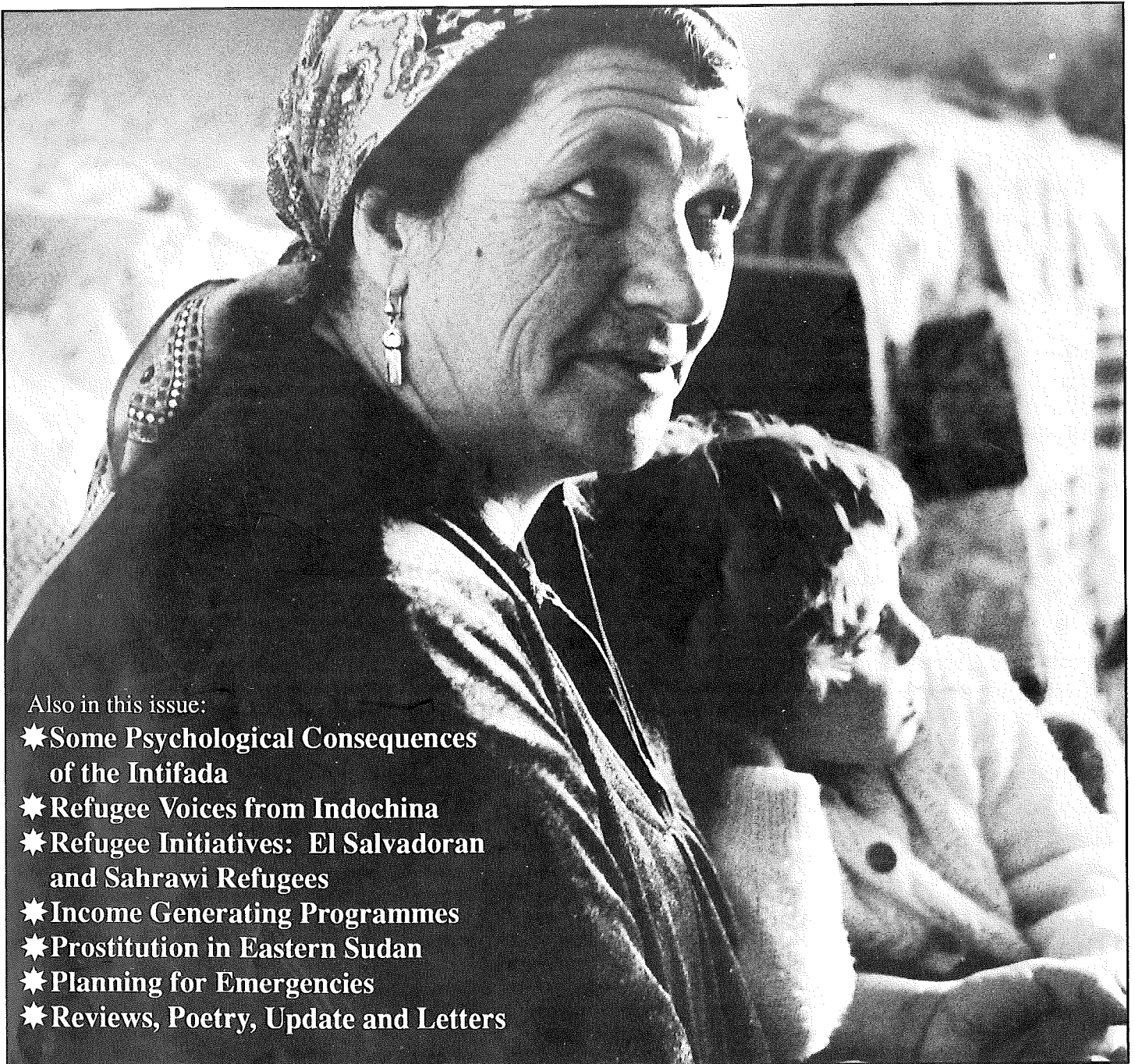


## THE FEARLESS CHILDREN OF THE STONE



Also in this issue:

- ★ Some Psychological Consequences of the Intifada
- ★ Refugee Voices from Indochina
- ★ Refugee Initiatives: El Salvadoran and Sahrawi Refugees
- ★ Income Generating Programmes
- ★ Prostitution in Eastern Sudan
- ★ Planning for Emergencies
- ★ Reviews, Poetry, Update and Letters

*A Palestinian Mother of Fifteen Children: 'I have ten sons, each will have ten more so one hundred will throw stones'*

# MENTAL HEALTH

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## THE INTIFADA: SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

### The End of Ramadan

Friday was a busy day in the town of Gaza, with many people out in the streets buying food in preparation for the celebration ending Ramadan. The unified Leadership of Palestine had issued a clandestine decree that shops could stay open until 5 p.m., and that people should stay calm during the day of the feast. They were not to throw stones at the soldiers while demonstrating. On their side, the Israeli authorities were said to have promised to keep their soldiers away from the refugee camps. Later, the matron of Al Ahli Arab general hospital confessed that she had nonetheless kept her staff on full alert.

In the early morning of Saturday, 6 May we awoke to cracks of gunfire and the rumble of low flying helicopters. Occasionally we could hear the whistle of a tear gas canister followed by a light explosion. Later we were told that clashes were occurring at Nuseira camp and possibly also at Rafah camp. People had gone to the cemetery to mourn their martyrs, as they call them, from the total of around 550 deaths during the eighteen months of the Intifada. Soldiers and helicopters had appeared to disperse the crowd with tear gas and truncheons. This was when the first stones were thrown and the first shots had been fired.

We hurried to Ahli Arab hospital and arrived amidst a controlled but very excited crowd. Black-masked men with terrifying clubs kept order inside the hospital gates, and helped with carrying wounded people into the emergency room and from there to the X-ray department. Whenever a car carrying an injured person screeched nearby, the crowd converged and the excitement rose. In no time fifty people had been brought in, of whom thirty had to be admitted. A few were in a very bad state with chest and abdominal wounds. All kinds of ammunition had been used: rubber bullets, metal-capped plastic bullets and high velocity ammunition. Some were bullets which had burst into many pieces inside the body. Even the so-called rubber bullets, which have metal inside, make penetrating wounds when fired from close quarters. The total death toll of the day was four, and the wounded numbered more than three hundred.

At one point, soldiers appeared at the gate of the hospital demanding the names of the wounded from the Director of the hospital. The latter refused because he knew the patients would be arrested for interrogation. It is common practice to drag the injured from ambulances, and even from the intensive care unit. You are shot because you are suspected, later on the wound is enough proof to warrant being



***Jalazone Refugee Camp: Father and children***

detained. At first the soldiers withdrew but soon returned and received their list. They also threatened to storm the hospital because of the black-masked men they had observed; these had been careful to disappear as soon as undesired parties had approached the hospital. As a result of this threat the *shebab*, as they are called, vanished and did not return. The shooting and stone throwing continued throughout the day, towards evening tension lessened and a total curfew was imposed on most of the camps.

For the time being, it remains an uneven battle with modern weaponry, and even a stone throwing machine developed by the army, against single stones thrown by hand. More than 25,000 wounded and 550 killed on one side, and some fifteen dead on the other.

#### **Some Psychological Consequences**

Under the prevailing circumstances, systematic observations were not possible. Therefore, the following are some considerations based on unsystematic experience and observation. They concern psychiatric consequences of the emergency: ways of coping with loss and bereavement; the impact of the *Intifada* on family structure.

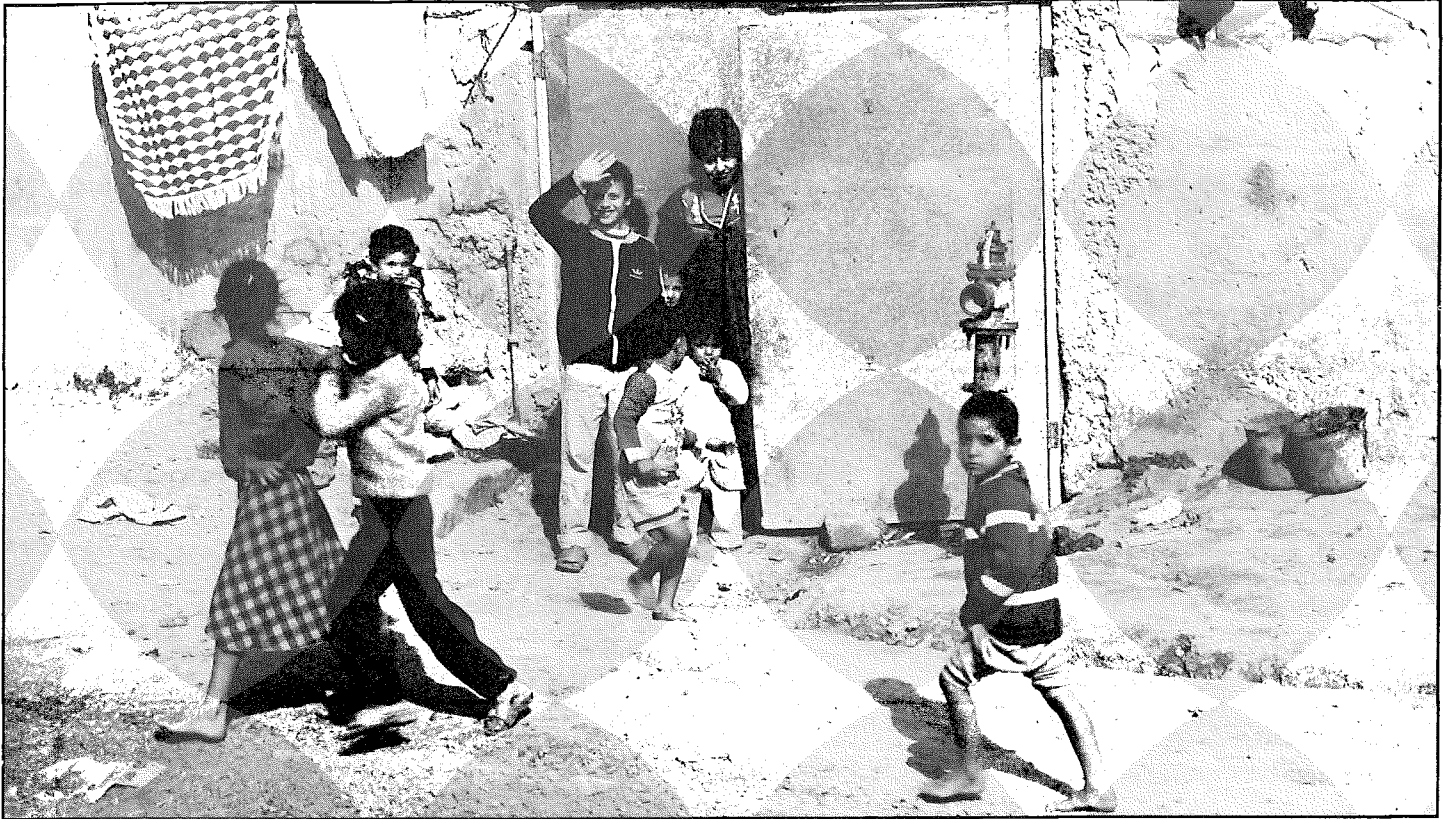
High risk groups appeared to be infants and adult males. Young children become anxious following the nightly raids in the camps where rooms are invaded and adults beaten up by the soldiers in front of their children. Some of the smaller children display regressive and clinging behaviour. Adult males are irritable and nervous.

#### **Ways of Coping with Injury or Loss**

Our first impression was that the victims of violence and detention were coping well and seemed to have adopted certain conscious tactics. In the confined, prison like space of the Gaza Strip people appeared to have found a new sense of identity from their suffering and sacrifice. They were at last resisting the occupying force; injury, disablement or loss of a relative were proof of this. They would proudly state 'This is our life as Palestinians'. A mother would not shed one tear over the injuries of her child.

A second way of coping involved the comparison of one's own injury with that of another whose fate had been worse. Minor against major injury; disablement against the loss of freedom or death. The third turned the injured person into a hero, and someone killed into a martyr. Both were to be honoured rather than mourned. At funerals it became more and more customary to sing wedding or other Palestinian songs rather than the traditional wailing. Pressure is strong to keep a stiff upper lip. The plight of one young man illustrates the terrible dilemma. After eight, almost uninterrupted, years in prison, he had the chance of being deported to Jordan. Sick of his wasted years and the circumstances in prison, he wanted to accept this option but his wife and members of his community objected strongly and felt that he should remain an imprisoned hero.

The doubtful quality of such coping in the longer term is evident from the following observation. We interviewed a young man who had lost both hands. They had been amputated



*Nuseirat camp in Gaza: The Intifada is becoming a way of life for the children*

following his electrocution. Soldiers had forced him to remove a Palestinian flag from the electric wires in the street with the aid of a metal pole. He tried to refuse but was forced to cooperate by the soldiers. His hands were cauterised, the hair on his body caught fire and he lost consciousness but survived. When he related how he had to be fed and dressed by his wife, he looked frustrated but his father was crying.

#### **The Changing Values of Family Life**

The structure and values of the family are rapidly changing because of the *Intifada*. Studies of the Palestinian criminologist, Nabira Kevorkian, confirmed our impressions in this respect. Adult males are planning and organising the *Intifada* with its strikes and demonstrations. Yet, their authority within the family is changing either because they are so often absent, being detained or employed abroad, or because they are beaten and humiliated in front of their children. They are also unable to defend themselves or to protect members of the family against the soldiers who enter their houses during the frequent *razzias* and curfews. The men are the most defenseless and more readily shot.

Palestinian women in the camps are more present and active, although they are also beaten up while protecting their children with their bodies. They are closer to their children than the men, and often indicate in which part of the camp the soldiers have been seen so that the children know where to throw stones.

The stone throwing children are the most active in the *Intifada*. In the Israeli media they are portrayed as having been sent by their elders to be in the frontline. This is certainly overestimating the authority of the fathers. The children can no longer be restrained, it is their struggle. The elders are concerned that the *Intifada* is becoming a way of life for the children as they have little else to do, the schools having been closed for many months. Many of the children we spoke to indicated that life is more interesting now. Adolescents, however, are more frustrated as they place a higher value on education.

Young children imitate their older brothers and have introduced the *Intifada* into their games. They play Palestinian against Israeli and throw stones when they quarrel. Doctors in health clinics told us of how they have had to treat the resulting bruises. We saw a young Palestinian mother who had to have stitches in her head because her young son had thrown a stone at her. Most tragic is the account of how Israeli soldiers buried some Palestinian men alive and this incident was much talked about in the camps. Following this event, two Palestinian boys aged about eight became angry with their baby sister and then proceeded to bury her alive. The child had to be hospitalised but fortunately survived.

There is no clear line between play and reality for the children. We talked to an eight year old boy who had been held hostage by Israeli settlers. He told us how, on various occasions, he had

outwitted the soldiers. He had no desire to return to school as his life had become much more adventurous. Adolescent boys are more responsible and represent new law and order, particularly when they wear their black masks.

At a time when parents are losing control over their children, the problem is further accentuated by the fact that there are no schools to teach discipline, restraint and responsibility. In this respect, the closure of schools by the government can be considered counter-effective, and other tough measures are likely to increase the problem.

#### **The Other Side**

The Israeli Defense Force once had a reputation for daring, organisation and a strong concern for the fate of the individual soldier. Today this reputation is changing rapidly into one of viciousness and brutality. The rules of the Geneva Convention are ignored: prisoners have their limbs broken; the injured are beaten up; ambulances are raided; and the old and the young are not spared.

Why does this happen? Is it a consequence of the provoking speeches of some of the Israeli leaders who appear to sanction brutality? Some Israelis blame it on the holocaust. An argument against this would be that it is unlikely that those who experienced the viciousness and brutality of the holocaust would inflict a similar experience on others. Furthermore, leaders such as Sjamir and Sharon did not experience the holocaust personally, nor did the soldiers. Perhaps such arguments are too simple.

We discussed the matter with members of the Institute of Criminology of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. They are deeply concerned about the demoralising and criminalising effect of service in the Occupied Territories on Israeli youth and society. They fear the aggressiveness that is getting more and more out of control, not only in the soldiers but also in the Israeli settlers who raid Palestinian villages. They explained that it is a much more deeply rooted sense of victimisation which runs throughout Jewish history. Whatever is happening, many Israelis perceive themselves as victims and never as aggressors. When they do hit, they are always hitting back. Now that they have recently learned to hit back expertly, this blind spot can only lead to further escalation in aggression because it is always seen in terms of defense. The Palestinians of Gaza and the West Bank are therefore not seen as the victims of an occupation who finally revolted against their humiliation but, in the words of Sharon, as aggressors who have to be 'stamped out'.

This blind spot was evident in two interviews we heard on the BBC World Service. One was with an Israeli military spokesman who became quite hysterical when questioned about the reprisals in Gaza and the West Bank. He shouted that the *Intifada* is a revolution and that this means war. He never stopped to think if twenty-two endless years of occupation were justification for demonstrations and an uprising, or if the thirteen soldiers he admitted killed against the 550 Palestinians

and more than 25,000 wounded are evidence of a war being waged against Israel. The second interview was with an Israeli Labour parliamentarian who stated that Israel was like an egg: the more you boiled it the harder it gets. It is an apt metaphor, except that he might have pondered on who is actually being boiled, the Israeli or the Palestinian. Unless this question is asked, it is only possible to think in terms of a further escalation of the conflict.

**Professor R. Giel**  
*Department of Psychiatry*  
*Academisch Ziekenhuis Groningen*

## **THE FEARLESS CHILDREN OF THE STONE:**

### **AN INTERVIEW WITH DR EYAD EL-SARRAJ**

Dr Eyad el-Sarraj, former Director of Mental Health Services in Gaza, intends to open a Community Mental Health Centre in Gaza to address the therapeutic needs of children and their families. Here he discusses with JoAnn McGregor some of his ideas for the Centre, developed during his ten years experience as the only fully qualified psychiatrist in Gaza.

#### **In your opinion, who are the main victims of the Intifada?**

It is the women and children who are at the forefront of the *Intifada*. Children are torture victims; they have been injured, separated from their parents by detention, or have witnessed family members being beaten. As a result they commonly experience problems in coping with the trauma. Since the closing of the schools, children amuse themselves with violent games, and mothers are often unable to handle the difficult behaviour patterns of their children. Those children not participating directly in the *Intifada* feel guilty and express their anger in violence against their own families. Women and children are often victimised by the men in their families, as their new assertiveness undermines the traditional control and authority of the men.

