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WELCOME HOME!

Repatriation to South Africa, Zimbabwe,
Chittagong Hill Tracts, West Papua, Laos.



Photograph by P.Lyttleton, OXFAM

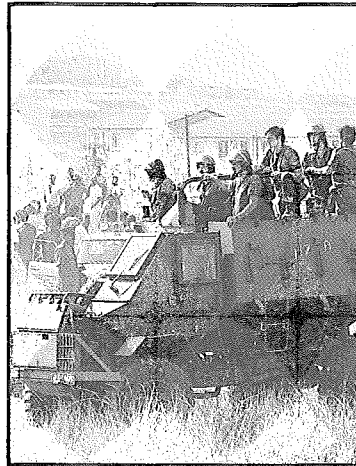
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- * Monetization of Food Aid:
What's in it for Refugees?

- * Mental Health
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THE REFUGEE PARTICIPATION NETWORK (RPN), published quarterly by The Refugee Studies Programme, aims to provide a forum for the regular exchange of practical experience, information and ideas between people who work with refugees, researchers and refugees themselves. The RPN is currently mailed, free of charge, to approximately 1300

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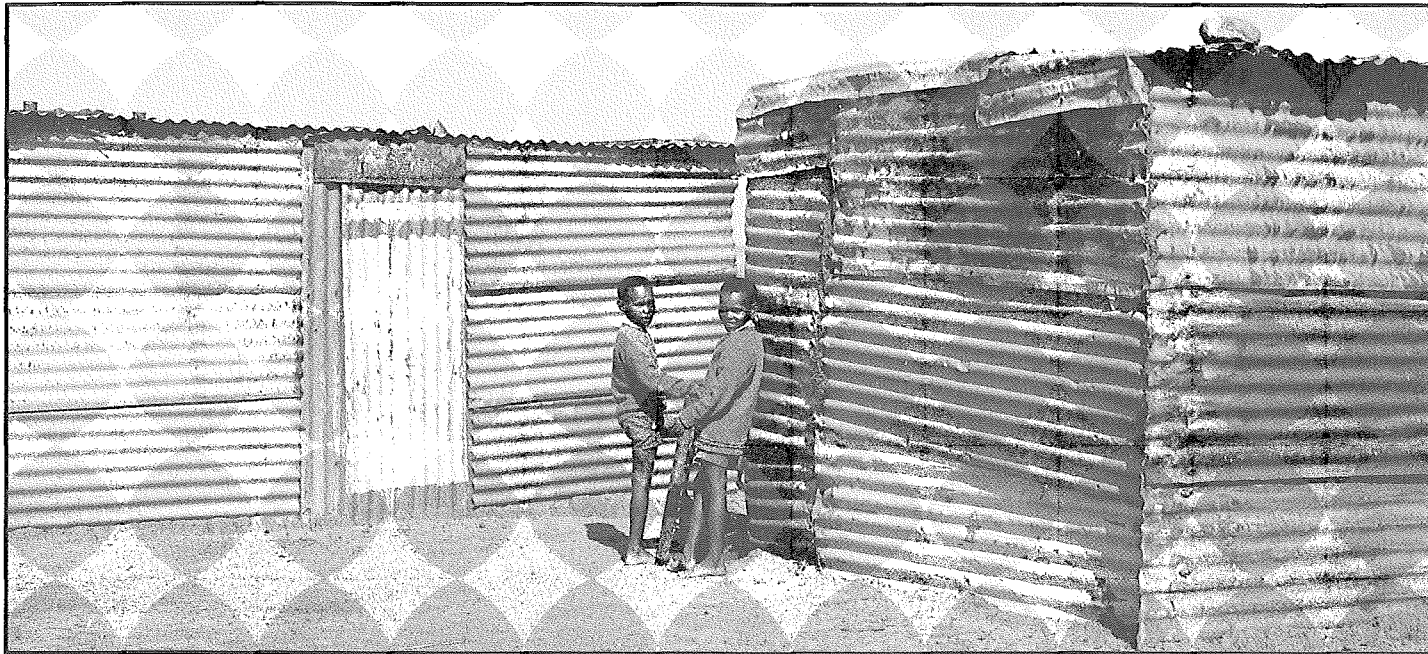
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REPATRIATION



Squatters' housing in South Africa

Photograph by OXFAM

THE DILEMMA OF RETURN

An estimated 40,000 South African political exiles have left their country since the early 1960s. Many are still outside South Africa, including the political activists of the 1960s and the youth who left later to acquire military skills. In the light of recent reforms, however, repatriation is clearly on the cards.

Most of the literature on repatriation deals with it as if it were purely an exercise in logistics. Treatment of the human dimension is strikingly inadequate and the tendency is rather to depersonalise refugees to undifferentiated 'masses' or 'flows'. This article starts to redress this imbalance and explores the prospects for repatriation to South Africa from the perspective of the political, social and economic conditions that returning exiles will find and the psychosocial problems that they are likely to experience. Although often considered separately, these two aspects of return are closely related.

The South African Context

The OAU outlines the central criterion for repatriation as being a change of circumstances in the country of origin that will allow returnees 'to take up a normal and peaceful life without fear of being disturbed or punished'. In reality, however, many repatriations do not occur in the context of clear-cut changes such as the end of a war, the withdrawal of a colonial power or a change in government. South Africa is a prime example of this.

Are the changes now taking place in South Africa fundamental enough to guarantee the safety of returnees? The unbanning of political parties means that previously unacceptable public issues, such as power sharing, are now being debated. However, what constitutes a 'political crime' has still to be decided, and opinions vary as to the adequacy of the reforms. The latter can be seen as a retrogressive step which simply takes the country back forty years, to a situation where black opposition was legal. The South African economy is saddled by debt, unemployment and capital outflow. The combination of a negative economic environment, political instability and international isolation have forced the government to introduce reforms as an attempt to save the country from economic collapse rather than as a 'change of heart'.

It is clear that the fate of political exiles will be a test case for South Africa's international prestige. Repatriation would give additional international credibility to the government and is therefore one political incentive for their return.

The Psychosocial Context of Repatriation

The following description of some of the psychosocial problems that are likely to arise during the process of repatriation is based on interviews with twenty adult South African exiles carried out in November and December 1990 when the euphoria that accompanied the initial announcement of reforms had subsided. All are professionals or students living in Europe, sixteen are black Africans and four are white. The aim was to explore current attitudes to and conceptions of what going back to South Africa means.

Primary Characteristics of Reintegration

A convenient way to consider the human face of repatriation is to distinguish between primary and secondary characteristics of reintegration. Primary characteristics are inherent or intrinsic to the process of return. Secondary characteristics accompany the process of return but are not essential to it (FASIC 1981).

Fifteen of those interviewed had definitely taken the decision to go back. As the average duration of exile for this sample was 15 years, the exiles are having to acknowledge that they must adapt to a very different society. The various reasons for wanting to go back amounted essentially to a desire to be part of a changing South Africa.

All the exiles interviewed are politically active people and perceive their return as a continuation of their political work. While insisting that they are not going back to reintegrate with apartheid, there was some ambiguity arising from distrust of the government: going back means returning to a social order which is essentially the same as the one which triggered their decision to leave. All wanted information about what to expect on arriving home and emphasised the uncertainties of recent developments. The need for information was stressed because of the danger of misinformation from the government-controlled media in South Africa.

Secondary Characteristics of Reintegration

Emotional disturbances, family problems, economic and employment problems are some examples of secondary characteristics of reintegration which I shall consider here. These problems may be a consequence of primary characteristics, or they may reflect personality and previous socio-historical experiences, or be a consequence of the broader social context.

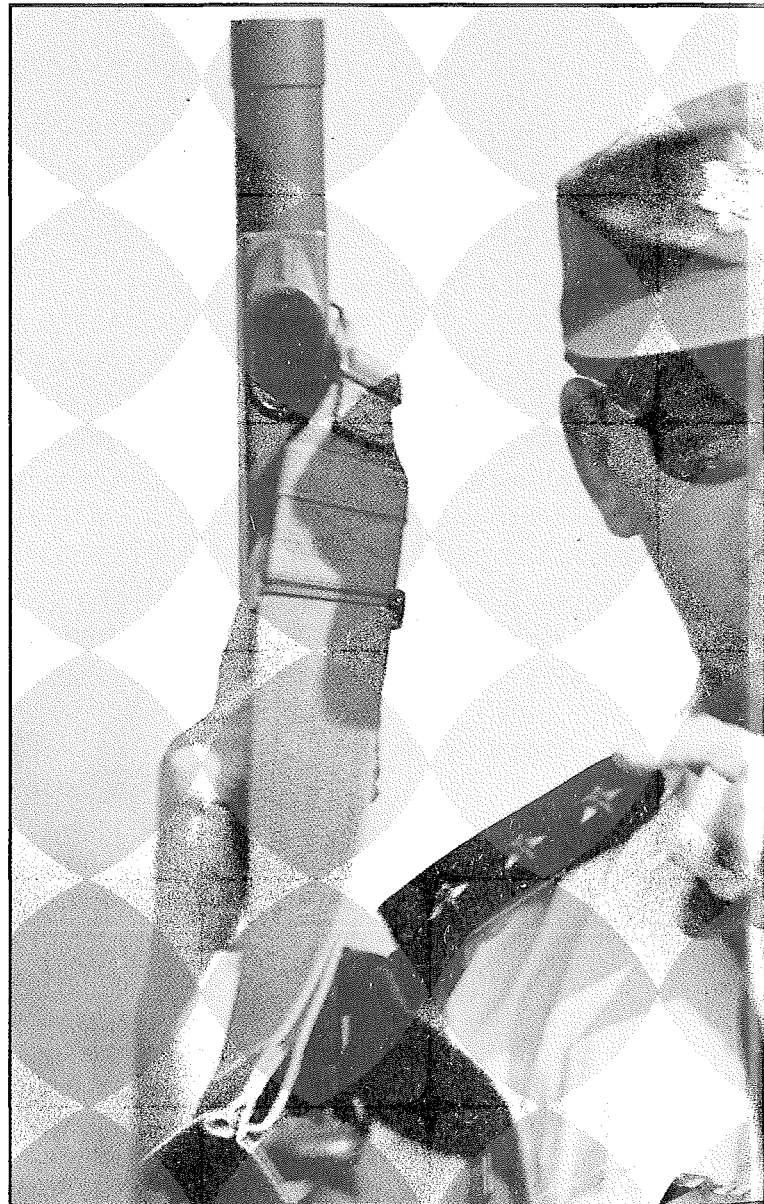
Emotional Disturbances

The few existing empirical studies of the emotional disturbances of reintegration indicate that among returnees who show emotional disorder, the disorder originates either before or during the exile period. This may relate to the problems of integration: for example, none of those interviewed felt they

had fully integrated with people in the various host countries they stayed in (although there is an obvious need to distinguish between not being integrated and not wanting to integrate).

