

IMMIGRATION in CANADA

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Speed up the claim over the territory

- In the West

Promote the development of the economy

- Attract workers for the construction of infrastructure
- Attract people with special skills
- Attracts people with money

Humanitarian causes

- Provide a safe place to live for refugees of war
- Provide a safe place to live for people who are persecuted for their beliefs
- Reunite families

IMMIGRATION in CANADA

- Canadian immigration policies were ethnically selective and remained so during the first half of the 20th century.
- Preference was given to British and Americans followed by northern and then central Europeans. Least desired were Asians, Blacks and Jews
- Non-preferred immigrants were usually admitted to perform risky or undesirable jobs, such as farming in remote areas and building the railway.

Early 1900's



- Liberal Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier promotes immigration to Canada to develop the economic potential of the Prairies
- For \$10.00 the government would give 160 acres of land
- Homesteading conditions were often much harsher than expected

Early 1900's



- To be successful, new immigrant needed to have sufficient funds to live until they could establish themselves
- New immigrants were isolated and very busy and tended to preserve their culture and way of life
- Their different culture often made them the target of racism and discrimination

Chinese immigration

- First Chinese immigrant came around 1850 to work in mines and help build the railway.
- From 1885 to 1923, an increasingly oppressive **head tax** was levied on Chinese immigrants
- 1923 the **Chinese Exclusion Act** imposed even more restrictive measures.
- 1932 after the death of some Chinese men (from starvation), the government decided to fund soup kitchen as a form of relief but still expected Chinese people to be fed at half the cost of white men.



Chinese immigration



Thomas Suen (L), 97, and Charlie Quan, 99, pose with their ex-gratia symbolic payments during a ceremony in Vancouver, British Columbia Oct. 20, 2006.

K o m a g a t a M a r u



- 1914, 376 Indian, mostly Shiks, who were British citizens were turned away in Victoria.
- The News papers of the days described them as “undesirable”, “sick”, “hungry”, and a menace to women and children”

K o m M a a g r a t a



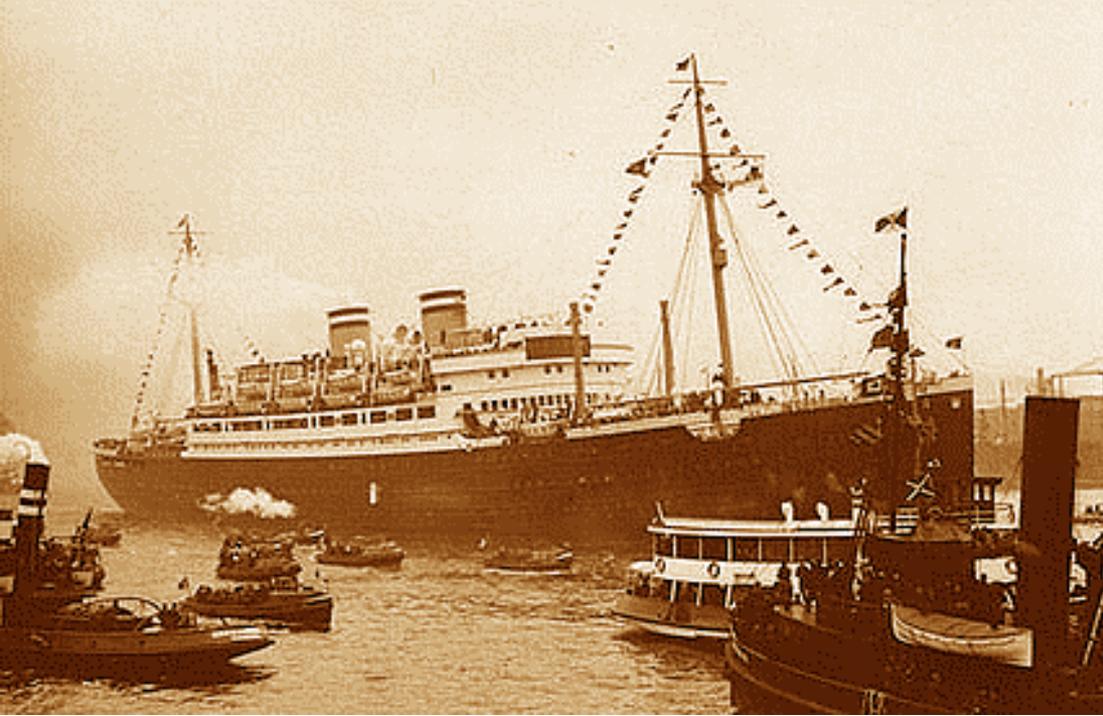
The "continuous voyage" policy stipulated that immigrants had to travel directly from their country of origin to Canada, without stopping, which was impossible from India.

