

Searching for the “Ideal” Canadian Immigrant: Selection Policies and Processes among Post World War II Displaced Persons

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'Displaced Persons' -DPs

- By the end of WWII 40 million people had been displaced
- 850,000 lived in Displaced Person's camps in Europe –closed mostly by 1952
- Former inmates of the Nazi German concentration camps, former prisoners of war, political refugees, former slave or voluntary workers, former forces under German command, deportees, stateless persons, refugees from former German occupied countries and Eastern Europe (Soviet satellite or annexed),
- Under the care of International Refugee Organization (IRO, 1946-1952)
 - A Multinational organization for sending refugees to accepting countries.

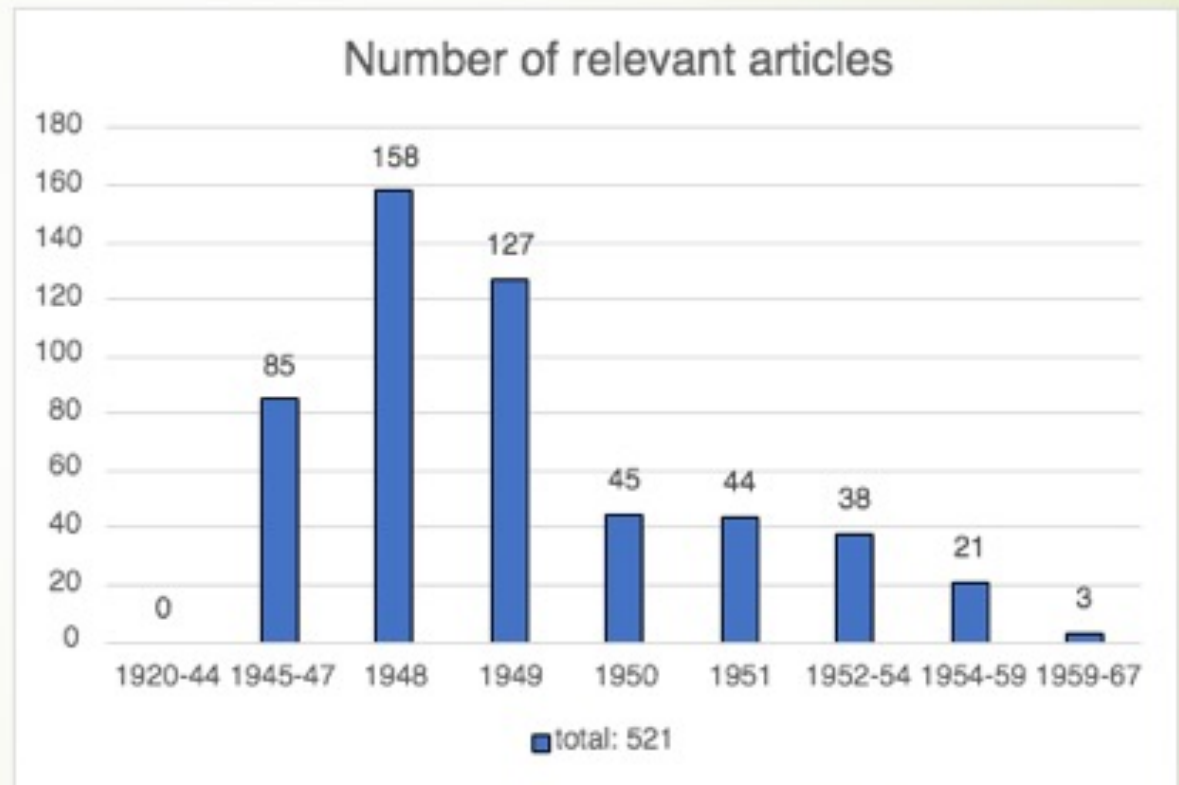


Canada and Displaced Persons

- 155 to 165 thousand displaced persons were admitted to Canada between the years 1946-1962
- This paper focuses on the selection and citizenship processes under which Displaced persons came to and stayed in Canada
- It outlines how DPs are constructed as 'other' building on sometimes contradictory terms, and inferior; and how a Canadian national identity and self-image are constructed in opposition, as superior.
- It further highlights a discourse of 'gratefulness' which not only normalizes the processes of 'other'ing but also obscures the material inequalities –hardships- that were imposed on DPs, and which benefit the process of capitalist nation-building of Canada.