Alienation was one of the most commonly cited negative experiences of exile, irrespective of country of asylum. It was expressed in various ways; as not being accepted by people, or being cut off from family. In Europe, alienation was linked to racism by all the black respondents.

Family break-up was another frequently cited negative experience. Those who have this experience preferred not to



South African Police

discuss it in detail. This phenomenon can refer to disavowal: the pain of the reality of family breakup being the reason for reluctance to be open about it. In some cases, such negative experiences can constitute predisposing factors to emotional disturbances.

Sixteen of the twenty exiles agreed that 'the best place for an exile is home.' As a result of previous work (Majodina 1989), I have found that South African exiles regard any expression of an emotional problem to be a sign of weakness implying the use of strong defence mechanisms to repress psychological problems. Returning home can acquire the symbolic meaning

of going back to a familiar place which does not require such defenses and can easily trigger the onset of overt emotional disturbances. Indeed, a study of Chilean returnees showed that once they had returned home, they threw caution to the wind (FASIC 1981). Home-coming brought such a huge sense of relief that it weakened psychological defenses, and conflicts that had long been repressed reached consciousness.

Family Problems

Fifteen of the exiles expected to have problems in reintegrating with their families in South Africa, due to the long period of absence. They are aware that they have acquired different values in exile and may not quite fit back in with the family life they left behind. They also recognise that in South Africa too, family members will have developed new attitudes and be in new situations which may not correspond with or be compatible to expectations. Problems were anticipated arising out of high expectations families would have of returnees. 14 of the respondents did not think they would in fact meet these expectations.

On the other hand, all expected to be warmly welcomed and took it for granted that they would receive continued emotional support from the family. As the dream of going home can take the form of a triumphant return, problems may arise if the reality does not match expectations or if the dream is not realised. Some, if not the majority, of returnees will have to live with close family members and in most cases this will mean sharing the small three or four roomed housing units accommodating as many as twelve or more people. This will inevitably create new sources of stress and the need to establish new kinds of relationships. Returnees and their families need a period of adjustment to share experiences and to come to terms with each others' different circumstances. In reality, this may not happen; a situation that is bound to have negative consequences. When conflicts do arise, family members tend not to look beyond their immediate situation to the broader socio-economic and political factors contributing to their problems. The common human reaction is to over-personalize the conflict, pointing the blame at individuals for any failure in personal relationships.

Economic and Employment Problems

There is little doubt that South Africa faces another year of negative economic growth, and unemployment is a huge problem. All felt that finding a job would be a prerequisite for integration, but were aware that finding suitable employment would be difficult. Some exiles do not have marketable skills, the old and sick will not qualify for jobs or pensions. Some only acquired military skills, and there is currently little prospect for their absorption into the South African Defense Force. There are already clear indications that those who



Photograph by OXFAM

LESSONS FROM ZIMBABWE: REPATRIATION OF EXILES AT THE END OF THE LIBERATION WAR

The repatriation of Zimbabwean refugees from Mozambique, Zambia and Botswana in time for the independence elections of February 1980 was the subject of two papers presented at the 'Symposium on Social and Economic Aspects of Mass Voluntary Return of Refugees from one African Country to Another' held in Harare, Zimbabwe, 12-14 March 1991. Here RPN extracts some of the themes from these papers which relate to the process of return.

The return to Zimbabwe at the end of the liberation war fits a classic model of repatriation: refugees returning to their country of origin after cessation of conflict, facilitated by UNHCR. Even in this case, however, the repatriation depended critically on refugees' own informal networks, and on channels created independently of the UN effort. Together these dealt with more returnees than did the UN system, as many refugees chose not to use formal channels out of suspicion and frustration.

The first paper, by Jeremy Jackson emphasises the key role played by local institutions. In the second, Stella Makanya questions the 'success' of the operation from the point of view of international monitoring and guarantees of safety due to the extent of harassment and control by Rhodesian forces.

LOCAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE ZIMBABWEAN REPATRIATION

Shortly after the news of the Lancaster House constitutional agreement, and 35 days before the elections scheduled for February 1980, UNHCR and its two implementing partners Christian Care and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare began the first phase of the repatriation programme. This entailed facilitating the return of those eligible to vote in time for the elections.

The operation depended crucially on the network of intelligence and support provided by Christian Care which had a track record of assistance before and during the war, giving them not only experience in operating under difficult and repressive circumstances, but also trust. In the late 1960s, it had coordinated welfare work in Southern Rhodesia. Its 'Relief Committee' had provided support for detainees and their families, and had been involved in drought relief, water supply and health services in the rural areas. The 'Prison Education Committee' had provided education and vocational training for detainees.

Despite being underfunded by the Rhodesian government, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare had a history of working



Squatters' housing in South Africa Photograph by OXFAM

gained their qualifications in Eastern Block countries will face job discrimination and, if present trends continue, it will be professional people trained in the West who will be given priority in the job market.

Finding accommodation will also be a problem in the context of the existing housing crisis. Unemployment and very high crime rates add to the insecurity of urban life. At the emotional level, feelings of marginalisation and alienation will inevitably resurface.

Political, social and economic conditions are closely related to the psychosocial outcomes of the process of reintegration. On the other hand reintegration can be perceived as the consequence not only of the actual physical act of return, but also of the individual returnee's personal characteristics and psychosocial history, and the socio-economic and political conditions they are returning to.

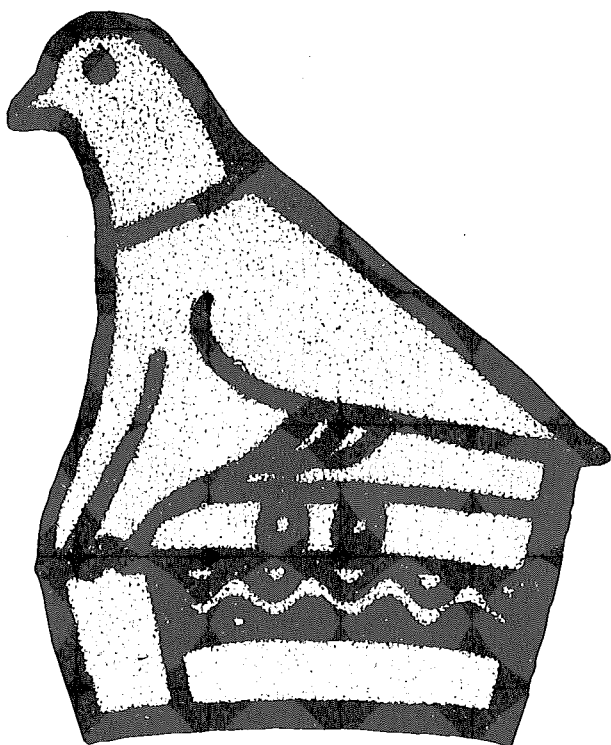
Although I have concentrated on the obstacles accompanying repatriation, it is not necessarily a painful and negative event. It can also be a positive experience that facilitates personal growth without threatening psychological stability. Attempting to understand the problems of reintegration is a useful starting point for the development of appropriate preventative measures that can make the process of return less stressful.

References:

FASIC 1981. 'A Social-Psychological Study of Twenty-Five Returning Families'. Presented at a seminar on Latin American Exiles entitled 'Mental Health and Exile'.

Majodina, Z. 1989. 'Exile as a Chronic Stressor'. *International Journal of Mental Health* Vol. 18(1).

This article is extracted from a longer paper entitled 'Prospects for Repatriation: A Psychosocial Study of South African Exiles', by Zonke Majodina, 1991.



with the war displaced, and had been drawn into site-and-service schemes in the urban areas in collaboration with NGOs and church groups who often provided finance.

An independently financed programme for the estimated 0.75-1 million internally displaced who fell outside UNHCR's mandate ran parallel to the programme to assist refugees. This was run by the Heads of Denominations (HOD) Christian Care Refugee Committee and was funded by local churches and donations from broader based ecumenical groups. The programme for the internally displaced grew out of a pre-existing programme for the war displaced. This had started in an ad hoc way through church groups, public appeals and individual and company donations channelled through a number of local NGOs. By November 1979 (three months before the PF government was elected), a 'top priority' plan for war refugees' resettlement had been outlined marking the beginning of the 'back to the land' campaign.

In Phase One of the repatriation, a network of reception, urban transit and mission centres was established. The reception centres were mostly at or near the border entry points, and here returnees received medical check-ups, food, overnight accommodation, assistance in tracing their relatives by the ICRC and were registered by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The network of mission stations in the countryside was heavily involved, and representatives of churches took on the responsibility for welcoming, counselling and briefing people on the situation in the country (or back home) before organizing their onward dispatch and transport to the nearest transit or mission centre.

To avoid congestion, returnees were rapidly decentralized from the transit centres to the missions. The mission centres acted as service and support satellites for the food aid (which lasted approximately a year) and other rehabilitation assistance. For many whose homes were destroyed these mission centres provided a critical base from which they could survive while reconstructing their homes. These same centres were used by the internally displaced.

In phase one, UNHCR officially repatriated 35,133 refugees in time for the elections (10,935 from Mozambique, 4,290 from Zambia and 19,908 from Botswana). During the same period a large number repatriated themselves. There are two documented examples, one involves 13,000 who walked from Mozambique into the Chipinge and Zambezi areas. Another group of 1,265 repatriated themselves in avoidance of official channels. In addition, the Christian Care network for the internally displaced handled many self-repatriated refugees - one source estimates 60,000 refugees came through these channels.

Phase Two started at the end of April. It was slower and better planned and focused on the young, including whole schools with teachers and equipment, ill people and war victims. A special camp for war-disabled was created and was manned by the Presbyterian Church with support from the Christian Care Office and the Government. In Phase One and Two together, approximately 70,000 refugees were officially repatriated out of the 150,000 - 200,000 in exile.