1939

SS St-Louis

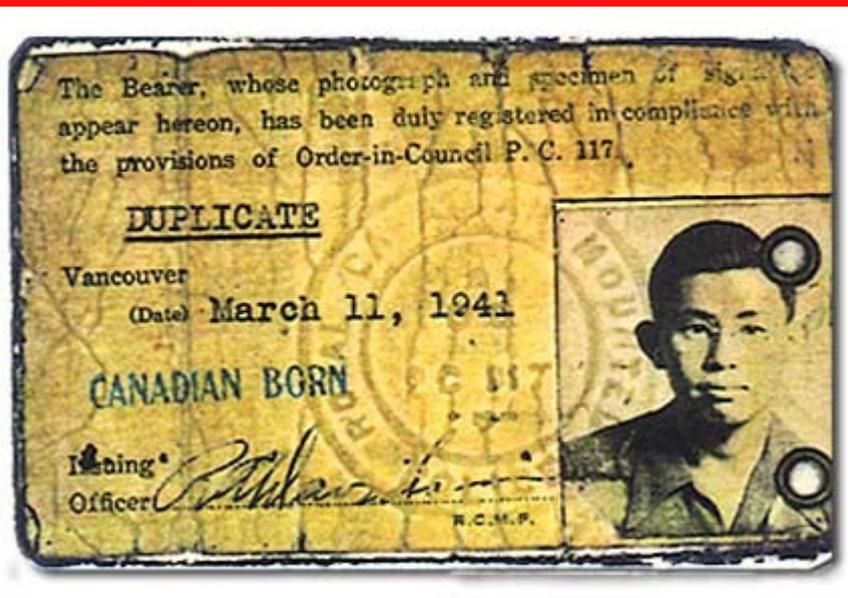


A group of 937 Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany were turned away at the Canadian border. Forced to go back to Europe, many eventually died under



Canada admitted only about 5,000 Jews — one of the worst records of any of the refugee receiving countries.

Immigration Minister Frederick Blair: "...if these Jews were to find a home (in Canada) they would likely be followed by other shiploads. No country could open its doors wide enough to take in the hundreds of thousands of Jewish people who want to leave Europe: the line must be drawn somewhere".



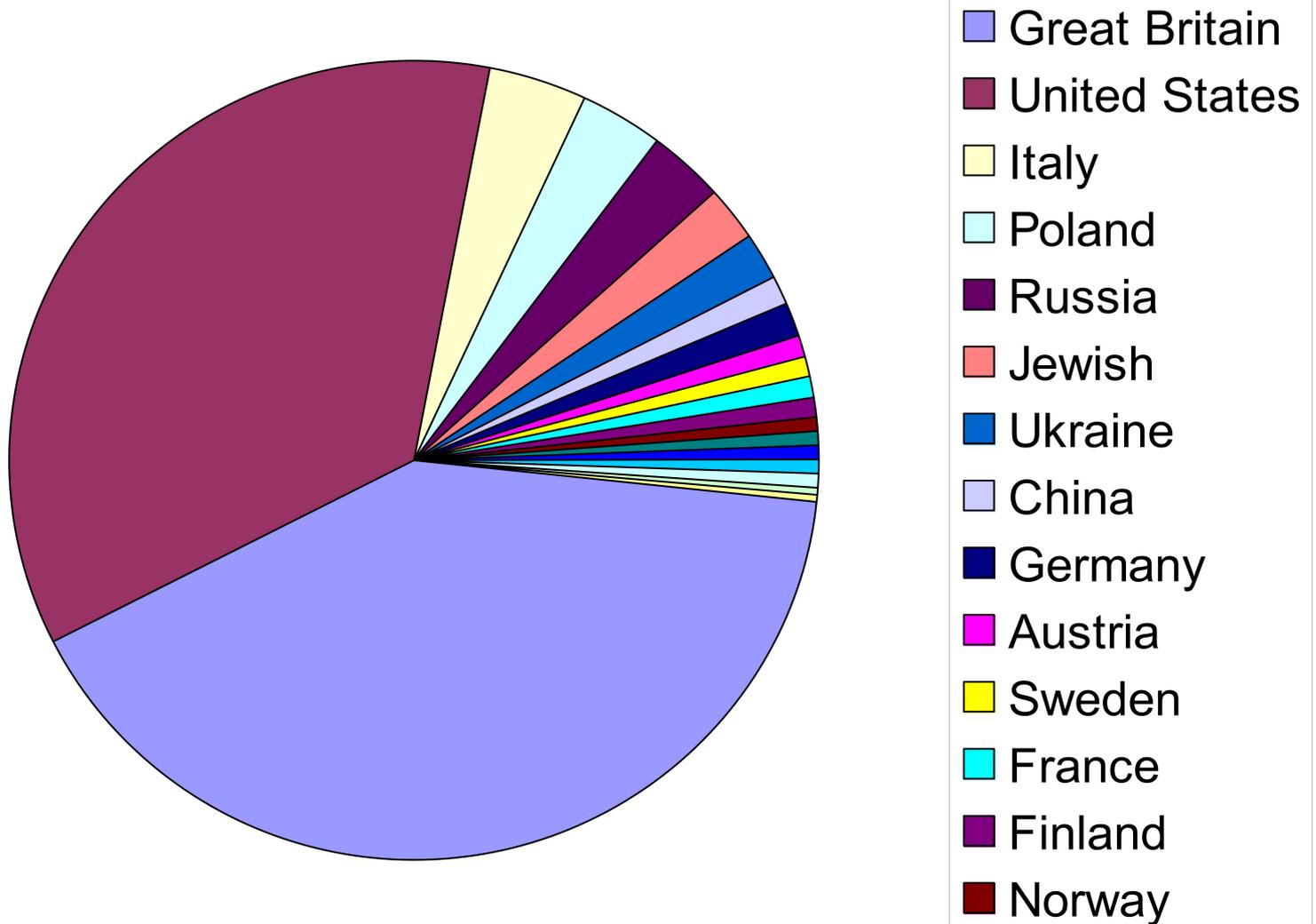
During World War II Japanese-Canadians were interned in work camps and many "repatriated" to Japan in 1946.