Method

- Keyword search: "Canada" AND "DP" in Globe and Mail through ProQuest
- 1945 to 1967
- Open coding on Zotero
- Summarize and Thematize



50,000th Refugee, Girl Hugs Mayor For G
The Globe and Mail (1936-); Feb 24, 1949; ProQuest
pg. 2

50,000th Refugee, Girl Hugs Mayor For Gift of Doll

Halifax, Feb. 23 (CP).—A tired little girl tonight sped toward reunion with her former father at New Hamburg, Ont., after a happy day in a fascinating new world.

Ausma Levalds, 8-year-old blond Latvian child, and 50,000th displaced person to come to Canada, arrived here today with 1,200 other storm-wearied DP's on the liner *Samaris*. The ship was 60 hours late, delayed by weather.

RECEIVES GIFT FROM CANADA



Photo courtesy Dept. Mines and Resources
Eight-year-old Ausma Levalds, newly arrived at the Port of Halifax from Latvia, receives a gift on behalf of the Minister of Mines and Resources from Mr. A. G. Christie, Immigration Inspector-in-Charge at Halifax.

Immigration policy background

- Restrictive immigration policies:
 - Series of the Chinese Immigration Acts and amendments 1885-1903, again 1923;,, Gentlemen's Agreement in 1908 against Japanese Immigration;,, Continuous Journey Regulation, 1908.
- Early 1900s: peculiar customs, habits, modes of life and methods of holding property are excluded, requirement of capital, physical and moral fitness
- Until 1914: (Always prefer) immigrants from Great Britain, then northwestern Europeans (and American) while allowing pockets of certain less preferred ethnicities (seen as races) for employment during economic boom (Baltic, Eastern and Southern Europeans) ¹
- 1931 order-in-council : the tightest immigration admissions policy in Canadian history. Admissible immigrants were limited to American and British subjects with enough capital to maintain themselves, agriculturalists with sufficient means to farm in Canada and the wives and minor children of Canadian residents.

1: Avery, D. (1995). *Reluctant Host: Canada's Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896-1994*. The Canadian Publishers

Immigration policy background

- 1929-39: Great Depression
- Between 1931-46: Department of Mines and Resources –Immigration Branch responsible for immigration, immigration discouraged
- 1946: “Bulk labour” schemes introduced by way of orders-in-council. –applied to Displaced Persons –and 1947 mobile immigration teams in Europe
- 1947: Canadian Citizenship Act: Canadians not British subjects anymore
- 1950: An overarching order-in-council: , expanding admission to other classes of European immigrants. +Department of Citizenship and Immigration was created
- 1951-52: A number of liberalizations: Germans, relatives, other classes/professions, allow some immigration from Asia (India-Pakistan), appeals for deportation allowed
- 1962, 1967: Immigration regulations: Elimination of race etc. rather focus on skills +sponsorship of relatives & points
- 1966: Creation of the Department of Manpower and Immigration



Who the DPs are

- Usually presented with ethnic (or religious –Jewish) origins, gender, occupation in Canada and their destination in Canada
- Came in two different streams, either way, IRO pays for their travel by sea
 - Relatives –private sponsor groups (changing definitions)
 - 'bulk labour' schemes –most discussed in Globe and Mail
- Both groups need to undergo health and security check-up – but the workers go through a selection process and are subject to a certain 'citizenship process' vetting
- Industries: mining, agriculture, bush workers/loggers to work in pulp in industry, lumber industry, logging industry, construction (hydro/railway), textile-garment industry, and health care assistants/domestics (for public institutions) and domestics for private families
- There is demand from these industries (and employers): as they are desperate to be saved from labour shortages, they apply to the government

Who the DPs are

Selection Agents Involved: IRO does medical tests; those who pass are interviewed by industry representatives (for women, YWCA or Catholic Women's League); physicians; immigration officials ensure their DP status; RCMP for political background –mainly non-communist

- **Selection Criteria:** the “deserving” immigrants are:
 - Morally and physically fit,
 - Suitable and needed for menial employment in specific industries and
 - Suitable for Canadian citizenship
- “Suitability for Canadian citizenship” involves two distinct “processes” that need to be completed, i.e., meeting two (freedom restricting) “conditions” for DP labourers in Canada:
 - **Conditional labour market participation:** contract completion, healthy, no-family, no labour union participation, no deportation -5 years of non-status,
 - **Acculturation to Canadian ways:** language, customs, free Democratic ways of Canada

