ARTICLES

"One of the Cultural Minorities"? Indigenous Peoples and the Creation of Official Multiculturalism

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Abstract: *Examining advocacy for multiculturalism in the late 1960s and early 1970s, this article challenges the idea that Indigenous peoples were not part of the discussions that led to the policy of multiculturalism. Instead, it demonstrates that their activism directly led to some inclusion in the early years of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and that ethnic minorities took some tentative steps towards building political alliances with them. However, the possibility of a less colonial, more inclusive "syncretic multiculturalism" was dashed by the White Paper's assault on Indigenous identities, which diverted Indigenous leaders' engagement with multicultural activists, and by the passive revolutionary outcome of a policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework," which originally excluded, but then was quickly extended to include, Indigenous peoples.*

Keywords: Indigenous peoples, multiculturalism, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, political history, politics, White Paper

Résumé : *En examinant le militantisme en faveur du multiculturalisme à la fin des années 1960 et au début des années 1970, l'article remet en question la notion que les peuples autochtones n'ont pas fait partie des discussions qui ont mené à la politique sur le multiculturalisme. Il montre plutôt que leur activisme a mené directement à une certaine inclusion dans les premières années de la Commission royale d'enquête sur le bilinguisme et le biculturalisme et que des minorités ethniques ont pris des mesures provisoires pour créer une alliance politique avec eux. Cependant, la possibilité d'un « multiculturalisme syncrétique » moins colonial, plus inclusif, a été anéantie par l'attaque du livre blanc sur les identités autochtones, ce qui a dévié l'engagement des leaders autochtones envers les militants multiculturels, et par le résultat passivement révolutionnaire d'une politique de « multiculturalisme dans un cadre bilingue », lequel excluait initialement les peuples autochtones, avant d'être rapidement étendu pour les inclure.*

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Mots clés : histoire politique, livre blanc, multiculturalisme, peuples autochtones, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, politique

INTRODUCTION

Canada's official policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework," announced in 1971, was the federal government's response to the *Final Report* of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (RCBB), specifically Book IV – released in 1969 – which dealt with "other ethnic groups."[1] Although studies of the policy are legion,[2] few have questioned what the relationship is, if any, between the policy of multiculturalism and Indigenous peoples.[3] Instead, these two histories have most often been treated separately.[4] The notable exception is Eve Haque's study, which thoroughly documents both Indigenous peoples' and ethnic minorities' interventions in the RCBB. It demonstrates "how Indigenous groups' claims were eventually set aside and other ethnic groups' demands were muted, all culminating in the commissions' final report," which did not consider Indigenous peoples and rejected the notion of multiculturalism. Although Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau went beyond – and even against – the recommendations contained in that final report, the multiculturalism he announced was "a restricted and limited notion" that "submerged competing visions of the concept." Most broadly, Haque argues that the RCBB's policy outcomes resulted in the installation of "a racial order of difference and belonging through language in the ongoing project of white settler nation-building."[5]

Unlike Haque's work, which emphasizes the settler colonial nature of the RCBB, Valérie Lapointe-Gagnon's French-language study focuses on how the commission represented the possibility of Quebec attaining special status. In *Panser le Canada*, Lapointe-Gagnon draws upon the Greek term "*kairos*," which refers to the right moment or the opportune time to do something to ensure that it will have a meaningful impact. Drawing parallels with John Kingdon's idea of a "policy window,"[6] Lapointe-Gagnon refers to *kairos* as the moment

1 Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (RCBB), *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, Book IV: *The Cultural Contribution of Other Ethnic Groups* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1969) (RCBB, *Final Report*, Book IV).

2 A Google Scholar search for "'multiculturalism' and 'Canada'" returns about 242,000 results.

3 For one exception, see David Bruce MacDonald, "Reforming Multiculturalism in a Bi-National Society: Aboriginal Peoples and the Search for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 39, no. 1 (2014): 65–86.

4 See, for instance, Will Kymlicka, "Ethnocultural Diversity in a Liberal State: Making Sense of the Canadian Model(s)," in *Belonging: Diversity, Recognition, and Shared Citizenship in Canada*, ed. Keith Banting, Thomas J. Courchene and F. Leslie Seidle (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2007), 39, 41. For the best short history of the policy of multiculturalism, see Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), ch. 5.

5 Eve Haque, *Multiculturalism within a Bilingual Framework: Language, Race, and Belonging in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 4–5, 6, 236.

6 John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1984; reprinted 2010).

when it is possible for an idea to become public policy. In this case, what she calls the "Laurendeau-Dunton moment" was one when new linguistic policy as well as constitutional compromises for Quebec could have been negotiated, though the window closed before its fullest results could be realized.[7] While it is not a focus, Lapointe-Gagnon's study also acknowledges that Indigenous peoples were consulted and then abandoned by the commissioners.[8]

The idea that Indigenous peoples were not part of the discussions that led to the policy of multiculturalism, or that their only involvement was a short-lived and unsuccessful engagement with the RCBB, is challenged by an examination of the broader push for multiculturalism that occurred outside the confines of the commission's public hearings. Conferences held to promote the idea of multiculturalism, as opposed to biculturalism, demonstrate that ethnic minorities took tentative steps towards building political alliances with Indigenous peoples. This article therefore argues that the *kairos* moment here may have been a truly revolutionary one, in which a new multicultural conception of Canada could have been imagined and brought about. Just beyond the horizon of linguistic or constitutional changes narrowly concerned with Quebec lay a more radical conception of "syncretic multiculturalism" that embraced multilingualism and affirmed the *sui generis* rights of Indigenous peoples.[9]

Of course, ethnic minorities were still defining multiculturalism and had their own internal divisions, and Indigenous leaders also had varying ideas of their involvement in, and the desired outcomes from, the RCBB. But there was a window in which these discussions could have resulted in concrete changes, though this window was ultimately closed by two decisions. First, the assault on Indigenous identities represented by the 1969 White Paper, which diverted Indigenous engagement from the RCBB and hindered the building of alliances with ethnic minorities. And, second, the passive revolutionary outcome of a policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework," which in the short time between its design and announcement shifted from excluding Indigenous peoples to considering them "one of the cultural minority groups" that it would cover.[10]

Indigenous Peoples, "Other Ethnic Groups," and the RCBB

The RCBB "was the child of the Quiet Revolution," which began around 1960 with the crumbling of Quebec's conservative political order and the unleashing of the forces of modernization, secularization, and nationalism.[11] One of the

7 Valérie Lapointe-Gagnon, *Panser le Canada: Une histoire intellectuelle de la commission Laurendeau-Dunton* (Montreal: Éditions du Boréal, 2018), 12, 31–8.
8 Ibid., 188–90, 366–7.
9 On syncretic multiculturalism, see MacDonald, "Reforming Multiculturalism."
10 "'Indians and Eskimos would qualify as one of the cultural minorities,' [MP Robert Stanbury] said." Quoted in Terence Moore, "Ottawa to Help Minorities Learn Languages," *Montreal Star*, 9 October 1971, 14.
11 Lisa Schrenk, "Directed Cultural Change and Imagined Communities: The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism Encounters the Language Question in Ontario, 1964–1967" (MA thesis, Queen's University, 1993), 2.

more prominent voices in the resulting debates about Quebec's place in Canada was that of André Laurendeau, the editor of *Le Devoir*. In 1962, Laurendeau wrote an editorial calling for the creation of a royal commission on bilingualism.[12] The Progressive Conservative government of Prime Minister John Diefenbaker rejected the idea, but when Lester Pearson led the Liberal Party to power the following year, he approved the creation of the RCBB, which was to be co-chaired by Laurendeau and Arnold Davidson Dunton. Established in July 1963, the RCBB was instructed to

> inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution.[13]

In an important but overlooked master's thesis, Lisa Schrenk convincingly argues that the RCBB was an example of "officially directed cultural change, which sought to make Canadians accept dualistic conceptions of their imagined community, in order to safeguard the stability of the federal state." In other words, rather than trying to determine if Canada was bilingual and bicultural, the commission was attempting to impart to Canadians a new, common-sense understanding of their country as fundamentally bilingual and bicultural.[14] Despite this narrow and rigid frame, some groups, including various Indigenous peoples and organizations as well as numerous Ukrainian Canadian individuals and organizations, forcefully countered with rival conceptions of Canada.[15] At the most basic level, the official policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework was therefore the result of the federal government's compromise between, on the one hand, the recommendations of the RCBB, which operated from the logic that there were two "dominant" and official cultures in Canada (English and French) and, on the other, the advocacy of various minority ethnocultural groups in Canada, who rejected biculturalism and argued for a more expansive definition of the nation, which they often described using the term "multiculturalism."