Italians and Germans were also interned in camp solely based on their country of origin.

- **1956** Canada admitted nearly 40,000 Hungarian refugees.
- **1970** Canada sets up new guidelines for its immigration policy:
 - ✓ **Humanitarian considerations** to unite families and provide a safe heaven for those who are persecuted.
 - ✓ **Economic considerations** to attract skilled labourers and to encourage economic growth and investment
 - ✓ **Demographic considerations** to maintain steady population growth
- **1978** Canada recognize three classes of immigrants regardless of their country of origin.

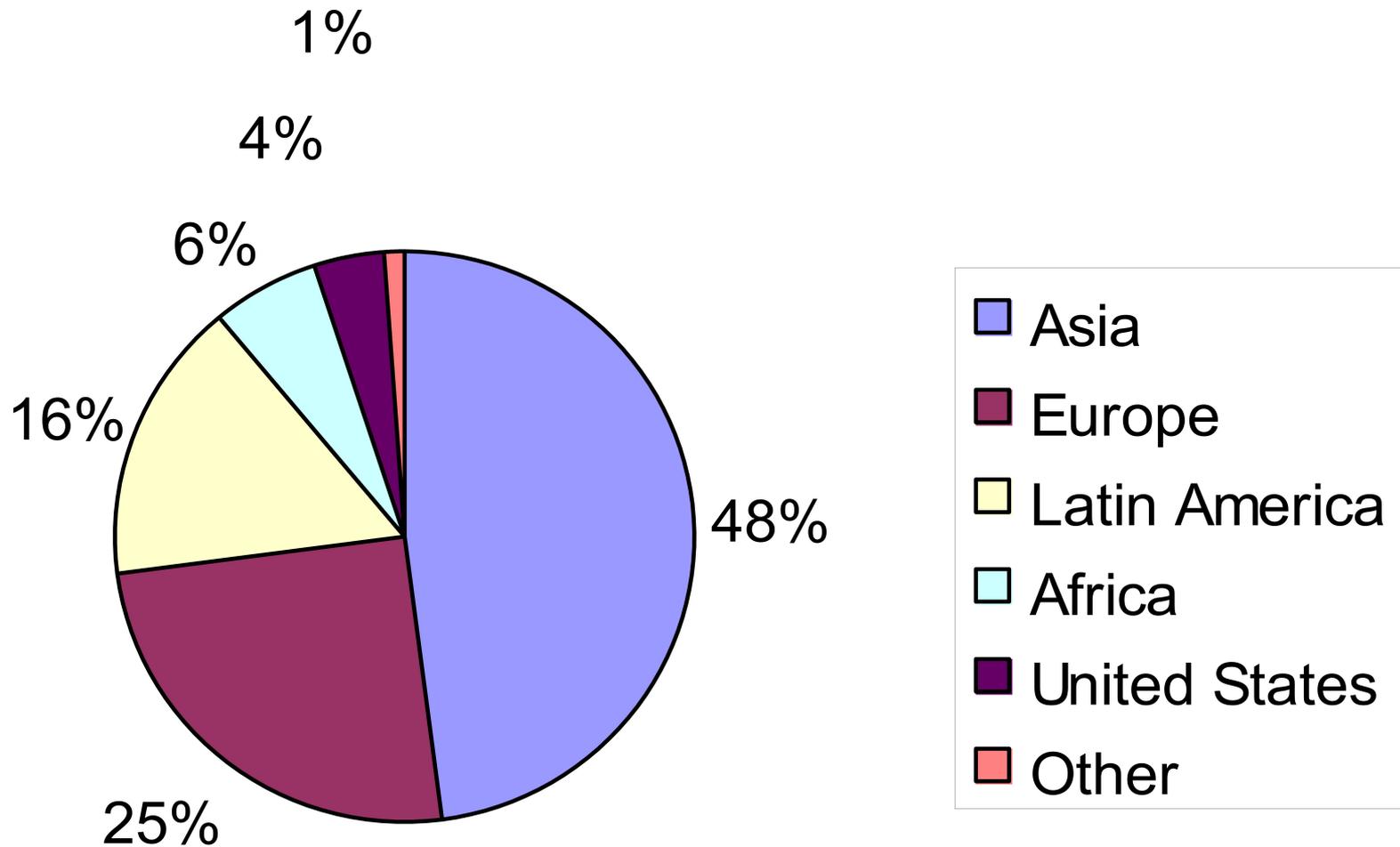
- **1979** Canada admits 60,000 Vietnamese boat people.
- **1986** Canada was awarded the United Nations' Nansen Medal for its compassionate refugee policies.
- By the end of the 20th century, Canada became one of the largest immigrant and refugee receiving countries in the world, admitting thousands of refugees from Bosnia, Rwanda, Kosovo and other places.
- Following the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York on 11 September 2001, Bill C-11 was passed to tighten refugee admission procedures.

