



The Yugoslav Movement to Canada, 1990-1995

Brian Casey

Brian Casey was the Immigration program manager at the Canadian embassy in Belgrade from 1990 to 1995—from before the break-up of Yugoslavia until after the Dayton Accord, which brought the conflict to a close.

I was posted to Belgrade in September 1990. It seemed like an ideal posting: it was a medium-sized program; it had been my first posting, from 1973 to 1976; I was fluent in Serbian; and I had many pleasant memories of the place. I had no idea what I was getting into. I had heard of this character Milosevic and knew that the country was experiencing some political and economic difficulties, but I thought that the Yugoslavs would muddle through as they usually did. At the same time, as an immigration foreign service officer, I dreamed of one day handling a big refugee movement, of following in the footsteps of Roger St. Vincent, who managed the movement of Asian refugees from Uganda in the 1970s, and Mike Molloy, Al Lukie, Murray Oppertshauser and many others who managed the movement of Indochinese refugees in the 1980s. I never expected that I'd get my chance in Yugoslavia.

As it turned out, between 1990 and 1995 I was heavily involved in the movement of some 30,000 people to Canada. Almost 20,000 more became permanent residents between 1996 and 1999. The numbers from the region were probably greater because the early 1990s averaged 16,700 stateless persons a year, of whom many could have been Yugoslavs. It was a significant movement by any measure.

Year	Number of Visas
1990	1,987
1991	1,832
1992	3,592
1993	9,137
1994	6,977
1995	6,829
1996	5,193
1997	4,265
1998	4,688
1999	4,462
Total	48,962

After 1993 roughly half were Convention refugees, another 40 percent were independent applicants, and the rest were members of the family class. In the early 1990s, Belgrade was the main processing office for Yugoslavs, processing more than two thirds of the Convention refugee and Special Measures program visas issued between 1990 and 1995, and an even greater proportion of the family class and independent category visas. Later in the 1990s, the Vienna office matched Belgrade's 40 percent, and the rest were processed by other European posts, mostly Budapest and Bonn. The statistics in the accompanying table are from official Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada permanent resident landings by country of last permanent residence, with the figures for Yugoslavia and each successor state combined.

I don't pretend in this article to tell the story of how Yugoslavia broke up; that has already been done by competent writers and academics. For those who want some background, I recommend the British writer Misha Glenny, and Laura Silber and Allan Little's *The Death of Yugoslavia*. Here, I just want to tell the story of how a small group of people at the Immigration section of the Canadian embassy in Belgrade made a difference in the lives of a lot of present-day Canadians from that part of the world. The stories that I relate are true, but I have changed the names of the Yugoslavs or used only their first names to protect their privacy. I did not have space to acknowledge everybody, but I hope they will be recognizable to former colleagues.

Contents

The Yugoslav Movement to Canada, 1990-1995	Brian Casey	1
Carmen et César, partie II	Christian Labelle	6
The Origins and Evolution of Humanitarian and Compassionate Admission of Immigrants	Robert Vineberg	9
Moskva, the Genesis of an Immigration Office	Jacques Beaulne	12
Book Review: <i>Great Canadian Expectations</i>	Charlene Elgee	15
British Home Children—the Latest Word		16
The "Girl", the "Boys", and the Book	Gail Devlin	16

Belgrade, 1990-1992

Life in Belgrade retained a veneer of normalcy even as Yugoslavia started to disintegrate. In early 1991 I arranged the visit of Health and Welfare Canada officials who were negotiating a bilateral social security agreement with Yugoslavia. Everything proceeded normally, and the Canadians left confident that a new agreement would soon be signed. I made regular reports on what was called "consular contingency planning". We didn't know what was going to happen, but looking back we had a good reading of the local situation. By all accounts, our reports were appreciated by policy makers in Ottawa.

In early 1991, together with the Health and Welfare doctor in Vienna, I visited all the designated medical practitioners in Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia. Travel by car was still possible anywhere in Yugoslavia. We went to Ljubljana, Rijeka and Osijek, and then south to Dubrovnik. On the day we left Dubrovnik, I went for what I feared would be a final swim in the Adriatic. By then it was clear that Yugoslavia was descending into a bloody civil war, and I wasn't sure when I would make it back to that beautiful city.

We arrived in Sarajevo on a holiday weekend—a Muslim holiday I think it was, though that didn't matter much to natives of Sarajevo; they celebrated together whether it was their holiday or their neighbour's. We wandered around after dinner, talking to people, sampling free beer from the wagons in the city squares, and I wondered whether it was possible that these people of different ethnic backgrounds who seemed to be living happily together could escape the conflagration that I saw coming. Our next stop was Zenica, a mixed Muslim-majority, Serbian-minority city in northern Bosnia. From there we returned to Belgrade. A few years later, as I was going through refugee applications, I noticed an application from a doctor from Zenica: it was our former designated medical practitioner, who had become a refugee.



Yugoslavia, 1990 (Courtesy Theodora Maps)

I spent a good deal of time in Zagreb in 1991 and 1992, attending to consular matters (an Immigration responsibility in those days) and helping to set up a functioning Canadian government office at what had previously been a small honorary consulate. I also delivered visa services to people affected by the conflict that had now started in those parts of Croatia with a mixed Serbian and Croatian, or mostly Serbian, population. The people I saw in Zagreb were mostly Croats who had been driven from their homes by their Serbian neighbours in areas where Croats were in the minority or less militarily powerful. In Belgrade, I had become used to dealing with Serbian victims of Croatian nationalism but saw that it could easily cut the other way. The Yugoslav army gradually swung toward the Serbian side, as Yugoslav political leaders talked about how their country could be reorganized but never came close to a practical solution. Nationalists became more and more powerful in Croatia, and Serbia came to be dominated by politicians who advocated a leading role for Serbia in what remained of the Yugoslav federation.

In 1991 and 1992 our Belgrade office had no allocation for government-sponsored refugees from the former Yugoslavia. The only choice for the increasing number of people who showed up at our office every day was the independent category. We used that as much as possible for applicants who became *de facto* refugees in the time it took to process them. We used positive discretion when they fell a little short on points, and we relaxed the financial criteria when they had some funding but not the level that was formally required. By the early months of 1993, we were issuing over 250 independent category visas a month, about a quarter of them to natives of Bosnia and Hercegovina or Croatia who would have had some sort of refugee claim. At the same time we slowly began to expand our humanitarian program, and I'll explain that later.

An Immigration program managers' conference was held in Ottawa in April 1992. I reported on the deteriorating situation in Yugoslavia and explained that we were going to need significant refugee numbers to respond to the applications we were already seeing. Our Assistant Deputy Minister Raphael Girard arranged a one-hour private meeting for me with Deputy Minister Peter Harder. I stated that our refugee applicants were from all Yugoslav ethnic groups, often in mixed marriages, and they refused to take up arms against the neighbors with whom they had lived peacefully all their lives. I didn't get any promises—it was too early for that—but I think I persuaded him and other senior managers that we knew

what we were doing and would react appropriately as the situation evolved. As with all developing refugee situations, it was a matter of making sure resources were in place and staff trained and NHQ managers were fully informed of what was taking place on the ground.

The Former Yugoslavia Special Measures, 1992

Since the beginning of the conflict, we had been relaxing the criteria for Yugoslavs whose Canadian relatives contacted our office. We sent two major reporting telexes to the External Affairs geographic bureau, copied to senior managers at Employment and Immigration and other missions involved in the issue (ZLIM6248 of 29 August 1991 entitled "Yugo Crisis—Immigration and Refugee Issues" and QLIM0222 of 23 July 1992 entitled "Refugee Situation in Former Yugoslavia"). In late July 1992, the Former Yugoslavia Special Measures were announced, providing relaxed immigration criteria for what had been known as assisted relatives. In addition, anybody in Canada who had made a refugee claim was given the opportunity to make an immediate application for permanent residence.