#### **Are the men also affected?**

Yes, men who have been subject to torture and kept in a position of powerlessness may have problems of readjustment on their release. They want to regain control of themselves and others and often subject their families to violence using the same methods they have themselves experienced in detention. As a result, they suffer guilt, depression and insomnia. Often



**Women and children are at the forefront of the Intifada**

they are left frustrated and restless on the sidelines, initiatives being taken by the children and women.

**Are there psychiatric or counselling services available for these victims in Gaza?**

At present there is no psychological or psychiatric help available for Palestinians in Gaza. As the Israelis are directly responsible for mental health problems, they are afraid of confronting them. For ten years I was Director of government mental health services in Gaza, but I was sacked after a lecture I gave outlining the mental health consequences of Israeli policies. During those ten years our team worked without a single social worker to help with the 700,000 for whom we catered and we were severely under-funded. There has never been a tradition of family counselling in Palestinian society as family problems are usually dealt with by discipline within the home; also, the elderly are looked after by their families.

**What approaches to therapy will you be using in your new community mental health centre?**

The Centre will offer a combination of therapy, training and research. Initially we need to raise awareness of mental health problems to remove the stigma of therapy. We shall be pioneering a new approach by offering counselling to children and their families in their own homes. I have experimented with this approach whilst working for the government health services and since then in my private clinic. I have found it to be more sensitive and less threatening for those seeking help, as the child is not in a strange and unfamiliar environment, and the community worker can observe the whole family together

under more natural circumstances. It also preserves family privacy which is important as people do not like to be seen to be seeking psychiatric help. Even if we only deal with a small number, at least they will be given quality treatment. There will also be a standard clinic for individual therapy when it is not possible to see patients in their own homes.

The mental health problems in Gaza have obvious similarities to those suffered by any other community subject to violence and frustrating conditions. But the centre will be unique in that therapy is offered in the place where the violence is occurring. Generally, people leave the countries of oppression before receiving treatment.

**How do you hope to reach the wider community?**

We will train community workers to give them skills in basic counselling and in recognizing cases for referral. Teachers should also be involved so that they can recognize and help those children who are suffering from behavioural or emotional disorders. Our team will be establishing very close links with the schools. We also hope to run in-service training courses for medical professionals, some of whom are failing to make accurate diagnoses. For example, whilst working in Gaza hospital, I conducted a survey which showed that 30% of cases diagnosed as physical complaints were in fact psychological. This highlighted the need for health workers to be trained to identify psychological complaints.

**What about traditional healers? Would they also be involved?**

Traditional healers are often the first to be approached by those needing help. Many are sheikhs and use the Koran in their treatment. Others may use a mixture of herbs or other methods. They are very popular, especially for complaints such as impotence on the wedding night, when young men can be anxious and frightened. The aim of integrating traditional healers into the services of the Centre will be to draw on their contacts and also to initiate a referral system by training them to recognise complaints they are unable to treat. This will help to prevent repetition of the serious cases of mistreatment, for example of epilepsy, which I have witnessed in the past. I remember one woman who came in with severe bruising having been continually beaten to exorcise 'evil spirits', in another case an epileptic woman was left in *status epilepticus* whilst the sheikh was trying to induce the evil spirit out, which resulted in her death. I am already in contact with several of these healers who send me their problem cases. Such links need to be strengthened.

For more information about the proposed Centre, please write to:

**Dr Eyad el-Sarraj**  
*Refugee Studies Programme*  
 21 St Giles  
 Oxford, UK.

# TESTIMONY AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

## A Reply to Buus and Agger

In RPN 3, Buus and Agger described the use of written testimonies in the psychotherapy of torture survivors. This involves refugees recounting their experiences from shortly prior to arrest, through detention and torture, to release and exile. They described its aim as to develop an understanding of the torture in the context of the political struggle in which it took place. We received the following comments in response to the article.

At the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, we fully agree with Buus and Agger's overall position and approach. Our work is similarly holistic, we also deal with individuals in their total social context: their place in the political and ideological struggles of their countries, their networks of family and friends. Based on our own experience, we offer the following comments.

### Testimony and Immigration

Certain processes of immigration control can be very traumatic for tortured refugees. Having escaped from arrest, interrogation and torture, they arrive in a new country only to be arrested again and interrogated under threat of being returned to the source of the original horror. Subsequently they may be granted only exceptional leave to stay in the country of asylum, and have to undergo the annual ordeal of renewal or, in some cases, refusal. Thus, many refugees who come to us have repeatedly been rendered helpless by powerful institutions and once again undergone the experience of being made into objects and potential tools of domestic or foreign policy.

It is often in this context that we and perhaps other agencies in this field of work have to take testimonies. I suspect they are sometimes different sorts of testimonies from those described by Buus and Agger. Instead of being a psychotherapeutic process freely and actively undertaken by the refugee as a means of reasserting him or herself, the testimony is often a rearguard action which is necessary to defend a refugee's precarious physical safety. Its potential as an assertive act against oppression is often lost in its defensive necessity and the lack of choice involved.

It seems that some have at least two ways of talking about their traumatic experiences. One is to give a relatively dispassionate account of facts, dates, events, places etc. The other is to tell the story of their experience with its full emotional charge.

In Buus and Agger's work, the therapist intervenes to encourage the expression of the emotional content of the story. This is part of the therapeutic experience. However, when a testimony has to be given in less free circumstances, there may be a case for encouraging or at least accepting the dispassionate recounting of facts. In this way refugees' emotions can be protected from intrusion until they choose. I am presenting this as an idea only and we must remember that such a dispassionate account may be more possible in theory than in practice. Also there will still be many things that torture survivors cannot recount at all. If this was recognized by those responsible for

the bureaucratic establishment of the facts in torture cases, we could go a long way towards humanising our official procedures for dealing with political refugees.

### Working with Groups

State organized violence affects relationships as well as the individual. At the Medical Foundation we work with groups and families in order to restore the individual's sense of belonging to a community. Buus and Agger comment on the significance of the interpreter in this context, who should be a fellow countryman and before whom the testimony is given. The value of this suggests that testimonies could be done in groups, either groups of survivors coming from different situations, or in groups of family or friends who have survived in the same situation. In this way, reintegration might be facilitated more directly.

### Testimony in its Context

Buus and Agger stress the importance of putting the refugee's individual suffering in the context of political ideology and struggle. But many of the refugees who we see have not been politically active. Even with political activists, I have found it useful to discuss a person's individual history, their social network of family and friends, their religious beliefs and cultural values. I include political beliefs in this much wider discussion, and I believe this broad approach is an important context for the experience of torture, flight, exile and resettlement in an often inhospitable host society.

I was surprised that the testimony method which Buus and Agger describe begins shortly before arrest and torture. If the testimony started earlier, the trauma would be understood in the context of the refugee's whole life, rather than being its principal feature. The testimonies taken by my colleagues at the Medical Foundation begin at birth and continue to the present. They incorporate more aspects of the refugees' life and provide a lot of background within which to locate the trauma.

It would probably not be important to write down the refugee's entire life history, just that part of it in which their integrity has been violated and which they need to reclaim and reintegrate within the larger meaning of their life. I would like to hear Buus and Agger's view on this.

### Client's Resistance

Buus and Agger describe how they give proper respect to the client's 'resistance', regarding it as 'the client's best way of looking after themselves right now'. I, myself, prefer to abandon the concept of resistance altogether and speak (as many psychotherapists now do), of the 'coherence' or 'integrity' of the client's personality or meaning system. The difference between the meaning the clients give to their experiences and the one we as therapists offer can be regarded as an interpersonal difference, rather than as resistance by the client to the 'truth' of our perceptions. This redefines the relationship between the therapist and the client. The idea of a healthy therapist treating a sick patient is replaced by the idea of constructing a new reality together.

# REFUGEE VOICES FROM INDO CHINA

## Reframing

This concept refers to a technique which is fairly common in family therapy (Watzlawick et al, 1974, describe its early use). It is used to promote a more pragmatic approach to problems and is often underpinned by the idea of a dialectic between meaning and experience: our experience is defined by the meaning we give it, and the meanings we create arise from our experience. Oppressive regimes try to deny this, and insist that their own constructed ideology is the only one possible. This can be vividly illustrated in the way that creative writers are persecuted as their insights are threatening to totalitarian ideologies (whether political or religious). But scientific categorization can also be oppressive. If we reduce the experience of torture and its aftermath to the medical category of an illness such as 'traumatic stress', for which there is a standard and straight-forward treatment, we are denying the refugees' own experience. The refugee is reduced to a 'patient'. This has been the experience of those working with relatives of the 'disappeared' in Argentina (Kordon et al 1988).

## Dick Blackwell

Psychotherapist

Medical Foundation for the Care of Torture Victims  
National Temperance Hospital, London

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*Refugee children in Site 2 Refugee Camp*

The following articles comprises contributions by refugees in Site 2 Refugee Camp on the Thai Cambodian border preceded by an introduction by Josephine Reynell, and one contribution by a Vietnamese refugee living in the UK who recently revisited his homeland. The contributions from Site 2 camp are about political conditions inside the camp and the fear of forced repatriation. They are kept anonymous for the protection of the authors.

## INTRODUCTION

Over the last ten years, life in the border camps for the majority of Cambodians has been marked by both physical and psychological insecurity, violence, poverty, a sense of hopelessness and an increasing disillusion with the political and military camp leaders. Categorized as 'displaced people' rather than refugees, they have few rights under international law. The international community, particularly donor governments giving aid to the camps, the UN and other agencies working on the border, has a responsibility to ensure that their human rights are not totally disregarded through their forcible return to a war zone.

1989 marked ten years of camp existence for most Cambodians living in the Thai-Cambodian border camps. The year began with a degree of optimism due to the seeming success of the peace talks between representatives from both sides of the Cambodian civil war and the announcement that the Vietnamese government would withdraw its troops from

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*Photograph by Josephine Reynell*

Cambodia by September. As a result, the issue of voluntary repatriation from the camps became a frequent topic of discussion amongst the agencies working on the border. The situation changed, however, with the collapse of the peace talks in August 1989, making voluntary repatriation clearly impossible.

The civil war between the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) and the State of Cambodia has tragically intensified making it obviously unsafe for people to return. A recent survey in the camps conducted by the Ford Foundation indicated that the majority of the camp population would like to return to Battambang province. At present this is where fighting is greatest. All the camps are firmly controlled by the Coalition military. A captive border camp population is absolutely essential to the Coalition's survival by giving it legitimacy as a credible 'government', and providing it with soldiers and porters to carry food and weapons to the battle zones. It is therefore not in the interests of the Coalition to see 'its' people returning home, except under its own auspices.

This was illustrated earlier this year when the peace talks appeared to be going well, leading many to believe that a peace settlement was about to be made. A substantial number of people from Site 2 reportedly returned to Cambodia on their own. Once the military commanders realized what was happening, they stationed KPNLF soldiers along the escape routes to prevent further people leaving - the blockade was effective and the movement of returnees ceased.

Whilst voluntary repatriation is impossible, the spectre of

forced repatriation appears to be an increasingly real possibility. The Coalition is attempting to capture land in north west Cambodia. As they do so, they will want to hold it by moving people from the camps to the newly occupied areas; the Khmer Rouge have been driving people from their camps to such areas since 1988. Fourteen thousand people are believed to have been moved inside Cambodia from Natrao camp and in 1989 reportedly the only people left in the Khmer Rouge southern camps of Bo Rai and Ta Luan were the sick and disabled. In November 1989 the KPNLF named a senior camp official from site 2 as administrator for the 'liberated' zone. General Sak is reported to have plans to move people from Site 2 back to Cambodia under KPNLF control.

The result of such action is to return civilian men, women and children (who constitute up to half the camp population) to a war zone. Nor would the position of the returnees be made any more secure by organizing their return to provinces beyond Battambang. Whilst the CGDK might well support such an idea as a means of infiltrating further inside the country, in the present context of civil war there is a risk that the Cambodian government would look on such returnees with suspicion. In the circumstances, the security of such returnees could not be guaranteed and they might run the risk of intimidation from the state security forces.

*Abridged from an article by Josephine Reynell and Tony Jackson which is to be published in the CCSCPT Annual Report 1989.*

#### **FORCED OR VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION?**

Inside Thai territory close to the border are located some Khmer refugee camps controlled by various factions of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK). The people living in these camps are very scared and worried since hearing rumours about repatriation, rumours which will probably become true in the next few months. This does not mean that these people do not want to go back to their own homeland, but it does mean that they are afraid of being forced to repatriate by the factions who have controlled them for years.

Most of the people in the camps have been trapped and kept as hostages or pawns. Most have nothing to do with either the resistance or politics, though there are some who have concerned themselves with the resistance. These are people who like to ingratiate and grovel in front of their bosses to get better jobs so that they can make money in the camps and obtain high positions when they return to Cambodia.

After hearing the news from the International Conference held in Paris, we, the innocent people who have nothing to do with politics, learn that each faction, especially the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese-backed government in Phnom Penh, do not want to share power in the future government of Cambodia after the last Vietnamese withdrawal. This makes us even more worried and scared as we are afraid of being forced to repatriate by each faction. While we absolutely do not want to be forced

to repatriate, we do want to be voluntarily repatriated. We would like to stay in a transit camp which is completely neutral and controlled not by factions, but probably by UNHCR or other international organisations. We really want the world and other peace-loving countries, particularly Thailand, to create a so-called neutral camp for Cambodian people who do not want to be forced to go back to Cambodia by any faction with whom they are living at the present moment. We want to have the right to go wherever we want to go or to stay with whoever we want to stay with.

If the Khmer people who live in camps in Thailand want to go back to Cambodia with the Khmer Rouge, they should have the right to do so. If they want to go back to Cambodia with H.E. Son Sann or Prince Sihanouk, they should have the right to go. And if they want to wait in a neutral camp, they should be able to go and wait there until the right time comes for them to be repatriated.

To the superpowers of the free world and to all people and governments who are concerned about Cambodian refugees we would like to plead and implore to help us in this case. We want you to help create a neutral camp for Cambodian refugees who do not want to be forced to repatriate. Please help us in these hard times. Your actions and words will be very powerful and will be greatly appreciated by everyone of us.

*Anonymous  
Site 2 Camp  
Thai-Cambodian Border*

### **WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A REFUGEE IN SITE 2 REFUGEE CAMP ON THE THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER?**

Whenever I talk about Site 2, tears always come into my eyes. Every day I keep asking myself the same question again and again: What is Site 2 like? Because of what I have seen, I dare to give the following answer.

#### **Site 2 is like a penitentiary for the Khmer people**

I can say this because I have looked closely at the real life of the Khmer people who have been in Site 2 for nearly three years. They have monotonously and miserably lived in a camp surrounded by a barbed-wire fence and patrolled by the black uniformed Thai rangers of Task Force 80.

The Khmer people cannot leave Site 2, they are forbidden to go beyond the fence. If they try, they may be killed, wounded or raped. Not only outside the camp are people killed, raped and robbed, but also inside the camp. What can we do to defend ourselves against these violations to our human rights? We can do nothing because we have no rights. We are 'displaced persons', people without a country, without representation, like forgotten prisoners inside a cage.

Some say it is easy and comfortable to be displaced people. They also say that displaced people have nothing to do but eat and sleep like pigs in a sty. This may be true for pigs, but for our people it is not true as they are not pigs but human beings and as human beings deserve the right to do the things that everyone else can do, the freedom to go where everyone else



*Thousands of children are crying for the freedom to go home*

*Photograph by Josephine Reynell*

can go. Sadly, they can only have this freedom in their dreams. Since our people have suffered such terrible conditions for so many years, they are becoming crazy and hopeless and I think all will become crazy and retarded if they continue to live under such conditions. If Site 2 is still here by 1992 or 1993, then Site 2 will become a mental asylum with hundreds and thousands of insane people.

**Site 2 is like a city which makes some of the Khmer leaders disoriented**

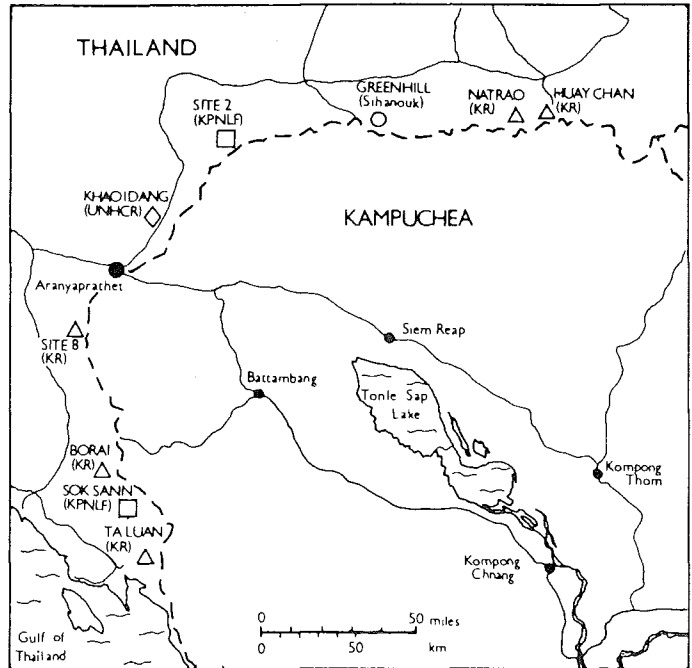
I can say this because, with my own eyes, I have seen some of our Khmer leaders drunk with power and money. It is a sad thing that our leaders fight with each other for power to control Site 2 while their country is in the hands of Vietnamese invaders.

I do not know why our leaders are so blind and selfish. Perhaps they think that the more power they have the more money they will make. They seem not to realize that while they are enjoying their happy lives, thousands of their people suffer from homelessness, dispossession and persecution. They seem not to know that while they are drinking their whisky or beer, thousands of their people are eating rice soaked with tears. They seem not to know that while they are hugging their beautiful wives or mistresses in Site 2, hundreds of simple soldiers are hugging guns in their hands inside Cambodia, sacrificing their lives in the battlefields, They seem not to know that while they are corrupting Site 2, thousands of Khmer children are crying for the freedom to go home. To our present leaders I would like to say that Site 2 camp is not a place for you to fight each other for power and money, but a place for you to work together. You have to remember that you are the ones to pave the way for the Khmer children of the next generation. You have to remember that thousands of your people have placed their lives in your hands. If you are always drunk with power and money, can you be trusted? I beg all present leaders to work together to liberate and rebuild our country. Please give up your silly ambitions. Please do not drink the cup of power and destroy your country. Please stop dreaming that Site 2 is a city where you can gain more power and make more money. If you are not able to create something for your own country, please do not destroy it.

