



The Resettlement of European Refugees in Canada (1947-1952): Lobbying, Humanitarianism, and Enlightened Self-Interest (Part 3)

Robert J. Shalka

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Ed. Note: Part 1 of this article (published in the Bulletin's March 2021 issue) discussed the situation faced by displaced persons from Eastern Europe following the end of World War II, as well as how Canadians became aware of their plight in significant part because community multicultural organizations providing them with assistance and lobbying on their behalf for resettlement in Canada, also publicized their qualities as desirable immigrants. Part 2 covered the Canadian government's response, initially one of cautious family reunification followed by an expanded program to meet Canadian labour shortages and nation building as a contribution to a wider multilateral approach. Part 3, the final installment, discusses the Refugee Resettlement Program and how it would prefigure future refugee resettlement initiatives.

A Refugee Resettlement Program

How best to meet Canada's economic and humanitarian interests and, at the same time, contribute to international obligations to solve the European refugee problem assumed a priority following the May 1947 statement on immigration policy to the House of Commons by Prime Minister Mackenzie King. However, senior officials had to contend with prolonged negotiations leading to the formation of the International Refugee Organization (IRO) and a delayed general plan for refugee resettlement. External Affairs officials attending multilateral discussions perceived that their international counterparts preferred that refugees be distributed on a quota basis among countries prepared to accept immigrants.¹ This was an approach Canada was not ready to endorse. Adhering to a position first taken at the Évian Conference in 1938, the Canadian delegation at the IRO discussions maintained that resettlement was best achieved by amending and adjusting existing regulations rather than implementing a general quota system. Canada's approach since 1945, where existing regulations were adjusted to admit immigrants from refugee camps, was held out as a more practicable approach.

Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources H.L. Keenleyside explained this preference in a letter dated 9 May 1947 to his counterpart at External Affairs.² Because it appeared that the IRO would not become operational for some months, Keenleyside argued it would be to Canada's advantage to act independently by resettling from five to ten thousand refugees without delay. This initiative would give Canada the satisfaction of being the first country to contribute to the solution of the problem. Of greater significance, Canada would be free to select refugees according to its own standards

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as to who would be likely to make the best Canadian citizens. Waiting for the IRO to develop an overall plan would obligate Canada “to take a share of all classes and types”. Moving ahead of an IRO plan would also strengthen the impression that Canada was serious about immigration while acting effectively in securing a “good type of Immigrant”. At the same time, Canada “would be making a real move towards a solution of a very distressing problem and ... would get a degree of recognition which would be very valuable publicity...”. Finally, the example of a Canadian initiative might encourage other countries to take similar steps, thereby contributing to an overall solution. Keenleyside took pains to emphasize that any persons admitted as a result of the proposed initiative would be counted against any quota Canada might eventually agree to.

On 6 June 1947, Cabinet agreed to move without waiting for a concrete plan from the IRO.³ Canada would select up to 5,000 displaced persons from camps as a bulk labour movement: 1,400 forestry workers, 2,000 workers for the clothing industry, 2,000 female domestics for hospitals and private homes, and an allowance for a small “reserve”. Persons selected would agree to work for 10 to 12 months with their designated employer at specified wages. Employers would be responsible for transportation from the port of entry. Refugees selected as close relatives were not to be included in the 5,000-person allocation for bulk labour.

Matters moved expeditiously. Pending the arrival of additional immigration teams, the two teams already in Germany and Austria to select close relatives began to examine displaced persons for the bulk labour movement. Demand for the Canadian program was such that by 10 July 1947, Acting Minister C.D. Howe informed Cabinet that the number of displaced persons under consideration exceeded the initial 5,000 allocation and sought approval of an additional 5,000 places, for a total of 10,000 displaced persons. This request was granted. More places were authorized in the coming months to meet the demand for labour from prospective employers.

By 8 August 1947, Acting Minister of Mines and Resources James A. MacKinnon reported that three selection teams were examining applicants in Germany and Austria.⁴ Each team comprised six to eight members and included an immigration inspector, a doctor, an officer from the Department of Labour, an RCMP member, a female officer to select domestics, and a representative from industry. The Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR), succeeded by the Provisional Committee of the IRO, assembled refugees for examination, with chest X-rays and blood tests ready for the medical officer. In the early months, some 16,000 cases were approved under the close relative scheme in addition to 10,000 for the bulk labour movement, for which 26,000 applications had been received. Nearly 4,000 applicants were interviewed for the first 1,500 forestry workers, of which half were rejected on medical and other grounds.⁵

Despite those successes, there was continuing difficulty in the examination and movement of displaced persons., The teams often lacked transportation and accommodation. Many camps could be reached only by motor vehicle. All movement within the zones of occupation was by military train or motor transport and required orders and permits. While the various authorities were willing to cooperate, transportation was often not available or was in short supply. Locating close relatives was often a problem, as people moved without always leaving forwarding addresses. Ocean transportation was also difficult to secure. Finally, IGCR and IRO facilities were inadequate to support the teams.

Initially, examination teams operated independently, with minimal coordination, and were constantly on the move from one camp to another, living and working under extremely difficult conditions. To ameliorate the situation, a headquarters was established in mid-November 1947 in Heidelberg, in the American zone, with responsibility for coordinating immigration activities in Germany and Austria. Heidelberg had survived the war relatively intact, was already the site of the newly established IRO as well as other agencies concerned with the movement of displaced persons, and was central for travel throughout Germany and Austria. Heidelberg would remain the centre of Canadian immigration operations in Germany until March 1948, when the office moved to Karlsruhe.

Transportation problems within Germany and Austria were resolved by the purchase and shipment of six Canadian Ford station wagons and five passenger sedans for the use of inspection teams conducting interviews in the various camps. The refit, at Canadian government expense, of the

Notice for CIHS Members Heigh-Ho, it's Zooming We Will Go

Again in 2021, the CIHS **annual general meeting (AGM)** will take place via Zoom. The Board decided that an in-person gathering is premature.

So please mark your calendars for the AGM at **7 p.m. on Thursday, 21 October 2021.**

Prior to the meeting, members will receive the registration invitation, agenda, various reports, and the list of candidates standing for election to your board, along with voting instructions.

We hope to plan some sort of in-person gathering in Ottawa when the public health situation is less fraught.

We look forward to your participation.

SS *Beaverbrae* helped to ease the shipping shortage. It was committed to transporting immigrants for three years, and for thousands it would be their transport to Pier 21 in Halifax.

Speaking at Dalhousie University in November 1948, Dr. Keenleyside paid a warm tribute to the successful work of the immigration teams:

The initial work of starting the movement towards Canada was done by a single immigration officer, whose office was his suitcase and whose method of transportation was by thumbing rides from military or other vehicles on the German roads....The achievement of bringing to Canada something over 50,000 [displaced persons] between July 1947 and November 1948 under the conditions that existed in Germany during that time, and in spite of the transportation difficulties that had to be overcome, is as remarkable a performance as anything that is to be found in the history of immigration to Canada.⁶

The rugged travel and work in distant camps experienced by those early immigration teams would recur many times over the next 70 years, and beyond.

