4 Professionals, Narrative, and Gendered Middle-Class Subjectivities

Chapter Four

Professionals, Narrative, and Gendered Middle-Class Subjectivities

In a 1959 letter sent to the Department of Individual Services of the International Institute of Metropolitan Toronto, a female scientist from Bulgaria thanked the counselling staff for its "kindness, patience and moral support" in helping her to land a job in her field. For months after arriving in Canada, she wrote, she had wandered from government office to social agency and even church group asking about meaningful work only to hear about low-level jobs. At the Institute, however, she found someone who took "an interest in me" and who understood the difficulties of adapting to a new life. As a result, she added, revealing an attachment to a professional status and identity, disappointment and desperation gave way to "a ray of hope in my soul." Promising to become an Institute member and volunteer, she pledged to help others forced to escape persecution in their Communist "Fatherland" to "become honest and useful people."[1] The Institute counselling staff, who knew the value of a compelling narrative, helped the author with the final version of her letter, which appeared in subsequent reports. In addition, her involvement in Institute activities would have reinforced the multi-ethnic but heavily Eastern European character of an agency whose democratic stance both reflected the main tenets of a postwar liberal capitalist welfare state and bore the mark of a transplanted anti-Communism.

As a woman, this refugee scientist belonged to a minority. But Institute staff used her letter of appreciation and that of other grateful or successful clients to justify the receipt of community chest funds and to generate other funds. They appeared in the publicity materials and in updates sent to Institute headquarters in New York City as proof of the efficacy of their professional interventions. The counsellors publicly circulated the human interest stories they gleaned from selected case records for the same purposes, the character profiles, twisting plotlines, and hopeful endings being key features of the publicity stories used in support of their liberal pluralist project.[2] Containing elements of drama, suspense, and humour, the human interest narratives that animated the

Institute reports and presentations delivered to both professional and popular audiences reveal the counsellors' heavy editorial hand. While also mediated sources, the case files speak to the need or desire of many clients to tell their story, however selective, truthful, or fanciful. So, too, do the letters contained in a file, whether its contents had been dictated to or translated by a counsellor or volunteer. The client narratives contained in a caseworker's notes capture, albeit partially, elements of the "theatre of encounter" that played out between social worker and client.[3]

This chapter examines the interactions between the Institute's professional clients and their mostly female but also male counsellors, highlighting the role of narrative and class-based gendered subjectivities in shaping the multicultural social welfare encounter. The Institute's employment files are not a reliable predictor of eventual success or failure, though they do challenge the popular misconception that immigrants with a professional background, then and now, experience an easier transition than do other immigrants. A careful reading of the more detailed professional files sheds light on the gendered subjectivities of middle-class newcomers in much-reduced circumstances navigating a restrictive professional landscape. Close scrutiny of the fragmented narratives in these files sheds light on social welfare interactions where counsellors and clients were both middle-class newcomers (and often both of European origins) seeking to rebuild professional careers and lives in Canada. My assessment of the files shows, too, that the Institute's counselling methods both prefigured key aspects of contemporary multicultural career-counselling principles (such as recruiting counsellors from within the immigrant communities being served) and exhibited the familiar shortcomings of career-counselling for "foreign" professionals, such as urging clients to markedly reduce expectations rather than try to resume or realize their professional aspirations.

Scholars in the fields of refugee studies and social work have documented, albeit in different ways, the importance of a convincing narrative. The traumatized refugee must narrate a "credible" and compelling story that will convince a judge or tribunal to grant asylum, and the community agency compiles its success stories in order to secure private or public funds.[4] We know, too, that storytelling, particularly in safe spaces, can help those with traumatic pasts to heal,[5] and also that those with ugly histories to hide, including war criminals, manufacture alternative narratives.[6] Reading the case files alongside the publicity stories and thank-you letters provides insight into the role of the material and the discursive in shaping Institute social work practices.[7] As for gendered identities, the preponderance of files on male clients means paying particular attention to masculinity. Neither Canadian ethnic historians nor Canadian historians of masculinity have scrutinized the masculinities of twentieth-century professional or bourgeois refugee and immigrant men. My assessments draw on the now extensive and feminist-informed literature in historical masculinities

highlighting the relational, hierarchical, fluid, and unstable character of masculinity.[8] Feminist scholarship on the subject informs the briefer but no less considered analysis of the professional female clients.[9]

Professional Selves

Contemporary scholars of immigration have documented the fervent desire of immigrants with professional backgrounds to re-establish careers in new contexts as well as the structural and cultural barriers that stand in their way. Rejecting dichotomized debates over whether individual attributes (such as speaking fluent English and host-society work experience) or institutional barriers (certification rules and employer prejudice) explain the difficulties in obtaining accreditation, they have critically examined the licensing controls limiting the entry of "foreigners" into the professional associations. They have also documented the ways that the social and career-counselling agencies that have emerged to help newcomers resume careers (or realize careers for which they have trained) emphasize compliance with these heavily self-interested institutional rules.[10]

These observations apply to Canada. Historians of Canada's post-1945 refugees have critiqued the institutional regulations and devaluation of "foreign" education and experience.[11] Until recently, however, in their focus on the success achieved by white European "good material" or "cream of the crop" refugees, they have been out of step with contemporary social scientists, especially in regard to lesser-skilled immigrants and working-class Canadians. Milda Danys attributes the success of Lithuanian displaced persons in postwar Canada to their being an "exceptional people" with a "psychology predisposed to be successful." Jan Raska is more attentive to the supports extended to the different waves of refugees from Czechoslovakia and acknowledges failure, but, again, the dominant portrait is of model middle-class citizens.[12] By contrast, more contemporary studies of racialized newcomers from the Global South seeking to re-establish (or attain) professional careers in Global North nations like Canada show how hostland racism and claims to "universal" measurements that denigrate "foreign" training and justify deskilling and "decredentializing" often lead to a drop in the newcomers' professional identity and status and, in some cases, a permanent descent into lower-skilled work.[13] One of the exceptions to the dichotomy just drawn is Shezan Muhammedi's recent history of the Ugandan Asians who between 1972 and 1974 became Canada's first major group of non-European, non-white, and predominantly Muslim refugees. While he, too, concludes that Ugandan Asians became successful, integrated Canadians, his textual and oral history sources document the considerable employment and everyday racism experienced by many of these "high quality" but racialized refugees.[14]

Contemporary insights can enhance understandings of the mainly white-on-white encounters that occurred at the Toronto Institute, provided we do not simply equate anti-immigrant sentiment against Europeans with anti-Black or anti-Brown racism. The findings of present-day multicultural adult education experts, anthropologists, and clinical psychologists regarding the gendered subjectivities of professional immigrants also have a wider applicability. One important socio-cultural insight concerns the tensions produced by the paradox of professionals who self-identify as such being forced by the host society's rules to "regain" a professional identity through post-migration "education," whether via formal examination or retraining.

