GILBERTO FERNANDES

# Moving the "Less Desirable": Portuguese Mass Migration to Canada, 1953–74

Abstract: *The sovereignty of migration policy-makers is never absolute. This has been true for both receiving and sending states. One important check on the receiving nation's immigration policy implementation was the sending nation's own sovereignty over its expatriated citizens. These colliding sovereignties have sometimes created liminal spaces where migrants and their informal facilitators were able to subvert regulations by playing them against each other, while, at other times, they were pressed between formal gatekeepers bent on enforcing their policies. This bilateral dimension is often missing from Canadian immigration history, as is the role of homeland government officials, who brokered and supervised these migrant movements while conciliating the roles of gatekeepers and facilitators. This is especially significant when it involved authoritarian governments, such as Portugal's Estado Novo dictatorship (1926–74). How did Ottawa's relatively liberal immigration policies correspond with the Estado Novo's authoritarian stance on emigration? How did Portuguese officials influence the movement of its emigrants in Canada? How did the migrants react to the concerted top-down arrangements of two imposing governments? This article examines these and other questions in reference to the Portuguese "bulk order", family sponsorship, and clandestine movements to Canada between 1953 and 1974.*

**Keywords**: migration policy, bureaucrats, diplomats, labour, Portuguese, bulk order migration, clandestine migration, family sponsorship, war resisters

Résumé : *La souveraineté des décideurs en matière de migration n'est jamais absolue. Cela vaut tant pour l'État d'accueil que pour l'État d'origine. La propre souveraineté du pays d'origine sur ses ressortissants expatriés constitue en effet un frein important à la mise en œuvre de la politique d'immigration de l'État d'accueil. Le conflit entre ces souverainetés a parfois créé des espaces frontières où les migrants et leurs facilitateurs ont été en mesure de bousculer les règles en les faisant jouer l'une contre l'autre, tandis qu'à d'autres moments, ils ont été coincés entre des contrôleurs résolus à mettre en application leurs politiques. Cette dimension bilatérale fait souvent défaut dans l'histoire de l'immigration au Canada, et il en va de même du rôle des fonctionnaires du pays d'origine qui ont négocié et supervisé ces mouvements migratoires tout en conciliant les*

*The Canadian Historical Review* 96, 3, September 2015

doi: 10.3138/chr.3094

*rôles de contrôleurs et de facilitateurs. Voilà qui est particulièrement important dans le cas de gouvernements autoritaires, comme la dictature de l'Estado Novo au Portugal (1933-1974). Comment les politiques d'immigration relativement libérales d'Ottawa ont-elles concordé avec la position autoritaire de l'Estado Novo en matière d'émigration? Comment les autorités portugaises ont-elles influé sur le mouvement de leurs émigrants au Canada? Quelle a été la réaction des émigrants aux mesures directives concertées de deux gouvernements? Le présent article aborde ces questions et d'autres en faisant référence aux mouvements de « commande en grand nombre » et de parrainage familial au Canada, entre 1953 et 1974.*

**Mots clés** : politique migratoire, fonctionnaires, diplomates, main-d'œuvre, Portugais

Migration historians have written a great deal about Canada's immigration policies, including their makers and enforcers. They have used terms such as "gatekeepers" and "facilitators" to identify those individuals who stood between migrants and their destinations, holding the keys that either blocked or granted access to visas, jobs, and citizenship. Gerald Dirks used them to identify two camps within Canada's regulators and bureaucrats. The gatekeepers were those who considered immigration to be at best a necessary evil and tried to restrict it; while the facilitators were those rare individuals who saw benefits in immigration and tried to increase it, moved not only by economic and demographic considerations but also by humanitarian and compassionate concerns.[1] Other historians have built on Robert Harney's discussion about the role of informal middle-class facilitators, who profited from the "commerce of migration" in facilitating the departure and settlement of their "humbler countrymen." Franca Iacovetta wrote extensively about Canada's gatekeepers during the Cold War, expanding this concept beyond border officials to include politicians, civil servants, public commentators, and professionals who defined the terms for accessing citizenship along Anglo-Celtic, capitalist, liberal-democratic, middle-class, patriarchal, and heteronormative lines.[2]

One important check on the receiving nation's policy implementation was the sending nation's own sovereignty over its expatriated citizens. As we will discuss in this article, Lisbon officials conciliated the roles of gatekeepers and facilitators, as they pre-selected the pool of applicants presented to Canadian immigration inspectors, while

1 Gerald Dirks, *Controversy and Complexity: Canadian Immigration Policy during the 1980s* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995).

2 Robert Harney, "Commerce of Migration," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 9, no. 1 (1977): 42–53; Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006).

seeking to expand the overall volume of emigration among select groups and regions, following their own national interests. While known to migration scholars,[3] this bilateral international dimension, and the role that homeland government officials played in brokering, supervising, and policing cross-border movements, has largely been seen as being ancillary to the traditional history of Canadian migration policy. In large part, this is due to the fact that Canadian historians have, for obvious reasons, privileged those sources available in their own country.

The extensive literature on the postwar "bulk order" movements offers detailed descriptions of the recruitment process conducted by Canadian immigration authorities, supported by the comprehensive records of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (DCI) at the national archives in Ottawa. "New migration" historians also resorted to oral interviews with postwar newcomers to "go beyond the standard narratives of immigration policy" and document their often difficult experiences during their recruitment, movement, and settlement process in Canada.[4] These historians, however, did not access government records in the sending countries. In the Portuguese archives, I found a trove of internal correspondence and other documents exchanged among Lisbon officials as well as with their Ottawa counterparts, emigrants, and other entities in Canada. It quickly became clear that much of Canadian history is preserved in these foreign collections, as they contain a great deal of information about immigrant communities on matters that were invisible to Ottawa and its record keepers. This is especially true when these records were

3 See, for instance, V.J. Kaye, "Dr. Joseph Oleskiw's Visit to Canada, August-October 1895," *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa* 32 (1962): 30–44; Vadim Kukushkin, *From Peasants to Labourers: Ukrainian and Belarusan Immigration from the Russian Empire to Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007).

4 Alexander Freund, *Oral History and Ethnic History* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 2014), 32. See also Milda Danys, *DP Lithuanian Immigration to Canada after the Second World War* (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1986); Ian Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900–1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987); Christiane Harzig, "MacNamara's DP Domestics: Immigration Policy Makers Negotiate Class, Race, and Gender in the Aftermath of World War II," *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* 10, no. 1 (2003): 23–48; Franca Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 20–52; Noula Mina, "Taming and Training Greek 'Peasant Girls' and the Gendered Politics of Whiteness in Postwar Canada: Canadian Bureaucrats and Immigrant Domestics, 1950s–1960s," *Canadian Historical Review* 94, no. 4 (2013): 514–39.

amassed by authoritarian governments with extensive surveillance apparatus, as was the case with Portugal's Estado Novo dictatorship (1926–74).

Under Dictator António Salazar (1932–68), Portugal was characterized by deep social and economic inequalities, where everyone was supposed to accept their place in society. Its weak economy was marked by under-developed and labour-intensive agricultural and industrial sectors, maintained by traditional elites who wanted to uphold the status quo. The ruling anti-liberal and anti-communist corporatist ideology privileged rurality over modern industrialization and its social "ills." This ethos was supported by a propaganda and censorship apparatus that promoted consensus and silenced dissent as well as by a violently repressive political police responsible for various civil and human rights abuses, assisted by an ubiquitous network of civilian informers. The conservative Catholic clergy ran a stifling and stern educational system and regulated many aspects of social and family life, where domesticity was compulsory for women, who were legally placed under the explicit rule of male "heads of family." Moreover, the Estado Novo held on to a centuries-old colonial empire that stretched from Africa to Asia, which proved to be economically, financially, and politically unsustainable. All of this amounted to massive levels of unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, and persecution. This was especially the case in the Azorean islands, located in the middle of the Atlantic, where centuries of isolation and neglect by Lisbon led its impoverished residents to turn to their emigrant kin in the United States – where large Azorean communities had existed since the mid-nineteenth century – for material assistance. Salazar's successor, Marcello Caetano (1968–74), was expected to bring about the regime's gradual liberalization and modernization, in tandem with changes already underway in some sectors of Portuguese economy and society. However, Portugal's Colonial Wars in Africa hindered this program and effectively boycotted any meaningful political change from within the regime.

In a country with very few paths for personal and collective advancement, and a long mythologized tradition of transatlantic mobility, emigration was the most sensible way to improve one's socio-economic condition. It was also a more immediate and safer (though not without peril) alternative to political uprising. Even dissenters could identify themselves with Portugal's long history of political and intellectual exile. The urge to escape increased as political persecution intensified in the 1950s, soaring once the Colonial Wars in Africa began in 1961, as many young families fled Portugal to save their male children from being drafted into that bloody conflict. The wars, which lasted until

1974, were one of the main factors prompting the Revolution of the Carnations, which toppled the dictatorship on 25 April 1974.