These stepped-up measures were reflected in the Annual Report of the Immigration Branch for the fiscal year ending 31 March 1948.⁷ Overall, immigrant admissions increased by 18.2 percent from the previous fiscal year, in keeping with the government's commitments to immigration—displaced persons in particular. Despite the logistical challenges outlined above, the inspection teams interviewed over 20,000 persons that fiscal year. At the same time, the Interdepartmental Immigration-Labour Committee approved 19,899 positions under the bulk labour movement. The workers most in demand were for railways, steel manufacture, forestry, hydroelectric transmission line construction, clothing manufacture, domestic labour, and agriculture. All would be destined to arranged employment. The examination teams' priority was to meet these needs, but not unexpectedly, it was not possible to select and process applicants for all approved positions, as some 8,702 bulk workers were also admitted in fiscal year 1947-1948.

The priority given to bulk labour resulted in considerable criticism from Canadians sponsoring relatives because of delays in transporting those displaced persons. On 31 October 1947, Director of Immigration A.L. Jolliffe informed the Cabinet Committee on Immigration Policy that, as of 21 October 1947, 10,264 close relatives had been approved, of which only 1,102 had arrived in Canada, which amounted to 23.5 percent of the total displaced person movement.⁸ By way of explanation, the director pointed to the scarcity of ocean transport and the priority given to bulk labour. In addition, many close relatives were ethnic Germans and therefore outside the IRO mandate. Their situation was resolved through arrangements with the Canadian Christian Council for the Resettlement of Refugees to locate and assist in the processing of persons not under the IRO mandate.⁹ Also, the Immigration Branch directed that close relatives were to comprise 40 percent of the movement to Canada. This order had an impact. By the end of March 1948, 5,042 relatives had arrived in Canada—35.5 percent of the total movement.

Following a rather slow start to the end of the 1947-1948 fiscal year, the work of the Canadian immigration inspection teams moved into high gear thanks to added resources and better coordination. According to official departmental statistics, displaced person admissions were the largest in fiscal year 1948-1949.

Fiscal Year	Total Displaced Persons Admissions(persons)
1947-1948	14,250
1948-1949	50,610
1949-1950	33,197
TOTAL	88,057

Fewer admissions to Canada in fiscal year 1949-1950 were attributed to expanded resettlement efforts by other countries—the U.S. and Australia in particular—as well as the end to restrictions on Jewish immigration with the termination of the British mandate over Palestine and the establishment of the State of Israel.

By 3 September 1948, Deputy Minister Keenleyside informed the Cabinet Committee on Immigration Policy that the government's objectives in admitting displaced persons had been attained.¹⁰ Canada had contributed directly to the solution to the displaced person problem by resettling large numbers of people who would make a valuable contribution to the economy. This included displaced persons selected both as close relatives and through bulk labour movements. Indirectly, Canada's contribution had provided an example to other countries. Most important was the U.S., which agreed to accept 205,000 displaced persons. Nevertheless, "Canada ... [had] by far the best record of any overseas country in its

handling of the [displaced persons] movement". This accomplishment was widely recognised by all, including the IRO, and "Canada's example of enlightened self-interest ... [was] established".

At the same time, Keenleyside noted that Canadian demand for imported labour had diminished. Also, Canadian selection teams found it difficult to find new candidates of the quality seen earlier. This situation would only worsen once the U.S. program got under way. By being among the first to act, Canada had been the destination of choice for displaced persons wishing to leave Europe, and Canada had been "able to obtain the best of the groups that have gone overseas". With the entry of the U.S. into the field, the situation changed. Keenleyside wrote at the time:

Rightly or wrongly, to most [displaced persons], as to most Europeans generally, the United States is still the Promised Land and Canada only a second choice. Most of the [displaced persons] who wish to immigrate will now apply first to the United States officials and come to the Canadian teams only if they are not accepted by the United States. These rejected applicants would not in general make good Canadians, as their ultimate objective would remain the United States. For practical as well as prestige reasons, it would be inadvisable for Canada to accept refugees rejected by the United States.

Faced with the above, Keenleyside recommended changing the emphasis from bulk labour to relatives of people already in Canada. With these changes, it was estimated that 30,000 to 45,000 refugees would be admitted to Canada by the end of August 1949. Cabinet approved the above on 29 September 1948.

Taking into account the change of emphasis to getting transport for relatives and the reorganization of immigration operations in Germany and Austria, the pattern of work to resettle refugees begun in the spring of 1947 continued at least until 1952, ending with the emptying of the camps and local resettlement of the remainder choosing to stay in Europe.

Official immigration statistics provide a breakdown of immigration admissions by "nationality" or "racial origin."¹¹ Of displaced persons admitted during fiscal years 1947-1948, 1948-1949 and 1949-1950, the key statistics are as follows:¹²

	1947-1948	1948-1949	1949-1950	Total
Czecho-Slovak	44	526	1,092	1,662
Dutch	732	2,918	827	4,447
Estonian	502	2,207	1,965	4,674
German	236	4,069	4,131	8,436
Hebrew	2,181	6,298	2,585	11,064
Jugo-Slav	378	2,747	1,183	4,308
Latvian	877	3,331	2,429	6,637
Lithuanian	1,978	4,362	1,577	7,917
Magyar	83	900	1,293	2,276
Polish	3,604	11,016	9,280	23,900
Russian	272	1,304	643	2,219
Ukrainian	3,321	10,277	5,617	19,215
Other	42	645	575	1,262
Total	14,250	50,610	33,197	98,057

Refugees selected under the bulk labour scheme proceeded to employers for whom they were required to work for a minimum of one year. In return, the employers committed to provide accommodation, wages, and working conditions at Canadian standards. Reflecting the needs of the labour market, most jobs involved domestic or basic labour, including farm work, railway maintenance, logging, mining, hydroelectric generation and transmission, and the needle trades. Domestic workers were placed in homes across Canada, and a large number were employed in Ottawa in the homes of prominent public figures.¹³ Others brought in under other bulk labour schemes found themselves on farms or in remote lumber camps and mines.¹⁴ Many would eventually find humour in their initial experiences. For example, a former Polish officer was selected as a farm worker, his family having operated an estate in pre-war Poland. Arriving at his place of employment, the farmer asked whether he knew horses. The immigrant replied that, as a Polish officer, he was certainly familiar with horses. The farmer then told him to get the team out of the barn, put on their harness, and hitch up the wagon. Sadly for the former officer, there was no groom available, and his undoubted equestrian skills did not readily translate to regular farm work with horses. He learned quickly. Other displaced persons would describe life in lumber camps and mines in northern Ontario and Quebec. Some employers came to appreciate their new workers for having a positive influence beyond their labour. For example, Senator Thomas Crerar, a former Minister of Mines and Resources and member of the Standing Committee on Immigration and Labour stated that:

I have been told by managers of a couple of mines...who have secured substantial numbers of these displaced men, that these people have exercised a very wholesome influence among the employees of their mines....They were definitely anti-communist and have enlightened many of those chaps working in these mines as to the conditions they themselves experienced under communist regimes....I'm very confident that on the whole the displaced persons who come to Canada are exercising a very healthy anti-communistic influence.¹⁵

The influx of large numbers of displaced persons, hostile to communism based on first-hand experience with Soviet rule, significantly reduced the influence of the various pro-Soviet organizations in Canada.