Early 1900's Immigration by Country of Origin



1981 to 1991

Immigration by Country of Origin



Fin

Belgium	19,370	0.57
Yugoslavia	17,898	0.52
Hungary	15,033	0.44
Poland	10,885	0.32
Romania	9,513	0.28

6- Poland	52,103	3.6
7- Czechoslovakia	34,165	2.4
8- Hungary	33,940	2.3
9- Finland	30,152	2.1
10- Italy.....	28,195	1.9
11- Yugoslavia	23,230	1.6
12- Sweden	21,530	1.5
13- Norway	20,692	1.4
14- Denmark	19,758	1.4
15- Russia	15,779	1.1
16- Netherlands	12,764	0.88
17- Belgium	12,229	0.84
18- France	7,165	0.49
19- Romania	6,066	0.41
20- Lithuania	5,949	0.41
21- Switzerland	5,747	0.39
22- Japan	5,090	0.35
23- Greece	4,403	0.30

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1- Great Britain	1,107,362	23.1%
2- Italy	485,191	10.1
3- United States	470,991	9.8
4- West Germany	328,646	6.8
5- Netherlands	185,006	3.8
6- West Indies	183,998	3.8
7- Portugal	147,327	3.0
8- Greece	131,452	2.7
9- France	126,199	2.6
10- Poland	113,323	2.3
11- India	88,873	1.8
12- Austria	70,321	1.4
13- Yugoslavia	60,098	1.2
14- Hungary	57,001	1.19
15- Australia	55,533	1.15
16- Ireland	46,151	0.9
17- Belgium	45,780	0.9
18- Switzerland	42,905	0.89
19- Denmark.....	40,302	0.84