The colliding sovereignties of sending and receiving nations sometimes created liminal spaces where migrants and their informal facilitators were able to subvert regulators by playing them against each other, while, at other times, they were grinded between gatekeepers bent on enforcing their policies. As Iacovetta noted, we can only fully understand Canada's migration policy if we take into account the immigrants' collective ability to influence its making and implementation.[5] The sovereignty of policy-makers is never absolute or inflexible. This was true for both sending and receiving states, as proven by their general inability to prevent clandestine migration in favourable economic times. Obstinate migrants fleeing from poverty and repression were apt at avoiding gatekeepers and finding ways to circumvent or exploit conflicting regulations with the help of grassroots facilitators and their unlawful "commerce" of clandestine migration. Furthermore, the Estado Novo's own views on emigration were ambivalent. Salazar was skilful at exploiting the gap between policy statement and enforcement, appearing stern on the formal disapproval of emigration while tacitly allowing it to grow clandestinely, so to reap the many benefits of having an expatriate labour force sending money to their families back home. On the one hand, mass emigration generated much-needed foreign revenue in the form of remittances, which were essential for Portugal to balance its finances. On the other hand, the uncoordinated and largely unlawful population exodus was something the dictatorship could simply not tolerate. This was especially the case once the imperial regime began directing emigrants to its African colonies in the 1950s, in an effort to grow their incipient settler population and unleash its economic potential as markets for the metropolis, and again during the Colonial Wars.

Portuguese postwar migrant labourers shared similar experiences of itinerancy, isolation, exploitation, and adaptation as other national groups in Ottawa's "bulk order" scheme.[6] Still, in addition to their numerical significance, some distinct characteristics make the Portuguese a case worthy of its own study, such as the fact that, unlike

5 Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 21.

6 Grace Anderson and David Higgs. *A Future to Inherit: The Portuguese Communities of Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976); Domingos Marques and John Medeiros, *Portuguese Immigrants: Twenty-Five Years in Canada* (Toronto: Marquis Printers, 1980); Susana Miranda, "Not Ashamed or Afraid: Portuguese Immigrant Women in Toronto's Cleaning Industry, 1950–1995" (PhD dissertation, York University, 2010).

other European migrants, they had no pre-war co-ethnic communities in Canada; neither their homeland nor its fascist-like dictatorship and settler colonial empire had been torn apart by war; and they were able to sustain a large migration movement until the mid-1970s, making it one of the last low-skilled European groups to settle in Canada. Considering all of these factors, how did Ottawa's relatively liberal postwar immigration policies correspond with the Estado Novo's authoritarian, yet ambivalent, stance on emigration? How did Portuguese officials influence the movement of its emigrants in Canada and conciliate their role as gatekeepers and facilitators? How did the migrants navigate and challenge the top-down arrangements of two imposing governments? This article examines these and other questions in reference to the Portuguese "bulk order," family sponsorship, and clandestine movements to Canada between 1953 and 1974.

## THE "BULK ORDER" MOVEMENT

Until 1947, Southern European migration to Canada was highly restricted, contrasting with the preferred British, American, and Northern European migration. Lisbon officials and private individuals in Europe and North America had inquired of Ottawa's interest in starting a migration movement from Portugal since 1923, but the latter always rejected these proposals, citing the "undesirability" of Portuguese workers on account of their supposed inadaptability to Canada's farming conditions. The same argument would be used to reject the immigration of Caribbean farm workers proposed by various West Indian governments in the 1950s.[7] Only after the Second World War did Canada shift to a more open immigration policy. Responding to moral imperatives, capitalist interests, international commitments, and nation-building goals, Ottawa introduced a bulk labour program that allowed employers to place orders for foreign workers with the DCI, which then recruited in Europe's refugee camps. Between 1947 and 1952, over 100,000 "displaced persons" (DPS) were admitted into Canada under this scheme and provided with a two-year contract (later reduced to one year) with a Canadian employer. Once their contracts were over, they were free to seek other employment and enter the path to Canadian citizenship.

7 Donald Avery, *Reluctant Host: Canada's Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896–1994* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995), 204. Letter, Deputy Minister of Immigration, Ottawa, to Portuguese Consul J.B. Maclean, Toronto, 17 May 1925, reprinted in Domingos Marques and Manuela Marujo, *With Hardened Hands: A Pictorial History of Portuguese Immigration to Canada in the 1950s* (Toronto: New Leaf Publication, 1993), 2.

Though not a war-torn country, prospective emigrants in Portugal welcomed the encouraging news from Canada. The Canadian consul in Lisbon, Lester Glass, informed Ottawa in February 1947 that news of loosening immigration restrictions in the Portuguese press had triggered a flow of inquiries (an average of twenty a day).[8] The following month, Glass reported having received 800 letters in a period of four weeks, along with a large number of phone calls. Offers to organize a labour migration movement between the two countries kept coming from diplomats, businessmen, and Catholic priests, but Ottawa still declined. Glass was instructed to discourage unsolicited applications on the ground that Portugal's emigration policies prevented most of its population from leaving the country. Indeed, the same year that Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King eased immigration restrictions, Salazar banned emigration altogether, except for those applicants with a work contract abroad or whose movement was regulated by accord with the receiving nation's government.

In late 1947, however, Lisbon acknowledged it was unable to uphold this ban, and it introduced a system of annual emigration quotas determined by the country's labour needs. To centralize and better control its population exodus, the regime created the Emigration Junta, an agency tasked with coordinating the recruitment, transportation, and settlement of emigrants and "protecting" them from "smugglers and self-interested intermediaries." From that point on, the prospective emigrants were told their applications would be handled "without stress, or having to waste [their] meager resources … guided and looked after from the beginning, at no costs."[9] Meanwhile, the Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado (PIDE) – the dictatorship's political police – was responsible for sanctioning the issuance of passports and supressing illegal emigration.[10]

Canada's rapid economic expansion after the Second World War demanded a corresponding growth of labour and consumer markets. Once the European refugee camps were emptied, Canada's leading industries pressured Ottawa to recruit manual workers from Germany, the Netherlands, and the "less desirable" Southern European countries.

8 Dispatch from Consul L. Glass, Lisbon, to Secretary of State of External Affairs, Ottawa, 21 February 1947, reprinted in Marques and Marujo, *With Hardened Hands*, 3.

9 Decree 36558 of 28 October 1947, Diário da República Eletrónico, available at https://dre.pt/web/guest/pesquisa-avancada (accessed 8 July 2015).

10 Maria I. Baganha, "From Closed to Open Doors: Portuguese Emigration under the Corporatist Regime," *e-Journal of Portuguese History* 1, no. 1 (2003), available at https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Portuguese_Brazilian_Studies/ejph/html/issue1/pdf/baganha.pdf (accessed 26 January 2015).

FIGURE 1 In this photo, António Viola (third from the left), who was part of the 1952 pilot group, is seen celebrating that year's Christmas Eve at a bar in Montreal, in the company of Italian and Portuguese immigrants, some of them from Venezuela (York University Libraries, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections [CTASC], Domingos Marques fonds, F0573, ASC29605).

Unlike the Italians and Greeks, there were no pre-war Portuguese communities in Canada that could advocate on behalf of their countrymen. Yet, motivated by the flood of applications received in Lisbon, Consul Glass surveyed the government officials on both sides about their willingness to discuss a migration agreement. The Canadians were discouraged by the dictatorship's onerous bureaucracy, which they deemed to be unsuitable for handling "bulk orders."[11] However, Lisbon's increasingly ambivalent position encouraged Glass to continue pressuring Portuguese officials to loosen their restrictions, until they finally agreed to send thirty-five skilled male workers to Canada in 1952. After some time in the country, migration officials on both sides were glad to learn that this small pilot group was successfully employed and adapting well, giving them reasons to be optimistic about a larger movement in the future (see Figure 1).

11 Letter, Deputy Minister L. Fortier to Department of Labour, 18 July 1951, file 3-33-27, vol. 130, RG 26, Library and Archives Canada (LAC).

Since the nineteenth century, Portuguese governments had viewed emigration as a structural "safety valve" for releasing social and political pressures arising from the presence of impoverished surplus populations. With unemployment soaring in Portugal and nearing crisis proportions in the Azorean islands, the Estado Novo once again turned to emigration as a temporary solution.[12] Similar reasons prompted the Italian government in the 1950s to pressure Canada into accepting migrants from the overcrowded rural south; while the Greek government urged Ottawa to help reduce its "surplus population" later that decade by citing its previous migration agreements with Italy and Portugal. However, like the Italians and the Greeks, the Portuguese had to contend with Canadians' long-standing prejudices against the supposed sluggish work ethic and cultural backwardness of Southern Europeans.[13]

The Portuguese chargé d'affaires in Ottawa, Caldeira Coelho, first approached Deputy Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Laval Fortier in July 1952 to propose a "bulk order" movement from northern mainland Portugal.[14] A few months later, Coelho finally convinced Ottawa to accept a few hundred farmhands, vineyard workers, and female domestics. These individuals were to be screened by a team of Canadian inspectors from Paris who would visit three Portuguese mainland cities. Recognizing this inaugural movement as "a difficult experiment," both Coelho and the Portuguese foreign affairs minister advised the Emigration Junta to prepare a slate of *bona fide* workers who could "shatter the lack of confidence currently held [in Canada] about the quality of Latin immigrants."[15] Before the Emigration Junta could approve this movement, it asked the DCI for clarification on the emigrants' expected working and living conditions; the terms for their repatriation on account of inadaptability or illness; the kind of assistance available in case of a work accident; the likelihood of placing

12 In São Miguel, population density in relation to farmland exceeded 1,300 people per square mile in 1950. Jerry Williams, *In Pursuit of Their Dreams: A History of Azorean Immigration to the United States* (Dartmouth, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 139.

13 Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 22–23; Mina, "Taming and Training," 521.

14 Coelho also mentioned Lisbon's interest in arranging a movement of Portuguese Americans to Canada. Letter, Deputy Minister L. Fortier to unknown recipient, 24 July 1952, file 3-33-27, vol. 130, RG 26, LAC.

