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Welcome to Canada



Alberta Janitorial Co-op president Luis Bogas hopes for a better life for immigrant janitors. Story page 2.

photo by Sheila Kushniruk

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Immigrant workers organize

By Sheila Kushniruk

Exploitation in the workforce happens everyday, especially for foreign domestic workers and immigrant janitors. These occupations employ a large number of foreign-born people as the work requires a minimum working knowledge of English.

Because of exploitation, immigrant janitors can make more money on welfare than they can through working, said Luis Bogas. As president of the Alberta Janitorial Co-op Luis is hoping to change that by getting contracts and hiring janitors (immigrants or native-Canadians). He would ensure the workers get fairer wages and a benefit package.

The co-op began in September of 1990 and was incorporated by the province January 1991. Luis has met with dozens of government ministers, labor leaders, big businesses and media, but to date the co-op has no work contracts.

"It seems these important people don't care about these immigrants," said Luis.

With a waiting list of over 200 people wanting work as janitors, the co-op is asking for work not handouts. "The co-op gives a light of hope, a way to receive good wages and good payment without welfare," said Luis.

The co-op has bid on jobs, but because other companies are bidding low and sub-contracting out the work for minimum wage, the co-op can't

compete.

He said many immigrants are working for these sub-contractors and it is common for them to not receive any benefits or overtime and cleaning supplies must be bought out of their own wages. This results in their pay being minimum wage at best and they must pay for their own Alberta

"They are working hard and receiving nothing. It's easier to receive money from the government"

Health Care, etc.

Sub-contracting is prohibited on federal contracts, but Luis said about 80 per cent of the work is still being sublet out and the government does nothing about it. He followed all the rules when he bid on government tenders, but by doing so he ended up with a bid which was too high. Companies that win the contracts are breaking the tender rules, said Luis.

He said these companies are getting away with exploiting workers because the language barrier often stops a search for help. Welfare begins to look better than working for less than minimum wage.

"They are working hard and

receiving nothing. It's easier to receive money from the government."

Luis was promised \$1,400 a month at his first job in Canada. When he only received \$940 he was told to go somewhere else if he wanted better. He had worked from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. seven days a week for the whole month with no pay for overtime and no benefits.

He was let go from another janitorial job when the employer found out Luis wanted to start a janitor's co-op. "I was told I was too intelligent to work there - nothing personal," said Luis.

At least with welfare, benefits such as Alberta Health Care are paid on top of a monthly cheque. It may be easier to stay on welfare, but Luis said it does nothing for



English Language Professionals Inc. help immigrants prepare to enter the workforce through job placement and group interaction.

photo by Sheila Kushniruk

the government cheque so she can get a toy. So you feel bad and useless. You're angry."

Luis said if the co-op could just get work it could cut down welfare payments substantially.

Foreign domestic workers (nannies and housekeepers) have problems too. While they are not immigrants, they have come to Canada under the Foreign Domestic Program and most go on to apply for landed immigrant status.

The association helps the workers by trying to rectify problems with the employer first and Labor Standards, Human Rights or Immigration if necessary.

Workers often don't know their rights or there is a language barrier which makes the association vital.

Leonida said she has two cases where a nanny has been ill and not allowed sick leave. One of the nannies had been employed in the home for over three years and had never had a sick day before, yet when she couldn't even get out of bed she was told she must wait for her vacation to have time off.

one's self esteem. He feels it causes tension in the home because immigrants are used to having to work to live and being without a job is demeaning.

"In my country I bought every toy for my children. In Canada the government buys the toys for my kids. My young daughter doesn't ask me to buy toys, she waits for

The domestic workers are not covered under the province's minimum wage legislation because they are given room and board by their employers. Without the protection employers can cheat workers out of overtime or sick leave said Leonida Hains, who is president of the International Homemakers Association.

Betty Padua is a former president of the Alberta Domestic Workers Association. She knows of cases where a domestic worker has been promised nice accommodation only to find they are expected to sleep in the basement storage area. About \$300 a month is usually deducted from the salary to cover room and board.

Betty dealt with another case where the domestic worker had to share a room with a baby and was expected to care for the child through the night as well as day, with no overtime pay.

Another nanny is in a home where she is not allowed to make phone calls or have friends over, but Betty said that is a rare mistreatment.

Language barriers often cause misunderstandings with the contract and the workers have nowhere to go except to their association to get help. Many of the foreign domestic workers coming to Canada don't know about the association and because of their isolation they may never find out.

"They're happy for an opportunity to get into Canada, but some areas are very unfair," said Leonida.