Indigenous peoples were completely absent from the RCBB's terms of reference as they were not considered a "founding race" or an "other ethnic group," both of whom had representation (the latter by Commissioners J.B. Rudnyckyj, a Ukrainian Canadian linguist, and Paul Wyczynski, a Polish-born French

12 André Laurendeau, "Pour une enquête sur le bilinguisme," *Le Devoir*, 20 January 1962, 4.

13 RCBB, *A Preliminary Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1965), 21.

14 Schrenk, "Directed Cultural Change," 26.

15 Bohdan Bociurkiw "The Federal Policy of Multiculturalism and the Ukrainian-Canadian Community," in *Ukrainian Canadians, Multiculturalism, and Separatism: An Assessment*, ed. Manoly Lupul (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press for the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1978), 105; 124, n. 16.

language scholar).[16] The lack of an Indigenous commissioner was highlighted by Ethel Brant Monture, a Mohawk woman from the Six Nations reserve, who described herself as a "one-woman crusade to reverse over four centuries of propaganda" about Indigenous peoples.[17] Monture appeared as a representative of the National Indian Council of Canada (NIC) and was the only Indigenous person to address the RCBB's preliminary hearings, held on 7–8 November 1963 in Ottawa. The press remarked on her respectable appearance ("mink hat and beige dress") and her demeanour ("she trembled"; "she shook visibly"; "her voice [was] shaking with either nervousness or emotion"), while judging hers to be "easily the shortest and most effective" of all the forty-six submissions presented that day:[18]

> Mr. President, gentlemen. I represent the National Indian Council of Canada. We respectfully submit that Canada is a tri-lingual country. Our imprint is indelibly on this land. Through the years we have added at least the colour. We were told at the first hearing of this Commission we would [not] be invited to be a part of it, that we would not be asked for representation. We feel until we are taking our full share at all levels we are in many ways a wasted people. We ask for your friendly consideration of this request. Indians possess a culture quite distinct from the biculturalism of French Canadians through which is woven a pattern of Canadian rights.[19]

After these remarks, which lasted less than a minute, a "tense," "deathly" silence settled before it was broken by "prolonged," "loud," and "rousing" applause – the only presentation to be so received.[20] In those few short lines, Monture had

16 See Thomas M. Prymak, "The Royal Commission and Rudnyckyj's Mission: The Forging of Official Multiculturalism in Canada, 1963–71," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 88, no. 1 (2019): 43–63; Lee Blanding, "Re-branding Canada: The Origins of Canadian Multiculturalism Policy, 1945–1974" (PhD diss., University of Victoria, 2013), 98–9.

17 Quoted in Graham Fraser, ed., *The Fate of Canada: F.R. Scott's Journal of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1963–1971* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021), 269, n. 33.

18 "Indian Asks Biculturalism Committee 'What About Us?' – Whites Applaud," *Brantford Expositor*, 8 November 1963, 13 ("trembled"); Phyllis Wilson, "Commission Hears Trusteeship Plan for Capital (and Mayor)," *Ottawa Citizen*, 8 November 1963, 13 ("mink"); Jack Cahill, "What About Us? 5 Million Ask," *Vancouver Sun*, 8 November 1963, 6 ("shook"; "voice"; "effective").

19 RCBB, *Preliminary Report*, 144; also quoted in Haque, *Multiculturalism*, 70. On Ethel Brant Monture's life, see Cecelia Morgan, "Performing for 'Imperial Eyes': Bernice Loft and Ethel Brant Monture, Ontario, 1930s–60s," in *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past*, ed. Myra Rutherdale and Katie Pickles (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 67–89. On the National Indian Council of Canada, see Reetta Humalajoki, "'We Cannot Go without a National Organization Any Longer': The Struggle to Build Unity in Canada's National Indian Council, 1961–1968," *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 35, no. 2 (2023): 165–87.

20 RCBB, *Preliminary Report*, 145; "Going Whose Way?" *Brantford Expositor*, 12 November 1963, 4 ("less than a minute"); Cahill, "What About Us," 6 ("deathly"; "loud"); Wilson, "Commission Hears Trusteeship Plan," 13 ("prolonged"); Max McMahon, "Bicultural Inquiry Under Way with Wide Range of Views," *Montreal Star*, 8 November 1963, 25 ("rousing"); see also Fraser, *Fate of Canada*, 22.

FIGURE 1 "He just found out biculturalism doesn't mean between Eskimo and white man." *Source: Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, 17 December 1963, 13 (image provided by Newspapers.com and reproduced with permission from the family of the artist, Ed Sebestyen).

pointed out that the terms of reference did not make sense: even considering all Indigenous languages as one group, Canada was obviously not just bilingual but tri-lingual and not just bicultural either as Indigenous peoples had their own culture or cultures. On top of this diversity, they too shared common "Canadian rights," yet they had not been granted representation on the commission itself.

Monture's presentation garnered positive press attention and triggered changes at the RCBB. Jean-Louis Gagnon recalled that his fellow commissioners were "embarrassed" that the terms of reference made no mention of Indigenous peoples.[21] So, in December, and drawing on a working paper prepared by one of the commission's study groups, Laurendeau made a public statement clarifying, among other things, that the "Commission recognizes clearly that it has a duty to give special attention to the problems of the Eskimo and the Indian in our present world."[22] The press welcomed this addition while critiquing it as an apparent "afterthought," with an accompanying political cartoon driving the point home (see Figure 1).[23] Indigenous peoples "were for years the forgotten peoples of Canada and never more forgotten than in the present anxiety over national unity," another article remarked.[24]

21 Quoted in Lapointe-Gagnon, *Panser le Canada*, 189 ("les commissaires . . . se sentaient gênés que le mandat ne fît aucune mention des peoples aborigènes").
22 See RCBB, *Preliminary Report*, 183–7.
23 "Recognizing Multiculturalism," *Star-Phoenix*, 17 December 1963, 13.
24 "First Canadians' Viewpoints," *Ottawa Journal*, 28 December 1963, 6.

Once the preliminary hearings concluded, the commissioners met with provincial premiers from January to March 1964 and then undertook a series of regional meetings from March to June of the same year. One of these meetings was held in Sudbury where the omission of Indigenous peoples within the RCBB's mandate of duality was powerfully challenged. Stella Kinoshameg, an Anishinaabe woman who taught in the region, began her presentation entirely in Anishinaabemowin: "Earphones which had been blaring out English and French dialogues through a simultaneous translation system . . . became dead silent." Kinoshameg paused and then asked in English: "Where are the interpreters?" She continued: "No one can translate my words, and yet our language was the first language heard on this soil. Our culture was the culture which existed in this land when the country was founded." She continued to critique historical commemoration as well as the education system that forced Indigenous children to learn English, hastening assimilation. "I don't want to be assimilated," she said, "I don't want to be on the English or the French side. I am an Indian and I want to preserve my culture."[25]

Like Monture, Kinoshameg's remarks were greeted with applause and made a clear impact on the commissioners, who quoted her remarks (though attributing them merely to an "Indian woman" in Sudbury) in their *Preliminary Report*.[26] The commissioners also went on to meet with members of the "Indian Advisory Committee" of the Ontario Department of Public Welfare, including several First Nations chiefs. By June, Commissioner Frank Scott had become concerned that they had not heard from Inuit peoples and argued that the commissioners should go to them since they likely could not appear before the public hearings.[27] Scott and Gagnon subsequently made a "tour of the Eastern Arctic" where they engaged "Eskimo Community Councils, government officials, and missionaries."[28]

During the tour, a RCBB spokesperson stated that "the commission [had] widened the horizons of its massive investigation in response to public demand." According to the press, after the regional hearings, which heard testimony that Indigenous peoples faced more serious problems than other groups, "the consensus was that Indians and Eskimos have been largely ignored until now, and that the bicultural commission would be an appropriate vehicle to reverse the trend." The commission declared that it would meet with various

25 "Teacher Wants Indian Language Preserved," *North Bay Nugget*, 26 March 1964, 5; Susan Dexter, "Count Us Out on Biculturalism View of Indians," *Toronto Star*, 26 March 1964, 8.

