

that multicultural policy is not a substitute for effectively dealing with racism, the underground racism that thrives in our country today will continue to afflict our land and every new immigrant who lands here.

My worst fear is that as the western world is struggling out of global depression the open purse strings of government supporting settlement and bridging programs will silently, and without fanfare, close. New statistical studies will appear that illustrate that dollar-for-dollar the generous bridge-to-work programs are a waste of taxpayers hard-earned dollars particularly when government debt loads are at the highest levels in years. James Bissett, a former executive director of the Canadian Immigration Service reminds us "there's a backlog of nearly a million applicants waiting to get in. More than half of recent immigrants are already living below the poverty line" (qtd. in Martin A15). Bissett argues that, "2.5 million immigrants who arrived in Canada between 1990 and 2002 received \$18-million more in government services and benefits than they paid in taxes" (A15). *Globe and Mail* columnist Lawrence Martin adds that Bissett "agrees Canada has a humanitarian role to play, but his view is that it is better done through greatly increased foreign aid than adding 300,000 job seekers in difficult times" (A15).

As more and more Canadian-born workers are displaced from their traditional jobs, I suspect, they will become the main focus of government policy and funding. The unemployed and underemployed offer up many more votes than the approximately 250,000 immigrants who arrive here every year—and it's always easier to cap immigration than it is to fight racism, particularly at a grassroots level where social activism wedded to government policy is the key ingredient that most traditional politicians and bureaucrats prefer to ignore. If multicultural policy remains the purview of partisan politics rather than a true, unfettered intention to level the playing field for all people of every race, ethnicity and religion in Canada—and not as a means to garnering votes but as a path to a truly democratic society—then it looks to me like immigrants, particularly women who are the most vulnerable to funding freezes, are in for a very rough ride here in the years to come.

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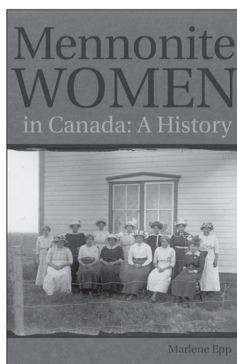
### The Crumbs of Civility

She pushes  
the cart through a neon  
red doorway  
with a yellow bucket  
of suds  
and a stack  
of cheap plastic sheets;

each night  
she wipes  
the tables clear  
of civilization's crumbs  
unnoticed  
unsung  
her quiet way  
cleans a countered  
corner  
for the next  
encounter of civility.

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