Leonida raised the subject at a minimum wage symposium where she was told it merited further discussion. Betty has also handed a petition to Family and Social Services asking for the domestic workers to be included in labor laws, but to date there has been no word on the outcome.

Celebrate Caring

Give To The ONECAUSE

That Helps So Many

Edmonton immigrants often exploited and harassed

By Sheila Kushniruk

Being a visible minority immigrant in Edmonton can be a real curse. It often means discrimination in the workforce and harassment outside of work.

Training from their native land generally isn't recognized by Canadian employers. Immigrants must settle for less and hope for better.

Barbara came to Canada about 30 years ago from an Island in the Caribbean. She is a short, black woman which in her eyes equals three strikes against her.

She is a professional and has trained many people under her, but when it comes time for promotions or for taking over when the boss leaves, she has been overlooked. The promotions and responsibility go to people under Barbara and she is still expected to help these people along.

"People are prepared to realize you have a lot of strengths, but it doesn't translate into a promotion when the opportunity comes."

She feels she must work harder than her co-workers and be twice as good because she is paving the way for other minorities. "You can't make a mistake or you're no longer one of the boys."

Amil has lived in Edmonton for

eight years. When he tried to find work in chemistry he was always asked if he had Canadian experience. He would respond by saying he had only been in the country for a few months and had no Canadian experience. He would urge them to give him a chance but they would not. Instead he found a job as a taxi driver.

Besides constantly being asked where he was from, Amil often got asked for drugs or had people refuse to ride with him even though his cab was first in the wait-line at a terminal. He has been called derogatory names and was once excluded from a company social event when he worked for a shipping business.

He has been invited over the phone to come in for a job interview, only to arrive and have the person who is hiring take one look at him and turn him away. Upon questioning why, he was told they didn't believe he could do the job.

Now Amil has obtained Canadian training in social work and is looking for employment, yet he has been told his accent is a concern.

Jackie has been in Canada for 22 years and holds a degree in social work. She has been hired to fill many temporary positions, but when the job changes to permanent she is let go for various reasons. "They never come right out and

say you're gone because you're black, but when your temporary position is done, they find an excuse not to hire you full time."

Carlos Pilquil has been in Canada for 16 years. When he first arrived and discovered the English he learned back in Chile was not enough to allow him to function in the workplace, he was told by the government his limited knowledge was going to have to be enough because English as a second language courses were all full with waiting lists.

He worked for three years as a janitor in a hospital and had hopes of becoming a porter. Every time a porter job came up Carlos was overlooked. The turnover rate of porters was high and yet every time Carlos applied he was told they found a more suitable candidate.

"Hatred wells up inside of you, but you think one day we will get our chance."

Debbie has lived in Edmonton for 24 years and has often run up against racism in the workplace. Trained in data-entry, she has been hired and fired many times for reasons she still

accused her of refusing to do something.

A Human Rights inquiry into the incident revealed the staff was consulted before Debbie was hired to ensure no one minded working with a black person.

At other data entry jobs she has been called a security risk, had locks changed on her and been told she doesn't socialize enough with co-workers. She has been screamed at and humiliated in front of co-workers and not paid for attending courses while colleagues are paid. Debbie's most recent dismissal caused a co-worker to offer to testify on her behalf if she were to take the case to Human Rights. The option is there for Debbie, but she said everything is too hard to prove.

Azam Siddiqui has been in Canada for 25 years and holds four degrees in education and administration, yet he has been forced to work as a substitute teacher for the last eight years.

He said he is the last to be hired and the first to be fired, still without explanation.

When he has worked as a teacher he is forced to handle twice the workload of co-workers then told he doesn't socialize with others. "There is no leisure to do so...The quality of life for Indian/Pakistani teachers is not the same as others."

At one point he became so disheartened with his treatment in Canada he went to teach in Nigeria for eight years hoping when he returned to Canada, to his family, he would be able to find



*New Canadians have a lot to offer, but they are often overlooked.
photo by Sheila Kushniruk*

Carlos upgraded his English on his own whenever he could and took any jobs that came along. "In the 1970s discrimination wasn't too bad because they needed us (immigrants). People landed good jobs and we were left with the bottom of the barrel."

doesn't know. Working at a clothing factory in 1981 she was told by her supervisor she was "Black and lazy." That same supervisor later told her 'It has been said that Negroes are lazy and I would hate to take you as an example.' Her supervisor fired her shortly after when a fellow worker wrongly

Native-born Edmontonians face racism too

Racism reaches blacks who are born and raised in Edmonton, not just visible minority immigrants.

Malcolm Thomas has been confronted by skinheads with shotguns, but he said the real problem is with mainstream society where minorities are often viewed and treated with less respect.

