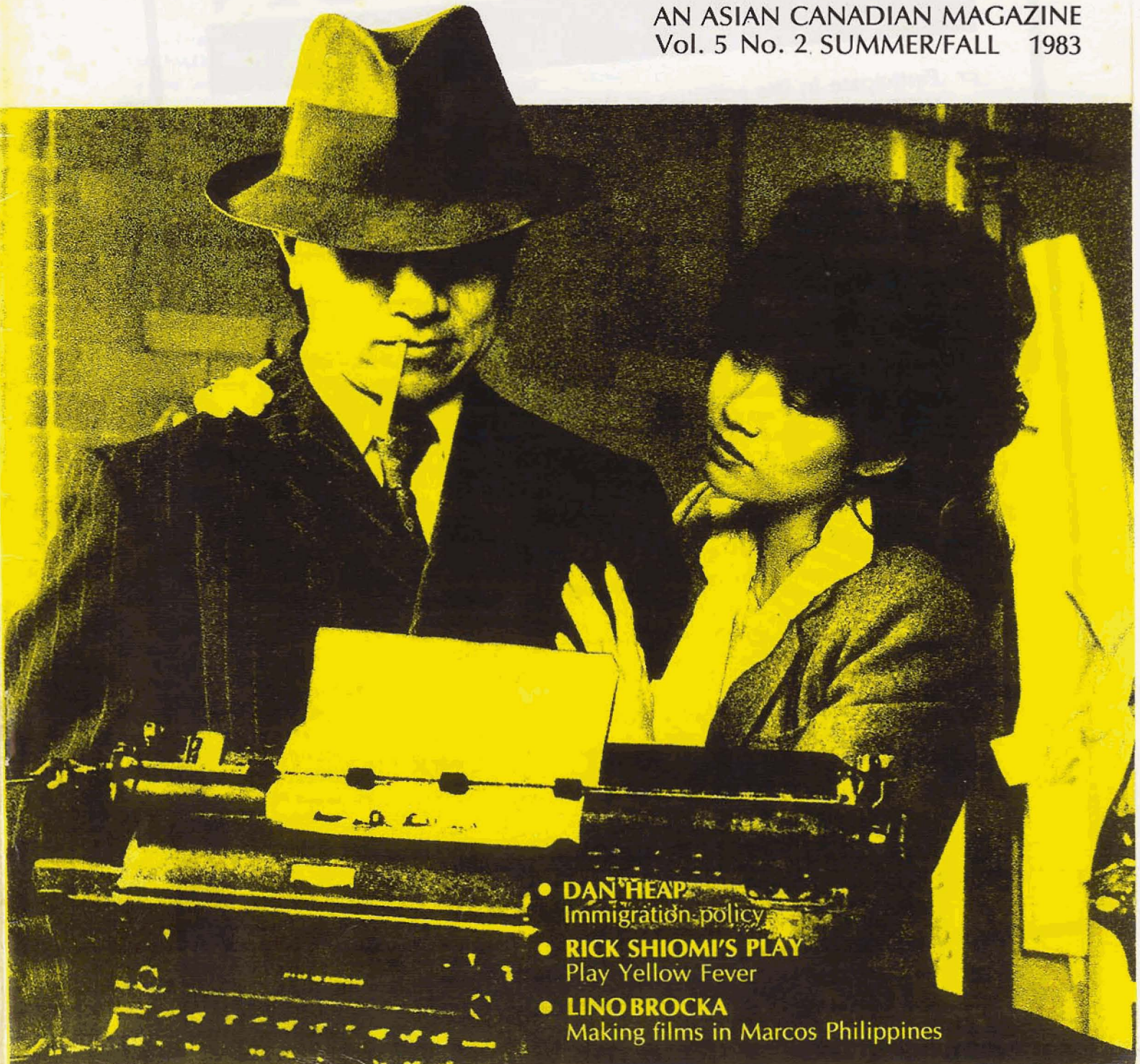


\$1.75

# THE ASIANADIAN

AN ASIAN CANADIAN MAGAZINE  
Vol. 5 No. 2. SUMMER/FALL 1983



- **DAN HEAP**  
Immigration policy
- **RICK SHIOMI'S PLAY**  
Play Yellow Fever
- **LINO BROCKA**  
Making films in Marcos Philippines



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# AN INVITATION

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☞ Participate in the activities of the **ASIANADIAN RESOURCE WORKSHOP...** and join company with Asian Canadian artists, writers and community activists.

☞ After years of depending solely on donations, magazine subscriptions and volunteers, **ARW** has hired four full time staff. **ARW** has received a grant from the Government of Canada.

Now we can reach out more fully to the Asian community in Canada.

☞ **How You can Participate –**

- Write or obtain articles for the **ASIANADIAN**
- Send art work for publication in the **ASIANADIAN**
- Help organize seminars and workshops sponsored by **ARW**
- Promote **ARW** in your community

☞ **Asianadian Resource Workshop aims**

- To find new dignity and pride in being Asian in Canada.
- To promote an understanding between Asian Canadians and other Canadians.
- To speak out against those conditions, individuals and institutions perpetuating racism in Canada.
- To stand up against the distortions of our history in Canada, stereotypes, economic exploitations, and the general tendency towards injustice and inequality practised on minority groups.
- To provide a forum for Asian Canadian writers, artists, musicians, etc.
- To promote unity by bridging the gap between Asians with roots in Canada and recent immigrants.

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For more details turn to page 31 and write to us:

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Asianadian Resource Workshop P.O. Box Q Toronto, Ont. M4T 2P4 Canada  
or ☎ 416-591-1625

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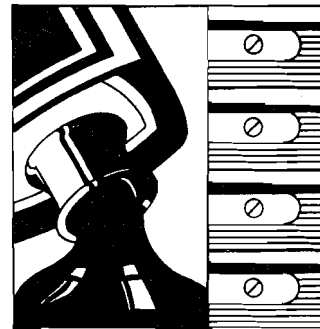
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# Editorial



The Asianadian is over five years old now. In these years it has reached many cross roads. Some of these, at the time, looked like the end of the road. The fight for survival during these periods has required faith and fortitude.

Something kept us going even when we felt we had reached the edge. We just could not let an idea die whose time had come. We knew that one more push was needed to take us nearer to our goal of a self-sustaining magazine which truly embodied the Asian Canadian sensibility.

Now the opportunity has arrived.

We have been successful in rescuing the Asianadian from the quicksands of financial uncertainty – at least temporarily. The Asianadian Resource Workshop has received a grant from the Government of Canada and has hired four full time staff members to work on the magazine and other projects of the Workshop.

So we have one part of what is needed to create a full fledged national magazine worthy of Asian Canadians.

The other part, indeed the more critical part, is how interested Asian Canadians will respond to this opportunity.

We hold out an invitation to all of you who feel you have a stake in the struggle of Asian Canadians. We invite you to consider the Asianadian as your special forum. To use the Asianadian as a vehicle to test your ideas and your creative outpourings; to share your thoughts and opinions; to proclaim your projects. Even to debate in it issues that are surging within your community so that others can gain insight and thereby broaden their understanding of their own predicament.

We invite you all to participate.

Financial assistance from the Government of Canada under the N.E.E.D. program is gratefully acknowledged.

The opinions expressed in this issue are not necessarily those of Assianadian Resource Workshop.



## A Cultural Enrichment Program for Japanese Canadian Preschoolers and Their Families

by Edy Goto

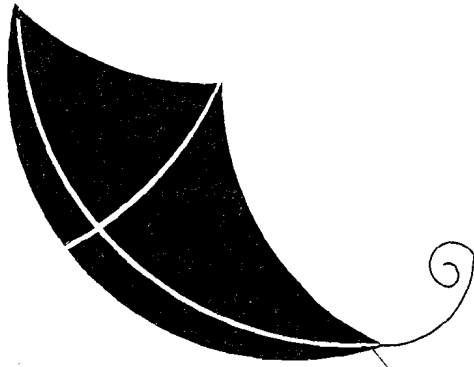
We started the program after being advised by some community elders that it wasn't important or necessary to teach our children, mainly YONSEI, or fourth generation Canadian, about being Japanese, or that teaching of that sort wasn't the community's responsibility.

KODOMO NO TAME NI ... means "for the sake of the children ..." Japanese Canadians over the past century, and their ancestors for thousands of years before, have sacrificed much, and laboured long, strenuous hours, "KODOMO NO TAMME ..." to provide for the best present and future for their children that they could. We, in turn, want the best and the most that Japan, Canada, and the Japanese Canadian experience can offer our children.

Those community elders were wrong. All you have to do is see the shining faces of our little ones and feel their pride smile through.

"We're Japanese Canadians,  
Canadians, Canadians  
We're Japanese Canadians,  
come join us and see.  
We're ISSEI and NISEI and  
SANSEI and YONSEI  
We're Japanese Canadians,  
one big family."





The first song we sing is about generations, because that's how we Japanese Canadians define ourselves. Those who came from Japan to Canada in the early years (our pioneers) we call ISSEI, first generation. Their Canadian-born offspring are NISEI, and the grandchildren, SANSEI. Our fourth generation is YONSEI, from the Japanese numbers ICHI, NI, SAN, YON – one, two, three, four. It's important to know that you're YONSEI, that you're a part of a chain of people who have contributed to the building and strengthening of Canada; that you're not a "visitor" or a foreigner even if people say you look like one, and that Canada is made up of people of many ethnic backgrounds who have an equal stake in our wonderful country. If you're YONSEI, you have to be taught this pride by Japanese Canadians; you won't learn it from anyone else.

"If you're YONSEI and you know it, say BANZAI!  
 If you're SANSEI and you know it, say BANZAI!  
 If you're NISEI and you know it, and you're really proud to show it  
 If you're ISSEI and you know it, say BANZAI!"

My daughter, barely one, does not yet understand the implications of being YONSEI, but she already shouts BANZAI! with the loudest of them.

Much of our learning is done through songs, *MAMA NO HIZA* – "at mother's knee" and crafts and activities that pick up the themes of the songs. We have an extensive repertoire of Japanese Canadian songs (we invented them) and we do Japanese translations of North American favourites like *KIRA KIRA* ("Twinkle Twinkle") and *ATAMA, KATA, HIZA, ASHI* ("Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes") We've adapted songs like "Old MacDonald's Farm". When our ancestors, like Mr. Tanaka, came to Canada, they couldn't speak any English, and neither could his animals, so their song went like this:

"Tanaka N-SAN had a farm  
 Ah-ee-oo-ay-oh (phonetic sounding of the first five characters of the Japanese "alphabet")

And on his farm he had an INU ("dog")  
 Ah-ee-oo-ay-oh  
 With a WAN-WAN ("bow-wow") here and a WAN-WAN there  
 Here a WAN, there a WAN,  
 everywhere a WAN-WAN  
 Tanaka JI-SAN had a farm  
 Ah-ee-oo-ay-oh"

We also sing old favourites and lullabies, and read stories from a selection of classics told by their parents to NISEI BAACHANS (grandmothers) and JIICHANS (grandfathers). Keeping content relevant to NISEI ensures its validity to Japanese Canadians, as opposed to Japanese, and guarantees reinforcement of songs and stories in the grandparent's home. Some can't get enough. NISEI, particularly BAACHANS, are frequent visitors each week to our groups.