Citizenship Process 1: Conditional Labour Market Participation

- 8 months to 2 years of contracts
- Contradictory reports on wage and working conditions
- Wage, living/sleeping/eating arrangements are taken out of the wages, and some forced savings are paid back to the DP upon the completion of the contract
- Completion highly encouraged, marked by ceremonies and/or certificates (normalization)
- Upon completion they are 'free' to get a job of their liking – and they have to continue proving that they are worthy of citizenship (five years)

2,300 European DP's Soon to Enjoy New Life in Canada's Minefields
The Globe and Mail (1936); Jan 1, 1948; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Globe and Mail
pg. 9

2,300 European DP's Soon to Enjoy New Life In Canada's Minefields

Team of Four Men
Selects Personnel
In German Camps

For more than 2,000 of Europe's long-suffering displaced persons, the dream of a worthwhile life is about to come true. In August 1948, a plane to live and eventual citizenship in a free country. With the cooperation of the Canadian Government and the International Refugee Organization, the mining industry of Canada is bringing 2,300 DP's to this country within the next six months.

Polish DP Puts on 28 Pounds During First Month in Canada

The Globe and Mail (1936); Jan 21, 1948; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Globe and Mail
pg. 2

Polish DP Puts on 28 Pounds During First Month in Canada

Kirkland Lake, Jan. 20 (Special). "How do we like Canada? We like it fine. In German labor camps we worked hard five years, no pay. Here we get big pay—no work."

That was one strapping big Pole's

although the farm workers fared better than some of those in the factories and at other employment in the towns, the farm ration was two ounces of black bread and a small can of soup a day.

"If we ever tried to smuggle an

DP Immigrants Impress Howe

Frankfurt, Aug. 11 (CP).—H. Hon. C. D. Howe, Canadian Reconstruction Minister, said today after visiting displaced persons camps here that he was "very favorably impressed" with D.P.'s in Germany as potential immigrants to Canada.

"I was pleased with what I saw," he said. "People seem clean and happy, busy learning skilled trades and anxious to do productive work. I get the impression they would be very desirable settlers for Canada."

64 DP's Get Certificates, Advised to 'Know Canada'

The Globe and Mail (1936); Jan 17, 1949; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Globe and Mail
pg. 17

64 DP's Get Certificates, Advised to 'Know Canada'

Several married couples were among the 64 new Canadians at Columbus Hall last evening who received from Controller David Balfour certificates issued by Federal Minister Humphrey Mitchell stating they had completed their year's contract with the government.

The event was sponsored by the Toronto Community Immigration Committee, which includes repre-

The Globe and Mail (1936); Jul 17, 1948; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Globe and Mail
pg. 10

DP Girls Treat Children As Well as Canadians Do

Canadian children are no different from others in their attitude to parents or strangers in the household who have come to help. And the European domestics (DP's) are no different from their Canadian sisters in their dealings with children.

The little Lithuanian DP who has been with his family a month "gets along splendidly" with his 6-year-old daughter, "much better than we expected," said Lou Kirsh of Forest Hill Village. "She is learning English, and doing fine, and the little girl likes her."

Citizenship Process 1: Conditional Labour Market Participation

Constructing the "Other": A Bag of Contradictions

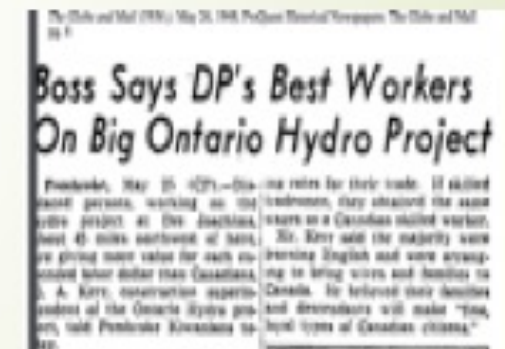
- **Health:** DPs are presented as
 - hungry, miserable, living on runny soup and black bread, in bad unheated houses with no food on plank beds, at the verge of collapse
 - –yet they are healthy ("good stock of people") and we want the healthiest, those who pass the tests, those who are "ready to tackle the bush."
- **Family:**
 - Heart breaking stories of losses of family/friends to Soviets, bombings, camps, lonely, homeless
 - –yet contracts don't allow family members to be brought in. In Canada; dramatic stories of family reunification upon DPs' hard work