**Who are the poor and abused in Site 2?**

Most of them are military families. Why are they poor? They are poor because they do not have the time to earn money as they are so busy fighting against the Vietnamese soldiers inside Cambodia. They do not have enough food and sometimes resort to eating the leaves off trees when they are surrounded. Sometimes they are killed in ambushes or are wounded and become crippled.

Many of the soldiers' wives have to stop their children going to school. Do they want their children to be uneducated? No, they do not. Many children leave school to help their mothers with work at home. They are often seen at rubbish dumps where they collect old, discarded plastic sacks which can be sold to be refined for oil.



Source: Jackson 1987

**KEY**

- International border
- Roads
- △ KR = Khmer Rouge camp
- KPNLF = Khmer People's National Liberation Front camp
- Sihanouk = Prince Sihanouk camp

Children in Site 2 are abused. Some are hired to carry water from the water-trucks to houses. Some women whose husbands are away for months inside Cambodia, become prostitutes to earn money to feed their children. Others become 'kept women' because of the lack of money. Teenage girls are often forced to leave school to become prostitutes to help feed their families. Many crippled soldiers are ill-treated. They are like oranges that are sucked dry and thrown away.

While the poor cry for help, leaders, military commanders and some of the rich people of the camp spend thousands of baht on alcoholic drinks, gambling, women and parties. The amount that one of these spends in one day on alcohol would keep a poor military family for one year in food. The widows of those who have died in the Cambodian battle fields are ignored by the commanders.

What can I do? I can do nothing because I am a woman whose husband died a few years ago and I am poor. I can only write this article to ask for help from the outside world. Site 2 refugee camp is like a hell for the poor and like a second Phnom Penh for the rich. All that I have described above is not exaggerated but true. I do not write this to defame or slander anyone, but to dissipate my woe and tranquilize my mind. The truth must be spoken.

To the people of the free world, I ask you to please help our Khmer people to get better treatment and support. Please help us to return home as soon as possible as we cannot bear living like this any longer. The sooner we return home, the better it will be.

*Anonymous*  
*Site 2 Refugee Camp*  
*Thai-Cambodian Border*

#### **SOME CONVERSATIONS FROM SITE 2 CAMP**

'Yesterday, my sister-in-law came to live here. She came from Site B.'

'Why did she come here?'

'To escape the drafting of the men in Site B. She has a new husband now. Her first husband, my brother, was killed during the Pol Pot regime. Now in Site B they are preparing all the men to fight. They replaced the section leaders with women section leaders, and all the other positions in the camp. That was a sure sign. Then they had a good chance to escape. They let them go to Surin to see the elephant celebration from where they could escape to come here. They paid the Thai guide 4,000 bahts. That was for five people. They didn't count the little baby'.

'I also heard a lot of people came from Site B. My neighbour

had a cousin who came the other day.... He hadn't seen him for over ten years.'

'I hadn't seen my sister-in-law for that long.'

'We have problems here too, but it's true, in one way we are lucky, we don't have a forced drafting.'

**Ampil Residents**

'Human Rights Day? What human rights? We should call it 'Human Wrongs Day'. We should all wear our clothes backwards, our glasses backwards and read out lists of violations.'

**Rithysen Resident**

'I am like a watch. Bright and shiny on the outside, but inside the parts are all rusted and broken and don't work very well.'

**Medic Teacher**

'We have many problems here. When we go to bed at night we worry about the ration. Will it be cut tomorrow? Will we have enough water since the dry season has begun? Will we be able to buy medicine for our sick child? Will they learn anything at school? Will they be afraid of buffalos? Speaking of buffalos, will we have any, and will we have land to plant rice when we go back? How will our relatives there greet us?'

'Yes, the big problem is the kids. Look at all these kids - just six or seven years old and playing in the dust. In your country



*Soldiers arriving at Site 2 Camp from the front*

*Photograph by Josephine Reynell*

kids like that already know a lot and are developing. Look at the Thai kids of their age..... Thailand develops their kids while we fall down. And we are neighbours.'

'Yes the sad part is the kids. The teachers hardly know more than the kids, and the parents work hard to send them to school, to pay for private classes. My mother always works so hard so we can go to school and sometimes she looks so sad and looks back to when my Dad was there, before Pol Pot, he was a teacher and it was easy. Now it is hard for her. She cries and when I ask her, she tells me about it and I try to comfort her and tell her a joke, and she can depend on me. But when I am sad, then who comforts me? Who can I talk to to cheer me up? I keep it all inside and just try to help my mother.'

**Rithysen Residents**

## RETURN TO VIETNAM

Ky Ho, a refugee from Vietnam, returned to Saigon in the Spring of 1989 after more than ten years away in the West. Here he tells Peter Cunliffe-Jones, a freelance journalist, what it was like to go back to the country he last saw in 1978 and how he reacted to the things he saw whilst there.

People are still leaving Vietnam. More than ten years after the first people left, the number of refugees continues to grow despite growing pressure from the West. But while the forced return of some 'migrants' from Hong Kong Islands may have made headlines in the West, in Vietnam the talk is still of going abroad. Do the Vietnamese count as refugees or economic migrants? The question is as irrelevant as it is shallow.

When I left Vietnam, in September 1978, I was a refugee. The country's economy was in ruins. War was imminent with both China and Cambodia. Basic foodstuffs, medical equipment, schooling, taken for granted when my parents were young, were no longer available.

Vietnam, once the safe harbour of a turbulent area, had faced warfare and starvation for thirty years. Vast areas of the countryside had been de-foliated and the soil beneath had turned into a lifeless mixture of rotten plants and chemical poisons. The thriving markets, the hustle and bustle of Saigon, had disappeared. Families who had settled in Saigon just two generations earlier, refugees from the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, no longer felt it was safe to stay. People were frightened to trade in public and rumours of arrests swept the city; men had disappeared; farms had been confiscated and given to soldiers in the VietCong. The once beautiful Saigon was now a mess and Cho Lon, the area where I used to live, was dead.

Nor did the prospects for the next generation seem any better. For school-aged children there was nothing; health care was almost non-existent; infant mortality was rising. The situation



*A Vietnamese father with his children*

in Cambodia was known to be bad and likely to lead to war. China, a longtime enemy of Vietnam, was threatening to invade. The international community had isolated Vietnam in a vindictive act of revenge for its defeat of the Americans and the anticipated aid and war damages were not forthcoming. No country, not even Japan or Germany, had suffered such destruction in a war and no country received so little assistance to re-build itself once the war was over.

Is it really any wonder that people wished to leave? The fears, doubts and uncertainties were overwhelming. We were all

victimised and within Vietnam there was persecution. Chinese immigrants suffered in particular and those who had played any part in the war for the Americans - as most of us had in order to survive - were hauled off at a moment's notice for 'correctional' duties.

Over the past ten years there has been little improvement. The government has taken less of an anti-market stance; the borders have been opened up to allow greater freedom of movement; inside the country, the new freedom of trade has led to an improvement in the supply of basic foodstuffs and essentials. But nobody knows how far this will be allowed to go. People are allowed to trade but only as long as it does not go too far. The uncertainty is causing people to leave. They are leaving because the Vietnamese have lost belief and trust in the future of their own country. They would not be leaving if they did not feel they had to. The Vietnamese know that it is no fun being a refugee.

When I went back to Vietnam in the Spring of 1989 I was there for the celebrations of the Chinese New Year. Firecrackers went off in the streets. New Year greetings were displayed on banners hanging in the streets. This, I was told, was the first year that such festivities had been allowed since the Communists took over. Celebrations went on long into the night. Discos opened and people danced to imported western pop music.

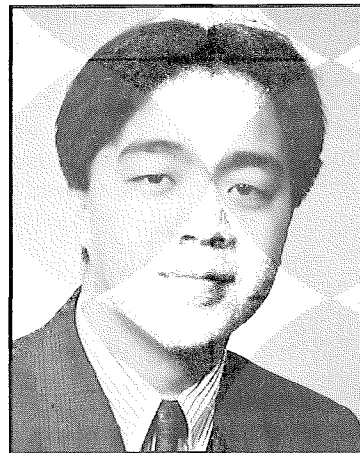
I went back to Cho Lon, the Chinese quarter of Saigon, and looked in on my old family home. At best, Cho Lon is a run-down, ramshackle part of town and always has been. That night it was alive with the New Year celebrations. My time was taken up with an endless tour of relatives' houses: uncles, aunts, cousins, friends and neighbours all crowded round to hear about my journey. In the early morning the streets resounded with the noise of people going to market or sitting having breakfast at roadside stalls.

At this moment, it seemed as if the stories I had heard in the West were true: Vietnam was opening its doors; freedom for its people was growing; life was coming back into a country that had been dead for so long. But then I talked to one young man, an old friend of the family who wanted to know how he could get abroad. I talked to another with the same idea. The conversations were all about the future, the West and certainty. They were happy to dance and drink and play music but wanted to know how long it would last. When would Vietnam succumb to the next disaster?

In the years following the American exodus, little has gone right in Vietnam. It is only partly true to say that this is the fault of the Vietnamese. It is their government that has collectivised and killed a promising agricultural system. But the behaviour of the outside world has been shocking. The Chinese have fought Vietnam in the North and in Cambodia. The Russians and East Germans have built large accommodation blocks for their soldiers and done little else for the country. America, architect of a devastating war, reneged on promises of reparation and then forced through crippling

international embargoes on machinery, foodstuffs and medical equipment thus squeezing the country dry.

Is it any wonder that the Vietnamese have become cynical and no longer believe in a bright future for their country? For ten years the Vietnamese refugees have been treated well. Now, however, the world, and the UK in particular, is tired of them. But until the world learns to treat Vietnam in the same way as any other country in need of reconstruction after a war, then the world will have to face the prospect of many more scores of refugees leaving their homes for other countries.



*Ky Bao Ho was born in Cho Lon in 1965. The son of a shop owner, he was part of the middle class Chinese population of Vietnam and third generation immigrant from China. He left Vietnam on 28 September 1978 after his parents had paid 12 taels of gold (£3000) to find him a place on a boat going abroad. The boat was wrecked on a Vietnamese prison island*

*but the captain managed to bribe officials to allow them to use another vessel and three weeks later he arrived at a refugee colony on Pulau Bidong.*

*He was one of the few to make it to UK, where he was helped by the Ockenden Venture and eventually resettled in Wales. Within 6 years he had taken 10 'O'levels, 4 'A'levels and gained a place at Cambridge University. He now works as a voluntary interviewer for the Refugee Arrivals Project, currently interviewing Kurdish refugees on their entry into the UK.*

*(Although originally written for RPN, this article has since been reproduced in The Independent on 14 December 1989.)*

# REFUGEE INITIATIVES

## COLOMONCAGUA: THE QUEST FOR EMPOWERMENT



*Literacy classes for refugee children in Colomoncagua camp*

*Photograph by Mike Goldwater/OXFAM*

One of the most common and damaging misconceptions about refugees is the notion that people who receive assistance will inevitably become afflicted by a condition known as the 'dependency syndrome'. Despite virtually no supporting evidence for this idea, it enjoys considerable credibility in international policy-making circles and informs the decisions of many large humanitarian organisations. It is based on the assumption that people who are freely given aid quickly lose their incentive to work and instead develop a dependency on others which results in a variety of ills including despondency, laziness and inactivity.

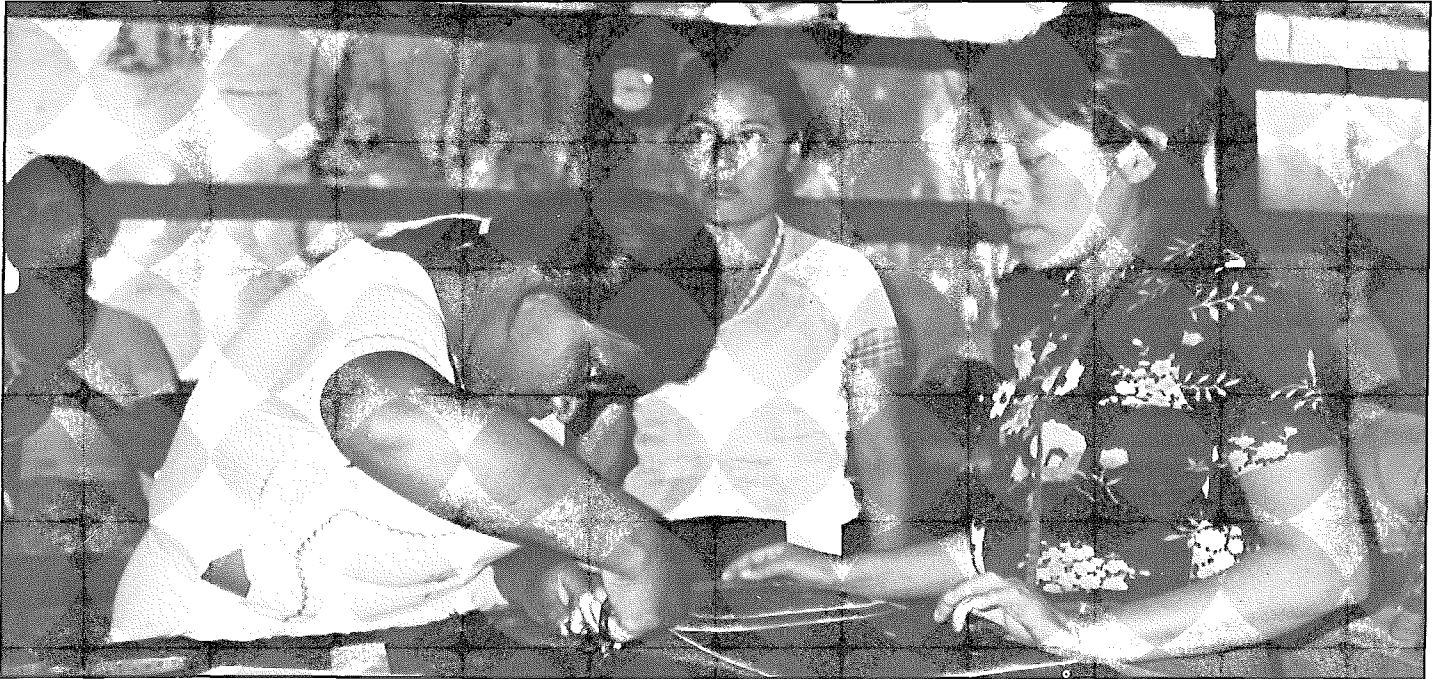
There is no more illustrative repudiation of this syndrome than the case of Colomoncagua, a Salvadorean refugee camp located just inside the Honduran border. At Colomoncagua the refugees exhibit none of the symptoms associated with dependency; on the contrary, the refugees are empowered by their experiences in the camp. They are actively involved in the development of their community and see themselves not as victims but rather as agents capable of determining their own future.

Colomoncagua is a model of community initiative and organisation. The camp functions as a fully-integrated community not unlike other small rural settlements. Health care is promoted, literacy classes are offered and both agricultural and industrial workshops provide employment for the camp's inhabitants. Several features distinguish Colomoncagua however. First, in radical departure from traditional Central American living patterns, it operates along



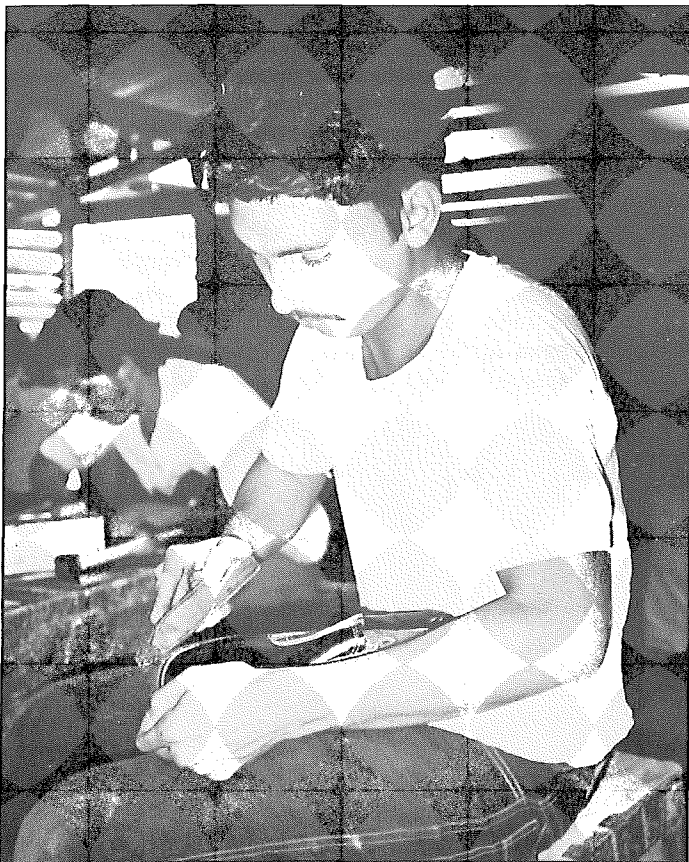
*A woodworking workshop producing musical instruments in Colomoncagua camp*

*Photograph by Graham Burt/OXFAM*



*A dressmaking workshop in Colomoncagua camp*

*Photograph by Gennie Poole/OXFAM*



*A leather workshop in Colomoncagua camp where enough shoes are produced to outfit the entire camp*

*Photograph by Gennie Poole/OXFAM*

collective principles. All equipment is community owned and goods are distributed on the basis of need. Second, and more significantly, the population lives in a state of siege. Ample documentation indicates that both Honduran and Salvadoran armies regard Colomoncaguan refugees as guerrillas and therefore as a security risk. During the last ten years, these armies have been responsible for the continued military harassment of the refugees, including abductions, and in several well-publicised cases, assassinations. Instead of finding security and protection in the camp, the refugees are subjected to, as they put it 'yet another regime of terror, almost as frightening as the one we left'.

In order to cope with the threats to their security, the refugees have adopted a highly disciplined form of organisation. All camp activities are administered by democratically run committees. A central coordinating committee oversees and directs the affairs of the entire camp. Colomoncagua is made up of six sections which are further divided into a series of 'colonies' comprised of individual huts. Each of the sub-units in the camp has a coordinator who is responsible for distributing resources and handling complaints. This structure has allowed the refugees to achieve substantial and enduring successes.

Foremost among the successes are the camp's industrial and craft workshops. There are no less than sixteen workshops operated by the refugees in Colomoncagua. Included are a mechanical shop specializing in the repair of motor vehicles, a woodworking shop which produces musical instruments, and a leather working shop where enough shoes are cobbled to outfit the entire camp. The workshops symbolise the refugees' struggle for self-sufficiency. In addition to providing the physical goods necessary for daily life, they also function as





*A mechanical shop specializing in the repair of motor vehicles.*

training centres for the thousands of young refugees who would otherwise grow up lacking formal skills or trades.