The number of applicants in all lines of business in Belgrade increased steadily from 1992 on, with well-qualified independent category applicants looking to migration as the only way to escape the situation. Our humanitarian programs began with the movement of several hundred members of the Sarajevo Jewish community to Canada under group sponsorship by the Jewish Immigrant Aid Services. Like many other natives of Sarajevo, they got out of the city while it was still possible. After June Sarajevo endured a siege by Serbian forces that lasted three years and four months.

The special measures program provided us with the means to help relatives of Canadian residents. By June 1995 we in Belgrade had processed 2,022 cases involving 4,074 people. Vienna issued another 1,386 visas, Budapest 312, and other missions 140, for a total of 5,952 visas. These were not big numbers for a program that had originally been expected to attract 10,000 applicants, but we responded to the demand there was and expedited processing when it was required. These cases sometimes required intensive interviews when the applicants were males of military age who had been involved in the war in Bosnia. One case resulted in our first formal refusal on the basis of war crimes; it was later used by the War Crimes Unit at headquarters to explain how these cases should be handled. The special measures program was extended into the late 1990s. I believe the final total for persons processed overseas would have come close to the original 10,000-person estimate.

Bosnian Ex-Detainees

In November 1992, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) made an appeal to the international community to assist 5,000 Bosnians whose release from camps in Bosnia and Hercegovina had been negotiated by the International Red Cross. In December, the UNHCR asked our office to assist a hundred Bosnians who had been released from prison camps in southern Bosnia and ended up in Plav, Montenegro, in our territory of responsibility. Plav was in an undeveloped area deep in the interior. Deputy Program Manager Michel Dupuis went there to organize the processing, assisted by Vesna, our locally engaged refugee program coordinator. It took them two weeks of very hard work in difficult conditions to complete the selection interviews and set up medical exams for the whole group. The refugees moved to Canada in early 1993 and settled very successfully.

A separate group of ex-detainees was moved to Karlovac, near Zagreb in Croatia. A team (three visa officers, a Health and Welfare Canada official for medical screening, and a Quebec Immigration officer) was sent from Canada. In one month, it processed 523 persons for resettlement in Canada. The Serbian detention camps in Bosnia were widely condemned. The Bosnian Serbs called them prisoner-of-war camps, but the international press exposed them as little more than concentration camps for the male victims of their ethnic cleansing campaigns. Sanctions on Serbia were increased, but the Bosnian Serb army was by now well entrenched and the war dragged on for several more years. Although the Bosnian Serbs were widely recognized by international organizations and The Hague Tribunal as the major perpetrators of war crimes and atrocities, the Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims were not blameless in this regard, and the biggest single ethnic cleansing exercise of the whole conflict was the expulsion of over 200,000 Serbs from Krajina by the Croatian army in 1995.

Mixed Marriages

People who survived in mixed marriages in this era are to be admired. One partner was usually treated as a traitor by his or her ethnic group. The other—usually the one on the wrong side of the ethnic divide—suffered even more. But some families persevered and refused to participate in a war against the people who, until yesterday, had been their neighbours. This principled view was not popular in communities consumed by nationalist emotions. Often individuals were left with a choice of participating or giving up their careers and moving to another country. Serbia was not much of a choice, even for ethnic Serbs from Bosnia or Croatia. It was impoverished by international sanctions; nationalist emotions were rampant; and the threat of forced mobilization and return to Croatia or Bosnia hung over all males. Many mixed marriages split up under the societal pressures. It took a strong, very determined couple to keep marriages and families together.

I recall one couple, Vesna, a Serb, and Munir, a Muslim, whom I met in 1992. They had lived through the ethnic cleansing of the Muslim population in northern Bosnia. Munir was repeatedly picked up and imprisoned by police or militia units. Each time Vesna would go to the prison and somehow get him out. But the persecution continued and included more and more beatings and torture. Finally Vesna managed to obtain a pair of Yugoslav passports. They made their way out of Bosnia to Belgrade through what was known in those days as “the corridor”. They came directly to the embassy and were immediately referred for interview by our reception staff. Munir was shaking uncontrollably, a clear victim of torture. I accepted them for processing as government-sponsored refugees and referred them to medicals and language classes. Three months later they were ready to travel to Canada. They came to say goodbye and thank us, and I had a good chat with them. Munir had recovered his physical health and talked excitedly about their future life in Canada. The language teacher later told me that they had been excellent students and very popular with their classmates, who had bought a cake for them on their last day in class.

Years later, when I was back in Ottawa, I heard from a Citizenship officer who was processing their citizenship applications. Munir wanted to change the Serbian name he used on his passport when he was landed back to his Muslim name. He had given my name as a reference, and I vouched for him. We knew that Muslim applicants often came into Serbia on false passports, and as nothing else was available at the time, we mostly looked the other way when it came time for them to travel to Canada.

Refugee Selection

Ordinarily the UNHCR handles the first step in the refugee selection process, referring cases in need of resettlement to the nearest Canadian visa office. In Yugoslavia, they had to concentrate their resources on protection, on making sure the refugees were sheltered, fed, and safe from violence. They were grateful when we volunteered to undertake the reception and selection of refugees seeking resettlement in Canada. We had a good facility in our building, with easy access for refugees, and we were prepared, with support from our headquarters in Ottawa, to devote our resources to refugee resettlement. The needs were there, and we responded as Canada often does in these situations. We were the major resettlement country working in Belgrade and operated a program open to all ethnic groups, which was greatly appreciated by people who were fleeing a situation where their ethnicity determined their fate.



The author reviewing PAQs, Belgrade

The key to our success was the Preliminary Application Questionnaire (PAQ). We had always used PAQs for independent category applicants. It was well known that the first step in immigrating to Canada was either to get a relative to sponsor you or to submit a PAQ to our embassy. When the number of refugees started to grow significantly in 1992, we simply added a page to our regular PAQ, asking where they were from, why they had left, and why they wanted to go to Canada. The applicant had to complete it in Serbo-Croatian, and preferably by hand. It was a kind of Canadian values screening in reverse, with applicants explaining why they had chosen Canada as the place where their personal values as human beings could best be realized.

I was the only Serbo-Croatian speaker on the Canadian staff, and I didn't want the locally engaged staff involved in the selection of Convention refugees—

not because they couldn't do it, but because they had lots of other things to do. Experience has taught Immigration officers to keep refugee selection in the hands of Canadians who are familiar with the situation on the ground and know the people with whom they are dealing. As a result, every evening I would take home several hundred questionnaires for screening. The acceptance rate was between five and twenty percent because we had a limited quota for government-sponsored refugees, especially in the beginning. Applicants whose PAQ was accepted received forms for the formal application process. This staging kept us from being overwhelmed and allowed us to concentrate our resources on processing the greatest possible number of applicants.

The successful applicants were, first of all, those who had the best refugee cases and who had clearly suffered persecution because of their political beliefs or ethnic backgrounds and had no possibility of a local solution. Most applicants met this description to a degree, but anybody involved in selecting refugees in the field knows that a relatively small number of cases really stand out, such as victims of torture or violence, women at risk, and families in danger.

The next deciding factor was the potential for resettlement, and we took a close look at language ability, education, employment qualifications, and personal qualities. At the same time, we tried to screen out anybody who might have participated in the war in any way.

Perhaps most importantly of all, with our PAQ selection system, we were getting applicants who had made a conscious decision that Canada was the place where they wanted to spend their future. The PAQ was only one page long, but people could explain their situation in as much detail as they wished, and they were often eloquent in doing so.

We also developed direct referral mechanisms with trusted individuals in the local Bosnian Muslim (the Belgrade Mufti, an individual I admired greatly) and Croatian (Caritas) communities. PAQs submitted through these contacts were processed right away. We accepted as many as we could, and I lobbied NHQ to give us more places in the refugee allocation.