Phase Three involved handing over to the government, and the emphasis changed to rehabilitation. UNHCR prepared to hand over to UNDP. The government had established 19 district welfare offices to take over some of the functions of the ICRC. The ongoing food programme was in the hands of the Dept of Social Services (responsible for 31,000 recipients) and Christian Care dealt with another 55,000. 70,000 agricultural packages were distributed to those who formally repatriated. A parallel rural reconstruction programme for the displaced and other distributed a further 300,000 seed packs.

Extracted from 'Refugees Repatriation and Reconstruction: An Account of Zimbabwe's Post-Lancaster House Repatriations' by Jeremy Jackson, Centre of Applied Social Sciences, University of Zimbabwe.

A HAPPY HOMECOMING?

The repatriation of Zimbabwean refugees in 1980 took place after a dramatic change in the country of origin. Despite the optimism following the defeat of a colonial power, the return was less than a happy home coming for many who experienced it.

The Formal Repatriation

Refugee reception centres were nominally under the authority of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, plus a representative of UNHCR and Christian Care. The Rhodesian forces, however, exerted considerable control. As a result, there was an atmosphere of hostility, as well as outright harassment and frequent violence. Deliberate delaying tactics were used to prevent exiles returning in time for the election. Other attempts were made to prevent them voting, for example, the ages of some of the returnees were falsified in the documents issued by immigration officials in an attempt to make the returnees ineligible to vote.

On arrival at the centres, refugees were sometimes accused of being liberation fighters avoiding the assembly points, and there were cases of arrest and torture by the police. Buses that brought refugees from the reception centres to the transit centres were often rudely stopped and searched. The chairman of Christian Care at that time, Father Edward Rogers, described the reception centres as resembling army camps. Describing Tegwani centre, he observed:

'The centre was fenced by a high and heavy security fence. At the gate, there were policemen, with four district assistants who had FN rifles and one with a machine gun, whilst inside, armed District Assistants were very much in evidence'.

The extent of control by Rhodesian Security Forces was also described by CIIR reporting on the very first group of 1,000 who were repatriated from Botswana.

'On arrival of the refugees at the reception centre there was, apart from an army of newspaper reporters, a strong presence of armed District Assistants (DAs). Only 5 customs and immigration officials were present. Although it had been agreed by all parties concerned that a reception centre could process about 1000 refugees a day, on this particular day only 200 were processed. No refugees were, therefore, sent the next day. When the next 1000 arrived on the third day, the local authorities declared that no more could come as there was a water problem. The programme was therefore to be temporarily suspended. When another

convoy arrived on the fourth day, the Rhodesian authorities impounded the lorries and made it clear that any further arrivals would not be welcome'.

The Rhodesian authorities could dictate the pace of the repatriation exercise, and refugees felt that they were returning to a situation that had not changed greatly from the one they had fled. The initial stages of the repatriation exercise were in the hands of the same government that had fought against the guerrillas, so refugees were treated with the same resentment and suspicion as were the guerrillas in the assembly points.

The questioning that took place at the reception centres was alarming for returnees as it often took place in the presence of armed men. In addition, many of the questions were irrelevant for the purpose of repatriation, and were embarrassing and irritating. For example, returnees were asked about their occupation in the country of exile, the name of their previous employer in Rhodesia, the reasons for leaving the country and what political party they supported.

Self-repatriation

As a result of the delays, and out of suspicion, the majority of refugees chose to repatriate themselves. However, not even for these was the home coming problem-free. Those who did not use the designated reception centres were harassed by the police and security forces. Others were confronted by Muzorewa's auxiliaries in the countryside. Unlike other 'political armies', Muzorewa's auxiliaries had not been confined and were involved in propaganda for the UANC. Many returnees were arrested and detained in prisons for questioning on the grounds that they were trained combatants.

The return home was further complicated by the continued existence of 'protected villages' (PVs) in many parts of the rural areas. The details of their dismantling had not been discussed at Lancaster House, and their inmates continued to live under armed guard and experienced violence from the security forces even after the ceasefire. For returnees whose families, neighbours and friends were in the protected villages, it was not clear where they were supposed to go - to join their families, or to their previous home sites which had been destroyed by the Rhodesian forces.

Extracted from 'The Desire to Return: An Examination of the Effects of the Experiences of Zimbabwean Refugees in the Neighbouring Countries on Their Repatriation at the End of the Liberation War' by Stella Tendayi Makanya, School of Social Work, Harare, Zimbabwe.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AS REFUGEES: WHAT CONDITIONS FOR RETURN?

The following articles look at the circumstances of indigenous peoples who are refugees. As minorities in their countries of origin, repatriations are taking place when the basic causes of flight are far from resolved.

What are indigenous people?

The term 'indigenous' is frequently used to refer to aboriginal or autochthonous people whose ancestors were the inhabitants of a particular country prior to colonization. This definition operates well in the Americas, Australia and New Zealand (Aotearoa), but it is more complex with reference to Asia and can be highly problematic in an African context. The indigenous movement has grown, however, to include peoples who consider themselves colonised and define themselves as indigenous. Since the 1960s the number of communities who have defined themselves in this way has risen rapidly. Organisations in North America, Australia, New Zealand and Scandinavia provided the initial impetus for the movement, inspired by the black civil rights movement in the U.S. and the process of decolonisation. By the early 1980s there were organizations operating at both a national and continental level to represent indigenous peoples throughout the Andes, the Amazon and Central America. In 1983, the decolonisation struggles of the Pacific made overtures to the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (an international organisation which was representing peoples from the Americas and Oceania) as a means of getting their voices heard. At the same time the United Nations became concerned with indigenous rights and a Working Group on Indigenous Populations was established in 1984 (a Working Group of the UN Sub Commission on Human Rights). Asian participation increased annually with delegates from the Philippines, Bangladesh, West Papua and Burma.

The indigenous movement is being used by these groups to attain self determination in the areas of: rights to land, freedom of cultural and religious expression, freedom of association and the right to self-development.

Displacement or Replacement?

Indigenous peoples constitute less than 500,000 of the world's estimated 13 million refugees. There are three groups now living in exile: refugees from the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh currently in India, West Papuans in Papua New Guinea and Guatemalan Indians in Mexico. This figure does not, however, convey the extent to which these populations have been displaced, as mostly this has not involved international borders. The causes of displacement in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and West Papua have some common elements: both populations are subject to land sequestration through policies of transmigration, forced removal into model villages, eviction under development projects, as well as religious and cultural persecution. These are seen as a

justifiable part of strategies of counter-insurgency and of forced 'development' of peoples regarded as backward by the Bangladesh Government and the Indonesian government occupying West Papua.

Indigenous peoples, as ethnic minorities within third world nations, are struggling to retain their cultural identity, while governments are struggling to follow the worldwide blueprint for development, growth and consolidation as modern nations. Efforts at assimilation, who undertakes those efforts and to what end, are delicate and controversial issues. All too often, education, integration and absorption have quickly turned into the obliteration of a people.

Andrew Gray

CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS REFUGEES IN TRIPURA, INDIA

The Chittagong Hill Tracts of SE Bangladesh have been the scene of an undeclared war between the tribal peoples of the hills and the Bangladesh army and settlers. The war has a long history but reached crisis point with a series of massacres in the 1980s. Currently 56,000 live in refugee camps in India, representing 10% of the tribal population of Bangladesh.

The Report of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission, was published in May 1991. Entitled '**Life is Not Ours: Land and Human Rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh**', it documented continuing human rights abuses on the basis of interviews with refugees in five of the six refugee camps in India. Prior to the Commission's investigations, the Indian and Bangladeshi governments had effectively banned all outsiders from the region, and hence limited reporting of the violations against tribal peoples which have occurred on both sides of the border. UNHCR has not been allowed access to the camps as India has refused them access on the basis of agreements between India and Pakistan and between India and Bangladesh stating that refugee movements within the sub-continent will be handled by the governments within the sub-continent.

The refugee tribal people regard each of the three 'durable solutions' as highly undesirable under present circumstances for the following reasons:

Voluntary repatriation

Refugees refuse to return to their homes in the Chittagong Hill Tracts until their security and livelihood is guaranteed. Many want the expulsion of the Bengali Muslims who now occupy



Refugees in Tripura, India

Photograph Andrew Gray

their lands, and restoration of their political autonomy. Successive Bangladeshi governments have resisted such an arrangement. The current government, faced with political opposition as well as overpopulation and widespread poverty, may be hard put to find any alternative location for the more than 400,000 Bengali plainmen, most of whom were themselves landless and jobless when they were encouraged to move into the hills under Zia's government and since.

Refugees vividly remember their experience of forced repatriation in 1986:

'After repatriation we got 14 kg of rice and 100 Taka per family. On the same day we were asked to assemble in Asalong Model Primary School but on the way Muslim settlers pushed us with pointed bamboo sticks and kicked us and some women were raped. The army asked 'you went to Indira Gandhi's country with great hopes of freedom and help so why did you come back?' We had to stay in the school and were given no rations by the army so we had no alternative but to work for the Muslim settlers. We could not return to our own houses but instead had to live in a specially

constructed cluster village. (Interview, Tripuran camp 22.11.90, Chittagong Hill Tracts Independent Commission).

The new District Councils, introduced by Bangladesh in 1989 were heralded as a change in the pattern of human rights violations. However, the paltry powers given to the Councils with regard to important issues such as land rights, discredited them in the eyes of the Hill people, many of whom refused to vote. Others were forced to vote and there were repeated cases of torture and rape at the time of the elections in mid 1989, which produced another wave of refugees, despite attempts to stop them crossing the border by both the Muslims and army on the Bangladesh side and the Indian border security forces on the other side.

'As we entered India we met a group of Border Security Forces who told us to go back where we came from. We refused because we feared for our lives if we returned. The Security forces beat me and finally took us back to Bangladesh and left us. So we took another route...' (Interview, Tripuran camp 22.11.90).

Settlement and integration in Tripura

The Indian Central Government and the Tripura State Government are not willing to consider settlement. Attacks by insurgent tribals within India's population make the influx of tribal peoples from Bangladesh highly undesirable. Conflicts between the Indian and Tripuran state governments further complicated the matter until recently.

Resettlement elsewhere.