The refugees at Colomoncagua regard their stay in the camp as a temporary phenomenon. They anxiously await the day when they will be able to return home and believe that the skills they are developing in their workshops will be essential for the rebuilding of their war-torn country. Their exile in Honduras is seen as an opportunity to prepare themselves for the monumental task of reconstruction. In many refugee camps, the problem of self-sufficiency is primarily a question of providing food, shelter and clothing in the immediate short term. For the Colomoncaguan refugees, the problem has taken on a deeper significance and is as much a matter of their long term political objectives, not only short term basic needs.

The quest for empowerment is highly evident in the camp's literacy project. Over ninety per cent of the refugees who arrive at Colomoncagua are illiterate, yet refugee teachers, using techniques developed by Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educationalist, have been able to lower this rate to less than twenty per cent. Classes are offered to both adults and children and are based on texts written by the camp's education committee. The texts deal exclusively with subjects relevant to the refugees' lives and to the problems likely to confront them on their return to El Salvador. Many classroom handbooks contain both political and technical information, for example, their pamphlet on coffee which details not only how to plant and harvest the crop, but also how coffee has been used to exploit the peasants of El Salvador for the benefit of a small international elite.

The refugees place great emphasis on education and literacy is held in high esteem. The ability to read is seen as the primary means of empowerment for both the individual and, equally

*Photograph by Gennie Poole/OXFAM*

important, for the entire community. The Colomoncaguan refugees are no longer prepared to accept the lives of poverty and repression they were forced to live in El Salvador. Instead, they are determined to build a new society based on the triangular principles of equality, justice and human rights. They are achieving this by embracing and exercising what I have chosen to call the politics of empowerment.

My choice of words here is deliberate. The terms 'dependency syndrome' with its connotation of illness, and 'politics of empowerment' with its connotation of collectivity and liberation stand in stark contrast. The quest for empowerment by the Colomoncaguan refugees has resulted in achievements that any community would be proud of: new housing, health and nutrition centres, chapels, access roads, a clean water supply and numerous agricultural projects. The refugees are the first to admit that these successes have been made possible by the generosity and help of the international humanitarian organizations. Far from falling into the trap of laziness and despondency, the refugees have put their meagre resources to immediate and good effect.

The key to their success has been the refugees' unfailing determination to return home and rebuild their lives along principles which will guarantee them both peace and decency. They have used their exile to prepare themselves for this task. Without the experience of the camp, the refugees would never have been able to organize themselves nor to achieve the kind of political clout and sophistication they now possess. In the case of Colomoncagua, the aid given to the refugees inside a supervised camp setting led not to dependency, but rather to the emergence of a strengthened, vital and empowered community.

**Lise Grande**

## BUILDING A LIFE IN THE DESERT



*Sahrawi women weaving windbreaks*

*Photograph by Kitty Warnock/War on Want*

Refugees are often portrayed in the media as helpless, passive and disorganized. But the exiled Sahrawi people have created stable, ordered and lively communities out of the chaos following forced exodus. Their achievements since the destruction of 1975 are remarkable. The following article looks at how the Sahrawi people have been able to transform their situation and the specific conditions which facilitated these changes.

The Sahrawi camps in Tindouf, Southern Algeria date back to late 1975 and the double invasion of Western Sahara by Moroccan troops from the north and Mauritanian troops from the south. The Sahrawi population fled the towns only hours before the Moroccan troops arrived and makeshift camps were established inside the country. These were destroyed by the Moroccan airforce raids in November 1975, January, February and April 1976. The terror and destruction of the bombing, in which napalm and cluster bombs were used, forced the population to flee across the border.

Initially, conditions were horrific. Food, shelter, clothing and blankets were desperately inadequate, many were sleeping without protection as the temperatures at night fell below freezing point. Mortality rates were high; there were deaths from wounds and burns received during the bombing, there was extensive malnutrition and epidemics of measles and whooping cough.

The environment of the region is desolate and inhospitable: a barren desert of sand and rocks almost devoid of vegetation with the exception of the occasional hardy *Acacia* tree. Temperature changes are extreme and sandstorms blow throughout the year, the fine sand making its way into tents, school classrooms and hospital wards. Tents need continual repair as the traditional animal hair is not available and canvas rots in the heat and tears in the high winds. The location of the four camps (named after towns in Western Sahara) was determined by the availability of drinkable and reasonably accessible water. This limited water is pumped to the surface from a borehole or shallow well, only in the case of Smara camp is there a serious salinity problem and hence delivery by tanker.

Opportunities for food production under such conditions are thus severely constrained as are the possibilities of integration into the host economy. Apart from vegetable production, and the meat and milk from the herds of goats and sheep, all food is provided by external donors, and a large part of the basic grain by Algeria. This makes the Sahrawi vulnerable to the shifting alliances of international aid. Intermittent supplies are still a problem, although less so than in the past, since the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) emerged from diplomatic isolation in 1980 to become a full member of the OAU. However, UNHCR's funding programme for 1985/6 was held at the 1984 level to avoid objections from Morocco.

### Organizing a Nation in the Desert

The 165,000 refugees in the four tent camps comprise those who fled at the time of the Moroccan invasion, who were later joined by other Sahrawis who had left from the 1950s onwards, Sahrawi workers on agricultural projects in western Algeria and Saharawi traders from northern Mauritania. Original tribal groups have been thoroughly mixed in the four settlements called *wilaya* (provinces). These settlements are in turn subdivided into six or seven *daira* (communities) which in turn comprises four *hayy* (neighbourhoods). Each *daira* is serviced by five committees responsible for health, education, production, social affairs/justice and food distribution. The smooth running of the camp is ensured by total participation of all individuals over the age of eighteen. Frustration, boredom and alienation are unknown as all are involved in the organization of the state in exile.

The five *daira* committees meet regularly. They are:

1. **The health committee**, responsible for sanitation and cleanliness. It organizes the chlorination of the water supply and monitors the health of the *daira* population, particularly the vulnerable groups of children, the elderly, pregnant and post-natal women and the disabled. It refers the sick to local clinics and the malnourished to nutrition centres.
2. **The education committee** is responsible for children of nursery school age, ensures primary school attendance and helps organize yearly adult literacy campaigns.
3. **The social affairs and justice committee** provides services for the elderly and the disabled, registers births marriages and divorces, and organises cultural shows and social activities. It is also the body to which minor disputes are brought. Crime in the camps appears to be minimal; only rarely are cases referred to the heads of the *wilayas*.
4. **The provisions committee** distributes food rations, clothes and tents, and maintains stores.
5. **The production committee** develops workshops to make and repair tents, make clothes, sandals, carpets, leather goods and mats. It organizes work in the *daira* vegetable gardens.

SADR government structures operate within the Saharawi camps without restriction, as well as in parts of Western Sahara outside Moroccan military occupation. The Polisario Front (the armed liberation movement formed in 1973 to overthrow Spanish colonial rule) has a strong ideology of self-reliance and has created all the structures (for example, eleven ministries) necessary for the administration of what is effectively an independent Saharawi state operating partly from exile. The most important mechanism for developing a unified understanding of the priorities and tasks of Polisario's struggle is through the structure of 'cells' (composed of eleven people each) under the tutelage of the *daira* orientation department. The Polisario has also set up 'mass organizations' in the camps for women, workers and youth. These organize social and political activities for their members and build international links with sister organizations in sympathetic countries.

The Sahrawi Red Crescent has observer status with the League of Red Cross Societies and is the formal channel for all external

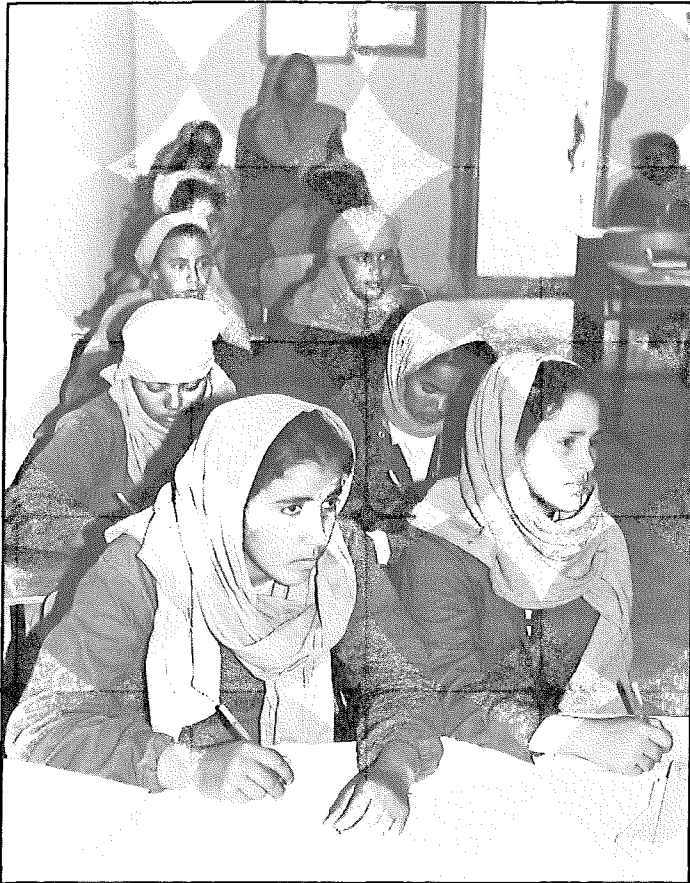
assistance to the Sahrawi people, (full membership is precluded until SADR has gained membership of the United Nations). It operates closely with the Algerian Red Crescent which, with Algerian government backing, finances the transport of supplies from external ports to Algiers and thence to the camps.

### The Central Role of Education

If there is one aspect of life in the Sahrawi camps that stands out above all others, it is the emphasis given to education. In colonial times, education was confined to a small elite and the skilled jobs needed for the extraction of Spanish Sahara's economic wealth were in the hands of foreign technicians. The Sahrawi are determined to reverse past humiliations and to create their own educated cadres to staff a future SADR. Everyone in the camps, except the very old and very young, seems to be either studying or imparting newly acquired skills and knowledge to others. Education starts at the age of three when the children go to a *daira* nursery school, regional primary schools are the next step (there are two in each *wilaya*). From there students go to boarding schools outside the main part of the camps. Boarding was chosen as it is said to provide a more total educational environment and allow the quicker assimilation of new ideas and knowledge. It also helps create a



Every Sahrawi child attends primary school  
Photograph by Kitty Warnock/War on Want



**Education is given priority in the camp**  
 Photograph by Kitty Warnock/War on Want

certain distance between children and parents so that children, returning during the summer vacation, can more effectively teach in the adult literacy campaigns. As a mirror image of the participatory style of the camp administration, the students in the two National Schools (the '12th October' and '9th June') play a role in the school administration. They are organized into three committees with responsibility for supervising health and hygiene, supervising maintenance, and organizing cultural activities. Vocational training, enrolment in the Sahrawi People's Liberation Army or continuing education abroad is the final stage.

#### **Sahrawi Health Services**

The main thrust of the Sahrawi Ministry of Health's policy is towards prevention. The *daira* health committees play the crucial role in ensuring camp cleanliness, burning rubbish, maintaining hygiene in the latrine area. The vaccination programme now achieves 100% coverage and there have been no epidemics since 1978. Nutrition centres have been set up in each *wilaya*, to cater for new born babies. Women stay there with their babies for forty days after birth: this is the traditional Islamic period in which the mother is confined to the home. It is also the most vulnerable period for a child, so the current Sahrawi practice in the camps represents an interesting adaptation of past customs.

The curative service is also highly developed, the three 'national hospitals' (general, paediatric and maternity) and several 'regional hospitals' being served by nine Sahrawi doctors (trained abroad in Algeria, Cuba and, until 1983, Libya). A major training programme for health workers has graduated approximately 33 nurses and seven 'auxiliary doctors' per year. All the buildings of the health institutions have been constructed and maintained by 'popular campaigns' of local people.

#### **Vegetable Production in the Camps**

The vegetable gardens are one of the most dramatic of the self-help projects: oases of green in an area where previously little had grown and surrounded by the rock and sand of the Sahara. Vegetables grow amongst fig trees, pomegranates, palm trees and acacia which have even attracted a population of small and noisy birds. The 21 gardens cover a total of 60 hectares. The long-term plan is to make the camps self-sufficient in vegetables and extend cultivation to 150 hectares, supported with financial and technical help coordinated by the British voluntary agency War on Want. The initial objective is to meet the needs of the nutritionally vulnerable group and all produce is currently directed to the nutrition centres, hospitals and old people's centre. The needs of the general population are not yet being met.

The bulk of the area under cultivation is in gardens organized at *wilaya* level, with a permanent workforce under the direction of a trained Sahrawi agronomist. Other smaller gardens have more recently been developed under the responsibility of the *daira* committees, and worked by the women from the production committee of the *daira*. Popular campaigns help with the labour intensive activities - building walls, preparing the land, weeding and harvesting the crop.

Vegetable production faces a number of problems. The extremes of temperature mean that only melon production is possible in the hottest summer months. Throughout the year, high winds create serious difficulties. Violent and frequent sand storms can easily flatten the crops as well as critically increasing evaporation rates from the leaves. Each of the gardens is therefore surrounded by mud brick walls, and within the gardens wind breaks of cane or woven grass have been erected. This grass, *sbut*, is brought from areas many miles distant inside Western Sahara.

A further major difficulty is the salinity of the soil, and harmful salts must continuously be leached out with large quantities of irrigation water from underground sources. In some of the sites, the existing soil must either be replaced or mixed with less saline earth brought in from nearby areas. The most successful vegetables are those most tolerant of saline conditions; carrots, beetroot, turnip, onions and white radishes. How can the 'success' of the exiled Sahrawi community be explained? The fate of long-term refugee camps is dependent on factors relating both to the internal social and political dynamic of the refugee community in conjunction with external factors, the attitude of the host government, relations with the

local community and their position with respect to the political and military conflict which was the root cause of their flight. The internal dynamics will be considered first.

### Sahrawi political and social ideology

The Sahrawi leadership consciously developed a political ideology emphasizing political unity and a new social order. This is debated locally on an agenda set centrally through the cell structure described above. Old tribal alignments are overlooked since a meeting of Sahrawi tribal leaders at Ain Ben Tili in November 1975 when it was decided that the national struggle against Morocco was more important than their own conflicts. The tribal history of Western Sahara is not taught in the schools of the camps, and tribal names are no longer used. Polisario has also ruled against any form of racial discrimination. In the past black Sahrawis had experienced conditions of semi-slavery and had the distinctive occupation of camelherd for their lighter skinned masters or owners. The loss of the camel herds has meant that economically they are no longer apart. Their involvement in Polisario's forces added strongly to the new sense of equality and Polisario itself launched a campaign to outlaw the old racialism in favour of the unity needed in the independence struggle. Now they are well represented in positions of responsibility, for example as *daira* heads, and mixed marriages are not uncommon. The term *abd* or slave is now only an historical reference. Women's position has also been radically changed, they are free to participate in their own mass organization, to discuss matters in the orientation sessions, to acquire an education, to hold administrative and political positions. Marriage customs have been changed, retaining only symbollic elements of the past.

A new vocabulary and tradition is being created - the names of Sahrawi martyrs and heroes and the key dates of the 'Sahrawi Revolution' are given to the institutions of camp life. Common



*A Sahrawi cultivating a vegetable patch*  
Photograph by Kitty Warnock/War on Want

experiences are stressed, the bombings of the temporary camps and the quest for peace and return to the homeland are the most popular themes of the abundant paintings that decorate the camps.

The new nationalism is a transformation of that of the colonial era. Whilst the old are respected, and prioritized in the distribution of scarce resources, the younger generation are at the head of the new order. Of the old songs, proverbs and dances, only those which emphasize unity and cooperation are retained. The challenge will come in developing a means of upholding these changes in the new state after return. There is a total orientation to a future in which Sahrawis are no longer refugees but citizens in their own land. The energy and motivation in the schools and training centres is rooted in the struggle to acquire the vital education and skills needed both to wage the political struggle for an independent SADR and to run the administration and economy after independence. With total participation, the dependence on outside supplies has not led to apathy. The emphasis is on creating a caring society.

### External facilitating factors

The external factors which have facilitated these changes relate to the attitude of the host government. The Algerian government has made major contributions in the delivery of essential outside material supplies, and indeed has paid the transport to the remote camps. They have also given complete organizational and political freedom in the areas allocated to the Sahrawi - and hence a relatively secure base.

The relationship with the local population is usually critical in determining the success of any refugee settlement. Integration, based partly on economic discrepancies between the refugees from the time of arrival can hinder the development of camps as social units - those with capital may get involved in trade or develop businesses, others who are physically fit may sell their labour. Some may leave for jobs and accomodation elsewhere. But, exceptionally in southern Algeria, there is no surrounding population to offer this possibility, the nearest local population being the Algerian military at Tindouf in a restricted zone. No market economy has appeared in the camps, with the exception of small scale purchase of cigarettes, soap, needles and thread.

With respect to the political and military conflict which led to their flight, the Sahrawis have experienced the fear of being a target for military attack, and the air raid tunnels beside the tents of Smara camp testify to this only too clearly. But Polisario's military operation is kept separate from the civilian population of the camps. A cross-border operation against the camps by Morocco has never taken place and is, at least in the immediate future, unlikely. Thus the Sahrawis are isolated but relatively secure.

*This above is based on two articles: 'The Sahrawi Refugees: Lessons and Prospects' by James Firebrace, published in War and Refugees: The Western Sahara Conflict, edited by R. Lawless and L. Monahan, 1987; and a manuscript on the same theme by Kitty Warnock of War on Want.*

# REFUGEE WOMEN

## THE PORT SUDAN SMALL SCALE ENTERPRISE PROGRAMME

At the request of the Sudanese Commissioner for Refugees, Euro Action Acord (EAA) were asked to do 'something in the area of income-generating activities for spontaneously settled refugees'. What resulted was not specifically a 'refugee' project - the very poor in Port Sudan being both refugees and Sudanese who face the same problems. Nor was it a 'women's project', as both men and women are poor. However, it did recognize from the start that women and refugees were important target groups. Many of the poorest in the slums are women who are recent arrivals, and women's earnings are critical to many families, even when there are men in the family.