21-45

1946-1980

The number of immigrants entering Canada continued to be small until the opening of the twentieth century, when the results of the vigorous policy of Sir Clifford Sifton, inaugurated in 1898, began to appear. This policy was directed to secure immigrants not only from the British isles, but from European countries. In the nineties large numbers of central and southern Europeans had begun to migrate to the United States, and Canada began to cast longing eyes on these sturdy peasants. As a result of the Sifton policy the numbers of foreign immigrants for a time exceeded those of British origin. Attention was also directed to securing immigrants from the United States, where conditions, particularly in agriculture, were largely similar to those in Canada. From 1907 to 1915, 40 per cent. of the homestead entries by immigrants were made by Americans. Many of these were returning Canadians, or their descendants. Usually they brought considerable capital, and their familiarity with prairie conditions was an advantage. Accompanying this aggressive policy, there was considerable activity in railway construction, resulting in the development of two additional transcontinental systems, the Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk Pacific. The railways were also definitely interested in securing settlers along their lines, and cooperated actively with the government. The result was that, while the number of immigrants arriving in Canada in the years 1891 to 1902 inclusive was 437,830, the number from 1903 to 1914 was 2,677,319. This was a period of rapid development of the Prairie provinces, and also of British Columbia, and of a considerable increase in immigrant population, particularly in the urban centres of eastern Canada.

In 1905 the two new provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta were created, and plans were laid to receive a large population. A notable feature of the immigration to Canada at this time was the large increase in the numbers coming from the British isles, particularly Great Britain. Assistance to emigrants was given by the British government, and by many charitable organizations, outstanding among which was the Salvation Army; but the unassisted largely outnumbered the assisted.

The outbreak of the Great War brought to a standstill immigration to Canada, and when the War had ended the situation had changed. Although it was expected that large numbers of people would wish to emigrate from Europe as a result of the distress following the War, this large movement did not take place. The movement of emigrants from the British isles also did not revive, mainly because there was less difference in economic opportunity as between the British isles and Canada. Assistance was given to discharged British soldiers to emigrate, and 26,560 came to Canada. Attempts were made to stimulate immigration by means of the Empire Settlement Act, an Act of the British government passed in 1922, which made provision for training and financial assistance to emigrants. The Act empowered the British secretary of state "in association with the government of any part of His Majesty's Dominions, or with public authorities, or public or private organizations either in the United Kingdom or in any part of such Dominions, to formulate and cooperate in carrying out agreed schemes for affording joint assistance to suitable persons in the United Kingdom who intend to settle in any part of His Majesty's Overseas Dominions. An agreed scheme under this Act may be either (a) a development or land settlement scheme, or (b) a scheme for facilitating settlement in or migration to any part of His Majesty's Overseas Dominions by assistance with passages, initial allowances, training or otherwise." Assisted passages to Canada were confined to agriculturists and domestic servants. The first land settlement scheme under this Act was negotiated with Canada in 1924 when the Canadian government agreed to provide 3,000 British families with improved farms. This scheme was carried out with modified success. Various schemes to assist immigration were entered into with the railway companies and with other organizations, but the results were meagre in comparison with the effort. The number entering Canada from 1923 to 1934 inclusive was 1,194,382, or less than half those entering in the twelve years before the Great War. As a result of immigration, there are in Canada to-day representatives of about fifty different nationalities.

As a result of the depression in 1930, immigration was actively discouraged by the Canadian government, and only very limited classes were allowed to enter the country.

Reference should be made to Oriental immigration, namely, that of Chinese, Japanese, and East Indians. Chinese first came to British Columbia from California at the time of the gold rush in 1858. The Japanese did not arrive until 1887, and not in any numbers until the beginning of the present century. The Oriental population is largely located in the province of British Columbia. The total number of Chinese entering Canada from 1886 to 1934 was 90,345. According to the 1941 census, however, the Chinese population of Canada was 34,627. The total number of Japanese entering Canada in the years 1901 to 1934 was 24,840. The Japanese population in 1941 was 23,149. The total number of East Indians entering Canada from 1905 to 1934 was 5,398, and the present population about 1,400. At the present time Chinese immigration has ceased, and Japanese immigration is very definitely limited. Fifty-eight per cent. of the Chinese, and over ninety per cent. of the Japanese, in Canada reside in British Columbia.

Reflecting on the massive immigration of Slavic and Southern European into the United States, a movement he deplored, Macdonald is quoted as saying:

"It is a great country, but it will have its vicissitudes and revolutions. Look at the mass of foreign ignorance and vice which has flooded that country with socialism, atheism and all other isms".

Quoted in AVERY, *Dangerous Foreigners*, p. 40.

Sir Mackenzie Bowell (former Prime Minister of Canada) on Ukrainians

"[...] The Galicians, they of the sheepskin coats, the filth and the vermin do not make splendid material for the building of a great nation. One look at the disgusting creatures after they pass through over the C.P.R. on their way West has caused many to marvel that beings bearing the human form could have sunk to such a bestial level [...]"

from the *Belleville Intelligencer*; quoted in Pierre BERTON, *The Promised Land - Settling the West, 1896-1914*, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1984, 388p., p. 50.