Since tribals are considered the lowest rank in the social hierarchy throughout South Asia, transferring them anywhere on the subcontinent would be extremely difficult; asking them to live further away from their homelands is problematic in any event. If this alternative has been considered in the sporadic discussions between Bangladesh and India on the fate of the refugees, it has not thus far come to public notice.

In the light of the failure of negotiations in 1988 between the Bangladesh government and the hill people's political organisations (the Jana Samhati Samiti and its armed wing the Shanti Bahini and a 'dialogue committee' of hill people), and the discrediting of the new District Councils, the recommendations of the Report of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission may lay some new ground for discussions of changes in Bangladesh and preconditions for return and may bring international pressure on governments in the region. The following points are extracted from the Report's conclusions.



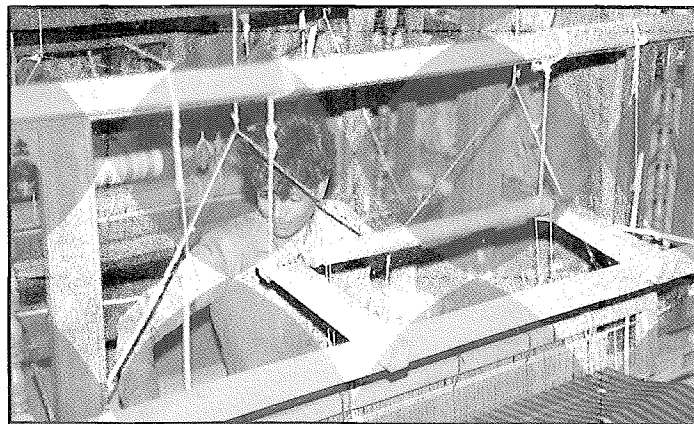
Kaptai Lake and Army Camp, CHT, Bangladesh

Photograph Andrew Gray

1. Land issues and the presence of the Bengali settlers.

Although the return of Bengali settlers would be the 'ideal solution', all parties are faced with the reality that now almost half the population in the CHT are new Bengali settlers. The report recommends:-

- * No further Bengali settlement in the CHT.
- * The appointment of a neutral body to examine land titles. The new District Council authorities are not regarded as sufficiently neutral. Refugees need guarantees to their land rights before they can return.
- * Guarantees to the Bengali settlers, who themselves could become victims. For those who live in the 'cluster villages' life is scarcely any better than that of the exiled and displaced tribal peoples. They have sold their land in the plains if they ever had any.
- * Dismantling of the cluster villages
- * A resource survey, to reverse the myth of 'empty' land in the CHT when the reality is of ecological crisis brought about by land shortage, and extensive logging.



Army funded Weaving Project, Bangladesh

Photograph Andrew Gray

2. Autonomy

- * Demilitarization of the CHT must begin immediately. Currently military occupation involves violations of human rights.
- * This process must be linked to autonomy and self-determination for the peoples of the CHT including control over land law and education.
- * The Commission recognizes the tribal peoples as 'indigenous', having settled there prior to the assertion of outside authority and recent Bengali settlers.
- * Referendum on the unit or units of autonomy to be determined by the hill peoples.
- * Normalization of the election process on the District Councils which is currently highly unsatisfactory.
- * Legalization of the hill people's political parties and organizations.

3. Human Rights Violations

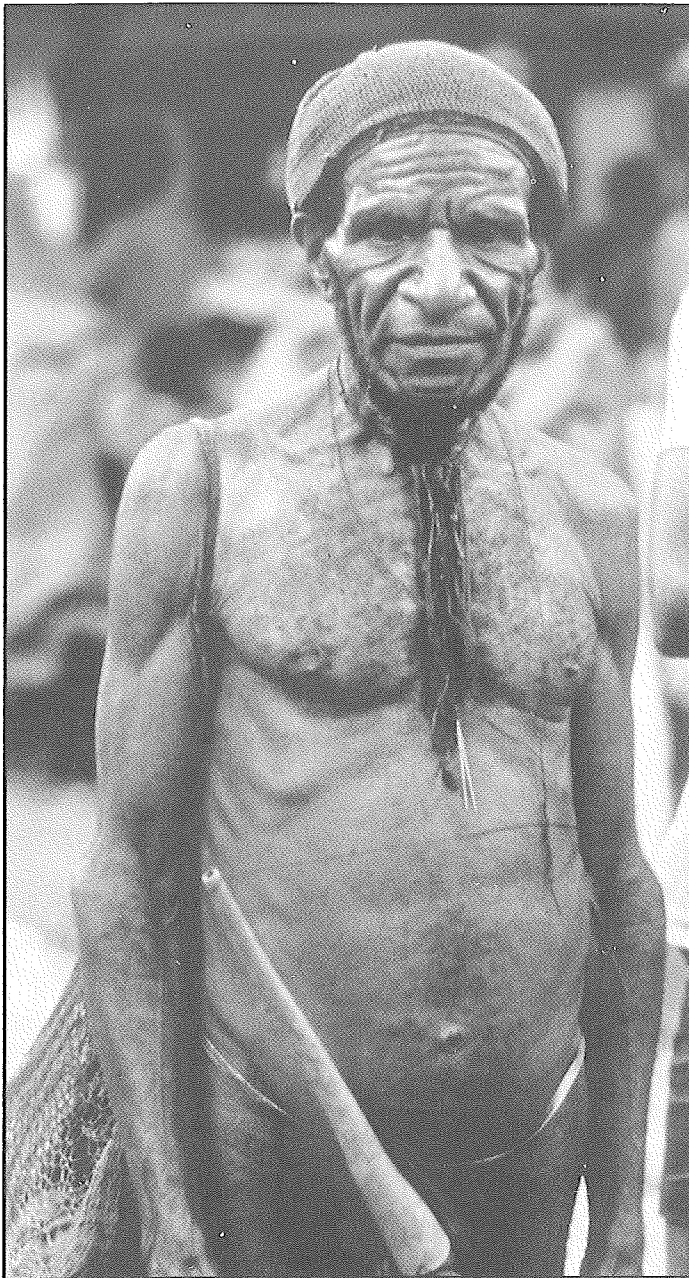
- * The Commission found extensive and on-going violations of human rights which must be discontinued. It calls on aid granting states and agencies to ensure that their programmes do not reinforce the status quo.

Sources: Interviews taken by the Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission, November 1990. 'Life is Not Ours: Land and Human Rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh' Report of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission May 1991. Bhaumik, S. 'Tribal Refugees from Bangladesh: Victims of Internal Colonisation'

VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION?

REFUGEES FROM WEST PAPUA.

Since 1986, UNHCR has been involved in organizing voluntary repatriation from the refugee camps in Papua New Guinea to occupied West Papua. Reports from returnees since that time illustrate that conditions continue to be insecure: many returned to find their lands taken over by Indonesian transmigrants and were forced to become squatters on their own land. Amnesty International have recently documented continuing human rights violations in Irian Jaya, including reports of refugees and border crossers being imprisoned and in some cases ill-treated



Photograph Kirsty Sword

or tortured after being forcibly returned or denied entry by Papua New Guinea authorities.

In 1988, sixteen refugee camps were closed and the refugees transferred to East Awin, an isolated area in the thick forests of Western Province far from the West Papuan border, the coast or towns. The land is not suitable for cultivation or building materials in the form refugees' are used to, and bad relations with the local people prevent refugees' securing their livelihood. Assistance is now being withdrawn from these camps. Those who do not wish to move to or stay in East Awin can chose 'voluntary repatriation'.

LETTERS FROM REFUGEE CAMPS IN EAST AWIN, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

On Monday 10th June, the main road that connects Iowara camp and the Fly river at Rimsite was blocked for the second time. The blockaders were the local owners, the Baad people. They cut down big trees blocking the road to trucks and camped at differnet points along the road to stop even those who travel on foot. The first blockade in March lasted for a month and was done by people of the Awin tribe. The motivation behind both blockades was essentially the same, namely to press the PNG government to give compensation for hosting refugees who make use of their land.

As refugees, we highly respect their demands. Yet we are strongly affected, as are Government officials, as it is impossible to travel. Newly arrived refugees have been forced to camp at Rimsite since the 10th of June, and refugees from Iowara who were to be repatriated to Irian Jaya on 12th and 13th June are not receiving proper attention.

On Thursday the 20th June, after the head of the Border Affairs Commission negotiated with the demanders, it was agreed to open the road temporarily so that the newly arrived refugees could be transported from Rimsite to Iowara. After that, the road would be closed again for an uncertain period. At the same time, he organised a meeting in Iowara with refugee representatives and informed us that according to studies and the decision of UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva, West Papuan refugees in East Awin are supposed to be able to take care of their own living and do not need any more help. Therefore the food ration will be stopped and other aid will be diminished. ZOA which has been supporting refugees will leave next year. One will have to pay for the use of the truck, also for the saw-mill. In 1992 an Australian volunteer will be stationed in Iowara to set up and help refugees in setting up projects.

The refugees do understand this decision, but it is hard to accept it in the light of the hard conditions. For instance, the



Preparing the Fire for Roasting Pork

Photograph Kirsty Sword

distance from Iowara to Kiunga is 60 km including 15 km over water. There are no sago swamps, so we cannot get roofing material (atap). Furthermore, the soil is infertile and clayey, and difficult to cultivate. We also have problems with water. Most important, there has been no compensation for land taken from local people, which diminishes the chance of ever creating an independent life.

The refugees have the idea that they might suffer, yet many of them have assured repeatedly that they will not return to Irian Jaya.

Iowara Camp June 22nd 1991.

Throughout the second half of 1990, life in East Awin camp got worse. Now we receive only half a kilo of rice per person per week and no fish or meat. The soil around the camp is infertile and we cannot grow anything, even our staple, sago. It is very hard to live on rice and cassava leaves. We are forced to go out hunting which leads to conflict with the local population and only recently three of our people were badly wounded and had

to be taken to hospital because they were hunting in a forbidden area.

The long term concerted policy of PNG and Indonesia is the return of all refugees from East Awin camp. But very few return of their own free will. However, a few are seriously considering returning to Indonesia and the lack of food and other supplies is probably the reason why. They would rather take the risk of returning than to continue suffering here. And that is the reason why our food ration is diminishing.

Jimmy Wawar, East Awin, December 1990.