Citizenship Process 1: Conditional Labour Market Participation

Constructing the "Other": A Bag of Contradictions

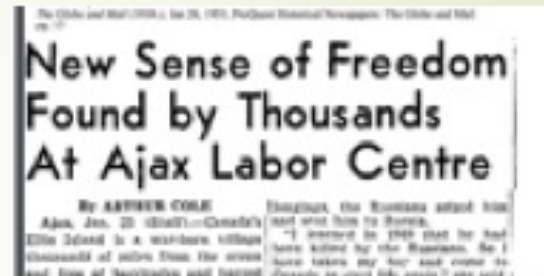
- **Skills:** have valuable "European skills"; educated DPs,
 - yet work menial jobs with gratitude; for accreditation they need capital and time (pass exams, go to school)
- **Hard work:** destitute, jobless, miserable, weak, slave labourer; industrious,
 - Yet, they want to come for hard work; receive high praise for their hard work; better than the Canadian worker, (or labelled as ungrateful when they don't work as hard, or skip from one farm to the next);
- **Unions:** Strategic inclusion of the DP 'other' in the nation as DPs are anti-union, and praised for not participating in unions and thus they are deemed better than Canadian workers. Labour Unions are criticized for being anti-immigrant and thus not wanting what is best for Canada



Citizenship Process 1: Conditional Labour Market Participation

■ In actuality versus in discourse:

- Newspaper discourse suggests that DPs are extremely willing and grateful for the job opportunities they have.
- Coming to Canada as DPs under these conditions is an opportunity for a new life, a resort from being 'slave labourer' and contracts are the price of passage. It is a fair exchange to dreamland, and an opportunity to get acculturated
- Yet, DPs save industries from labour and skill shortages, and secure extra profit (by working for less, and being obedient and controlled)
- They work under the threat of deportation, forced contracts, without families or union participation (other severe personal deprivations), and will be in limbo for another few years even after the completion of their contracts.



Citizenship Process 2: Acculturation Over Time

Construction of the "Other" versus Actuality

- **Language:** high volumes of reporting on their effort to learn (yet, they sometimes know many languages); have to learn before even bringing their families (in terms of importance); their English is accented.
- *Their construction as being linguistically inadequate, takes away from their labour contributions*
- **Civics:** they put in extreme effort to learn Canadian geography, history, law & customs and to conform on clothing; calls to Canadian people to invite them to picnics, homes etc. so that they can learn the Canadian ways; overall, they need to be taught all these.
- *Not having these skills is devaluing their ability to be recognized as equal participants in the making of the Canadian nation*

DP's in Mines Learning Customs of Canadians: European DP's Learn English, Like Life in Mining Towns
Hornack, Ben
The Globe and Mail (1936-); Feb 26, 1948; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Globe and Mail
pg. 13



European DP's Learn English, Like Life in Mining Towns



Ready for days that begin in gold mining, these Ukrainian displaced persons were underground before 5
first days. Children of the Canadian Royal Mining Association are now DP's in Germany after Canada as their second
choice as a haven. The U.S. states that, although more still, Canada 1948.

DP's Soon Adopt Canadian Costumes

The Globe and Mail (1936-); Nov 13, 1950; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Globe and Mail
pg. 16

DP's Soon Adopt Canadian Costumes

Examination, Nov. 12 (Staff).—The
young girls of Central Europe are
wearing their many-peticoated
national costumes in favor of blue
jeans and ballet slippers.
For most of them the transition
has been gradual. In many cases
although churches usually have very
little to do with it. And St. Kath-
arine's is an occasion on which any
one named Katherine or any one
who knows some one named Kath-
arine figures a celebration is in
order.
But on these special days the
A lot of them will wear costumes of
the homeland on such special days,
but in between such occasions the
maiden from Europe and the torn-
apart who have never been outside
Canada will look as much alike as the
young women will have difficulty in
deciding whether to say, "May I

Citizenship Process 2: Acculturation over Time

Construction of the "Other": Contradictions and Actualities

- Political Opinions: "Free Democratic Ways":
 - Hero vs victim** –they are freedom lovers and actively sought freedom and dignity by running away
 - Yet, they are also oppressed, terrorized by war and police, and rendered homeless so they need to be saved and re-taught the meaning of freedom*
- Communists are not allowed:
 - Canada is opposite of Communism:** a non-police state, where there is free speech. Canadian Reds presented as anti-democratic, aggressive verbally and physically towards DPs, who in turn despise them,
 - Yet, Canada needs to investigate the political beliefs of DPs before coming to Canada*
- A particular Canadian national identity, which excludes all communist or leftist elements, including that of the "Canadian" communists

They Don't Scare Easily

DP's Greatest Menace To Communists Here, Know Reds' Strategy

This is the first of two articles dealing with the winning battle being waged by Displaced Persons to smash the hold of communism.

stone's throw from Alexandra Park. To him the situation is reduced to simple terms: The Communists hate the DP's and the DP's hate the

They Know Freedom

By Frank Tumpene

Most of us Canadians have had, we are maintaining my responsibility with an arduous discipline which is the basis of the new world.