In 1992 and 1993, the economy in Serbia was collapsing under the weight of UN sanctions; inflation was out of control; criminals were being integrated into the power structure; and corruption was growing at all levels of society. The politics of nationalism and his corrupt-but-efficient party apparatus kept Milosevic in power. Refugee PAQ applications increased to a steady 300 to 500 every day. Dealing with the sheer number of applications was always a challenge, but we managed. We tried to convince applicants that they should not use local facilitators or unlicensed consultants but just come to the embassy and explain their situation themselves instead of giving money to third parties who really could do nothing for them. In addition to putting up signs in our waiting room, we went to local television, radio and newspapers to spread the message. An example of the coverage we were able to get was in the 6 July 1994 edition of *Politika*, the leading Belgrade daily newspaper under the headline "Filling out a form – 2,500 German marks". *Ed. Note: This is the first of two parts.*

**Annual General Meeting
Thursday 26 October 2017**

The 2017 CIHS annual general meeting will be held at
St. Anthony's Soccer Club
523 St. Anthony Street, Ottawa

St. Anthony Street runs off Preston immediately north of the Highway 417 overpass. The club is wheelchair accessible and has free parking.

A cash bar will be open at 6:00 pm, and the meeting will come to order at 7:00 pm.

The meeting will be accompanied by an excellent Italian buffet at the cost of \$40. Students are particularly welcome and pay half price.

Guest speaker to be announced.

We are looking forward to greeting new members and old and extend a special invitation to any members from outside the national capital region who happen to be in Ottawa. We will be celebrating the publishing of *Running on Empty: Canada and the Indochinese Refugee Movement 1975-1980*, the Society's most important accomplishment to date. Copies of the book will be available at a special member's price.

Please RSVP rgirard09@gmail.com or call 613-241-0166.

Upcoming Conference in Ottawa

Flight to Freedom: Canadian Refugee Experiences and Policies since 1957 will be held 21 to 23 October 2017. Please note that the venue has been changed to Saint Paul University.

Carmen et César

Christian Labelle

Note de l'éditeur : Nous reprenons ici le récit commencé dans le Bulletin 81 de l'histoire de Carmen Quintana, brûlée vive par des soldats chiliens durant la dictature du général Pinochet et des circonstances dramatiques entourant sa venue au Canada en 1986.

Christian Labelle est diplômé en Relations Industrielles et en Économie. Il a joint le service extérieur du ministère de la Main-d'œuvre et de l'immigration en 1972. Il a eu des affectations à Beyrouth, Paris, Lisbonne, Santiago, Le Caire, et Washington.

C'était un dimanche. Nous regardions tranquillement la télévision à la maison lorsqu'un bulletin spécial nous annonça qu'une tentative d'assassinat venait d'être commise à l'endroit du président du pays, le général Pinochet. L'incident s'était déroulé dans le « Cajon del Maipo » [Maipo Gorge], une zone touristique située au sud-est de Santiago, au pied des Andes. Le général se déplaçait toujours par convoi de cinq voitures Mercedes blindées, sous bonne escorte des services de sécurité. Il ne voyageait jamais dans la même voiture pour déjouer les tentatives d'attentat. Le convoi avait été attaqué par un groupe d'hommes armés de lance-roquettes. Il y eut cinq roquettes de tirées, une pour chaque voiture blindée. Trois des roquettes ont explosé, tuant net les occupants de ces voitures. Deux n'ont pas explosé. Le général Pinochet se trouvait dans une de ces deux voitures et il s'en est tiré avec seulement une légère blessure à la main. Tout le pays était sous le choc.



Augusto Pinochet après l'attentat du 7 septembre 1986

Le lendemain, je fus accueilli au bureau par ma collègue Merle qui me dit d'une voix inquiète: -C'est César. Elle me tendit le journal « El Mercurio » où on pouvait lire en première page, écrit en lettres énormes : « Le cerveau de l'attentat est un employé de l'ambassade du Canada ».

Même si les assaillants avaient réussi à prendre la fuite, les services de sécurité chiliens, qui étaient d'une efficacité redoutable, avaient rapidement retrouvé une des voitures qui avaient été utilisées par les assaillants et la maison d'où l'attentat avait été organisé. C'est ainsi qu'ils ont pu découvrir que l'individu qui avait loué les voitures et la maison s'appelait César Bunster et qu'il avait présenté au moment de la location un document indiquant qu'il était un employé de l'ambassade du Canada. Il devint immédiatement l'homme sans doute le plus recherché de l'histoire du Chili, mort ou vif. Les représailles contre ceux qui étaient soupçonnés être complices furent immédiates et brutales. Durant la nuit suivant la tentative d'assassinat quatre personnes furent assassinées par des agents de la Central Nacional de informaciones, [les services secrets chiliens](#). L'état d'urgence fut décrété et plusieurs opposants connus furent emprisonnés, y compris Ricardo Lagos, qui devint plus tard président du Chili après le départ de Pinochet.



César Bunster en 1986

César Bunster était un jeune homme que nous avions embauché quelques semaines auparavant, mais qui n'était resté que quelques jours à notre emploi. Nous l'avions embauché pour remplacer le portier de l'ambassade qui avait abruptement démissionné pour aller travailler comme instructeur de ski. L'ambassade était située au sixième étage d'un édifice à bureaux dans le centre-ville de Santiago. Les visiteurs à l'ambassade étaient admis, après vérification de leur identité et des raisons de leur visite, par le portier, qui faisait coulisser une grille de métal pour les laisser entrer. Comme nous étions en pleine période de pointe pour les demandes de visas de visiteurs, il nous avait fallu lui trouver rapidement un remplaçant. On nous avait recommandé deux candidats possibles que nous avions interviewés: un peintre en bâtiment qui ne parlait que très peu l'anglais et César Bunster, qui parlait un excellent anglais et qui était un parent éloigné d'un constructeur qui faisait des travaux de rénovation à l'ambassade à ce moment-là. C'est lui que nous avions embauché. Environ une dizaine de jours après avoir commencé à travailler, il nous avisa qu'il avait des difficultés et qu'il devait disparaître pour un certain temps. Il ne pouvait donc plus continuer à travailler pour nous.

La nouvelle de son implication dans l'attentat nous a tous estomaqués, et ce n'est qu'au fil des jours suivants que nous avons mieux compris ce qui s'était passé. Ce que nous avons découvert, c'était que le jour même où il nous annonça son départ, il avait demandé et obtenu une lettre de l'administration confirmant qu'il était un employé de l'ambassade, soit disant pour pouvoir ouvrir un compte de banque. C'est cette lettre qui lui a servi pour louer les voitures et la maison utilisées pour l'attentat contre le général Pinochet.

César avait une Maîtrise en Sociologie de l'Université de Birmingham en Angleterre. Lors de l'entrevue d'embauche nous lui avons fait valoir qu'il était beaucoup trop qualifié pour un emploi de portier, mais il nous avait répondu qu'il était un « retornado » [un exilé chilien revenu au pays] et qu'à ce titre il lui était très difficile de trouver du travail. Il avait aussi ajouté que le salaire offert par l'ambassade était très bon. Sur ce plan, il avait raison. (À titre d'anecdote, un des policiers qui est venu nous rencontrer dans le cadre de l'enquête sur la tentative d'assassinat nous a demandé discrètement si nous pouvions l'embaucher comme portier après avoir appris le montant du salaire versé par l'ambassade pour ce poste qui pourtant correspondait au salaire minimum canadien.)

Nous avons également appris que son père, Alvaro Bunster Briceño, avait été nommé ambassadeur du Chili à Londres par le président Allende. Lors du coup d'état, l'attaché militaire chilien aurait apparemment fait irruption dans le bureau de l'ambassadeur en lui apprenant qu'un coup d'état militaire venait d'avoir lieu au Chili et que désormais c'était lui qui était en charge à l'ambassade. L'ambassadeur aurait alors déclaré qu'il n'en était pas question, car c'était lui qui était accrédité comme ambassadeur et il aurait même menacé le militaire en question de le faire arrêter par la police britannique. Nous ignorons si cela a effectivement eu lieu, mais nous savons que l'ambassadeur Bunster a par la suite dû quitter ses fonctions et a demandé l'asile en Grande-Bretagne.