With a few exceptions, refugees admitted under the bulk worker schemes honoured their employment contracts in remote areas but relocated to the cities at the end of their term. There were instances where workers from urban backgrounds were unhappy with forest work and sought to join community members in large cities. In such circumstances, community representatives would intervene and recommend "toughing it out" for the duration for the sake of the community's reputation.

During the three fiscal years noted above, 104,001 immigrants of English, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh origin were also admitted from overseas, a number slightly more than displaced person admissions. Most came directly from the U.K. and Ireland and benefitted from measures encouraging immigration from the "British Isles". Large movements from Portugal, Italy, and Germany would soon follow.

Conclusion

The resettlement of Ukrainian and other displaced persons in Canada came about through a combination of factors. There was a realization that, after 15 years of draconic immigration restrictions due to the Great Depression and World War II, Canada had a considerable pent-up demand to reopen immigration. Pressure increased for the government to facilitate and expand family reunification, particularly from continental Europe, which had been effectively "closed" after 1930. Displaced persons fortunate enough to have family already in Canada benefitted from the opening up of immigration categories to include close relatives. At the same time, a consensus developed in Canada to expand its population in order to secure the country's territorial integrity and to grow and prosper economically. This interest coincided with labour shortages in certain key sectors such as forestry, mining, and agriculture. Finally, at the multilateral level, the humanitarian dimension of refugees unable or unwilling to return to their places of origin required an international solution through massive overseas resettlement.

Adopting an approach of "enlightened self-interest", Canada began cautiously. It started by bringing over the spouses and dependent children of Canadian service personnel. By mid-1946, the categories of people eligible to join family members already in Canada were significantly expanded, to benefit displaced persons and others in Europe. Finally, in mid-1947, the Canadian government initiated bulk labour immigration schemes to meet identified labour market needs, with the clear objective of selecting immigrants "of the best possible type". During this last phase, the objective was to approve as many as possible from the pool of available displaced person applicants ahead of competing countries. Clearly, it was a strategy unashamedly intended to pick "the cream of the crop". At the same time, the government minimized its financial commitments by giving preferential treatment to family sponsorships and bulk labour approvals.

The wave of displaced person immigrants to Canada had a profound impact, bringing diversity to urban centres—chiefly in Ontario and Quebec—that had been primarily the domain of "old stock Canadians". For the already well established Ukrainian-Canadian, Polish, Jewish, and other communities, the arrival of the "third wave" brought new blood and often new challenges.

The refugee movement from 1947 to 1953 prefigured future Canadian resettlement movements. The immigration service succeeded in processing large numbers of applicants quickly and efficiently, setting an example that would be repeated soon and often: Hungarians in 1956 and 1957; Czechoslovaks in 1968; Ugandan Asians in 1972; Indochinese from 1975 to 1980; self-exiled East Europeans in the 1980s; Bosnians and Kosovars in the last years of the 20th century and beyond, as well as numerous smaller movements. By the time of the Syrian resettlement movement of 2015 and 2016, the immigration service had a well-established tradition of delivering on Canada's humanitarian and other commitments efficiently and on time.

¹ *Documents on Canadian External Relations*. Vol. 13 (1947). 304.

² *Documents on Canadian External Relations*. Vol. 13 (1947). 307.

³ *Cabinet Conclusions*. No, 8812, 8836.

⁴ *Documents on Canadian External Relations*. Vol. 13 (1947). 332.

⁵ Arrangements were also being made to deal with persons not covered by the IRO mandate, including ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe (*Volksdeutsche*), German fiancées of Canadian servicemen, and the German and Austrian spouses and minor children of legal residents of Canada. The last group were still considered enemy aliens.

⁶ Hawkins, 339. For a first-hand account of the work of immigration officers at the time, see Roger St. Vincent, *A Very Fortunate Life* (Unpublished manuscript, 2005), 65-90. <https://aidhistory.ca/a-very-fortunate-life-by-roger-saint-vincent>. St. Vincent was posted to Karlsruhe from 1948 to 1952 and worked in the displaced persons camps. It is an interesting book, replete with anecdotes.

⁷ Dominion of Canada. *Report of the Department of Mines and Resources for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1948* (Ottawa: King's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1949, 237ff.

⁸ *Documents on Canadian External Relations*. Vol. 13 (1947). 318.

⁹ *Documents on Canadian External Relations*. Vol 14 (1948). 129ff.

¹⁰ *Documents on Canadian External Relations*. Vol 14 (1948), 1296ff.

¹¹ *Report of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1950* (Ottawa: King's Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1951), 26.

¹² The Dutch displaced persons statistics include special movements for farm workers and farmers displaced by extensive flooding of agricultural areas during the latter part of the war. The German numbers comprise Ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) displaced from their traditional homelands in Eastern Europe due to events during and immediately after the war. German citizens (*Reichsdeutsche*) were still considered enemy aliens. The significant decline in "Hebrew" admissions in fiscal year 1949-1950 can be attributed to the double impact of the creation of Israel with the end to all restrictions on Jewish immigration and the opening of the massive U.S. resettlement program. Ukrainians were in the top three resettlement groups with Poles and Jews and accounted for 19.6 percent of the total displaced persons movement. As already noted, these figures are probably underreported.

¹³ William Lyon Mackenzie King's diary mentions a "Polish girl" taken on as a kitchen helper under the supervision of his regular cook. M.J. Coldwell, leader of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, employed a displaced person domestic to care for his invalid spouse.

¹⁴ Jane Frances Gilmour, *The Kind of People Canada Wants: Canada and the Displaced Persons, 1943-53* (Toronto: Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Toronto. 2009). The author, of Baltic background, relies on family anecdotes and archival sources, as well as records retained by Ontario companies that recruited and employed bulk workers.

¹⁵ *Senate Standing Committee on Immigration and Labour*. 28 April 1948.

The Chyssem Project: Commemorating 50 Years of Tibetans in Canada

Dicki Chhoyang

Dicki Chhoyang immigrated to Canada, at the age of four, as one of the first Tibetans who settled in Quebec in 1971. She is the co-founder of the Chyssem Project and is responsible for Indigenous Initiatives at McGill University.