The Daily NorthWesters about Ukrainian immigrants:

"The protest of the Council is quite justified. The dumping down of these filthy, penniless and ignorant foreigners into progressive and intelligent communities is a serious hardship to such a community".

Date of the article is unspecified in the source.

Cornelius Van Horne (1906)

Reflecting the greater openness of business leaders to immigration, and opposing restrictive regulations based on racial or ethnic criteria, Van Horne is quoted in the *Montreal Star* as saying:

"What we want is population. Labour is required from the Arctic to Patagonia, throughout North and South America, but the governments of other lands are not such idiots as we are in the matter of restricting immigration. Let them all come in. There is work for all. Every two or three men that come to Canada and do a day's work create new work for someone else to do".

From *Montreal Star*, July 27, 1906 (quoted in the *Canadian Annual Review*, 1906, p. 281).

The Missionary Outlook (Methodist) in June 1908

"If from this North American continent is to come a superior race, a race to be specially used by God in the carrying on of His work, what is our duty to those who are now our fellow-citizens? Many of them come to us as nominal Christians, that is, they owe allegiance to the Greek or Roman Catholic churches but their moral standards and ideals are far below those of the Christian citizens of the Dominion [...] It is our duty to meet them with an open Bible, and to instill into their minds the principles and ideals of Anglo-Saxon Civilization".

William Lyon Mackenzie King (1908)

"That Canada should desire to restrict immigration from the Orient is regarded as natural, that Canada should remain a white man's country is believed to be not only desirable for economic and social reasons but highly necessary on political and national grounds."

(From a 1908 Report; at the time, Mackenzie King was Deputy-Minister of Labour; he later became Prime Minister of Canada in 1921)

J. S. Woodsworth (1909)

"We need more of our blood to assist us to maintain in Canada our British traditions and to mould the incoming armies of foreigners into loyal British subjects".

From his *Strangers Within our Gates*, p. 46. Woodsworth was a Protestant clergyman. He later became leader of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) Party.

Arthur S. Goodeve

"[...] but only the best people of European countries should be selected, only those who can assimilate with us to make one united, sound anglo-saxon race".

Statement made by Arthur Goodeve in the Canadian House of Commons on May 18, 1911. Goodeve was a Conservative member from Kootenay, B.C. (although originally from Ontario).

The same member is also quoted as saying: "Everyone will agree that we cannot assimilate Asiatic immigration and make the Asiatics good Canadian citizens. But that is no reason why we should not trade with them [Japanese]".

W. D. SCOTT (historian) in 1914

"Undesirable immigrants are those who will not assimilate with the Canadian people, or whose presence will tend to bring about a deterioration from the political, moral, social or economical point of view."

In *Canada and Its Provinces*, p. 568.

Clifford SIFTON on East European Immigrants (1922)

"I think a stalwart peasant in sheep-skin coat, born on the soil, whose forefathers have been farmers for ten generations, with a stout wife and a half dozen children, is good quality"

from *Macleans Magazine*. Note that this was said long after Sifton was out of politics and responsible for immigration. According to Berton, (*The Promised Land*, op. cit., p. 21) Sifton had deep-seated suspicion of Roman Catholics and French Canadians. He did not employ a single Quebecer in his department.

Armand Lavergne (1931)

"If you had in your western country Canadians of French descent, of French tradition, [...] instead of the foreign element which you brought in, do you think that bolshevist speeches along the lines of Lenin in Russia would be possible in Canada?".

House of Commons Debates, March 30, 1931, p. 182. Lavergne was a Conservative member from Montmagny in Quebec.

William Lyon Mackenzie King (1938)

"We must seek to keep this part of the Continent free from unrest and from too much intermixture of foreign strains of blood".

From King's *Diary*, 1938. King was Prime Minister of Canada at the time.

Changes in the immigration policy were done progressively. There was no sudden change immediately after 1945. Yet, unmistakably, the policy shifted. Progressively, the discriminatory clauses in the Canadian Immigration Bill were altered, then removed. Important dates to chart these changes are 1947, 1952, 1962 and 1967.

Reasons given for this change are primarily the following:

The economic needs of Canada changed. Canada now needed highly skilled, educated immigrants who made an important contribution to the technological revolution taking place. Immigrants came to the cities and were seen contributing to the well-being of the country in important ways. Post-war prosperity was linked to the coming of this skilled workforce. Many of these immigrants were investing immigrants.

