

## Chinese to fight denial of refugee permits, (1986, August 20). *The Globe and Mail*

A4 THE GLOBE AND MAIL, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20, 1986

NATIONAL

# Chinese to fight denial of refugee permits

By GRAHAM FRASER  
The Globe and Mail

OTTAWA

Canada is not giving Chinese applicants for refugee status the same benefits that 155 Tamil castaways have received, says a Toronto immigration lawyer who is launching a test case on their behalf.

Barbara Jackman will appear on Monday before Federal Court Judge James Jerome to fight a test case on behalf of Chinese citizens who have been refused ministerial permits to stay in Canada because they have permits to be in the South American country of Guyana.

Canada's decision to grant ministerial permits to the 155 Tamils, despite their refugee status in West Germany, contradicts

decisions taken earlier this summer about refugees from the People's Republic of China, Ms Jackman said.

A case in point is Cham Kee Young, who stopped off in Toronto on July 11 and did not go on to Guyana, where he had been accepted. However, because he had a resident's permit for Guyana, he was refused a ministerial permit in Canada.

"We will be asking the court to order a minister's permit," Ms Jackman said yesterday. "We will also be asking for a decision saying that not to grant the permit was wrong in law."

Last week, Minister of Employment and Immigration Benoit Bouchard said it did not matter whether the 155 Tamils had residence in West Germany before coming to Canada.

However, the Immigration Department has not taken the same approach in the case of Cham Kee Young and several hundred other applicants from the People's Republic of China.

Ms Jackman says nearly 200 Chinese refugees came forward to apply for refugee status on May 21, when then immigration minister Walter McLean identified the countries to which Canada would not deport people.

However, while the Sri Lankans were given permits although they had come from Germany, the Chinese — many of whom had come from Guyana — were not given permits.

"With the Chinese, they (the Immigration Department) just said no," Ms Jackman

said. "Their officials have said they can't (stay in Canada)."

She said the Chinese were able to leave China with permits allowing them to enter Guyana, but encountered racism and violence in that country.

A spokesman for External Affairs Minister Joe Clark said yesterday that two years ago, Canada made a proposal to the executive committee of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, underlining the need for better control of the irregular movements of refugees.

"The basic premise is that countries of first arrival should make every effort to find long-term solutions . . .," the official said. "Refugees shopping around for the best place to end up is not a good solution."

## Lifeboat people have no links to Tamil militants, Ottawa says

Canadian Press and Staff

Canadian authorities, acting on West German reports, say there are no links between the 155 Sri Lankans rescued off the Newfoundland coast last week and suspected Tamil militants living in West Germany.

Junior Immigration Minister Gerry Weiner told a news conference in Ottawa yesterday that preliminary security checks show no connection between the Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lankan refugees.

Speaking in French, Mr. Weiner said: "We now have really a preliminary confirmation that none of these 155 fall into that category, that they are all refugees, that they are all ordinary citizens . . . but we will continue to follow that with a fuller investigation and I will advise Canadians if there are other details."

Earlier yesterday, Peter Moeller, chief of special investigations in the West German port city of Bremen, said police and prosecutors were investigating 31 Tamils in West Germany suspected of ties to rebels who are fighting for an independent Tamil state in Sri Lanka, the island nation off India.

Radio Bremen reported on Monday that the Sri Lankan refugees, who left West Germany on July 28 and were smuggled to Canada, belong to the Tamil Tigers, one of five major rebel separatist groups fighting in Sri Lanka.

Asked about the radio report, Mr. Moeller said: "I cannot confirm it."

Mr. Moeller said the 31 Tamils were detained after police acting on a tip raided a Bremen apartment July 29.

He said the Tamils were demanding money from one of the two Tamils who have since admitted involvement in organizing the voyage to Canada. After identity checks, the 31 were released a short time later.

Letters found in the apartment bore the emblem of a group Mr. Moeller identified as the Tamil Tigers, but he added that authorities had no proof that the Tamils were members of a rebel group.

"The Tamil we freed told us he had been held there for three days and was being pressured psychologically, not physically, to pay money to an organization," he said.

Mr. Moeller, who would not identify the man, said Bremen police went to the apartment after Hamburg police tipped them off that a man was being held there against his will.

Previously, Hamburg police said that irate Tamils

who were left behind had informed them about the clandestine operation to Canada, which originated at Brake, a West German port city.

Police indicated earlier that the 155 castaways were victims of an unscrupulous smuggling ring that profited from their fears of being deported to Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankans who arrived in Canada last week have had their refugee status put on hold until a new refugee determination system is put in place, some time next year.

Even before the West German reports were made public, a Canadian task force was set up to investigate the backgrounds of the Tamil castaways with the help of police in other countries.

Sri Skandarajah, a spokesman for the Toronto branch of the Tamil Eelam Society, said he had "absolutely no knowledge of any such connection" between the refugees and the Tamil Tigers.

And Selva Ponnuchamy, president of the Eelam Tamil Association of Quebec, denied any connection between the refugees and the guerrilla group. "Why would they come here? The Tigers are freedom fighters in Sri Lanka. They don't fight anywhere outside of the borders of Sri Lanka."

Mr. Ponnuchamy said the refugees lived for two years in West Germany, but authorities took no action.

Meanwhile, a newly-ormed association of Sinhalese Sri Lankans in Montreal claims the 155 Tamil castaways will follow in the footsteps of other Tamil refugees and send money home to finance terrorist activities. But the head of the association acknowledges he has no proof to back up the accusation.

Eric Perera, chairman of the 200-member Quebec Association for a United Sri Lanka, said Canada "was taken in by these people. The usual way of operating is to find a job and then send money back home, which is then used for terrorist activities. These people are economic refugees, not politically persecuted people."

But he said he had no proof the Tamils in Montreal were involved in terrorist activities.

Katherasan Rajalingam, a member of the Montreal Tamil Association, yesterday vehemently denied the accusations of the Sinhalese. "Even the Canadian Ambassador to Sri Lanka wrote to (External Affairs minister) Joe Clark about the atrocities committed against our people," he said. "The Sinhalese are the terrorists whose policy it is to kill women and children."



Associated Press

Survivors of violence in Sri Lanka: travel agencies place advertisements in newspapers offering their services.

## Travel agencies cashing in on Sri Lanka's ethnic strife

Reuter  
COLOMBO

Travel agencies in Sri Lanka are cashing in on the country's ethnic strife by promising Tamils fleeing the violence or simply looking for a better life the chance to seek asylum abroad at reasonable prices.

Tamil journalists said the fees range from the equivalent of \$500 Canadian to as much as \$5,000, depending on destination and extra services provided such as passports or visas. The services sometimes include false documents, although it is easy for Sri Lankans to obtain passports legally.

Some agencies even place newspaper advertisements in the separatist rebel stronghold of Jaffna, 320 kilometres north of Colombo, promising easy, quick trips to Germany. The 155 Tamil refugees who were pulled from lifeboats off the New-

foundland coast on Aug. 11 had sought asylum in West Germany.

The ads in Sri Lanka "don't outrightly say they are offering asylum and a safe haven for the Tamils, but their specific destinations are countries in Europe where most Tamils are seeking refugee status," a senior editor of a Jaffna tabloid said.

A typical ad might say: "Travel arrangements to Germany, France and Denmark — people who want to go to Germany, arrangements straight away."

"Once the people go to the travel office, they would make arrangements for something else," the journalist added.

Another senior journalist at a Tamil paper in Colombo said the agencies operate legally, and there is nothing irregular about printing the ads.