These letters from Iowara camp have also been printed in 'West Papua People's Front Newsletter'. More information about refugees from West Papua can be obtained through: 'TAPOL' produced by the Indonesian Human Rights Campaign, London and 'West Papua Update', Australia West Papua Association. With thanks to Viktor Kaisiepo.

PROVIDING INFORMATION FOR REPATRIATING LAOTIAN REFUGEES

The repatriation of Laotian refugees started in 1980, since which time 6,700 Laotians have returned under UNHCR auspices. Another 368 were forcibly repatriated towards the end of 1990 having been 'screened-out' in Thailand. A further 20,000 have self-repatriated. Describing conditions in Laos, the latest Amnesty International report states that only 232 of the 35,000-40,000 political prisoners arrested without charge or trial, following the communist victory in 1975 are still imprisoned for 'reeducation'. Despite continued economic liberalization and improved relations with the USA, however, domestic and international pressures for serious political reform have been resisted. The new constitution establishes a market economy but maintains the one-party socialist state. There is no constitutional recognition given to fundamental human rights. On a series of occasions since late 1990, local security personnel attached to the Sop Pan administration have threatened detainees that they will not be released unless they pay bribes. Penal and criminal procedural codes and other legislation recently promulgated by the government in connection with its new policies appear to contain no basis for such arbitrary practices to be discontinued.

Here RPN details a project of the Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees, funded by the Thai-Chinese Refugee Service and UNHCR which aims to provide refugees with information. The Project Director is Jon Boagey.

BAN VINAI INFORMATION PROJECT BULLETIN

The Ban Vinai Information Project (BVIP) started in mid-February 1991, after refugees in Ban Vinai Camp had been told by the Thai Government of the camp's closure in 1992. The first task of the Information Project has been to prepare a bulletin to provide information to facilitate refugees' decisions about their future. The bulletin is printed in Lao and English and there is a tape edition in Hmong. It is distributed to the refugees in Ban Vinai and other camps in Thailand, to NGOs, UNHCR, the Royal Thai Government, to Laos and countries of resettlement.



The first issue reports on a letter from the leader of the Hmong community to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, which lays out the conditions to be met by the Laos Government before the Hmong leadership will support voluntary repatriation. The bulletin also reports on a UN mission to several Provinces in Laos which will be available in the future. They also explain the meaning and purpose of the screening process and provide an update on news about potential movement to other camps in Thailand such as Chiang Kham Camp.

An interview between Ban Vinai Information Project workers and the UN representative in Ban Vinai is also included in the bulletin, part of which is reproduced overleaf.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

BVIP: We have heard that Ban Vinai will close in 1992. Is it true or not?

UNHCR: The Royal Thai Government plans to close Ban Vinai Camp in 1992 for sure. Before the camp closes, refugees will have the chance to apply for resettlement or voluntary repatriation. We will not force them to repatriate.

BVIP: How can the UN help refugees who used to be enemies of communism in Laos?

UNHCR: Laos officials say that they will give amnesty to everyone who goes back. I think that if these people want to develop the country they will be able to return and there will be no problem. UNHCR will facilitate voluntary repatriation and they will be able to live as normal citizens in Laos.

BVIP: UNHCR and MOI are now screening refugees who have no BV number. If people are screened out what will happen to them?

UNHCR: Those who are screened in are eligible to be a refugee. Those who are screened out are not. Those who are screened in will be moved to Chiang Kham Camp and there they will have the chance to apply for resettlement. Those who are screened out will not have the option of resettlement.

BVIP: If someone is screened out, can they make a request to UNHCR to live in Thailand?

UNHCR: If screened out people really believe that they are eligible to be refugees, UNHCR will make an appeal to the Thai Government to reconsider their situation.

BVIP: Do refugees have to pay for the air ticket if they go to the USA?

UNHCR: No. But after they have arrived in the USA and have a



job and salary, then the sponsor will ask them to pay back the airfare, but not all of it. Those who do not have jobs are not asked to pay.

BVIP: There are opposition groups in many countries like Afghanistan, and Indochina, and UN is involved. In the Gulf War, the UN supported Kuwait because it has oil and is rich. Laos and Burma are poor so why does the UN not help these countries?

UNHCR: In the Gulf War, the UN's position was that Kuwait was unfairly invaded by Iraq. It was not a question of having a lot of oil and therefore being supported. If China invaded Laos then the UN would also help them. In fact many UN organizations are now working in Laos, including UNDP, UNICEF and UNHCR. The UNDP budget is more than \$36 million, that is 900,000,000 Thai Baht.

BVIP: We have heard a rumour that Laos and Thailand are co-operating in sending refugees back to Laos because Laos is bribing Thailand. Does UNHCR know a little bit about this?

UNHCR: I promise that this is one hundred percent not true. At the moment there are Tripartite meetings between Thailand, Laos and UNHCR. The aim of these meetings is to solve refugees' problems, not to send them back to Laos. UNHCR has told Laos that there are some refugees who want to return to Laos and asked if Laos would accept them. Laos agreed. So all refugees can go back to Laos voluntarily but they will not be forced back.

BVIP: Do France and Australia accept refugees?

UNHCR: They only have family reunion programmes.

BVIP: Does China accept refugees?

UNHCR: 5,000 went last year, but the Chinese Government does not want to accept any more for resettlement.

BVIP: What will happen to people whose name is on the list for movement to a different camp in Thailand (Phanat Nikom) but who change their mind?

UNHCR: The Thai Government will send them to Chiang Kham Camp and their food rations will be cut.

BVIP: Can illegal people (i.e. those without a BV number) go to the USA?

UNHCR: No, not unless they are screened in. We have to wait for the results of the screening from the Thai Government in Bangkok who make the final decision about who is screened in or out. It is not decided by UNHCR or the Thai Government in Ban Vinai.

ISSUES ARISING FROM MAKING THE BULLETIN

Jon Boagey, Project Director, Ban Vinai Information Project

The major difficulty in providing information to refugees has been language: both finding appropriate translations into the various languages, and conveying specific ideas. Information (particularly from official sources) is in English, but dictionaries are often inadequate and subtle differences in English words are often not matched in Lao or Thai. From Hmong to English there are often even more problems because words do not exist in the language at all. Hmong has a specific word for the new shoot which emerges from the stump of a tree after cutting, but no word for asylum seeker.

Although the workers on the information project are virtually trilingual (Hmong, Lao and Thai) they interchange the languages in their ordinary speech. Hmong predominates in the camp but is heavily influenced by Lao and Thai and becomes a kind of linguistic melange peculiar to Ban Vinai. The Lao version of the Bulletin will only be accessible to young men, as children, women and older men generally cannot read. We hope to reach the other groups by translations into Hmong on cassettes. On tape in Hmong, the bulletin becomes more of a story - one person talking to another. As such it is more personal and loses some of the objectivity. This also changes people's perception of where the information comes from.

Specific items of news with implications for the Hmong have to be very accurately translated. For example: 'Mr Mai wrote to the High Commissioner to request assistance in negotiating a settlement for the Hmong refugees'. What or who is the High Commissioner and how can her position be explained in any meaningful way? Is 'request assistance' the same as 'ask for help'? What about 'negotiate a settlement?' etc.

For me the biggest single issue in the provision of information is the disparity between the Hmong interpretation of the world and that of the powerful groups outside the camp who are currently planning their future.

REFUGEES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF REFUGEES FROM LIBERIA IN SIERRA LEONE

Melissa Leach

In early 1991 a UN report stated that the recent influx of Liberian refugees was exacerbating local practices of 'indiscriminate' forest clearance in the Mende chiefdoms of Eastern and Southern Sierra Leone. Degradation was blamed on the increase in demand for daily resources such as land, fuel and poles caused by self-settled refugees. It also alleged that refugees were depleting wildlife populations for food. This article looks at the basis for such assertions and argues that they stem from a failure to understand local systems of resource use and management which do not in fact threaten the environment. Misinterpretations of this kind have encouraged inappropriate interventions by relief agencies. These not only fail to address the real environmental issues in the area, such as large scale logging and shooting outside local control, but also jeopardize refugees' livelihood by disrupting crucial relationships between refugees and their hosts which determine access to natural resources, food and other socio-economic support.

The forests in the border area are some of the last areas of tropical rainforest in Sierra Leone and are of West African importance as remnants of the Upper Guinean forest formation. Centring on the Gola forest reserves, the Government together with agencies such as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is attempting to reconcile international concerns about the maintenance of biodiversity with the rather different local concerns for natural resource access and management.

Refugees' access to land

Although refugees commonly farm rice, cassava and vegetables, contrary to common assertions, their land needs have not encroached on the high forests (either in the reserves, or in the remaining areas of high forest under local control). This is because refugees follow local Mende agricultural practices which rarely, if ever, involve clearing high forest. The few incidents of encroachment which have arisen (involving local Mende rather than refugees) have been politically motivated - to stake claims to old family land now out of access in the reserve. These encroachments are not related to land shortage and resource pressure outside the reserves, and population densities are sufficiently low, even after the refugee influx, for adequate fallow periods to be maintained.

Refugees did not have trouble in gaining access to land. Those who were related to land holding lineages invoked their own rights to land through descent. Alternatively, as the power to



Women Fishing

allocate land is a source of patronage, others offered labour and allegiance in return for land. If hosts themselves were clients to landholding lineages, they negotiated on behalf of refugees for patronage to be extended.

Agencies failed to understand these land allocation practices and their implications and made inappropriate interventions. The town chief was approached with respect to refugees' land access, as if he was responsible for rural land allocation and had authority over elders of rural landholding lineages on land matters. Neither assumption is accurate.

Equally misleading is the idea that land rights are 'insecure' as they are issued verbally, last for only a year and give usufruct rights rather than title deed. There is no notion of land 'ownership' as such: land clearing gives the cultivator the right to work the land until it is left to revert to bush, when it returns to the control of the landholding lineage.

Via the town chief, agency staff requested villages to provide written deeds stating that the land allocated to refugees would



Photograph Melissa Leach

be theirs until they leave. This initiative is counter-productive: setting up alternative structures of authority for land-related matters through the town chiefs undermines the authority of local landholders and may trigger disputes. Land allocated to refugees under agency-directed systems (like the food aid allocated to them) is outside local influence. The resulting alienation of refugees from host communities, and competition between overlapping forms of jurisdiction and bases for claims are likely to make refugees' cultivation rights less, not more secure.