26 Ronald Lebel, "Tempers Flare on Biculturalism," *Brantford Expositor*, 26 March 1964, 12; see also "Whither Champlain without the Indian," *Sudbury Star*, 26 March 1964, 1; RCBB, *Preliminary Report*, 49–50. Kinoshameg later worked for the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (DIAND) but never stopped teaching, offering courses in Anishinaabemowin at the University of Sudbury in 1971; an award in her honour is given by Laurentian University (https://laurentian.ca/faculties/arts/our-tricultural-mandate). See her obituary in the *Manitoulin Expositor*, 2 August 1973, https://sites.rootsweb.com/õnmanito/obituary/Ki-Ky.html.

27 Fraser, *Fate of Canada*, 65; see also 85, 87–8, 95.

28 RCBB, *Preliminary Report*, 49–50.

Indigenous leaders and communities, survey existing research, and commission new studies to fill the gaps.[29] In short, through their direct intervention, Indigenous peoples were added to the agenda of a commission originally created without any mandate to consider them.

The RCBB's summary of the regional meetings was released as a *Preliminary Report* in 1965. In it, the commissioners remarked that they "found great sympathy in 'white' audiences for the plight in which Canada's two indigenous peoples [sic] find themselves. . . . We were impressed by this unanimity of views." However, they attributed this "plight" to "the relentless march of North American industry and technology . . . into territories once exclusively their own." In other words, the question was less one of Indigenous peoples' place in Canada and more of how to ease the consequences of the inevitable march of modernity, for whom no one – not even a single country (note the shift from Canada to North America) – could be blamed. As for Indigenous peoples' claims to language rights, Haque demonstrates that they were "presented as fragmented and inconsistent." Instead of recognizing that Indigenous peoples represented one of the "strongest possible challenges to the dualism of the founding races," the commissioners instead consistently placed them on the periphery by emphasizing that they were "in a position apart."[30]

Once the regional meetings concluded, the public hearings began. Fourteen sessions, each lasting between one to four days, were held in ten major cities between March and December 1965. These hearings consisted of the presentation and discussion of some of the 404 briefs submitted by individuals or organizations, including several Indigenous people and organizations.[31] Unfortunately, due to political struggles within the organization, the NIC did not submit a brief as it had originally intended. Kahn-Tineta Horn, Richard Pine, and others were challenging the leadership of its director, Odawa educator Wilfrid Pelletier or Baibomsey. Horn and Pine argued that the organization was "controlled by non-Indians," and they sought to establish a new body to "represent the Indian people."[32] Horn, a Mohawk woman from Kahnawake, would instead submit her own brief, as would John Curotte, also from Kahnawake.[33]

29 Ronald Lebel, "Indians, Eskimos on the Bicultural Agenda," *Red Deer Advocate*, 12 September 1964, 5; see also Frank G. Vallee, "Indians and Eskimos of Canada: An Overview of Studies of Relevance to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism," 2 vols. (n.p., September 1966); Haque, *Multiculturalism*, 124–5.

30 RCBB, *Preliminary Report*, 50 ("plight"), 128 ("apart"); Haque, *Multiculturalism*, 79–82.

31 RCBB, *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, Book I: *The Official Languages* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967), xv–xvi (RCBB, *Final Report*, Book I). Private meetings were also held with individuals and groups who did not want to make public statements.

32 Quoted in Haque, *Multiculturalism*, 120; see also Humalajoki, "We Cannot Go." Ironically, one of the only organizations to represent Indigenous peoples before the RCBB was indeed controlled mainly by non-Indigenous peoples: the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada (IEAC), whose membership was only one-third Indigenous. IEAC, "Brief to the RCBB," May 1965, p. 1, file 750–541, vol. 57, series 80, RG33, Library and Archives Canada (LAC).

33 Haque, *Multiculturalism*, 120–1.

In Haque's analysis, these and other related briefs revealed certain "patterns of resistance to the hierarchy presented in the commission's terms of reference." Namely, they resisted arguments based on the idea of the fragmentation of Indigenous languages, emphasized that Indigenous peoples were multicultural, argued that their claims for cultural preservation were not privileges but rather treaty rights, and "challenged the founding-races model of the terms of reference directly."[34] Horn's brief, for example, argued that "we Indians are not aliens, not citizens, but are the First People of North America, the legal proprietors of this continent." She continued: "The phrase 'founding race' can refer only to Indians who have been here beyond memory."[35]

The brief from John Curotte, chairman of the "Caughnawaga Defence Committee," explicitly engaged with the idea of multiculturalism. Like Horn, Curotte argued that "'the founding races' were the Indians, and the others could be called the 'invading races,' or the 'second coming races' or whatever fits!" In place of biculturalism, he proposed a form of multiculturalism but one that was unlike what the other ethnic groups had been proposing. Curotte suggested that, if the argument for "equal partnership" did not rely on equality of numbers, then "'Equality' of groups which are so uneven in numbers should also include Indians and bring it into 'multi' instead of 'bi.'" In other words, there were English, French, and a multiplicity of Indigenous cultures as well.[36]

The commissioners did not know how to respond to these challenges. According to a diary kept by Frank Scott, during a March 1966 meeting, when discussing

> other ethnic groups . . . the question arose, what shall we do with the Indians and the Eskimos? Are they just another ethnic group? Most Commissioners felt that within our terms of reference, they were not in the same position as the new Canadians. Then where would we place them? Gagnon said we must speak about the Eskimos and the Indians, otherwise we would look ridiculous to the Canadian public. I said we might have to make some comment about them, but we would make ourselves even more ridiculous if we attempted to pretend we knew anything about the situation. We had no research on it, and Gagnon's and my little tourist trip to Baffin Island could scarcely count as research.[37]

In a meeting held a few months later, Commissioners Rudnyckyj and Wyczynski had pushed for recognition of "native" languages in the Constitution. Scott, in his own words, "strongly opposed the idea, saying that there was no meaning to the word 'native' and that in any case, we should not clutter up the Constitution with such detail. I am afraid I may have offended their susceptibilities somewhat." Whether cynically or accurately, he also resisted because he "suspect[ed] that

34 Ibid., 127.

35 Kahn-Tineta Horn, "Brief to the RCBB," March 1965, file 740–292, vol. 47, series 80, RG33, LAC; see also Haque, *Multiculturalism*, 120–1.

36 Caughnawaga Defence Committee, "Brief to the RCBB," March 1965, pp. 2–4, file 740–289, vol. 47, series 80, RG33, LAC; see also Haque, *Multiculturalism*, 121–3.

37 Quoted in Fraser, *Fate of Canada*, 145. (Frank Scott's account is accurate in that, while the RCBB had commissioned research on Indigenous peoples, the two-volume report was not completed until September 1966.)

behind the proposal is the idea that after the acceptance of Indian and Eskimo languages as 'native' they saw the acceptance of Ukrainian in the same category."[38]

In the end, the commissioners decided to make "some comment," as Scott suggested, but they ultimately chose to exclude Indigenous peoples as being outside their scope. In Book I of their *Final Report* (on the "Official Languages"), published in 1967, the commissioners now clarified that they would not examine "the question of the Indians and the Eskimos." The justification was that they were not in the terms of reference and could not logically be included in either of the two categories. No doubt referencing the *Hawthorn Report*, the first part of which had been completed in 1966, they added that it was clearly not the government's intention to have the RCBB "undertake long studies on the rightful status of the Indians and Eskimos within the Canadian Confederation; other bodies . . . have been entrusted with the research required for the making of government policy." Their final, tepid suggestion was that the federal government, working with the provinces, should take steps to assist the survival of "the Eskimo language and the most common Indian dialects."[39]

The ultimate exclusion of Indigenous peoples from the RCBB's *Final Report* went largely unremarked upon. As Gagnon put it, "there was no one to complain about it, except perhaps those involved. With the help of illiteracy, this omission caused little noise."[40] Indeed, although the press covered the release of Book I of the *Final Report*, few made any mention of the omission, despite early stories suggesting that it would recommend "a better deal" for Indigenous peoples.[41] The *Montreal Gazette* was the exception, running a fiercely critical story that argued that the commission had excluded Indigenous people on technical grounds, that it was glad to do so, and that while the report advised that the federal government should help preserve their cultures, the commission itself had "opted out" of helping.[42]

Indigenous peoples were not the only ones to contest the RCBB's terms of reference. Some of the "other ethnic groups" also protested the notion of biculturalism, arguing instead for multiculturalism. Though, at this time, there was no agreement on what "multiculturalism" did or should mean, the invocation of

38 Quoted in ibid., 157. Jaroslav-Bohdan Rudnyckyj, in a "Separate Statement" included in Book I (155–69), proposed that any language other than English or French used by 10 percent or more of the population of a given administrative district be granted the status of a regional language.