A certain amount of cultural degradation is to be expected as immigrants and their descendants lose sight and memory of the ancestral homeland. With Japanese Canadians the acculturation process was all the more devastating, immediate, and all-encompassing.

After the demoralizing experience of evacuation, incarceration in concentration camps, and restricted dispersal based totally on their race and ethnicity, NISEI priority was to spare their SANSEI children the stigma of being different, of thinking and knowing they were different. Thus, at every conscious and unconscious level, denial became an important component of the way we SANSEI viewed our culture and ourselves, i.e. we couldn't be different, because all we had was "Canadian" culture. Now that it is not only permissible, but preferable to be ethnic, YONSEI can be Japanese Canadian, not "just Canadian", and involving grandparents helps SANSEI bridge the cultural gap.

By emphasizing some of the everyday things done by our seniors, ISSEI and NISEI who are alive and observable, we're discovering how much culture we have and how accessible it is to English speakers. For example, almost every NISEI has a garden, and they all plant vegetables to excess. Along with the tomatoes and cucumbers and zucchini are edibles that wouldn't be found in anyone else's garden, so our children sing about that:

"BAACHAN grows DAIKON,  
 DAIKON, DAIKON  
 BAACHAN grows DAIKON,  
 enough for us all.

BAACHAN grows AZUKI,  
 AZUKI, AZUKI  
 BAACHAN grows AZUKI,  
 enough for us all.

BAACHAN grows GOBO,  
 GOBO, GOBO  
 BAACHAN grows GOBO,  
 enough for us all."

And so we recite the various plant names. Although most of the children do not eat these foods at home, they are learning about them. On special occasions, at New Year's, on our picnic days, and at the grandparents', they will be able to greet these foodstuffs familiarly.

Our children wear HAPPI coats made by the mothers. The HAPPI is a short, informal peasant garment more suitable for children's play than a kimono. Ours are Japanese Canadian, rather than Japanese. For boys they are made of a fabric with a fishnet pattern to remind them of their grandfathers and great-grandfathers who were the West Coast's pioneer fishermen. The girls wear a strawberry pattern to commemorate the contributions of Japanese Canadian market gardeners.

Because of our program's emphasis on Canadian content, on highlighting and reinforcing Japanese Canadian culture as it is found in the community and in the family, we have been able to keep imports, and therefore costs, low. The Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre provides us adequate play space on Wednesday mornings, at no charge. Mothers pay a small fee to cover refreshment and craft expenses, and are encouraged to bring their children's favourite toy each week to share. This supplements our stock of purchased and donated toys. Children's word books have been relabled in Japanese by recent arrivals from Japan who bring their children to play with ours, and to learn our history.

KODOMO NO TAME NI ... was started nine months ago by two volunteers – myself, a SANSEI, and Liz Iwata. Liz, a HAKUJIN (Japanese Canadian for "white", or "non-Japanese) married to SANSEI, was particularly concerned that her children, half Japanese, might encounter racial discrimination, taunts or torments when they entered the public school system. She wanted them to experience what it means to be Japanese Canadian while they were still young. Like many of the HAKUJIN mothers, Liz is more sensitive to remarks and inuendos we SANSEI have learned to ignore. Almost half the mothers are HAKUJIN. Having chosen to be part of Japanese Canadian families, rather than being born to them, HAKUJIN mothers are often more concerned than SANSEI parents that their children have the positive group experiences and cultural exposure KODOMO NO TAME NI – has been able to provide. They are often surprised to find that they are at no disadvantage to the SANSEI mothers. Being "Japanese Canadian" is a new experience for us all. And, typical of our community, most of the children are "mixed", with one HAKUJIN and one Japanese Canadian parent.

Five children, including Liz's Tiyoshi, 28 months, and my Aja Miyuki, 1, attended the first class. We now piggy-back two groups with enrollment limited to 15

mothers in each. We have two assistants, resident BAACHAN Aya Saegusa, and JIICHAN Doug Fujimoto, both NISEI, retired primary school teachers. Liz runs the crafts program and I do the songs.

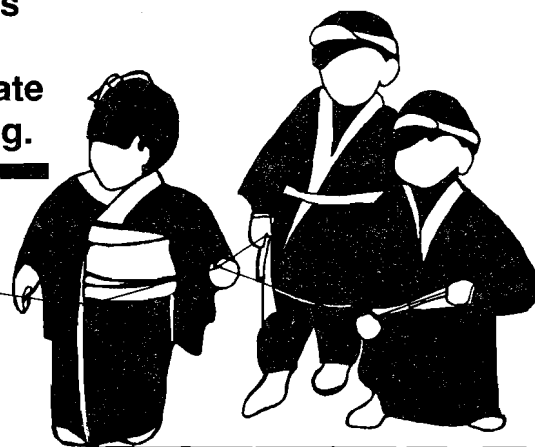
I have left discussion on one of the most important aspects of our program – that being the very young age of participants, to the last. We like to pretend that it was our intention to work with young toddlers and infants. Our original "pre-schooler" program plans were quickly revised as we discovered that the expected three- and four-year olds had already been enrolled in other playgroups and schools by their ambitious and upwardly mobile parents. What was left was a group of infants with eager and enthusiastic mothers.

No one who works with one's and two's would be surprised at our little geniuses' successes. We're constantly amazed at how much they pick up, and we're optimistic for the future. Our youngest children learn songs, stories, and Japanese vocabulary faster than their mothers, along with their first English words, and our oldest are already fast-approaching three years of age. Mothers are planning to keep their children involved with KODOMO NO TAME NI ... programs and activities until they are old enough to participate in Japanese language, classical and folk dances, or martial arts classes offered in the community. ▲

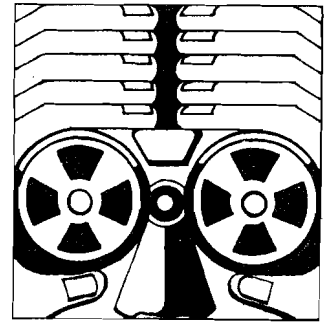
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**With the Japanese  
Canadians the  
acculturation process  
was all the more  
devastating, immediate  
and all encompassing.**

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# Face to Face



*with Dan Heap*

ASIANADIAN: *What do you see as the big issue in immigration and refugee matters today?*

*Heap:* I suppose the very biggest issue in both immigration and refugee matters is the outlook of the government, and to some extent the outlook of the public on this subject. In the past and up to the present, the government has treated immigration as part of our labour policy. It has been very confusing. Confusing to immigrants especially but confusing to others too. It means that the government can change rapidly from saying "we want more" to saying "we want less". In a way, that makes it very hard to plan.

The government has cut back this year both on general immigration and on refugee quotas with the same excuse - unemployment. Now I consider that these two things are not really related in the way the government suggests. For one thing, the refugees or immigrants should be able to make up their minds on whether they want to come here and run the risk of unemployment rather than being told that it's for their own good to keep them out.

Secondly, when the government puts it that way, whatever it intends, the effect of putting it in that way is to suggest to Canadians that immigrants, and perhaps refugees, are taking jobs that otherwise would go to Canadians and are therefore a cause of unemployment among Canadians. I don't think 15,000 refugees a year or even 150,000 immigrants a year are the cause of two million being un-



**Dan Heap** is currently the Member of Parliament for Spadina and Immigration Critic for the New Democratic Party. He was born in Winnipeg in 1925 and educated at Upper Canada College and Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. He has studied theology at the University of Chicago, the Montreal Diocesan College and the McGill Faculty of Divinity and has been an Anglican Minister since 1951. Prior to his election to the House of Commons in August, 1981, he served for ten years as an Alderman in the City of Toronto. He and his wife Alice have been married for thirty-three years and they have seven children.

Asianadian would like to thank Dan Leckie, Olivia Chow, Dora Nipp, and Leonard Preyra for making this interview possible.

**I don't think 15,000 refugees a year or even 150,000 immigrants a year are the cause of two million being unemployed. If anything, the truth is the other way.**



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employed. If anything, the truth is the other way. That is to say, there is some evidence to show that immigrants generate more jobs than they take.

Underneath that, the big issue is the attitude toward immigration. The attitude in part, maybe largely, has been that we bring immigrants to do jobs that otherwise are not preferred. At one time, it was opening up the prairies for farming, at other times it has been construction labour, railroad repairs, mining under very hard conditions. Now perhaps it is service jobs like domestic labour, housekeeping, childcare, or very low-paid jobs in the textile or entertainment industry.

When the policy is to bring the immigrants in to do these jobs then it has the effect of setting Canadian workers against the immigrants. Because even if the Canadian workers don't prefer those jobs they feel that immigrants are coming to take them, are underselling or undercutting Canadian workers and so the conflict contributes to racism.

*What lies behind or what event triggered the government's interest in discussing the question of an amnesty for illegal immigrants?*

I don't know. I think that's a good question. What triggered it?

Incidentally, the word "amnesty" was not used in the report by the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council to the Federal Minister of Employment and Immigration. It was used immediately afterwards by some journalists and I think it is a mistake to use that

word.

First of all, it is not happening now. Anyone reading this report should be clear that it is only a recommendation not government policy. Those without status who might be affected by any change should not be under the impression that by surrendering themselves to immigration officials they will get landed status. In fact, it appears from recent experience that the informal rule of accepting for landing those who have surrendered after being 'established' for five years has been extended to ten years. I'm afraid that unless we make that clear, some immigrants being very anxious and perhaps not having a command of English might misunderstand it and be very sorry.

The study is in my opinion a trial balloon. If there is public opinion in favour of amnesty then the Minister will probably proceed. If on the other hand, there is a real backlash against immigrants and illegal immigrants as a result of the proposal then the government will back away from taking any action.

*What are some of the strong and weak points of the Report?*

The report has some good points, however, it was not carefully prepared. The study's estimate of the number of present illegals is highly suspect. It mentioned 200,000 but gave no indication at all of how it arrived at that figure and some responsible people have said that the true figure is much lower than that.

Another thing I don't understand is why there was so little consultation with community groups. The

group that produced the report appeared to study it more in Washington D.C. than in Canada. I don't know why they spent so much time asking people in Washington about a Canadian problem. Also, the report and subsequent comments by Gerry Robinson, a lawyer who is advising the government, seemed to focus a lot of attention on the question of tighter control at border points of entry and a strict application of the Immigration Act for employers who knowingly hire illegals. I accept that Canada needs to have a tighter border security system. With such a system though we also have to have a fairer and faster method of considering refugee claims, family re-unification requests and applications abroad. There must also be guarantees that the control system will not violate civil liberties. I also have some difficulties with the Advisory Committee's specific recommendation that Canada have a conditional settlement programme, (that is, those without status surrender themselves and may be allowed to live in a temporary residence status for six years — then if they meet certain unspecified criteria they would be granted landed status.) If such a scheme were implemented it would give them the status of second class non-citizens.