15 Letters, C. Coelho, Ottawa, to Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (PMFA), 30 December 1952; President A. Baptista, Emigration Junta, to Minister of the Interior, Trigo Negreiros, 7 January 1953; and Foreign Affairs Minister P. Cunha to A. Baptista, Emigration Junta, 25 February 1953, 2P A52 M67, Historical-Diplomatic Archive of the PMFA (HDA).

them near each other and avoiding "migrant camps," which was likely informed by the 1948 scandal surrounding the "primitive and insanitary" camp conditions of the Lithuanian and Estonian sugar beet workers in Emerson, Manitoba;[16] among other concerns. Lisbon objected to sending single women to work as domestics, fearing they would be "isolated in an unknown environment." Instead, the Emigration Junta offered to recruit men in the Madeira islands, where there was an unemployment crisis in the hotel industry. They also recommended that the Azores and Madeira be added to the locations being visited by Canadian inspectors since people there were keen to move to North America and generate migration chains.

In turn, the Canadians refused to go to the Azores and restated that they would only accept female domestics. Ottawa then proposed replacing the domestics with tradesmen and engineers from Lisbon, where they would also recruit half of the farmhands; the other half being recruited in Madeira.[17] The Portuguese diplomats continued to impress the "absolute necessity" of including Azoreans in this "bulk order," since the recruitment process in the islands had already begun, with significant costs for the applicants. However, Ottawa was adamant in its refusal, citing the fact that Canadian public opinion opposed "Latin and Catholic immigration," and demanded that this movement be handled with "special care"; that Azoreans were "hardly adaptable" to the Canadian climate; and that the government was "afraid of being attacked by Parliament" on the pretext that the Atlantic islands were too far from continental Europe to justify the travelling costs, especially for such small numbers.[18] However, they were willing to accept twenty Azoreans if they were sent to Lisbon for screening. Meanwhile, close to 4000 islanders had already applied.[19] Finally, both parties agreed to a total of 275 migrants, including manual and qualified workers from the mainland and the islands.[20]

16 Danys, *DP Lithuanians*, 167.

17 Letters, A. Baptista, Emigration Junta, to unknown recipient, 7 January 1953; Minister Negreiros to unknown recipient, 21 January 1953; telegram, Minister Cunha to C. Coelho, Ottawa, 26 February 1953, 2P A52 M67, HDA (my translation).

18 Telegram, C. Coelho, Ottawa, to PMFA, 28 February 1953, 2P A52 M67, HDA (my translation).

19 Memo, Deputy Minister Fortier to the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, H. Allard, 26 March 1953, file 3-33-27, vol. 130, RG 26, LAC.

20 Those engineers recruited in Lisbon eventually cancelled their applications upon learning that their credentials would not be recognized everywhere in Canada; that they were not guaranteed highly paid positions; and that they would not be provided with contracts prior to departure. The junta also failed to

As with other "bulk order" recruits, prospective Portuguese emigrants had to overcome various hurdles before they were screened by Canadian inspectors, each with significant financial costs and little guarantee of success. They had to bribe corrupt local officials; appease temperamental mayors and other local masters; secure the means to pay for their passage and initial expenses in Canada; and negotiate with unscrupulous landowners, doctors, moneylenders, and other facilitators. After all of this, they still had to satisfy the Canadian gatekeepers, who looked for healthy labourers with "good general physique"; a familiarity with heavy outdoor work; practical knowledge of the type of mixed and dairy farming practised in Canada; and "the ability and desire" to adapt to new methods and conditions.[21]

Medical screenings were an important and vexing step for all "bulk order" groups, and the Portuguese were no exception.[22] The second round of exams was most upsetting for the applicants, who according to Portuguese officials were often rejected over "miniscule things."[23] The Canadian inspectors turned down an unexpectedly high number of candidates and "dependents" previously vetted by Portuguese doctors. This was especially taxing for those who had already taken up loans or sold their properties to get to this point in the screening process. In one case, two Azorean applicants were considered unfit after having made the trek to Lisbon, prompting a compassionate Portuguese official to arrange their free passage to Brazil in order to save them "the embarrassment of returning home."[24]

Canadian doctors suspected their Portuguese counterparts sometimes deliberately overlooked inadmissible medical conditions. In one instance, a woman tried to conceal her "ringworm of the scalp" infection with a clever hairdo and dark crayon. When asked why she was allowed to pass her previous medical exam, the Portuguese doctor confessed to have "felt sorry for these people in view of the large amount of money they had spent."[25] Canadian doctors too were

recruit enough tradesmen in Oporto. Letters, PMFA to Canadian Consul in Lisbon, 11 March 1953; and A. Baptista, Emigration Junta, to PMFA, Lisbon, 21 March 1953, 2P A52 M67, HDA. Memo, Deputy Minister Fortier, 26 March 1953, reprinted in Marques and Marujo, *With Hardened Hands*, 11–12.

21 Memorandum, DCI – Immigration Branch, 2 November 1953, 2P A55 M66, HDA.

22 Danys, *DP Lithuanians*, 93–4.

23 Letter, PIDE Station Chief A.R. Casaco, Ponta Delgada, to Director A.N. Graça, PIDE, 17 June 1957, SC, SR Pr. 1056/48, ui. 2628, PIDE/DGS, National Archives of Torre do Tombo (NATT).

24 Marques and Medeiros, *Portuguese Immigrants*, 26.

25 Letter, Dr. N.S. Black, Department of National Health and Welfare, to Dr. J.E. Grant, Chief Medical Officer, London, 11 May 1960, file 854-3-11, vol. 3086, RG 29, LAC.

moved by the applicants' difficult conditions. In 1956, after examining 1663 "bodies" in Ponta Delgada, Azores, one doctor qualified his selection with the proviso that "full consideration must be given to the complete insularity and primitive conditions in which most of these people have been spending all their lives." He added:

> They came to us most apprehensive and sometimes almost in a state of anxiety because they already had been through the Portuguese processing mill for three months, and that is no pampering. After investing their life economies and for many of them their coming years of salary in the venture, rejection [must be] disaster. The results were dripping cold sweat in the warmest weather and absolutely unreliable blood pressures. One literally fainted from exhaustion because he had spent his last money feeding his children rather than himself. Pathetic as it may sound it is the simple truth.[26]

Canadian medical examiners had trouble performing mental health screenings given the fact that many of the candidates were illiterate; required an interpreter; had distinct cultural practices; and were "by nature garrulous." Informed by Portuguese psychologists, they worried about Portugal's high levels of "mental deficiency" (supposedly the highest in Europe). However, these inspectors recognized that such "deficiencies" were conditioned by the candidates' "general poverty and lack of cultural stimulation in their environment" as well as by their widespread alcoholism. Ultimately, as one doctor noted, these migrants ought to be judged in the context of Canada, where they would have to "compete economically for livelihood" in a more "stimulating environment," which would increase their "intellectual functioning" and "social maturity."[27]

Another important step in the selection process was the security screening. In 1951, Ottawa and Lisbon had agreed to alert each other whenever a communist national attempted to travel to (or "infiltrate") the other's territory, giving border officials the option of denying entry while agreeing not to disclose their information source.[28] Unsurprisingly, Ottawa solicited the PIDE's cooperation in preventing the entry

26 Letter, Dr. Dupuis, Lisbon to Chief Medical Officer, London, date unknown (c. 1956) , file 854-3-11, vol. 3086, RG 29, LAC.

27 Report on Recent Visit to Lisbon Office by Dr. W.G. Burrows, Psychiatric Consultant (Department of National Health and Welfare) to Dr. J.E. Grant, Chief Medical Officer, 4 April 1961, file 854-3-11, vol. 3086, RG 29, LAC.

28 Various correspondence (some confidential) between Minister Cunha, PIDE Director A. Lourenço, and the Canadian consul in Lisbon, 21 May to 8 August 1951, PEA M314, HDA.

of individuals with "political ideas contrary to the established Order."[29] Still, it was possible for political dissidents to slip through this security screening or, perhaps, to be allowed to leave with the PIDE's tacit consent. For example, António Sousa, a former business owner who falsely applied as a carpenter, was allowed to board the first ship carrying migrant workers to Canada despite being under the PIDE's surveillance since he had supported the democratic opposition's candidate in Portugal's 1948 presidential elections.[30]

## SOJOURNERS IN CANADA

On 13 May 1953, the cruise ship *Saturnia* landed in Halifax carrying the first group of Portuguese labourers arriving in Canada under this inaugural "bulk order." In the end, only 180 migrant workers were recruited that year. They made the weeklong journey aboard Italian and Greek steam liners, escorted by an Emigration Junta inspector who provided them with contact information for Portugal's diplomatic offices in Ottawa and Montreal; a few basic English lessons; and notions on Canadian currency and the ways of its people. One inspector was praised for "caring for [the group's] appearance and helping maintain a good impression [with Canada's] authorities." The Portuguese chargé d'affaires was happy to report to Lisbon that the first group of emigrants "elicited many compliments from Canadian immigration authorities on their presentation, physical appearance and financial means."[31]

Upon arriving in Halifax, the men were put on trains to different parts of the country without being given much information about their fate; the majority lacking the language skills to ask. Once at their destinations, they were picked up by Canadian government agents and escorted to the local DCI offices. At times, these agents failed to appear as scheduled and the men were left waiting, sometimes for

29 Letter, PMFA to A. Lourenço, 19 February 1953, 2P A52 M67, HDA.

30 António Sousa would become one of the first and most prominent businessmen and civic organizers in Toronto's Portuguese community. His Canadian-born son, Charles Sousa, later became a member of provincial parliament with the Ontario Liberal Party, where he served as minister of labour, citizenship and immigration, and finance. Transcript of interview with A. Sousa, c. 1978, 2010–019/001 (10), Domingos Marques Fonds, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections (CTASC), York University (my translation).