39 RCBB, *Preliminary Report*, 187; RCBB, *Final Report*, Book I, xxvi–xvii; see also Haque, *Multiculturalism*, 151–2, 117–19; Hugh Alan Cairns, Stuart Marshall Jamieson, and Kenneth M. Lysyk, *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies*, vol. 1, ed. Harry Bertram Hawthorn (Ottawa: Indian Affairs Branch, October 1966), https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2014/aadnc-aandc/R32-1267-1-1-eng.pdf.

40 Quoted in Laplante-Gagnon, *Panser le Canada*, 190 ("il ne se trouva personna pour s'en plaindre, exception faite peut-être des intéressés. L'analphabetisme aidant, cette omission fit peu de bruit").

41 See, for instance, "Bi-Bi Report Due Tuesday," *Times Colonist*, 4 December 1967, 1.

42 "Indians, Eskimos Excluded from Commission's Report," *Montreal Gazette*, 6 December 1967, 9.

this term by some groups often accompanied the demand for minority language rights and the right to be acknowledged as equal alongside the English and French as so-called founding "races."[43] In other words, some individuals and groups accepted the RCBB's division between "founding races" and "other ethnic groups" but sought to move from the latter to the former group, sitting alongside the English and the French (and perhaps, by extension, some other, more recently arrived, settler groups). As a Mr Belash argued before the RCBB, "Canadian Ukrainian citizens feel that they are too a founding race since to a large extent it was the Ukrainians that did the work of building the railways, and it was the Ukrainians who founded these settlements in the most inaccessible parts of western Canada. Our ancestors did not move into neatly ploughed prairie but opened up the backwoods."[44] Similarly, a brief from the Ukrainian Self-Reliance League of Canada argued that the "pioneers of Ukrainian origin who broke the virgin prairies, cleared the bush, built the roads, worked the mines, were unquestionable 'founders' in their own right."[45]

Others, however, sought to collapse the distinctions between "founding races" and "other ethnic groups." As Isydore Hlynka, of the Ukrainian Canadian Committee (UCC), argued, this distinction constituted "a division of Canadian citizens into two categories . . . first and second class citizens." He made it clear that the UCC rejected any attempt to "recognize or to imply the superiority of one group of Canadians over another, whether it be on the basis of their ethnic origin, their culture, or the so-called prior historic right, because this means a return to a colonial status from which it has taken so long to emerge."[46]

Although non-French, non-British ethnic groups were included in the terms of reference, their advocacy led the RCBB to take them more seriously than it otherwise might have. In 1966, the commissioners belatedly decided to devote a volume of their final report to the "contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada," a phrase they had not yet defined. Jean Burnet, a research associate employed to assist with the preparation of Book IV, cautions that the writers of the resulting volume were limited by the terms of reference, the statements affirming duality made in previous volumes of the report, and the commission's previous statements about the relationship between language, society, and culture.[47] In the end, the commissioners rejected the "multiculturalism" that some groups proposed and stuck with biculturalism, arguing in Book IV that "we must not overlook Canada's cultural diversity, keeping in mind that there are two dominant cultures, the French and the English."[48]

43 Haque, *Multiculturalism*, 94.
44 Quoted in RCBB, *Preliminary Report*, 219. This was probably Borislaw Nicholas Bilash, a prominent Ukrainian Canadian educator.
45 Quoted in Haque, *Multiculturalism*, 108.
46 Quoted in ibid., 57.
47 Jean Burnet, "Taking into Account the Other Ethnic Groups and the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism," in *Multiculturalism and Intergroup Relations*, ed. James S. Frideres (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 9–17.
48 RCBB, *Final Report*, Book IV, 12–13.

Even before Book IV, the "other ethnic groups" had been putting pressure on the government to move beyond biculturalism, but when it was released in 1969 and rejected these calls, they redoubled their efforts. Those who had been arguing against the hierarchy of the terms of reference soon adopted an additional strategy. In seeking to bolster their demands for cultural equality, they attempted to draw Indigenous peoples into their movement for multiculturalism, presenting them as yet another oppressed ethnic group in need of more recognition and rights. However, after some initial participation, Indigenous peoples did not continue with their advocacy for multiculturalism as they were engaged in a more pressing battle against the federal government's assimilationist White Paper.

THE WHITE PAPER AND BACKLASH

Throughout the 1960s, the public paid greater attention to the problems facing Indigenous peoples, due to both the broader context of decolonization movements globally as well as domestic events. Increasingly, many Canadians came to see these problems as stemming from the paternalistic (mis)management of Indigenous affairs by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (DIAND).[49] But DIAND had decided that the solution to Indigenous peoples' socio-economic problems, and their own reputational issues, was a revision of the Indian Act. Quite belatedly, the department also decided to consult with Indigenous representatives in eighteen cities across Canada.[50] However, as these consultations continued, civil servants and politicians debated the best course of action behind closed doors in Ottawa. In other words, instead of waiting for the consultation period to end before formulating policy changes, the government worked behind the scenes to revise policies without the involvement of Indigenous peoples.

Once Pierre Elliott Trudeau came to power in 1968, any future course of action had to align with his liberal vision and its focus on the individual.[51] So it was that, although tensions were running high between civil servants who were split on what was the best route to take, Trudeau's Cabinet approved as a policy objective the "full non-discriminatory participation" of Indigenous peoples in Canadian society.[52] The government's liberal definition of equality meant sameness, leading policy-makers to conceive of discrimination as having both

49 On this period, see Sally M. Weaver, *Making Canadian Indian Policy: The Hidden Agenda, 1968–70* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), ch. 1; J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Native-Newcomer Relations in Canada*, 4th ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 328–35; both of which should be read in conjunction with Sarah Nickel, "Reconsidering 1969: The *White Paper* and the Making of the Modern Indigenous Rights Movement," *Canadian Historical Review* 100, no. 2 (2019): 223–38; see also Reetta Humalajoki, "'A Program of Pacification'?: Federal Funding and Indigenous Political Organizing in Canada, 1968–71," *Canadian Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (2023): 494–518.

50 Weaver, *Making Canadian Indian Policy*, 49, 60–5.

51 On which, see ibid., 55; Paul Litt, *Trudeaumania* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), ch. 8; McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada*, ch. 5.

52 Weaver, *Making Canadian Indian Policy*, 114; see also 132.

"negative" and "positive" forms: negative discrimination involved the withholding of rights, for example, while positive discrimination consisted of any different or special treatment. Civil servants thus came to agree that the best solution was the elimination of so-called "special status" for Indigenous peoples – that is, the abolition of the Indian Act, treaties, and status, all things that were seen as "discriminatory."

DIAND therefore drew up a memorandum for Cabinet that outlined how this might be done. Notably, it did not include any plans for further consultation with Indigenous peoples nor, for that matter, with the provinces, which would assume responsibility for Indigenous peoples as private citizens. Eventually, Cabinet decided to propose this plan in a "white paper," an increasingly popular format that could be used either to announce completed policies or to provide a basis for further consultation with those individuals affected. The result was the *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy, 1969*.[53] Commonly referred to simply as the White Paper, this policy document was greeted with shock and dismay by Indigenous leaders. Little wonder – in April 1969, DIAND held the final consultation meeting, at which time Indigenous delegates, including George Manuel, told Minister of Indian Affairs Jean Chrétien that their priorities were the recognition of treaties and the obligations they created; the recognition of their rights; the reconciliation of past injustices, particularly those concerning hunting; and the resolution of outstanding lands claims. Further, they argued that these items had to be addressed before any meaningful consultation on amendments to the Indian Act could be undertaken.

Yet, merely two months later, they were flown to Ottawa where they heard of the government's intention not to amend the Indian Act but, rather, to abolish it along with all "special rights" – that is, "Aboriginal rights." First Nations delegates immediately called an emergency meeting, and the next day issued a press release under the aegis of the National Indian Brotherhood, a "tempered but firm repudiation of the White Paper."[54] It was signed by Walter Dieter, the organization's chief, David Courchene, the vice-president, and regional directors Philip Paul and Wilber Nadjiwan, who was also president of the Union of Ontario Indians, as well as by leaders of other regional and national organizations, including Peter Dubois, Andrew Deslisle, John Snow, Lawrence Stevenson, Jack Pete, and Matthew Bellegarde.[55]

The federal government initially dug in. In a speech given in Vancouver in August, Trudeau expressed his belief in the need for assimilation and his unwillingness to address past injustices through any other means. Treaties in modern society were "inconceivable," equality before the law was a "must," and

53 *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy, 1969* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1969), https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.700112/publication.html, cited in Weaver, *Making Canadian Indian Policy*, 166; see also 176.