Veronica de Negri holds a picture of her son Rodrigo Rojas at a march in Washington, D.C., 1986. Another son, Pablo, is to her right. (Courtesy *The Washington Post*)

L'implication involontaire de notre ambassade dans cette crise a eu un impact immédiat. Il nous a fallu démentir formellement auprès du gouvernement et de la presse quelque responsabilité que ce soit en rapport avec l'attentat. Nous avons aussi accueilli la veuve du [journaliste José Carrasco](#), une des personnes assassinées par les militaires en représailles à cet attentat. Elle avait une sœur qui résidait au Canada. Son cas fut traité de façon expéditive et, le lendemain, elle s'envolait vers Toronto.

Ceci amenait également une complication supplémentaire importante au départ de Carmen Quintana vers le Canada. Il fallait absolument qu'elle parte le plus rapidement possible afin d'éviter qu'elle ne soit associée d'une quelconque façon à la tentative d'assassinat contre le Général Pinochet et que cela l'expose encore plus à des représailles de la part de ceux qui voulaient venger la tentative d'assassinat. Le départ pour la date déjà prévue fut maintenu.

Nous avons donc misé sur le fait que le Chili, malgré les excès de la dictature, était tout de même un pays où la tradition du respect des fonctions diplomatiques était encore très ancrée. Il fut convenu que j'accompagnerais Carmen à partir de l'hôpital jusqu'à ce qu'elle soit installée à bord de l'avion, et ceci, avec ma voiture personnelle, car elle portait des plaques d'immatriculation du Corps Diplomatique. C'était aussi la voiture que je savais le mieux conduire. Nous avons écarté l'idée d'utiliser une des voitures de l'ambassade avec un chauffeur, car nous ne voulions pas prendre de chance et courir le risque d'être éloigné de l'ambulance qui transporterait Carmen. Nous ne voulions pas non plus exposer un de nos chauffeurs à des représailles possibles par la suite.

Le 12 septembre je me rendis donc à l'hôpital avec ma voiture à bord de laquelle il y avait la mère de Carmen et sa sœur. La consigne était que je devais suivre l'ambulance immédiatement derrière, le plus près possible, afin d'éviter qu'une autre voiture s'immisce entre l'ambulance et la mienne, ce qui signifierait la fin de la protection rapprochée que je pouvais offrir. Le convoi se mit donc en branle et l'ambulance quitta l'hôpital en faisant hurler sa sirène. Rapidement, elle prit de la vitesse et nous roulions à plus de 100 kilomètres à l'heure dans les rues de Santiago. Il y avait entre autres plusieurs journalistes et photographes qui étaient venus pour couvrir l'événement. Comme prévu, il y eut plusieurs tentatives pour s'insérer entre l'ambulance et ma voiture, mais à chaque fois je me rapprochais de l'ambulance pour empêcher que cela se produise. Parfois je me trouvais à moins d'un mètre de l'ambulance, et tout ça, à une vitesse folle. Je me sentais comme un pilote de Formule 1 dans une course de grand prix tellement j'avais les mains crispées sur le volant !

Finalement, le convoi arriva à l'aéroport et, comme convenu, put se rendre jusqu'au pied de l'avion. Là, quatre jeunes et robustes policiers du service de l'aéroport prirent la civière et la montèrent délicatement à bord de l'avion et l'installèrent sur la rangée de fauteuils rabattus. Le directeur de la Police de l'Aéroport avait bien tenu parole. Le docteur Villégas s'installa dans le siège juste à côté de Carmen. Après m'être assuré que tout était en ordre avec l'équipage et que le

reste de la famille était à bord et leur avoir souhaité bonne chance à tous, je sortis de l'avion pour qu'il puisse partir. L'avion décolla, et je restai là à l'observer jusqu'à ce qu'il ne fût plus qu'un petit point dans le ciel, pour bien m'assurer que rien d'imprévu n'arrive.

Ce n'est que deux ans plus tard que je revis Carmen. Elle avait décidé de revenir au Chili pour rencontrer le Pape Jean-Paul II, qui venait en visite officielle au Chili, et surtout, pour militer contre le Général Pinochet lors du plébiscite de 1989 par lequel il demandait à la population de rester 10 années de plus au pouvoir, plébiscite qu'il a d'ailleurs perdu. Après sa guérison, grâce, entre autres, aux soins du docteur Papillon de l'hôpital Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal, Carmen entreprit de dénoncer sur toutes les tribunes possibles les abus et violations des droits de la personne commis par le régime Pinochet. Elle a même prononcé un discours à cet effet aux Nations Unies.



Carmen Quintana et l'auteur au Musée canadien pour les droits de la personne, Winnipeg, Novembre 2016

Je ne l'ai plus revue jusqu'à tout récemment, soit 27 ans plus tard. J'ai pu reprendre contact avec elle grâce à une journaliste de *La Presse* qui avait écrit [un article sur elle](#). Cet article parlait du combat qu'elle mène encore pour la défense des droits de la personne et du devoir de se souvenir.

Après son retour au Chili en 1989, elle a décidé d'y rester. Elle a repris ses études et a obtenu une Maîtrise en Psychologie. Elle s'est mariée et a eu trois enfants. Elle a décidé de revenir vivre au Canada où une partie de sa famille vit toujours. Pour cela elle a dû refaire une demande d'immigration comme travailleur qualifié. Elle est revenue au Canada en 2011 et est maintenant citoyenne canadienne. Elle poursuit ses études de Doctorat en psychologie à l'Université de Montréal. Elle a également été personnellement nommée comme Attachée Scientifique à l'ambassade du Chili au Canada par la présidente actuelle du Chili, Michelle Bachelet. Elle s'occupe de la

promotion du Musée des Droits de la Personne, qui est en fait une exposition itinérante qui a déjà été présentée dans quelques villes du Canada.

Devant la pression internationale et celle de la population du Chili, le régime annonça qu'une enquête interne de l'armée serait menée pour faire la lumière sur l'incident au cours duquel Carmen Quintana et Rodrigo Rojas avaient été brûlés. L'enquête fut menée par un Juge d'instruction de l'armée, le Colonel Torres. Les soldats interrogés affirmèrent que les deux adolescents s'étaient accidentellement immolés en laissant tomber un cocktail Molotov. Tous racontèrent la même version. Le militaire responsable de la patrouille qui l'a brûlée vive, le Lieutenant Pedro Fernández Dittus, n'a été condamné qu'à 600 jours de prison pour avoir négligé de demander des soins médicaux pour les deux jeunes brûlés.

Récemment, un des soldats de cette patrouille a décidé de révéler la vérité sur ce qui s'était passé et sur le camouflage orchestré par l'armée pour se disculper. Ils avaient tous reçu l'instruction de témoigner selon la [version établie par l'armée](#). L'enquête a été rouverte, et Carmen est retournée au Chili en août 2015 pour témoigner. Il est donc possible que maintenant, près de 30 ans plus tard, [justice soit enfin rendue](#).

Le courage et la détermination démontrés par Carmen Quintana suite à la tragédie qui a bouleversé sa vie et son engagement profond à promouvoir le respect des droits de la personne ne peuvent que susciter l'admiration. Je me sens privilégié de l'avoir connue.

Quant à [César Bunster](#), l'histoire raconte qu'il quitta le Chili le jour même de l'attentat contre Pinochet, mais qu'il revint au Chili quelque temps plus tard. Il vécut dans la clandestinité durant plusieurs années sous l'identité de son demi-frère, travaillant comme traducteur. Il aurait même travaillé comme traducteur pour les ambassades britanniques, américaine et...canadienne ! En janvier 2004, se prévalant des dispositions de la prescription légale pour toute personne n'ayant pas été formellement accusé d'un crime, il put sortir de la clandestinité et recommencer une vie normale. Il a été élu comme conseiller municipal de Puente Alto en 2012, poste qu'il a occupé jusqu'à décembre 2016.