The Chyssem Project would like to hear from anyone who worked with the first Tibetans to come to Canada.

In July 2022, the Tibetan community in Canada will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the first Tibetans in Canada, in the early 1970s. They were resettled across five provinces: Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba.

To mark this anniversary, a group of volunteers has been working on an e-book to record the origins of Tibetan immigration to Canada as well as share the life stories of some members of this first group. In collaboration with the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, it undertook interviews with members of the first Tibetan community that are now part of the museum's collection.

The Tibetan community in Canada now numbers over 8,000 individuals, with the largest concentrations living in Toronto and Calgary. Its growth took place in three waves: the first group arrived in the early 1970s, followed a few decades later by several thousand who came from the United States. A federal resettlement program for 1,000 Tibetan refugees from Arunachal Pradesh, India, brought the third and most recent wave, with its first group arriving in 2013.

For further information about the project, visit: www.thechyssemproject.com

Email: chyssem50@gmail.com



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J.A.W. "Al" Gunn (1922–2009): An Immigration Career

Kurt F. Jensen

Al Gunn¹ was one of the "grand old men" of the Canadian immigration service. He was a founding member of the Canadian Immigration Historical Society (CIHS) and a significant force within the organization. Shortly after his death in 2009, as a tribute to his memory the Society established the Gunn Prize, which is awarded annually for an outstanding essay on Canadian immigration history.

Gunn saw active service overseas during World War II with the British Royal Air Force, which he joined in early 1941. At the end of the war, he returned to civilian life in Montreal, and on 15 May 1946 he joined the Immigration Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources as an immigration inspector, a position in which he remained until 1950.

Initially there was an obstacle in the way of his recruitment. He was born in Niagara, New York, as his mother preferred the hospital there to the one on the Canadian side, and he was not registered as a Canadian citizen born abroad. Immigration files determined that a kind immigration officer at the border simply recorded his "landing" at some point when he was returning to Canada from the United States.

Regular commercial air service between Canada and Europe was inaugurated in 1948. Many displaced persons from refugee camps in Europe began to enter Canada at Montreal's international airport at Dorval via charter flights organized by the International Refugee Organization. Gunn was involved in the immigration landing process of a number of these people and also examined for admission to Canada visitors and immigrants arriving at the airport.

Gunn spent four years at Dorval Airport before being transferred in 1950 to a position as correspondence clerk in the general immigration admissions and placement section of the Eastern District (Montreal). His job was to review field investigators' reports on settlement arrangements for persons sponsored as relatives or farm workers by Canadian residents. In 1951, Gunn was assigned duties relating to the settlement and placement of unsponsored immigrants. He reviewed applications sent by visa officers overseas, either approving or rejecting immigration applications. Gunn's career progressed steadily, and he spent June 1952 to December 1953 as clerk in charge of personnel, during which time he was also assigned temporarily to various Canadian border and maritime entry points where he assisted staff when they were overloaded with the number of admissions.

His first significant career advancement came in early 1954, with a three-year assignment as visa officer at the Canadian embassy in Brussels. He interviewed immigrants, including displaced persons admitted to Belgium after World War II, as well as non-immigrants seeking entry to Canada.

Returning to Canada in 1957, he became a district operations supervisor in Montreal (and regional operations supervisor in 1962), responsible for distributing instructions to field officers that reflected operational changes to the regulations governing the immigration program.

Gunn was assigned to headquarters in Ottawa in 1965 as reporting systems officer for the Immigration Branch, conducting research projects, feasibility studies, and statistical surveys. This assignment included work with the intelligence unit of the Enforcement Division, which liaised with other Canadian enforcement agencies, primarily the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and its security service (the forerunner to the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service).

His next rotation, in early 1969, saw him assigned as chief, data analysis in what was now the Immigration Division of the Department of Manpower and Immigration. In this position, Gunn oversaw a team analysing statistical data and preparing reports based on the data to enhance program management. In 1976 he became assistant director, and in 1978 director, of the program data division of the Priorities and Program Branch. Here, he continued his involvement in developing computer-based information systems, both operational and statistical, with the goal of assessing the success or failure of programs in implementing policy. His work also required forecasting the impact of proposed changes to the *Immigration Act*, as well as the volume of immigrants arriving in Canada annually. A challenging assignment, it demanded a thorough and current knowledge of all aspects of policies and programs relating to immigration.

In 1980, after 34 years, Al Gunn retired from Immigration, having served a long and distinguished career. He became active in the Canadian Immigration Historical Society after its establishment in 1986, soon becoming a member of the board of directors and holding various offices.

At this point, Gunn also embarked on an intermittent career as an expert witness in court cases of immigration and citizenship fraud. He was often assisted by his friend and former co-worker, Roger St. Vincent, both providing expert testimony on immigration policies and procedures, including security and intelligence dimensions. The usual charges against the defendants were that they had obtained admission to Canada and/or Canadian citizenship by withholding critical information about their wartime cooperation with and participation in German military and security forces engaged in war crimes.

Gunn was an expert witness in eight federal court cases of citizenship revocation from 1998 until 2007, and several cases hinged on his or St. Vincent's testimony. Their explanations of the legislation and the attendant selection procedures were reflected in the courts' decisions, which stated that, had the accused been frank about their wartime service with German forces in their interviews with immigration officers, they would have been refused entry on the grounds of prohibited membership in Nazi armed forces, the Waffen SS, or if the accused were not German, as auxiliary police, security or military forces. Gunn and St. Vincent testified that questioning of applicants was always extensive, detailed, and covered applicants' wartime activities. Most of the prosecutions resulted in convictions, the exceptions being when individuals were sufficiently removed from active engagement in war crimes that they might have benefitted from the positive discretion exercised by the interviewing official.

¹ Memorandum by J.A.W. Gunn, MEM-n.d.-2, CIHS Archives. See also [CIHS Bulletin 55, June 2009](#) for an *In Memoriam* article about Gunn.

Management Consultants

Joe Bissett

Management consultants are dangerous birds.
Their searches, their studies are often absurd.
They travel, they spin, they question and look.
They return with their findings comprised in a book.

Their presentations are glib, they use the right phrases—
"High fidelity response" and "alternative phases".
They baffle the intellect, confuse and alarm;
Yet their suggestions are followed despite all the harm.

They have insulted your judgement.
They have blown your mind.
They have borrowed your wristwatch
And told you the time!

The Displaced: Refugee Writers on Refugee Lives edited by Viet Thanh Nguyen, Harry N. Abrams, 2019, 192 pages.

Book Review by Diane Burrows

Diane Burrows, a retired immigration foreign service officer and program manager, is the current editor of the CIHS Bulletin. She was posted to New Delhi, Rome, Port of Spain, and Washington, and worked in executive-level positions at Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Her direct experience in refugee application processing began in New Delhi and continued in Italy, Croatia, and Serbia.