54 Weaver, *Making Canadian Indian Policy*, 147–48, 169, 173.

55 National Indian Brotherhood, *Statement on the "New Indian Policy,"* 26 June 1969, 6–7, https://digital.scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/solr?query=ID%3A24989&start=0&rows=10&mode=view&pos=0&page=6.

Indigenous peoples "should become Canadians as all other Canadians."[56] Despite these arguments, criticism of the White Paper continued to mount. In November, Harold Cardinal, head of the Alberta Indian Association, published a book entitled *The Unjust Society*, and, the following year, the association drafted a position paper entitled "Citizens Plus."[57] This document was revised and expanded by the National Indian Brotherhood and submitted as their official response to the White Paper. Coming subsequently to be known as the "Red Paper," this document was presented to Trudeau in a meeting of the full Cabinet in June 1970. His response was impromptu, emotional, and sincere. Trudeau acknowledged that some of their statements had been "naïve," informed by "the prejudices of small 'l' liberals and white men at that who thought that equality meant the same laws for everybody." He ended by promising further dialogue, with no rush, and told the assembled Indigenous representatives that the government would not "force any solution on you, because we are not looking for any particular solution.[58] These remarks surprised and inspired the Indigenous leaders present and conversely dismayed senior DIAND officials, who still hoped the assimilationist policy could be implemented. The abandonment of the White Paper represented "the first major political victory for the Indian movement." [59]

Yet the fight was far from over. Other Indigenous organizations prepared their own responses to the White Paper, including the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs' *A Declaration of Indian Rights: The B.C. Position Paper* in 1970 and the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood's *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows* in 1971.[60] As Andrew Gemmell argues, Indigenous activists in Canada were not, at that time, part of the broader Leftist movements commonly associated with the 1960s.

56 Pierre Elliot Trudeau, "Remarks on Indian Aboriginal and Treaty Rights, Part of a Speech Given August 8th, 1969, in Vancouver, British Columbia," https://iportal.usask.ca/record/18228. See also the press coverage that recorded revealing unscripted comments: "Trudeau Gives Indians Categorical 'No,'" *The Province* [Vancouver], 11 August 1969, 7; "You Can Have Everything – If You Pay for It," *Vancouver Sun*, 14 August 1969, 6.

57 Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society: The Tragedy of Canada's Indians* (Edmonton, AB: M.G. Hurtig, 1969).

58 *Citizens Plus: A Presentation by the Indian Chiefs of Alberta to Right Honourable P.E. Trudeau, Prime Minister and Government of Canada, June 1970* (Edmonton, AB: Indian Association of Alberta, 1970); "Statement by the Prime Minister at a Meeting with the Indian Association of Alberta and the National Indian Brotherhood, Ottawa," 4 June 1970, https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2018/aanc-inac/R5-598-1970-eng.pdf.

59 Weaver, *Making Canadian Indian Policy*, 185–7.

60 Union of BC Indian Chiefs, *A Declaration of Indian Rights: The BC Indian Position Paper* (Vancouver: Union of BC Indian Chiefs, 17 November 1970), https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ubcic/pages/1440/attachments/original/1484861419/3_1970_11_17_DeclarationOfIndianRightsTheBCIndianPositionPaper_web_sm.pdf?1484861419; Indian Tribes of Manitoba, *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, 1971), https://scoinc.mb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/WahOurTom1971-wcag.pdf.

Rather, "their first-order concerns were . . . treaty rights, land claims, and Aboriginal title."[61] This focus stemmed from the fact that not only had these issues never yet been adequately addressed by the Canadian state but also that these rights had been directly threatened by the federal government's assimilationist policy. The White Paper all but ensured that Indigenous advocacy would remain focused on these foundational rights, disrupting further involvement with the RCBB and related advocacy.

MOBILIZING FOR MULTICULTURALISM

Just as Indigenous peoples were mobilizing to protest the White Paper, they were also being invited to participate in the nascent multiculturalism movement. Led by Ukrainian Canadians, it aimed to prompt the federal government to abandon the "biculturalism" of the RCBB and instead adopt multiculturalism. The movement's strategy of attempting to build a pan-ethnic "third force," including Indigenous peoples, can be clearly seen in the series of conferences that took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s, all of which undoubtedly contributed to the creation of the policy of multiculturalism.

One of the first such events was the Thinkers' Conference on Cultural Rights, which was held on 13–15 December 1968 and spearheaded by Paul Yuyzk, the first Canadian senator of Ukrainian descent and an outspoken advocate for multiculturalism. Illustrating this new strategy, Clive von Cardinal, who worked at the Research Centre for Canadian Ethnic Studies at the University of Calgary (himself of Anglo-German parentage), argued that the so-called "third element" (the non-British, non-French group) included "the autochthonous Indian and Eskimo populations as well as the millions of Canadians of various ethnic origins who are neither strictly French nor English in their cultural backgrounds."[62] But the conference proved that the inclusion of Indigenous peoples as part of the third element was an uneasy fit and also revealed that the priorities of many Euro-Canadian organizations lay with their own groups' struggles and that they were unaware of the different set of challenges facing Indigenous peoples.

Yuyzk provided an incredibly tone-deaf opening speech, providing as it did a survey of the so-called "third force" in Canada through a historical overview of immigration to Canada, with hardly any discussion of its effects on Indigenous peoples. Indeed, his opening line was a bare assertion of the standard settler colonial attitude towards Indigenous peoples: "Over a hundred years ago, the Fathers of Canadian Confederation thought mainly in terms of English French

61 Andrew Gemmell, "Defending Indigenous Rights against the Just Society," in *1968 in Canada: A Year and Its Legacies*, ed. Michael K. Hawes, Andrew C. Holman, and Christopher Kirkey (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2021), 170.

62 Clive H. Cardinal, "The Third Element as a Cultural Balance in the Canadian Identity," in *Canadian Cultural Rights Concern . . . A Conference to Study Canada's Multicultural Patterns in the Sixties: December 13, 14, 15, 1968–Toronto*, ed. Canadian Cultural Rights Committee (Ottawa: Canadian Cultural Rights Committee, [1968]), 102.

relations, although there was the Indian problem," he remarked, adding that now (in the 1960s) leaders had to think in "broader terms." He did not devote any significant attention to Indigenous peoples in the remainder of the speech, though in the few instances where he did mention them, they were presented as one ethnic group among many.[63]

Although Yuzyk's speech predated the release of the White Paper and subsequent protest, while the RCBB was underway, Indigenous protests were already making headlines in the mainstream media, such as a four-hundred-person march in Kenora.[64] It was perhaps this early activism that led Yuzyk to propose compromise as the way forward: "We are witnessing a more militant attitude on the part of our Indians, . . . who resent the paternalism of the establishment and desire control over their own affairs and a better deal as citizens." However, he positioned their struggles as analogous to those of other minority groups as he immediately shifted to speaking of how "various Canadian ethnic groups want a better share in all aspects of Canadian life." His cheery conclusion – that none of the issues facing Canada "was so formidable that it cannot be solved by compromise" – can also be read as objecting to the "militancy" that he had mentioned. A path of non-violent compromise leading to constitutional reform was, he suggested, "the Canadian Solution."[65]

But if Yuzyk's audience initially accepted this vision of Confederation as a beneficial compact for all, one that merely needed recasting, they were soon challenged by a different view. The sole Indigenous speaker at the conference was Omer Peters, then serving as president of both the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada and the Union of Ontario Indians.[66] He opened with a play on the RCBB's reference to English and French as the two founding races. "Indians and Eskimos," he said, can "claim to be unquestionably the two founding racial groups of the Canadian Nation." Despite this honorable position, they have faced hardship and discrimination "far beyond that of any other ethnic group in the Canadian mosaic of people." Peters thus suggested that Indigenous peoples had an incontrovertible claim on the Canadian nation, that they were "Canada's First Citizens," and that, as such, they simply could not be considered just another ethnic group. He then provided a series of stark statistics about economic status, health, housing, education, and employment and closed with four suggestions for how current injustices could be eliminated. None of these dealt with so-called cultural rights (the focus of the conference) but instead focused on treaty rights and attaining increased autonomy, in part by being freed from the bureaucracy of DIAND.[67]

63 Paul Yuzyk, "The Emerging New Force in the Emerging New Canada," in Canadian Cultural Rights Committee, *Canadian Cultural Rights Concern*, 10.