César Bunster en 2014

Note de l'auteur : Je tiens à remercier tout particulièrement ma collègue Merle Bollick dont l'aide précieuse m'a été d'un grand secours et a considérablement aidé au succès de cette opération.

The Origins and Evolution of Humanitarian and Compassionate Admission of Immigrants to Canada: A Short Overview

Robert Vineberg

*Robert Vineberg's career with the federal public service spanned 35 years, most of which was with the Immigration program. He joined the Immigration foreign service in 1973, served abroad, worked at national headquarters, and concluded his career as regional director general, Prairies and Northern Territories Region. Since retirement he has written several scholarly articles and book chapters on immigration policy, as well as a book on the history of immigrant settlement in Canada, *Responding to Immigrants' Settlement Needs: The Canadian Experience*.*

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Introduction

The option of admitting people to Canada notwithstanding their inadmissibility has always existed in some form, although it was only in the last 50 years or so that the term "humanitarian and compassionate" (H&C) came into common use for it. This article provides a brief overview of the use of H&C as well as visa officers' "discretion" during the past 50 years; it does not specifically address pre-removal H&C decisions, but the principles are similar.

Humanitarian and Compassionate Provisions

Originally, the authority to override the provisions of the *Immigration Act and Regulations* rested only with the Governor in Council through orders-in-council (O-in-C). If someone were found inadmissible for reasons of not meeting selection criteria, proscribed medical conditions, criminal convictions or security concerns, an order-in-council could overcome the inadmissibility, permitting an otherwise inadmissible person to come into Canada or allowing someone in Canada as a temporary resident or without status to obtain permanent resident status. In some cases where there was an urgent need to get to Canada, a special "Minister's Permit" was first issued to allow the person to come forward to Canada. The earliest reference to a Minister's Permit appears to be in s.4 of the 1910 *Immigration Act* (9-10 Edward VII, Chap. 27). Subsequent to admission by a Minister's Permit, an order-in-council would be obtained to allow landing. S. 81 of the same act provided the Governor in Council with the authority to "make orders and regulations" consistent with the intent of the act.

By the time of the 1952 *Immigration Act* (Chapter 325, RSC, 1952), the process had become more formalized, and s. 9, stated that:

The Minister may, notwithstanding any provision of the Act, authorize the landing as an immigrant of any person who
(b) has, since the issue of such permit, resided in Canada for at least ten years.

Permit holders had to renew their permit annually, and only after 10 years in Canada could they apply for permanent residence without the need for an O-in-C. This delayed their integration and their ability to apply for citizenship.

By the 1970s, thousands of admissions were being made by O-in-C. In order not to inconvenience Cabinet with individual requests, lists of O-in-C applications would be prepared and submitted to the Governor-in-Council when 100 or so cases had accumulated.

The 1976 *Immigration Act* (1976-77, c. 52), which came into force in 1978, reduced the waiting period for permit holders to apply for permanent residence to five years (s. 38(2)). It also provided in s.115(2) that:

The Governor in Council may by regulation exempt any person from any regulation made under subsection (1)¹ or otherwise facilitate the admission of any person where the Governor in Council is satisfied that the person should be exempted from such regulation or his admission should be facilitated for reasons of public policy or due to the existence of compassionate or humanitarian considerations.

As the 1976 Act did away with the specific medical prohibitions of earlier acts and left to the regulations the conditions whereby a person would be considered a danger to public health or cause excessive demand on the health system (s.115(1)(l)), an O-in-C could then be used to overcome medical inadmissibility as well as failure to meet selection criteria. Criminal and security inadmissibility as defined in s.19 could not be overcome by an O-in-C, and for such cases a Minister's Permit was still required unless, in the case of criminal inadmissibility only, enough time had elapsed since the

conviction and the applicant was eligible for and had obtained a certificate of “criminal rehabilitation”. When the need to travel to Canada was not urgent, O-in-C applications were processed while the applicants remained abroad, allowing them to be landed on arrival and, therefore, not have to wait on a Minister’s Permit for the five-year period prior to becoming a permanent resident.

The first specific authority for H&C without an O-in-C (as opposed to the general discretion given to the Minister) came with the amendment to the *Immigration Regulations* in 1993 (SOR-93-44) wherein s.2.1 was added to the regulations:

The Minister is hereby authorized to exempt any person from any regulation made under subsection 114(1) of the Act or otherwise facilitate the admission to Canada of any person where the Minister is satisfied that the person should be exempted from that regulation or that the person’s admission should be facilitated owing to the existence of compassionate or humanitarian considerations.

This was made possible by an earlier amendment to the *Immigration Act* in 1985 (R.S.C., 1985, c. 1-2):

114. (2) The Governor in Council may, by regulation, authorize the Minister to exempt any person from any regulation made under subsection (1) or otherwise facilitate the admission of any person where the Minister is satisfied that the person should be exempted from that regulation or that the person’s admission should be facilitated owing to the existence of compassionate or humanitarian considerations.

The big steps forward here were that:

1. The Minister rather than the Governor in Council had the authority for H&C and could delegate that authority. For cases overseas that involved relatively straightforward inadmissibility, the Minister delegated to the heads of the visa offices (Immigration program managers). In similar cases in Canada, H&C decision makers could be front-line Immigration officers.² For more serious inadmissibility, such as serious criminality, the delegated officer would be at national headquarters, and in rare cases the Minister would make the decision; and,
2. Once H&C was approved, Immigration officers could issue immigrant visas, rather than Minister’s Permits, so there would no longer be a five-year wait to receive permanent resident status.

Under the current *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)* which came into force in 2002, the provision for H&C was included in the act itself, in s. 25(1):

25 (1) Subject to subsection (1.2), the Minister must, on request of a foreign national in Canada who applies for permanent resident status and who is inadmissible—other than under section 34, 35 or 37—or who does not meet the requirements of this Act, and may, on request of a foreign national outside Canada—other than a foreign national who is inadmissible under section 34, 35 or 37—who applies for a permanent resident visa, examine the circumstances concerning the foreign national and may grant the foreign national permanent resident status or an exemption from any applicable criteria or obligations of this Act if the Minister is of the opinion that it is justified by humanitarian and compassionate considerations relating to the foreign national, taking into account the best interests of a child directly affected.

This means that people refused under the normal selection criteria or due to medical or criminality concerns or, in the case of sponsored applicants due to insufficient financial resources of the sponsor, can re-apply under H&C if they have not applied in the first instance for H&C. One drawback is that previously, visa officers on their own initiative could invoke H&C; now an applicant must be aware that the H&C option is available and specifically apply for consideration under that provision.

Visa Officers’ Assessment and the Use of “Discretion”

In the context of H&C being used to overcome inability to meet the statutory prohibitions (health, criminality and security) as described above, it has also been used in other compassionate situations such as the applicant being the last remaining family member outside Canada. However, last remaining family members often only fail to qualify because they do not meet the economic class selection criteria. These situations have offered visa officers the opportunity to consider whether the person is likely to establish successfully notwithstanding the selection criteria, in which case, since 1967, there has been the possibility of using “discretion” to approve an application.