The Displaced: Refugee Writers on Refugee Lives is a collection of 20 personal accounts by refugee authors from around the world that reflect their own stories of persecution and displacement (sometimes many times), transit, and coming to terms with what it means to be a refugee in their countries of resettlement. Most of the authors, including the editor, now live in the U.S., but two live in Canada, one in the U.K., and one in South Africa.

The collection's editor, [Viet Thanh Nguyen](#), is a Vietnamese-American novelist, essayist, and academic.¹ He is a regular contributor to the *New York Times*, won the Pulitzer Prize and other awards in 2016 for his novel *The Sympathizer*, and in 2017 was [awarded](#) a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship.

As a title, *The Displaced* works fairly well, linking the various essays and summing up how the authors identify across time and space with their diverse refugee experiences. The book was published in 2018, during the U.S. presidency of Donald J. Trump. Some of the essays directly and indirectly criticize the U.S.'s southern border control practices, and certainly some take great issue with the former president's derogatory statements in 2015 about Mexican immigrants to the U.S.² In general, though, this is not an inflammatory book—rather it inspires the reader to reflect and read more by refugee authors and to listen to refugee voices.

Nguyen introduces the collection of essays with one of his own about his family's refugee experiences after the fall of Vietnam and moving to the U.S. While it has many sad moments and he narrates them poignantly, it also explores how such experiences are shared by the volume's other authors.

Nguyen presents his ideas clearly and persuasively. The book is very readable, even eloquent, as it addresses such heavy themes as persecution, fear, displacement, violence, loss, cultural disorientation, racism, and guilt. In most instances, the authors make it very easy to empathize with them or their family members in their challenges and the solutions they reached, sometimes unwillingly and under great strain. As I progressed through it, I found myself wanting to read "just one more essay".

The collection reflects the writers' holistic and sustained engagement with their refugee experiences. As I read, I picked up some of the authors' questions to themselves and the readers. Does one ever stop being a refugee? What are the intergenerational scars of continued persecution? What does a country owe to refugees, and what do refugees owe in return? Do refugees have to be grateful, and for how long, and do such obligations create power imbalances between the refugee and the receiving society? Are refugees invisible, or hyper-visible?

As a former visa officer who played a minor part in Canada's refugee resettlement program delivery, I was surprised by how infrequently the administrative portion of the refugees' journeys was mentioned. Some write of the U.S. administration's harsh treatment of asylum seekers who cross the Mexico-U.S. border. But most writers omit recounting their own administrative process of refugee selection or asylum determination, perhaps because they were very young when such decisions occurred or because those transactions were less relevant to their narratives.

Given the fact that the *Bulletin* concerns itself with Canadian immigration history, it is germane to touch on the Canadian contributions to this book: David Bezmozgis's article "Common Story" and Joseph Kertes's "Second Country". Bezmozgis is a well-known and respected Canadian writer. His family left Latvia, then part of the Soviet Union, when he was six years old, after formally renouncing citizenship and becoming stateless. He writes about his parents' and grandparents' experiences of being displaced during the Nazi occupation of Latvia during World War II; a schoolyard accident in Canada and his family's challenging adaptation to Canada in that period; attending his wife's citizenship ceremony, with the values of Canadian citizenship on display; and his observations of an Immigration and Refugee Board hearing, where the applicant's claim to refugee status was being slowly and methodically questioned. And he uses these four memories as the basis for questions about what is owed by the country and by the citizen.

Kertes is also a distinguished Canadian writer and academic. His family escaped from Hungary when he was a child. His article relates the story of his family's passage from Hungary to Canada, putting it into the context of the conflicts of 20th century Europe. He admits that his parents, who had relatives in both Canada and the U.S., had to flip a coin to determine where they would resettle. Kertes refers to Canada as the "second country" because "We [Canadians] are outsiders". He

compares the expectations of the U.S. (the “first country”) for newcomers to assimilate, to Canada’s, where the identity of newcomers remains hyphenated, where “the hyphen is harder, more obdurate”. He also asserts that Canada has moved from a pre-national state to a post-national state, bypassing the type of nationalism that he sees in today’s Hungary. He closes the article with hopes that the new (2017) Syrian refugees to Canada will enrich this country.

In conclusion, the majority of contributors to the book explore their resettlement in the U.S., and while for Canadian readers this could appear to be a less pertinent topic, I would disagree. Many of the challenges of integration that the writers describe comprehensively and sensitively in their stories are at a personal, yet universal, level. Nguyen writes (page 17):

These displaced persons are mostly unwanted where they fled from; unwanted where they are, in refugee camps; and unwanted where they want to go. They have fled under arduous conditions; they have lost friends, family members, homes, and countries; they are detained in refugee camps in often subhuman conditions, with no clear end to the stay and no definitive exit; they are often threatened with deportation to their countries of origin; and they will likely be unremembered, which is where the work of writers becomes important, especially writers who are refugees or who have been refugees—if such a distinction can be drawn.

¹ Nguyen has written two novels (*The Sympathizer*, 2016, and *The Refugees*, 2017) and a history (*Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War*, 2014). He has also edited two other collections of essays (*Race and Resistance: Literature and Politics in Asian America*, 2002, and *Transpacific Studies: Framing an Emerging Field*, 2014), and a children’s book (*Chicken of the Sea*, 2019).

² In former President Trump’s announcement of 16 June 2015 that he would be a candidate for the Republican Party’s nomination for president, he stated, “When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best. They’re not sending you. They’re not sending you. They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people”. <https://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/> Accessed 20 July 2021.

Many Immigrants Coming

The Frank Paper, 7 May 1908, page 1.

Ed. Note: This article reports on the editor of the monthly journal, Canada West’s, prognosis for immigration to Western Canada. Dawn Edlund, CIHS President, accessed the following 1908 newspaper article from Frank, Alberta on 27 March 2021 while researching on the “Peel’s Prairie Provinces” section of the University of Alberta’s website. It has been transcribed from the website’s scanned version; contents between square brackets are hers,

Herbert Vanderhoof, late secretary of the Western Canada Immigration Association and editor of Canada West, says that from advices he has received from various sources he believes that immigration into Western Canada this year will exceed that of the record breaking year of 1908 [1906?].

The Canadian government’s American agents report that the number of enquiries this year is much larger than last and they also say that the character of the enquiries is also better. In fact things at present are very much the same as they were in 1906, and everything looks as though 1908 was going to break the record.

Whole colonies are becoming interested and many enquiries have been received from different sections of the states with the object in view of bringing whole colonies into western Canada.

One of these has already purchased a tract of land and several families have arrived. This is a German Luthern [sic] colony from Hastings, Neb., and the elders were through the west some time ago and purchased a tract of 39,000 acres in the Tramping Lake district, in the vicinity of North Battleford, Sask.

Several of the families have already arrived and they are all in good circumstances and able to make the best of their advantages.