64 Haque, *Multiculturalism*, 126; Scott Rutherford, *Canada's Other Red Scare: Indigenous Protest and Colonial Encounters during the Global Sixties* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020).

65 Yuzyk, "Emerging New Force," 12.

66 Omer Peters, "Canada's Indians and Eskimos and Human Rights," in Canadian Cultural Rights Committee, *Canadian Cultural Rights Concern*, 40.

67 Peters, "Canada's Indians," 32–40.

Non-Indigenous participants dealt in different ways with the growing realization that Indigenous concerns differed from their own, as the structure and substance of their discussions and recommendations make clear. Some singled them out for separate treatment, others lumped them in as one among many, while still others suggested that Indigenous peoples ought to form a united front for the purposes of lobbying.[68] This tension, between the proposal that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples present a united front and the growing recognition that their struggles were different, persisted until the end of the conference. When the convenors presented their resolutions, they separated (European) cultural groups and Indigenous peoples.[69] This was the last conference to feature Indigenous representatives: the release of the White Paper the following year would draw them into a struggle against its assimilatory proposals, ending this nascent attempt at alliance.

A second conference, entitled Canada: Multicultural, was initiated by students at the University of Toronto and held on 7–8 August 1970. Here again, organizers had invited one representative from an Indigenous organization, Tobasonakwut Kinew, known then as Peter Kelly, of the Union of Ontario Indians.[70] Although Kinew did not attend, there were a handful of references to Indigenous peoples throughout the conference. For instance, Member of Parliament Robert Stanbury closed his speech by arguing that each of the cultural groups were Canadian and "its fruits belong to us all" and that the result of this flourishing diversity was the construction of a singular "Canadian character." He then asked, rhetorically: "Is Shevchenko the exclusive property of Ukrainians or does he belong to the world? Is Pauline Johnson's poetry a legacy of just the Indian or the Canadian? Does not Monique Leyrac evoke in Toronto as much as in Montreal a communal sense of *joie-de-vivre*?" Here, through the invocation of a Mohawk poet, Indigenous arts and culture were positioned as both Indigenous and Canadian, and Indigenous peoples were presented as simply another Canadian cultural group, just like Ukrainian Canadians or French Canadians.[71]

In sum, non-Indigenous multiculturalism advocates occasionally considered Indigenous peoples in the broader plans they were making. However, in so doing, they implicitly positioned them as merely one cultural group among many. Both the arguments and possessive language used reinforced this conclusion, and there were no Indigenous representatives present to push back against it, nor did any of the non-Indigenous participants object. Although some non-Indigenous attendees were aware of the similarities between their goals and those of Indigenous peoples when it came to language and culture, there was a profound ignorance of the very real differences.

A third conference was held shortly afterwards. Organized by a "multi-ethnic committee of Edmonton" and entitled Multiculturalism for Canada, this event

68 Canadian Cultural Rights Committee, *Canadian Cultural Rights Concern*, 50–31.
69 Ibid, n.p. ("Resolutions") and n.p. ("Resolutions regarding Indians and Eskimos").
70 See "Program," in *Canada: Multicultural* (Toronto: Citizenship Branch, Department of Provincial Secretary and Citizenship, Government of Ontario, [1970?]), iv.
71 Robert Stanbury, "The Nature of Citizenship in a Multicultural Society," in *Canada: Multicultural*, 9; "Question Period – Number 1," *Canada: Multicultural*, 10.

was held at the University of Alberta on 28–29 August 1970. It opened with Yuzyk giving the same speech he had at the 1968 Thinkers' Conference, with some additional concluding remarks added, thus setting the settler tone for the remainder of the conference. From the published proceedings, it appears that the conveners of this conference invited Indigenous participants, though none attended.[72] Perhaps as a result, not one of the final recommendations specifically referred to Indigenous peoples. However, due perhaps to the individual speakers chosen or to ongoing media coverage in the wake of the disastrous White Paper, some of the passing references to Indigenous peoples during this conference – particularly, those on the greater discrimination they faced – served to underscore how their situation was in fact different.[73]

The one prominent exception to the relative silence on Indigenous peoples was a speech given by Abraham J. Arnold of the Canadian Jewish Congress, who criticized the organizers for not foregrounding Indigenous peoples and the problems they faced:

> When considering the position of the various ethnic or cultural groups in Canada I believe that we must begin with the native peoples. This seminar has been reminded of the absence of proper representation from this group. It is not enough to say that they were invited. As Canadians we must all be concerned with the problems of the native peoples. The tendency to separate them from us has existed for far too long. Whenever we are reminded about the native peoples we express great sympathy for their position but the preponderant tendency is still to forget or overlook them. This is exactly what the B. and B. Commission did in relegating them to a footnote in Book IV. . . . In my view the situation of the native peoples is the priority problem of inter-group relations in Canada today. All criticisms or complaints of other minority groups take second place to the difficulties of the native peoples. Nevertheless in this situation we again seem to be following the example of the B. and B. Commission of which we are so strongly critical in other respects.[74]

However, these were also his only remarks on the subject, except in his conclusion when he informed attendees that there would be Indigenous participants at the upcoming Manitoba Mosaic Congress. Unfortunately, this did not prove to be the case.

The Manitoba Mosaic Congress was organized and partly funded by the Dominion-Provincial Cultural Relations Secretariat of the Manitoba provincial government, with additional funding provided by the federal government. It was held in Winnipeg on 13–17 October 1970 with the express purpose of

72 One participant from the IEAC, Peggy Robbins, attended. See "Conference Participants," in *Multiculturalism for Canada: Report of a Conference Held at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, August 28—29, 1970* ([Edmonton?]: s.n., [1970?]), 78.

73 See, for instance, Keith Henders, "Present Human Rights Legislation in the Province of Alberta and Its Implementation," in *Multiculturalism for Canada*, 60–3.

74 A.J. Arnold, "How Far Do We Go with Multi-Culturalism?" in *Multiculturalism for Canada*, 24–5. Arnold was the executive director of the Canadian Jewish Congress's Western Division.

discussing Book IV of the RCBB's *Final Report*.[75] Indigenous peoples were not the subject of much discussion throughout the event, despite the obvious relevance of many of the issues discussed, such as non-English French bilingualism. Indeed, the primary division within the conference was between those people, like keynote speaker Watson Kirkconnell, who wanted to preserve cultural heritage and the ethnic elites who wanted to promote cultural and linguistic rights (fully half of the resolutions passed during the conference were concerned with language). However, Indigenous peoples were not explicitly named in any of the resolutions. One reason for this is perhaps due to the conference's structure. The planners made it clear that it was "not the purpose of Congress to deal with group or individual problems but the general issue of multiculturalism and pluralism."[76] Further, they had not secured any Indigenous representatives to speak but only high-ranking civil servants: Arthur Laing, minister of DIAND, and A.G. Leslie, the superintendent.[77]

Laing's speech was exceptionally revisionist. In it, he argued that "the essential respect of each other's natural pride in the collective past and in separate cultures and traditions is a part of Canada's heritage." He continued: "It is essential for Indian people to retain their cultural heritage and we are fortunate in Canada to live in a land which for many years has been committed to a blending of so many kinds of people rather than to a melting of the many into one cultural pattern." Yet he also argued that Indigenous cultures had "decay[ed]," though he did not list any reasons. Laing thus completely erased the Canadian government's century-long attempt to assimilate Indigenous peoples and instead wrote a new history in which not only had Canada been pluralist for "many years," but the federal government had also been the sole party responsible for preserving and rebuilding Indigenous cultures in Canada, which had inexplicably been diminished over time to the point where intervention was necessary. In fact, he later shifted the blame onto "many of the bands" who had "allowed this part of their heritage [the arts] to lapse." As for the relationship between Indigenous peoples and cultural pluralism, Laing employed the tapestry metaphor, remarking that the federal government was "preserving the bright colours of tapestry which the Indian and Eskimo cultures have contributed." However,

75 "Groundwork Laid for Cultural Mosaic Meet," 3 April 1970, https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/archives/1970/04/1970-04-03-groundwork_laid_for_cultural_mosaic_meet.pdf.