31 Telegrams, C. Coelho, Ottawa, to PMFA, Lisbon, 19 May and 1 June 1953; letter, Secretary A.C. Branco, Emigration Junta, to Minister Negreiros, 14 October 1953, 2P A52 M67, HDA (my translation).

days. In one case, a group of migrants waiting to be picked up in Montreal were thought to be a band of criminal fugitives and pointed out to the police. In 1954, another group of newcomers in Peterborough, Ontario, arrived earlier than expected and had to spend the night at the city's jail.[32] Once at the DCI offices, newcomers sometimes had to wait days before being offered a job, which meant their hostel bills kept accruing. Farmhands were usually picked by the farmers themselves, who examined their bodies in detail. Like those engineers, liberal professionals, and other highly qualified DPs who went through similar humiliating scrutiny, these proud "peasants" also saw these inspections as an affront to their dignity, especially for those who had never worked for another person before.[33] Some men were assigned jobs in distant provinces. In one case, a group of newcomers in Montreal was told to go to London, Ontario, from where they were sent further southeast to Windsor, where another officer drove them around nearby Harrow looking for someone to hire them. At one farm, they were told: "I don't like Portuguese people."[34]

As with other "bulk order" migrants, communication difficulties and unfamiliarity with Canadian ways became a serious problem for Portuguese labourers, especially farmhands.[35] One such migrant, Carlos Pereira, recalled how his boss once handed him a spray and gave him instructions in English that he did not understand. Not realizing it contained toxic chemicals, he assumed the farmer meant for him to spray the flowers: "When he saw me doing this he put his hands to his head and with even my poor English I understood that he was saying 'My wife will kill us, both you and me'."[36] Even those with previous agricultural experience were ignorant of Canadian farming techniques, machinery, and climate. For instance, Pereira, who had been a farmer and miller in Portugal, was tasked with milking cows at a farm near Ottawa, even though he had never laid hands on an udder. Furthermore, like many DPs eager to leave their refugee camps, some of these migrants lied about their previous work experiences in order to be chosen by Canadian recruiters. This was the case with a group of Madeiran "vineyard workers," comprising former police officers, drivers, hotel workers, shopkeepers, civil servants, and

32 Marques and Medeiros, *Portuguese Immigrants*, 56. Letter, P. de Lemos, PMFA, to A. Baptista, 22 June 1954, 2P A55 M66, HDA.
33 Anderson and Higgs, *A Future to Inherit*, 37–8.
34 José da Nóbrega, quoted in Marques and Medeiros, *Portuguese Immigrants*, 57.
35 Danys, *DP Lithuanians*, 91–92, 169–73; Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 37–8.
36 Carlos Pereira, quoted in Marques and Medeiros, *Portuguese Immigrants*, 37–8.

privileged "sons of family." The Portuguese chargé d'affaires interviewed some of these men and found that few actual farmers had been selected in Madeira because they lacked the funds to pay for the passage or were unable to contract loans.[37]

Canadian officials were not pleased when Portuguese farmhands started breaking their contracts and looking for better jobs in the cities after only a few days on their assigned farms. Like other European "bulk order" migrants, the very long hours and intense seasonal work on Canadian farms was something to which they were not accustomed. In most cases, their monthly pay was below the $60–80 they had been promised, while others were not given contracts at all.[38] These absconders also complained they were isolated, overworked, underfed, and underpaid or that their work was just "too hard."[39] One such farmhand, Francisco Silveira, recalled being fed one egg and two pieces of toast in the morning and at night during his time on a dairy farm in Saint-Timothée, Quebec. After Silveira's contract ended and a new Portuguese cohort arrived in 1955, he returned to Saint-Timothée to look for his replacement. Finding the farmer and the new employee at church, Silveira called the newcomer aside, explained he was aware of his predicament, and told him to pack his bags once he got back to the farm. Later that day, Silveira arrived with a taxi and "rescued" his countryman.[40]

The Portuguese officials too were annoyed by the emigrants' complaints, which they found in most cases to be "totally unfounded." Coelho considered the high number of grievances to be "based on such futile reasons that it is impossible to present them to Canadian authorities without a total loss of prestige for our workers." Perhaps for this reason, Portuguese foreign officials tried to appease the migrants by addressing each complaint individually and shifting the men around. When Silveira sought the help of the vice-consul in Montreal, the latter allegedly responded that he was there to look after Portuguese government affairs, not the emigrants'. However, in the vice-consul's reports to Lisbon we find a different characterization of his work, with references to multiple trips to meet Portuguese migrants in distant locations, often to deal with their injuries and complaints and at other

37 Letter, C. Coelho to PMFA, 1 June 1953, 2P A52 M67, HDA.

38 According to C. Coelho, farmers in southern Ontario were better employers than those in Quebec, where wages were lower and work more demanding. Letters, C. Coelho, 1 and 6 June 1953, 2P A52 M67, HDA.

39 Marques and Medeiros, *Portuguese Immigrants*.

40 Transcript of interview, 13 February 1993, 2010–019/001 (9), Domingos Marques Fonds, CTASC (my translation).

times as courtesy calls to animate these isolated men.[41] Portuguese officials believed that the main reason why so many supposed farmhands failed to adapt to the hard toil on Canadian farms was because they had no previous agricultural experience. They were also aware that, in many instances, Canadian farmers laid off workers or halved wages in the winter, which contravened their contracts. Many migrants accepted these cuts because they were worried that they would not be able to find other jobs. In other cases, wages were paid irregularly or only after the workers threatened to leave.[42]

Less than a month after the 1953 cohort arrived, Coelho estimated that 40 per cent of all migrant farmhands (especially those from the mainland) were ready to break their one-year contracts. This was a problem since it raised cautionary flags for Canadian officials about the unreliability of Portuguese workers. The Emigration Junta inspector overseeing Portuguese migrants in Canada recommended that Lisbon impose penalties on those sojourners who breached their contracts, such as prohibiting them from leaving Portugal once they returned to visit their families.[43] Though troubled, Coelho eased anxieties by noting that such breaches of contract were less common among the Portuguese than among other "preferred" groups, such as the German and Dutch migrants.[44]

In fact, contract "skipping" was common to all "bulk order" groups and occupations. For instance, as many as 45 per cent of Greek domestic workers broke their contracts in the 1960s.[45] Ottawa had faced this reality long before the Portuguese arrived and were aware that smallhold farmers "could simply not afford to pay [their] hired hands enough to keep them in a position that was subordinate, isolated and without prestige when there were different jobs available with none of these drawbacks," as Milda Danys notes.[46] Furthermore, Canadian officials tolerated the high absconding rates of hired farmhands since they eventually met important labour shortages in the cities. Indeed, Coelho estimated that only 8 per cent of Portuguese "skippers" had

41 Letter, Vice-Consul M.P. Almeida, Montreal, to PMFA, 30 June 1954, 2P A55 M66, HDA.

42 Letter, C. Coelho to PMFA, 1 June 1953 and 10 December 1954, 2P A55 M66, HDA (my translation).

43 Letter, C. Coelho to PMFA, 3 June 1953, 2P A52 M67, HDA.

44 Letters, Minister P. Cunha to A.M. Baptista, 31 December 1953; C. Coelho to Minister P. Cunha, 30 April 1954, 2P A 55 M66, HDA.

45 Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 37–42, 45–6; Mina, "Taming and Training," 522–3.

46 Danys, *DP Lithuanians*, 176.

remained unemployed over the winter. Still, the diplomat proposed that Lisbon provide its emigrants with unemployment insurance, on top of which the Emigration Junta suggested offering insurance for work accidents.[47] None of these recommendations gained traction with the regime's decision makers.

Dealing with a continuous decline in its traditional sources of migrant labour, Ottawa increased the volume of Portuguese migration in 1954. That year, the railway building company R.F. Welch, which had traditionally hired Italian immigrants, sought to hire 1000 unskilled workers to do maintenance on the Canadian National Railway tracks across the country. The minister of citizenship and immigration, Walter Harris, reserved 200 spots in this "bulk order" for the Portuguese, with the expressed intention of replacing Italian railway track workers, reflecting Ottawa's growing anxiety over the rise in Italian immigration.[48] For the Lisbon officials, the most appealing aspect about this offer was the fact that the railway company was willing to hire Azoreans. That year, both governments agreed to a total of 950 migrants, including track workers, farmhands, and tradesmen, all from the Azores. In Coelho's eyes, this cohort produced better results than the previous one, which had been dominated by Madeirans and mainlanders, as most newcomers fulfilled their one-year farm contracts. Their "physical characteristics" and quality of work also impressed Canadian farmers and immigration authorities.[49]

Although living in far-off inhospitable places, the railway track workers did not experience the same isolation as farmhands since they lived and worked in gangs of the same nationality, which could entail over a hundred men. Some of the Italian overseers also spoke a bit of Portuguese.[50] Furthermore, the wages, benefits, and food offered by R.F. Welch were also significantly better than what was offered on the farms (see Figures 2–3). Still, the work was heavy and intensive and often done under Canada's unforgiving weather. Carlos Pereira, who built railway tracks in Sept-Îsles, Quebec, remembered

47 Letters, C. Coelho to Minister Cunha, 13 July 1954; A.M. Baptista to Minister Cunha, 31 July 1954, 2P A 55 M66, HDA.

48 British immigration dropped from 44 per cent in 1946–50 to 27 per cent in 1956–61, while Italian immigration increased from 4.5 per cent to 18 per cent. Letters, C. Coelho to PMFA, Lisbon, 26 September 1953; PMFA to A. Baptista, 19 October 1953, 2P A52 M67, HDA; Ninette Kelley and Michael Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 314; Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 31.