The new world is the stage where we should be playing as a political system. Many of us don't believe many of the things we read about communism. It is a strange thing, we know, isn't it? But that's the way it is. I don't think we will get along very well together.

DP's Deserve Protection

Russia's charges that Displaced Persons in Canada are being "exploited" is ludicrous, and those who Communists have been among the first to deny the allegations. Tumpene's purpose in broadcasting the charges cannot be overlooked, however.

Displaced Persons brought into Canada are neither Communists nor Communist sympathizers. For the most part they, and their families still in Europe, are very actively against Soviet despots. The only exploitation to which they have been subjected has been the attempt to smuggle into their groups a number

A DP Gives Thanks and a Warning
The Globe and Mail (1946); Jul 22, 1949; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Globe and Mail
 pg. 6

A DP Gives Thanks and a Warning

As a DP, may I take this opportunity to thank you for your excellent articles and also very much thanks to your correspondent Mr. R. Hyman. I was also pleasantly surprised with editorial article in 28th July, 1949: "Let the DP's help us."

Time or the Communist propaganda in Canada for persecuted anti-Maltese is open to them for discussion. We know all our ways. Our position to the country of this situation is different from British, "drama." They can see the British and other countries. We Canadian people would not say have only one country and looked after them. We are Canadians too. Therefore it would be a very easy job that we will fight for. Therefore it would be a very easy job that we will fight for. Therefore it would be a very easy job that we will fight for. Therefore it would be a very easy job that we will fight for.

DP's Refute Reds, Like Democracy
The Globe and Mail (1946); May 25, 1949; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Globe and Mail
 pg. 2

DP's Refute Reds, Like Democracy

Winnipeg, May 24 (CPI).—Recent Soviet charges that Canada is exploiting displaced persons now living in the Dominion were vigorously refuted by a statement issued by the Canadian branch of the International League of Human Rights.

a statement issued by the Canadian branch of the International League of Human Rights.

a part: "We

The Globe and Mail (1946); May 31, 1947; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Globe and Mail
 pg. 15

Displaced Persons

Canada Seen Good Field For Refugees

London, May 30 (Reuters).—Canada is regarded as one of the most promising fields for displaced persons. Sir Herbert Emerson, director-general of the inter-governmental committee on refugees, told delegates of 58 countries as they began work on solving the problems of displaced persons.

New World

72,000 DP's Find Haven In Canada

Ottawa, Dec. 2. — Canada, the first overseas nation to establish a mass immigration program for displaced persons, has today announced that it has accepted 72,000 such persons since the war.

War-Wracked Girls Find Haven in Canada



DP's Waiting for Miracle To Take Them To Canada

"Displaced persons didn't think we were in the D.P. camps where I worked. They thought we were in the camps where they had nothing to do. We were about," said Margaret J. Stewart, who was with UNRRA as chief welfare officer for the U.S. zone in Germany, and has returned to Toronto.



Discourse of Gratitude

- Discourse to obscure the (super) exploitative material conditions of labour market participation and devalorization of DPs' skills, and normalize a vision of capitalist development
- Reiterates the 'other' VS 'Canadian'
- Canada claims
 - an "honest-to-goodness hospitality"
 - it has superior political, legal, economic, social, and cultural lifestyle
 - It offers a fair exchange because it offers a home, land of opportunity and hope, of freedom, equality, democracy (non-Communist) - "a kind of life the DPs never knew before"
 - It claims to be (Samaritan) benefactor, saviour/ liberator, teacher
- Globe and Mail helps build a national identity –at a particular time and space conjuncture with a particular group of immigrants.



Future work

- Work in progress, to include other immigrant groups, other time periods and possibly Toronto Star.
- Part of a larger interdisciplinary study by an international research team consisting of Social Scientists and Computer Scientists from SMU, Dalhousie University and Universidad Nacional del Sur (Argentina)
- Objective:
 - to develop a trainable, novel Natural Language Processing and Visual Analytics tool,
 - to facilitate, expand, and produce semantically nuanced text-intensive research in Social Sciences and contribute to the 'state of art' in Computer Science.
- Visanmigration.ca

THANK YOU