The Post-War period is one of unprecedented economic growth and increases in the standard of living. Jobs were plentiful and immigrants were not perceived as competing for scarce jobs.

Increases in family revenue over decades (inflation eliminated)

1951-1961 : 32.8%

1961-1971 : 46%

1971-1981 : 26.1%

1981-1989 : 7.1%

Greater education among Canadians. Prejudice often feeds on ignorance. New technology (radio, television, cinema) and foreign travel bring Canadians into contact with people from the rest of the world and makes them curious, and more open, about other cultures.

The effect of World War II, the horror of the death camps, etc. make Canadian see what intolerance leads to. The Post-War period, especially the 1960's, is a period of growth of recognition of Human Rights ([Canada adopts its first Bill of Rights in 1960](#)).

Increasing organization of minority groups to defend their rights. Individual immigrants are not fighting prejudice alone anymore.

An important element of the Canadian post-war immigration policy, extending to the early 1960's, was a strong anti-communist component that was widespread at the height of the Cold War period. Anti-communists and people fleeing the communist dictatorships were given asylum in Canada. Such immigrants were popular as they justified the belief of Canadians as to the dangers and evils of Communism.

In the Post-War period, the increasing rise in the standard of living in Europe, especially in Western Europe, meant that European immigrants were less and less interested in immigrating to Canada. If one considers that the birth rate was rapidly declining in Canada, and that there were shortages of labour in several fields, then the country was forced to look for immigration in other parts of the world and, for that purpose, change its policies.

Contrasting Canadian Immigration Regulations (1910, 1952, 1970's)

Immigration Act of 1910

May be excluded from immigrating to Canada:

"Those physically, mentally or morally unfit whose exclusion was provided for by Act of Parliament last session".

"Those belonging to nationalities unlikely to assimilate and who consequently prevent the building up of a united nation of people of similar customs and ideals".

"Those who from their mode of life and occupations are likely to crowd into urban centers and bring about a state of congestion which might result in unemployment and a lowering of the standard of our national life".

Immigration Act of 1952

The Act gave the Immigration Minister a great deal of discretionary powers. The following categories might be excluded from entering Canada:

"Nationality, citizenship, ethnic group, occupation, class or geographical area of origin".

"Peculiar customs, habits, modes of life, or methods of holding property".

"Unsuitability having regard to climatic, economic, social [conditions]",

. "Probable inability to become readily assimilated or to assume the duties or responsibilities of citizenship".

Immigration Act from the 1970's

According to the Act, the objectives of immigration are

a) "To enrich and strengthen the cultural and social fabric of Canada, taking into account the federal and bilingual character of Canada".

[...]

f) "To ensure that any person who seeks admission to Canada in either a permanent or temporary basis is subject to standards of admission that do not discriminate on grounds of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion or sex."

Why did Canada Refuse to Admit Jewish Refugees in the 1930's?

Claude Bélanger,
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The coming to power of Hitler in early 1933 and the establishment of Nazism in Germany led over the remaining years of the 1930's to a set of increasingly severe measures against Jews that were to end, in the course of the Second World War, with the Holocaust, an attempt to annihilate an entire people and in which an estimated 6 million European Jews were to die. In the 1930's, the boycotts initiated in 1933 and 1934, the Nuremberg laws (1935) and Kristallnacht (1938) gave clear signals to the Jews of Germany that they should seek asylum in other countries. The main problem they faced was that few countries opened their doors to them. Canada only admitted around 5,000 Jewish refugees in the 1930's. What explains such a low number?

A first factor was the impact of the Great Depression. The 1930's brought misery to Canadians as low wages and high rates of unemployment became the norm at the same time as prices remained relatively high. Canadians had always been conditioned to think of immigration as serving the economic interest of Canada. As the job market contracted, few in Canada were prepared to support the entrance of any large number of immigrants. These could only be seen as potentially entering Canada to compete for the scarce jobs remaining. In fact, the reverse was taking place. If immigrants lost their job, which was frequently the case, they were ruthlessly deported from Canada. Thus, several restrictive regulations were adopted in the early years of the depression (P. C. 1113 in 1929; P. C. 659 and 1957 in 1930 and P. C. 695 in 1931) so that, by 1932, only agriculturalists with enough capital to start farming in Canada could be admitted. In the process, the number of admitted immigrants to Canada had gone from 166,783 in 1928 to 14,382 in 1933 (and was to continue to decrease until 1937). Thus, Jews attempted to enter Canada in the 1930's at a time when we had nearly entirely closed the doors of the country to immigrants. As historians Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond and John English put it in their book entitled *Canada, 1900-1945*: "For Canadians, the Great Depression was the overwhelming fact of the decade (p. 295)."