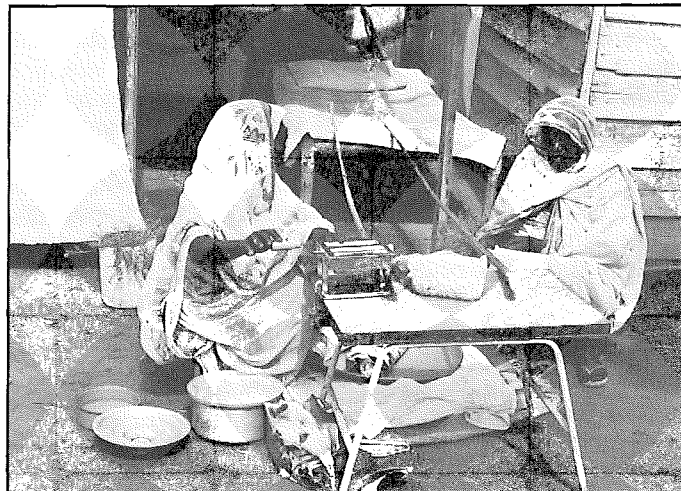
EAA developed a programme offering training, services and credit to poor women and men entrepreneurs, both refugee and non-refugee. No activities are considered suitable only for women, and while equal consideration is given to all businesses, affirmative action is offered to women and refugee clients. This programme shows how even the most marginal of businesses can be improved, and as such has insights and valuable lessons of how involving these groups can work out in practice.

In 1988, after the project had been operating for four years, 4208 individual businesses had been helped and 133 groups. Of the individuals, 1809 were women and 500 refugees, whereas 50 percent of the clients in the groups were refugees and women.

Most of the businesses currently being helped are part of the 'informal sector' of Port Sudan. Operators and customers come mainly from the slums and squatter areas surrounding the Red Sea Port. Petty traders, cooked food and tea sellers, carpenters, water carriers, tailors, mattress makers, bicycle repairers, blacksmiths, and a host of other entrepreneurs provide many of the slums' basic goods and services. But just as the customers are poor, so are the businesses, which are almost always tiny and provide no more than a precarious marginal income for their operators. The slums of Port Sudan are the last resort for many widows, divorced or abandoned women. There are many families in which there is no husband or father to provide even a minimum income. It is estimated that up to 50 percent of refugee families may be headed by women whose children and other dependents rely totally on them for their survival. But, most of the women slum dwellers have little or no education, few marketable skills in comparison with men, and are often restricted by what is considered 'acceptable' for women to do in their communities.

### Starting up the programme.

From the outset the programme emphasized the importance of a long and rather slow research process before anything was initiated. The donors became impatient, but staff stress that the benefits of this approach were many: they were more confident after the detailed field-oriented training; it brought them into



*Women making spaghetti*

direct contact with those living in the *diems* (slums) so that when the programme was actually ready to begin its work, staff had already been accepted and were familiar with the daily pattern of social and economic life in these communities.

Criteria for assistance are stringent. He or she must be from the poorest of the poor, be largely or totally responsible for the upkeep of the family and, to ensure familiarity with his or her surroundings and the basic lines of supply and demand of a business, the applicant must have been resident in Port Sudan for at least two years.

### Services offered

There is no limit on the size of loans given, but each has a maximum repayment period. The guiding principle is that many small loans are generally a more effective way to help marginal entrepreneurs in the informal sector than a few large ones. Four different kinds of credit are offered through the programme:

1. **Hire-purchase Loans.** Loans of this type are for tools and equipment, and/or to build business premises. This enables a business to cut costs and increase returns by providing tools or space that were previously leased or borrowed. Repayment must be within 20 months.
2. **Short-term Loans for Working Capital.** This type of credit enables a business person to buy raw materials in bulk and therefore more cheaply. Loans of this sort are to be repaid in two months.
3. **Micro-loans.** These are very small loans, often as little as the equivalent of US \$50, to provide working capital. They were originally designed to meet the needs of women market vendors and must be repaid within a month.
4. **Home Improvement Loans.** These are given for the purchase of building materials to improve or extend the home, to build latrines, or to lay water pipes. These must be repaid in 20 months.

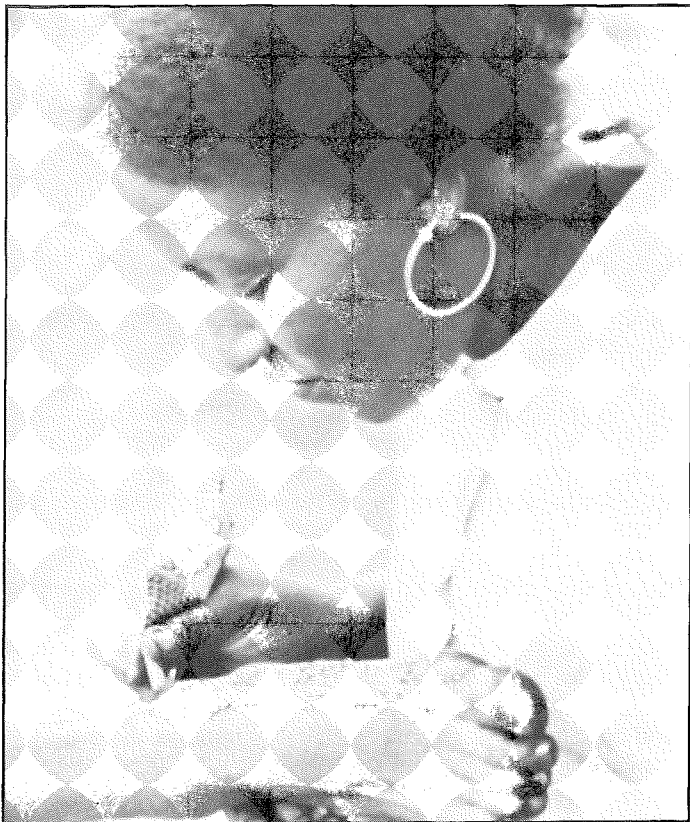
No interest is charged on loans, but the initial registration fee is £S2 and there are small fixed administration charges.

### Reaching women

The programme operates through simple offices located in each *diem*. It is men who make most use of these offices, as women find it difficult to come to such a public place, particularly to make an initial request for help. To overcome this problem, staff often make 'cold calls'. These are unsolicited home visits to women they have heard about or noticed at work, and whom they believe might welcome assistance. This method of contact is an important part of the programme's aim to reach women entrepreneurs who otherwise would never consider asking for help. It is sometimes used with men as well. If requests do come directly from women, they are usually made through a third person, either a woman who is already being assisted or a male relative who comes to the sub-office on her behalf.

Once initial contact has been made and the criteria and conditions carefully explained, the next step is registration, for which the applicant pays £S2. The fee is considered to be an important statement of the programme's philosophy to the prospective client: that this is a business proposition, not charity. The programme strongly believes that services which must be paid for (no matter how small the fee) are more valued than those provided free.

After registration, home visits are made to establish family circumstances and work place visits are made to conduct thorough business analyses. Some applicants are rejected at



*The decorating of brides with henna designs is a rare and valued skill*

*Photograph by Wendy Wallace*

this stage, and some decide themselves not to continue with the programme. Roqhia Hamza Osman, from the staff in Dar el Naeim recalls how a woman responded angrily when asked for details of her income and household expenditure. 'Either you give me the money or you don't, but don't interfere' the project worker was told, and that was where negotiations ended.

### Women's Businesses

Businesses operated by women tend to be small and almost all production is home-based. Of the 47 different types of businesses that have been or are being assisted by the programme, women are active in 13. These are tailoring, catering, cake-baking, sweet making, ice cream making, hairdressing, laundry, soft drink selling, henna decoration, spaghetti and macaroni making, *shira* (handicraft) production, needlework and knitting. The most common activities are tailoring and catering. Assistance is also offered to businesses which at first glance seem to hold little prospect for a steady income. For example, the decorating of brides with henna design is a rare and valued skill, and once a woman has established her reputation as a talented artist, she can expect quite substantial payments for a single assignment.

### Tailoring

Tailoring, the most popular activity, is not necessarily the most lucrative. Its great attraction is that the work can be done at home, which is the most socially acceptable place for women to work, and it can be done in hours snatched between household chores and child care. Women tailors compete with men in this trade, but they are also hampered by the fact that it is not as easy for them to operate from public workplaces or to go outside the home to sell their products. Rather they must wait for customers (generally their neighbours) to come to them with orders, or depend on a male relative to sell their ready-made garments outside. EAA staff try to help solve these problems by suggesting ways of advertising or alternative market outlets for the male 'agents'. The skills upgrading and business management courses have also helped toward this end. Too often, however, a woman's tailoring business operates irregularly and marginally and lapses into little more than an income-saving activity by which she can make her family's clothing more cheaply.

### Catering: Aziza Ismael, Cooked Food Seller

Aziza Ismael is a thirty-year old Eritrean refugee, who moved to Port Sudan in 1978. Shortly after her arrival, her husband divorced her 'because my children always died very young'. Since then he has given her no help. She is the sole breadwinner for herself, her mother and her three brothers who are all under 10 years of age. She sells cooked food in a rented, make-shift shelter at 'kilo 8', a large flat wasteland beyond the *diems* where the scores of transporter trucks which serve the port park while they wait for business. She heard of the project through a friend and applied for a hire-purchase loan to replace her equipment which she had previously borrowed from relatives. The loan was readily granted as she had a regular clientele.

Aziza Ismael was assisted in making a detailed cost and profit account. She was introduced to the concept of counting her own labour as a cost and of paying herself a fixed wage which is not counted as profit. As a female member of staff notes; 'We try to help the client understand, you are different from your business. The wage you pay yourself must come out of business expenses because you are spending your time.' She was also helped to set her prices according to her costs, instead of simply charging the same as caterers nearby.

Frequently staff will visit their clients more than once a month if some aspect of the business requires special attention. 'If we notice that the price of a basic commodity has gone up', says one staff member, 'we visit the client to see how she is adjusting her business to this. For example a woman client might have received a loan when meat cost £S6 a kilo, now it has gone up by about 20 per cent. We can advise the client either to put in additional capital, to reduce production, or to increase her prices. In the case of most caterers, we would advise them to increase the cost of the dish - though we have to keep an eye open for what others are charging so that our clients will still be competitive'.

Lack of working capital is the most common problem facing women. On average, businesses run by men operate with three times the capital of those run by women. This often means that women cannot buy raw materials cheaply in bulk; thus operating costs are high and profit margins low. Amlasa Mokenen, an Eritrean refugee who sells *kisra*, never had enough capital to buy her flour in bulk. She received a £S300 loan to buy 270 kgs of flour. This she repaid in three months, although the installments were high (including administrative charges £S105 a month). Since the loan she has increased production, spends less time on travelling to purchase flour, and has higher profits even though some of the flour bought for the business is sometimes used in home consumption. However, the question now is, how will she be able to keep up her high level of production once she has used up the flour bought with the loan? She is being urged to set aside money to buy another bag of wholesale flour and not to use any of the flour to feed her family. But with so many dependents and high household expenses, she may not be able to follow this advice.

#### **Affirmative action for women - the continuing debate**

The debate over and the search for better ways to help women and to reach more women clients continues within the project. The special problems of women's businesses which prevent them from providing good incomes to their operators revolve around: lack of adequate capital or equipment; poor management skills; lack of regular business hours; competition; an inability to market products outside the home; and heavy family responsibilities which frequently force women to use business capital to meet immediate needs.

Staff feel that at least some of these problems could be overcome if women were encouraged to give higher priority to their businesses. 'Women often don't succeed in business because, even when they are the main breadwinners, they are

not as tough as men in resisting pressures that limit their business production. As a female staff member notes: 'You can't compare women's heavy family responsibilities with those of a single man. Women have to do everything, and sometimes they fail. We try to help women work out a way to divide their time, but many can't make fixed hours if they have children.' She also feels strongly that women have a higher commitment to the family, and this pushes them into using business capital for daily needs. 'It's well known that almost all women's income goes back into the family, much more than men's. Women don't go to the cinema or buy cigarettes.' It is women, not men, she stresses, 'who must everyday find the food to feed the children.'

Saadiya Mahmood Aman, the female group leader of the Diem el Nour sub-office, agrees with this view and believes that the programme must find new ways of helping women. 'We give the same help to women as we give to men. But it's not only capital that women need. They also need training and much advice. We must introduce new kinds of businesses for women. There are so many women who need training in a skill, not only equipment.' This is an important point which must be underscored. For example, she is doing all she can to encourage the tailoring teacher who rents a room in the sub-office's women's center to give classes to young women for a small fee. The teacher has received a loan to buy a sewing machine for these classes. She would also like the programme to buy the finished products from the trainees for a small sales exhibition in the nearby market in order to encourage them to continue their training and help them get started in business.

In this she is supported by her colleague Haw Hamid Iris, but other group leaders are very reluctant. They see this as a departure from the programme's philosophy of only giving help to businesses which have proven potential. 'The others say, "the project is for self-reliance. If we accept this exhibition idea, then we no longer support self-reliance". But we say that we would be helping women to become employed and that they would eventually become self-employed.'

'Softer' loans for women, or help that is not directly aimed at improving the viability of a business are not planned. But there is one element of affirmative action for women entrepreneurs already in the programme; men who request loans for catering businesses are refused so as not to increase competition with women in an already crowded field. Assistance is now also given to retailing activities by women which marks a departure from the stress on credit for producers who sell their own goods. Thus, support is being given to women who sell goods produced at home by other women, and who take a percentage of the sales as their payment. Home improvement loans are also proving increasingly popular. Some staff believe that this kind of help may serve to considerably improve the quality of women's lives in the *diems*.

Within the programme, women and men staff are treated equally and receive the same basic salary, depending on whether they are team leaders, consultants or assistants. To this



salary incentive payments are added, based on the number of clients handled by each staff member. But in practice there are some differences in working conditions and pay. Because women clients frequently must be sought out and often need more sustained advice, since their businesses are more precarious, women staff tend to have a heavier work load than their male counterparts even when they have fewer clients. And social constraints hamper women staff too. While men staff members are given loans to buy motor scooters to make their rounds in the sprawling *diems*, it would be considered 'unacceptable' for women to use them. Women must take buses or walk, which again is more time consuming. As a result, women's incentive pay, based on the numbers of clients, is generally lower than the men's. To redress this unwelcome and unexpected imbalance, which only emerged as the programme developed and grew, incentive payments are gradually being phased out.

#### Recent developments

The political changes in Sudan have increased the vulnerability of women's businesses to rising prices and food shortages. Since 1988, the town authorities' attempts to 'clean up' the town by clearing squatter areas and informal trading places have made the future precarious. 'Individuals had appealed but these disjointed actions had achieved nothing' comments Ali Adam, 'so we assisted the women to form a committee and arrange a meeting with the town clerk to present their case. They argued that they were widows and mothers, some with sick relatives to look after, and since their businesses had been destroyed they needed a new source of livelihood. What had the council got to offer? The women were forceful and convincing, and the town



A beverage vendor

clerk has at least granted them temporary permission to trade'. When women get together in groups their position can be strengthened.

#### Affirmative Action for refugees

Over the past two years the number of refugees participating in the project has been falling, from 40 per cent in 1986 to approximately 15 per cent of individuals and 50 per cent of groups in 1988. Ali Adam, Programme Coordinator, suggests that refugees prefer secure employment to enterprise in the informal sector of Port Sudan, and jobs are relatively easy to come by as refugees are perceived as cheap and trouble-free labour. 'We have relaxed some of our criteria for assistance in order to attract refugee clients - there is no geographical restriction on their operation, the minimal residence requirements are also waived, and if the project is to provide employment and services for the wider community we will consider higher loans'. But extreme caution has to be exercised in changing the criteria for any one group. Recently a new sub-office has been opened in Assoutriba refugee settlement. Refugees have been reluctant to move into the new UNHCR settlement, located about 4km outside the town and as yet with no water facilities. EAA offered advice and assistance in the initiating of a bus cooperative to overcome the transport problem and are involved in developing workshops and marketing facilities.

*This article was compiled by JoAnn McGregor based on an interview with Ali Adam, Programme Coordinator in Port Sudan, recent project documents from ACORD and extracts taken from a SEEDS pamphlet published in 1988, 'The Port Sudan Small Scale Enterprise Programme' by Eve Hall.*

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SEEDS is a series of pamphlets on women's income generating projects edited by Ann Leonard. Other issues include women's credit schemes, a village women's group organizing and operating a commercial bus service in Kenya, women promoting waste recycling in Mexico - an environmental technology with income potential. The series is designed to share information and spark new projects based on the positive experiences of women who are working to help both themselves and other women improve their economic status.

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# REFUGEE WOMEN'S SURVIVAL STRATEGIES AND PROSTITUTION IN EASTERN SUDAN

Employment and income generating opportunities are limited in Tawawa, a semi-urban refugee settlement on the outskirts of Gedaref in Eastern Sudan. In addition, high levels of violence, corruption, alcoholism and gambling make it a notoriously dangerous and difficult place to live. For women, the problems of earning a living are particularly severe and the community and income-generating projects have made little difference. **Tadelle Demeke** conducted an independent survey of the situation of women in the settlement, the options open to them and their survival strategies. In the following article she explains the problems they face and the reasons why so many women have turned to prostitution as the only viable way to make a living and support their families.

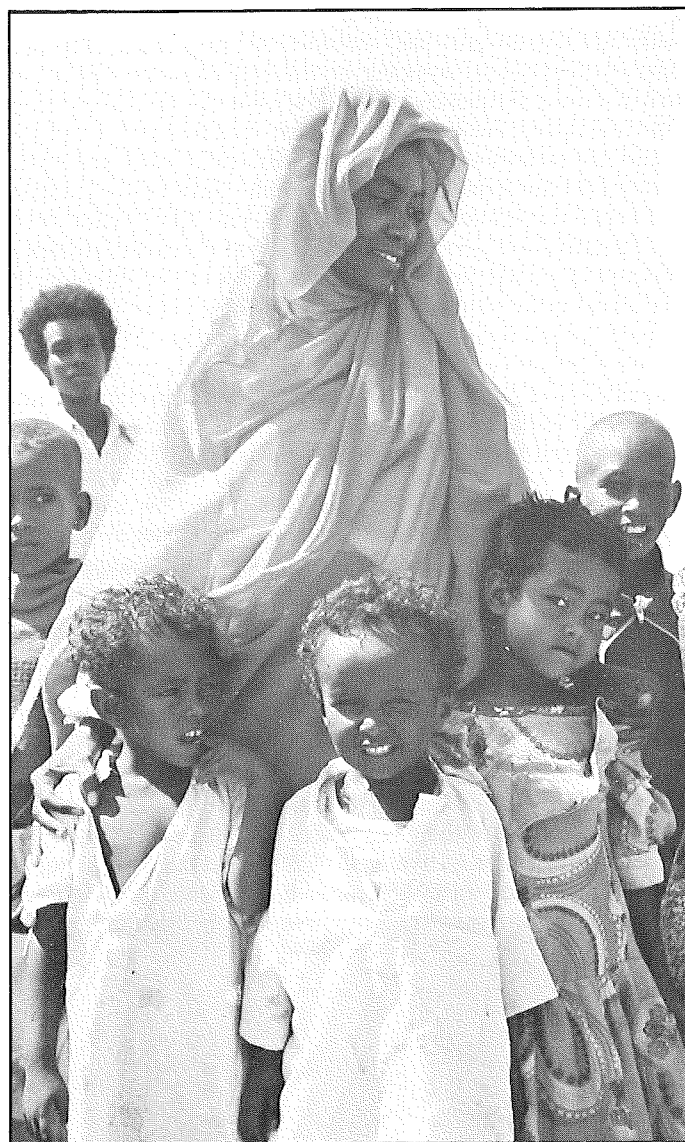
## Married Women in Refugee Settlements

Most married refugee women are living with their second or third husband, having been deserted by previous partners. Husbands leave their wives mainly for economic reasons. This causes great hardship for the women who are left to support themselves and their children by resorting to odd jobs or by getting minimal support either from relatives or agencies. But such support is unreliable and at best only short term, so women find that the only strategy open to them is to remarry, bear more children, suffer another desertion, and enter yet another marriage.