*What are some of the good points of the report?*

The main benefit of the report is that it brings the discussion out into the open, on to the public agenda, and lays out some of the main concerns and problems associated with

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**The long-standing problem of course is a very uneven distribution of our external immigration officers....**

**Whatever the intent the effect is to make immigration to Canada much more available to people of Britain or English-speaking or northwestern European origin.**

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it. It also acknowledges that some of the reasons for the number of illegal immigrants are faults in the government's programmes such as the delays which frustrated some people to the point where they decided to "cut the corner" and in this way the report is useful.

Also, the fact that the Minister has asked for a further report gives people a way of entering into the discussion and having some effect on government policy.

*How will the offer of an amnesty affect the immigration status of those people currently in the process of applying for entry into Canada.?*

There is no government comment on that and I couldn't guess. The only way an amnesty would make sense is that it be entirely separate, above and beyond the immigration quotas.

If the government were to suggest that because we are giving amnesty to 200,000 illegal immigrants we will reduce the quota by that amount that would be the government's decision. I hope they wouldn't make that decision and there has been no suggestion that they will.

*In a letter to your constituents dated November 10, 1982 you claim that the present government policy is "making a mockery" of the family reunification programme. How is this happening?*

As of May 1, anybody wanting to bring in an assisted relative to Canada must have an approved job

---

offer for him or her. In other words, there is now hardly any difference between that part of the family reunification-assisted relative programme and independent immigration.

*The Standard Processing Time Report of 1980 seems to suggest that there is a geographical or racial bias built into Canadian immigration policy which frustrates applications from certain countries. What's your reaction to that suggestion?*

I'm not familiar with the Standard Processing Time Report. I was not in office in 1980 and knew even less about immigration then than I do now.

The long-standing problem of course is a very uneven distribution of our external immigration officers; some countries have ten or more officers and others have none. Whatever the intent is the effect is to make immigration to Canada much more available to people of Britain or English-speaking or northwestern European origin. It takes longer to get to Canada from some countries than others. There may be other biases built into the regulations but I'm not aware of them.

*What do you see happening in immigration and refugee matters in the next few years?*

I don't see very much change in the general immigration policy. There will probably not be any substantial new discussion there.

On refugees, it is hard to tell. There are ten or fifteen million re-



fugees in the world at present and a lot of people think that the number is more likely to grow than to shrink. We don't know where the next trouble spot will be, either from drought or civil war. Four years ago I don't think anybody was predicting the boat people and so on. In Africa the causes appear to be more a result of natural disaster. The United Nations is warning us that we have a lot of refugees in the world and the number is more likely to increase. What Canada should do about them is something we should be addressing. Mainly aid to refugees where they are with a certain amount of programming to bring them into Canada. I think we should be taking more refugees than we do. I don't think we can possibly bring out any large percentage of the number who are refugees and it is not clear to the United Nations whether we should.

*Do you foresee any change in the climate of Canadian public opinion with regard to the acceptance of refugees or immigrants in Canada given our uncertain economic future?*

I haven't found any specific hostility to refugees. There is a general humanitarian feeling that if they are in danger for their lives where they are they should be able to start a new life somewhere else. I have not found hostility in that respect.

The question of what happens to immigration policy in full is really a labour question since the government is treating it as such. I don't find the organized labour movement hostile to immigrants. I do

find them saying that immigrants should be given the proper opportunity to be integrated here because otherwise they would be exploited by anti-labour employers. Things like union busting. Therefore it is to the advantage of all working people if immigrants are given full access to English or French language lessons, knowledge of the law and the ordinary social services they need for support.

*If the government does use unemployment or the economic situation as a determinant of the immigration quota do you not think that the interests of the immigrant community and those of the labour movement would conflict?*

The labour unions have become aware of that possibility and are making some effort to guard against it. The policy of the organized labour movement has changed as of the last fifty years. A century ago they were rather thoughtlessly anti-foreign especially anti-Asian. As of forty or fifty years ago that apparently has changed. We find that in the 1930s and 1940s the labour movement under the CCF were campaigning for equality of treatment of Asians and in the 1940s the CCF was in the lead with the campaign that East Asians in Canada be allowed to vote, Chinese, Japanese, and East Indians in particular. They were specifically prohibited from voting, and the law wasn't changed until 1947 or 1948.

*In other words, you do not expect Canadian labour unions to increase their opposition to immigration as*

*is happening in Europe, Britain and France in particular.*

The situation there is rather different than in Canada because of the large number of temporary labour, guest labour and so on. We have some farm labour but we don't have anything like the scale of it in Britain and Western Europe. Partly because of distances I suppose. I don't know enough about the situation there to make a comparison.

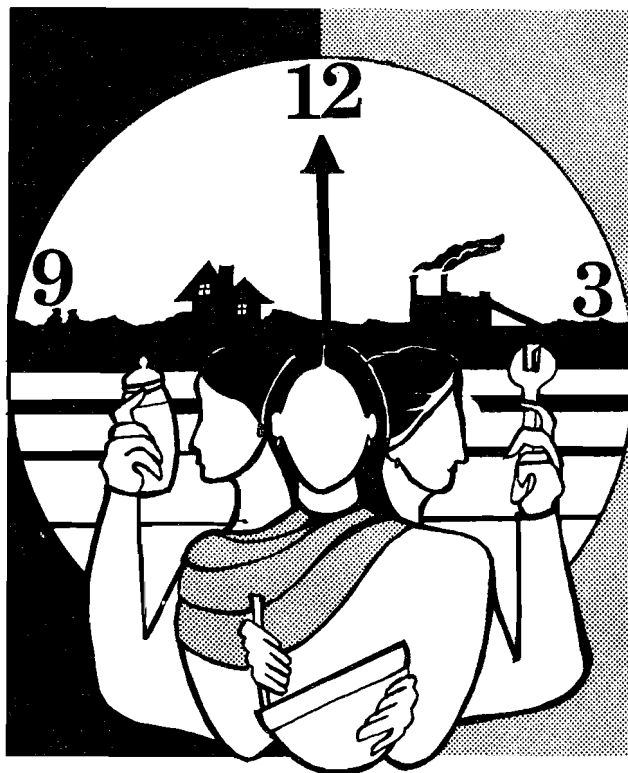
While I've been NDP immigration critic and a member of the Canadian Paperworkers Union I haven't heard any request or proposals from union officers hostile to immigrants. There is positive action on the part of the Toronto Labour Council, for example, to work with the school boards to make sure that classes are provided for English as a Second Language for immigrants. There is a positive effort by the labour movement to make sure that they are integrated in a way that benefits both the immigrants and Canadians. ▲



# IMMIGRANT WOMEN

## *AN EXPLOITED CLASS*

by Maria Theresa-Larain



**Working class immigrant women are exploited as workers, as immigrants and as women.**

*This is one of the key-note speeches presented to The Immigrant Woman in Canada: A Right to Recognition, Toronto, Ontario, March 20-22, 1981. This speech was "inadvertently" left out of the published proceedings of the conference for obvious reasons.*

Today, I have been asked to speak on behalf of immigrant women. To attempt to speak on behalf of immigrant women in general is an almost impossible task. Trying to speak on behalf of all immigrant women would be to deny the differences exist within these women, and there are differences.

The first group of immigrant women are those who, because they belong to a certain socio-economic class in their countries of origin, they have access to education, to better jobs and the potential to achieve a more meaningful life.

The second, and by far the largest group, are those immigrant women who, in their countries of origin, belong to a lower socio-economic class. These women have little or no access to education, they are not integrated into what is technically defined as the "labour force" and their potential for becoming marginal to this society is great. These are the women who work here as unskilled or semi-skilled workers, in two main areas of the labour force: in the manufacturing industries – they work as garment and textile workers, in plastic, shoe and rubber factories; and in the service industry – they work in laundries, hotels and restaurants, as cleaners and domestics.

These are the women who take the jobs that Canadian native-born women won't take. These are the women who are not present today, in spite of the fact that they represent the vast majority of immigrant women. They are the working class immigrant women, and they are the women that we will try to represent at this conference.

The women that we will be speaking about, the working class immigrant women suffer three main types of exploitation in this country. They are exploited as workers, because they are forced to work through necessity eight or more hours a day for the minimum wage or often less. This, in effect, represents the smallest fraction from the profit that the owner of the factory extracts from their labour power. They are exploited as women, because as other working class women, they work a double day. After eight hours a day at the factory, they go home just to start another shift, cooking, cleaning, taking care of their man and their children, and they do it all for free. This benefits the society in general, but more importantly the employers, because what these women are in fact doing is raising a new generation of workers. Thirdly, they are exploited as immigrants because, besides working under the worst conditions and being paid the lowest wages, they are humiliated, dis-



criminated against, isolated from families and society by being denied the basic tool for communication: language. They are also forced to remain in what is called the job ghettos, and on top of all that, they are blamed for all sorts of problems such as unemployment, inflation, and social service cutbacks, and so on. These problems are in fact the result of the current crisis and the government's response to it.

So we can see that working class immigrant women are exploited as workers, as immigrants, and as women. All these types of exploitation are interrelated and cannot be separated from each other, and they will exist until structural changes are made within this society.

What I would like to do is to further examine this exploitation and to analyze how this exploitation is manifest in terms of structural discrimination within three main areas: immigration, employment, and education.

In order to fully understand the reality that immigrant women face, we have to start from the point when we first arrive in Canada. Therefore, the first issue that we have to deal with is Canadian immigration policy and within it, some assumptions that seem to us false and inaccurate.

One of these underlying assumptions is that our existence starts when we first put our feet on Canadian soil. Our past, our back-

ground, our culture, counts little when it comes to the point of becoming part of Canadian society. But, our existence does not start at the port of entry at the Canadian airport. Life does not begin for us when we first face a Canadian immigration officer. We have a past, we have a culture, we have a history that is as worthwhile for us as Canadian history and culture is for Canadians, and we want respect for it. To assume the contrary is chauvinistic and leads to unfair practices.

Within the immigration policy, there is an issue that we must analyze. This is the link between the immigration policy and the economic interests of those who are in power.

Immigrant labour has been, and continues to be very crucial for the development of Canada. When Canada needed workers to help the railroad, thousands of Chinese people were brought into the country. After the project was finished the doors were closed to them and those Chinese who remained here were forced to live in the most deplorable conditions.

When Canada needed highly-trained professionals and technical workers during the fifties and sixties, thousands of both male and female workers were brought to fill these vacancies.

Today, Canada needs unskilled labour and immigrants, including women, are brought in to meet the needs of the Canadian labour market. As a result, we find a high concentration of working class immigrant women, working in the poorest paid sectors, where they are exploited and isolated from society.

Worst of all, they are forced to remain in these ghettos without the possibility of getting out because that would go against the interests of those who own the means of production. Unfortunately, the owners of these businesses are the ones who have the political power to influence such things as the immigration policy. This is why the immigration policy reflects the interests of these groups. This is also the reason why immigrant women

who want to get out of the factory ghettos are often frustrated by contradictory practice in Canadian employment policies.

