

administrative law and enactment or legal matters is avoided, especially at a time when poverty is becoming feminized, feminist historians risk fossilization in the manner of Henri Bourassa, when his views came increasingly to appeal only to that small Quebec minority accepting his middle-class nationalist and anti-feminist assumptions. If history as legitimation is not channelled into new approaches, the only dialogue remaining will recall the experience of Canadian missions in China — the dialogue of the deaf and the dumb.

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Egon F. Kunz — *Displaced Persons: Calwell's New Australians*. Sydney and Toronto: Pergamon Press for Australian National University Press, 1988. Pp. xxi, 285.

Between 1947 and 1954, some 180,000 persons displaced by war in eastern and central Europe settled in Australia. Almost all of these immigrants migrated under a scheme with special selection criteria and relocation controls. This scheme, launched by Arthur Calwell, the country's first minister of Immigration (1945-1949), is the subject of this book. The author, who came to Australia under the scheme, has published extensively on the fate of Australia's displaced persons.

He uses samples, surveys and statistics generated by other researchers and government agencies. He also created a sample of his own: some 5,800 adult males who arrived aboard 12 non-randomly selected transport ships. Some 1,800 of these were sent questionnaires in a 20-year follow-up. Data analysis, though extensive, is descriptive. The most compelling reading is the comments by refugees culled from numerous sources.

The context in which the migrants began their odyssey identifies the peoples affected by war and persecution. The Australia in which they ended up is also portrayed. Thirteen ethnic groups from which almost all came are also described. For example, the ruptures which displaced millions of Poles and the factors which drove 60,000 of them to Australia are examined. Brief reference to displaced migrations to Canada and elsewhere is also made.

The author stresses that not only did Australia's intake feature numerous ethnic groups, but that the migrants from these groups were not typical cross-sections. Each, to use the author's category, was made up of a number of discreet "vintages" with distinctive attributes in terms of gender ratios, age, class and occupation. Some were not even properly identified, with Russians mixed in with those listed as Ukrainians and Hungarians, sometimes referred to as "Balts", a term more properly attached to arrivals from the Baltic, namely Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

In Australia, the host group, which had practiced exclusivist immigration policies and which, despite its overwhelmingly British origins, could even hurl xenophobic epithets at English immigrants, was not disposed to welcome the European influx. Calwell was convinced that underpopulated, labour-short white Australia could only survive and prosper in the post-war world through a rapid infusion from Europe. But

he also feared that such a migration would trigger a disruptive backlash within the host group. To allay fears, he had Australian officials select the most physically fit from camps run in Europe by the International Relief Organization. In addition, displaced persons coming to Australia under the scheme must agree to enter into a contract under which they were required to spend up to two years in locales and in unskilled employment specified by the state. Breaking this undertaking could lead to deportation. The government also campaigned to place the new immigrants in the most positive light.

The author details how the immigrants fared, what their contribution was both as regards future immigration policy and the development of Australia. They, for example, were the vanguard of some 4.5 million immigrants who came to Australia between 1947 and 1987 to a country that had only 7.5 million inhabitants in 1947. While the author concludes that Calwell's scheme benefitted both the host and migrant groups, it nonetheless had its darker side which, he asserts, has not been sufficiently explored. He finds and accounts for a higher incidence of mental illness among the refugees. He traces numerous examples of conflict, suffering and lost opportunity as the migrant groups try, on the one hand, and the host people, on the other, to impose strategies of segregation, assimilation and integration.

The author dwells upon a particularly ironic development. Calwell's scheme significantly increased the opportunity for unskilled and poorly educated migrants to quickly improve their material lot. Their wages and the buying power these possessed were considerably higher than in the Europe they had left. "That Australia did turn out to be close to a paradise for the least educated, there can be no doubt" (225). Meanwhile, skilled, well educated upper-class refugees, who made up a significant minority of the migrants, lost status and self-esteem. The country lost their potential contribution while many of them languished in unskilled, manual jobs during their two-year indenture and even beyond it. Medical doctors were particularly ostracized. Some got to practice in the outback or Papua, New Guinea, but the profession blocked their use in urban areas. Other skilled refugees, through a combination of their initiative and the flexibility of some Australian bureaucrats and professionals, found appropriate skilled employment before their contract expired.

This work rehearses much that is familiar in migration studies generally, in the dynamics of the demography of war-torn Europe and in ethnic relations in Australia. It also contains material the author has previously published. Its distinct contribution is its reminder that even academics are inclined to categorize too readily and foster distortion as a consequence. In this case, Australia's displaced arrivals were, in terms of their background and the specifics of their harrowing journeys, a heterogeneous lot. With this point clearly established, the author is able to show that responses to their new circumstances were also varied. The host group, including even its most informed members, ignored that variety and indulged in stereotyping which demeaned and disadvantaged themselves as well as the newcomers. Whether most Australians belatedly reformed as consequence of the impact of immigrant numbers and values as the author also suggests, is, of course, a moot point.

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