"Minorities are raised with feelings they're bad for how they look, how they act and how they speak," said Malcolm.

Minority students have no sense of self worth as they only see the worst depictions of their ancestors in history books, said Malcolm, while European students are associated with grand aristocracy. History doesn't start at the beginning, it is taught from where white people intervened in other cultures, he said.

He has had bad experiences in the school system and now he has graduated he keeps running into racism daily whether it be at university or on the street.

We expect to be treated badly... We don't have the luxury to let our guards down."

Government initiatives in employment equity are important, but Malcolm said the policy is not enforced even in the External Affairs Department where he was employed last summer.

The time has come for minorities to be hired over whites when all the qualifications are equal, said Malcolm. This would give minorities the advantage white people have enjoyed for decades. He also sees the education curriculum has to be redesigned to give people historically accurate information and teach respect.

"We expect to be treated badly... We don't have the luxury to let our guards down."

Part of the problem is the world's economic system is based on exploitation, said Malcolm, and that must change. "I have a tremendous view of how happy we can be... Strive for friendship instead of objects."

June Sheppard Writes

Change

I was in my mid teens in Edmonton. A girlfriend and I frequently set out for an evening walk from Norwood where we lived to the downtown centre of the city for window-shopping.

It was a much smaller, safer city then, even as dark descended. Nevertheless, it was reassuring to pass the policeman working his beat - conscientiously trying the locks on the many small stores along Jasper Avenue. Remember, those were "pre-mall" times!

Some thirty years or so later as an Edmonton Journal columnist, I was interviewing two native women of my acquaintance. They recalled how they too as teens like to stroll together as the last rays of the sun tinted a small nearby lake. But as they made their casual way over a rough gravel road, an RCMP car carrying two officers would shadow them.

"After all, we were native girls idly strolling along and in the general direction of the town too", one woman said. "It was just assumed were probably up to no good". Her voice was bitter.

Recently I attended a conference on the U of A campus - "Police Powers in Democratic Societies." I listened to academics (no women, by the way!) from across Canada and found my thoughts going back to the stereotyped assumptions so readily made about two young

Continued from page 5

work.

In Nigeria he was considered a scholar and by the time he left he had been promoted to Dean of a faculty. Upon his return he had to try and upgrade in areas where teachers were scarce and still was denied jobs.

Friends have recommended he downgrade his credentials and change his name to get a job, but he will not hear of it.

"In a multicultural society you can find a place for me too. If you say it's not a multicultural society then fine, I will not expect to be treated equally."

"They have reduced me - a scholar, to a destitute. It's your culture which will suffer because of denying me."

doesn't come easy to our police forces

aboriginal girls so long ago.

A phrase used by one speaker - "police burdened by history" sharpened my awareness of how immovable a roadblock to progress thinking in stereotypes always is.

Racism is still "alive and unwell" in our midst.

Some initiatives are being taken by police forces in Canada to try to improve relations. Edmonton, for instance, voluntarily adopted employment equity programs last year, the ultimate goal being commitment to the police force reflecting the make-up of the society at large.

However, I gather there are no set deadlines for this and, based on the word of the police chief that he "made every effort" to meet the goals, no sanctions will be applied if it fails. That does sound a trifle limp!

Recruitment of ethnic minorities into the force runs into understandable barriers - understandable when you consider that many of these people carry to our country unhappy and even terrifying memories of police from their homelands. Can they be convinced that policing is a "noble profession"? Not overnight, I suggest.

Police organizations are dominated by white males. Those minorities visible by the color of their skin

may well wonder about promotion opportunities for them in the force.

The Quebec Human Rights Commission was told that having ethnic and visible minorities on police forces serves only to increase prejudice against people already held by police officers.

Hostility between police and aboriginal people has a long history, one reason being the almost complete lack of say they have ever had about policy priorities in their communities and on their reserves.

It does seem that some policing organizations are coming to realize how vital sincere collaboration with people is, together with an honest



June Sheppard

attempt to understand their values customs, history and hopes.

But it's obvious there is a woefully long way to go. Illustrating this was a report at the conference from Dr. Harish Jains of McMaster University, a charter member of the Police Minority Liaison Committee.

He reported that 251 municipal police officers in two major Canadian cities whose attitudes were tested revealed "irrational judgments of ethnic culture groups, an appalling lack of awareness or knowledge or sensitivity about their cultural or social diversity," although they were right in their own communities.

Racism is still "alive and unwell" in our midst.

Much more recently than that we have been shaken by the shooting deaths of two black men at the hands of white police officers in the province of Quebec.