The CIHS Molloy Bursary Update

Charlene Elgee

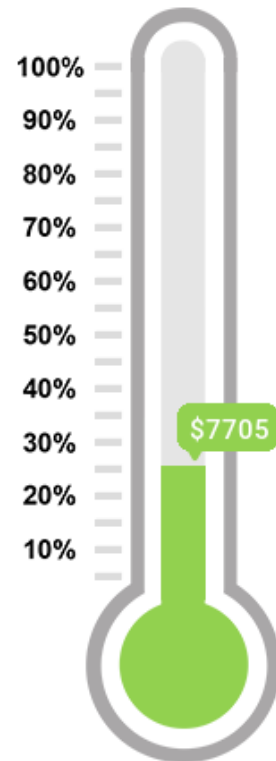
The CIHS Molloy Bursary **application form** can now be downloaded from the Student Awards tab on our [website](#), so spread the word amongst your academic contacts and to any Canadian history students you know. The deadline for application is 1 November, and we want to see lots of applicants!

Once again, generous contributors have come through with financial support for the [CIHS Molloy Bursary](#) fund. Its total has grown to \$7,705. Our thanks go to two more “star donors” and the generosity of our good friends and colleagues at the Canadian Ambassadors Alumni Association for circulating information about this bursary to its members.

Please keep those donations coming in. A fully sustainable bursary fund is our objective because it will allow us to help highly qualified students for many years to come.

Your tax-deductible donation can be made by direct e-transfer to Info@cihs-shic.ca or by cheque mailed to: **Canadian Immigration Historical Society, Treasurer, PO Box 9502 Station T, Ottawa K1G 3V2**. Just be sure and indicate on the e-transfer or on your cheque that you want the donation to go to the CIHS Molloy Bursary Fund.

Goal: \$30000



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2021 Star Donors (as of September 2021)

Silver donors (\$1,000): Jolène Beaupré, Larry Carroll, Roy Christensen, and The Trekkers group (Neil Alexander, Roger Barliszen, Brian Casey, Helen Economo, Kurt Egloff, Mark Floyd, Don Gautier, Ken Hosley, Peter Lilius, and Norman Morgan)

Bronze donors (\$500): Randy Orr, John Baker, Jacques Beaulne, and Anonymous (2 donors)

1999: Canada's Resettlement and Repatriation of Kosovar Refugees

Jan Raska, Acting Manager of Research at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, has written a [comprehensive account](#) of the resettlement of refugees from Kosovo to Canada. As part of the research for the article, he relied on first-hand accounts published in previous issues of the CIHS *Bulletin* and the media, as well as interviews of people who were involved in the resettlement. It is a very worthwhile read.

A Memory of the 1993 Immigration Program Managers Workshop, Antigua Guatemala

A few years have passed since this photo was taken. Can you recognize anyone?



The 2003 Citizenship and Immigration Canada Western Hemisphere Program Managers Workshop, Antigua, Guatemala, participants are listed from left to right.

Front row (kneeling): Tony Marshall, Trudy Kernighan, Stephane Larue, Joyce Cavanagh-Wood, Claudette Deschênes. **Second row (seated):** Robert Orr, Dr. Brian Gushulak, Al Lukie, Susan Burrows, Nesta Scott, Philip Lupul, Lyse Ricard, Paul Whelan, Dave Graham, Ken Hosley, Craig Dundas, Jim Crowther, Bruce McDonald, Jean-Pierre Cliche. **Third row:** Guy Bélanger, Francine Galarneau, Melody Duncan, Dawn Edlund, Howard Spunt, Frank Perriccoli, Michel Smith, Luis Monzon, Michael Francomb, Christian Labelle, Rénaud Dusseault, Elizabeth Alt, Gilles Lemaire, Michel Gagné. **Back row:** Brian Hudson, Raymond Gabin, Sylvie Dorey, Dr. Jim Anderson. [courtesy of Joyce Cavanagh-Wood]

In Memoriam

Grodde, Eva

Retired Canadian visa officer Eva Grodde passed away peacefully on 1 January 2021, just shy of her 89th birthday. She was born in Insterburg, Germany, which was renamed and is now within the boundaries of the Kaliningrad Region of the Russian Federation. Eva graduated from Queen's University in 1953 with a Bachelor of Arts degree and the following year completed her Elementary Education Certificate in Physical Health. She taught in Toronto but then relocated to Lebanon where she stayed for 10 years. She began as an English teacher to a very wealthy family and later became a visa officer at the Canadian embassy in Lebanon. The embassy relocated to Cyprus, and from there she was posted in Singapore, where she interviewed refugees. Her final posting was to Cairo, Egypt from 1986 to 1989.

Remembered by Susan Burrows

I have been typing up my diaries from all the years I was overseas and came across the name “Eva Grodde”. I first met Eva when she was Gerry Schroh’s secretary at NHQ Western Hemisphere Branch in 1978. She then became a foreign service officer. I met up with her again in 1986 in Cairo when I was doing temporary duty there. She showed me photos of the refugee camps she used to visit in Malaysia and Indonesia and seemed to be very popular with the locally engaged staff wherever she went. I looked her up and, to my surprise, discovered she passed away this past January. I found one obituary: <https://obituaries.basicfunerals.ca/obituary/Eva-Grodde>.

Remembered by Robert Shalka

I first met Eva in 1980 when she was Gerry Schroh’s secretary, and I remember her as a hard-working and efficient colleague. She joined the foreign service in 1982 and was among the group of new probationary foreign service officers whom Liz Boyce and I trained in the *Immigration Act* and regulations. We worked together from 1985 to 1987 in Singapore and made many trips together to the Vietnamese refugee camps in Pulau Bidong (Malaysia) and Pulau Galang (Indonesia). Again, she proved a diligent and efficient officer who coped well with a heavy and complex workload. She was well regarded by her Canadian colleagues and local staff. From Singapore she went on to Cairo, where her fluent Arabic would have been a major asset.

Orr, Randy

As this issue was being finalized, we learned of the death of CIHS board member and IRCC employee Randy Orr. He passed away on 15 September 2021 in Ottawa and was laid to rest on 22 September 2021. We would be honoured to publish tributes and remembrances about Randy Orr in the next *Bulletin*.

Ouellette, Chantal



Chantal Ouellette, a former immigration foreign service officer and program manager, passed away from cancer on 29 July 2021 in Quebec City, and her funeral was held on 2 September 2021.

Chantal graduated from the Université Laval with a degree in anthropology in 1976 and started work shortly thereafter as a foreign service trainee in the immigration stream. Her early visa officer postings took her to Glasgow, London, Port-au-Prince, Detroit, and then to Rome, where she specialized as an immigration control officer. Headquarters and family matters brought her back to the National Capital Region where she focused her expertise at various times in the former Enforcement Branch’s immigration document integrity divisions, the Europe geographic desk of CIC’s International Region, and the Operational Management Coordination Branch’s Fraud Deterrence and Verification Division. Her most recent postings were to Damascus and Beirut (a split assignment due to an evacuation from Damascus in 2012), Ankara, and finally Tunis in 2014, where she was the immigration program manager. She retired to Quebec City at the end of that posting.