Some examples of these contradictory practices are the following: (a) When we first arrive in Canada and request language training we are denied it with the excuse that, "You won't need it for your job." Of course, these jobs which require no English are on factory assembly lines, where almost every language except English is spoken.

When we try to get out of these job ghettos and again ask for language training, we are told, "Sorry, it is too late now. After being here for such a long time, you should already speak the language."

(b) Another example of the contradictions that we meet within the practices of Canada and employment is the case of a woman who wanted to get the English course in order to continue working at a day-care centre, which was the work she had done in her country for ten years. She was told by the counselor that she should remain in the factory because, even though she could learn English, she would always have an accent, and that would not be good for the children she would be working with.

These situations are just examples of how government policies keep immigrant women in job ghettos. As was mentioned before, the economic interests of those in power need to maintain immigrant women in these ghettos. As long as immigrant women remain there, isolated from the rest of society with no access to language, retraining or education, the owners of the means of production will be sure to receive the profits that they want from the working class labour.

Going back to our starting point, we mentioned that working class immigrant women are exploited at three different levels: as workers, as immigrants, and as women. We can conclude now that immigration policy and practices reinforce these three levels of oppression by protecting the economic interests of the owners of the means of produc-

tion, rather than protecting the rights of working class immigrant women.

We will now go into the area of employment and briefly describe the situation of working class immigrant women.

We have already talked about the fact that working class immigrant women work as unskilled workers in order to fill the needs of Canada's labour market. We know that they are poorly paid, that they work compulsory overtime, that they often work under deplorable working conditions, that they cannot communicate with their employers, that often they do not receive fringe and other benefits, and that they do not have possibility of getting out of these job ghettos. What is



**Within the immigration policy, there is an issue that we must analyse. This is the link between the immigration policy and the economic interest of those ... in power.**

left to describe now is (1) what does it really mean for an immigrant woman to work under such working conditions and (2) why do they stay in these jobs?

To be a working class immigrant women means to get up at 6 a.m. or earlier, to prepare breakfast for the family, to have a sip of coffee or tea, to put the house in order and run to the bus stop, swearing in each one's own language at the Canadian weather and at the bus which never comes on time.

Once at the factory, an old dusty and dreary Spadina shop, she will go up the stairs and meet her fellow workers. She will pay five cents for the hot water and pour herself a cup of coffee while she takes her coat off. Then she will sit in front of her sewing machine and start working without stopping even to go to the washroom, because that is not allowed during the "employer's time." At 10 a.m., she will have a coffee break, then back to work until lunchtime. After half an hour for lunch, they are back at their work again, no talking, no standing, no stretching, no going to the washroom. If the machine breaks down, it is always the workers' fault and supervisors will yell at them, insult them, or hand them humiliating notes, like this one that I have here. It was given to Susana, a sewing machine operator whom I know:

*Every time you break the machine you loose production time and as you are on a piece rate income YOU suffer. Therefore you MUST allow the machine to finish the cycle BEFORE you remove the garment. This is most important.*

This note was given to her after fruitless efforts on the part of the supervisor trying to tell Susana that she had broken the machine and that she was going to be held responsible, and equally fruitless efforts on the part of Susana trying to tell the supervisor that she did not break the machine and that she did not like being yelled at and humiliated in that way.

A working class immigrant woman's day ends at 5 p.m. at the factory, if she doesn't have to stay to work overtime. She then goes home to continue with her second shift. Her children come home and talk to her, but sometimes she has to force them to speak their native language because she does not understand when they speak to her in English. After supper, the same routine: doing the dishes and cleaning, may be with some help. She is too tired to talk, but still she has to spend some time with her family while they watch TV or talk about the interesting things that happened to them during the day. She listens to them, but she does not have anything to tell them. After a while, she goes to bed, thinking about tomorrow, which will be the same as today.

We have roughly described a day in a working class immigrant woman's life. Through the description of that day, we can observe how she is being oppressed as a worker, as an immigrant, and as a woman.

We are aware of the fact that working immigrant women suffer the same kind of oppression as Canadian working class women. But this oppression is aggravated by the fact that they are immigrants and that they therefore have special barriers in terms of communication and in terms of participating in social and family life. This leads us to our second question: why do they stay in these job ghettos if the conditions are so bad?

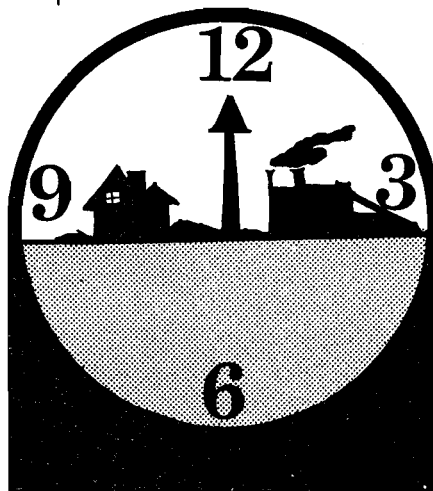
There are three reasons for that: (a) they need the jobs because they must work; (b) these are the only jobs that they can get because they do not speak the official language; and (c) they have little possibility of getting language training because they cannot pay the courses by themselves and the government will not facilitate their access to the English training courses.

In other words, we are back to what was stated before when we analyzed what the immigration policy meant for working class immigrant women: the economic in-

terests of those who have the power to influence government policies like the immigration and labour policies need to maintain working class immigrant women in these job ghettos. This is the only way the owners of big factories and industries will be certain to receive the profits that they want from working class labour.

We will now refer to the third area that concerns working class immigrant women and this is education. Education cannot be separated from the concept of culture. Canadians see themselves as "givers" to the immigrant and do not perceive the totality of the immigrant as participant and enricher of Canadian society.

Those who make the policies ought to understand that immigrants do not come here to be "civilized." Civilization is not synonymous with North American culture. We are willing to share what we have, to be participants and enrichers of Cana-



**A working class immigrant woman's day ends at 5 PM at the factory. She then goes home to continue with her second shift.**

dian society, but in order to do that, we need respect, respect for our history, respect for our background, and respect for our culture.

Language is one of the main barriers that face us when we attempt to communicate and to participate in Canadian society. Acquisition of the official languages of Canada is our fundamental right. It is inhumane to encourage and to entice people from third world countries to come to Canada for a better life, and then to deny them access to the most essential tool for gaining control over their lives: language.

If it is true that the economic needs of this country are met in part by maintaining an unskilled, illiterate, and isolated labour force, then it becomes clear that it is not in the interest of the policy-makers to provide easy access to language skills. That is why government policies reinforce the three levels of exploitation that working class immigrant women are subjected to.

Given that fundamental structural changes are needed in our economic, political, and social institutions before qualitative changes can be realized in the lives of working class people, what can we realistically hope to achieve?

Women Working with Immigrant Women believes that basic reforms can be initiated within the immigration policies, within the areas of education, health, employment opportunities, language acquisition, and social services. If it is the business of this conference to address the needs and concerns of immigrant women, then let us begin by recognizing that it is not the immigrant woman who is the problem. It is not that the immigrant woman is needy or helpless. We know who we are, we know what we want, we know what we need. And, we know also that what we are demanding are our basic rights. **▲**

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SUBHASH RAMCHARAN'S

# RACISM: NON-WHITES IN CANADA

by Leonard Preyra

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*Although it is politically advantageous to theorize on the emergence of a new Canadian society that enshrines the principles of democracy and freedom, justice and equality for all, and the evolution of a dynamic, multicultural society, the evidence shows neither equality nor justice, nor the evolution of a dynamic multicultural society. In fact, one may argue, that the truncated multiculturalism that has emerged in Canada is counter productive to the political, social and economic aspirations of the nonwhite immigrant groups in the society. By giving overt public support to the preservation of cultural traditions, the majority group can turn a blind eye to the evidence of a racially stratified economic system. Likewise, a blind eye can be turned to the evidence of an elite dominated members of the majority group, and to the culture of poverty, frustration, and deprivation that is the lot of many nonwhite Canadians.*

*(Subhas Ramcharan, Racism: Nonwhites in Canada. Toronto, Butterworths, 1982.)*



Does Ramcharan not know the meaning of the word "gratitude"? What gives this prominent successful nonwhite Canadian the right to attack Canada's cherished cultural policy? Does he not hear the chorus of Hallelujahs each time Canada's multicultural policy is mentioned? Why does he play Cassandra just when it's becoming fashionable to be "ethnic" in Canada? Whatever his motives, Ramcharan's credentials for commenting on Canada's multicultural policy are impeccable. He is currently Head of the University of Windsor's Department of Sociology and Anthropology and has spent over two decades studying race relations in Canada and the West Indies. Furthermore, as a nonwhite (Asian) immigrant himself Ramcharan has undoubtedly supplemented his academic work with a wealth of personal experiences that few outside the nonwhite community in Canada can claim to possess. If only for these reasons *Racism: Nonwhites in Canada* deserves to be examined seriously.

Ramcharan's seminal work begins with an historical examination of the role and status of nonwhites (East and West Indians, Arabs, Chinese, Filipinos and Japanese) in Canada. And, not surprisingly, finds a familiar history of racially discriminatory immigration policies – the head tax, the Chinese Exclusion Act, the nonwhite immigration quotas of the 1962 and 1974 Immigration Acts, etc. — He shows that the present Immigration Act is still subtly racist but nonetheless an improvement over its predecessors.

In the course of his recital Ramcharan shatters the stereotypical image of nonwhites as being socially and culturally inferior by showing how "only the best qualified and skilled can meet the entry requirements of the Canadian immigration department" and goes on to present statistical evidence which confirms that over the past two decades less than two percent of the nonwhite immigrants could be described as uneducated or unskilled.

This analysis of immigration records for the period between 1901 and 1976 also indicates quite clearly that in times of economic prosperity and labour shortages immigration is welcomed, while in periods of economic hardship the demand for immigrants is perceived as the cause of unemployment. By explicitly linking immigration quotas to the unemployment rate, Ramcharan implies government policy itself fans the flames of racism.

All in all these are hardly earth-shattering revelations to anyone who is even vaguely familiar with Canada's race relations record. In fact the first two-thirds of *Racism* represents little more than a very good summary of the theoretical issues and practical evidence guiding the race relations debate in Canada today. It is the concluding third of the book which makes it extremely stimulating reading.

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**For nonwhite immigrants in Canada the most weighty inferiority is that they are treated as members of a category regardless of their individual merits.**

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For one thing, he offers the heretical observation that the ghetto or siege mentality of some nonwhite groups is partly responsible for the growing racism directed against them. As the sociologist puts it: "It is essential that the racial minorities recognize that wider interaction with the host society is a major step in reducing the negative attitudinal frame of reference in which many of them are held". He feels that the failure of nonwhites to interact leads to a climate of ignorance, distrust and misunderstanding in the wider society. Yet, despite his criticism of nonwhites for their nonpar-

ticipation, Ramcharan offers a defensible explanation for their isolation.