Firewood and timber needs

The alarm about depletion of the forest for fuel and timber has been raised in several agency surveys. One of these calculated that refugees in the Zimmi area were harvesting 32,000 bundles of wood per day, which was equated to the daily clearance of 5 acres of woodland. Although in some areas demand for firewood and other resources has risen, and firewood sales have increased, this figure is exaggerated and highly misleading for a number of reasons:

- * it fails to take account of the substantial amount of dead wood which is gathered, the collection of which has no negative impact on forest stocks and productivity. Dead wood is preferred as it is easier to harvest, lighter to carry and can be used immediately.
- * it totally ignores the ability of many species to regenerate. Indeed, studies of regeneration show that the regrowth of trees which have been coppiced (i.e. the main stem cut) can be more rapid than that of uncut trees. Disturbed forest is more highly productive of important locally-used species, and can be re-harvested.
- * it does not convey the fact that much of the harvested timber and firewood is a by-product of agricultural activity and would have been cut in any case.

The need to build shelters raised the demand for construction timber, and poles were extracted from bush fallow beyond usual local pressures. In addition, the demand for thatch roofing vastly increased the harvesting of palm leaves from swamp fallow prior to the introduction of plastic tarpaulins by an agency. Notably, however, local people did not consider these increases in natural resource exploitation as a problem given their capacity to regenerate: no environmental threat was perceived even though there was short term economic scarcity.

Pressures from increased collection of 'minor' forest products were also assumed to adversely affect the high forest. Although local people are entitled to hunt and collect timber and 'minor' forest products for their own use in the reserves, in practice they rarely do so. Indeed, the high forest is rarely even visited except by people such as ritually-prepared hunters and healers, as it is perceived as the realm of natural and supernatural forces, and is feared as the origin of potentially dangerous spirits. Most regularly used resources are collected from fallow bush and farms where useful plants are preserved alongside crops.

Local restrictions on resource use

Forest resources are managed at many different levels: households, lineages, secret societies, villages and chiefs all control certain aspects of resource use. For example, elders of land holding lineages should be notified before harvesting oil palms from the forest or fallow bush, or permission sought in the case of non-lineage members, and the elders should be given a token amount of the resulting oil.

The refugee influx triggered many natural resource disputes. Transgression of natural resource management regulations has implications far beyond long term environmental impact - it can challenge local political authority or the short-term resource access of others. On arrival, refugees were often ignorant about local entitlement laws; for example they angered local

rightholders by cutting palm fruit without permission, or by cutting down whole palms to eat the hearts or get the fruit more quickly. There have been incidents of cutting fruit, or tapping for oil without asking, and without usufruct rights. Although in a few cases, palm misuse has led to refugee families being banished from villages, legal procedures have mostly been resilient enough to deal with such conflicts in situ.

Hunting

Hunting is another means by which local people are alleged to deplete the forests. This common stereotype is misleading as rare forest animals (e.g. elephants, large antelopes, rare

primates) are not regularly eaten. A recent survey (Davies and Richards 1991: 41) found endangered species to account for less than 2% of animal protein in the diet, with crop pests such as cane rats, certain monkeys and small antelopes being the main mammals eaten. Although there is some gun-hunting, most animal protein is obtained by trapping and fishing; there are rules governing rights to set traps in certain territories and to the meat caught in them.

Gun-hunting is more common in Liberia than Sierra Leone, as guns are more easily available and monkey meat more commonly consumed. Some refugees brought guns with them whilst others borrow from their hosts. Among local Mende, shooting arrangements were often based on the relationship between an expert hunter with ritual powers and his apprentices. Other arrangements are made between gun-owners and borrowers: the shooter is supposed to bring all the meat he acquires to the gun owner and give him a share of it. Gun owners have tried to set up gun loaning relationships with refugees on such terms. Many refugees were related, or at least from the same ethnic group and hence were familiar with the rules. Most partially conformed (despite bitter complaints that the local Mende had 'too many laws'), usually selling meat privately and taking only part to the owner. The ready availability of guns since the conflict certainly has increased their use in hunting, to the possible detriment of specific populations such as monkeys and antelopes. However, the six additional guns imported into one village by hosted refugees were used mainly to shoot not rare species, but common pests such as Campbells and spot-nosed monkeys which are destructive to cocoa and coffee plantations.

Resource exploitation outside local control

If local level resource management systems were largely able to accommodate the refugee influx, where was the environmental threat? Serious threats came from those operating outside local physical and socio-legal constraints. The logging equipment and large numbers of chain saws that have come into the area as a result of the Liberian civil war have facilitated forest exploitation on a new scale, much of which is unregulated. Restrictions can also be avoided by 'buying off' local chiefs, for example ex-Liberian logging companies and sawmill owners are negotiating timber rights to village forest trees. Local authorities benefit from the 'royalties' and are attracted by the quick profits.

With regard to wildlife, the main threat is from heavily-armed Sierra Leonean and Liberian monkey-hunting gangs and large scale shooting for the bushmeat market. Although such gangs did exist previously, the Liberian crisis has enhanced cross-border trade in dried bushmeat. Several of the rare elephant kills in the last ten years have involved Liberians and ties



A Cane Rat Trapped

Photograph Melissa Leach



An Intercropped Upland Rice Farm Photograph Melissa Leach

strengthened by refugee-hosting arrangements may well be used to justify increased hunting in the future.

Secondly, natural resources are severely threatened where civil order has entirely broken down. In Liberia and in insecure parts of the border area on the Sierra Leonean side, there are virtually no oil palms left. All have been felled for fruit, wine and hearts, as there was no incentive to conserve them as normal. In some areas of Sierra Leone currently held by Liberian rebels, monkey populations - of rare species as well as pests - have been decimated.

Conclusion

The current security situation in Sierra Leone's depopulated and rebel-held border chiefdoms threatens the environment to a much greater extent than did the refugee influx of 1990-1991. Resource degradation, rather than being caused by local practices, occurs primarily where local mechanisms of control break down. When left free from interference, refugees were accommodated within local natural resource management systems and the view that they heightened degradation is a severe misrepresentation. Rather than through 'classic' forestry initiatives, conservation and local interests may be better served by finding ways for local people to 'police' the activities of logging companies and hunting gangs, and strengthening local resource management institutions that already exist.

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This article is extracted from a report by Melissa Leach entitled 'Refugee-host Relations in Local Perspective. Food Security and Environmental Implications of the Liberian Influx into Rural Communities of Sierra Leone, 1990-1991'. April 1991.

FOOD AID MONETIZATION OF FOOD AID: WHAT'S IN IT FOR REFUGEES?

Ken Wilson

From the point of view of refugees' livelihood strategies, relief money can have advantages over food. The ration currently provided to refugees usually contains cereal, pulses, a fat source and occasionally salt and sugar. As entitlements are calculated on the basis of the number of individuals in a household, they may vary from the actual physiological requirements of a particular household, with its specific age and sex composition. To create variety and to make the package palatable, refugees have to supplement the ration with fresh vegetables and other food stuffs. For those unable to secure additional income this typically involves selling or exchanging food aid. Sometimes food also has to be sold to process cereals, purchase fuel, acquire adequate shelter and even to secure protection. Diet preferences, cooking problems, or raising capital for businesses are other reasons for such sales. In short, the ration is treated as a general economic resource rather than a diet.

Unfortunately, using food aid as an economic transfer can be inefficient. The value of the relief commodities often falls very low due to restrictions by donors on refugees selling food (where illegality lowers prices), or because local markets are saturated. Thus items are often sold at a fraction of the costs incurred by donors in their procurement and transport. Where there is sufficient food on the market, refugees themselves might be in a better position to meet their needs if they were given cash rather than food.

Speed and reduced delivery costs are also potent reasons for using money. Transport is frequently a substantial proportion of the total cost of assistance programmes: it accounts for around 40% of UNHCR's operational budget in Africa. Transport costs often escalate during emergencies, and facilities may become virtually unavailable. When agencies do manage to make arrangements (e.g. by pricing other transporters out of the market), the economic effects of this may harm hosts and refugees in other, often unexpected, ways. Logistical problems with delivery mean that refugees are sometimes obliged to go for considerable periods without food. Distributing cash could therefore mean that refugees receive a greater overall proportion of the money donated to them, as well as in a more timely fashion.

An example can illustrate this point. Food disbursement to Ugandan refugees in Southern Sudan in the early 1980s virtually ground to a halt each rainy season because of the roads. Yet food was available within the area and refugees could have bought it themselves had they been given money. The presence of such funds might also have further stimulated Sudanese production. The UNHCR Field Office did make some local purchases, but the situation was an emergency and the field staff lacked experience in food purchase, had little transport and insufficient knowledge of local markets and



*Ugandan Women Selling Food in Yei Market, Southern Sudan
Photograph JoAnn McGregor*

traders' networks (Harrell-Bond 1986, Wilson 1985a and b). Even when food aid was provided, much was sold, including the fish meal which refugees knew was used as animal feed in Europe and was said to taste like 'ground up crocodiles'.

Possible means of distributing cash

One means of realising cash for distribution would be for food donors to monetize bulk food aid at central or regional government level. Alternatively, UNHCR could make direct requests for cash from donors, which would then be distributed to refugees. In situations where cash distribution is not considered feasible, coupons could be distributed to be redeemed against items in a central shop, or even from local merchants and traders encouraged to bring a variety of foods into camp markets. Cash disbursements have been made to Afghan refugees by the Pakistan Government during parts of the 1980s, by the Indian Government to Sri Lankan Tamil

refugees, and more recently by a non-governmental agency operating on the Mauritania Senegal border. However, to our knowledge, these programmes have not been evaluated.

Reluctance to make cash disbursements

In the section below, responses are made to some of the reasons commonly used in support of food and against cash disbursements.

1. Much aid donated to refugees has been related to specific surpluses in the West. Where money is received it has often been tied to the purchase of goods in particular places, such as within EEC countries, and restrictions have been placed on the sales of such food stuffs within recipient countries to preserve official markets. It has proven difficult to raise untied financial aid.

* Tied food aid may be on the decline for a number of reasons which should put cash distribution more firmly on the agenda.

2. The Western concept of charity strictly limits the 'legitimate' needs of recipients, and donors generally regard it as their right to see these met by their contributions.