Another is that the institutional rules construct the immigrant as "a deficient self" and play a role in a process whereby one may internalize the negative descriptor in order to survive, psychologically and emotionally, in the new society. Some immigrant professionals resist the process by challenging the dominant norms, by ceasing to pursue a career, or by returning home. Certain groups, such as journalists and artists, may try to resolve the problem by seeking self-employment within their ethnic community. But many others acquiesce to the constraints imposed. When that happens, these experts argue, the professional client views the social agencies as existing mainly to help them overcome a personal deficiency while they accept lower-paid jobs in the belief that they must acquire the qualifications for professional posts even when they possess them. To deal with the disappointment, they lower their pride by internalizing a notion of a "deficient self" constructed largely through the host society's institutional rules. Cross-cultural difficulties with interpersonal and presentational skills also produce anxiety among migrants unfamiliar with the host's cultural code, and those who are unemployed are likely to experience high levels of stress. Consequently, many end up accepting entry- or end-level jobs for which they are overqualified in order to support their families. They suffer a deterioration in their mental health, the manifestation of which is also gendered. Professional wives, for example, attribute their husband's increasingly "unstable" or "aggressive" behaviour to persistent unemployment and the anxiety it generates. Pressure from similarly burdened kin may compound the problem to the point that the individual loses a sense of hope and motivation.[15]

Publicity Narratives

Most people who used the Institute's counselling services, including professionals, wanted help with securing work. The Institute staff emphasized that early success or failure on the job market had a lasting impact on a newcomer's attitude towards the new society and their integration. As one report put it, a person "employed in his own trade or profession – will become a happy and adjusted settler – and in years – a Canadian citizen."[16] The value attached to

integrating professionals also reflected a dual logic: Canada's economy could benefit hugely from their specialized knowledge while the failure to adapt could produce pronounced maladjustment.

Drawing on North American studies that linked severe "ill-adjustment" to the wide gap between aspirational and achieved levels of employment among professionals, the Institute lobbied, unsuccessfully, to secure a dedicated government employment counsellor (from the National Employment Service, NES) to help clients with the certification process. A press release articulated the liberal principles involved, declaring that in a competitive capitalist society, immigrants should have "equal" access to the "community resources" that will enhance their participation through a proper "clarification" of their skills. It also included the Bulgarian female scientist's letter and the following caution: "the human being may learn the hard way by trial and error, but one wonders how many mental illness[es] and crimes could be prevented, if a human being was helped in his effort to make a happy and productive life."[17]

The counsellors circulated the narratives they gleaned from selected professional files for similar reasons. As casework supervisor, Margarete Streeruwitz explained that a failure to expose the obstacles could mislead the public into thinking "the main difficulty lies with the individual himself" when "his" primary goal is employment.[18] Another reason was to cast a favourable light on the counsellor's actions, an author's "flourishes and dramatic momentum" turning narratives drawn from cases into what Mark Peel calls "speaking stories" that often exaggerated the positive interventions involved.[19] The initial worker might write a draft and senior staff might polish it, with the use of the authorial "we" ensuring anonymity and indicating a common purpose.[20]

Neither tales of total triumph nor of abject failure, the publicity or human interest stories produced by Institute counsellors noted early disappointments and ended on a hopeful note. Most featured male clients, but referenced their families. The Institute counsellor and/or other understanding Canadians usually played a pivotal role in the optimistic ending. An early example featuring a young German architect "resentful" about a first Canadian winter spent unemployed stressed the importance of a timely intervention. On his landlady's suggestion, he visited the Institute, enrolled in English classes, and "became less bitter." Opening up about his feelings, he recounted his arrival in Halifax; he and some friends had been so overtaken by "fear and anxiety" at hearing the Immigration official say they were now "on their own" that "they sunk down on a bench … immobile for half an hour" before deciding to continue with "the adventure to make good in Canada." (The one dissenting "boy" booked a return passage home.) The story ends with an endorsement of the Institute's timely and positive intervention.[21]

Another story featuring Germans had several twisting plots. Mr S. was an engineer with an outstanding resume; however, because of his poor English,

he was unable to find employment, adding "a psychic pressure" to the anxiety of sponsoring family and adapting to life in Canada. Owing to the "intellectual differences" between him and the working-class German family with whom he resided, he "had no one to whom he could talk" and felt lonely. The Institute's entry into his life improves matters, as he begins English classes, gets documents translated, and is referred to jobs. But just as he finds work and his wife and son arrive, an unexpected setback comes in the form of a "puzzling and disturbing" spot on his lung detected during a company medical exam. Sent to a sanitarium, he harbours fears of deportation. Meanwhile Mrs S. loses her job and suffers "a nervous breakdown," and once discharged is embarrassed to accept welfare support. Then, finally, the ray of hope. The "mysterious spot" remained fixed and Mr S. is issued a clean bill of health. The couple decide to stay in Canada, their ability to speak English underscoring the importance of the Institute's services.[22]

A story that highlighted the gratitude but also resilience of newcomers who benefited from the Institute's timely assistance involved an older unemployed Estonian businessman, age 58, and his wife. After hearing the man's "sad tale" (he was desperate to help the son who had sponsored them), the counsellor phoned an employer looking for "a young man with fair English" to work as "a candy packer" and urged him to instead hire "our applicant." While awaiting an answer, the writer continues, "we found out that the client had his own chocolate factory and shop in his country," adding that "he even produced small snapshots – and with tears in his eyes said this was all he had left." To everyone's "great delight," the man was hired. He later visited the Institute, giving "every girl" in the office "a chocolate bar … a hand-shake and a big grin."[23]

Two narratives intended to highlight the Institute's role in helping talented men overcome their discomfort over job interviews also contain elements that speak to the masculine subjectivities of professional newcomer men frustrated by their inability to regain a professional life. The first man, an engineer, age 29, said his "heavy" Eastern European accent was putting off prospective employers. The counsellor's decision to contact employers directly to make the man's case elicited the expected gratitude. The client's comments about the "pleasure" derived from being able to converse with other professional men struck a hopeful chord while also illustrating his attachment to a professional identity.[24] The source of anxiety for the second man, a Dutch academic, was that his "dark skin" caused "difficulties" in interviews. In the only staff-shaped narrative to touch on race and colonialism – the dark skin is attributed to an Indonesian grandmother – the focus is on the counsellor's ability to help his client distinguish between perceived racism and "insufficient" qualifications. In other words, the European counsellor's approach to this mixed-race client assumed a "deficient self" and discounted racism. Convinced the main problem was the man's "insufficient" credentials, "lack of confidence," and "expectations of

rejections," the caseworker arranged follow-up sessions that reportedly helped the client to improve his interview style and his "attitudes" towards others.[25]

Curiously, given the presence of usable material, the narratives featuring women were few and brief. An amusing one involved the manager of an upscale "apartment house" who said she liked the "nice" chambermaid she had been sent by the agency, but "to please send her someone else" as the former ballerina was a lousy housekeeper. "By now," the writer notes, the residents "knew all about her stage career, her husband, her divorce, etc. but the apartments were not cleaned properly."[26] None of the uncovered staff-crafted publicity stories featured post-1967 racialized clients or counsellors.