He states: "Faced with overt attitudes of hostility, loneliness, poverty, frustration, and generally being a stranger in a society that refused to accept them as equals, the early nonwhite immigrants to Canada had no alternative but to turn inwards and look to one another for social, psychological, and emotional support". Decades later he finds that very little has changed in this regard: "For nonwhite immigrants in Canada the most weighty inferiority they suffer is that they are treated as members of a category, regardless of their individual merits. As such, they are ascribed a position in society by the majority group, based on their physical and cultural characteristics. The inevitable outcome is the development of a separate social identity, and the institutionalization of a way of life that sets them apart as a distinct community".

Ramcharan argues that it is this racial schism which lies at the heart of Canada's racial problems and Canada's multicultural policy only serves to exacerbate it. "Cultural pluralism and multiculturalism", he believes, "can be perceived as a double-edged sword. On the one hand it can retard the emergence of social conflict in the Canadian social system. On the other hand, though, it allows for the continuation of majority group dominance in the social, economic and political institutional spheres, a domination that is anathema to the development of an egalitarian society". His argument brings to mind the image of South African "Homelands" and Amerindian "Reservations" and their contribution to multiculturalism. In any case, he goes on to say: "By falling into the trap of supporting ethnically and racially separate groups in the society, we will only be furthering the practice of separate but unequal, which has been the institutional arrangement of the past. Power, prestige and influence continue to be the prerogative of the majority group in the so-

ciety, and we can see no positive long-term benefit to racial or ethnic group identification as either an integrative force, or as a method for the procurement of equality in the economic system”.

Here we come to the crux of his central thesis. *Racism: Nonwhites in Canada* begins with an acceptance of the proposition that “Canada has no alternative but to assume a culturally pluralistic character given its commitment to maintain a dualistic society in terms of language and culture” and goes on to find processes such as absorption and assimilation to be “unworkable” and “archaic”. Ramcharan suggests instead an intermediate course between the Scylla and Charybdis of cultural assimilation and social isolation — social integration. The process of integration, he believes, must begin with a recognition by the dominant elites and nonwhite group leaders that racism has become a problem in major Canadian cities and that racial inequality inevitably brings social unrest, riots, violence and tension if it is allowed to continue unabated. The acceptance of this fact he adds, must lead decision-makers to encourage positive social changes in race relations: structural systemic changes; stronger anti-discrimination laws especially in employment and housing; attitudinal changes, improved police/community relations and so on. On this note Ramcharan is not optimistic. “Canada’s predilection for a self image of equality of opportunity for all racial and ethnic groups, and its refusal to accept the evidence of racism in its midst, bodes ill for the successful resolution of inter-racial conflict”.

Ramcharan rejects the conclusion of Walter Pitman’s Task Force on Race Relations in Toronto that racial intolerance in Toronto is not a phenomenon of institutional racism but rather of “culture shock” with the white majority being unable to adjust to the fact that Toronto had become a multicultural entity. Furthermore he disputes the idea that as nonwhites adjust to the

new society and integrate into the social structures they will become socially and economically mobile. Second and third generation Chinese and East Indians children born in Canada he points out, are experiencing the same racially prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviour that their parents and grandparents faced on their migration. “It is simplistic”, he argues, “to rationalize discriminatory and unequal treatment of people on the basis of length of time in the society and also, it is futile to believe that the problem will simply disappear with time”. In any case, Ramcharan challenges the notion that decision-makers must take full responsibility for improving race relations in Canada. Community leaders too, he feels must take steps to improve the public image and social interactions of nonwhite groups in Canadian life. In this respect, Ramcharan argues “Only organized political action, and an increased activism on the part of leaders of the minority groups can reap any dividends. Sitting quiescently, hoping that the power elite and those who control the political processes will voluntarily change the status quo, is an exercise in futility, as past decades of nonwhite deprivation in Canada have shown”. He convincingly argues that institutional change will only occur with the dispersal of racial minorities into the modern society.

“By becoming part of the power structure they (nonwhites) can influence the decision-making process, alter the traditional roles, and increase the groups’ chances of achievement and mobility”.

He cautions that there will be a price to be paid for increased activism, however, “advocates of multiculturalism cannot expect equality of opportunities in social and economic structure without realizing that in the cultural sphere compromises will have to be made”. “Special treatment often means unequal treatment”, he notes, “and thus is dysfunctional for the immigrant in the long run”. In a nutshell he feels “the dilemma for nonwhite

immigrants is that on the one hand by valuing and emphasizing their cultural distinctiveness, they are endangering the very goal of equality of opportunity and mobility that they so desperately seek. On the other hand, if they insist on emphasizing their rights to full equality, and demand that universalistic standards and achievement values be the form of the society, they risk the loss of their cultural identity.” Nevertheless, Ramcharan argues it is a risk Canadians have to take if we are to avoid the “cataclysmic confrontations and conflict” that have marked interracial relationships in the United States and Great Britain.

In conclusion the Ramcharan feels that Canada’s racial problems are not insurmountable, however, many changes and compromises must be made by the dominant elites and minority groups if a truly multiracial state can emerge in Canada. As it stands, *Racism: Nonwhites in Canada* represents a massive attack on Canada’s multicultural policy and its “pox on both your houses” approach is bound to offend ethnic community leaders and decision-makers as well. It is not surprising that the work has proven to be controversial. Nevertheless, in my opinion, Ramcharan’s work represents the most thoughtful and thought-provoking treatment of some of the major issues in race relations in Canada today and deserves to be seriously examined by community activists, government leaders and all those who are concerned about the state of multiculturalism in Canada today. ▲

# International forum

## A Conversation

## With **LINO BROCKA**


by Richard Fung

Over the years Lino Brocka has become something of a legend to Festival of Festival audiences. His "gangster melodrama with a difference" **Jaguar** was a hit in 1981, followed by **Bona** in 1982. This year the director was in Toronto to introduce an older (1979), but nevertheless wonderful dissertation on Manila slum conditions, **Insiang**.

These screenings, largely due to the persistence of one programmer, David Overboy, have done much to establish Brocka's reputation in the rather myopic eyes of North American film going circles. However, Lino Brocka has for years been the leading light of Filipino directorial talent, as was made evident by the number of Filipino fans who surrounded him after the Bloor cinema screening of **Insiang**.

Talented and outspoken about conditions in his country (he spoke at 'Ninoy' Aquino's funeral), Lino Brocka is not a favorite of the Marcos regime. Richard Fung talked with the director about politics, filmmaking and the connection between the two.





Asianadian:

*I have read that you oppose revolution in the Philippines right now. Why is that?*

Lino Brocka:

The military is very strong, thanks to the U.S. government, so at this point even if you say you would like to have option for violence – because the situation in the provinces and in the mountains is different from that in Manila and suburbs – at this point violence would actually worsen things, because that is exactly what the government is waiting for. They have always said that this is exactly what we're against: communism etc. Any form of violence or militancy they always excuse or justify by saying 'It's the communists again.' It's a convenient excuse for them. That was the excuse they used when they declared martial law, and naturally this sort of falsification always finds an ally with the U.S. government and so they've been taking advantage of that. I don't think violence will achieve anything at the moment. What we're working for is to generate mass action.

*Where does film fit into all of this?*

We have a film festival, an annual local film festival which is held every December and it has been traditional for the last fifteen years or so. All the movie houses in Manila and suburbs show nothing but Filipino movies. This is of course to encourage the local movie industry. This last two, three years, (Jack) Valenti, who is the head of the Motion Pictures Association of America has been trying to get the December play dates for the American movies, for understandable reasons – it's the box office season. I suppose due to pressure or threats, I really don't know how he was able to get it – but he was able to get it – they

moved the local film festival to January 1st, so the December play date is open to Hollywood movies. I suppose Valenti sort of told the First Lady that if you don't open the December play dates then we pull out or we don't participate, and of course the first lady cannot afford not to have Valenti and Hollywood movies and Hollywood celebrities in her International Film Festival. So now the movie industry is also up in arms.

Again you can see the U.S. influence. You know, not only in the military bases. It's rather insulting – so the move right now is to go on strike for three months starting September eleventh. It was approved unanimously by the film academy which is made up of all the guilds in the local movie industry. This means they will not work for the next three months. There is also a move to boycott American movies in December, so we will push for that.

This is where film is coming in right now. We're going out into the streets and trying to add pressure just like the labourers, the urban poor, the teachers, the students. Each sector is now bonded together.

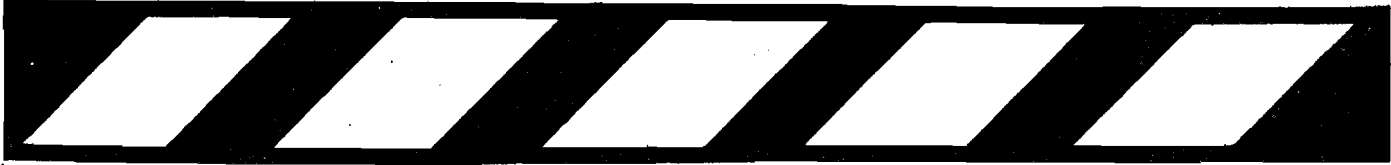
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**If they like blood I'll give them blood. If they like sex – I'll give them sex – but it is a matter of putting what is popular into cinema ... so that you're able to put some relevance into what is popular.**

*One of the things that strike me in the film of yours that we've seen is that there is long gap between art or politics and popular film – that you actually integrate melodrama, action, the love interest and politics. Did you always make films this way? Is it an interest or is it something you do to gain a wider audience?*

Well let's put it this way. To be able to make the kind of movies I like to make with the least amount of compromise ... I think simultaneous with making those movies one should never lose track of that audience. Before you speak of the great Filipino movie, you've got to speak about the great Filipino audience that will make that movie. Definitely that movie audience is not that well used in the aesthetics of cinema. They are not familiar with festival movies, they patronize popular cinema. So you take into consideration the characteristics of popular cinema which make them go to the movies. If they like blood I'll give them blood. If they like sex – I'll give them sex – but it is a matter of putting what is popular into cinema and rooting, anchoring it in some basic social milieu,, so that you're able to put some relevance into what is popular. So it's very hard ... in Filipino we call it "Timpla". You know you sort of put a little salt and a little pepper and a little this. You have to somehow combine all these things because you have to make a movie that will be familiar to the audience, what they want, you are actually making them conscious of things. It's very important to develop that – while you are showing them what they want, you are actually making them conscious of things.

*Insiang is from 1979. You have said that you are not allowed to make movies like that or Jaguar anymore. In what sense?*



The First Lady doesn't like the slum settings so I have to get out of the slum settings – so I have moved to the condominiums and the houses in the subdivisions and the suburbs.

*I was thinking about this when I saw **The Year of Living Dangerously** which was shot in the Philippines and showed a lot of slums –but it was alright because it was supposed to be Indonesia?*

Yes, because you must remember that we don't have slums in the Philippines.

