

When the liberal forces in Czechoslovakia spearheaded by the government of Alexander Dubcek attempted to enhance the political and social freedoms in their country in 1968, an armed intervention by the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact forces made sure that these liberalizing tendencies were crushed. As a result of the invasion thousands of Czechoslovakians were forced to flee.

Responding to this refugee crisis the Canadian government announced that Czechoslovakian refugees would be welcome in Canada. There is no doubt that there was an element of self-interest in this invitation since it was an unprecedented opportunity to acquire the finest type of refugees including medical doctors, dentists, designers, electronic engineers and chemical technicians. Ultimately the total number of refugees admitted into Canada reached 12,000 with the cost to the government being approximately 11 million dollars.

Tibetan Refugees

In 1959 between 60,000 and 80,000 Tibetans fled their country when it was annexed by China. In 1971, Canada accepted 228 Tibetans for resettlement in this country. The Tibetan refugees, approximately 90 percent of whom were between the ages of 15 and 44, settled in Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. They were intentionally resettled in agricultural areas where it was felt they could adapt more easily. The arrival of the Tibetan refugees in Canada marked the first refugee movement into this country from Asia.

On August 4, 1972 former Ugandan President Idi Amin decreed that within ninety days, all Asians carrying British passports would be expelled from the country. The Canadian government was quick to come to their assistance and selection teams were sent to Uganda. However, the *Toronto Globe and Mail* took an incisive and critical view of the government's action when it wrote on August 26, 1972:

"While we applaud the government, we also look between the lines. The mechanics of the action are not without a touch of international gamesmanship. Being quick among the nations to say come, by being speedy in sending an immigration team, . . . the government appears to be bidding for the cream of the crop. This is not wrong so long as the government is prepared to take some of the less attractive as well."

In terms of age and educational qualifications, the Ugandan-Asians comprised one of the most desirable groups ever to gain admittance to Canada. About 60 percent were either professionals or involved in sales and commerce. These refugees also possessed the favourable characteristics of speaking English and were considered most likely to become self-reliant very shortly after being admitted.

Canada accepted a total of 7,000 Ugandan-Asian refugees over the two years 1972 and 1973. After the small Tibetan refugee movement, this was the largest non-European refugee movement to acquire permanent resettlement privileges in Canada.

The Chilean refugee movement had its origins in the coup by the Chilean military on September 11, 1973, which resulted in the overthrow of Chile's Marxist President, Salvador Allende, and his administration.

In this particular case the Canadian government demonstrated greater caution and reluctance to adopt a liberal refugee policy than on earlier occasions. The reason being that the Canadian government was not prepared to oppose or embarrass the military junta that had come to power in order to protect western capitalist values and interests. Furthermore, Canadian officials were hesitant to accept a large number of Chilean refugees who were decidedly Marxist and left of centre in their political affiliation and ideology.

The Canadian government dragged its feet in the processing of refugee applicants from Chile as evidenced by the high percentage of incompleting case investigations on the part of immigration personnel. These delaying tactics were in sharp contrast to the rapid processing of applicants which had taken place during the Czechoslovakian and Ugandan-Asian movements.

When South Vietnam fell to the North Vietnamese communist forces in 1975, thousands of displaced Cambodians and South Vietnamese initially converged on Saigon in search of political asylum in some other country. With the ultimate fall of Saigon and the communist takeover the mass exodus of the fleeing Indo-Chinese refugees mostly in boats — in most instances very unseaworthy small craft — permanently identified this refugee movement as the "boat people". This floating population of "boat people", unwanted and unaccepted by other Southeast Asian countries, caught the attention of the whole world and the hearts and minds of people everywhere.

Canada's response to the Indo-Chinese refugee crisis was based exclusively on a strong humanitarian offer for unqualified assistance. This was the very first time in Canada's history that no trace of economic considerations or any degree of self-interest can be identified in this country's offer to assist the Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees. A substantial number of refugees were airlifted from the temporary refugee camps that were set up and brought to Canada on special Canadian Armed Forces flights. Once in Canada they were distributed amongst several Canadian provinces. Special mention should also be made of the outpouring of public enthusiasm for the refugee sponsorship program which allowed individual Canadians, voluntary associations and church groups to respond and participate in the costs and responsibility of resettling many thousands of refugees.

Recently Canada has welcomed the 10,000th refugee from the Southeast Asian Refugee Camp in Hong Kong. The 60,000th refugee from all Southeast Asia destined for Canada arrived in Montreal in December 1980.

A fundamental review of Canada's immigration policy and refugee program was completed with the publication of the Green Paper on Population and Immigration in 1975. The Green Paper had this to say about Canada's refugee program:

"The only certainty for which Canadian policy in this area must be prepared is the unhappy prospect that grave crises will continue to erupt. Policy must provide for a flexible response to situations in which it will be imperative to preserve a sensible and human balance among a wide range of factors and options. In each specific instance, we must weigh the choice of providing resettlement opportunities in Canada in the light of the development of Canadian immigration policy as a whole and the equitable