Cases and Scenarios

The noteworthy presence of middle-class newcomers among the Toronto Institute's clientele is reflected in my database, one-third of which involve clients from professional backgrounds.[27] The subset of 335 case files to which I now turn were selected because they contain enough qualitative content to permit some meaningful observations. The subset, though small and skewed heavily in favour of European and pre-1967 clients, captures a wider range of scenarios as well as many more negative or abrupt endings than do the publicity stories. Men (59 per cent) outnumber women. Eastern European refugees (74 per cent) dominate both the total group and the male and female groups (74 and 75 per cent respectively). Immigrants from Western Europe are a distant second (22 per cent), and the non-Europeans a very distant third (4 per cent).[28]

The Institute's involvement in every government-subsidized refugee resettlement scheme enacted during its history is reflected in the subset. The Eastern Europeans who dominate the refugee clientele include the early arriving Polish veterans who had served with the British forces in the Second World War and the displaced persons who followed them to Canada shortly afterwards. Both groups arrived on labour contracts for specific industries, with wives and children joining them later. The Hungarian refugees of 1956 were part of the 40,000 refugees resettled in Canada through a government-led scheme following the Soviet Union's defeat of the uprising. The Czechs and Slovaks were among the 12,000 refugees who arrived in a similar fashion following the Soviet-led invasion of Prague in 1968. Czechs outnumber Slovaks in the subset (66 and 34 per cent respectively).[29]

The remaining professional refugees, about whom the small number of case files say very little, include a handful of Chileans and Ugandan Asians. The Chilean refugees were not the leftists who fled Chile following the 1973 military coup that ousted Salvador Allende's democratically elected socialist government and installed General Augusto Pinochet's authoritarian regime; the leftist refugees' admission was delayed by Canada's security forces. Rather, they were late-1960s

and early-1970s refugees of Hungarian, Czechoslovakian, and Yugoslavian origin who had escaped after the Second World War to South America, and some of their Chilean-born adult children. The observation also applies to the post-coup Chileans who were clients of the Institute in 1973 and 1974. Unlike most of the 7,000 Chileans who comprised the first major group of leftist refugees to be settled in Canada, the Institute's Chilean clients resented both Allende and Pinochet and claimed to have been "persecuted" as "foreigners."[30] The few Ugandan Asian clients were among the almost 8,000 refugees admitted into Canada following General Idi Amin's 1972 order to expel South Asians from Uganda.[31]

The immigrants were mostly Germans who arrived in the fifties and early sixties following the lifting of exclusions in 1950, a few early arriving Dutch, and a handful of post-1967 Chinese and Asian Indian immigrants who arrived under the points system, which based admission on probable economic contribution to Canada. The Institute's Chinese clients arrived mainly in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. The case files do not state birthplace or citizenship, but few would have come directly from mainland China. The 1967 points system allowed Chinese families from South America, the Caribbean, Southern Africa, and Southeast Asia to immigrate to Canada. With Canada's recognition of the People's Republic of China in 1970, immigration gradually grew, becoming significant after 1972. Like those who followed them during the peak period of 1972–8, most of the Chinese who became Institute clients in 1972 (my cut-off year) would have come from Hong Kong, with much smaller numbers arriving from Taiwan and Malaysia. The few point-system Asian Indian professionals were men who became Institute clients in the early 1970s, at the start of a decade that would see a dramatic increase in immigration from South Asian countries.[32]

There were commonalities among the numerically dominant Eastern Europeans in the subset of cases, including their anti-Communism, but there were also differences. For example, whereas the early refugees had refused to return to Communist-run homelands at the end of the Second World War, the Hungarian "1956ers" and Czechoslovakian "1968ers" had lived under a Communist regime for a lengthy period of time, the "68ers" having done so the longest. They shared a middle-class hostility towards Communism, but their status and trajectories varied. Some men had enjoyed privileged and influential positions and elite status in pre–Second World War homelands and then languished in camps for years before securing refuge in Canada, while others had faced occupational stagnation due to the anti-bourgeois policies of their Communist homeland state. The experience with state arrest and imprisonment also varied.

In addition to the men who dominate the most prestigious professions, such as law and medicine (89 per cent), the subset includes a large cluster of engineers (21 per cent) and smaller groups of journalists, accountants, teachers, and university graduates.[33] A minority of the women are in the elite ranks (11 per cent), but the noteworthy proportion of female professionals (39 per cent) reflects

in part state mandates that encouraged women's participation in Communist economies.[34] Teachers and nurses account for just over half of the professional women, with the former outnumbering the latter.[35] A majority of the men and women are in their thirties and forties (65 and 54 per cent respectively). Two-thirds of the men are married, the majority of them fathers. Just over half of the women are married, and just over half of them have children. Almost two-thirds of the clients were counselled in their own language, while a minority of those from non-English-speaking nations spoke "fair" or "good" English. They learned about the Institute from family, neighbours, landladies, and friends, or through referrals from other agencies or government departments.[36]

As for counsellors, women (6) outnumbered men (4) in the subset. Three European female counsellors (two refugees and one immigrant) handled a majority of the cases (61 per cent) overall and close to two-thirds of the female ones. An Eastern European refugee and Northern European immigrant were the most active male counsellors. The counsellors describe male doctors, lawyers, and academics as "brilliant" and "distinguished," and others as "bright" and "excellent." They praise men for possessing "active" and "alert" personalities or the "aggressive" look of determination. On occasion, as with the Eastern European female worker who described a Chinese teacher keen to improve his English as "a very nice, cheerful person," they complimented men for possessing less obviously "masculine" traits.[37] The female counsellors applied descriptors such as "intelligent" and "bright" to a number of women professionals.

That praise reflected a client's homeland status, though the sympathy-laden (as opposed to empathetic) observations speak as well to the counsellors' own profile as middle-class newcomers rebuilding lives and careers in Canada. In some cases, a counsellor shared the same national or ethnic group affiliation, and gender, as his or her client. Sometimes counsellors with anti-Communist inclinations recounted clients' stories of state persecution and escape in their letters to prospective employers, vouched for their willingness to start at the bottom, and recommended them as people "of trust and of great integrity."[38] While attuned to the shifting targets of anti-immigrant prejudice, and the need to counter it, the heavily European counselling staff saw itself as part of a white population even if this understanding was not solidified until the early 1970s with the increase in the number of racialized clients.[39]

The professional group also stood out because it required "longer and more intensive counselling" than did less-skilled immigrants, largely due to the certification rules created at the provincial level by the professional associations. The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO), for example, required an applicant to provide proof of medical training, pass an English-language exam, submit letters of reference, formally declare one's intention to become a Canadian citizen, and complete a one-year internship in an approved Canadian hospital. The dentists, which included women since dentistry was a

heavily female occupation in some Eastern European countries, had to repeat a three-year university program, though some were given a year's credit. A portfolio for a doctor or engineer could include twenty or thirty letters; many delays occurred for various reasons, including papers lost in wartime, insufficient English, and a shortage of hospitals willing to provide internships.[40] Staff also identified the complex "human factors" involved, from a client's personality or "state of mind" to the time and sensitivity involved in raising a client's morale and helping them to "regain" their self-respect.[41]

Male Professionals

The initial "occupational" plan for these clients involved a short-term strategy to meet immediate needs through "sub-marginal placement" and a longer-term one to reach the "desired goal" of accreditation and desirable employment. But it was quickly compromised by the many referrals received from government departments and social agencies that lacked personnel with the linguistic skills or cultural "knowledge" to handle "foreign" professionals. As they increasingly involved male professionals who, one, two, and three years after arriving in Canada were still stuck in manual jobs and showing signs of psychological stress,[42] the staff focused on a pragmatic strategy of securing low-level white-collar jobs.