One of the women in the study was aged 38 and had married four times. She did not have children from her first husband, but she has three children from her second husband (whose whereabouts she did not know), and four children from her third husband (who similarly disappeared). Finally she married for the fourth time and has two more children and is pregnant with the third. This husband has also disappeared. The woman is now trying to support herself and her nine children with little, if any, external support. Fatherless children suffer materially from their poverty, as well as psychologically - envying friends who have fathers.

Husbands are developing a new culture of neglecting to support their children, leaving the burden almost entirely on the shoulders of their wives. Mothers are not aware of their legal rights to challenge the fathers of their children. Being a refugee exacerbates this problem due to the unfamiliarity of the language and culture of the host society, and it is women who feel these pressures more than men.

Ironically, most Ethiopian men like to have as many children as possible. In part, this may be due to the lack of legal and social pressure on them to take responsibility for the maintenance of their children. For example, one woman with two children suggested to her husband that they should not have any more children, as they could not support them. Her husband would



*Mothers assume sole responsibility for supporting their Children.*

*Photo by: John English/OXFAM*

not accept the idea, so she consulted the local elders. Meanwhile her husband had ordered her to leave if she would not consent. Whilst her case was being considered, she became pregnant as she knew nothing about family planning. Then she did not dare to consult the elders again, as she was ashamed of her pregnancy. In such cases of family dispute, elders usually believe in delaying settlement of the case, in the hope that husband and wife can solve their differences. Though appropriate in certain circumstances, women have sometimes frequently found it a harmful approach.

Most family disputes emanate from economic problems. If a wife starts up a business to support the family (e.g. selling tea or cooked food), a husband will generally oppose her, suspecting his wife of having an affair with another man. Such businesses are considered socially as venues for adultery.

Family disputes are a common feature of refugee life, but what really concerns me is the complete lack of sympathy the husbands show for their wives. For example, in 1981 one woman gave birth to twins. The income she was getting was not enough to support her family, so she asked her husband to contribute towards the upkeep of their children. He refused although he was earning (she did not know how much). She decided to present the case to the local elders. They recommended a divorce and that the wife should be left with the home and children. But the husband argued that his wife should leave the house and he himself would care for the children. This is what happened, the husband started to 'take care' of the children and the wife was obliged to live with the neighbours. He took the case to the police and charged his wife with deserting their children. The wife was arrested for four days. The elders went to the police and negotiated her release on condition that she live with her husband. At the time of the study she was living with her husband in the same situation as before the dispute.

The burden of marrying more than once, particularly when a wife has children from her previous husband(s), is very heavy as mothers usually assume sole responsibility for supporting their children from earlier marriages.

#### **Refugee prostitutes in Tawawa Refugee Camp, Eastern Sudan**

In Tawawa, there are an estimated 700-800 prostitutes out of an official population of 2,250 women between the ages of 15-49. The aim of the study was to assess how they live, why they became prostitutes, the nature of their problems, and how they perceive their present and future lives. The study will be of help to non-governmental organizations and others concerned with identifying the problems of refugee women who earn their living through prostitution and working towards their solution.

Tawawa is an urban refugee settlement with a population of 13,000 according to the official census. Out of the 7,508 aged between 15 and 49, 70 per cent are men and 30 per cent women. But there is a large, floating, unofficial population of agricultural labourers and others, most of whom are men. Thus the imbalance in the ratio of men to women in the settlement is even more pronounced than appears in the census figures. Refugee and Sudanese men travel considerable distances to visit the settlement which is famous for its prostitutes, liquor bars and gambling. Thus, refugee women are in a particularly difficult situation.

Most prostitutes are unhappy and ashamed of their occupation. But they say that prostitution is the only viable option they have for survival. Almost none of the prostitutes participate in agency projects for refugees. Their only skill is preparing traditional foods. There is an urgent need for training programmes specifically for these women, to enable them to change their occupation. At present agencies give no specific attention to this group.

Refugee women do not immediately turn to prostitution after entering the Sudan. Most prostitutes have experienced at least one marriage, and the study showed that they become prostitutes as a result of failed marriages. Some of them have children from previous husbands, and in the past a few had worked as domestic servants.

Another problem faced by prostitutes is their lack of knowledge of the use of contraceptives, and of the control of sexually transmitted diseases. When they start out, many prostitutes are young and naive. I spoke to one 18 year old prostitute who had previously been a domestic servant and became pregnant as soon as she started prostitution (she knew nothing about methods of birth control). She expressed grief at her own situation 'I became a prostitute after seeing others dressed well and decorated with ornaments, which I thought was a sign of a better life. But I have ended up with a child who has no proper father.'

Another example is a woman who came to Sudan in 1986 and by the time of the study was a mother of two children. When she first came to the Sudan, she had sought shelter with a relative who sells local beer. When she was living with this relative a man asked her for sex, which she refused. But the man persuaded the relative and an arrangement was made without her knowledge or consent. She was invited to eat lunch, and when she entered the room, the man inside closed the door and had sex with her. She became pregnant. When the man became aware of her pregnancy, he paid her rent for six months. Then he gave no more support. She later turned to prostitution to earn her living.

When asked what support she gets from the fathers of her children, she replied, 'no men are willing to help their children from outside married life. The maximum support they give is to pay house rent for five or six months when the woman is pregnant, then dress the child when he/she is one year old, then buy some biscuits or sweets when the child is two years old, when the child is three or older, the father will roam around the town with his child to show the community that he/she is his child. The full responsibility for bringing up the child is with the mother'.

Maybe the reason that most refugee men try to have children from prostitutes is to escape all responsibility. There are many cases of abortion among prostitutes, sometimes resulting in the death of the women.

In some cases refugee women are forced by their husbands to become prostitutes. One 40 year old woman told me her story, and is a case in point. She disliked her occupation, and was especially ashamed because she feels too old to be a prostitute

'My husband came to Sudan before me in 1980. I had six children, three of whom were alive at that time. In our homeland (Shiraro-Tigray), we had our own house and enough property. Two and a half years after my husband came to Sudan, he wrote to me telling me to join him and leave all that

# PLANNING FOR EMERGENCIES

## ENGINEERING RELIABLE EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLIES IN REFUGEE CAMPS:

we had behind. The trip to Sudan was very difficult. When I arrived in my husband's house, we had no property to help us earn a living. My younger son then started to sell bread on the street to support the family. Finally I asked my husband why he asked me to come to Sudan knowing that he could not support the family. His reply was 'be a prostitute like your friends; I cannot support you'. I consulted the local elders as I was insulted and wanted a divorce. Then I became a prostitute to support my family. My husband found a job later, but I was not willing to live with him again.'

Prostitution is not a preferred occupation, almost all refugee women turn to it as they see it as the only option for solving their economic problems. Given current economic conditions in the settlement, the number of prostitutes is likely to increase.

Prostitutes expressed particular disgust at certain aspects of their livelihood: waiting till midnight for customers, dealing with drunk and violent men, and contracting venereal disease are all to be expected. Some men refuse payment. Could anything be more degrading? As if this is not enough, prostitutes are frequently beaten by customers and lose their few possessions if an argument breaks out. They are also victims of thieves at night (they are considered to have money and perceived as unable to defend themselves). If they argue, the house is set alight. There are numerous examples of prostitutes who have been knifed or burnt. In one example a man slept with a pregnant prostitute who was living with her mother, during the night he killed both the prostitute and her mother and burnt the house.

As prostitutes are vulnerable to various crimes, ranging from stealing to murder, some of them have a quasi-husband who acts as a guard until 12 p.m. and passes the night with her until the morning. Such men are called 'Midnight' referring to the time when they sleep with their quasi-wife prostitutes. These men may or may not have their own job in the day time. Such men can be fathers to the prostitutes' children, and in most cases share the income from the prostitution. There are certain husbands who force their real wives into a similar relationship for the economic benefits.

As it is the economic and social pressure on women which has led them to prostitution, the lifting of this burden requires special attention and commitment.

**Tadella Demeke**, Women's Programme Officer, SCC, Gedaref, Sudan.

*The author is herself an Ethiopian refugee from Gondar, who works for the Sudan Council of Churches. The study was conducted independently of SCC who do not have any projects in the settlement.*



*Construction of an OXFAM tank with semi-skilled refugee labourers*  
*Photograph by Robert Hodgson*

In the initial confusion of emergencies, the immediate crisis can prevent effective long term planning. Yet conditions often persist and problems become long term so interventions need to be made to last. For water supply programmes the need to construct emergency inputs for minimum maintenance is crucial. This is not always easy since installations are required quickly and their future is not always clear; however, a little extra consideration in the planning will save scarce resources in the long term.

### **Oxfam water supply packs**

The Oxfam Technical Unit have developed 'water packs' to standardise ordering and supply of equipment for emergency water supply and distribution. The equipment was designed to be reliable, easy to transport and simple to construct. The packs consist of a pump driven by a diesel engine (Petter or Lister); storage tanks made of corrugated iron sheets with a rubber lining; pipework and distribution via tapstands.

### **Mechanical Equipment**

Operating conditions are often extremely harsh and the consequences of breakdown can be dramatic in emergency situations. For example, air temperatures in the East Sudan can reach 50 degrees while altitudes of up to 3,000 metres in Ethiopia put a big strain on the operation of a diesel engine. Dust storms and torrential rain may be experienced in either country. It is axiomatic that for mechanical equipment to give good service in such conditions, the installations must be made as robust as possible and maintenance must be planned from the start.

The programmes for the refugee-affected parts of East Sudan include maintenance of more than 100 Lister-engined machines

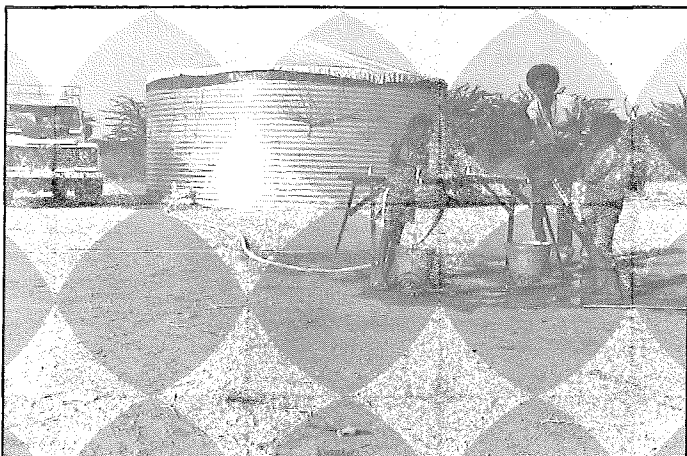
of various types and sizes. While these engines are reported as giving good service, records for the first four years of operation show considerable variation in running costs, even among engines of the same type. Seemingly minor differences in installation and application can be significant in the longer term: i.e engines must be securely bolted down and protected against dust and heat to maintain wear and tear at acceptable levels.

Although the cost of replacing worn parts may seem small, the time that the engine is out of action may be crucial. Once its operation is passed to the local community, the requirement for foreign exchange to purchase the parts may become crippling. It is important, therefore, to minimize potential engine wear through careful design of the pump stations and to anticipate and provide for routine maintenance such as replacement of oil and filters. In harsh operating environments routine maintenance may involve significant time and expense but neglect in this undertaking will prove more expensive in the medium to long term.

#### **Water storage and distribution**

The standard Oxfam tanks have been used all over the world and represent very good value in terms of cost per volume contained. It is possible to erect a 90 cubic metre tank in one to two days, even with relatively unskilled workers. The tanks are generally finished with a reinforced plastic fabric cover stretched over rope supports to keep out dust. These fabric covers make ideal roofs for huts and it is usually necessary to protect installations against theft, e.g. with a fence. Access to the tanks to treat or sample the water is inconvenient, however, and as part of their continuing review of the equipment, Oxfam are considering alternative designs for the roofs for longer term use.

Depending on the local topography, it may be necessary to pump water from the storage tanks or, alternatively, flow under gravity may be possible. For short distances the standard push-fit reinforced PVC pipe is used while for longer supply lines (say, more than 300 to 400 metres) the larger High Density



*For immediate use a tapstand can be gravity-fed from the tank*

*Photograph by Robert Hodgson*

Polythene (HDP) pipe is preferable in order to reduce friction and maintain adequate flows. The HDP pipe is more expensive and requires skilled labour for laying.

Tapstands must be robustly constructed with thick durable concrete bases and surface falls to drain waste water to a sump. If water is allowed to pond the resulting mud-baths create serious health hazards and breeding sites for insects. Construction of soakaways in black clay soils is impracticable; an effective procedure for water spillage disposal is to allow nearby residents to establish vegetable patches. This ensures that no drop is lost or allowed to puddle, but needs sensitive control to prevent excessive use of the main supply.

By careful design of water distribution systems it is often possible to improve the layout of ad-hoc refugee camps and to help spread residents more evenly over the area designated for occupation. Where new camps are planned it is vital to consider water distribution as part of the essential infrastructure of the camp and to involve the engineer from the start.

#### **Water quality and treatment**

Groundwater sources should not need treatment but it is often advisable to disinfect supplies to prevent subsequent infection during transport and distribution. Chlorine tablets of the type used for swimming pools are easy to use initially. In the long term, calcium hypochlorite is more cheaply obtained in powder form but needs more careful transport and storage. Alternatively, vertical sand filters can be constructed using the Oxfam tanks, but if water is turbid the capacity and frequency of cleaning required may render these uneconomic.

Surface water sources may be turbid or muddy and must be allowed to settle before chlorination. Flocculents such as aluminium sulphate can be used to promote rapid settlement but their efficient use will be determined by the water chemistry. It may be simpler to provide extra storage; in either case frequent cleaning of the tanks will be needed.

River water can sometimes be cleaned at source by abstracting through infiltration galleries or pipes laid in trenches in the river bed. The water is then filtered naturally as it is drawn into the gallery. Knowledge of the hydrological characteristics of the river basin is most helpful in successful completion of such constructions.

#### **Wells and springs**

In some circumstances, for example, for smaller populations, wells may be built. If constructed at existing water sites, these must be regarded as permanent and should be built to the most robust design possible. Where new wells are planned then their potential effect on local agricultural practice must be determined. Considering the simplicity of the concept, there is a surprising variety of designs for the humble well.

An effective design developed in northern Ethiopia comprises 500mm thick masonry walls topped with a precast concrete cover-slab. A circular concrete upstand is provided integral

## RESPONDING TO REFUGEE EMERGENCIES: A REVIEW OF MANUALS

with a masonry plinth to assist water gatherers in hoisting their pots onto their backs. A one-metre wide circular apron surrounds the well and drains to a point where water can be collected for animals.

Caution is advised in the installation of pumps in remote areas. All hand-pumps need maintenance and if there is no mechanic nearby capable of this undertaking then the pump will soon break down. It may be better in the long term to provide some sort of bucket, preferably of a pattern that is locally available. Buckets made of discarded lorry tyres have been used with some success. On-site bacteriological testing confirms that pollution is reduced if a single bucket is used for drawing water rather than each user bringing his/her own.

### In the longer term

The performance of the Oxfam water equipment is reviewed constantly and improvements made where possible. Once the future of a particular programme becomes clear, it is beneficial to reconsider and, if necessary, upgrade the installed equipment. It will also be vital to establish maintenance and operator training facilities locally to ensure continued smooth-running. The change-over to local operation and maintenance will be more easily achieved where the refugee population has been closely involved in planning and implementing the works from the outset. Most camps include people with technical ability and these must be sought out as soon as possible.

Properly engineered water supplies require qualified experienced personnel for optimum design and efficient construction. The Register of Engineers for Disaster Relief (REDR) places great emphasis on the dissemination of experience as widely as possible among its members. Their regular training days ensure that the membership has current knowledge of the disaster relief scene.

**Robert Hodgson, CEng.**

The Register of Engineers for Disaster Relief (REDR) was set up in 1980 to assist in locating experienced engineers willing and able to respond rapidly to requests to participate in disaster relief programmes. The Register includes upward of 500 volunteers covering the broad spectrum of civil and public health engineering. To date about 125 assignments have been undertaken in programmes as diverse as flood relief in Swaziland and Sudan, earthquake reconstruction in Mexico, roadworks to assist famine relief in Uganda, sanitation for refugees in Malaysia and water supply programmes during the 1984 drought emergency in Sudan and Ethiopia.

*Information on REDR may be obtained from:  
The Director, Register of Engineers for Disaster Relief  
25 Eccleston Square, London SW1, UK*

*Information on the Water Packs from:  
The Technical Unit, Oxfam  
274 Banbury Road, Oxford, UK*

It is important to share the development of an 'institutional memory' in the organizations that deal with refugee crises in the developing world. It is essential that relief agencies do not respond to refugee crises in a merely ad hoc manner but build upon the experience of previous emergencies. This review summarizes one aspect of the 'institutional memory' built up by Save the Children Fund (SCF) in responding to the nutritional, health, and logistical problems presented by refugee influxes and similar emergencies. This is manifest in a series of manuals, which have arisen largely out of work in Ethiopia and Sudan, but have wider relevance in Africa and the rest of the world.

The foundation of SCF's approach to the health and nutritional problems of refugee and similar crises is to be found in the work commissioned by the World Health Organisation and the International Disaster Institute (now Relief and Development Institute) in the mid-1970s. The first manual is:

- (1) *The Management of Nutritional Emergencies in Large Populations*, by C. de Ville de Goyet, J. Seaman, and U. Geijer, (Geneva, World Health Organisation, 1978).