Linda Gagné se souvient

Le décès de Chantal est une grande perte pour le monde dans lequel on vit actuellement. Chantal avait le don de trouver le point positif chez tous les gens qu’elle connaissait et réussissait toujours à nous convaincre qu’elle avait raison.

J’ai rencontré Chantal à Rome où elle travaillait comme agente d’intégrité des mouvements migratoires. Malgré sa lourde charge de travail et ses visites régulières à l’aéroport, elle était toujours disponible pour aider ses collègues et le personnel local à n’importe quel moment de la journée. Elle était d’une efficacité et intégrité exceptionnelles et a été un exemple constant pour ses collègues et collaborateurs. Elle était aussi toujours disponible pour les policiers de l’aéroport qui lui demandaient conseil sur les passagers qu’ils suspectaient d’être en possession de passeports frauduleux, et Chantal leur répondait même s’ils l’appelaient pendant ses jours de repos. Ces policiers l’appréciaient énormément et se souvenaient agréablement d’elle encore 20 ans après son départ. Elle a été grandement appréciée pendant toute la durée de son poste à Rome pour sa grande curiosité envers le pays hôte et son grand respect envers tous les gens qu’elle rencontrait. Elle avait aussi des contacts constants avec ses homologues des autres ambassades.

Sur le plan personnel, Chantal était formidable et une amie exceptionnelle. De nature très réservée et humble, elle était une personne très curieuse intellectuellement et était toujours au courant de ce qui se passait dans le monde. Elle restait en contact avec ses ami(es) par téléphone ou par courriel, et quand on se retrouvait après une longue période à l’étranger, c’était comme si on s’était vues la journée précédente. Elle s’enquêrait régulièrement de l’état de santé de ses ami(es) proches et allait voir régulièrement une tante aînée qui était dans une résidence à plusieurs kilomètres de chez

elle. Il ne faut pas oublier qu'elle n'a pas hésité à sacrifier sa carrière en prenant une période prolongée de congé sabbatique pour s'occuper de ses parents qui avaient de sérieux problèmes de santé.

C'est avec une grande tristesse que j'ai salué Chantal quelques jours avant son décès, sachant qu'elle en avait plus pour longtemps à vivre. Elle a tellement souffert, donc son décès a été une libération pour elle. Je me considère très privilégiée qu'elle ait partagé une partie de ma vie et fait partie de mon cercle d'amies.

Denise Defoy se souvient

Je n'ai pas travaillé avec Chantal en poste ni à l'administration centrale. Cependant, j'ai eu l'occasion de profiter de bonnes jasettes avec elle. J'ai très apprécié son écoute, ses commentaires sans jugement et sa discrétion. Le dévouement envers sa famille et le don de soi qu'elle a démontrés lors de la maladie de sa mère étaient inspirants. Une femme tranquille qui gagnait à être connue.

Remembered by Holly Edwards

I am very sorry to hear that Chantal passed away. I did not know her well. I worked with her a bit when she was in the Western European Division and I was doing refugees (1987 to 1990 for me). We were still at DFAIT. I think we may have crossed paths again 1993 to 1996 when I was again at headquarters (this time at CIC). Above all, I remember that she was self-effacing, but had a mocking sense of humour and could be quite fun to work with.

Jean-Louis Laberge se souvient

Je suis attristé par la nouvelle du décès de notre collègue Chantal Ouellette. Mon souvenir le plus lointain remonte à son affectation temporaire à Bruxelles qu'elle a faite à l'été 1982. Sinon je n'ai pas eu l'occasion de travailler avec Chantal dans la même direction ou à l'étranger. Avant mon affectation à Paris comme agent de contrôle en 1999, j'ai pu profiter de ses sages conseils car elle travaillait à ce moment-là au contrôle des documents à ASFC.

D'une nature souriante, il était toujours agréable d'échanger avec Chantal. J'ai toujours apprécié sa grande capacité d'écoute, Chantal me donnait l'impression d'une personne fiable, responsable et qui avait à cœur tout ce qui était relié à l'immigration. Sa grande polyvalence lui a permis à contribuer à de nombreux programmes de CIC et ASFC durant sa longue carrière.

Régnald Gilbert se souvient

Une bien triste nouvelle. C'était une belle personne. La dernière fois que j'ai vu Chantal, elle était dans un musée à Québec un peu avant la pandémie. Elle avait l'air en forme, et la retraite lui allait fort bien.

J'ai croisé Chantal à de nombreuses reprises à Ottawa au fil des ans bien que nous n'ayons jamais travaillé directement ensemble. Elle connaissait bien ses dossiers et était toujours très professionnelle. Nous avons toujours eu de bonnes relations, même quand je lui ai un peu tordu le bras pour qu'elle parte en poste après un très long séjour à Ottawa pour des raisons familiales. Après son séjour à Ottawa, elle est repartie en poste à Damas et Ankara. Je l'ai un peu perdue de vue, jusqu'à ce qu'elle arrive à Tunis, pour sa dernière affectation. C'est là que je l'ai mieux connu; nous avons eu de multiples échanges car Paris et Tunis se partageaient le traitement des dossiers tunisien. Je l'ai visité à Tunis ou j'ai pu constater qu'elle était très appréciée de son équipe.

Lorsque je pense à Chantal, je ne peux m'empêcher de penser à un trajet en taxi à Rome lors d'une conférence de chef de programme. Le chauffeur de taxi très coloré nous racontait sa vie mouvementée en Italien (en conduisant comme Lewis Hamilton dans les rues étroites de la ville éternelle). Chantal assise à l'avant traduisait ce que le chauffeur racontait pour le bénéfice des passagers à l'arrière en ajoutant quelques commentaires humoristiques. C'était absolument hilarant. Chantal pouvait être très drôle quand elle s'y mettait.

Anton Jurkovich se souvient

J'ai travaillé avec Chantal à Ottawa de 2001 jusqu'à mon départ à la retraite en 2004, alors que je revenais de Genève pour prendre la direction de L'Europe. Chantal arrivait aussi pour prendre la fonction de directrice-adjoint.

La meilleure façon pour décrire Chantal qui me vient à l'esprit est de parler de « compétence tranquille ». Elle avait une connaissance fine du programme d'immigration et était d'une fiabilité exemplaire. C'était d'autant plus remarquable qu'elle a fait face à des problèmes de famille importants à compter de 2001, en commençant par le décès soudain à l'été 2001 de son seul frère, pour qui elle avait une grande affection; ainsi elle s'est retrouvée seule pour s'occuper de sa mère (qui avait de sérieux problèmes de santé) et qui habitait Québec, ce qui a exigé des aller-retours fréquents entre Ottawa et Québec. Malgré cette situation difficile, Chantal n'a jamais failli dans ses responsabilités à la Direction Europe. Elle était plutôt réservée et ne cherchait pas à se pousser au premier plan, mais faisait son travail avec professionnalisme et efficacité. Chantal a été pour moi une collègue et une collaboratrice exceptionnelle.