Another problem for Jews was that Canada did not have a refugee policy. The country did not distinguish between refugees - who clearly would require special considerations - and ordinary immigrants. Consequently, refugees were required to follow all the regulations that were imposed on ordinary immigrants. How could a Jewish refugee from Germany who had been dispossessed of all his worldly possessions show he could support himself in Canada? Canada had admitted some groups of refugees in the XIXth century (Hutterites and Mennonites for example) but only because these were farmers, who otherwise qualified under Canadian Immigration Law. Only after the Second World War did Canada begin to develop a refugee policy.

An important factor in the plight of Jewish refugees was the widespread presence of Anti-semitism in Canada. This factor cannot be ignored or underestimated. Historian David Rome wrote in *Clouds in the Thirties* (Vol. 11, p. 510): "The reluctance of the Canadian government to admit Jewish refugees in any great numbers was a fair reflection of public opinion [...] which was a strong Anglo-Saxon nativism permeated with Anti-semitism". Thus, even when Jews would have had the means to support themselves in Canada, they were often refused entry. The social exclusion of Jews was common in the institutions of English-speaking Canada while a vociferous anti-semitic discourse was heard in Quebec, spearheaded by the home-grown Nazi movement of Adrien Arcand, and legitimized by some members of the Catholic clergy and, otherwise, respectable newspapers such as Montreal's *Le Devoir*. Thus, Jews had few friends in Canada and many enemies. In Quebec, for the most part, Jewish immigration was unwanted because any immigration was unpopular. For decades, the Federal Government had conducted an aggressive immigration policy oblivious to the bilingual and bicultural character of Canada, not sufficiently concerned with Quebec's wishes, hopes, goals and aspirations. The net result was to make Quebecers suspicious of the Federal Government, and of immigration in particular. The factor of Anti-semitism having been raised and its importance underlined, it should not be considered as the only factor at play. In the period of 1891 to 1931, tens of thousands of Jews entered Canada despite the existence of Anti-semitism. It alone could not keep Jews out of Canada. However, compounded with the other factors presented above and below, it made it virtually impossible for Jews to find refuge in Canada in the 1930's.

The lack of an international sympathetic response to the Jewish refugees is also a factor to consider. Until the Evian Conference of 1938 no international concerted action in favour of the refugees was attempted. Even after the Conference was held, little changed. While several countries did noticeably better than Canada in admitting refugees (others did even less), none can be said to have had a really favourable position to the Jewish refugees and to have had a generous policy; the closest to generosity were Argentina (63,000) and the United States (102,000). Had the rest of the world mounted a significant response, Canada might have been shamed into following a similar course. In the context of the 1930's, few countries could point an accusing finger to other countries. The negative response in Canada to Jewish refugees is also a clear indicator of the lack of influence of the Jewish community in Canada. Here we touch a rather interesting point. Antisemites were fond of accusing Jews of controlling the government and the economy (or the world, as claimed by the more extreme antisemites of the time). Yet, Jews were unable to have their brothers and sisters of Germany accepted in Canada. Clearly, this was because as a group of fairly recent immigrants they in fact had little influence in Canada. There were only three Jewish members of Parliament and the Jewish community trusted too much that they could achieve results through quiet diplomacy.

Still, if Canada had had a different federal government, the response might have been more positive. However, Mackenzie King was not a Prime Minister to forge ahead and challenge public opinion. On the contrary, he made it a habit of never straying too far from public opinion. And, on this point, the electors of Canada were clear: the doors should remain closed.

The very magnitude of the problem also probably contributed to the difficulty in solving it. As Hitler enlarged progressively his country by annexation (Austria, Sudetenland, etc.) more and more Jewish refugees were created. Where would it end? If a boatload of refugees was allowed to land, how many more would follow? Many thought - and the Director of the Canadian Immigration Branch, Frederick Blair, was among them - that "the line must be drawn somewhere", and that it would be best not to admit any at all.

Thus, a web of complex factors brought about Canada's poor response to the desperate appeal of the Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany. In responding so negatively, the government of Mackenzie King followed the lead of his predecessors who had never developed a refugee policy. He was not about to create one for a group that faced so much prejudice and discrimination in Canada. He faced little pressure from the international community or from ordinary Canadians to adopt a different policy. Unfortunately, during the Great Depression, too many people were hurting and were not in the mood to pay much attention to the problems of others...