* The problem that donors see assistance to refugees as 'charity' rather than an obligation of the 'international community' is unlikely to change. Donors are reluctant to acknowledge that refugees are a product of a wider socio-political disequilibrium that is ultimately the responsibility of all world citizens, especially those wielding greatest influence and power (i.e. governments). This idea of 'charity' that cannot be critically examined greatly inhibits innovation and effectiveness in refugee relief operations. Greater education and public awareness might help to change these attitudes.

3. It is often held that those on 'charity' cannot be assumed to know what is in their own best interests. In addition, they are sometimes accused of putting their own desires above the needs of their dependents due to inequalities in household decision making. The argument goes that they will spend the money on beer or cigarettes not food.

* The notion that refugees are peculiarly unable to determine their best interests seems entirely out of tune with studies of their actual remarkable livelihood strategies, and appears to have an ideological origin.

* Household decision making processes influence the distribution of aid within families. Although they vary markedly and it is unwise to generalise, men (especially male household heads) are more able to dominate access to money in most societies. A system involving distribution of money has

to be highly sensitive to whether the needs of women and children are being met, especially if money is given to the men.

During the drought relief programme in Zimbabwe in the mid-1980s food was replaced by cash to ease the logistics of distribution. Prior to the change, beneficiaries' opinions on its potential benefits varied. Women generally thought that money would better enable them to meet their various needs, since it is not only food that is short in periods of economic dearth, but they feared that much of the money would not be used for family welfare if it was distributed to men. Even many of the men freely admitted that they would spend part of the money on themselves rather than family needs. The sensible option of distributing money direct to women was not considered by the institutions involved. In the end, a large proportion of the money which was distributed to the men was still spent on maize, especially in the households with the poorest food stocks, suggesting that there was too much concern about the problem. Similarly, Botswana's experience with a cash-for-work programme during the same period showed that a large proportion of the cash was spent on short term welfare needs, and particularly on food.

4. It is feared that the distribution of money would be even more vulnerable to diversion and corruption than goods in kind.

* Unfortunately concerns about the capacity of existing aid disbursement structures to handle money effectively are legitimate in many cases. However, these systems could be greatly improved with greater co-ordination and exchange of information within and between authorities and agencies, and with systematic accountability to the refugees themselves. Distressing levels of leakage in refugee operations are not inevitable but generally appear to be the result of poor and authoritarian management. If it seems impossible to manage money distribution, there is always the option of coupons, though a system of controlling the exchange of coupons back into money would be required.

5. Local and regional markets in the affected area may not be capable of mobilising sufficient food and other items, especially in the short term, so that cash would not enable refugees to meet their needs.

* Despite the economic problems of many of the areas experiencing major refugee flows, experience suggests that markets are much more dynamic than might be expected. During famine relief programmes when money has been provided instead of food, local markets have generally proved capable of mobilising food. Furthermore, if allocated money, refugees would be able to move in search of markets and opportunities even where there are problems with transport.

Cash distribution programmes obviously must be based on research of market capacity prior to their initiation, and should monitor market prices and flows of goods and people during implementation. It must be stressed that in some situations cash distribution would be highly inappropriate and this is not intended as a blanket recommendation. Typically these would be situations during very large rapid influxes into isolated areas, or areas where there is already an incipient famine.

6. Some fear that cash distribution would be so much more desirable than current assistance schedules that it would attract people across borders and/or encourage local people to pretend to be refugees.

* This appears to be a tacit admittal that current assistance is made in a much less attractive manner than the aid is worth in financial terms. The notion that the level of relief provided to refugees - even if in cash - would be sufficient to attract an influx is hard to square with the level of violence needed to make people refugees and the fact that most refugees avoid assistance programmes altogether, and that there are usually substantial delays between influxes and aid actually arriving. Results of research on refugee livelihood show that even under relatively good conditions aid provides only a minor proportion of total income. Thus even if refugees are so easily motivated by economic factors, it seems unlikely that typical levels of relief would move them so easily.

* The idea that many more local people might disguise themselves as refugees during distribution if there was something worth receiving is more credible, and must be tackled in the design and security of distribution programmes. A relief system with greater benefits for refugees also holds real dangers for relations between refugees and their hosts. Indeed, research suggests that refugees' personal security and rights to resource access are largely provided by local hosts on the basis of goodwill and patron-clientage. If this was disrupted refugees could lose more than they gain in receiving more effective aid. Interventions in refugee affected areas must, therefore, benefit both locals and refugees, and not threaten the status of the host community. Clearly genuine developmental interventions are called for in refugee-affected areas alongside targetted relief to refugees.

Alternatives to Cash: An Economic Rather Than Nutritional Ration

In situations where cash is not appropriate, food distribution can be done on the basis of an economic rather than a nutritional ration. Refugees can be given items which minimize transport costs (and speed up delivery) which are in high demand locally, and if possible have a high price relative to world markets. Refugees could use these items as resources for

barter, for buying other food, and generally for meeting welfare needs. In many situations the ideal item would be cooking oil, since it is easy to store and transport and has a high value per unit weight. Although they receive only small quantities, refugees are already using oil in this way in many areas of the world. Cooking oil generally competes little with local agricultural production, and makes a valuable contribution to local cereal-based diets, especially for children. At present refugees are usually obliged to dispose of cereals or pulses to generate resources for their other needs despite low demand for these products. This process itself sometimes may depress local agricultural production.

Experiments in providing this kind of 'economic ration' have been suggested in the past but have not been systematically undertaken to my knowledge. These should be undertaken as early as possible, and particular care taken to investigate refugees' own views of the programme. The dynamics of local marketing systems and their capacity to handle the refugee supplies must also be studied.

Experiences with Cash Distribution in Famines in Africa

Experience of operations involving large scale cash distribution are largely in drought/famine relief programmes. Regional markets and merchants have often been able to respond rapidly to changing demand patterns even during periods of general production shortfalls. This is because even in situations of



Food Supplements, Tecun, Mexico

regional famine there tend to be pockets of food surplus, which are not otherwise redistributed due to costly transport and weak purchasing power. Cash disbursement increases demand (and hence prices) and thus encourages traders to locate and transport food.

A thorough evaluation of a cash distribution programme in the 1984 famine in Ethiopia concludes that:

'...despite some limitations, there are convincing grounds for recommending that cash disbursements should play a regular complementary role to food aid relief operations' (Kumar 1985).

The distribution of money attracted sufficient food into the area or to local markets, but did not dramatically affect prices, which were rising during the period due to the increasing pessimism regarding the next harvest. Kumar notes that anyway prices were not determined by free market forces, but negotiated by Kebele committee members and farmers (and probably also traders), in the light of 'equity and availability'. Such mechanisms (which are actually quite common) could be used to manage prices during cash disbursement, though they would break down if supply was grossly inadequate for demand. Under a supply failure Kumar recommends immediate food aid distribution as the only viable option. Such an eventuality might indeed, occur, and is rumoured to have resulted from problems with a cash disbursement programme in Saudi Arabia.

Amongst the advantages of cash disbursement, Kumar identified the ease of administration/logistics, and the fact that people could select their own diet (which was much appreciated). He reports that very little money was spent on alcohol and that a considerable amount was invested in future agricultural activity. He concludes that 'cash distribution has enabled recipients to decide their own balance between consumption and saving - and it appears from this project that even poor households have a marked propensity to save'. Indeed, he was surprised that 'even such malnourished people wanted to accumulate for the future and were prepared to forego current consumption in order to do so'.

Similarly, in the cash-for-work programmes in Zimbabwe and Botswana in the 1980s there were no reports of substantial market failure. This reflects the well-developed national marketing channels as well as the innovative activities of private grain traders. Recent policies to de-regulate markets in Africa may enhance the capacity to meet refugee-generated demand, though it may often be at high purchase price. A note of caution must be added, however, as merchants, sometimes with political motivations have in some circumstances demonstrated a capability of controlling the levels of grain transport outside of market mechanisms. This highlights the

need for real research and monitoring in the design and implementation of programmes of this kind.

The effects of cash distribution to refugees are frequently likely to be more favourable than in famine situations, because refugee influxes provide scope for increases in production as well as in enhanced distribution. In many refugee situations, at least in Africa, refugee movements appear to be associated with increases in food production due to refugees' involvement in wage labour and other economic activities. In Southern Sudan, Western and North Western Zambia, as well as in the high potential and less densely settled areas of Malawi and Eastern Zambia, host populations increased food production and even regional export during and immediately after a refugee influx. Rural-rural migration is often associated with increased cash cropping in Africa, since migrants provide critically short cheap agricultural labour and increase market demand. Migrants also frequently work exceptionally hard to generate economic security, and this can contribute to the general economy. Given the dynamism of most African rural economies it is not unreasonable to expect that financial injections might have marked developmental payoffs.

There are alternative scenarios, however, such as that of the Chadians in Western Sudan in the mid-1980s. Here refugees arrived in an area suffering a severe drought. By lowering wages and raising food prices in an area isolated from national food markets, refugees precipitated a famine that struck both them and large sections of the host community. In large sudden influxes refugees tend initially to consume the local surplus, giving the impression that all is well. However, once this is finished, and in the pre-harvest hungry season, a severe crisis may result before the benefits of the arrival of refugees on local food production can be realised, especially in areas isolated from national markets. In later years, in contrast, food production may expand to meet the new demand. It is in the second crisis period that food must be moved into the area, whilst the distribution of money in the earlier and later stages of the emergency could be more effective. As was acknowledged by all at the symposium in March 1991, the time has come for some carefully monitored experimentation with such new approaches.

References:

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Extracted from: 'Enhancing Refugees' own Food Acquisition Strategies' by Ken Wilson. A paper presented at the symposium 'Responding to the Nutrition Crisis Among Refugees: The Need for New Approaches'. March 1991.

THE REFUGEE VIEWPOINT

Representatives of refugee-based organisations made the following statement at the International Symposium 'Responding to the Nutrition Crisis Among Refugees: The Need for New Approaches' held in Oxford from 17-20 March 1991.

1. Refugees should be represented at all levels and participate in all decision-making. Of note, there is no refugee included in the Steering Committee of this Symposium.

2. Assessments of food needs should be related to specific conditions and not to the capability of donors to give. Refugees need to be involved in these assessments, in their planning, and in the food distribution itself. Food needs should not be catered for by standardised packages, as needs will vary.