49 Letters, Chief Operations Division, G.R. Benoit, DCI, to C. Coelho, Ottawa, 29 December 1953; C. Coelho to PMFA, 10 December 1954, 2P A55 M66, HDA.

50 Marques and Medeiros, *Portuguese Immigrants*, 30 and 72.

FIGURE 2 A gang of Portuguese railway track workers in Edmonton, June 1957 (CTASC, David Higgs fonds, F0571, ASC17694).


FIGURE 3 Alberto Cabral, Sr, hanging his laundry outside a CN train car in Edmonton, June 1957 (CTASC, David Higgs fonds, F0571, ASC26921).

FIGURE 4 Rui Ribeiro with co-workers in a tobacco farm in Delhi, Ontario, September 1957 (CTASC, Domingos Marques fonds, F0573, ASC29598).

working outdoors in minus 58 degrees and seeing the skin of his friend's face fall off from the cold, and having another friend return to Portugal after losing a leg to frostbite.[51]

Portuguese "bulk order" migrants also found work in mining, logging, fruit and tobacco picking, construction, the service industry, and factories (see Figures 4–5). It was common for these highly mobile sojourners to have worked in various jobs across Canada before finally settling in one place, usually once they were ready to call for their

51 Transcript of interview with C. Pereira, c. 1978, 2010–019/001 (10), Domingos Marques Fonds, CTASC.

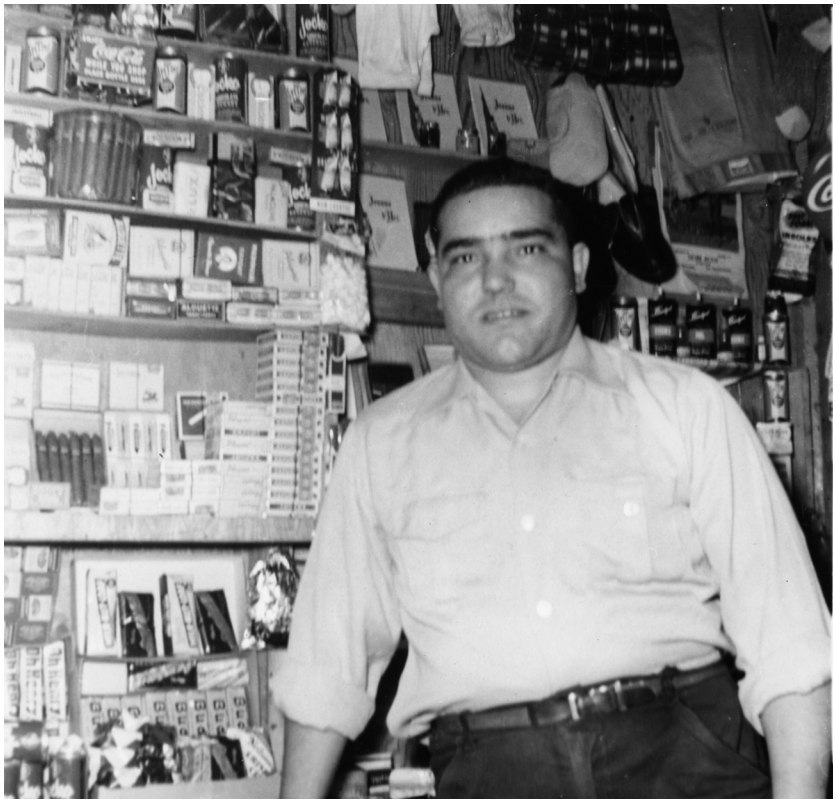


FIGURE 5 José H. Romano in his variety store on the mining town of Schefferville, Quebec, 16 September 1955 (CTASC, Domingos Marques fonds, F0573, ASC29599).

families. Again Carlos Pereira is a good example of this progression from sojourner to immigrant. After abandoning the farm near Ottawa where he worked for three months, then being laid off after five months of railway work following labour unrest, Pereira went to Montreal, where he met a fellow Portuguese in a boarding house, who told him about a job in Goose Bay, Labrador. He worked there for seven months, painting airplane hangars during the day and selling soda pop and decks of playing cards at night. After a year and a half in Canada, Pereira went back to Portugal for a short period. He returned to Canada in 1955 and found employment in a bedframe factory in Toronto, which he supplemented with a part-time job in

FIGURE 6 Sisters Maria Teresa and Maria Leonor Pereira outside their family's new house in Toronto's Kensington Market. Photo by Carlos Pereira, 1957 (CTASC, Domingos Marques fonds, ASC29606).

construction. Nine months later, he called for his wife and daughters to join him after buying a house, which became the first Portuguese boarding house in Toronto. In 1958, the Pereiras bought a farm near Orangeville where they grew beans and made sausages and bread, which Carlos sold from the back of his pick-up truck in Toronto. In 1963, they sold the farm and opened a grocery store in Kensington Market, which already had a sizable and growing Portuguese population (see Figure 6).[52]

Experiences varied for the smaller group of tradesmen. By 1955, the Portuguese consul in Montreal discouraged sending more tradesmen, arguing that it was "nearly impossible to place them" given their language difficulties; the employers' reluctance to hire them; and the trade unions' resistance to accepting foreign contract workers. Instead, he proposed that only those individuals from "the lowest rungs" of society be allowed to migrate to Canada since they would feel the least

52 Ibid.

impact of low wages, of having no legal protection, and of the difficult working conditions. He also urged emigration officials to decline applications from small landowners and accept only "the most backward" peasants, "like the Azoreans."[53] Coelho ridiculed the consul's suggestions, rebutting: "Every country seeks to be represented abroad by prosperous communities of the highest level, instead of a low level backward bunch." According to him, the problem was the opposite, since many contract "skippers" were skilled workers who found city jobs in their trades.[54]

The volume of annual Portuguese "bulk orders" remained largely the same (950 workers) until 1956, with small adjustments in terms of region of origin, skill set, and destination. Despite its positive reaction to Azorean workers, Ottawa again limited recruitment to Lisbon. Portuguese officials were not overly concerned with this limitation, since they were confident that those Azoreans already in Canada would develop their own migration chains. As before, the immigration authorities were disappointed with the "poor adaptability," "constant complaints," and high absconding rates of farmhands arriving from the mainland – 48 per cent of the 923 workers who arrived in 1955 broke their contracts, and nine never reported to their designated DCI offices.[55] For the 1956 cohort, Canadian officials returned to the Azores, where they had previously made a "satisfactory selection." Still, the high rate of "skippers" continued, and the number of migrants failing to report to a DCI office increased.[56] As the number of Portuguese migrants in Canada expanded so did their networks, where information about jobs circulated with greater ease, prompting newcomers to chase better wages elsewhere more quickly than before.

By the end of 1956, Canadian officials were starting to question the value of the Portuguese movement. Still, demand for labourers remained high, forcing Ottawa to recruit up to 2000 farmhands, along with tradesmen, engineers, and their "dependents." Despite objections from the Canadian labour unions, the DCI yielded to the

53 This opinion contrasted with that of an Italian professor invited by Canada's immigration officials to tour the country in 1951, who concluded that, in order to prevent the high rate of Italian "skippers," farmhands should be recruited in the more developed central and northern regions of Italy as opposed to the poorer south. Iacovetta, *Such Harworking People*, 41.

54 Letters, Consul H. Gomes, Montreal, to Minister Cunha, 7 November 1955; C. Coelho to Minister Cunha, 10 November 1955, 2P M190, HDA (my translation).

55 Letter, C. Coelho to PMFA, Lisbon, 30 September 1955, 2P M190, HDA.

56 Letters, DCI's Director, Ottawa, to Deputy Minister Fortier, 8 November 1955, and 15 May 1956, file 3-33-27, vol. 130, RG 26, LAC.

demands of the railway companies and requested another 1000 railway track workers from the Azores. Altogether, 3050 migrants were to be recruited in 1957. That year, Portuguese migrants were able to benefit from the Canadian government's Assisted Passage Loan Scheme, which allowed them to borrow money interest-free to pay for their passage, then repay their debt over a two-year period.[57] Selected from the mainland and the Azores, these immigrants were the first to make the journey by air, which was now cheaper than travelling by sea.[58]

Unlike in previous years, the Canadian employment services had a difficult time finding jobs for these newcomers. This was due in large part to the arrival of refugees from the Hungarian revolution and the British Suez crisis in 1956–7, which flooded the Canadian labour market with over 138,000 "preferred" migrants. The 1957–8 economic recession further reduced the number of available jobs, leading to a spike in unemployment. Those city jobs that Portuguese workers once found in abundance were now scarce. As a result, more sojourners began spending the winters in Portugal, when Canada's employment rate was at its lowest.[59] Widespread unemployment was the reason offered by Ottawa when explaining its decision to limit the 1958 Portuguese "bulk order" to 500 mainland workers.[60]

This period of high unemployment coincided with Ellen Fairclough's tenure as minister of citizenship and immigration. Unlike the previous Liberal administration, which was characterized by a flexible and relatively open approach to immigration, the new Conservative government promised to tighten Canada's admission policy, restrict the entry of unskilled workers, and focus on extending family sponsorship. In 1958, Ottawa sought to raise the volume of Portuguese immigration to 2000–3000 arrivals per year, although this time it privileged family sponsorship. Still, Canadian officials continued to look for ways to import Portuguese labourers without upsetting the public, which was increasingly hostile to Southern European immigration. In 1959, the ongoing crisis in the Azorean island of Faial, following the Capelinhos volcano's eruption two years prior,[61] gave Ottawa the opportunity to

57 Memo, DCI – Immigration Branch to Visa Officer A.J. Desjardins, Canadian Embassy, Lisbon, 19 December 1956, file 3-33-27, vol. 130, RG 26, LAC.