This is a 100-page booklet which lays down the principles of relief interventions, including sections on the nutritional needs of people during normal times, and the minimum that can safely be given in an emergency; the assessment of the nutritional status of a population; the roles of general food distribution, therapeutic feeding, and special foods; the control of communicable diseases; and managerial and logistical aspects of running an efficient relief camp. This remains a seminal work on the topic, the distillation of years of experience in Biafra, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Sahel. It is also available in French and Spanish. Copies can be obtained from:

*Distribution and Sales Service  
World Health Organisation  
1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland*

The price is Swiss Fr. 16.00 though special terms are available for developing countries. Payment is also possible in US dollars or Pounds Sterling.

- (2) *Disasters, A Special Edition Devoted to Viewpoints, Case Studies, and Theoretical Considerations on the Care and Management of Refugees, Issue 3,4, 1979*, (ed. Francis D'Souza).

This consists of a series of twenty-four papers on a variety of aspects of managing a refugee influx in a developing country. It includes practical articles on the setting up and management of refugee camps, as well as more general papers on the experience of refugee crises in a number of countries, and the seminal paper of Robert Chambers, 'Rural refugees in Africa: What the eye does not see'. While of limited value as a field manual, this collection remains one of the most wide-ranging and stimulating publications in the area.

- (3) *Nutrition in Shelters in Emergencies*, SCF, London.  
 (4) *Health Care in Shelters in Emergencies*, SCF, London.

These two manuals were produced by SCF in 1984. They are indispensable practical guides to the setting up of feeding centres and field hospitals, written in a simple and straightforward manner with helpful illustrations so that any competent nurse or community health worker should be able to set up and manage the essentials of a relief camp. They are based specifically on experience in Ethiopia but are relevant anywhere in the world. They can be obtained from:

*Overseas Information Dept.  
 The Save the Children Fund  
 Mary Datchelor House  
 17 Grove Lane  
 Camberwell  
 London SE5 8RD, UK*

The price is £2.50 plus £1.00 post and packing.

- (5) *Establishing a Refugee Camp Laboratory - A Practical Guide*. By Warren John, SCF London.

This manual was produced in 1985. Its title is self-explanatory; it follows the standards of practicality and applicability set by the above two publications. It is also available from SCF, London at a price of £2.50 plus £1.00 post and packing.

In the mid-1980s, relief agencies in Sudan found themselves taking on a wider range of responsibilities than ever before. In the western provinces of Kordofan and Darfur, two NGOs (CARE and SCF) found themselves responsible for the major part of famine relief programmes that were intended to reach a total population of over six million people. The concurrent influx of Eritrean and Tigrayan refugees in eastern Sudan presented NGOs with equally mountainous, if less familiar, tasks. All over the country relief agencies also had to operate in the face of almost unprecedented difficulties. Among the relief agencies, SCF was to the fore in trying to record and codify the lessons learned from their experience, before all the experienced personnel disappeared elsewhere. The results of these was a series of three documents. These are:

- (6) *Suggested Preparations for a Possible Refugee Influx into Sudan*, by Chris Eldridge, SCF, London 1987

In this paper, Chris Eldridge (then SCF Field Director for Sudan) goes beyond the manuals discussed above. He does not attempt to rewrite them, or even replicate what is found in them, but rather supplement them with highly specific prescriptions for how to overcome the problems faced by a relief agency working with refugees in eastern Sudan. The paper is written in anticipation of an influx in early 1988 (an influx that did occur, though in a slightly different form to that anticipated by this paper). It deals with technical, bureaucratic, staff and logistical issues. Valuable sections include inventories of the equipment needed to keep Landrover 110s on the road, which specific drugs should be stockpiled, how to avoid local transport contractors, suppliers and landlords from

overcharging foreign agencies and how to manage the delicate problems of staffing - expatriates, refugees, and local Sudanese. Copies can be obtained from SCF, London, price £2.50 plus £1.00 post and packing.

- (7) *Food for Thought, Suggestions for a Systematised Approach to Emergency Food Distribution Operations*, by Chris Eldridge, SCF, Khartoum, December 1987.

This is a much longer document (two volumes) and sets out the lessons learned from SCF's involvement in the relief operations in Darfur during 1984-86. At the end of the operation SCF had a fleet of 150 lorries and 50 Landrovers and employed 600 staff. This was the first occasion on which an NGO had undertaken a comprehensive famine relief operation for the entire population of a region on such a scale. Chris Eldridge includes discussions on how to organize relief grain distributions, notably the sort of agreements that should be signed with government and the sort of contracts to be made with hauliers. He goes on to discuss information collection, the logistics of grain transportation and storage, monitoring and evaluation, reporting, staffing and specific problems encountered with maintaining vehicles. This is all specific to Sudan but has a much wider relevance. Not since the Indian Famine Codes has there been such a comprehensive documentation of 'what is to be done' in large-scale famine relief on the basis of experience in trying to do it. Sadly, the lessons are learned all too slowly: just as this manual was being written, the EEC was committing some of the blunders made three years before by USAID in trying to mount a relief operation for western Sudan. Copies are available from SCF, London, price £2.50 plus £1.00 post and packing.

- (8) *Food Targeting in Darfur: Save the Children's Programme in 1986*, by Ruth Buckley, in *Disasters*, 12, (1988), pp 97-103.

This is a supplement to Chris Eldridge's work and describes in greater detail the principles and practices of the way in which SCF gathered socio-economic data in the villages of Darfur in 1986 so as to be able to target food relief to the poorest. Ruth Buckley was responsible for planning the targeting scheme and monitoring its performance. This was a path-breaking exercise in the application of rigorous information collection based upon social-scientific analysis of vulnerability to famine. The successes and failures of the project are instructive and are relevant well beyond Sudan. A particular lesson learned was the importance of including local government in the planning and implementation of the targeting.

Alex de Waal

*UNHCR and OXFAM handbooks will be reviewed in future publications.*

# POETRY

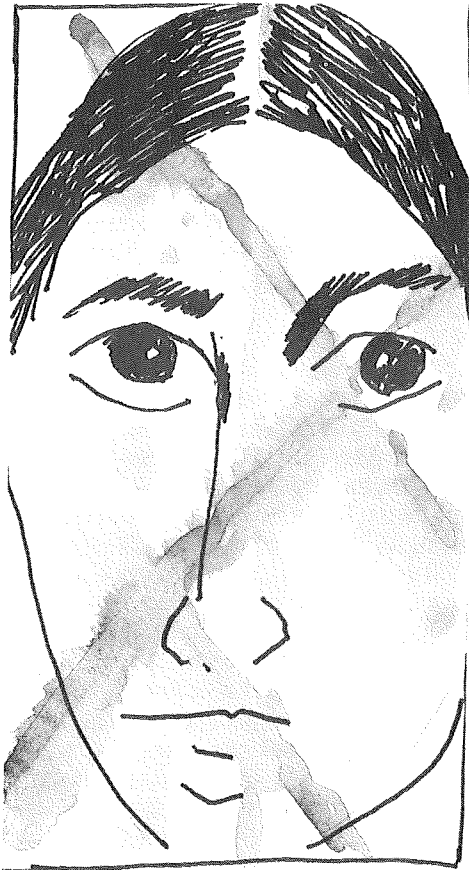


Illustration by Lucy Reford

by Monique Thormann

## My Life

*You are a refugee. You cannot dance here.  
(Only two buckets of water a day)  
You cannot pass outside this gate. Ever.  
(Fish oil, charcoal, two chicken wings, rice)  
You must work for our government in community  
labour. No pay.  
(Asbestos in walls, contact sheet floors, two people  
per hole)  
You are lying to us. Your father was not a soldier  
before 1975.  
(Interview: wait, wait, wait. Reject, Reject, Reject)  
You must have a white card to work. You cannot  
cross this line  
without a special pass.  
(Suffocating heat. No fan. Urine-stained dirt. Pure  
living)  
You drank too much last night. Go to jail.  
(Baby screaming, voices shouting, no closed spaces,  
ever)*

*You have entered our country without permission  
You have disgraced yourself because you left your  
country  
Have you no shame.*

## My Friend Thanh

*Hands clinging the windowless window  
A face criss-crossed by bamboo sticks*

*You are outside, I am inside (tilting my chair at my  
desk).  
Your tale is of past freedoms  
In a younger life in an old country;  
Mine can only be in the present  
in a forward-moving life  
In a Superpower country.*

*Each memory is savoured  
The eyes sting, the throat contracts.*

*You are saddened 'Where did all the good times go?  
Will they be back?'*

*I ask a horrible question 'Why did you leave?'  
Silently, though.*

*You do have one freedom and a happy time ahead of  
you,  
My Friend  
You can come and sit beside me in my office.  
Laughing only.*

## Through Green Eyes

*Not glazed, but clear.  
Not fixed, but wandering.  
Soaking in, not cutting out.  
Locked in the hope, the despair, the waiting  
the pain  
the frustration  
rejection over and over.  
Former victims as well as victimizers.  
Now presently paying victims.  
Oh those poor black eyes. Thousands  
of them. But only one set of green eyes.  
Enough to help.  
A Little.*



# REVIEWS

*The Production and Marketing of Ethnic Handcrafts in the US: a Curriculum and Teacher's Guide for Training Refugees* (1988) by Elizabeth Perkins, published by Refugee Women in Development, Inc., 20 F Street N.W., Fourth Floor, Washington, DC 20001, USA.

As ethnic crafts become increasingly popular in the West, there is a demand that refugee women are well-suited to fill. But, as the author of this book points out, their attempts to market their products are often severely limited, being both sporadic and uncoordinated and the income generated inconsistent and meagre. *The Production and Marketing of Ethnic Handcrafts in the US* was born from the need to set up a class to teach refugee women to develop and market their own crafts.

The manual is organised into thirteen chapters covering a wide range of teaching activities: product quality, new product ideas, adapting to accepted consumer demands, price setting, selling through craft fairs and stores, publicity, custom orders, record-keeping, invoices and sales taxes. Each chapter is divided into: goals, background, advance planning, field trips, handouts and sources and resources. Several of the chapters are accompanied by slides. Most examples are from Asian and Central American cultural groups with the majority of the slides being products made by the Hmong who have had the most experience with crafts production for a US market.

Without expanding into sophisticated marketing methods such as mail order catalogue or export marketing, the material in the manual is clearly intended to fall within the scope of refugees who arrive in a Western country with little or no idea of the marketing procedures of that country. Although primarily written for use with refugee populations who have resettled in the US, there is no reason why *The Production and Marketing of Ethnic Handcrafts in the US* should not be adapted to help train refugees elsewhere in the West.

Mary Kilmartin



*Refugees from Vietnam* (1989) by Carol Dalgish, published by Macmillan, Basingstoke, UK, 158 pp.

Carol Dalgish provides us with a very interesting overview of the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees in the UK. In the introduction the context is explored by reference to previous movements of refugees in Britain, notably the Poles and Ugandans, and the kinds of provision which were made available for them. Dalgish also touches on the motives of administrators by showing how the notion of integration can be variously interpreted, but rarely implies on the part of the refugee a willingness to abandon 'cultural heritage and language'. The background to the movement is explored through the reminiscences of refugees, and with a rather too superficial summary of political events in Vietnam, and first asylum in Hong Kong. This might have been better confined to reporting how the refugees saw this experience. Likewise, the description of the reception programme in the UK does not greatly benefit from comparisons with Sweden and Canada, where the constraints and priorities are very different. The able analysis of the shortcomings of the UK programme stand alone, particularly with reference to dispersal, language and skills training.

The data on resettled refugees is derived from two main sources. Firstly, the records of more than 4000 Vietnamese, collected by the British Council for Aid to Refugees between 1979 and 1981, are discussed and tabled, providing a demographic profile of this group. Secondly, there are two surveys conducted by the author of forty-four heads of household living in London and Rochdale. Dalgish admits that the sample is not representative, but nevertheless provides useful if rather depressing information on the difficulties which Vietnamese face in establishing themselves in British society. Recommendations contained in the final chapter offer some guidance as to the means by which this situation could be improved.

Linda Hitchcox  
St Antony's College, Oxford.

***Famine that Kills: Darfur, Sudan, 1984-1985.* (1989)  
by Alexander de Waal, published by Oxford  
University Press.**

This book challenges the way in which famines are understood. It addresses the discrepancy between the interpretations of outsiders and local people's own analysis of their situation and strategies of coping.

The reinterpretation starts out by questioning and discrediting the common English usage of the term 'famine' - in particular the way in which it is automatically associated with mass death through starvation. The focus then changes to the concepts and experiences of people in Darfur, based on visits to villages in

contrasting parts of Darfur over eighteen months during and after the famine. The author then explores the processes of hunger, destitution and death, rooted in a detailed analysis of local history and economy derived mainly from oral sources.

The most controversial part of the argument is that concerning mortality. The rise in the death rate during the famine is attributed less to lack of food than to 'health crises' in areas where people concentrated in large numbers. In particular, children died of diseases such as diarrhoea and outbreaks of measles which de Waal alleges have not increased in severity due to malnutrition. The evidence for the argument and its interpretation will doubtless stimulate debate amongst epidemiologists, nutritionists and demographers.

The last section of the book discusses the governmental and international relief effort. The main criticism is that food aid was largely irrelevant as it did not properly address health crises as the cause of excess mortality. Therefore, it was marginal to the saving of lives. The second criticism of the relief programme is that it was committed late, delivered late and reached the wrong people. He provides recommendations on how the relief effort could have been improved in this particular context - clean water, sanitation and vaccination could have prevented most deaths even without any food aid.

But de Waal (page 1) does NOT intend these as a blueprint for other famine situations:

'These specific recommendations suggest a new agenda for famine relief, but they are not the main purpose of the book. I do not want to be part of the creation of a new orthodoxy, which will be imposed on poor societies which are vulnerable to famine. Instead I am arguing for no orthodoxies, but instead a willingness to listen to, debate with, and understand people who suffer famine in each place.'

JoAnn McGregor\*

**The Refugee Studies Programme**

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**Anthea Sanyasi, Course Training Officer  
Queen Elizabeth House  
21 St Giles  
Oxford OX1 3LA  
UK**

# UPDATE

## PUBLICATIONS

### The Occupied Territories

*The Palestinian Situation*, by Sarah Graham-Brown is published by the World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations. Price SwFr 15.00 (£6.00 or \$9.00) post and packaging included.

*The Palestinian Situation* outlines the historical origins of the conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis, going back to the early days of the twentieth century. It also briefly examines the changing regional and international context and the roles played by the state of Israel and the PLO. However, the main focus of the book is on the Palestinians' own predicament and highlights the effects of dispossession, dispersion and exile over several generations; the experience of living under Israeli rule; and finally their views of national struggle and resistance.

As the World Alliance of YMCAs is seeking to respond to the new developments in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the book also examines the YMCA's historical role in the region, its longstanding involvement with Palestinian refugees, and its response to the events of the *Intifada*.

To order write to:

Refugees and Rehabilitation Dept.  
World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations  
37 Quai Wilson, 1201 Geneva, Switzerland

### Forced Migration

*Forced Out: The Agony of the Refugee of our Time* (1989), by Carole Kismaric is published by Human Rights Watch and the J.M. Kaplan Fund in association with Penguin Books. Price £12.95.

*Forced Out* focuses attention on the plight of refugees in the late 20th century and provides an understanding of where modern refugees come from and how their experiences in countries of asylum are determined by political and not humanitarian concerns. In particular, the book raises questions as to what happens when people are torn from their homeland, what it is like to live in a refugee camp and what refugees face when they seek refuge abroad. *Forced Out* ends with a manifesto to future practice with a twelve point covenant on the Rights of Refugees.

To order write to:

Penguin Books Ltd  
27 Wrights Lane  
London W8 572, UK  
Tel: 01 938 2200

### Asian Refugees

*Asian Migrant*, a quarterly publication of the Scalabrini Migration Centre, Philippines. vol. II, no. 3 (July - September 1989), provides: short newsbriefs from various Asian countries; more comprehensive articles on the Vietnamese Boat People, Refugees in Australia, and Vietnamese Female Outworkers; Update; Reviews; and an interview on the Disadvantaged Schools Programme in Australia.

For further information write to:

Asian Migrant  
Scalabrini Migration Centre  
PO Box 10541 Broadway Centrum  
Aurora Blvd., 1112 Quezon City  
Philippines

*Stalemate: Refugees in Asia*, by David Feith, commissioned by the Jesuit Refugee Service/Asia-Pacific, (price A\$ 5.00 or US\$ 4.00, 96 pp.), surveys the main refugee groups in Asia and examines some of the issues central to the refugee situation. It attempts to convey an understanding of the lives of refugees in Asia and the problems they face.

The contents of this book include: The Main Refugee Groups: Afghan, Indochinese, Vietnamese, Kampuchean, Laotian, and Sri Lankan Tamil refugees; World Responses; Asylum and Protection; Voluntary Repatriation, Local Integration, and Resettlement; and Refugee Camp Life.

To order write to:

Asian Bureau Australia  
173 Royal Parade  
Parkville, Victoria 3052, Australia  
Tel: (03) 347 8211

or

Jesuit Refugee Service/Asia-Pacific  
88/1 Soi Luecha 1  
Phaholyothin Road, Bangkok 10400, Thailand

### Refugee Children

*Children on the Frontline: the impact of apartheid, destabilisation and warfare on children in Southern and South Africa, 1988*, 67 pp., (price \$5.00, £3.50 UK), is a report for UNICEF by various authors and covers the impact of South African policies on such areas as: child health and mortality, nutrition, education, housing, the price of war, and what must be done.

To order write to:

UNICEF, Unicef House  
3 United Nations Plaza, New York  
NY 10017, USA or

UNICEF, Palais des Nations

CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

### Refugee Women

*Sweeter than Honey: testimonies of Tigrayan Women* (1989), by Jenny Hammond with Nell Druce, published by Third World Publications, price £19.95 hardback, £6.95 paperback.

Tigray, an area attempting to secede from northern Ethiopia, is often associated with famine, poverty and underdevelopment. But since 1975 the people of Tigray have been transforming their society by a gradual process of revolution. Led and supported by the Tigray People's Liberation Front, they have set up an education system, health care and a democratic administrative structure, despite the impoverishment of the region and the Ethiopian government's continued military aggression. *Sweeter than Honey* investigates the claim of this revolution and its effects on the lives of the people, particularly women.