Definitive comment at the time of this writing cannot fairly be made. But in the view of historical facts on the subject of attitudes towards visible minorities, one cannot escape the fear that racial prejudice could well have helped pull the trigger.

One thing is apparent. We need to build a truly representative police organization - one that differs in structure, attitudes and methods from the British, the American or whoever. Ours must be an organization of the future - too many of those we emulate are based in the past. Perhaps then we could help the police officer to lay down "the burden of history."

Barriers can be broken down

In speaking with ten Edmonton immigrants about exploitation in the workforce, the situation does not seem hopeless. Their suggestions for change include hiring more visible minorities in schools, government, business, industry and the media.

Many felt employment equity is not enforced and it should be in both government and private industry. "More effort has to be made to get visible minorities in every area of the workforce, not just token positions, but positions of authority," said Barbara.

Several felt the government is afraid to offend the people who elect them and changes made are to appease immigrants rather than from a genuine spirit of recognizing dignity.

All agreed that a visible minority person must be qualified in every aspect to get a job, but when all else is equal in candidates favor should be given to the minority for a change.

Furthermore, several felt an accent should not bar anyone from being considered for a job as long as the person speaks clearly and can be understood.

Other government programs do not receive the level of funding they should (such as English as a second language courses). "If they want us to speak perfect English they're not putting the money into the lessons," said Carlos Pequil.

Ibrahim Alladin is the director of education and multiculturalism for Edmonton Immigrant Services and he knows the problems in our city. He said racism follows economic trends. If there is high unemployment and competition for jobs racism is prevalent. Target groups also change, but Ibrahim said racism often stems

"Employers say 'You don't have Canadian experience,' even in janitorial positions. What has Canadian experience go to do with washing floors?"

Ibrahim said immigrants often don't know their rights and aren't aggressive enough to pursue



Children at St. Catherine's Elementary School play together without notice of color or race.

from manual workers who tend to be territorial and protective. "Communities should be aware immigrants are not here to do our dirty work."

He said tolerance is not the issue. We should be learning cultural differences and how to accommodate them.

"Communities should be aware immigrants are not here to do our dirty work."

Immigrants are constantly confronted with requests for Canadian experience when they apply for jobs which in Ibrahim's eyes is a subtle way to discriminate against someone.

breaches. Information has to be made available to them on the laws which protect their rights. More access to learning programs are needed, especially English as a second language he said. Funding should be increased to help deal with the backlog. He knows of immigrants who have been here for years before they attend.

Any effort must be made with genuine commitment. Ibrahim said by becoming more accepting of others it will also help to stop various ethnic groups from pulling away into factions; when people come together the country can begin to think about unity.

Potholes and people: a battle for priorities

October 3 was a hopeful day. It was a day when human services were given equal priority with city infrastructure in budget theory. Edmonton's Mayor Jan Reimer put people first as she spoke at a luncheon hosted by the Edmonton Social Planning Council.

About 200 people sat in the grand Empire Ballroom of the Hotel Macdonald listening to Mayor Reimer as she addressed "Potholes and Human Services: Setting Priorities Within Tight Budgets." Guests ranged from city officials and media to members of various local social agencies.

"We need to invest more in the development of our human resources with a priority on meeting basic human needs. We need to

shift toward preventive efforts with the goal of reducing the need for costly crisis-intervention" said Reimer.

The crowd appreciated her insight as she compared the language used in Council debate on money matters.

"When a low-cost housing proposal comes before Council the debate is all about whether we can afford it or not. When the request is for many millions more for a ball park or a concert hall, the language is all about investment, opportunity and economic spinoffs."

Reimer emphasized the need for governments to get away from the 'crisis mentality'.

"While the crisis deepens there is supposedly no money for basic human needs like food, shelter and child care

which would go a long way to preventing expensive health and crisis intervention costs."

"When a low-cost housing proposal comes before Council the debate is all about whether we can afford it or not. When the request is for many millions more for a ball park or a concert hall, the language is all about investment, opportunity and economic spinoffs."

Governments were also criticised by Reimer for getting into jurisdictional disputes.

"Children in need should not be the victims of endless disputes whether they are a federal, provincial, civic responsibility or under the school board for that matter."

She suggested that instead of treating everyone equally, governments and agencies move toward equitable treatment according to need - putting resources where they're needed most.

A call was made for a practical review of human service roles among government levels to bring together resources to solve society's problems.

"A lot of time and money is spent these days telling people why nothing can be done about problems; it might be better spent doing something."



Mayor Jan Reimer accepts a gift of thanks from Council board member Michael Phair. Deloris Piper signed the Mayor's luncheon speech.