58 Various correspondence, 1957, 2P M446 A6, HDA.

59 Letter, Consul A.N. Freitas, Toronto, to PMFA, 2 December 1957, 2P M446 A6, HDA.

60 Telegram, Ambassador V. Garin, Ottawa, to PMFA, Lisbon, 15 January 1958, 2P M446 A6, HDA.

61 The Capelinhos volcano first erupted on 27 September 1957. Over the next seven months, it destroyed close to 4200 acres of pasture, crops, and arable land; over 600 buildings; and left several thousands of people homeless.

bring 150 Azorean families under humanitarian provisions.[62] The next year, Canadian officials informed Lisbon that the Portuguese movement was to be restricted to Faial, which the latter understood as a tactic to deflect public criticism. In 1961, another unemployment crisis led Ottawa to stop the Azorean humanitarian movement entirely and limit the annual Portuguese "bulk order" to 200 workers.[63]

The labour migration agreement brokered between Canada and Portugal ended that year. Altogether, 6875 male workers were requested (though the actual number recruited was lower) between 1953 and 1961, 88 per cent of whom were destined for unskilled occupations. A significant minority of these workers were in fact tradesmen who passed as common labourers. Together with the 800 skilled workers included in these "bulk orders," and others sponsored by their kin, these educated migrants later assumed leadership positions in their budding ethnic communities and created their first associations, social services, and businesses. Compared with other "bulk orders," the Portuguese movement was small. For instance, the Italian movement (1951–2) brought around 7000 migrants into Canada, and the Greek movement (1951–7) brought another 17,747.[64] Still, this official movement introduced a critical mass of Portuguese immigrants to Canada, who later developed large autonomous migration chains through family sponsorship and clandestine schemes.

## FEMALE MIGRATION AND FAMILY SPONSORSHIP

Before family sponsorship became the focus of Canadian immigration, Ottawa's position on the Portuguese "bulk orders" was to "select as many single persons as possible."[65] However, once the first cohort arrived, sexual anxieties surrounding the presence of lonesome "Latin men" prompted Canadian officials to place a request for single Portuguese female domestics, waitresses, and nurses, so to provide these men with "women of their own race." As Noula Mina notes in reference

62 Letter, Consul A. Nogueira, Montreal, to PMFA, 24 July 1959, 2P M720 A8, HDA.

63 Letters, Ambassador E. Patrício, Ottawa, to PMFA, 18 January 1960 and 10 January 1961; General-Director F. de Oliveira, PMFA, to Ambassador Patrício, 13 April 1960, EEA M140, HDA.

64 Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 37; Avery, *Reluctant Host*, 202.

65 Letter, G.R. Benoit, Chief Operating Division, DCI, to C. Coelho, 29 December 1953, 2P A55 M66, HDA; Memo, Deputy Minister Fortier to the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs H. Allard, 26 March 1953, file 3-33-27, vol. 130, RG 26, LAC.

to the movement of Greek female domestic workers, migrant men were "not subjected to the same degree of moral scrutiny or regulation" from Canadian officials as women.[66] Still, it is worth noting that these Greek women were not seen as sexual threats, since they were encouraged to court and marry single Canadian men. Following the example of those Italian domestic workers who arrived in 1951, were assigned female chaperones, and housed in convents in Montreal, where social and religious organizations were supposed to give them "spiritual and moral assistance," Canadian officials assured their Portuguese counterparts that the Catholic clergy were prepared to supervise these women and ensure they observed the same moral conduct as was expected of them in their home country.[67] Lisbon was reluctant to meet this request, citing Portugal's shortage of domestics and nurses and the potential isolation that these women would face in a foreign environment, "where even men have a hard time adapting."[68]

By 1956, when the number of Portuguese contract breakers became alarming, Deputy Minister Fortier proposed that migrant workers be allowed to bring their families to Canada, convinced that this concession would damper their mobility and give them an incentive to settle.[69] That year, Ottawa also broadened its family migration provisions by allowing landed immigrants to sponsor their spouses, children, and siblings, along with the sponsored individual's spouse and children under the age of twenty-one. Around the same time, the Estado Novo clarified its position on female emigration: married women could only obtain passports with their husbands' consent, while single women were not allowed to do so (until 1969) unless they were sponsored by a close relative in the country of destination; had a contract with a Portuguese employer; or had a contract with a married foreigner who had hired them in the past.[70] Canadian officials pressured Lisbon to simplify the sponsoring process for women and children by allowing emigrant "heads of family" to grant their consent at the time of screening.[71] These changes significantly impacted the volume of Portuguese emigration to Canada, which grew

66 Mina, "Taming and Training," 527.

67 Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 35.

68 Correspondence, C. Coelho to PMFA, 19 August 1954; P. de Lemos, PMFA, to Ottawa Legation, 24 September 1954, 2P A55 M66; Consul V. Gomes, Montreal, to PMFA, 7 November 1955, 2P M190, HDA.

69 Letter, Deputy Minister Fortier to DCI's Director, 25 October 1956, file 3-33-27, vol. 130, RG 26, LAC.

70 Dispatch, Emigration Junta, 20 March 1956, in letter, A. Baptista to Minister Negreiros, 12 March 1958, 2P M557 A7, HDA.

71 Letter, Deputy Minister Fortier to Director DCI, 25 October 1956, 2P M557 A7, HDA.

FIGURE 7 José H. Romano meeting his wife, Rita Romano, and other arrivals at the Montreal airport in November 1954 (CTASC, Domingos Marques fonds, F0573, ASC29600).

from 941 departures (1955), to 1612 (1956), then to 4158 (1957); these numbers included over 600 and 1100 migrants in addition to the "bulk order" recruits in 1956 and 1957 (see Figure 7).

In its typical ambiguous style, Lisbon expressed interest in increasing family emigration at the same time it delayed the departure of "dependents" waiting to join their husbands and fathers. This decision was consistent with its unwritten policy of separating families in order to generate remittances. Indeed, one of the reasons behind the Emigration Junta's approval of Canada as a destination was the fact that it was at the time "one of the few countries that allowed currency trans-

fers."[72] The view held by Ottawa was that the Estado Novo objected to family migration, which Portuguese officials denied, arguing they simply wished to guarantee that expatriate citizens did not place themselves in difficult situations abroad, hence why they delayed family reunification until the male emigrant's financial situation was stable.[73] Most of the women who eventually moved to Canada were married or engaged and joined their partners in the cities. Contrary to the dictatorships' rationale, it was their multi-faceted contributions to the immigrant household that stabilized or improved their financial welfare and that of their budding ethnic communities.[74]

In March 1959, Ottawa again limited sponsorship rights to nuclear family members, except for the nationals of some Anglophone countries and France, who could still sponsor siblings and married children. This harmed the Estado Novo's interests, which sought to maintain a steady emigration flow from the Azores, among whom extended family sponsorship to the United States had been common until the late 1910s.[75] Critics in Canada denounced the discriminatory basis of this legislation and accused Minister Fairclough of yielding to nativist fears triggered by the increase in Italian immigration, which surpassed British arrivals for the first time in 1958. At this point, the chargé d'affaires in Ottawa was tasked with convincing Canadian officials of the "fundamental difference" between Portuguese and Italian immigrants and how the former were "more susceptible to being integrated" into Canada. The Conservative government denied the critics' accusations and replied that its measures simply addressed the growing immigrant application backlog and prioritized skilled candidates with decent chances of finding employment upon arrival. Reporting to Lisbon about these developments, the Portuguese consul in Montreal commented that Minister Fairclough's defence was unfounded since skilled workers had the most difficulties in finding employment. "In truth," he added, "what Canada wishes are unskilled workers to be exploited at will – until they open their eyes – in jobs that Canadians don't want."[76]

72 Memo, Emigration Junta Secretary V. Lobo, 14 July 1954, 2P A55 M66, HDA.

73 Memo, C. Coelho, 16 October 1958, 2P M557 A7, HDA.

74 See, for instance, Edite Noivo, *Inside Ethnic Families: Three Generations of Portuguese-Canadians* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999); Miranda, "Not Ashamed or Afraid."

75 Interrupted in 1917, Azorean mass migration to the United States did not restart until 1958.

76 Letters, Consul Artur Nogueira to Minister Marcello Mathias, 17 April 1959 (my translation); General-Director, Albano Rodrigues, PMFA, to Chargé d'Affaires S. Garrido, Ottawa, 13 May 1959, 2P M720 A8, HDA (my translation).