To order write to:

Third World First  
232 Cowley Road  
Oxford OX4 1UH  
Tel: 0865 245678

## Education

**Advanced Education and High-level Training for Black South Africans: Commonwealth-wide Initiative** is a report on the Harare Consultation held at the Harare International Conference Centre, Zimbabwe on 28 - 29 June 1989. The Consultation followed a proposal by the Southern African Advanced Education Project (SAAEP) and the South African Education Trust Fund (SAETF) to establish a network of institutions in Commonwealth countries to provide high-level training for black South Africans.

Those interested in the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the report should write to:

*South Africa Education Trust Fund*  
63 Sparks St., Suite 806  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1P 5A6  
Tel: (613) 230-6114 or

*Southern Africa Advanced Education Project*  
Queen Elizabeth House  
21 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LA, UK  
Tel: (0865) 270264

## Refugee Youth

The Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has published the proceedings of the National Conference on Refugee Youth, **Replanting Uprooted Youth**, held on 4-6 December 1988 in San Francisco, USA.

The goal of the Conference was to develop strategies to strengthen and enhance the successful resettlement of refugee youth at local, state and national levels. The report describes the process by which representatives from seven major cities were able to identify the most crucial problems facing refugee youth in their localities and the steps to be taken towards alleviating those problems.

For further information write to:  
*Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service*  
122 C Street NW, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20001, USA

## Health

**Medicine and War: A Journal of International Medical Concern on War and Social Violence** is published quarterly by Penrose Trust Press on behalf of the Medical Association for Prevention of War. Subscription price: £60 or US \$110.

The Journal concentrates on global community health and preventative medicine in areas which include forms of social violence such as: violent treatment of prisoners; violence or discrimination against minorities, ethnic communities or other groups; and the neglect of the needs of refugees.

To order write to:  
*The Editor*  
*Medicine and War*  
Penrose Trust Press  
601 Holloway Road  
London N19 4DJ, UK

## NGOs

**World Vision News** is published quarterly by World Vision Zimbabwe, a Christian humanitarian organisation involved in community development, childcare, emergency relief assistance, evangelism and

mission work. The newsletter includes in-house news items, church news, individual concerns, workshop reports, and new projects. Subscriptions are free upon request. Anyone wishing to advertise or contribute news and feature articles should write to:

*World Vision Zimbabwe*  
Dolphin House  
123 Moffat St., Harare, Zimbabwe  
Tel: 703794

**NGO News** was first published in January 1989 by NGO Unit, UNHCR, Geneva and will continue to be a regular means of disseminating information on NGO views and activities. The publication consists of news, reports and bulletins (in either French or English) received from NGOs.

Those wishing to receive or contribute to *NGO News* should write to:  
*NGO Liaison Unit*  
UNHCR, Palais des Nations  
CH-1211 Geneva, Switzerland

## ORGANIZATION

**Islamic African Relief Agency (IARA)** is an African voluntary organization, established in 1981, based in Khartoum, Sudan. IARA focuses on services to over a million international refugees living in Sudan who are victims of political situations or natural disasters. The work of IARA is carried out through: the provision of food, shelter, clothing and medical services; establishing health centres in urban and rural areas; finding solutions to educational problems; executing feeding programmes on child nutrition; and the rehabilitation of refugees and victims of disaster.

For further information write to:  
*Islamic African Relief Agency*  
PO Box 3372  
Khartoum, Sudan  
Tel: 73741, 78766, 73916

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Africa Watch Sudan**, a non-governmental organization created in May 1988 to monitor human rights practices in Africa, has issued a special bulletin on the dismissal of dozens of judges who objected to the rights of civilians facing trial in special military tribunals; the closing down of all independent newspapers; and the detention of lawyers and trade unionists.

People are asked to send politely-written letters of appeal to the Sudanese authorities listed below, calling for the government to: reinstate judges who have been dismissed and release those who have been detained, and lift the ban on the Sudanese Bar Association; suspend special tribunals until they are reformed to bring them into line with the international human rights standards; allow newspapers and journals to publish and distribute without censorship.

Please address appeals to:  
*His Excellency Lt-Gen Omar Hassan al Bashir*  
Head of State, Defence Minister and Commander-in-Chief  
Army Headquarters  
Khartoum, Sudan

*His Excellency Mr Hassan el Amin al Bashir  
Ambassador of the Republic of Sudan  
Embassy of the Republic of Sudan  
2210 Massachusetts Avenue NW  
20008 Washington DC, USA*

*His Excellency Mr Ibrahim Mohammed Ali  
Ambassador of the Republic of Sudan  
Embassy of the Republic of Sudan  
3 Cleveland Row  
St James's, London SW1A 1DD, UK*

#### EDUCATION

A one day conference, **Refugee Education into the 1990s**, was organised by the British Refugee Council and World University Service on 12 October 1989 at County Hall, London to promote educational opportunities for asylum-seekers and refugees.

The Conference confronted the question of the increasingly restrictive refugee policy of the British government and the impending changes in education as a result of the Education Act of 1988. In particular, it referred to the various problems refugees face from the time of their arrival in the UK such as: poor or non-existent interpreting services; inadequate provision of information about educational opportunities open to refugees; insufficient English language tuition; and lack of support for refugee-based organisations by some local authorities.

Workshops covered such topics as 'Fees and Awards', 'Careers and Educational Advice for Adults', 'The Educational Needs of Girls and Women', 'Using Community Resources in Mainstream Education', among many others.

For a full report and recommendations of the Conference write to:  
*World University Service (UK)  
20 Compton Terrace  
London N1 2UN, UK  
Tel: 01 226 2747*

**The Eritrean Educationists Group in the UK (ERED-UK)** was officially launched on 7 July 1989. The main aims and objectives of the association include:

1. To provide Eritrean educationists or those interested in the field of education, with a forum for exchanging ideas and experiences;
2. To collect and classify relevant educational materials (e.g. books, journals, research reports, teaching aids etc.) for teachers and students in Eritrea and in the refugee schools in Sudan;
3. To offer an educational counselling and advice service to Eritreans in the UK.

For further information contact:  
*Dr Teame Mebrahtu  
Chairman, ERED-UK  
96 White Lion St., London N1 9PF, UK*

#### EXHIBITION

**Vietnam Refugee: A Touring Photography Exhibition** by Howard Davis, is the result of two years work with Vietnamese refugees in the UK. The Exhibition consists of forty black and white photographs with an accompanying text from Vietnamese refugees telling their own experiences. The Exhibition can be readily assembled and is suitable for a wide variety of public venues.

Bookings or further information about the Exhibition can be obtained from:

*Howard Davies  
Wombat Photography  
107 Pemberton Rd.  
London N4 1AY, UK  
Tel: 01 348 1531*

#### PEST CONTROL

An adhoc committee on pest control, chaired by Dr Gordon Smith, and comprising representatives of the NGOs SCF and OXFAM, LSHTM and the Liverpool STM, UNHCR, ODRNI, ICI and Wellcome, met in Nov 1989 to establish a working group for the purpose of:  
Generating guidelines on the appropriate use of chemical pesticides in disaster relief programmes, refugee camps, etc.  
Producing a list of contacts with experience and expertise in various areas of pest control and sanitation who may be approached for expert advice by development agencies, disaster relief organizations etc.

This committee is now seeking information on vector control programmes that have been undertaken with particular reference to the mechanics of organization. Anyone with information, reports or references should contact:

*Dr Maleleine Thomson (co-ordinator)  
Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine  
Pembroke Place  
Liverpool L3 5QA*

## SHOULD WE CHANGE OUR NAME?

The term 'participation' is over used and much abused. It was originally welcomed as the vital link between relief and development, seen as the way in which refugees and other powerless people could take control of their own affairs. Too often, however, in the practice of refugee assistance, it has come to mean refugees taking part in projects defined and organized by agencies, in extreme cases, only 'participating' by contributing their labour. Or it can refer to the co-option of refugee elites in a form of 'indirect rule'.

Participation is difficult to define in practical terms: where should it start and where should it end? At which levels should we be aiming for participation? All or some of the above? Sometimes there are structural obstacles to participation, for example if the host country regards the refugee population as a security risk. And what are the policy implications of a local host population who have no experience of participation, for example in authoritarian states. How do we then create participatory structures for refugees?

So what about the Network? If the term participation is so nebulous and so frequently corrupted, do we want anything to do with it? If the common experience of participation is not a positive one of empowerment, but rather one of continued exclusion dressed up in new words, maybe we should discontinue to use it.

Please write to us with your views and experience of 'participation'!

*If you are not already a member of RPN and would like to join, please fill in the tear-off form below and return it to RPN as soon as possible.*

### YES, I WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE REFUGEE PARTICIPATION NETWORK

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone/Telex/Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Main area of work experience ( e.g. education, health etc ) \_\_\_\_\_

Special interest group ( e.g. refugee women, disabled etc.) or second area of experience \_\_\_\_\_

Geographical area of interest ( e.g. Africa, Asia etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Type of organisation ( e.g. non-governmental, international agency, refugee-based, individual etc. ) \_\_\_\_\_

*Please send to: Refugee Participation Network, Refugee Studies Programme,  
Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St Giles, OXFORD OX1 3LA, UK*

# LETTERS

RPN received the following letter in response to Clare Hanbury's article 'Back to English 900' which appeared in RPN 5, June 1989.

*'Having read Clare Hanbury's article, I feel I should react, because in a world where changes take place every day it is difficult to report accurately. Ms Hanbury's article describes the situation in Chi Ma Wan in 1988, the year that she left. The article in itself is not badly written, but it gives the impression that over the past year and a half nothing has happened in terms of development in education and social welfare for the benefit of the Vietnamese people in Hong Kong. I would like to take this opportunity to update you and Ms Hanbury by describing the activities of ISS (International Social Service) in the various centres where we are present.*

*From the two 'open' centres, San Yick and Pillar Point, a total of almost 800 children attend primary and secondary education in a schoolbuilding outside the camps. In a normal school environment, these children receive up to twenty hours of schooling a week in four shifts. Thirty-five staff await the children every morning or afternoon. Twenty-seven Vietnamese from the centres, three local Chinese, an Indian lady, an Irishman, an American and two overseas Vietnamese work extremely hard from morning till evening. All are professional teachers, either trained in Vietnam or having gone through an intensive in-service training.*

*Apart from these school activities, ISS has set up what we call support programmes in the centres, primarily for remedial cases and the older children (16-18). Evening classes include English and Vietnamese literacy for adults. For the English programme a curriculum has been developed by a professional curriculum developer from the Hongkong University. Our problems include a continuing lack of classroom space and money for text books and additional audio and visual teaching aids. Attendance is sometimes irregular because many of our evening students have jobs outside the centres, but in general the ISS programme enjoys great popularity among the people in the centres.*

*Apart from the activities in the liberalised camps, ISS has set up an elaborate programme for asylum seekers in seven detention centres. Despite lack of space due to the enormous number of arrivals, most of the children receive between twelve and twenty hours of instruction by professional staff recruited mainly from the centre and supervised by outside ISS staff. ISS staff also run an in-service teacher training*

*programme. Our reasons for having the actual teaching done by the people themselves are:*

*1. Participation of the camp population adds to the feeling that the school is theirs and not an ISS institution. ISS is a service organisation that helps Vietnamese people set up and run their school rather than offer a package deal that the people in the centre may or may not like, and over which they have no control.*

*2. It is reality and not ISS's preference that most of the asylum seekers will, at some stage, return or be returned to Vietnam. In order to avoid alienation from the system to which most of the children are bound to return, it is better to have instruction given by those who have inside knowledge of the system. Those who are granted refugee status will be transferred to refugee centres and receive education aimed at entry into a western type society.*

*3. The more people we can involve in our programme the better as it helps them to retain, or regain, their dignity which has been damaged by institutionalisation in prison camps. If only we could do more in this respect.*

*Due to the above mentioned space problems, we have expanded our involvement with the Vietnamese community by employing an Activities Co-ordinator who organises a whole range of activities that do not necessarily require the use of classroom space. There are music groups, choirs, camp newspapers, regular cultural festivals, sports competitions etc.*

*Overall, the International Social Service, Hongkong Branch tries to provide for a total of 36,000 people in the nine centres and is ready to take on more responsibilities if asked. For 1990 the budget exceeds 20 million Hongkong dollars and estimates the active participation of more than 800 refugees and asylum seekers. Additionally, we hope to employ about seventy-five people from outside, preferably local Chinese. This preference for local Chinese is a) because ISS is a local organisation and b) because local Chinese, who have inside knowledge of the situation, may be instrumental in our attempts to improve the profile of the Vietnamese in the eyes of the people of Hongkong.*

*I do not wish to conclude by saying that all is well in Hongkong. I wish I could. However, members of ISS staff who have toiled, fought and sweated to provide a service in a society that is hostile towards the Vietnamese, and those who work for them have a right to some credit and recognition should be given to their efforts. After two years of absence, it is unworthy of Ms Hanbury's qualities as a human being and a committed refugee worker to presume that after she left developments*

*have come to a standstill.'*

**Adrie P. van Gelderen**  
Refugee Co-ordinator  
International Social Service, Hongkong  
Branch

After the recent influx of East Germans into West Germany the RPN received the following letter which carries on the continuing debate of 'who is a refugee?':

*'A few years ago the West German government was concerned with the influx of refugees from troubled parts of the Third World. The burden of these immigrants on the German economy and society overshadowed the political cause which is the legitimate basis of a refugee's claim. For these refugees there was no Berlin wall and all that it stands for to mediate their claim for asylum.*

*This is in contrast to the euphoria which has surrounded the influx of East German 'refugees'. I do not want to question the hospitality and warmth shown by the West German nation to those from the other side of the border with whom it feels a great sense of identity. My question revolves round the arbitrary use of language. The term refugee has an international definition. It is an emotive term. Is it right to compare a refugee with a genuine fear of persecution to the recent East German guests?'*

**Manuchehr Sanadjian**  
Oxford

The following letter from the Christ Evangelical Episcopal Church in Nazareth is in response to an article in RPN 6 on Palestinian Refugee Women:

*The article on the Palestinian Refugee Women was very interesting. For many Palestinians shut away in refugee camps there is very little obvious hope. They have no shelter, little money and not enough food. This is why articles such as this are important. They give the Palestinians back some of their pride that the Israelis may have managed to take away. They read of their brothers and sisters making steps forward of their own initiative and succeeding in their endeavours. This gives them hope and pride in themselves. Thank you for such articles, not only for us but for the knowledge that it reaches people around the world and that more people come to know of our situation.*

**Riah Abu El-Assal**  
Archdeacon

# NEWS FROM RSP

9.0(.)The guest editor for this issue of RPN is JoAnn McGregor, assisted by Mary Kilmartin. Printed by OXFAM.

## New RSP Staff

As RSP continues to expand, we are very pleased to welcome the following new senior members of staff: Ken Wilson, a former guest editor of RPN, has joined RSP recently as Research Officer; Andrew Shacknove, a lawyer will fill the Joyce Pearce Fellow position attached to Lady Margaret Hall; Margaret Godel, a psychologist, has joined to conduct research on mental health issues of refugees in Gaza; and Emmanuel Marx, a distinguished anthropologist, will be with the Programme for this year to teach the course 'Voluntary and Involuntary Migration: Towards a New Theoretical Framework'.

## RPN Directory Error

In the first edition of the RPN's *Directory of Participants*, the postal addresses were listed by country. Those who live in Gaza and the West Bank were thoughtlessly listed under Israel rather than under Gaza or The West Bank, 'via Israel'. For Palestinians who have struggled for so long for their own homeland, this difference in postal address means a great deal. Our failure to observe this fact has no doubt caused offence, for which we apologise. The next edition of the *Directory* will be amended.

## Research on NGOs and Refugee Assistance in Malawi and Zimbabwe

Roger Zetter, Editor of the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, conducted a research feasibility study, 'NGOs, Governments and Humanitarian Assistance for the Uprooted in Southern Africa', in Malawi and Zimbabwe in July and August 1989. The study was the preliminary stage in preparing a major research proposal, in collaboration with five host country researchers, to examine institutional responses to the Mozambican influx and the dynamics of institutional relationships in crisis situations.

Assumptions that internationally based organizations and agencies are best equipped to provide humanitarian assistance for refugees are now being increasingly questioned. Many African countries favour widening and strengthening an indigenous base for assistance. It is within this context that Governments, NGOs and Intergovernmental organizations in Malawi and Zimbabwe are involved in a refugee relief and assistance operation for more than one million forcibly displaced people from Mozambique.

The main objectives of the study were to:

- \* establish the field conditions and appropriate research methods for a full research programme;
- \* formalise a network of host-country academics to collaborate in the research;
- \* provide an overview of the refugee situation in each country.

A summary of this report will be included in the next issue of RPN.

## International Meeting

Recognising the need to draw upon additional expertise outside the University of Oxford and to continue to stimulate the consolidation of refugee studies, RSP has established an International Research Advisory Panel (IRAP) to bring academic specialists together from around the world.

The first annual meeting was held on 3 - 7 January 1990 the theme of which was *Refugees in the 1990s*. An objective of this Panel is ultimately to serve as an international 'think tank' on refugee issues. The agenda included the current international refugee situation and the implications for research, training and the dissemination of information to policy makers. A report with conclusions from the proceedings will be published in the *Journal of Refugee Studies* and will also be made available to interested governments and humanitarian agencies. On request, RPN readers will also be posted a copy.

## Sixth Form Conference on Refugees

In order to further students' understanding of and commitment to human rights, the Refugee Council and the Refugee Studies Programme organised a pioneering conference in Oxford on 15 November 1989. More than 130 sixth formers from twenty-one secondary schools attended.

The conference was organised into workshops that addressed topics including: Britain's restrictive attitude towards refugees and the plight of those who seek asylum in the UK; international refugee situations in Cambodia, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Central America, the Horn of Africa and Palestine. The conference ended with the students attending a talk by Dr Swee Chai Ang, internationally known for her work as a surgeon in refugee camps in Beirut and Gaza.

Further information about educational material relevant to schools can be obtained from the British Refugee Council, Bondway House, 3/5 Bondway, London SW8 1SJ, UK

## New and Recent RSP Publications

The following publications are available from the Refugee Studies Programme: *The Directory of Current Research on Refugees and Other Forced Migrants*, 2nd Edition 1988 (price £6.00). The Directory is regularly updated and contributions are welcomed from all researchers; *The Refugee Crisis: British and Canadian Responses*, Symposium Proceedings 1989, (price £3.00); *Politics and Ethiopian Famine 1984-85* by J. Clay and B.K. Holcomb, (price £2.50); *The Crisis of Migration from Afghanistan: Domestic and Foreign Implications*, RSP Conference Proceedings, April 1987, (price £4.00).