Preston and the Reformers shoot for the big time

By Jonathan Murphy

With a federal election less than two years away, social justice advocates should be preparing to lobby the next national government. The problem is that it could include almost any permutation of five political parties representing conflicting ideologies and allegiances. Conservative, Liberal and even New Democratic governments are pretty much a known quantity. The Bloc Quebecois is an unknown, but its fate likely depends upon the outcome of Meech II, and its social policy positions will probably be incoherent, given the varied backgrounds of its elected members and its inherent opposition to federally-driven programs. That leaves the Reform Party.

Reform first emerged into a sceptical world in 1987. Most Canadians who even noticed its birth assumed it was just another in the long line of short-lived conservative and western separatist parties which seem to breed in the fertile ground of Alberta's bible belt. By 1990, with Deborah Grey and Stan Waters both elected to Parliament, it was obvious Reform was going to buck the tradition of impotent Western alienation. Today, Reform is ahead of the Conservatives in opinion polls outside Quebec [*Globe and Mail*, November 4 1991].

Of all its policies, the Reform Party takes its hardest line on immigration. The Party calls for

the suspension of constitutional protections to allow the immediate deportation of 'illegal immigrants', and even argues a constitutional amendment may be needed to enshrine



Jonathan Murphy

this denial of human rights. It further claims that immigration should not be designed to solve "the crisis of the welfare state through forced growth population policy", without saying why our underpopulated country should not use immigration as one tool to counter declining population growth. And, although no federal government has ever suggested otherwise, Reform's manifesto is at pains to point out that immigration policy should not be "explicitly designed to radically alter the ethnic make-up of Canada, as it increasingly seems to be" [*Saturday Night*, December 1990].

As for multiculturalism, Reform's stance is also strident. Preston Manning has a message to immigrants: "Look, we made a mistake in the past when our politicians met you at the boat and offered you a grant to preserve the culture you were leaving." To rectify this 'mistake', he calls for "the abolition

of hyphenated Canadianism, which has troubled this country for the last fifty years" [Alberta Report, September 3, 1990]. The Party plans to abolish the federal Department of Multiculturalism and eliminate the use of tax revenues to support 'ethnocultural' activities [Reform Party Blue Book - Policies and Principles, 1990].

In contrast, Reform does not recommend the abolition of funding for private schools, which are generally attended by Canadians of particular ethnic and religious backgrounds. In an interview with *First Reading*, Stephen Harper, Chief Policy Analyst with the Party, argued that "Its best not to set standards on an issue like that ... I'm not philosophically opposed to the funding of religious and ethnic schools ... I would not advocate using federal spending power to legislate criteria." Reform's vision of 'One Canada' does not apparently extend to the generally white, conservative groups of European origin who wish to retain their ethnic and religious identity through private schooling.

On many other social issues, the Reform Party's policies are best described as mainstream conservative. In a 1990 interview, party leader Manning asserted that "We are getting to the end of the road where taxpayers can finance the welfare state and the large bureaucracy" [*Winnipeg Free Press*, June 10, 1990]. There will be "an inevitable reduction in the sum total of social spending", says Stephen Harper, and in these circumstances "We have always advocated the targetting of social spending."

Reform is opposed to the Mulroney government's policies of universality with clawbacks: "If you were in a sinking boat, without enough lifejackets for everybody, wouldn't you give the lifejackets to the people who couldn't swim rather than those who could?"

The Party believes that social programs should be decentralized, with programs delivered at the municipal and community level through local boards. This theme is reminiscent of the social policy practised by Alberta's long-time Social Credit provincial government, which is not surprising. After all, Manning's father Ernest was Premier during most of the Social Credit era. The young Preston himself provided theoretical rationalization for Socred programs which included municipally-directed preventive social services, community development with Alberta's Native people, and deinstitutionalization of psychiatric patients [Government of Alberta, *White Paper on Human Resources Development*, 1967].

Reformers are wary of tampering with Medicare: "It's qualitatively different from income support programs; the need for service is unrelated to income level." Nevertheless, the Party does advocate the loosening of Canada Health Act regulations which forbid the implementation of user-pay schemes.

Despite its policies on multiculturalism and immigration, the Party seems surprisingly moderate on some other human rights issues. Asked about the Party's policy towards gay rights, Harper claims the Party does have homosexual members, and that "We are basically civil libertarian ... We do not have a conservative social engineering agenda ... We do not tolerate acts of violence against homosexuals ... We would not support legislation that

discriminated on the basis of sexual orientation." At the same time, the Party "does not necessarily support" the inclusion of sexual orientation as a prohibited ground for discrimination under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

An astute politician, Preston Manning has steered Reform away from its roots as fast as its growth has endowed it

Canada, and especially the rural West, has been ignored and patronized by governments dominated by central Canadian agendas.