*So they were all movie sets?*

Yes (laughing)

*How does censorship work? Is it a subtle, informal thing or is it official?*

It is official. You cannot do anything without submitting your synopsis and sequence treatment to the Board of Censors. They have to approve that, then after they have approved it you start the movie and after the movie is finished, then they censor it again ... whether it is fit for exhibition or not. Then if the movie gets a chance to be sent abroad – like to a festival, or even for showing to Filipino communities, as long as it gets outside the Philippines it will again be submitted for censorship. The criteria for movies being shown abroad is different –whether it gives a good image of the country.

*Can you give examples of other criteria in operation?*

Well, definitely anything that tends to undermine the government is out, so anything political is out ... What else? Their guidelines on sex and violence is rather confusing, sometimes lenient, sometimes

hard. It depends on the whimsical interpretation of the chairman, of the people sitting in. That's what we're hitting at the arbitrary, whimsical double standard interpretation. Like it's O.K. for Americans to say "fuck you", "damn you" and that is passed. But Filipinos cannot say that even if the movie is judged for adults only. You ask why and the answer is 'Americans are immoral, you know' – They're promiscuous and they have loose morals: Filipinos are supposed to be very moral.

*How do they deal with the reputation of the Philippines as a haven for child prostitution.*

They close their minds to that. Everybody knows that it brings in the dollars. So they say there is child prostitution for about one day or two days, they will show some police making a raid, after you will never hear about that. People are used to this already, these raids. It's what you might call fund-raising activities of the police. Especially during Christmas or before there is also of fund-raising (chuckles). When they raid the sauna baths, massage parlors, gay bars and all that; the people are used to it. Prostitutes go through the whole thing. Afterwards they're released the next day but it's good to show they were raided, you know – for the benefit of the press.

*But the government never deals with the basic underlying issue of prostitution, which is poverty.*

No. They don't.

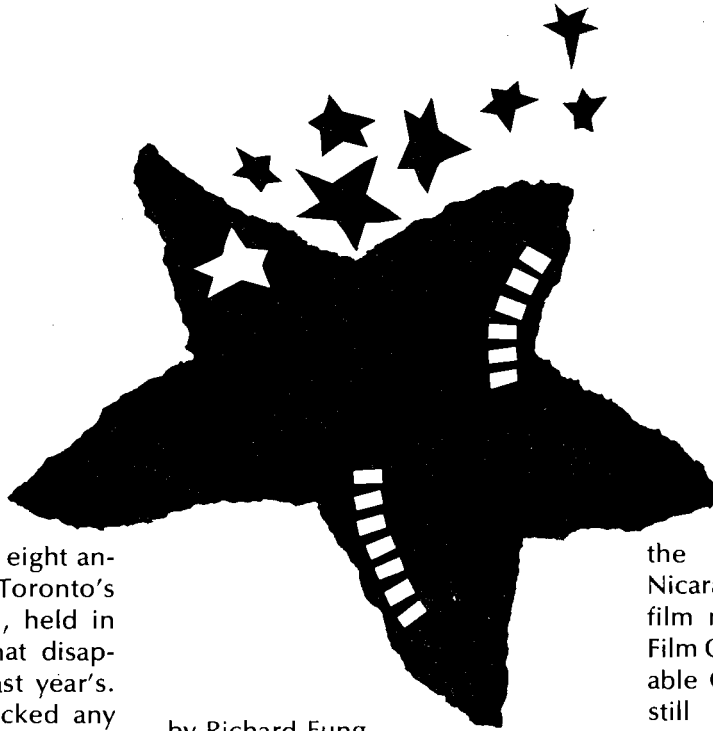
*You've had a film at this festival every year for the last three years now. You're here yourself this year. How does this change both your recognition in North America and the way you are treated in the Philippines?*

Among the intellectual order which are in Manila this means a lot. You go to Toronto, you go to Cannes – all of that means a lot. But, as far as the ordinary movie goer is concerned – I suppose they say 'Wow, Brocka went to a festival abroad', but it doesn't really give me more options to make the kind of movie I would like to make. As a matter of fact, it scares the producers away, because they have this notion that I am going to make a movie that nobody will understand, that there will be long stretches of silence, you know. Some people have asked if it has helped me – it hasn't really. Otherwise I should be making movies. The last time, when I made **Bona** was three years ago. That was the last movie of that kind and it wasn't even that serious. It was produced by the star herself (Nora Aunor) who just wanted to do something serious.

In the beginning I thought it was also significant because I thought it would give us (filmmakers) some kind of protection – after having been to Cannes and knowing some people there and being written about they won't touch you, but the killing of Ninoy (Aquino) just made it clear ... (laughing) what do you mean? ... even if you're surrounded by forty foreign correspondents it doesn't mean anything. If they want you, they'll get you anytime, anywhere; in Toronto or Cannes, whether you're in the Carlton lobby or Plaza II. ▲

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# THIRD WORLD FILMS AT THE FESTIVAL OF FESTIVALS



The programming for the eight annual Festival of Festivals, Toronto's international film festival, held in September, was somewhat disappointing, compared to last year's. The selection of films lacked any cohesion, in part because the section titled "Contemporary World Cinema", was programmed by three people with very disparate interests. As a result, avant-gard Babette Mangolte's *The Sky on Location* found itself in the same category as Mrinal Sen's *Kharij* a film about servants in India. All this made for tedious work in choosing screenings.

This set-up also made for slimmer pickings from Third World Cinema, since David Overby's "Critics Choice", especially noted for a wide selection of Asian films, was collapsed and subsumed into "Contemporary World Cinema".

A final programme included several features from Asia but only a couple from Latin America and none from Africa or the Middle East.

by Richard Fung  
and Prabha Khosla

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**Perhaps the most popular of the Asian films was Lino Brocka's *Insiang*.**

***Bitter Cane*, by Jacques Arcelain is a devastating film about the plight of Haitians and the plunder of the Haitian economy by U.S. interests.**

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As well, the Latin American films both came from veteran directors, which implies very little probing on

the part of the programmers. Nicaragua's *Alsino y El Condor*, a film nominated for best Foreign Film Oscar, was directed by the notable Chilean Miguel Littin and the still unfinished *Erendira* from Mexico, was directed by Raul Guerra from a script by Nobel Laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

Perhaps the most popular of the Asian films was Lino Brocka's *Insiang*. Currently prevented by censorship from making the kind of films he would like to, Brocka chose to show this 1979 film about rebellion against machismo, set in a Manila slum. Shot in a persistent wide-angle, the viewer misses no detail of the junk-littered world which surrounds the heroine.

Other Asian features included the immensely moving *Inagi Ningthem/My Son, My Precious* from the budding Manipuri cinema of North East India, Japan's *The Ballad of Narayama*, which won the Golden Palm award at Cannes and *Man Chu/Late Autumn* from South Korea.



◀ **Bitter Cane**  
by Jacques  
Arcelain



◀ **Man Chu/  
Late Autumn**  
from South  
Korea



◀ **So Far From  
India** is  
a more  
conven-  
tional  
film in  
documen-  
tary style.

The **Go Masters**, a Japan-China co-production which won at this summer's Montreal film festival, was scheduled in at the last moment, without much publicity. This epic production, traces the relationship between two masters of Go, one Japanese, one Chinese, which spans the period from before the Japanese invasion to post revolutionary China. Somewhat stilted and a bit obvious in its symbolism, this film of reconciliation is nevertheless of great political significance.

On the documentary front there were some excellent films by Third World directors or about the Third World. An unscheduled film, **Trobriand Cricket**, from Papua New Guinea, is a delightful document on the subversion of cricket from a colonial sport to a ceremony which fits the context and reality of present day islanders. **Bitter Cane**, by Jacques Arcelain, is a devastating film about the plight of Haitians and the plunder of the Haitian economy by U.S. interests. This documentary

exposes the relationship of unemployment in the United States and exploitation in Haiti and posits that despite a difference of language and culture the two societies are locked into one another as part of an economic system.

From El Salvador came **Letter from Morazan**, a film produced by Radio Venceremos, voice of the FDR/FMLN. Shot mostly in video with some super 8 and then transferred to 16 mm. it shows the FMLN guerrillas in combat with Salvadorian Government forces. A bit shaky and with some problems in editing, it is still one of the most interesting documentaries about war.

Mira Nair's **So far from India** is a more conventional documentary portraying the relationship of a young man Ashok who has left his home and community in Gujarat, India, to work in the United States as a newspaper vendor. Ashok is married to a Gujarati woman before he left for the United States so that he would not marry a white woman. Much of the film focuses on the perceptions of his wife and family members about life in the U.S. where none of them has been. The film shows them comparing what they have heard about the States to their lives in India. Most of them decide they would not like to live there. They feel life in America is more difficult than in India. Nobody in the family speaks any English except Ashok's father, which further separates them from the United States.

While the portrayal of Indian social organization is quite accurate, the film does not adequately document the struggles of Ashok with American life. How to get a job that pays more than for the bare essentials? What about racism of American society? And how does he cope without the family and social structure in which he was brought up? Nor does it address the question of economic realities of India: Why the migration to the United States? How does his family earn a living in India? As a result Mira Nair's film shows us only part of the reality of being so far from India. ▲

# Dubious Award



The *Toronto Star*, on December 16, 1931 ran an article with the headline, "Protests Chinaman Getting Car License". In those days, the years when racism was at its height, one could imagine Chinese being denied car licenses. What was curious about this particular protest was that it was the "Chinaman's" own lawyer who was doing the protesting.

Lee Pong, a Chinese laundryman had been found guilty of criminal negligence in striking a pedestrian with his car. Pong's lawyer, L.E. Blackwell, told the court that his client should be given a light sentence. "I would suggest that you take into consideration the fact that he is a Chinaman," the lawyer said, "in my opinion a license to operate a car should not be issued to a Chinaman without careful supervision. The crown issued him a license and now the Crown convicts him." Judge O'Driscoll promised to consider a suspended sentence.

Asianadian's Dubious Award is given quarterly to writers, artists, companies or organizations for making outstanding contributions towards perpetuating stereotyped images of Asians.

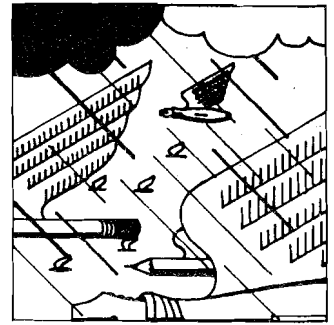
Nominations for this award may be made by any reader who in his/her daily reading comes across unusually "brilliant" articles or pictures depicting Asian Canadian stereotypes or exploiting the many myths about Asians in Canada.

Nominations may be sent to the Asianadian.

The Dubious Award for this issue has been nominated by Shin Imai.