Ottawa reversed its restrictions on family sponsorship a month after introducing them, following the backlash from various ethnic groups. Shortly after that, Canadian officials complained that some "heads of family" were content with sending money home instead of calling for their families to join them or that they had acquired assets in Portugal where they expected to return. So they asked Lisbon to allow families to leave the country together, rather than reuniting them at a later date.[77] Portuguese officials in turn objected to the length of time it took Canada's immigration services to process applications from wives wanting to join their husbands (approximately two years in 1961), stressing the negative effects that such a wait had in a couple's life.[78]

By 1965, the then Liberal government saw family sponsorship as being "one of the most serious immigration problems," since it provided a means for large numbers of labourers to land in Canada without undergoing occupational selection. They also saw Portuguese migrants as one of the primary culprits in skirting this selection process. According to one DCI official, 82 per cent of the 9442 Portuguese arrivals in 1964–5 were sponsored migrants. Among these, 1858 were workers, of whom 61 per cent were unskilled, 24 per cent semi-skilled, and 14 per cent skilled. In contrast, of the 866 migrant workers who were not sponsored, 79 per cent were skilled, 13 per cent semi-skilled, and only 7 per cent unskilled.[79] The "point system" immigration selection process introduced in 1967, which privileged highly skilled, well-educated applicants, raised a significant barrier to Portuguese mass immigration, which owed its existence to Canada's high demand for lower skilled labourers. Still, Portuguese immigration continued to grow, not only through family sponsorship but also through extensive clandestine migration streams that developed alongside the official channels.

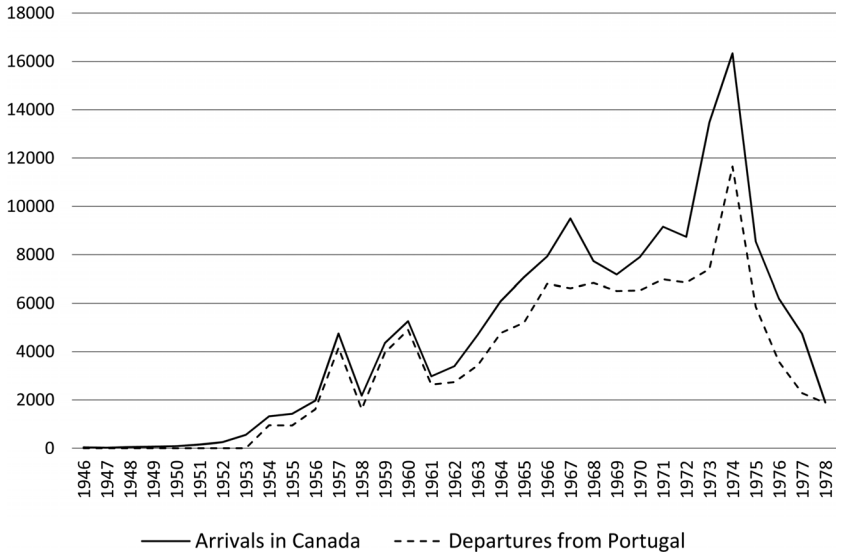
## CLANDESTINE MIGRATION

Before the first Portuguese "bulk order" cohort arrived in 1953, a small, but pivotal, stream of re-emigrant men from Venezuela, Brazil, the United States, and other countries had begun making their way into Canada illegally, heeding the call for foreign labourers. Many

77 Letter, author unknown, Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, to Ambassador Patrício, 28 May 1959, 2P M720 A8, HDA.

78 Letter, Consul António Patrício, Toronto, to PMFA, 15 May 1961, PEA M307, HDA.

79 Letter, D. Ross Fitzpatrick, Executive Assistant, DCI, to MPP P. Ryan (Toronto-Spadina), 10 December 1965, file 540-6-613, vol. 772, pt. 3, RG 76, LAC.




GRAPH 1 Portuguese versus Canadian migration statistics, 1946–1978. *Source*: Marques and Medeiros, *Portuguese Immigrants*; Maria Baganha, "Portuguese Emigration After World War II," in *Modern Portugal*, edited by António C. Pinto (Palo Alto, CA: SPOSS, 1998), 19.

of the early official migrants recalled encountering "lots" of these clandestine countrymen in Canada, especially in Montreal.[80] The discrepancy between recorded departures from Portugal and arrivals in Canada points to the existence of a parallel movement in the 1950s of a few hundred migrants every year, which grew considerably after 1961 (see Graph 1). However, the total number of Portuguese arrivals from other countries was undoubtedly higher since clandestine migration, by definition, was not captured by official statistics.

Another more commonly acknowledged clandestine movement was that of the "White Fleet" cod fishermen, who jumped ship in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia and made their way west.[81] In the twentieth century, and especially after the Second World War, Portuguese cod fishing in the Grand Banks revived, bringing around 5000

80 Transcript of interview with Á. Marques, 15 February 1993, 2010–019/001 (9), Domingos Marques Fonds, CTASC.

81 During the Second World War, the Portuguese cod fishing convoy earned the nickname "White Fleet," in reference to the colour of its ships' hulls, painted white so that German U-boats could easily identify the neutral Portuguese out at sea.

fishermen to Canada's Atlantic shores every year in the 1950s. Unlike other more advanced European fleets fishing in the Grand Banks, the "White Fleet" combined modern trawlers with traditional single-manned dories, where solitary fishermen caught fish by the strength of their arms. This was a very labour-intensive and risky occupation with a high rate of injuries and deaths, due not only to the many dangers of the sea but also to the propensity for the larger ships to catch fire. It is no surprise that so many of these men abandoned this hard life once they stepped ashore.

A more common way for undocumented migrants to enter Canada was to pass as tourists, overstay their visas, and later apply for landed status from within the country. They often did this with the help of illegal migration rackets run by travel agents in various countries, sometimes aided by Portuguese consular staff. For instance, in 1957, the Portuguese consulate in Montreal was implicated in two illicit migration schemes. The first case was a scam orchestrated by a Paraguayan immigrant and travel agent who defrauded Portuguese migrants in Kitimat, British Columbia, then ran away with over $3000 collected from prospective emigrants in the Azores; all with the implicit (though likely inadvertent) help of consular staff. The second case involved two travel agencies in Montreal and Caracas, which together brought Portuguese "tourists" to Canada via Brazil and other South American countries, where it was supposedly easy to get a visa from a British consulate. Once in Canada, the Montreal agency helped these undocumented migrants apply for landed status. An investigator sent by Lisbon to audit the consulate's involvement in these illicit activities discovered that one of its staff members was a former general manager of the offending agency. After this case became public, the travel agency changed ownership, yet the new manager (a Portuguese American) continued to operate an illegal migration racket, only this time catering to those wanting to move to the United States.[82] In October 1958, the Emigration Junta called for a stop on the issuance of ordinary passports for common workers wishing to visit Canada, arguing these were, "by norm, in no condition to do tourism." Three months later, the dictatorship offered amnesty to those undocumented emigrants who returned to Portugal to regularize their status.[83]

82 Report, Consul J. Taveira, 22 October 1957, and various correspondence, October–November 1957, 2P M446 A6, HDA.

83 Letter, A. Baptista, Emigration Junta, to various Civil Governors, 21 October 1958, 2P M557 A7, HDA (my translation). Article 1, no. 6, Decree 42089, 6 January 1959, Diário da República Eletrónico, 2P M557 A7, HDA.

At the same time the "bulk order" movement ended in 1961, the movement of young families leaving Portugal to save their children from military draft and of clandestine war resisters seeking asylum in Canada began. In July 1961, a "White Fleet" captain informed the ambassador in Ottawa that a growing number of fishermen were "jumping ship" (twenty-nine that year so far), only a few of whom had been captured and returned. That year, for the first time, four runaways captured in North Sydney appealed their deportation with Canadian authorities, on the grounds they would be drafted to fight in Angola. Lisbon feared the media might take an interest in the men's story and that Canadian politicians would take advantage of the situation to further condemn the Estado Novo's colonial wars. Immigration officials also feared this case might set a dangerous precedent, considering the thousands of Portuguese fishermen setting foot in Canada every year. According to the Portuguese embassy, Director of Immigration W.R. Baskerville tasked one of his officers with convincing these runaways to withdraw their appeal, which they did when they were told they had no chance of being granted refugee status. Possibly contributing to their decision was the fact they were "starved" in their prison cells, where they were only given "a drop of coffee and bread with raw tomato inside."[84]

Despite being a vocal critic of Portugal's colonial wars at the United Nations, Ottawa did not grant special treatment to those citizens of its NATO ally who refused to fight in Africa, the same way it did not for American "draft dodgers" escaping the Vietnam War. In fact, Canada deported war resisters despite the appeals from Portuguese "anti-fascist" activists in the country, who warned Ottawa about the violent reprisals these men would face if they were repatriated. These political exiles also helped some of these runaways enter the country illegally, which led Canadian authorities in 1961 to raid their meeting places in Montreal, working with information provided by the local Portuguese consul.[85] The saga of Portuguese undocumented war resisters took a tragic turn on 7 December 1967, when the twenty-three-year-old Gomes Rosa jumped to his death from the eighth floor window of a federal building in Montreal, after being informed that his refugee application had been declined and that he had to return to Portugal. After this incident, various Portuguese organizations in Montreal

84 Various correspondence, 18–21 July 1961, PEA M3, HDA.

85 Various correspondence, F0579, 2009–022/003 (2), PCDA Fonds, CTASC; memo, Portuguese consulate, Montreal, 9 November 1961, SC, SR pr. 1056/48, ui. 2628, Serviços Canadianos – José Luis da Ponte Rebelo, PIDE/DGS, NATT.