One reason the Reform Party appeals to many rural people is because it espouses local-directed and delivered services. While decentralization has dangers, it can also be flexible and innovative. The



with respectability and the chance of power. It has already abandoned its first rallying cry of "The West wants in", so that it could appeal to Ontario and Eastern Canada. In order to secure the financial and media support it needs from business, it has dropped opposition to the widely unpopular Goods and Services Tax.

Manning's dilemma is that the rabble-rousing, populist message is what motivates many of his hard-core supporters. The more the Party apes the policies of the Tories, the more acceptable it is to the business class, but the less reason it has for an independent existence.

Human service advocates also face a dilemma in reacting to the growth of Reform. It would be easy to dismiss the Party, except this also dismisses its legions of supporters in rural Alberta and elsewhere, and will further exacerbate their legitimate feelings of isolation and impotence. Western

Family and Community Support Services program originally developed by Ernest Manning's Social Credit government has made Alberta a leader in community-based programming, envied by other provinces. When Reform reaches into the positive traditions of Prairie populism and supports local initiatives, it deserves a fair hearing and constructive input.

But when the Reformers sow discord and intolerance, as they do with their policies on race and immigration, the contempt and anger they reap is fully deserved.



Facts dispel racist myths on immigrants

A publication recently released by the Economic Council of Canada sheds some light on a few misconceptions about immigrants. "New Faces in the Crowd - Economic and Social Impacts of Immigration" is their 1991 statement. Below are several pertinent excerpts.

"The bulk of the evidence favors the conclusion that a steady level of immigration, whether low or high, will not cause any unemployment. The main reason is that the number of firms will expand steadily, in these circumstances, to create the needed new jobs...

We conclude that immigration does enhance economic efficiency in Canada. The gain, which is achieved by exploiting the additional scale economies created by a larger population, is probably a very small one...

The relative distribution of population and economic power among the provinces is not very sensitive to immigration...

In 1986, approximately 16 per cent of Canada's 25 million people had come to this country as immigrants...The majority of immigrants came to Canada as young adults; their dependency ratio (the proportion of those aged 14 and under and aged 65 and over) is much lower than that of the native born (Canadians)...

Immigrants who came to Canada during the 1980s are somewhat less

educated than their predecessors - though they are better educated than the native-born, and they are somewhat less proficient in either English or French than either the Canadian-born population or earlier immigrant cohorts...

There is no conclusive evidence that the new immigrant groups experience significantly more unemployment than traditional groups...

The 1986 census shows that, contrary to popular belief, the proportion of welfare recipients among recent immigrants (12.5 per cent) is smaller than among native-born Canadians (13.8 per cent)...

There are strong indications that education and experience acquired abroad pay much less, in terms of earnings, than they do if obtained in Canada...It takes all but the youngest immigrants up to 20 years to catch up to the earnings of Canadians, though catch up they nearly always do...

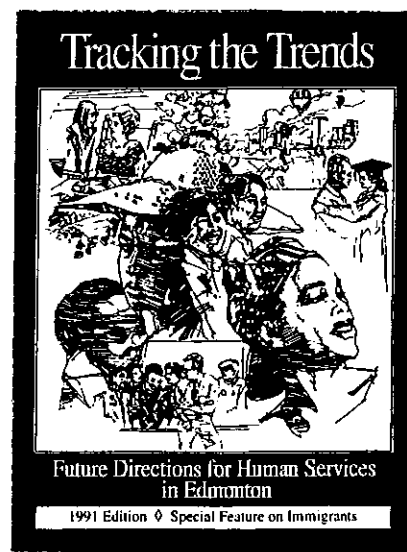
The only really risky situations, anywhere in Canada, are those where unemployment is high or where the increase in the proportion of visible-minority immigrants is unusually rapid. Both types of situations tend to decrease tolerance...

The 1986 census shows that, contrary to popular belief, the proportion of welfare recipients among recent immigrants (12.5 per cent) is smaller than among native-born Canadians (13.8 per cent)."

The Autumn 1991 Canadian Social

Trends publication put out by Statistics Canada said "The visible minority population represented 6.3 per cent of Canadian adults who worked sometime in 1985 or 1986. They had an unemployment rate that was only slightly higher than the national average (10.8 per cent compared with 10.3 per cent) and an educational attainment higher than the Canadian population (14 per cent had a university degree, compared with just under 10 per cent of Canadians overall). Nonetheless, in 1985, their average employment income (\$27,900 for men and \$18,900 for women) was lower than that of Canadians overall. (Canadian men made \$30,500, while women made \$20,000 on average)."