## AMITABH PLACE

by Om Joneja

*Amitabh Place was Toronto's first Indian style shopping mall until it closed down recently. It was named after Amitabh Bacchan, arguably India's most popular male film star, who opened the mall during one of his visits to Toronto.*

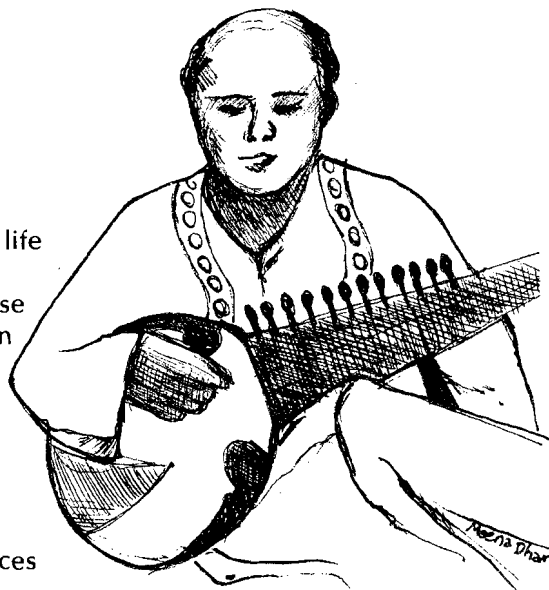
He drove me here  
to make me eat  
Indian in a land  
that has eaten Indians:  
tipis, totems, tobaggans – all!

Eating dosai without chutney  
my host talks of Amitabh  
convalescing his stardom.

Waiter-proprietor  
pulled here by his son Kris  
born of the Karmas  
he sure committed in a previous life  
is nostalgic of  
Karolbagh and his unlive house  
he earned sweating under a fan  
for Government of India.

My host shows me the place  
blessed by Amitabh  
when he was here  
selling a masala movie of  
brothers, brothels, bank-balances  
looks, lovers, lawyers  
places, palaces, pedlars  
shanties, smugglers, shootings  
vans, villains, vandals  
all threaded through  
trees, taboos, temples.

A Benares brocade saree  
with golden arms, pearly ears  
piercing her diamond fingers  
through dal-bhat  
bangles me casually  
'Hi! Kem Chho!'  
'Fine Chhe' I reply  
and look vainly for the woman  
in Benares brocade  
this dyed cousin of Gandhi  
gobbling Amitabh place. ▲



*Ali Akbar Khan is India's most renowned living sarod player. The sarod is an instrument like the sitar but with a mellow sound.*

## ALI AKBAR KHAN

by James Strecker

My thinking,  
the twilight  
combine: I want  
to make hymns  
in the heart  
of what I love

before my chains  
are distances  
and once again  
I am heretic  
to the light.

But the chilly  
gradations of sky  
pursuing  
the wanton sun  
make me still

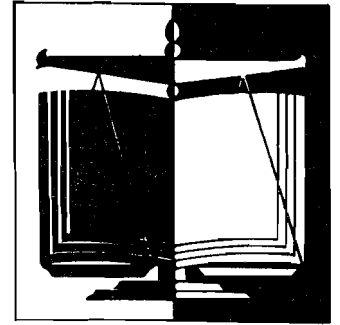
in second thoughts  
before the moon's  
eternity.

This morning  
he tied the sunrise  
to earth  
Raga Basant –  
Mookhari;

now, patiently,  
as the moon impends  
coffin-lidded  
on each man's  
particular love

the planet ends  
in grace  
with knowledge  
of its beginning.

My body speaks  
as if it were  
my thinking  
in the sweet  
hesitation of Raga Shree. ▲



# RICK SHIOMI'S PLAY YELLOW FEVER



by Himani Bannerji

**Yellow Fever brings out issues that neither the Japanese community nor other non-white communities can afford to ignore in Canada.**

*"Unless the stone bursts with feeling, unless the seed flowers with speech, there is in my life no living word. The sound I hear is only sound, white sound."*

Joy Kogawa: *Obasan*

There is a silence that is not quite the opposite of speech and actually holds in suspension a myriad voices – a silence which once broken displays an extra-ordinary depth of memory. And nor is it the simple recounting, this coming to speak, it is an act of reconstructing the past towards the present and the future. Such has been the case with the Japanese Canadians who, after years of silence since the Second World War, have during the last years allowed others to look



▲ From left to right: Harvey Chao (Sam Shikaze), James Knapp (Sargeant McKenzie), Mary Lee (Chuck Chan), Tom McDonald (Superintendent Jameson), Bob Lem (Cap. Kenji Kadota), Susan Jay (Nancy Wing).

into years of oppression as "enemy aliens", as the "yellow peril". They have spoken along side with the Chinese, with the East Indians, with the black people – with all the so called "visible minority" people and through their speech produced such extra-ordinary works of art as Joy Kogawa's *Obasan*.

Rick Shiomis' play *Yellow Fever*, based on a story conceived by Marc Hayashi, is another attempt within this tradition to tell the tale with light heartedness and humour –

nonetheless to tell it seriously – and in Toronto it was presented at Toronto Folk Theatre but the members of Canasian Artists Group. The brochure for the play introduces the play as well as the project of the group by saying:

"Central to the effort (of the Canasian Artists Group) is the Toronto production of R.A. Shiomi's much talked about play, *Yellow Fever*, which is so successful in the United States. It is the perfect vehicle since it features an Asian lead,

virtually unheard of in legitimate theatre; it features primarily an Asian cast; it is set in Vancouver, and it is written by a Toronto native ... from this point the artists' group will branch out to embrace other areas of the arts."

*Yellow Fever*, a light hearted thriller, is set in the rundown inner city part of Vancouver. It's hero Sam Shikaze, an aging private-eye, in a crumpled suit somewhat given to the comfort of the bottle, forgetful of his own sexual charms and of others as well, is reminiscent of the anti-hero private-eyes of Dashiell Hammet and Chandler. And in his temporarily quiet world of the bottle, Billie Holliday and meals out at Rosie's, enters the problem in the shape of a kidnapping of the local Japanese Beauty Queen named Cherry Blossom. Both the parents of the girl and Sam's old acquaintance Police Captain Kenji Kadota entrust Sam with finding the girl, and find her he does, along with finding a woman who falls for him, plenty of beatings with racist name-calling, and a secure place in the heart of the Canadian police and politicians of neo-nazi racist organizations such as the Western Guard. Reluctantly, bruised and battered, Sam overcomes every obstacle – with a little help from the 'kid' reporter from the Vancouver Sun and Chuck Chan, his woman lawyer friend. In the end Cherry Blossom returns to the bosom of her family, Captain Kadota returns to the force, the Western Guard policemen are exposed, the 'kid' finds her way to fame through the Toronto Globe – and Sam Shikaze walks alone through the empty back streets of the China town from where the

Chinese are vanishing, stops, lights his cigarette, lowers his hat over his forehead and walks out of our sight.

*Yellow Fever* brings out issues that neither the Japanese community nor other non-white communities can afford to ignore in Canada. Starting with ever-present stereotyping, extending in range to power various myths about the 'orientals' to being branded as cunning, treacherous creatures – the play extends into activities of racist organizations such as the Western Guard which is considering ways of eliminating this infectious "yellow fever". Not too long ago a Nazi-Fascist combine had spoken of the Jews as a social concern. The interesting thing is that this Fascism is shown to be deeply imbedded within the law/order enforcement apparatus in Canada, as well as within various other departments of the State – extending from those which makes laws to those which implement them. And last but not the least the play serves as a reminder to the Japanese and other 'visible' minority groups that, whereas their labour and economic activities have a role in the Canadian economy – they themselves do not. A time may come when the doors of other barbed-wired camps will be held open again, and even green reservations will open their gates and 'visible' minorities will join other invisible visibles such as the native Indians who are right now sitting there. Waiting for what?

A few words about the production now. Whereas Rick Shiomi's play itself has so much in it, the play as presented in Toronto Free Theatre under the direction of Raul Aranas with Harvey Chao (Sam

Shikaze), Susan Jay (Nancy the "Kid"), Tom MacDonald (Superintendent Jameson), Bob Lem (Kenji Kadota) and others, gave us less than the script of the play could provide. Somewhere the seriousness of the play failed to come to grips with its humour and lightness. Somewhere in the welter of actions, humour and jostlings, the point of the play began to get lost. A greater economy could be exercised in this direction. We know that knaves can be fools but still ... The other area where the direction/acting were less than satisfactory was the portrayal of women. Women don't need to act so artificial, or strut about the stage like that, nor hold their bodies in such coy "feminine" postures – especially if they are "liberated" women. I do know that we are dealing here with a play in a light vein, but one could be light and comic without actually caricaturing the part that one plays. But there were moments, and sequences, when the acting and the theme came together – particularly in the acting of Shikaze, in his lonely walks, late nights alone, in interactions with Rosie, in his self-deprecating, sceptical humour. The caricature type of acting was put to its best use in the Western Guard meeting enacted by Tom MacDonald and Jim Knapp.

Aranas and artistic director Guy Spring, as well as the stage managers of the play (Winston Kam and Midori Carney) are to be congratulated in the three part stage that they created. The use of the actual stage space and the space beside the main stage, which serves as the main street and the alleys, is very imaginative. One of the most strik-

ing moments of the play is the entrance of Shikaze (Chao) through that half-lit street, pausing to light a cigarette. That act and that setting alone established his character and put him in the long tradition of poor, unwilling, unheroic private eyes. From then on we sit mostly interested, often drawn into the lives of Japanese (the Chinese as well, as the "Kid" Nancy is Chinese) Canadians – seeing an interesting use of a old time literary fame. When the curtain falls, we leave convinced of the need to look into the lives of those who, "visible" as they are, are "invisible" in the Canadian cultural/social scene. ▲

# THE SOJOURNER LIES ON THE MIND OF SOME

by Anthony Chan

---

Unlike theatre or film reviews, reviews of books neither make nor break a book's salability. Authors sometimes prefer to have a bad review rather than no review, provided proper information about the book is given: author's name, spelled correctly, and certain details are mentioned — publisher, date of publication, where to buy, and the price.

Unfortunately Jin Tan's review of *Gold Mountain* (*Asianadian*, April 1983 issue) only informs the reader of his own pet theories and attitudes. He neither provides the basic information such as publisher, date nor gives the usual description of the book. A reader might wonder what the hell the book is all about.

Ever since I first met Jin Tan in August, 1982 at the University of Victoria, where I was teaching a summer course on Chinese history, it seems that the interpretation of the "Chinese as a Sojourner" has been preying on his mind and studies. For me, Sojourner is equivalent to Foreigner: one who is in a transient situation always ready to move at the drop of a CP ticket.

Actually, the magnitude of Jin Tan's concern about what I had written about the Sojourner Myth pleased me because here was someone anxious to take on this very important debate: "Were the Chinese Sojourners or Not?" Others have followed him. Yuen-foon Woon, a sociologist at Victoria recently gave a paper about the Sojourner as a Reality!



Debate over issues was one of the major goals which Cheuk Kwan, Lau Bo and I envisioned when we started the *Asianadian* on April Fool's Day, 1978. With Aminur Rahim's "is Oriental an Occident?" (*Asianadian*, April 83 issue) not only is there humour in Asian Canadian communities, but also vigorous debate about key issues.

