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MULTI-CULTURALISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Conference Organized by The Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies

with the support of the

York University 50th Anniversary Committee

September 24- 25, 2009

Senate Chamber, Glendon Campus
(2275 Bayview Avenue)

Conference Chairs:

Daniel Drache, Associate Director, Robarts Centre

Seth Feldman, Director, Robarts Centre

Multiculturalism, once the crumb thrown to those not born into one of the “founding peoples,” has evolved into a cornerstone of what it means to be Canadian. It is assumed to be held together by a curiosity about the other and an exposure to many different ways of living and knowing. There is much research challenging this assumption and many immigrant communities question the policy’s shortcomings. Today, Multiculturalism hangs in the balance.

To address these changes and their future implications, “Multiculturalism and its Discontents,” is designed as a public event featuring a wide selection of Canada’s best known social commentators, journalists, pollsters, and scholars. They will, in a set of lively, open discussions address multi-culturalism’s legal and social limitations, its flashpoints, its successes, failures, as well as the unprecedented creativity of the many diasporas housed in Canada.

50

Day One – Thursday September 24, 2009

9:00 - 10:30

Panel 1. Ask a Pollster: Is Multiculturalism Working as Part of our Value System?

Chair: Daniel Drache, Associate Director, Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, York University

Michael Adams, Founder of Environics Research Group

10:30 - 10:45 Break

10:45-12:15

Panel 2. Ask a Constitutional Expert: Does Reasonable Accommodation Succeed in Protecting Tolerance and Diversity?

Chair: Seth Feldman, Director, Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, York University

Jamie Cameron, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University

Barbara Jackman, Barbara Jackman Associates

David Cameron, Political Science, University of Toronto

12:15 – 1:30 Lunch

1:30-3:00

Panel 3. Ask an Historian: Has Canada's Signature Program Really Worked During the Last Twenty Years?

Chair: Colin Coates, Canada Research Chair, Canadian Studies, Glendon, York University

Franca Iacovetta, Department of History, University of Toronto

Julia Lalonde, Research Officer, Faculty of Education, York University

Roberto Perin, Department of History, York University

3:00 – 3:15 Break

3:15-4:45

Panel 4. Ask an African-Canadian Scholar: What Have We Learned about the Pitfalls and Success of Multiculturalism?

Chair: Warren Crichlow, Faculty of Education, York University

Rinaldo Walcott, Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

George Elliot Clarke, Department of English, University of Toronto

Carl James, Director, York Centre for Education and Community, York University

Day Two – Friday September 25, 2009

9:00-10:30

Panel 5. Ask a Political Scientist: Is the Multicultural Vision and Policy Broken?

Chair: Robert Latham, Director, York Centre for International and Security Studies, York University

Ken McRoberts, Principal, Glendon College, York University

Jules Duchastel, Department of Sociology, University of Quebec at Montreal

Daniel Salée, Principal, School of Community and Public Affairs, Concordia University

10:30 – 10:45 Break

10:45-12:15

Panel 6. Ask a Researcher: Is Diversity a Success on the Mean Streets of Toronto?

Chair: Roger Keil, Director, City Institute at York University

Grace Galabuzi, Department of Politics and Public Administration, Ryerson University

Jeffrey Reitz, Professor of Ethnic, Immigration and Pluralism Studies, Centre for International Studies, University of Toronto

Lunch 12:30-1:30

1:30-3:00

Panel 7. Ask a Foundation: Where does Canada's Premier Identity Program go From Here?

Chair: Daniel Drache, Associate Director, Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, York University

Zanana Akande, Community Activist and Leader

Alan Broadbent, Chairman and CEO, Avana Capital Corporation

Charles Pascal, Executive Director, Atkinson Charitable Foundation