The recorded comments (or narrative traces) in the men's files offer revealing if mediated glimpses into a middle-class newcomer masculinity marked by status anxiety. The oft-expressed preference for "cerebral" rather than "heavy" labour is a case in point. Fifties-era examples include a Latvian lawyer who said that while his wife was working as a warehouse "packer" he wanted "to use his brain" in an office with a decent salary, and a Ukrainian journalist-turned-factory-worker who said he wanted a job "which would require rather my intellectual capacities than those of my muscles" and provide a salary sufficient to support his family.[43] Other men expressed their professional subjectivity by protesting the unfairness or absurdity of Canadian disregard for homeland credentials and, in the case of the Eastern European refugees, insufficient appreciation of the courage shown in defying or escaping Communism. The 1952 letter of a Bulgarian veterinarian and former government meat inspector annoyed over the Ontario Veterinarian Association's rejection of his diploma from Sofia University noted his role in combatting an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Bulgaria and in arranging his family's escape from "Communist tyranny."[44]

In response to their clients' complaints about delays or difficulties in accessing courses or exams, Institute counsellors admonished them to appreciate that one could not just "jump into a career" in Canada and to be patient.[45] Conversely, the stoicism of a former physics professor from Lithuania employed for a year as a janitor to help support his family earned him praise. Calling him "well-adjusted [because he is] able to face the situation and understands it,"

his immigrant male counsellor found him a nominally better-paying job in a department store.[46]

On occasion, however, a counsellor expressed embarrassment over the failure to offer a highly accomplished man meaningful work. An Eastern European female counsellor conveyed such sentiments in her fifties-era files on two refugee lawyers from Yugoslavia – a Serb, age 43, who also edited a Toronto-based newspaper, and a Yugoslavian, age 59, who had also been an academic. When the "trustworthy" and English-speaking Serbian lawyer-turned-logger-then-hospital-janitor about whom she was confident of placing in a "clerical position" ended up in a bakeshop, she wrote "we should try something better." (The paper trail then ends.)[47] She was equally disappointed over her failure to secure the older Yugoslavian law professor employed as a night watchman a college teaching contract. Some postwar Eastern Europeans did land university jobs, but no academic in this subset of cases did so, including a younger Chilean (age 32) engineer, on whose behalf a female counsellor wrote the meteorology department of a Montreal-based university.[48] It was also difficult to place older journalists with Canadian newspapers, whose editors said they lacked an understanding of the local context and colloquial language. Hence, immigrant journalists, then as today, would often pursue work within their ethnic community. A Ukrainian refugee journalist who had been actively involved in anti-Communist activities in Europe did just that, becoming a prominent leader among nationalist (conservative) Ukrainians.[49]

In one of just three cases that addressed racism, a 31-year-old Chinese teacher from Malaysia who spoke fluent English expressed frustration with "the apparent excuses" given "for not hiring him." He told his European worker about a principal in Hamilton, Ontario, who "told him they were only looking for a teacher who was familiar with the particular school environment he had to teach in." Although "disappointed" to encounter this racism-by-evasion not only in the United States, where he had spent some time, but also in Canada (even if "more of an undercurrent"), he preferred to "succeed" in Canada. During a follow-up call to report that the private school referrals had not panned out, he offered the kind of praise that made for a good publicity story: Institute staff in Toronto, as in Buffalo, were "trying to help a person right away instead of only talking about it as many others do."[50]

The one file that features both a racialized counsellor and client contains the recorded complaints of K.M., a young Ugandan Asian accountant, age 26, who notes that, two years after arriving in Canada, yet another employment counsellor (from Canada Manpower Centres, CMP, formerly the NES) had told him "to forget the certification for now" and take a factory job as a shipping clerk. The job, he says, involved "cutting textiles" as well as clerical work, but it was the low wages ($2 per hour) that led him to abandon it for a temporary but better-paying job at a gasoline station. The counsellor refers K.M. to an agency that would help

him to prepare his resume (the Institute no longer provided the service) so that he could fill out an application to the Certified General Accountants of Ontario. This surely pleased K.M., though the notes do not explicitly say it. Nor do they say whether counsellor or client thought racism explained the repeated advice to defer certification. CMP offices were involved in the Ugandan Asian resettlement scheme and the advice itself was familiar enough. Still, the other three Ugandan Asian men in the subset, each with a different Institute worker, were given the same referral. It suggests that Institute counsellors were more sympathetic than their mainstream counterparts to the men's desire to re-establish their professional lives. As an active member of the Uganda Committee of Toronto, which was coordinating re-settlement efforts, the Institute also shared a widely held assumption that an early success rate would temper anti-Asian racism.[51]

"Emotional and Psychological Fallout"

Clinical psychologists studying barriers faced by today's professional migrants recommend the adoption of a "multicultural" career-counselling model that resembles the Institute's pluralist approach. Using Institute-like language, they claim that counsellors knowledgeable about their client's cultural background can be more effective intermediaries, interpreting the hostland's institutional rules and cultural norms to the immigrant, and the immigrant's homeland credentials and experience to hostland employers, agency staff, and the wider public. A related suggestion that counsellors familiarize themselves with the prejudices of the wider society and address their own biases was encouraged in Institute training and debriefing sessions (see chapter 3).

There is also overlap with respect to storytelling techniques. Multicultural career-counselling experts advise that the counsellor, having formed an opinion of a client's cultural norms and beliefs from initial meetings, help the client to gain greater self-knowledge by completing exercises, such as writing a "future biography" or an obituary, that reveal how the client envisions their life unfolding. By addressing the client's stereotypes and experiences of discrimination as well as past successes, the counsellor, they add, can further assist the client in developing appropriate career goals that are also compatible with their integration into the host culture.[52] Institute counsellors did not use these specific narrative tools, but they certainly understood the value of storytelling in dealing with what we now call migrant trauma, and in facilitating adjustment as well as in promoting their work. Such efforts are evident in the files on clients described as "dejected and frustrated" men who, "having wandered from place to place" without receiving appropriate guidance or support, exhibited a "pattern of disappointment and psychological or emotional fall-out."[53]

That determination reflected in part a professional imperative to organize individual details into higher-level or more "scientific" categories such as client

types (see chapter 3), but the constructions themselves can also be read in terms of masculinities. Two main types were identified. First, there were the once-prominent judges, surgeons, and academics who had undergone a stressful transition from the privileges of an elite or hegemonic masculinity, and the sense of entitlement it engendered, to a subordinated and marginalized one, initially as displaced persons or escapees in refugee camps and then as struggling refugees in Canada. Second, the counsellors identified a middling stream of professional such as engineers and teachers who, having experienced the limits placed on their career, status, and freedom by the anti-bourgeois policies of their Communist homeland, are re-embittered by the realization that resuming a career in Canada will be far more difficult than promised or assumed.[54]

The counsellors' recorded complaints of male clients in many files constitute narrative traces that convey not only a resentment against Communist officials and Canadian professional associations alike, but also a sense of diminishment at finding themselves still a long way from resuming or rebuilding a professional career and a middle-class way of life. These sentiments are captured in the many references to being "compelled" or "forced" to toil at degrading work despite professional credentials. Even allowing for the worker's input, the professional subjectivity of a Hungarian lawyer-turned-physical-education-teacher who insisted on being referred to as "Doctor" can be gleaned from a letter in the file that is addressed to the minister of education. In it, he complained that, despite Canadian assurances to the contrary, his application had been rejected by fifteen schools. In spite of two diplomas, the letter reads, "I am compelled to work as [a] night cleaner." Calling his situation absurd given the reported need of teachers "in many parts of Canada," and his willingness to go anywhere for "a position in my profession," he asks the minister to assist a newcomer who is "unable to go further" on his own. The letter notes other achievements, including coaching the "world-famous Hungarian Vasas" soccer team, and his political courage ("I was imprisoned 4 years because of my anti-communist activities in Hungary"). Like others, he also conveys a sense of shame over his inability to support his wife and children. The last point suggests that, despite the greater presence of women in the professions in Communist states as compared to Canada, many Eastern European men who arrived in Canada espoused a breadwinner ideology familiar to Canadians, though some may have done so in support of their claims.[55]

Angry Young(er) Men

Although Institute counsellors were trained to consider the social-cultural and psychological elements of a case, the files under review focus more explicitly on the psychological maladjustment of elite and middle-class men experiencing downward mobility and status anxiety than on matters related to specific group-defined cultures (see chapter 3). They do, however, view many of these clients as members

of a particular subgroup, namely Eastern Europeans victimized by Communism who needed help in readjusting to life in a Western capitalist society.