It is also important to consider the operation of the selection system and the decreasing flexibility provided to visa officers by the selection system as it has evolved. In the original points system, in the 1967 *Immigration Regulations*, the pass mark was 50, and officers could apply up to 15 points (out of 100) for personal assessment. Plus, with the approval of

their officer-in-charge, they could “exercise discretion” to approve (or refuse) cases notwithstanding the points total. As a result, a humanitarian or compassionate decision not involving statutory prohibitions could take the form of discretionary approval. Officers also, of course, as noted above, could seek authority from headquarters for a Minister’s Permit or an order-in-council to overcome prohibitions outside of the points system (criminal, security or health inadmissibility). In the 1978 *Immigration Regulations*, the personal assessment was reduced to 10 points, but the provision for use of discretion remained. Section 11(3) of the 1978 regulations stated:

(3) A visa officer may

(a) issue an immigrant visa to an immigrant who is not awarded the number of units of assessment required by section 9 or 10, or

(b) refuse to issue an immigrant visa to an immigrant who is awarded the number of units of assessment required by section 9 or 10,

If, in his opinion, there are good reasons why the number of units of assessment awarded do not reflect the chances of the particular immigrant and his dependents becoming successfully established in Canada and those reasons have been submitted in writing to, and approved by, a senior immigration officer.³

When the *IRPA* was implemented in 2002, the personal assessment was removed from the selection criteria, but there was still a similar provision for the use of discretion in the *IRPA* regulations:

109 (1) Whether or not a foreign national has been awarded the minimum number of required points referred to in subsection 108(1), an officer may substitute for the factors set out in subsection 102(1) their evaluation of the likelihood of the foreign national’s ability to become economically established in Canada if the number of points awarded is not a sufficient indicator of whether the foreign national may become economically established in Canada.

(2) An evaluation made under subsection (1) requires the concurrence of a second officer.⁴

However, given that most applicants for immigration are no longer seen by visa officers, it is increasingly difficult to make use of this provision. In particular, as applications for the Federal Skilled Worker Program go through the Express Entry process, candidates who do not have sufficient points at the outset simply no longer come to the attention of a visa officer. As a result, some applicants who might have been able to qualify through the exercise of discretion respecting their economic prospects in Canada now have to put forward a case based on whatever H&C conditions might exist.

Conclusion

H&C has evolved over the years from an exceptional provision only to be authorized by the Governor in Council to a process defined in the current immigration legislation. In addition to its inherent uses, H&C has also become a way to replace the discretion previously used more often by Immigration or visa officers examining economic class applications (but only insofar as the inadmissibility related to selection criteria as opposed to the statutory prohibitions). Of course, the large majority of H&C decisions continues to be used in cases involving unsuccessful refugee claimants, over-age family members, or persons under removal order.

Notes

¹ The general regulation-making authority in the Act.

² In Canada, the term “Immigration officer” is used, whereas overseas the term “visa officer” is usually used to describe officials charged with carrying out the provisions of the *Immigration Act*. However, visa officers are legally immigration officers and are sometimes described as such.

³ Officers-in-charge of visa offices (and assistant officers-in-charge of large visa offices) were designated as senior immigration officers.

⁴ Who would, in practice, be the Immigration program manager.

As part of the sesquicentennial celebrations, Radio Canada prepared short television spots on four lesser-known issues in Canadian history. The episode about the [British Home Children](#) features Professor Laura Madokoro of McGill University whom the Society knows well. Bulletin 60 carried [Lynda Joyce’s article](#) on this subject.

ERRATA: On page 2 of Bulletin 81, the cutline to the second photograph should have read “Vietnamese volunteers behind the buffet”, and in the article “Canada: Day 1”, the spelling should have been “John Burroughs”.

Moskva, the Genesis of an Immigration Office

Jacques Beaulne

Good News

It was sometime in April 1974, two years after my arrival in Milan, Italy, that the telephone rang in my office at the Canadian consulate general. The call was from Ottawa Headquarters Personnel. The conversation went roughly this way: "... your file shows that some time ago you indicated an interest in being posted to Moscow. Are you still willing to go there?" I was astonished at the offer, but quite pleased. True, I had recorded an interest in a Moscow posting, having studied basic Russian at university, but I was realistic enough to recognize that Canada had no Immigration office there and that it would be some time, if ever, before thought could be given to selecting immigrants in the Soviet Union.

It was explained to me, however, that, after a long period of negotiating between Immigration and External Affairs, the latter was prepared to allow one of our officers into the workers' paradise. "If you want the job, get yourself back here by the end of August. We are signing you up for a 10-month semi-immersion Russian language course at the Canadian Forces Foreign Language School". Overnight my Milan posting was cut in half. No more Italian lessons!

Mauvaise Nouvelle

Les cours de russe allaient bien, ma réinstallation à Ottawa aussi. Je ne pouvais pas demander mieux. Mais moins d'un mois après le début des cours, ce fut le coup de tonnerre. On me convoqua à la Centrale pour m'annoncer que l'ambassadeur Robert Ford à Moscou avait changé d'idée. C'était totalement prématuré, selon lui, d'avoir un agent d'immigration dans son ambassade. Il n'en était plus question et, de toute façon, il avait déjà choisi l'agent qu'il voulait à la place prévue pour un agent d'immigration. Une fois le choc digéré, je me suis mis en tête de convaincre, avec succès, le Service du Personnel de me laisser continuer et compléter le cours, quitte à passer les deux prochaines années à convaincre les Affaires Extérieures et surtout l'ambassadeur Ford que l'affectation d'un agent du service des visas en U.R.S.S. était souhaitable.

Once I had completed the course, I was assigned a deputy director job in the European division at HQ while the powers-that-be continued to lobby External Affairs. In the autumn of 1976, word came that I would be seconded to the consular division early in the new year in preparation for the 1977 posting rotation. Ambassador Ford had given his formal agreement to the two-year posting—but he wanted me there no later than early June! A compressed on-the-job consular course, posting briefings, and a short refresher course in Russian kept me busy for most of that winter and spring until the move.

Bonjour Moscou



Bolshoi Theatre decorated for October Revolution Day (National Day)

L'arrivée de ma famille et moi à Moscou en tant que Conseiller et Consul fut excellente. Pas seulement avons-nous été chaleureusement accueillis par l'ambassadeur, mais aucune remarque pénétrante de sa part ne fit surface pour me rappeler que j'étais un intrus, imposé par Ottawa, dans un sanctuaire longtemps chasse gardée pour «ses» agents. De toute façon j'étais là comme agent des Affaires extérieures et non comme agent d'immigration, me rappela-t-il. Pour faire contraste avec l'accueil, j'avais bien été prévenu que la pièce qui me servirait de bureau n'allait pas m'impressionner. Effectivement, il s'agissait d'un recoin à peine assez grand pour pouvoir y entrer, grâce aux bureau et classeur qui occupaient 95 pour cent de ce cabanon, situé à même le «salon rouge», genre de grande chambre de réception remontant, comme le restant de la chancellerie, à la période pré-révolutionnaire. Mon poste de travail n'était pas dans la zone sécuritaire de la mission ce qui

pouvait rendre mal commode certain éléments de mon travail. Par contre cela facilitait le rapport avec mon personnel de soutien canadien ainsi que nos employés locaux.

The Closet

The *de facto* closet, while warm and cosy, was not user friendly. My Canadian secretary and Canadian consular clerks were located in the visa registry, a long way down the hall. My two locally engaged staff, who were not allowed in the visa registry, were in a third room closer to the "red room". As in all missions, any classified documents were to be left in the secure part of the embassy. When such material arrived, we would be called by the Canadian registry or cipher clerk "to come and read such" correspondence, which would of course be filed in the main secure registry.

Case Files

As I was not officially in Moscow as an Immigration officer, Immigration files as such, namely applications for permanent residence, were handled out of Vienna's Immigration office and were simply known as "family reunification" cases. Without exception all such cases were sponsored by close relatives in Canada. There were no independent applications in the system for the simple reason that Soviet authorities did not allow non-sponsored cases out of the country. The only exception to the Soviet practice of not letting able-bodied citizens emigrate was the movement of Soviet Jews to Israel, providing they first renounced their Soviet citizenship. Ironically, the U.S.S.R. had no diplomatic relations with Israel but would allow their Jewish citizens who had not worked in "sensitive" positions to emigrate there. The Netherlands embassy, which looked after Israeli affairs on instruction from Jerusalem, issued the Israeli visas. Occasionally, the Dutch consul would discreetly inform me that he suspected such and such a person intended to apply at the Canadian embassy in Vienna while transiting Austria, rather than proceeding to Israel.