But I digress.

Besides Jin Tan's inability to follow the standard rules of reviewing a book, his argument against my "Sojourner as Myth" premise comes out of reading, not *Gold Mountain*, but two articles I wrote for *Visible Minorities* edited by Ujimoto and Hirabayashi and *The Journal of Ethnic Studies* in 1980 and 1981: early interpretations. Why do I think that?

Essentially, its because my interpretation has taken a quantum leap from those earlier efforts. In *Gold Mountain*, I wrote about the roots of emigration, workers and merchants, Qing dynasty policy to overseas Chinese (incidentally, *hua qiao* or *hua q* does not mean sojourner), and comments by Alexander Winchester, Huang Cunxian, Sing Cheung Yung, and Won Alexander Cumyow (the first Chinese born in Canada). If Jin Tan had taken the time to read these passages, if nothing else, they would have given him some idea that Chinese immigrants were *made* sojourners because of racism. Both Sing Cheung Yung and Won Alexander Cumyow said that "the Chinese would bring their families here were it not for the unfriendly reception they got here during recent years". That's found on page 50.

No where in his review did Jin Tan refer to these passages or to any of the chapter topics. It is quite obvious that he did not take the time to read the book except for the Preface. If he did, he did not do it with any clear understanding or perception. One wonders what kind of history is taught at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education where Jin Tan is presently teaching. Perhaps Jin Tan's major difficulties lie in his training or lack of it.

As for his comparing Southeast Asia with Canada and the conditions of Chinese immigration, it's like comparing apples with lemons - one sweet and the other sour. Jin Tan would profit from reading M. Godley's *The Mandarin Capitalists from Nanyang*, 1981 and R. Irick's *Ch'ing Policy toward the Coolie Trade*, 1982. He would find that many Chinese in Southeast Asia were more resident capitalists and less sojourner.


Jin Tan also laments the fact that *Gold Mountain* takes the "CHINESE AS VICTIM" thesis. Far from it: the book is rather directly opposed to the Chinese as Victim thesis. What is this thesis? It means that the Chinese were constantly reacting/responding to racism and racists called the tune. Again, if Jin Tan had read my chapters on workers/merchants, Sun Yat-sen and the revolution in Canada, the drive to repeal the exclusion act, and the section on literature, he would have discovered that the Chinese in Canada were creating history. They were taking matters in their own hands.

In modern Chinese history, there are two schools. One follows the response theory - the Chinese reacted and were helpless to the onslaught of imperialism in China. The other takes the view that the Chinese, even under imperialism, were able to create and direct their own destiny. I followed this latter school for my first book, *Arming the Chinese*.

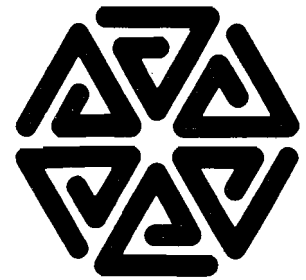
But again I digress.

An example of the "Chinese as Victim" thesis is Peter Ward's *White Canada Forever*. The title itself tells the reader where Ward is coming from: certainly not from the viewpoint of the Chinese in Canada. It's the outsider's view of Chinese Canada. The Chinese are merely things to be toyed with and consequently can have any number of images, falsehoods, directions imposed on them. That is why *Asianadian* was launched - to give the Asian Canadian view of issues in Canada.

*Gold Mountain* describes a social history of Chinese Canada: what people ate, how they dressed, what conditions were present, how they married, etc. To call the book an exercise in the "Chinese as Victim" thesis shows that Jin Tan needs to read more widely and with some effort. Before reviewing any other book, he should also read it carefully first.

A review is like makeup. It reveals a person's face and the thoughts behind it. 





## South Asian Canadian Literature Conference.

On October 1 and 2, 1983, a conference was held at the University of Toronto campus on South Asian Canadian Literature entitled: Search for Meaning. The conference was sponsored by Toronto South Asian Review to mark the release of the report entitled —

*Search for Meaning.* Edited by Dr. Suwanda H.J. Sugunasiri, it is the work of several contributors who have worked for about three years on the project. The report, however, has yet to be published.

In the first session Dr. Sugunasiri made a short presentation of his report. This was followed by a review of *South Asian Canadian Poetry in English* by Arun Prabha Mukherjee of the University of Regina.

Other topics covered in the two-day proceedings were: *South Asian Canadian Novels in English* by Frank Birbalsingh of York University; *South Asian Canadian Short Stories* by S.H.J. Suwandasiri and Canadian Punjabi Fiction and Drama by S. Kalsey. Nuzrat Khan of Ottawa spoke on *Urdu Literature in Canada.*

Brenda E.F. Beck of the University of British Columbia gave a talk on *Indo-Canadian Popular Culture: Should Writers Take the Lead in its Development?* Dr. M.G. Vassanji of the Toronto South Asian Review spoke about *Patterns of South Asian Literature.*

In addition to these presentations there were poetry readings by several South Asian writers such as Lakshmi Gill, Krisantha Bhaggiyadatta, Himani Bannerji, Rienzi Cruz, Cyril Dabydeen and Reshard Gool.

## Coalition of Visible Minority Women.

After months of planning, a conference of *Visible Minority Women*, sponsored by the Race Relations Division of the Ontario Ministry of Labour was held in Toronto on September 30 and October 1, 1983.

The conference was attended by women from visible minority communities from all over Ontario. Among the participants were women from the Black, Chinese, South Asian, Native and the Filipino communities.

Throughout the conference planning and at the conference itself differences emerged between the community women and the government organizers. The community women felt that the government organizers had diluted many of the action-oriented draft resolutions and made them read like bland innocuous statements. Also many of the resource people nominated by the community women were not called by the government organizers. Also Latin American women were not included in the conference.

As a result of this dissatisfaction with the conference, a strong movement of women emerged to form a *Coalition of Visible Minority Women*. The goals of this Coalition are to build a united front to fight against racism and sexism in Canadian society.

It was felt that a common voice was needed to address this issue. The first meeting of the *Coalition* was held on October 22, 1983 in Toronto.

The projected activities of the *Coalition* include:

- To work towards gaining access to the media in order to bring the message of the Visible Minority Women to the public's attention.
- To monitor the media and expose biases in dealing with Visible Minority Women.
- To work with labour organizations in order to influence the labour movement.
- To get representation on boards, committees and organizations which deal with issues affecting Visible Minority Women.

If you wish to participate in the activities of this *Coalition* please contact:

Margaret Gittens  
101 Blecker St.  
Unit 100F  
Toronto, Ont.  
M4X 1X1

# Contributors

**Himani Bannerji** is a poet and short story writer who has recently returned from a trip to India where she did research in political theatre in Bengal. She came to Canada from India in 1969 and teaches part time at York University. She has published a book of poetry called *A Separate Sky* (Domestic Bliss, 1982).

**Anthony Chan** was one of the founding members of Asianadian Resource Workshop. He is the author of two books, *Gold Mountain* and *Arming the Chinese*. He has taught history at several Canadian universities and is presently with the Minority Development Program of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

**Meena Dhar** is an urban planner with the City of Toronto. She immigrated to Canada in 1967 and lives in Toronto with her husband and two children. She is a member of the Board of the Riverdale Women's Centre. She is a free lance graphic artist.

**Richard Fung** is a former Trinidadian who came to Toronto from Ireland in 1973. He is presently studying Film at the University of Toronto. He has recently completed a videotape on racism in the Toronto School System for the Toronto Board of Education. He is a member of the Gay Asians of Toronto.

**Edy Goto** is Sansei (third generation Japanese Canadian) living in Toronto with her husband and two children. Over the last eight years she has been actively involved in community work with the Japanese Canadian community. She was General Secretary of the Japanese Canadian Centennial Society.

**Om Joneja** teaches in the Department of English, Maharaja Scindhia University of Baroda, India. His poems in Hindi and English have been published in Indian periodicals. He was in Canada recently to do post-doctoral research at Concordia University, Montreal.

**Prabha Khosla** was born in Pororo, Uganda. She works with the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of South Africa. She also acts as an organizer/interpreter for working class women of Indian origin at work.

**Leonard Preyra** is a doctoral candidate in International Economics at Queen's University in Kingston. He has worked as a research analyst for the MacDonald Commission on the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

**James Strecker** teaches Media Studies at Sheridan College in Hamilton. His work has been published in several Canadian periodicals including *Fiddlehead*, *Poetry Canada Review*, *Dalhousie Review*.

**Maria Theresa-Larain** lives in Toronto. She is the coordinator of Women Working with Immigrant Women, a national umbrella organization.

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- poetry
- letters

concerning the Asian experience in Canada.

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Submit your manuscripts to the *Asianadian*.

## PROMOTE THE ASIANADIAN RESOURCE WORKSHOP IN YOUR COMMUNITY

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Contact **Asianadian Resource Workshop.**

## ASIANADIAN RESOURCE WORKSHOP (ARW): WHO IS WHO IN ASIAN CANADA

ARW is compiling a WHO IS WHO of Asian Canadian professionals, artists, academics and community workers.

We will be pleased to receive suggestions. We need the following information:

- Name
- Address
- Area of Expertise
- Qualifications
- Major tasks or projects completed.

Contact **Asianadian Resource Workshop.**

## HELP ORGANIZE SEMINARS FOR (ARW) ASIANADIAN RESOURCES WORKSHOP

ARW - sponsoring a series of workshops in Toronto on Employment and Asian Canadians (see overleaf for details)

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Write to Asianadian Resource Workshop or ☎ 591-1625 in Toronto.

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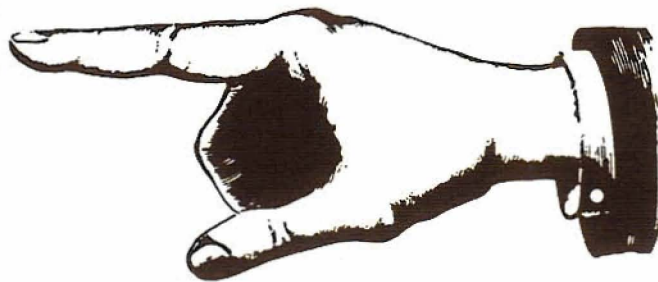
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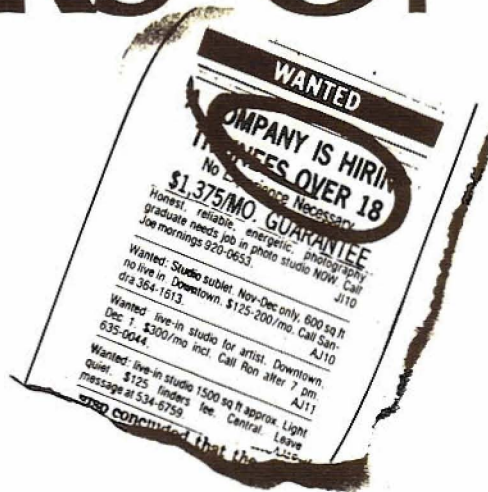
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