76 *Report of the Manitoba Mosaic, October 13–17, 1970* (Winnipeg: n.pub., n.d.), 17. On Watson Kirkconnell, see Daniel R. Meister, "Anglo-Canadian Futurities: Watson Kirkconnell, Scientific Racism, and Cultural Pluralism in Interwar Canada," *Settler Colonial Studies* 10, no. 2 (2020): 234–56; Daniel R. Meister, *The Racial Mosaic: A Pre-History of Canadian Multiculturalism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021); Daniel R. Meister, "Whiteness in Canada: History, Archives, Historiography," *Canadian Historical Review* 105, no. 1 (2024): 74–95.

77 So it was that Arnold repeated his criticism that it was "not enough to say that they were invited." A.J. Arnold, "How Far Do We Go with Multi-Culturalism?" in *Report of the Manitoba Mosaic*, 90. The "List of Participants" reveals that Ahab Spence and Isaac Beaulieu, two influential members of the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, attended but did not give speeches (242–72).

much like the folk-culture focus of cultural pluralism (which was ascendant in Canadian society in the 1930s and increasingly adopted by the federal government in the 1940s), DIAND largely concentrated on encouraging the production of art (in part because of its economic potential), though Laing also mentioned a plan to publish a pictorial history of Indigenous peoples for use in public schools.[78]

In summary, at the Manitoba Mosaic Congress, some participants did not consider Indigenous groups; others saw only a limited space for them in pluralist programs; and DIAND representatives declared their intention to include Indigenous peoples in the tapestry of the future but were disingenuous about the past, specifically the federal government's assault on Indigenous languages and cultures. No clear consensus had emerged. However, some trends did develop across this series of conferences. Organizers initially made efforts to include Indigenous representatives. When those representatives were present, they pushed back against the argument that Indigenous peoples were merely one cultural group among many and that their concerns were analogous to those of European Canadian minority groups. The participants reacted in mixed ways to this message: some resisted, while others displayed sympathy. The conference organizers had difficulties in securing attendance from Indigenous groups, the leadership of which was often in flux during this period and whose members were otherwise focused on combatting the assimilatory proposals of the White Paper. As such, subsequent conferences failed to include Indigenous representatives, and, eventually, organizers instead sought out DIAND speakers who brought with them an entirely different, and inaccurate, message.

MULTICULTURALISM FROM ABOVE

Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau did not come to office in 1968 intending to enact a policy of multiculturalism. Rather, the original aims of his cultural policy in 1969 hewed closely to the vision of the RCBB, albeit with some inclusion of Indigenous peoples: "To stimulate the two founding cultures and to integrate the original contribution of the native peoples and New Canadians, [and] to develop and promote bilingualism."[79] Of course, when Book IV was publicly released in April 1970, the federal government had to craft an official response. And, since bilingualism had been enshrined with the passage of the 1969 Official Languages Act, the federal government's response to questions concerning official cultures would have to be placed in a bilingual framework.

The government's approach to crafting a policy response to Book IV resembles in several respects the processes that led to the White Paper. Perhaps most notably (given his treatment in the literature on multiculturalism), Trudeau did not actually spearhead the effort but, rather, recognizing its importance, assigned the task to two Cabinet ministers: Gérard Pelletier, who was secretary

78 Meister, *Racial Mosaic*; Arthur Laing, "Cultural Identity of the Indian and Eskimo People," in *Report of the Manitoba Mosaic*, 116–18.

79 Quoted in Ryan Edwardson, *Canadian Content: Culture and the Quest for Nationhood* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 195

of state, and Robert Stanbury, a minister without a portfolio who was responsible for citizenship.[80] Additionally, the government remained publicly committed to consultation as befitting Trudeau's stated commitment to participatory democracy. In April 1970, Stanbury suggested a series of consultations with ethnic groups on Book IV and, over the following year, he and Pelletier met privately with ethnic leaders, organized a series of public meetings on Book IV, and attended conferences, including those described above. In the meantime, the Citizenship Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State formed its own task force to consult ethnic groups about the government's citizenship objectives (it also provided funding for most of the aforementioned conferences).

On 13 July 1971, Pelletier and Stanbury submitted to the Cabinet Committee on Science, Culture, and Information their jointly signed memorandum on the federal government's response to Book IV, which proposed a policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework."[81] The White Paper had ignored Indigenous peoples' wishes as expressed during the consultation period and had in fact advocated something antithetical. However, this memo outlining the policy of multiculturalism showed consideration of the feedback received from ethnocultural communities, their organizations, and their leaders and, as such, represented a compromise between their demands and the conclusion of Book IV, which rejected calls for multiculturalism. For example, in an appendix, the memo listed all the consultation efforts undertaken, provided an analysis of the issues as discussed in the "ethnic press," and even listed some points of contention raised throughout the period of consultation. It also reproduced in full the resolutions passed by the "Manitoba Mosaic Congress."[82]

The federal government's aversion to group rights, however, had not dissipated. Even the people with the power to "break the nation" were not granted such rights by the state: demands for French language rights resulted in an Official Languages Act, which notably "recognized the language rights of the individual as opposed to the collectivity," stemming from Trudeau's vision for the country in which French Canadians would feel welcome anywhere they went in Canada, not just in Quebec.[83] When it came to demands for group rights from those perceived as having less political power, the government would again respond in the form of individual rights. Although it promised support to all cultures, the measures that the federal government proposed largely centred on individuals: removing barriers that "people of ethnic origin" faced to participating in

80 On the two ministers, see Bernard Ostry, *The Cultural Connection: An Essay on Culture and Government Policy in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1978), 115; Blanding, "Re-Branding Canada," 234–5.

81 Although signed by the two cabinet ministers, the memorandum had been developed and written by staff at the Citizenship Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State.

82 "Memorandum to Cabinet – Canada: The Multicultural Society," 13 July 1971, Cabinet Document no. 864–71, Appendix B, 26–9, file 864/71, vol. 6394, RG2, LAC.

83 Weaver, *Making Canadian Indian Policy*, 55.

society, promoting interchanges between cultural groups, and assisting immigrants to learn at least one official language.[84]

When they transformed this policy recommendation into a speech for Trudeau to give, the speech writers made the emphasis on individual rights much more explicit: "The individual's freedom would be hampered if he were locked for life within a particular cultural compartment by the accident of birth or language." The speech's overall thrust was that the policy ensured that individuals had the ability to choose to maintain their ethnic identity or not. The ability to make this choice was what Trudeau called the "cultural freedom of Canadians."[85] As the conclusion put it, multiculturalism was "basically the conscious support of individual freedom of choice. We are free to be ourselves."[86] Those who drafted the policy explicitly sidestepped one contentious issue altogether: the question of Indigenous peoples' place in Canadian society. The authors of the memo merely echoed the RCBB, stating: "The terms of reference of the Royal Commission made no mention of Indians and Eskimos. . . . For this reason, they are excluded from this proposal."[87] This was seemingly uncontroversial as there is no evidence to suggest that this decision was contested in Cabinet when the proposal for a policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework" was discussed.[88]

Despite this absence of discussion, it is clear that the same underlying beliefs that had led to the White Paper shaped the crafting of the policy of multiculturalism. The White Paper operated from the assumption that Indigenous peoples would be happy to become Canadian citizens and that the loss of at least some languages and cultures was inevitable. So too did the federal government assume that some ethnic groups' cultures and languages would fade away.[89] The subsequent policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework therefore emphasized that the government would be concerned with supporting only the "viable cultures of Canada." If cultural groups wanted federal assistance, they had to have "demonstrated a desire and effort to continue to develop, a capacity to grow and contribute to Canada, as well as a clear need for assistance."[90] The policy-

84 See "Summary," in "Memorandum to Cabinet – Canada: The Multicultural Society," 13 July 1971, n.p. The strange implication that some people had no "ethnic origin" was excised from the resulting speech and statement, which stated unequivocally that "everyone . . . has an 'ethnic' background." *House of Commons Debates*, 8 October 1971, 8580.

85 *House of Commons Debates*, 8 October 1971, 8545 ("hampered"), 8581.

86 *House of Commons Debates*, 8 October 1971, 8545 ("cultural freedom"), 8546 ("be ourselves").

87 "Memorandum to Cabinet – Canada: The Multicultural Society, Summary," 2.