The first "problem" type was the angry younger man in his thirties or forties who blamed his Communist homeland for denying him the life he rightfully deserved, and Canada for denying a high-quality newcomer the opportunity to resume a career. A Ukrainian engineer resentful about his demotion to draftsman also dismissed his co-workers as "all communist." His counsellor felt equally compelled to "explain" that the workers' "anti-European attitude" was due to fears over "job security" and not left-wing ideology.[56] Complaints that Canadian immigration officials in Europe or Halifax misled them about Canadian conditions were also common, but these were often framed in the context of Institute publicity stories that stressed the importance of its services.[57]

The many files noting registration for courses or preparation for exams suggest that a majority of these men acquiesced to the regulations, at least initially. So, too, do the files on the cluster of engineers of European, Asian Indian, and Chinese origins who, having failed to gain admission into the Association of Professional Engineers of Ontario, reduced their aspirations and enrolled in a drafting course or applied for jobs as an entry-level draftsman.[58] Although facing fewer obstacles than their Asian counterparts, the European engineers who resumed their careers nevertheless experienced less prestige in Canada than they had in Europe. But they did participate in the postwar "modernization" of Canadian industry that saw the rise of new factories and massive public works projects. Although neglected by Canadian historians of masculinity, the "technical experts" who filled the post-1945 ranks of Canada's "modern men" included those of "foreign" extraction.[59]

The few explicit cases indicating a rejection of the certification rules included men who demanded help in finding work in the United States. One example involved a 37-year-old married German doctor employed as an attendant at a Toronto mental health facility, a physically demanding job that included restraining patients. No doubt aware of the "anti-Nazi" sentiment aimed at Germans, he explained his Russian origins and recounted his war story. It included conscription into the Russian army as a medic, serving as a POW in a surgical clinic in Berlin, and, at war's end, fleeing to the US zone, where he worked in a refugee hospital until receiving an exit visa, which allowed him to enter Canada. He then complained about a recent twist in his story, noting that just as he secured a hospital internship, the medical rules were changed; they now required English-language exams in more subjects than was previously the case. Claiming that his counterparts in Los Angeles were already gainfully employed doctors, he demanded help in joining them. The caseworker, who surely knew of similar difficulties south of the border, agreed to make enquiries, but no update appears in the file. A few cases involving engineers wanting to find work in the United States, or return to Europe, also end abruptly.[60]

Institute staff were not surprised to encounter frustrated men, even recommending some of them for media interviews or conferences. They were critical, though, of "arrogant" clients who resisted their advice or were otherwise less-than-compliant clients. A Canadian female volunteer counsellor accused a former Polish judge who complained about being "compelled to work as an unskilled industrial labourer without any hope for the future" of possessing a "bitter" and "defeatist attitude," but also begrudgingly admitted that "I suppose one cannot blame him for it." He reportedly declared that four and a half years after arriving in Canada, "I can't call myself a hapy [*sic*] well adjusted Canadian." After failing to place him as a law clerk, she suggested that a bookkeeping or (basic) accounting course would make him more employable. The advice, then, was to reduce his lofty expectations and aim for a more realistic goal, a white-collar job preferably in his field. Once retrained, she added, he should advertise in a legal newsletter as "a Polish judge, speaking good English and desiring legal clerical work."[61] We do not have his response, but the curt dismissal of a Latvian statistician given similar advice suggests, too, that clients' refusal to condescend to clerical posts frustrated Institute counsellors and their colleagues.[62]

One of the best storytellers was T.B., a 35-year-old teacher imprisoned in Hungary for his anti-Communist activities and then barred from his profession. The differing responses he elicited from his female and male counsellors offers as well an example of how gender influenced the theatre of encounter. The harried woman counsellor who first handled his request for a job while he awaited the results of his application to teacher's college offered a negative judgment: "I do not know whether the prison affected him that way, but he seems very hard to handle – conceited, does not care about anybody else." An effort to secure the multilingual T.B. a teaching contract with the University of Toronto failed. Then, a male immigrant counsellor with social work training became T.B.'s counsellor, perhaps because he objected to the female worker. This counsellor's different portrayal of T.B. as "nervous and timid" suggests that T.B. was willing to share his anxieties with another man. The counsellor attributed T.B.'s "nervous" demeanour, and obviously poor health, to "his difficult past." In an observation that suggests he considered the file a potential publicity story, he adds that T.B. will "improve" when "he gets his place in Society," though "everything" depended on his health.[63]

Institute staff, many of them avid newspaper clippers, learned more about T.B. through a Toronto newspaper article on Hungarians that interviewed him under a pseudonym. Clearly impressed by T.B.'s story, the reporter recounted the man's five-year imprisonment in Hungary and his escape in 1956, his experience with certification "red tape," and his plans to publish a memoir. The journalist ended on an optimistic note, writing that, besides selling real estate (using a "late-model" car supplied by his firm) and "doing private tutoring," T.B. and

his wife now lived in a "spacious" but "simply" furnished flat in the (more middle-class) Casa Loma district and that their (middle-class) social life revolved around the Hungarian Helicon Society (est. 1951), an arts and letters club.[64]

By contrast, the case file goes on to record T.B.'s deteriorating health, his "quit[ing]" real estate, and his failure to secure admission into teacher's college. As the situation worsened, the counsellor contacted a charitable organization with a plea to help out a former political prisoner who suffered "great moral degradation from 'brain washing' and other evil practices," and who was now "in the middle of a crisis" that, unless circumvented, may cause "a breakdown," forcing the whole family to go "on relief." He adds, the course was the man's "last chance to obtain a license and practice his profession" at age 36. Referencing T.B.'s breadwinner status, the counsellor also notes that "he is haunted by the spectre of his family being unsheltered and hungry," and asks that funds to cover living expenses for the duration of the course be provided, preferably as a gift, but, alternatively, as an interest-free loan.[65]

T.B.'s mental anguish presented as a crisis in masculinity and his male counsellor's attentiveness to the anguish of a client who fit both a Cold War and "good material" script underscored its value as a publicity story. So, too, did the ending. T.B. may not have taken that teacher's course, but his luck did change over the next few years. First, he received approval as a substitute high school teacher from a suburban board of education and entered teacher's college. Then a high school in Fort Erie, Ontario, responded to an ad he placed in an educational newsletter, though he declined the job. Finally, he moved to Buffalo and landed a job with the city welfare department. Perhaps the fact that the happy ending occurred in the United States explains why the case was never turned into a "speaking story."[66]

An articulate 1956er whose anti-Communist views were also featured in the Toronto media explained middle-class resentment towards Eastern Bloc states in terms of the contradictions of a well-resourced technical education system that combined demanding standards with state-directed favouritism towards students whose parents were workers or party members. This practice, he argued, discriminated against the "class-alien" elements: the bourgeoisie, wealthy peasants, and non-Communist intelligentsia. In a differently gendered scenario, he used his rhetorical skills to convince a sympathetic female counsellor to find a (female) donor willing to help him start a cleaning business, and then disappeared with the money.[67]