Cas Consulaires

Du côté consulaire (tel que traditionnellement connu dans le service extérieur du Canada—c'est à dire, l'assistance aux Canadiens), il y avait aussi suffisamment de pain sur la planche pour me garder occupé. Un Canadien en détresse en U.R.S.S. pouvait rarement s'en sortir sans l'intervention de l'ambassade. Les cas que nous avons vécus étaient souvent complexes—hospitalisation, exportation illégale d'objets d'art, décès, emprisonnement, double nationaux incapables d'obtenir un permis de sortie et, bien sûr, passeports perdus. Contrairement aux demandes de visa, le travail consulaire nous demandait souvent d'improviser à la dernière minute à cause d'événements imprévus.

Visitor Visas

The bulk of visa applications were called "official" visitor visa applications. They were all submitted by the Foreign Ministry on behalf of Soviet sport teams, of all levels and disciplines, and their entourage, as well as on behalf of Soviet business persons. The entourage would sometimes contain applicants who were turned down by screening authorities in Ottawa who determined that their presence in Canada was not in our best interest. The refusals rarely caused flack—as if they had been expected! Groups travelling under the care of Soviet tourism agencies such as Sputnik and Intourist constituted the heavy summer work-loads, as did diplomatic visa applications. Any visitor visa, whether private or official, had to wait until Ottawa had completed the necessary screening.

In terms of volume, private visitors came next. They usually consisted of elderly persons sponsored for a short visit by a relative in Canada. Refusals on our part were not frequent because we knew that the Soviets would keep an immediate family member behind in the U.S.S.R. to ensure the person's return. Furthermore, our file would always include the host's approved-by-the-CIC visitor sponsorship letter. Sometimes we would see travel refusals by the Soviet passport authority. The most common reason: the host in Canada had deserted the Red Army at the end of World War II. Next common reason: the host in Canada did not return to the U.S.S.R. after he was allowed to visit Canada.

Not Everyone Gets to Enter the Mission

One interesting aspect of being assigned to the Soviet Union was getting used to the sight of every visitor to our embassy being stopped and interrogated by the armed militiaman (Interior Ministry police) at the pill-box by the front door of the embassy. Countless were turned away because "they had no official business with us".

Le Service d'immigration est instauré

C'est à l'été 1978 que la CEIC et le Ministère des Affaires Extérieures se sont enfin mis d'accord pour établir de façon officielle la présence d'un bureau d'immigration au sein de l'ambassade à Moscou. Même si mon détachement au MAE prit fin, et que les dossiers d'immigrants ainsi que les budgets appropriés furent transférés de Vienne, à vrai dire rien ne changea dans mes fonctions. Les dossiers d'immigrants, tous parrainés par un proche parrain au Canada, consistaient d'un minuscule 70 cas environ, mais tous compliqués. C'était la fameuse «liste de réunification de famille de l'U.R.S.S.».

La «Liste»

Cette liste, depuis des décennies était le mépris du Ministère des Affaires étrangères de l'U.R.S.S. (le MID). Chaque année l'ambassadeur Ford, (et je n'ai jamais trop compris si son excellence jouissait de cette tâche annuelle ou non) accompagné de son consul, se présentait au MID et remettait au sous-ministre responsable pour le Canada la liste des candidats pour qui notre gouvernement intervenait pour raisons humanitaires. Ces personnes, longtemps séparées de leurs proches, avaient pour la plupart subi un refus de départ pour



Diplomatic corps viewing military parade in Red Square on National Day

causes inacceptables par le Canada. Comme pour les visiteurs déboutés ci-haut mentionnés, on nous donnait des explications insensibles et brutales, répétées année après année, qui se rapportaient au départ «inadmissible» du garant au Canada, de désertion qui remontait à la Deuxième guerre, ou le non-retour du garant après un voyage à l'étranger. Ou bien, le candidat avait acquis dans son travail des connaissances « sensibles » qui, de l'étranger, pourraient nuire au bien-être de l'U.R.S.S. Il pourrait s'agir d'un garant conjoint ou d'un enfant adulte, par exemple, d'un musicien ou d'un sportif qui aurait demandé asile au Canada. Le refus était ferme, comme l'était le Rideau de Fer. Et ce rituel, qui recommençait chaque année depuis des décennies, allait se poursuivre encore jusqu'à l'implosion de l'U.R.S.S.

Outside the Chancellery

Work aside, life in Moscow was altogether different from living in the West. All accommodation in Moscow was supplied by UPDK, a Soviet agency officially structured under the Foreign Ministry but suspected of being part of the Interior Ministry and the KGB. Pre-posting briefings warned us that all our flats were riddled with listening devices (as was the embassy). All local staff, household help, and babysitters, were "hired" through the UPDK, and it was a well-known secret that they reported monthly for debriefings.

During our first year we found our two-bedroom apartment rather tight, what with a three-year-old toddler and a month-old baby. Furniture was the standard External Affairs issue provided in all staff quarters abroad—comfortable, but certainly not stylish. During the second year we were fortunate enough to be assigned a larger two-bedroom flat with a tiny bachelor flat next door, which allowed us to hire a live-in Finnish nanny. Many expat couples in Moscow with young children hired foreign nannies to give spouses the opportunity to get out of the Spartan apartments to look for scarce food items or even quality durable goods that were occasionally available. Heating was sub-standard in winter and hellish in summer. In December 1978 and January 1979 the outside temperature fell to minus 40C. Inside our apartment the reading dropped to 11C. One Swedish diplomat ran an extension wire from his eighth-floor window all the way down to his car parked about 50 metres from the building, in order to activate the block-heater. Our cars wouldn't start for days because of the cold. One of our Canada-based staff lit his hibachi BBQ (we would order briquettes from Finland) and put it under his car engine to get it going. Others removed the spark plugs and heated them in their kitchen oven, then quickly screwed them back in the engine.

Faire des achats

S'approvisionner était autre chose ! D'une certaine façon, le corps diplomatique était choyé car il pouvait, à partir de devises étrangères, se procurer les «coupons-D» de la Banque du Commerce extérieur. Ces coupons nous permettaient d'aller dans trois ou quatre magasins (un pour l'alimentation, un pour les appareils électroniques, et un pour les tapis orientaux et certains vêtements et chaussures importés de l'ouest). Même si les prix y étaient intéressants, les choix réduits laissaient beaucoup à désirer. Autre que pour le délicieux pain «brun», il était rare de s'aventurer dans les magasins «locaux» où les longues files d'attente et la qualité n'en valaient pas la peine. Nous avions tous un compte chez Stockmann, le grand magasin de Helsinki, qui pouvait nous fournir, pour un prix souvent «salé», tout ce que l'on pouvait imaginer. De façon hebdomadaire nous commandions viandes, lait frais ainsi que légumes et fruits qui étaient introuvables, même dans les magasins «diplomatiques» de Moscou. Quelques fois par année nous faisons venir du bœuf de l'Argentine—un vrai régali !

Travel



Ancient wooden church, Suzdal

Driving was not unpleasant, given the relative paucity of traffic. The only threats were the official ZIL or Chaika limousines that had exclusive access to special lanes on major avenues. Getting caught driving in a ZIL lane could result in a long interrogation by militiamen, or worse, being threatened with a *bout de papier* from the MID. Another important aspect of driving in Moscow was learning where to make a U-turn—the "razvarot" or "raz", an institution in itself, for it is an absolute taboo to make a U-turn in Moscow unless a "raz" sign allows it. Also, filling-up at the rare gas stations was quite an experience. At the two or three stations where we could pay with D-coupons, the gasoline pumps were so primitive that hoses were missing the usual nozzle. The attendant would activate the flow at the pump, and by the time he got to the car, considerable gasoline had spilled on the ground.