For more information and statistics on Canada's immigrants consult **Tracking the Trends 1991 Edition**, which is put out by the Edmonton Social Planning Council together with several other agencies.



Council, businesses tackle employment barriers

Businesses will soon be able to get help multiculturalizing. The Edmonton Social Planning Council is working on a training package which will offer organizations a base for teaching their staff to understand and work with minorities and immigrants. It would assist the businesses in modifying goals, programs, personnel practices and services.

The package is aimed at dismantling barriers which immigrants and minorities face when they seek employment.

The project is in the works and project co-ordinator Pearl Bennett hopes to have the package ready for testing in late winter. The package will be easily modified to

suit the specific requirements of the organizations involved.

Assisting the Council in the development of the package is an advisory committee made up of members of minority groups, representatives from government and two Alberta corporations, as well as Council Board members and business people.



The committee has completed the first phase of the project, reviewing existing programs in Edmonton and area and is engaged in discussions on program models and program content.

The committee is committed to addressing the point of view of immigrants and minorities and the point of view of the business community. Employment equity legislation has also been identified as an area needing special attention. The committee then hopes to move on to strategies for working in an intercultural, multiracial environment.

It is a challenging process that requires time commitment and resources. While many organizations understand the need to adopt strategies that would accomplish change they appear to experience difficulty doing so. The package will make the subject more approachable and give helpful guidelines to achieve the goal of multiculturalizing.

Who's new at E.S.P.C.

The Edmonton Social Planning Council has four new staff members.

Pearl Bennett was hired on contract mid-September to develop a training package to help businesses multiculturalize. Pearl is still working on the project, but she is now a full time social planner with the Council.



Pearl Bennett

Alison MacDonald

Pearl has a background in arts, education and multiculturalism and is a well-known advocate for immigrants

Alison has worked with a variety of agencies such as child welfare,

and visible minorities in Edmonton.

Alison MacDonald also joins the staff as a social planner. She has returned to Alberta after five years in Ottawa where she obtained her Masters in social work and worked with the Canada Safety Council.

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Feds push big business agenda - McQuaig

The future of the Canada we know is in jeopardy according to author/journalist Linda McQuaig.

"The New Business Agenda" was presented to about 100 socially-minded people Sept. 27. It was co-sponsored by the Edmonton Social Planning Council as McQuaig was touring across Canada to promote her new book "The Quick and the Dead."



Linda McQuaig autographs a copy of her book "The Quick and the Dead."

"It's imperative we go in the opposite direction of what big business wants," urged McQuaig.

She said Prime Minister Brian Mulroney along with his Conservative government has been lured into an agenda of big business. This agenda is threatening medicare and other

social programs. McQuaig said the government is making Canadians believe there is not enough money to run the government, causing a huge deficit.

McQuaig argued that by putting more money into social programs the government would increase productivity rather than lower it as we are led to believe.

A point was made of the irony created by big business urging restraint when they have never suffered cut backs. She suggested government could save one billion dollars per year by simply

disallowing the business/entertainment deductions for income taxes which big business enjoys.

Eight billion dollars worth of tax breaks are used yearly by big businesses said McQuaig.

McQuaig suggested Canada is following a dangerous path as it heads toward international free trade and globalization. She said the process makes the rich richer and it could throw Canada into an international bidding war to offer the lowest possible

wages in the hopes of attracting big business.

"It's a race for the bottom."

She said Canada will end up as a branch plant economy where all the company head offices will be in another country and money made in Canada will be flowing out of the country. She said the corporations must put money back into Canada. Goods stored here for distribution should have a requirement that would see processing of data in Canada before export.

Changes in the world's economy were seen as catalysts for Canada, but she said the country need not agree to the political changes which government is saying go hand and hand with economic changes. She told the audience there is more than enough money to run the government, it is the interest payments which are staggering.

Her analogy put big business together with the government in causing interest rates to remain high which in turn keeps wage demands in line. She said workers keep their demands modest when they see higher demands cause inflation.

Her message to social agencies was to make the public aware of how serious the problem is. "Mulroney has done this in such a sneaky way," said McQuaig, but she pointed out the Liberal party carries the same agenda and would probably be willing to go almost as far as the Conservative government has to please big business.

Inside Oka

Geoffrey York describes the stand-off at Oka as the most bizarre story he has ever covered. As a Globe and Mail journalist he spent three weeks reporting from inside of the Warrior lines and has written a book *People of the Pines: The Warriors and the Legacy of Oka*.

