



RACISM and the AMSSND Commitments

Racism and Immigration

Did You Know...?

- Immigration laws in the [United States](#) and [Canada](#) have consistently favored white Europeans and disadvantaged people of color. Immigrants have served as scapegoats during hard times in the economy or national security, and have been blamed for “taking” the jobs of “real” Americans or Canadians. Recently, fear of migrants and anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies have led many white voters to hold [false beliefs about immigrants](#) in their countries.
- In the United States...
 - Native Americans and black people were excluded from citizenship from the start.
 - The [Chinese Exclusion Acts](#) banned immigration from China.
 - “[Mexican Repatriation](#)” efforts during the 1930s rounded up at least 1 million people of Mexican descent (including U.S. citizens) and sent them to Mexico in order to enact President Hoover’s campaign to provide “American Jobs for Real Americans.”
 - In 1924, Congress passed an [Immigration Act](#) that set quotas for immigration at 2% of the level of the population that had been in the U.S. at the time of the 1890 census (deliberately using old data in order to provide more spaces to northern Europeans while limiting availability to other newcomers). This was in place until 1965.
 - *In the past three years,*
 - Nationals from seven Muslim-majority countries (Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria—including refugees, Sudan, and Yemen) have been excluded from entering the United States by so-called “[Muslim bans](#).” (As a candidate, President Donald Trump called for “[a total and complete shutdown](#) of Muslims entering the United States.”)
 - [Refugee admissions](#) have been cut to their lowest levels since the Refugee Resettlement Act was passed, with a few notable trends:
 - Rise in share of Christian refugees, declining Muslim admissions
 - Rise in European admissions, sharp drop in Middle East admissions
 - The asylum process at the southern border has [all but shut down](#), and asylum-seekers have been [forced to wait](#) in deplorable camps in Mexico or detained in [inhumane conditions](#) in the U.S., and children have [been taken from their parents](#) to be detained in camps, alone.
 - [Racial profiling is rampant](#) in the immigration enforcement system—committed by [cops on highways](#), [Border Patrol agents on buses](#) and [ICE in neighborhoods](#).
 - The U.S. president called Haiti a “[sh**hole country](#),” questioning why we let “so many” people migrate from there, and suggesting that we should increase immigration from places like Norway. He then moved to terminate the Temporary Protected Status of Haitians.
 - Recipients of [the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program](#)—young people brought to this country without documentation as children, known as “Dreamers”—have lived in fear and uncertainty since the current administration terminated the program. The Supreme Court ruled that the termination was unlawful, and the administration has said it will try again.
 - Hate crimes against Latino people have [risen dramatically](#).

- In [Canada...](#)
 - Chinese Exclusion Acts banned immigration from China.
 - Limits on Japanese immigration, and expulsion of Japanese-Canadians during WWII.
 - “Continuous passage rule,” which excluded migrants who could not travel to Canada on a direct voyage. Targeted Indians and Asiatic peoples.
 - During WWII, immigration policy was actively anti-Semitic, and Canada’s refugee record for Jews is abysmal.
 - Until the 1960s, Canada chose its immigrants on the basis of their racial categorization rather than the individual merits of the applicant, with preference being given to immigrants of Northern European (especially British) origin over the so-called "black and Asiatic races", and at times over central and southern European "races".
 - Even policies that appear neutral have disproportionate impacts on people of color. For example, requiring birth and marriage certificates excludes those from countries who do not prioritize documentation of that sort or where there is no functioning government to issue them (likely countries in the southern hemisphere that are majority people of color).

To learn more and take action...

- [In Canada](#)
- [In the United States](#)

For Reflection...

Como Tú / Like You / Like Me, by Richard Blanco

{for the D.A.C.A DREAMers and all our nation's immigrants}

... my veins don't end in me
but in the unanimous blood
of those who struggle for life . . .

... mis venas no terminan en mí
sino en la sange unánime
de los que luchan por la vida . . .

—Roque Dalton, [Como tú](#)

Como tú, I question history’s blur in my eyes each time I face a mirror. Like a mirror, I gaze into my palm a wrinkled map I still can’t read, my lifeline an unnamed road I can’t find, can’t trace back to the fork in my parents’ trek that cradled me here. *Como tú*, I woke up to this dream of a country I didn’t choose, that didn’t choose me—trapped in the nightmare of its hateful glares. *Como tú*, I’m also from

the lakes and farms, waterfalls and prairies of another country I can’t fully claim either. *Como tú*, I am either a mirage living among these faces and streets that raised me here, or I’m nothing, a memory forgotten by all I was taken from and can’t return to again.

Like memory, at times I wish I could erase the music of my name in Spanish, at times I cherish it, and despise my other syllables clashing in English. *Como tú*, I want to speak of myself in two languages at once. Despite my tongues, no word defines me. Like words, I read my footprints like my past, erased by waves of circumstance, my future uncertain as wind. Like the wind, *como tú*, I carry songs, howls, whispers, thunder’s growl. Like thunder, I’m a foreign-borne cloud that’s drifted here, I’m lightning, and the balm of rain. *Como tú*, our blood rains for the dirty thirst of this land. Like thirst, like hunger, we ache with the need to save ourselves, and our country from itself.

Prayer

Creator God,

You have created all people in your image, with dignity and unique gifts to share. Help us to receive the blessing of all who wish to share those gifts with us, and help us to be neighbors to all, regardless of the color of our skin or the place we were born.

Christ Jesus,

You traversed the bounds of spirit and matter to abide with us. You have called us to walk with you, pilgrims in this world. Help us to see you in all who seek to migrate to new places and make their homes in new lands, and help us to walk with and welcome them as you do.

Holy Spirit,

You have “shed your love abroad in our hearts.” Help us to be channels of that love so that our world will be a place where all can know the truth of their dignity through the love of neighbors.

In the name of the Blessed Trinity, we pray. Amen.