sent a letter to Minister Jean Marchand pleading for a more "humane attitude" whenever the ministry was deciding the fate of clandestine migrants fleeing the colonial wars – a message they underlined with a rally outside the city's immigration office.[86]

Canada's membership in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which promoted freedom of mobility among member countries, limited Ottawa's power to curtail the unlawful inflow of citizens from Portugal, one of the international body's founding nations. After September 1963, Portuguese citizens visiting Canada for a period of up to three months were no longer required to obtain tourist visas, which resulted in a surge of applications for landed status from within the country. The number of Portuguese entering Canada with a non-immigrant visa jumped from 650 in 1958–63 to over 3000 in 1963–4. By the end of 1965, less than 25 per cent of these individuals were known to have left the country after their visas expired. Seeing this as a "complete breakdown" of its immigration system and viewing the Portuguese as its worst offenders, Ottawa asked the dictatorship to put a stop to its illegal departures, threatening to reinstate visa requirements for its citizens. Lisbon in turn blamed the DCI for encouraging clandestine migration since it took too long to process applications and the fact that it had no office in the Azores.[87]

In an effort to clear its application backlog, Ottawa made it easier to apply for landed status from within Canada in 1966. The next year, it created the independent Immigration Appeal Board to hear appeals from individuals facing deportation, who could base their arguments on compassionate grounds. These two pieces of legislation were greatly misused by prospective migrants and their informal facilitators. The right to apply for landed status from within Canada encouraged more "visitors" to try their luck, while the lengthy appeal process allowed them to stall a deportation order if their applications were unsuccessful, during which time they continued to work for wages. Counselled by cunning immigration consultants, these "visitors" appealed their

86 "Told to Return, Immigrant Jumps to Death," *Globe and Mail*, 15 December 1967, 2; *Portugal Democrático*, February 1968, 126, SC, CI (2), pr. 4779, u.i. 7370, Movimento Democrático Português, PIDE/DGS, NATT; letter from the Portuguese organizations of Montreal to Minister J. Marchand, 14 December 1967, F0579, 2009–022/004 (17), PCDA Fonds, CTASC.

87 Letters, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Rene Tremblay to Minister of Finance Walter L. Gordon, 14 July 1964; D. Ross Fitzpatrick to MPP P. Ryan, 10 December 1965, file 540-6-613, vol. 772, pt. 3, RG 76, LAC. Letter, Ambassador E. Brazão, Ottawa, to PMFA, 28 December 1964, EEA M140, HDA.

FIGURE 8 José Rafael, a former travel agent turned immigration consultant, sits at his desk in his Toronto office. Besides him, two undocumented Portuguese migrants seek to obtain landed status. In 1971, Rafael would be convicted of immigration racketeering and defrauding, although he was cleared of any wrongdoing after appealing to the Supreme Court of Ontario the following year. Photo by Jack Judges, 24 July 1967 (CTASC, Toronto Telegram fonds, F0433, ASC08252).

deportation even when they lacked legal merit, hoping to receive amnesty on compassionate grounds, based on the fact they had established roots in Canada (see Figure 8). This led to an enormous backlog at the Appeal Board, where cases could take up to seven years to resolve, which further aggravated the problem.

Under the government of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, Ottawa finally took decisive actions to fix this problem by revoking the right

of visitors to apply for landed status in November 1972 and the right of undocumented residents from countries without visa requirements to appeal a deportation order in August 1973. To clear the outstanding backlog, the Canadian government granted undocumented migrants a period of sixty days to regularize their status. About 39,000 people were amnestied as a result of this Adjustment of Status Program.[88] However, at this point, Portuguese migration had already begun to decline as a result of the global recession of 1973–4 and the deep transformations in Portugal following the 1974 revolution.

## CONCLUSION

Every door into Canada had its own gatekeepers and facilitators, which migration historians have studied at length. However, their focus has been placed mainly on the receiving nations. Even when Canadian scholars acknowledge the importance of the sending nations' policies and legal apparatus in determining migratory flows, they sometimes ignore the effect of homeland officials in shaping these movements. Those Portuguese diplomats and bureaucrats who brokered the labour migration agreement with their Canadian counterparts, or assisted the sojourners on the ground, influenced the characteristics, size, provenance, and destination of Portuguese mass migration to Canada. They may not have influenced Ottawa's migration policy-making, but they certainly did its implementation.

These official facilitators did not always have the emigrants' own interests in mind. While they often sympathized with, and addressed the difficulties faced by the sojourners, their primary concern was to ensure they met the approval of the Canadian gatekeepers, so that the emigration "valve" remained open. The Emigration Junta cared that expatriate citizens be treated fairly and raised a number of stipulations before they could approve their departure. However, their approach was consistent with the Estado Novo's paternalist and patriarchal ideology, as evidenced in its stance on female and family migration. Portuguese officials in Canada tried to address the migrants' complaints individually, though in a cursory and derisive manner, ultimately aiming to contain their collective protests and manage Ottawa's perception. With little knowledge of Canada's languages and laws, and generally repudiated by its labour unions, these migrant workers also had limited recourse to their hosts' institutions. In short,

88 Kelley and Trebilcock, *Making the Mosaic*, 368–71.

Portuguese "bulk order" migrants were subordinate to the corresponding interests of Ottawa and Lisbon officials, which left them little room to formally dispute their mistreatment at the hands of their Canadian employers.

That is not to say that Portuguese labourers were helpless. While many migrants complained to homeland officials, many more protested with their feet, as was their custom, and abandoned their jobs when they objected to its conditions, as had been the case with other "bulk order" groups before them. In fact, it was the planned and top-down nature of the bulk labour program that led it to break down. In the end, the autonomous drive of migrants seeking better economic opportunities prevailed over the structured job placements that were offered by the government officials. The more they broke their original contracts, the more they realized there was little the authorities could do to prevent their itinerancy, since an individual's freedom of mobility and right to seek better employment within the country were protected under Canada's laws. These non-compliant migrant workers became more defiant as their numbers grew and the older cohorts helped newcomers bypass bureaucrats and their arrangements.

The rate of contract "skippers" reached troubling proportions once it coincided with high unemployment in Canada and a slowing down of British immigration. In reaction to this situation, Ottawa's gatekeepers ended their "bulk order" agreement with Portugal and tried to limit the entrance of its unskilled migrants. Yet Portuguese labourers continued to arrive in large numbers, through family sponsorship and unlawful schemes; the latter organized by informal facilitators who took advantage of the liminal spaces left open by Canada's conflicting legal principles, international responsibilities, and short-term economic concerns. For its part, the Estado Novo maintained its ambiguous attitude toward illegal emigration by publicly chastising it on the one hand and tacitly allowing it on the other.

Over 150,000 Portuguese arrived in Canada between the 1950s and 1970s. Against Ottawa's original wishes, more than 60 per cent came from the Azores.[89] Despite the introduction of the "point system," more Portuguese landed in Canada in the first half of the 1970s than before. In 1966–75, they represented 8 per cent of the annual number of arrivals, ranking fourth among newcomer groups. In 1977

89 Despite Canada's preference for northern Italians, the "less-desirable" southerners also managed to dominate the 1951–52 Italian "bulk order" movement, by overwhelming the recruitment process, aided by Italian government officials. Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People*, 30.

alone, Portuguese immigrants in Canada contributed over $11.7 million to Portugal's coffers, ranking fourth among remittance source countries.[90] In the end, the Estado Novo had met its goals. As for Canada, it is today home to nearly 430,000 Portuguese immigrants and descendants, whose social, cultural, political, economic, and other contributions to Canadian society have been innumerable.

Between "surplus" and "less desirable," these highly mobile workers were both rejected for their potentially destabilizing political and economic effects and valued for their labour and financial contributions. Therein lay their advantage and handicap. Like other national groups, Portuguese migrants were often ready to bend or break the rules in order to find a better life elsewhere. They did it to leave authoritarian Portugal, and they did it to enter liberal-democratic Canada. Their collective efforts to bring kin to Canada overwhelmed Portuguese and Canadian bureaucrats and policy-makers, who sometimes had to bend their policies to the will of a critical mass of migrants. While they were not alone in their non-compliance, their persistently high volume of informal migration in the face of government restrictions, motivated by a desire to escape a dictatorial regime responsible for their long-standing poverty, illiteracy, persecution, and military conscription, made the Portuguese a distinct case in the history of postwar immigration to Canada.

GILBERTO FERNANDES graduated from York University's Ph.D. program in history in 2014. His research focuses on the history of diasporic communities in North America. Fernandes is an active public historian involved with multiple initiatives in Toronto, including the Portuguese Canadian History Project, of which he is co-founder and president.

GILBERTO FERNANDES a obtenu son doctorat en histoire à l'Université York, en septembre 2014. Ses recherches portent sur l'histoire sociale, culturelle et politique des diasporas en Amérique du Nord ainsi que sur l'histoire transnationale des groupes de migrants et des groupes ethniques du Canada. M. Fernandes est également un historien public dynamique, qui participe à divers projets de sensibilisation de la population à Toronto, entre autres au Projet d'histoire luso-canadienne, dont il est le cofondateur et le président.

90 Converted from 1,680,000,000 *escudos*, using foxtop.com historical currency converter. "Dinheiro de Emigrantes," *Comunidade*, 28 February 1978, 9, reprinted in 2010–019/005 (4), Domingos Marques Fonds, CTASC.