One of the few cases where staff attributed a young man's excessive anger to serious psychological dysfunction also sheds light on the limitations of the Institute's career-counselling approach. Noting the "great deal of hostility" expressed by J.R., a Yugoslavian refugee, towards the manager of his research laboratory for reneging on a promise to promote him, the Eastern European caseworker aimed to help him gain insight into his situation. According to his

notes, he first convinced J.R. that abandoning the job was a mistake because it meant he could not collect unemployment insurance or enrol in a hospital training course that interested him. Then, the caseworker explained that J.R.'s rationale for considering a move to Montreal – that Quebeckers would be more "welcoming" than Anglo-Torontonians towards someone who had lived in France and spoke French – was a misplaced effort to "escape from stress." And, finally, he helped J.R. "to realize that his present difficulties were related to his personality problem," which J.R. then attributed to his negative refugee camp experiences having made him a "nervous person." But there is no further follow-up.[68] In another scenario, a female counsellor, pleased that her success in securing a "very bitter" Ukrainian accountant a bookkeeping job had turned him into a happy and appreciative client, expressed her professional pride in a way that aligned with the Institute's liberal capitalist ethos. She wrote that in helping immigrants to achieve a better life, the host society benefited from the human capital they represented: "we were able to do a job which saved a man from loosing [*sic*] his self-confidence, but also the community from loosing [*sic*] a man with a good professional skill." She was also celebrating what was in effect a demotion from professional accountant to low-level bookkeeper.[69]

Depressed Older Men

The efforts to place professional clients in low-level white-collar work was particularly pronounced in the case of men who fit the second main type of ill-adjusted professional, the "older" man in his fifties and sixties who was "depressed" or "very depressed." In a typical example, the female counsellor of a 60-year-old Yugoslavian banker repeatedly rejected for managerial posts told the one bank manager who expressed an interest in him that his depression was strictly situational (that is, linked to his difficult circumstances). Given the chance, she added, the "intelligent, capable" man would "prove a very reliable, conscientious worker" who could "offer some input." The job in question was a clerical one.[70]

In pursuing a strategy that involved deskilling and decertification, counsellors hoped that office work would produce an income and halt a further decline in the men's mental health. As an enticement, they presented low-level clerical posts as providing the accoutrements of a respectable middle-class, if not an intellectual, scientific, or legal, pursuit, and a better-than-minimum-wage income. Implementing the white-collar strategy was not easy, however; the relevant files feature mostly women counsellors trying to assist men for whom they felt sympathy, even pity, rather than empathy. A European female worker who thought the "very well educated and honest looking" academic who had gone through several dead-end jobs during his first year in Canada would find even "an easy clerical job" too "difficult" nonetheless suggested a library technician

or bookkeeping course. When he mentioned a chauffer's licence, she wrote "an excellent plan," her enthusiasm indicating relief over his having seriously reduced his expectations.[71] Her female co-worker, also European, conveyed sympathy towards a Yugoslavian engineer and his wife in her plea to an indifferent personnel manager in the city's landscaping division to show compassion towards a "distraught" couple "desperate" to sponsor their daughter by giving the man a job. A refusal even to help with the application form made the manager the anti-immigrant villain in this story. An Institute volunteer assumed the role of friendly Canadian by hiring the wife as a maid, but the file ends without news of the daughter.[72]

In the main exception to this pattern, a few cases show female counsellors asking about locales where the accreditation process might be less strictly enforced than in Ontario. An ethno-Canadian volunteer counsellor went this route with a 54-year-old Bulgarian dentist upset over the Ontario Dentistry Association's refusal to recognize his diploma from the University of Lille, France, or the dentistry practice he had in Bulgaria and France. Concerned the "enterprising" man was getting "progressively more depressed" over his inability to break a two-year cycle of odd jobs, she contacted a Japanese Canadian doctor based in the Yukon who had written an article in a Japanese Canadian newspaper to which the Institute subscribed about the need for medical personnel in the territory. Making a case for her client's suitability, she wrote that he had greatly enjoyed his one short-lived contract with the Quebec Health Service in Harve St Pierre – which she revealingly describes as an "isolated place on the edges of Labrador" – because he could "practice his profession."[73] The dentist's file, like those of an older journalist and lawyer also willing to move away to practise their respective professions, does not include a record of the eventual outcome.[74]

The only proven successful case of this type involved Dr N.J., a Polish doctor, age 53, who had been working as a hospital cleaner while preparing for his medical exams. He complained about the CPSO rules now requiring the follow-up internship to be a rotating one, saying the arbitrary change threatened to sabotage his plans. Noting the fifty or so rejection letters in his file, his European female counsellor sympathized, writing that she could understand why he "did not believe that anyone could help him," and why "he resented very much being a cleaner in a hospital where he saw other young doctors doing the work he had done for 20 years." She also observed his pronounced mood swings, reporting that he alternated between "behav[ing] very dignified" and "laps[ing] into a very excited state of mind," and that he had mentioned killing himself and his children. She did not recommend hospitalization, however. Convinced that his depression was situational – the details of which indicate a "crisis in masculinity" triggered by persistent status and male-breadwinner-anxiety – she instead advised him to persevere in the hope that securing an internship might allow him "to become his own self." After he passed the exams, her resourcefulness

and some good luck produced a hopeful outcome. She contacted a former client who had held an internship with an out-of-town hospital to ask about possible openings. Now a resident, he offered to visit Toronto with a colleague and interview the client. Three weeks later, Dr N.J. began an out-of-town internship while his wife and children stayed in Toronto. There is no update in the file, but the actions of the former-client-turned-resident underscores the importance that the reacquisition of a career in a (still male-dominated) prestigious profession played in the adjustment of "elite" male newcomers to Canada.[75]

Professional Women

The vast majority of the female professionals in my subset of cases are Eastern European refugees. The exceptions include a Chinese teacher who, arriving amid the Christmas rush of 1970, was told to apply for sales work in a department store. Of the two young Chilean-born professionals, both daughters of Eastern Europeans, one was a social worker keen to work with the Institute. The female counsellor helped the woman, who spoke fluent English, with the application and said that the Institute director Tine Stewart would interview her, but in the end she was not hired. The counsellor's advice that the client also apply for an advertised job with Planned Parenthood not only made good sense, but also indicated her own support, one she shared with other female staff, for women's reproductive rights.[76] The other young Chilean professional, an architect, was visiting her parents, both of whom were also Institute clients, but she, too, was looking for a job in her field. The file ends without an outcome, but she may have been a visitor ("tourist") hoping to apply for immigrant status while in Canada (as a matter of policy eligibility for all such applications would be revoked in November 1972).[77]

The women's files contain less narrative content than the men's, but there is enough information to draw some comparisons. As to similarities, they, too, document initial downward mobility, marked examples of which include an architect-turned-waitress and an agronomist-turned-babysitter. Like their male counterparts, a handful of female university graduates gained acceptance into engineering or other professional schools, mainly at the University of Toronto.[78]

We also find recorded expressions of disappointment over downward mobility in cases of middle-class professional women. Only a few, however, were like Dr P., a Polish doctor in her thirties whose attachment to her professional status and identity was demonstrated through a grim determination to resume an elite career. She also had a compelling story to tell. According to her cover letter, she trained as a general practitioner in Crimea and then worked in a transit camp hospital in Germany during the war, earning a medical diploma. After the war, she worked as a doctor with the International Refugee Organization in Europe before migrating to Brazil, where she practised as a physician until

moving to Canada in the mid-1950s. Dr P. came to the Institute after failing to secure a rotating internship. A few years later, she returned to report that she had secured and completed an internship and taken the medical exams, but that difficulties with English led to her failing one of them. In a hopeful ending reminiscent of a publicity narrative, the counsellor referred Dr P., who was married without children, to a private tutor with a nursing background and recommended a university course in English conversation.[79]