Remembered by Fran Psutka

Chantal left us too soon, at only 67 years of age. She began her career in 1976, as part of a small group of ten hires that also included Richard Hetherington. I never worked with Chantal but I socialized with her over the years and we were good friends. Chantal was an introvert—she was sweet and had a sense of humour, in her quiet way!

Chantal enjoyed cultural events. In Toronto, we saw *The Phantom of the Opera*. I visited Chantal while she was posted to Detroit. We visited museums and blues clubs—she was fearless about driving around in Detroit, and later in Italy. I also visited Chantal while she was posted in Rome. We “hung out” with Colleen Cupples, the head of the immigration section in Rome. While in Rome, we drove to Assisi (to visit the famous Basilica di San Francesco) and visited other tourist spots including Pisa and Lucca. Chantal attended my wedding in 2005 in Ottawa. Her wine tastes included a favourite red, Chateau Pûyfromage, a French bordeaux.

Chantal retired in 2018 and moved back to Quebec City. Sadly, she was predeceased by her only brother André, who was a foreign service employee of DFAIT. Rest in peace, dear Chantal!

Alain Théault se souvient

Je suis désolé d'apprendre la triste nouvelle du décès de Chantal. Je n'ai pas travaillé de près avec Chantal dans mes affectations à l'étranger ni à l'administration centrale, mais je l'ai côtoyée à plusieurs reprises, dans quelques réunions et pour quelques suivis. J'ai le souvenir d'une collègue sérieuse, franche, fiable et très intègre—réservée mais toujours aimable.

Remembered by Merle Bolick

I was fortunate to have Chantal Ouellette reporting to me from 2005 to 2007 as the senior analyst on the Europe desk. She was senior to me, but she didn't make me feel stupid. She never complained about my editing her memos written in French! For much of the time, she commuted each weekend to Sainte-Foy to look after her widowed mother, who had suffered an amputation and was confined to a nursing home. I had family duties of my own, and we made a good tag-team. She replaced me as chair of the European immigration program managers' conference in England in 2006. Chantal had an excellent work ethic, she never complained, and she rarely had to be told what to do. Although we couldn't spend much personal time together, she did share her quiet enthusiasm for Nicolas Sarkozy. We always had interesting chats in the smokers' lounge, while that existed. She was a great asset to the department.

Pflanz, Benno (Ben)

The CIHS learned that Ben Pflanz passed away in late July. There will be a tribute to him published in the next *Bulletin*. We are in communication with his family to learn more precise information.

Vigneau, Régis

Bernard de Jaham, ex-fonctionnaire d'Immigration-Québec, se souvient.

Décédé ce printemps, Régis Vigneau a été un acteur important des politiques d'immigration du Québec. Il fut successivement directeur, sous-ministre adjoint, puis sous-ministre au ministère de l'Immigration du Québec, entre 1975 et 1988. Pendant cette période, il a été l'instigateur, le principal artisan voir même le maître d'œuvre de plusieurs orientations, politiques ou accords qui ont marqué l'adolescence de ce jeune ministère, créé en 1968 avec seulement quelques dizaines d'employés.

Entré au ministère comme directeur de la formation, Régis Vigneau a notamment eu le mandat de réaliser la prise en gestion directe des Centres d'orientation et de formation des immigrants (COFI). Ce fut pour ce petit ministère une opération de grande ampleur, compliquée par les négociations tant avec les partenaires qu'avec les syndicats de professeurs, qui fit tripler le nombre d'employés du ministère, passant de 147 à 461.



Devenu sous-ministre adjoint en charge des opérations de sélection et d'établissement des immigrants, Régis Vigneau participe aux négociations de l'entente Couture-Cullen conclue en février 1978 par le ministre fédéral de l'Immigration, Bud Cullen, et son homologue du Québec, Jacques Couture. Suite à cette entente accordant au Québec le pouvoir de sélectionner les ressortissants étrangers désirant s'établir sur son territoire, Régis Vigneau coordonnera la prise en

charge de ces nouvelles responsabilités, qui entraîneront une période d'activités intenses d'organisation et de consolidation du ministère.

Quelques mois après la victoire du Parti libéral de Robert Bourassa en décembre 1985, Régis Vigneau est nommé sous-ministre en titre du ministère. Or ce n'est un secret pour personne qu'il est d'allégeance péquiste. C'est dire à quel point ses connaissances et habiletés étaient reconnues de tous, peu importe leurs positions sur l'échiquier politique. Il ne sera remplacé que trois ans plus tard, dans la foulée des changements qu'apportera pour le ministère l'accord du lac Meech.

Régis était intelligent et, servi par sa facilité de parole et la passion qu'il y mettait, doué d'un fort pouvoir de persuasion. Ce qui faisait de lui un habile négociateur et un fameux conteur.

Il était également très humain. C'est une qualité qui l'a plusieurs fois guidé dans les actions et politiques ministérielles, notamment lors de la régularisation en 1980 de plus de 4000 Haïtiens se trouvant en situation illégale et souvent précaire au Québec; ou encore dans le cas du *Hai Hong*, ce cargo insalubre transportant 2500 réfugiés vietnamiens dont personne ne voulait, alors que le Québec fut le premier à annoncer qu'il en accepterait 200. Il est vrai qu'en cette matière, le prêtre-ministre de l'Immigration de l'époque, Jacques Couture, lui montrait la voie.

20 ans après avoir quitté le ministère, Régis prenait encore la plume pour adresser une lettre publique au Premier Ministre Jean Charest en faveur d'Haïtiens rescapés du séisme de 2010 et ayant des attaches au Québec.

Après un passage à la Ville de Montréal, Régis Vigneau sera un pilier fondateur de Montréal International, organisme voué à l'attraction d'investissements, d'organisations internationales et de talents étrangers, à une époque où cette notion n'était pas encore à la mode. Il partira à la retraite en 2006, après dix ans comme vice-président exécutif et secrétaire corporatif de Montréal International.

Voilà ! Ces quelques lignes en hommage à Régis Vigneau, qui a été mon patron à diverses époques de ma vie professionnelle, et aussi mon ami.

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 – Dawn Edlund; Vice-President – Anne Arnott; Treasurer – Raph Girard; Secretary – Robert Orr; Editor – Diane Burrows; Past-President Michael Molloy Members at large - Brian Casey, Roy Christensen, Valerie de Montigny, Charlene Elgee, Kurt Jensen, Gerry Maffre (Communications), Ian Rankin, and Robert Shalka Member emeritus - J.B. "Joe" Bissett IRCC Representative - Vacant Webmaster: Winnerjit Rathor</p>
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