York shared his experiences with about 50 people October 16 at a public lecture sponsored by the Edmonton Social Planning Council

With search lights constantly moving above him, phone lines cut off and constant confrontations on the edge of bloodshed, York said he began to wonder "What kind of a country is this?" Mohawks and the journalists inside were isolated and he said the army tried to make their lives as miserable as possible to get them to leave the Kanesatake Reserve.

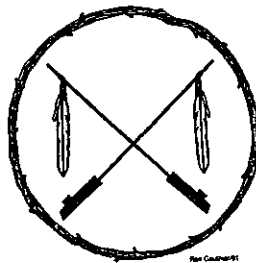
Amidst all the chaos York said a Mohawk traditional wedding ceremony took place in one of the final days of the stand-off. He remembered the military helicopters flying overhead trying to figure out what was going on.

The people of Kanesatake paid a large price and have reaped few of the benefits which resulted from the crisis, said York. It was the first time the Canadian Army was used against the people of Canada since the FLQ crisis and the first war zone in Canada since the Riel Rebellion of 1885.

York said the Canadian Armed Forces took more of an interest in

handling the situation peacefully than did the Quebec police force. The armed forces led Quebec police to believe an airlift of the Warriors was to take place, he said. The move was to take off some of the pressure to attack the barricades.

In over 200 interviews made for the book, York said he was unable to find anyone that witnessed the death of the Quebec police officer. An investigation by the Montreal Police (where only Quebec police were interviewed, no Mohawks) has also come up empty handed, he said.

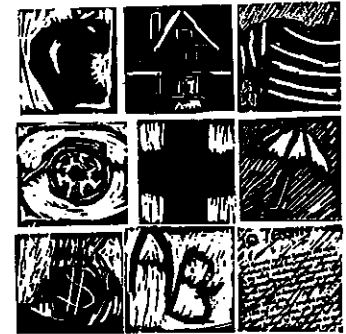


York suggested our gun control laws must be improved, as even through the final days of the conflict natives were arriving on the reserve with armaments they had just purchased.

The military solution has been proven ineffective dealing with the sovereign aboriginal nation, said York. The Oka stand-off, along with the killing of the Meech Lake Accord has had a huge impact across the country and brought a new relevancy and new unity to native peoples in Canada, he said. It has also forced the government to move on land claims, although settlement promises have yet to show results. Direct action and civil disobedience are options many smaller tribes are considering because of Oka, said York.

New Council publication

Family Budgeting Guide



The 1991/1992 Family Budgeting Guide will be available through the Council in December. The guide should serve as a tool for professionals to determine family budget needs.

The guide was produced in consultation with the Edmonton Board of Health and other potential users. It is an update to previous guides published in 1985 and 1987 which are now out of date due to inflation and cost changes.

Thanks to the Clifford E. Lee Foundation for a contribution which covered the printing costs of the guide. Council is hoping to receive assistance from the federal government and other foundations to cover the guide's development costs.

The 1991/1992 Family Budget Guide can be purchased for \$12 a copy, plus \$3 shipping and handling.

TO:

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Second Class Mail

Registration Number 6390 i.d. 12/91

Who's new at E.S.P.C.

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the Canadian Mental Health Association and the University of Calgary faculty of social welfare.

Luciana Pizzi began working with the Council on contract mid-October. She recently completed an honors thesis for the University of Alberta's department of anthropology and she has an educational background in psychology and sociology.



Luciana Pizzi

Sheila Kushniruk joined the staff in late September as the publications editor. She has a degree in journalism and worked

for two years as a reporter/photographer at the Camrose Canadian newspaper.



Sheila Kushniruk

The Council wishes the best to the two former social planners Jennifer Hyndman and Pratima Rao who left to return to school in fall. Summer students Bev Roche and Keith Andony also returned to school.

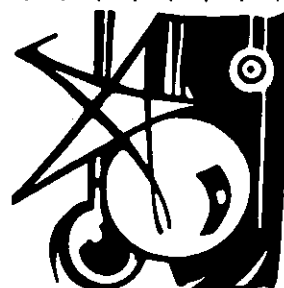
Laurie Kolada, the former communications co-ordinator also left at the end of August to start her own business.

Council gets a face-lift

Thanks to the Art Loan Program, operated by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Edmonton Social Planning Council office will be home to six paintings by Alberta artists. The paintings will be on display for a four-year loan as part of an effort to make local artists known.

The Council gratefully acknowledges Ruth Krahn who has loaned part of her art collection to us for the past three years.

EDMONTON SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL



The Board and Staff of the Council invite you to join us in celebrating the joy of the season at our Wine and Cheese Open House
Friday, December 6, 1991
3:30 - 7:00 p.m.

#41. Commonwealth Building
9912 - 106 Street
423-2031