88 "Cabinet Conclusions," 23 September 1971, 6–8, vol. 63, RG2 A-5-a, LAC, http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.redirect?app=cabcon&id=3041&lang=eng.

89 See Robert Stanbury, "Notes for Remarks to the International Symposium on Languages and Cultures in Multi-Ethnic Society," 22 May 1971, reprinted in *Sounds Canadian: Languages and Cultures in Multi-Ethnic Society*, ed. Paul Migus (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates for the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association, 1975), 232.

90 "Memorandum to Cabinet – Canada: The Multicultural Society, Summary," n.p. ("viable"); "Record of Cabinet Decision," 29 September 1971, 1 ("demonstrated"; this document is included with "Memorandum to Cabinet – Canada: The Multicultural Society").

makers therefore assumed that the gradual disappearance of some cultures was inevitable and that, in part, this would be due to individuals choosing not to maintain their ethnic identities. Given the backlash that the White Paper had generated, however, the government was at pains to denounce any assimilatory intentions.[91]

Despite the exclusion of Indigenous peoples from the July 1971 memorandum, after it was transformed into a policy announcement several months later, it included Indigenous peoples. Trudeau's speech to the House of Commons on 8 October 1971 declared: "It was the view of the royal commission, shared by the government and, I am sure, by all Canadians, that there cannot be one cultural policy for Canadians of British and French origin, another for the original peoples[,] and yet a third for all others."[92] When discussing the practical implications of the policy, however, he positioned Indigenous peoples as simply another cultural group, though he also suggested that multiculturalism was primarily directed at other cultural groups that had not yet received substantial government funding (as had Canadians of English, French, or Indigenous descent).[93] Yet if they were not intended to be the primary beneficiaries, politicians affirmed that Indigenous peoples were to be included in the policy. In an interview given after the announcement, Pelletier, who had formerly signed off on a memo that explicitly excluded Indigenous peoples from consideration, now stated outright that, in the policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework, "Indians and Eskimos would qualify as one of the cultural minorities."[94] So it was that, although the policy had been crafted without any consideration of Indigenous peoples, the government had rather awkwardly included them at the last minute.

Perhaps given the attention that had recently been generated by the disastrous White Paper, early sceptics pointed to the government's failures in Indigenous policy to cast doubt on how effective the policy of multiculturalism would be.[95] But any consideration of the place occupied by Indigenous peoples quickly disappeared as Trudeau headed to Manitoba to promote multiculturalism. In the announcement and elaboration of the policy he made only a day later to the Ukrainian Canadian community in western Canada, who had been the most vocal advocates of such a policy, the prime minister echoed the settler colonial logic of their claim to "founding race" status. Delivering his speech to the UCC, Trudeau opened by praising the Ukrainians' role in the colonization of western Canada, remarking that viewing Winnipeg from the air as he arrived from Ottawa led him to wish that the "earliest settlers could return and see how their dreams have come true a thousandfold."[96]

91 See "Press Conference Prior to Conference Opening," in *Canada: Multicultural*, 4–5; "Assimilation Idea Rejected by Pelletier," *Leader Post* [Regina], 14 October 1970, 9; *Report of Manitoba Mosaic*, 229; Stanbury, "Notes for Remarks," 232.
92 *House of Commons Debates*, 8 October 1971, 8545.
93 *House of Commons Debates*, 8 October 1971, 8545–6.
94 Moore, "Ottawa to Help Minorities Learn Languages," 14.
95 *House of Commons Debates*, 8 October 1971, 8546–7.
96 Handwritten addition to "Notes for Remarks by the Prime Minister to the Ukrainian-Canadian Congress, Winnipeg, Manitoba," 9 October 1971, folder 3, vol. 66, Pierre Elliott Trudeau Fonds, O11, MG26, LAC.

CONCLUSION

Writing in 2017, historian Joan Sangster argued that scholars have perhaps been too quick to dismiss past political alliances between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples. Though they may have embodied contradictory motivations, she argues, such alliances still require intensive historical scrutiny that will result in a more complex narrative.[97] In this case, although the "other ethnic groups" may have struggled to fully understand the challenges facing Indigenous peoples and the ways in which their situations were different, their desire to build an alliance and their willingness to fight for additional rights for Indigenous peoples should not be ignored.

Canadian leaders of non-British, non-French, European descent, like Paul Yuzyk, Jaroslav-Bohdan Rudnyckyj, and Clive von Cardinal, were doubtless working first to obtain recognition and additional rights, including linguistic ones, for their own communities. However, in the fight to obtain these rights, some (like Cardinal) actively tried to build bridges with Indigenous peoples, some of whom (like Omer Peters) were willing to engage in the effort. Although the first step was for Indigenous leaders like Peters to educate non-Indigenous audiences on the challenges facing Indigenous peoples, and how they differed from ethnic minorities, this nevertheless represented a multicultural moment, a *kairos* moment in which a more durable political alliance could have been formed. However, the release of the White Paper in 1969 slammed shut this narrowly cracked window: Indigenous leadership necessarily diverted from engaging with the RCBB to combatting this direct threat to "Aboriginal" and treaty rights.

The policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework announced by Trudeau in 1971 was a far cry from what the "other ethnic groups" had promoted: in short, the policy was a passive revolution. Historian Ian McKay, when applying this Gramscian concept to Canadian history, explains that a passive revolution refers to a means of state maintenance by which changes are brought about from the top down and are designed to incorporate some subaltern demands in order to avoid more radical measures.[98] This strategy can be seen in how the RCBB and the federal government handled the challenges from Indigenous peoples and the representatives of "other ethnic groups."

Rather than take seriously the objections that Indigenous peoples like John Curotte, Kahn-Tineta Horn, Stella Kinoshameg, Ethel Brant Monture, and others raised to the RCBB's terms of reference, the RCBB chose instead to sidestep them. Instead of exploring the possibility of a multicultural and multilingual state, like the one proposed by the Ukrainian Canadian and Indigenous activists, the Trudeau government appropriated the term and placed multiculturalism within a narrow, colonial, English French bilingual framework. Instead of a substantive commitment to funding various ethnocultural groups, the

97 Joan Sangster, "Confronting Our Colonial Past: Reassessing Political Alliances over Canada's Twentieth Century," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 28, no. 1 (2017): 2.

98 Ian G. McKay, "The Canadian Passive Revolution, 1840–1950," *Capital & Class* 34, no. 3 (2010): 363–4.

government provided an extremely modest budget while emphasizing "self-help." Instead of concrete legislation, the government merely announced a policy, the direction of which would largely fall to the Citizenship Branch, a small section of the Department of the Secretary of State. The Citizenship Branch, in turn, arguably rebranded existing efforts instead of crafting an entirely new program.[99] And even though multiculturalism had not yet been fully defined by its proponents, the federal government's co-opting of the term served to delimit its possibilities.[100] The policy's funding, more easily attainable by centralized, well-organized ethnic groups with experience writing grant applications, also served to exacerbate divisions between ethnic groups. Meanwhile, attempts to reorient the policy in order to address discrimination and assist groups who were racialized as non-white were met with fierce opposition by some of the groups that first advocated for the creation of the policy. The *kairos* moment had passed, the policy window was firmly closed and locked, and syncretic multiculturalism remained in a realm of freedom.[101]

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99 This argument was first made in Freda Hawkins, *Critical Years in Immigration: Canada and Australia Compared* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 217–28, and, later, in more detail, in Blanding, "Re-Branding Canada."

100 Although the term was scarcely defined in speeches on the subject, Trudeau's explanations nevertheless set the terms of discussion for years to come. Requests for an explanation of the policy were commonly met with copies of Trudeau's statement to the House of Commons (sometimes adding a copy of his remarks to the Ukrainian Canadian Committee, which did not actually use the term "multiculturalism"). See, for instance, letter from Ivan L. Head to Bob [Robert H. Barron], 3 November 1971, p. 1, folder 13, vol. 143, O19, MG26, LAC; see also "Multiculturalism – General (Sept. '71 – Jan. '73)," file 328–2, part 1, vol. 87–88/038, box 59, RG6, LAC.

101 On opposition, see Daniel R. Meister, "Ethnicity to Equity? Official Multiculturalism and Racial Discrimination in Canada, 1971–79," *Canadian Studies* 95 (2023): 43–72. On the realm of freedom, see Ian McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals: Rethinking Canada's Left History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005), ch. 1.

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