Diplomats could travel anywhere inside the Moscow Ring Road, a divided highway about 100 kilometres in circumference. To travel outside that ring, we had to request special permission from UPDK, apart from a few exceptions such as Sheremetyevo International airport, a couple of "diplomatic" beaches on the river Moskva where we would often picnic, and Peredelkino, a picturesque village where Nobel Prize winner Boris Pasternak is buried. When driving outside the Ring

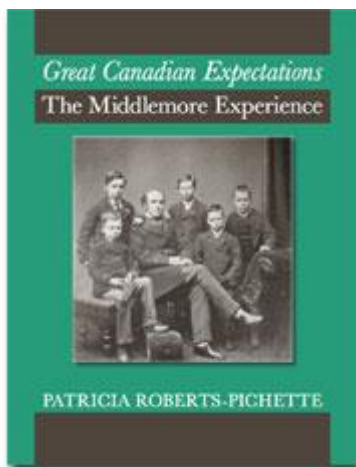
Road, at every major intersection we would encounter a militiaman recording our licence plate number and then using his two-way radio to report our progress to a monitoring centre. During our posting, with UPDK approval, we managed to travel to Kiev, Leningrad, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and battle sites of the Napoleonic wars. A group of embassy wives were also successful in arranging trips to Riga, Tallinn, Yerevan and Tbilisi.

Conclusion

The challenging work, the team spirit, the extracurricular outings, the toe-freezing October Revolution military parade on Red Square standing a stone's throw from Lenin's tomb where Leonid Brezhnev and his yes-men were standing, the even colder broom-ball games against friendly embassies, the Friday evening movies with hamburgers at the Canadian embassy club, ordering fresh milk and steaks on Thursday (or was it Friday?) from Stockmann's in Helsinki knowing they would arrive only the following Monday, the "roving formal dinners" among the expat community, the Canada Day festivities, even being evacuated to Helsinki after breaking a toe at the diplomatic beach—all contributed to a rich and rewarding posting inside the Iron Curtain. I still feel the excitement of landing in Moscow in 1977 when, as the first Immigration officer appointed there, my task was to be part of Canada's important presence in the U.S.S.R. Furthermore, I am proud to have played a role in appeasing and reassuring a demanding and sceptical ambassador that the time had come for Canada's Immigration service to be present in Moscow.

J'ai grandement apprécié mon affectation à Moscou, qui s'est terminée à l'été 1979. L'expérience pour mon épouse et moi (nos deux enfants étaient trop jeune pour qu'il leur reste souvenance) fut totalement différente de ce que nous avons vécu avant et après cette assignation. Ce sentiment est d'autant plus fort maintenant que l'U.R.S.S. soit disparut—pour, il semblerait, être remplacée par une Russie presque aussi critiquable que l'était son prédécesseur.

Great Canadian Expectations: The Middlemore Experience by Patricia Roberts-Pichette. Carleton Place, Ontario: Global Heritage Press, 2017. 314 pages
Charlene Elgee



Solid academic research on the history of Canadian immigration is always valued by the CIHS, and it is indeed a joy to share such a study with our readers. *Great Canadian Expectations* by Patricia Roberts-Pichette demonstrates what can be done with thorough sleuthing through primary sources and the discipline of a trained academic mind. Roberts-Pichette has had a long and distinguished career as a university professor (University of New Brunswick) and as a public servant.

During the latter part of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th, several agencies sprang up in Great Britain to deal with one of the ugliest and most heartbreaking effects of the Industrial Revolution: the many orphaned, neglected, and abused children in large cities, the product of a vast army of poverty-stricken people drawn by hope of a better life through employment in the industrial centres of Europe. The solution devised by several social reformers was the creation of these agencies, which took in the children and arranged for their transport to the British colonies, notably Canada and Australia. In Canada, they were known as the "home children".

This book is a detailed account of the agency started by John Throgmorton Middlemore, member of a wealthy business family in Birmingham, England. Roberts-Pichette analyses the socio-economic situation of the city during the years of the Middlemore Homes (1873-1933), providing valuable background for those wishing to understand the phenomenon of juvenile emigration. She also covers in detail the history of the Middlemore family, revealing in the process why this was an immigration success story. Middlemore was "ahead of his time in having the wellbeing of the children as his primary concern" (p. 209). The homes he set up in Birmingham, and in Ontario, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia were created around the children and their need to be educated and loved so that they could fit into a good Canadian home and family. This meant that great care went into the process of choosing and monitoring the homes. Whatever horror stories came out of the home children movement, they were not about the Middlemore children.

The author is adept at bringing into the stories the other hallmarks of the times: the legal framework, the social movements such as eugenics, the political movements and reactions, the prejudices and backlashes against immigrants, the social climate of both countries, the effects of the Great War, the evolution of the relationship between the British government and its colonies—in short, the elements that make the Victorian era and early 20th century so fascinating.

This is an interesting read for any student of history but even more so for students of immigration history. The appendices and bibliography are thorough and provide many roads for the historians and genealogists to tread. More importantly, it

fills a gap in the under-developed body of literature about the home children, a significant chapter in the story of Canadian immigration.

British Home Children—the Latest Word

Through a collaborative effort between British Home Child Group International and Gilles Duceppe, former leader of the Bloc Québécois and grandson of a British home child, on 15 February, a private member’s motion brought forward by Bloc Québécois MP Luc Thériault was passed in Canada’s House of Commons. The text reads:

That the House recognize the injustice, abuse and suffering endured by the British Home Children as well as the efforts, participation and contribution of these children and their descendants within our communities; and offer its sincere apology to the former British Home Children who are still living and to the descendants of these 100,000 individuals who were shipped from Great Britain to Canada between 1869 and 1948, and torn from their families to serve mainly as cheap labour once they arrived in Canada.

The “Girl”, the “Boys”, and the Book

Gail Devlin

When I volunteered to edit *Running on Empty*, I was faced with the daunting task of establishing a respectful working relationship with not one, or even two, but four experienced writers whom I did not know well.

It was quite a challenge. To begin with, I had to ensure that the technical aspects of the manuscript followed the style guide and were consistent throughout the document. Each writer had his own way of doing things: two spaces following a period vs one space; hyphenation or no hyphenation; capitals or lower case; how to write dates; whether to italicize *ibid*, and so on. Thanks to the thoroughly professional background and good humour of the writers, I was able to establish the rules, and, for the most part, they followed them. When they deviated or fell back into old habits, I was able to rein them in and remind them that I was the one in charge. It was very satisfying.

An editor’s most important function, however, is to provide constructive criticism and give feedback on the substance of the text. Writers are proud of what they have written, and some will take offence at the very suggestion that clarification is required or that the text disagrees with something in a previous paragraph, or, heaven forbid, that the sentence structure be changed or, even more insulting, that text be deleted or text added.

I played the role of a prospective reader. If I couldn’t understand what they were saying or had questions about what they had written, it was likely the reader would not understand either. In editing this book, I had an advantage in my role as reader representative, because, unlike most adult Canadians, I knew little or nothing about the subject. In the late 1970s when the events in the book took place, I was living in Moscow, where my husband was posted to the Canadian embassy. During that time, I read no newspapers or magazines from Canada, watched only Soviet television in Russian, and, occasionally, heard news broadcasts from the BBC and Radio Free Europe. There may have been mention of “boat people”, but no connection to what was happening in Canada.

My ignorance of these events turned out to be an asset when I read the manuscript. It meant that I read the text in the same way that many of the end users, that is, the students of today, will read it. Like the students, I had few preconceived notions about the events and policies discussed. The writers, as always, were most cooperative in carefully explaining what may have seemed quite obvious to them but which I knew little about.

All four of the "boys" as I thought of them, rather like a band of brothers, were tolerant of me and readily answered my questions and made the necessary changes. The book is the proof that, by working together at what seemed at times to be a Sisyphean task, we accomplished what we set out to do. It’s a wonderful story.

<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 - Gail Devlin; Editor - Valerie de Montigny; Members at large - Brian Casey, Roy Christensen, Peter Duschinsky, Charlene Elgee, Kurt Jensen, Gerry Maffre (Communications), Ian Rankin and Gerry Van Kessel Member emeritus - J.B. “Joe” Bissett IRCC Representative – Greg Chubak</p>
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