Even allowing for the translator's input, the few employment letters in the women's files shed light on the women's mode of self-representation as well as desire to impress prospective employers. Most echo that of a 32-year-old Polish engineer, a married woman without children, who articulated her professional identity within an anti-Communist discourse. Her plot-twisting narrative began at the end of the Second World War, when she earned a degree in agricultural studies. Having held positions with a number of university laboratories and cattle-breeding stations, the letter notes, she pursued further studies in animal breeding and served as editor of a series of engineering textbooks published by Krakow University. But her fortunes changed with the "tighten[ing] of "the communistic attitude" following the Communist victory in 1948. She noted, "I was not allowed to continue with my professional work being a descendent of an intellectual "bourgois" [*sic*] family," but "continued to keep my professional knowledge by reading books and periodicals."[80]

The letter of a female engineer hoping to find work with a research agency not only expressed an attachment to a professional profile; it also issued one of the two explicit references in the subset to sexism in the professions. An ethnic Ukrainian from Poland, she began by narrating her war story. Having moved with her family to Poland after graduating from a university in Soviet Ukraine, the letter notes, she was working in a metallurgical laboratory "when the Germans overran Poland" and sent her to Auschwitz for the remainder of the war. Arriving in Canada on a domestic labour contract, she later found marginally better paid work as a nurse's aide in a Toronto hospital. Then came her big break: a contract to work in a metallurgical lab with a research institute and a generous supervisor who, knowing her diploma was lost in the war, provided a reference letter attesting to her skills. She acknowledges "the gap" in her work experience, but insists that she is "still only 36, and prepared to start as a technician at any level whatsoever." She reaffirms her professional attributes, saying she is a "specialist in metallography, microphotography, and microstructures." She then adds that, besides having to contend with the "handicap" of being a foreigner, "there is the circumstance that women are not commonly employed in this field by industry." The file had speaking-story potential and, in hiring her, the Ontario Research Foundation fit the role of generous Canadian employer.[81] A more specific case of male bias involved a young (25-year-old) Hungarian geologist described by her female caseworker as a "very intelligent,

very pleasant intellectual lady." The geology company refused to hire a woman for their advertised "junior geologist" position because it entailed "supervising small prospecting groups" of men in "isolated areas."[82]

More striking, however, are the differences in the situation of male and female professionals. These included the lower wages of the female placements and a reluctance to accept night-shift work. Women also differed from their male counterparts in their response to the accreditation regulations. Close to two-thirds of them chose, largely for pragmatic reasons borne of structured patriarchy, not to pursue a lengthy certification process but instead to opt for lower-status jobs within their field or even outside it. This was particularly true of older women who, like the fifty-something Latvian refugee dentist and pharmacist, said they were "too old" and financially insecure to "redo" a university program and asked for work as a lab technician or, failing that, office work. Although there is no record of her saying so, the same reasoning likely applied to the 52-year-old Chinese doctor who arrived in 1970 with a husband and children and speaking "poor" English.[83] An earlier-arriving Russian gynecologist and pediatrician, age 43, was more blunt, saying she could not "look for" an internship because she had to look after her children.[84] Younger women in their thirties, among them an Eastern European refugee doctor and engineer, similarly said they could not repeat their training because they now had a family.[85] Evidently less daunted by the rules regulating their respective professions in Ontario, many of the teachers and nurses, both single and married women without children, tried to secure their Canadian "standing," though few had done so as indicated in their Institute file (see below).

The prevailing gender norms regarding women's reproductive roles and caring labour both informed women's middle-class femininity and limited their ability to resume a career. While cognizant of the impact that pregnancy or a supportive male partner had on women professionals, Canadian ethnic historians have not closely scrutinized the gender dynamics involved.[86] By contrast, current studies of dual-career couples emphasize the detrimental impact of "traditional" gender-based expectations within the migrating family unit on the integration of female spouses, especially when mothers or other female kin are not available to help provide domestic support. Women, they show, are usually the trailing spouse, and the unpaid caring labour expected of them disadvantages them in the professional labour market. Also, migration often alters the gender dynamics within dual-career families so that women who were full-time professionals back home feel pressured to sacrifice "personal" gains in order to ensure the family's well-being in the hostland.[87]

Arriving amid the rapid social changes of the late sixties, the Czech and Slovak female professional refugees of the Prague Spring, many of whom had lived for two decades in a Communist state that sanctioned women's wage earning and state-run childcare, were struck by the lack of such facilities in Toronto.

Like other working mothers, they tapped the available facilities, such as church-run nurseries and orphanages as well as subsidized and private daycare centres. The relevant files capture their frustration over insufficient spots. Raska explains Czech women's underemployment in Canada vis-à-vis the Czech Soviet Republic in terms of the fewer jobs available for skilled women in Canada and the sexism of Canadian Immigration officials who sometimes refused to place them in English- or French-language programs. We could add the absence of a "nationalized" (provincialized) daycare system – something for which feminists were then lobbying – as well as interruptions or delayed entry into the labour force due to childbirth. That no alliance was forged between Canadian feminists and women "68ers" despite agreement on the need for more childcare services is not surprising, though, given their opposing views on state intervention and the left or the left-liberal politics of many feminist activists.[88]

Predictably, Institute counsellors supported women's pragmatic decision to lower their professional aspirations in order to immediately earn an income and meet family expectations. A partial exception to the pattern hints at the difficulty of abandoning a career: a Czech engineering instructor, who first declared that "she did not want a factory or cleaning job" but "to work in her own profession and hopefully return to teaching," reappeared some months later to say she was "desperate for work" and would take anything. Applying the white-collar-job strategy, her Eastern European woman counsellor advised her to take her translated certificates and university diploma to the local banks and libraries and ask for an interview. She also supplied some clothing and furniture donations and placed the child in a nursery. More generally, the absence in these files – for gaps or omissions in the files can be as revealing as verbatim quotations or narrative traces – of recorded laments over careers suspended or cancelled by children underscores both the impact of transplanted "traditional" gender roles on women, including those from Communist homelands, and the pragmatism with which most women handled the demands of motherhood. Some of them, though, may have sought re-entry into their field once their children were older.[89]

A file on a 68-year-old widowed Russian psychologist determined to secure a clerical job with "a psychologist or psychiatrist" shows a woman trying to hold on to a vestige of her homeland status and identity by seeking a position where she believed she could make use of her expertise as well as multilingual skills. The notes of her European male worker, a trained social worker, capture her disappointment and his counselling approach. He writes that, because she was so "certain" about attaining her goal that she was "unable to consider" any other clerical job, he supported her plan to contact several doctors as a corrective strategy. Two weeks later, she returned upset over being repeatedly told that she was "too old" to practise in Canada, and asked him why he had not stressed just how futile her quest would be in their first interview. The counsellor, who

claimed to have spent a "considerable" amount of time with the woman, replied that as she was not then "ready" to hear the bad news, he "thought it advisable for her to find out for herself." With some professional self-satisfaction, he adds, she agreed with him, thereby offering proof that he helped her to attain a greater degree of self-awareness. There is no follow-up, but the final entry implies that she was now willing to accept any type of office work.[90]

