

How Refugees Have Enriched Canadian Life

Condensed from "Citizen", Canadian Citizenship Branch

WHEN refugees leave their homes and search for more tolerable conditions of life elsewhere they bring with them their skills and experience, their courageous outlook on life and a maturity gained through suffering. The country that gives them refuge is richly rewarded, as many examples from history illustrate. One example from recent times is the diffusion of scientists, scholars, musicians and others throughout many parts of the world as the result of Nazi persecution in Germany. The United States was immeasurably the richer for having offered a haven to Einstein. And he was only one, though the greatest, among many who have devoted their talents and energies to the countries which gave them refuge.

Canada is one of the countries which have benefited very considerably from the training and experience of refugees from Nazism, both Jewish people and others. Most came before and during the Second World War. After the war a much larger flow of homeless people poured into Canada as a result of the political and geographical changes which took place in Europe at that time. This group included Poles, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Yugoslavs, Hungarians, Czechoslovakians and others.

A later refugee movement was brought about by the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Canada received over 20 per cent of the total number who fled from Hungary. The most recent group of all are the families from refugee camps, with one member suffering from tuberculosis.

Since 1933 over 300,000 refugees have found homes in Canada and it is estimated that, since the war, one of every seven immigrants has been a refugee. What have the refugees contributed to their new country? Here are a few contributions made by outstanding individuals who have come to Canada during the past twenty-five years.

Science and Scholarship

Dr. Gerhard Herzberg, Director of the Division of Pure Physics at the National Research Council, is a world authority on spectroscopy—a branch of physics dealing with the structure of atoms and molecules. He left Germany to come to Canada in 1935. Dr. Herzberg has received many high honours. In 1953 he was awarded the Henry Marshall Tory Medal of the Royal Society of Canada. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of London and has received honorary degrees from a number of universities, both at home and abroad.

A pioneer in the use of the new psycho-active drugs on this continent, Dr. Heinz Lehmann won the Albert Lasker Award in 1957 for his experimental work in this field. He is an associate professor of psychiatry at McGill University and clinical director of the Verdun Protestant Hospital. He graduated in medicine from the University of Berlin and did postgraduate work

in psychiatry and neurology at several German universities and at the University of Vienna. He made his home in Canada in 1937.

German-born Dr. Karl Stern is psychiatrist-in-chief at St. Mary's Hospital in Montreal and Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Ottawa. Dr. Stern is the author of several books. Also at the University of Ottawa is Dr. Antony Fidler, Professor and Head of the Department of Medicine. Dr. Fidler escaped from Poland and before coming to Canada taught at the Polish Medical College in Edinburgh.

Many other Canadian universities have gained from the experience of European-trained scientists and scholars. An early refugee from Germany, Dr. Peter Brieger is Head of the Department of Art and Archaeology at the University of Toronto. Dr. Konstantine Kowalewski, formerly of Poland, is Associate Professor of Experimental Surgery at the University of Alberta Medical School and Assistant Director of the McEachern Research Laboratory. A leading scientist in the field of forest ecology, Dr. Vladimir Krajina is Professor of Biology and Botany at the University of British Columbia. Dr. Krajina fled from Czechoslovakia in 1948.

Departments of Slavic Studies at several universities owe their origin to refugees from eastern European countries. At the University of Manitoba, for example, Ukrainian-born Dr. Jaroslav B. Rudnycky is a very active head of the Slavic Department. Another example is Dr. Theodore Domaradzki, from Poland, who is Director of the Centre of Slavic Studies at the University of Montreal.

British Columbia provided a haven for a group of nearly three hundred students and thirty professors of the Forestry Faculty of Sopron University after they fled from Hungary in 1956. The group's move to Powell River through the cooperation of the Powell River Company and the University of British Columbia brought to the province a source of badly needed professional manpower for Canada's pulp-and-paper industry.

Many medical scientists among former refugees are making important contributions in various fields of research. For example, Dr. Andrew Sass-Kortsak, who has become widely known as a child specialist in the ten years since he came to Canada from Hungary, has directed several major research projects at the Hospital for Sick Children Research Institute in Toronto. Dr. Ernest Kovacs, also from Hungary, is a research associate at the School of Hygiene, University of Toronto. He is at present carrying out experiments in an effort to discover the cause of multiple sclerosis.

Dr. Ludmila Dolar-Mantuani is the only woman in Canada with a degree in petrology—the study of rock formations. At present she is working in the research department of the Ontario Hydro-Electric Power Commission. With her husband, Dr. Mantuani escaped from Yugoslavia to Venice.