Only two women, an older Latvian pharmacist, age 56, and a young Polish academic, age 25, expressed satisfaction with a downward career move. Having failed the qualifying pharmacy exams, the pharmacist worked as a nurse's aide before retooling as a cook. Several months after her European female worker placed her in a tourist lodge, she sent a thank-you letter to the counselling staff. "Although I have not great experience in the culinary art," it reads, "I am not without knowledge and I say, cooks are not born – they are made – by their own efforts," adding, "So I shall do my best in this new art." Whether or not she received help in writing it, the letter indicates that she was able to derive validation from a less-skilled job by redefining it as a new career.[91] One of the Institute's few Jewish clients, the Polish academic wanted a clerical job in order to sponsor her parents and a sister from Brazil. Once hired, she wanted to buy her counsellor a gift. He demurred, saying her good news was enough reward and that professional codes prohibited the practice. Since this worker, like others, accepted invitations to family dinners and celebrations from appreciative clients, his insistence on maintaining professional/private boundaries in this instance is noteworthy. As for the woman, who, like the Bulgarian scientist of our opening story, volunteered at the Institute, she simply found his home address and had her husband (an Austrian journalist) drop off a gift.[92]

Trailing Professional Spouses

Among the women in the professional subset who belonged to a dual-career marriage were nurses and teachers. Under the auspices of the Canadian Nurses Association, many immigrant nurses were initially placed as nurse orderlies in hospitals. Ostensibly meant to help them acquire the Canadian knowledge required for the exams, the exhausting labour involved could interfere with their studies.[93] It explains why a Chinese nurse who was seriously injured at work planned to prepare for the nursing exams while convalescing: she was told the certificate would help secure a less physically demanding job in a clinic. The female counsellor found her a volunteer tutor to help with her English.[94]

In addition to attaining sufficient English, immigrant teachers had to secure a letter of standing from the Ontario Department of Education or earn a teacher's certificate in order to practise their profession. Meanwhile, some of them worked in factories and as waitresses and domestics. While nurses and teachers enjoyed less prestige than doctors or lawyers, they, too, maintained

a professional ethos. In a written thank you to the Institute for arranging an interview with the Metropolitan Toronto Board of Education, a Ukrainian teacher referred to the "pleasure" of conversing with another professional woman. She also did some volunteer (translation) work for the Institute.[95] The case files involving translated résumés and diplomas, notes as to preparation for nursing exams, and applications to teacher's college indicate a determination to resume a career as well as interruptions due to family duties, whether related to pregnancy or the arrival of children from overseas. They show, too, how some women's options were limited by a husband's aspirations, such as pursuing a post-graduate degree in order to advance in his field. Or, alternatively, how his success or good luck (such as landing a job with a firm that covered the cost of his Canadian training) allowed them to leave low-level jobs and pursue their own certification.[96]

Institute counsellors routinely invoked the white-collar-job option with their teacher clients, urging those with sufficient English to apply for work as bank tellers and office clerks on the premise that these respectable jobs (which did not require typing skills) were more attainable. A case from the late 1960s illustrates the great lengths to which a young Yugoslavian teacher in her mid-twenties went in an effort to resume a career she valued, and her eventual acceptance of an alternative one. A CMP job counsellor referred the married woman, who spoke fluent English, to a particular European female counsellor at the Institute. Afterwards, she dutifully made the rounds, visiting the local Immigration Department, the Toronto Board of Education, and a high school principal's office. Discouraged from teaching, she asked about nursery and daycare positions only to be told about the training course requirement. When, a year later, she was still unemployed and her physician husband was still struggling with the CPSO licensing requirements, the counsellor recommended a bank teller position, saying it was a "good" job and that dealing with the public would acclimatize her to "the Canadian way of life." After putting up some initial resistance, she relented. A dozen calls later, she was sent to interview with a bank, but failed the English test. Another slew of phone calls to employers interested in "bright young women for office [work]" led to a job with an Ontario public health agency; this time, she passed the English test and became a clerk in the accounting department. The final entry describes her as "happy" and "grateful" – the perfect client. Having reduced her aspirations in order to secure a much-needed income, she also fits the profile of the professional wife rationalizing the value of accepting less fulfilling work.[97]

The records under review contain no direct evidence of frustrated husbands becoming more belligerent towards their wives. In one case that suggests the possibility of male aggression, the European male worker thought the Hungarian lawyer/husband and teacher/wife "both appear a bit depressed as a result of their unsuccessful search for a position." But the husband dominated the

meetings, at one point dismissing his poor-paying "salesman" job, then refusing to retrain as a welder, and then denouncing Canadians for not hiring him. One might well imagine that the silent wife bore the brunt of his growing anger, even if he did not turn violent (a theme discussed in chapter 5).[98]

Finally, a few disgruntled couples decided to return to Europe, in one case doing so separately. The latter case involved a Czech female teacher married to a graphologist who first attributed their unhappiness to her husband's frustration over learning English. She appeared to be doing well, completing an English course and securing a letter of standing. When she could not find a teaching job, her female counsellor suggested that, as a fluent Russian speaker, she contact the University of Toronto about the possibility of teaching Russian. A month later, the woman reported that the university required a PhD, that her husband had returned to Czechoslovakia, and that the Immigration department wanted the repayment on her passage loan. She pursued teaching possibilities over the next few months, suggesting the couple had separated, but the final entry says that she also returned home.[99]

Conclusion

Toronto Institute counsellors, particularly the women, clearly sympathized with their professional clients, particularly the compliant ones, and, at least initially, assumed they could make significant contributions to Canada. These clients' struggles also resonated personally with the counsellors, most of whom themselves were educated middle-class newcomers working to rebuild new careers in Canada in the aftermath of war, loss, and displacement. The evidence suggests, too, that they treated the post-1967 racialized professionals without racial animosity, though the scant information in the relevant files, along with the charges of racism occasionally laid against Institute personnel (see chapter 7), renders this observation highly speculative. At the same time, however, the counsellors, whether formally trained or Institute-schooled, viewed their clients through a professional filter, as evidenced by the typology of angry younger men and depressed older men. Shaped partly in response to the Eastern European refugees' deep resentment towards Communist regimes that stole their freedom and careers, the typologies were also informed by Cold War narratives. The absence of similar female typologies may be explained by the pragmaticism that made many of them compliant subjects.

An analysis of both the case files and publicity stories reveals the strengths and weaknesses as well as paradoxes of liberal pluralist social work practices. On the one hand, they prefigured key aspects of contemporary multicultural career-counselling methods. This included hiring counsellors and caseworkers who came from the immigrant communities represented by the clientele and who, whether before or after their on-site training, possessed a knowledge of and

sensitivity to the cultural attributes of the ethnic groups (and subgroups) which the clients belonged – though there was little explicit evidence of their applying this social-cultural perspective. On the other hand, the advice meted out exhibited what these same experts consider the shortcomings of career counselling for "foreign" professionals. While impressed by their accomplished clients, Institute staff ultimately wanted them to significantly reduce expectations rather than try to resume or realize their professional aspirations, or to lobby for changes in the accreditation rules. As for the clients, both women and men experienced significant downward mobility, at least initially, but also showed a grim determination to recoup a professional and middle-class way of life. However, facing greater restrictions, women were more likely than men to trade in career goals for more attainable white-collar jobs that also allowed them to meet familial obligations. Finally, while these employment files offer some glimpses into the emotional life of clients and even counsellors, it is the case files dealing with marital conflict and with generational tensions, the subjects of chapters 5 and 6 respectively, that lend themselves to a more sustained analysis in this regard.