3. The quality of food should be of as high a standard as possible, similar to that given to host country nationals although with consideration of the refugees' original diet. Refugees should not be used as a dumping place for surplus food.

4. Labelling of refugees should be minimised. People tend to regard refugees as hopeless and helpless third class citizens. This attitude influences policy, reduces the quality and quantity of food, and other help made available

5. Donors should see to it that food reaches the refugees and is not left sitting at ports. Part of the donation (in cash?) could be assigned specifically to monitoring logistical arrangements, to ensure that food gets to where it is needed.

6. Host governments should be stopped from using refugees as a political tool. Food should not be used to manipulate refugees. For example, it should not be given as a reward for good behaviour, or be withheld for 'disobedience', nor should 'food security' be linked to forced or voluntary repatriation.

7. Food should not be diverted by the host country to solve their problems. Care should be taken to avoid mismanagement of food which occurs because of corruption at the local level, incorrect identification of the problem, inadequate monitoring, and choice of inappropriate people to administer distribution.

8. Refugees should be given greater freedom of movement and opportunity to use their skills in procurement of food. For example, if refugees are not allowed land on which to grow food, is it reasonable to make them depend totally on handouts from the international organisations? This not only promotes dependency, but makes it very difficult for people to survive.

9. People displaced within their own country should have the right to food aid.

The following point concerning issues of power was expressed in the group:

Refugees hold a very weak position in terms of sharing the power with host countries and donor organisations. They feel vulnerable as the host countries or donors hold the power in decision-making and actions that affect their lives. Also, the presence of refugees in a country may very well threaten the balance of power within that country.

MENTAL HEALTH IS WESTERN MENTAL HEALTH CARE APPROPRIATE FOR REFUGEES?

Based on research with Cambodian refugees, Maurice Eisenbruch argues that mental health care should include refugees' own perceptions of the meaning of their trauma, the way in which they express their distress and an understanding of the strategies they use to overcome it. If refugees express the symptoms of 'post traumatic stress disorder', this may be the sign of constructive methods of coping with a devastatingly traumatic experience, and not necessarily indicate a disorder. 'Western' approaches to therapy, may hence be inappropriate.

Diagnosing mental health problems

Some mental health professionals in America and Europe diagnose 'post-traumatic stress disorder' on the basis of the definition given in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM). This offers a check-list of criteria, which can be easily identified, such as: re-experiencing the trauma by recollections of the event, recurrent dreams, or flashbacks; reduced involvement with the external world, loss of interest, detachment or estrangement; and at least two of a collection of symptoms: hyperalertness, sleep disturbance, survivor guilt, trouble in concentrating, avoidance of activities that prompt the trauma to be recollected, and intensification of symptoms of exposure to events that symbolize or resemble the traumatic event.

These symptoms are presumed to occur universally as a reaction to stress - the assumption being that the nature of the event causing the stress and the cultural background of the person suffering stress are not relevant. When these ideas are applied to migrants, they are based on assumptions about how people should adjust after immigration, how they should express their distress, how their disorders should be classified, and how their distress should be treated.

Clinical experience in many western countries suggests, however, that even after an initial period of increased well-being, some refugees may become alienated from the host society and retreat into a troubled private world or show antisocial behaviour. Their symptoms do not necessarily indicate a disorder and how they experience and interpret them will depend on their cultural background. If western health professionals try to identify and treat refugees according to criteria such as those listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, they run the risk of treating an illness which the refugee does not have, and may leave him or her feeling confused. Such misunderstanding of refugees' needs could be avoided if more emphasis were placed on the cultural meanings of the information gathered from the refugees themselves, even if these may at first seem bizarre to the professional.

Cultural bereavement

The concept of cultural bereavement which I developed on the

basis of my work with Cambodian refugees, encompasses the loss of social networks, cultural values and self-identity which can cause refugees to live in the past, be visited by supernatural forces whilst asleep or awake, and suffer feelings of guilt over abandoning their homeland. They may feel pain if memories of the past begin to fade, but find constant images of the past (including traumatic ones) intruding into their daily life. They may yearn to complete obligations to the dead, and have anxieties, morbid thoughts and anger that mar their ability to get on with the demands of daily life in their new environment. The expression of cultural bereavement should not be viewed as a disease, but an understandable response to catastrophic loss. It is a way of understanding the experience of uprooted people that can minimise the likelihood of refugees being wrongly labelled as having psychiatric disorders. It can also enable distress to be detected in refugees who may exhibit no clinical symptoms in Western terms.

Homesickness

I conducted research with two groups of unaccompanied refugee adolescents fostered in America and Australia. Those in Australia had been fostered in group care, and those in America in foster families (mostly American, although some were Cambodian). After interviewing 79 children, I concluded that the cultural bereavement amongst those in the US was greater than amongst those in Australia where there was less pressure to leave the old culture behind.

The children fostered with American families saw little of their fellow Cambodians and had little or no access to Cambodian culture. These children continued to be preoccupied with the past, often thought about their families, indeed, were more preoccupied than they had been at the time of arrival. They had sustained feelings of regret over leaving the homeland, coupled with a wish to go back. Very powerful bad memories of atrocities during the Pol Pot times lingered, with a recollection of anger and regret about the time they had left Cambodia.

The children thought that the pain they felt could be partly combated by traditional religious beliefs and access to ritual. Sometimes the importance of these yearnings is ignored by policy-makers and care-givers, who feel that rapid integration into western thought, behaviour and religion is better for the children, especially as they are young. But the fieldwork showed that much good could be done by facilitating access to Buddhist monks and Cambodian *kruu* (traditional healers), should the children want it.

Misdiagnosing post traumatic stress disorder

The beliefs and actions of refugees with severe nostalgia may suggest to a western psychiatrist or health worker that they are psychotic. It is not unusual, for example, for Cambodian

refugees to be troubled by visitations of spirits from the homeland, hear voices commanding them to appease their ancestors, or feel that they are being punished for surviving. These can be culturally normal signs of bereavement, and refugees can respond quickly to intervention by the Buddhist monk or the *kruu*.

Some symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder, such as somatization, are relatively common amongst Cambodian refugees. But others, such as guilt, seem to be relatively uncommon expressions of distress. Many Cambodians describe themselves as having the 'Cambodian sickness', which in Khmer is described as *ch'u kbaal*. It refers to a constellation of chronic symptoms including lethargy, headaches and worrying about the family at home. *Ch'u kbaal* may be brought on when refugees are reminded of their homeland by an anniversary, or a ceremony, or even by the smell of the wind. It may be severe when their ancestors come from a dream into their daily life, especially if they are denied the opportunity to honour their ancestors through Buddhist or other rituals. To interpret such headaches as only another symptom of post traumatic stress disorder would be a mistake.

The case of Ros illustrates how a refugee could think, feel and act in ways that express her cultural bereavement, but be misdiagnosed as having a psychosis or a post-traumatic stress disorder.

Since the birth of Ouk, her youngest child, Ros, a young Cambodian, had felt worried, depressed, and troubled by dreams in which she saw horrifying figures that told her to harm her son, and she was frightened when alone in her flat. She missed the family in Cambodia and was visited in Australia by spirits from her family. The health team observed her crying and she complained of blackouts, shortness of breath, and tingling extremities. The health team diagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder and post-natal depression with psychotic features. It was thought that she might be a child abuser and that Ouk should be taken away from her.

I examined Ros, and we spoke in Khmer. Ros feared that because she had not appeased her ancestors her parents' spirits would return to hurt her. She had been troubled by a panoply of Cambodian spirits coming through the ceiling of her fourth floor flat and worried that the flat was dangerous for her son because people would walk up and down on the fifth floor on top of his brain and damage his intellect. He was vulnerable, she thought, because his birth had been induced and his placenta thrown out by the obstetrician. The induction of labour meant that Ouk was born on the wrong day.

Ros recalled how at the age of seven she had seen an *?aap* (a disembodied femaleskull with entrails dangling behind it) flying through the trees. Her father had told her that after childbirth the placenta must be buried to prevent the *?aap* from smelling the blood and swooping to devour it, killing the child and making the mother ill. After Thel's birth, Ros, sleeping on the balcony, had seen the bright green light of the *?aap* flying through the neighbourhood and had been overcome by an icy chill.

The health centre asked the housing agency to move her to the first floor. Ros really wanted a *kruu* to visit her home (on whatever floor) to make it safe, and I took her to see one at his home. The *kruu* diagnosed the woman as suffering from this panoply of Cambodian spirits. The *kruu's* wife, knowledgeable in astrology, found that Ros's birth date and astrological cycle were in decline. The family spirit on her father's side was angry with her. The *kruu* treated Ros and Ouk with several rituals: one involved using a magic amulet to expel the evil spirits; another set up a protective marker around her house to repel further attacks. Ros's bad dreams stopped, she felt her home to be safer, and her physical symptoms subsided. Ouk began to thrive.

The symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and postpartum depression resulted from Western obstetric routine being followed with no allowance for Ros' cultural needs. When her middle child had been born in Thailand, the placenta had been properly buried and the child was protected against the *?aap*. No harm had come to Ros or the child. But in Australia Ros's labour had been induced, Ouk was born on the wrong day, and the placenta was discarded. The *kruu*, however, understood what she saw (what Westerners might have diagnosed as visual hallucination), and instead of trying to suppress visions of her family at home and the associated vengeful spirits, he protected her from being harmed by them. The *kruu's* collaboration was instrumental in treating Ros' fundamental suffering rather than dealing only with the symptoms, which had no meaning when explained to her as post-traumatic stress disorder.

The DSM states that the nature of the stress should be considered according to what an 'average' person would experience in similar circumstances. Although it suggests that experience in a concentration camp is a catastrophic stress, for example, there is nothing to show how an 'average' person would act in the circumstances, or how cultural theories of death or misfortune shape the person's response to disaster. Post traumatic stress disorder is the only condition which can be formally diagnosed which describes the possible reactions following trauma. A psychiatrist trying to understand refugees' problems from their behaviour and symptoms has nowhere to start other than the presumed universal responses to stress.

Insight-orientated therapists also only have western concepts such as survivor guilt which are assumed to be universal.

It is now being considered whether to include 'post victimization syndrome' as a qualifier to the diagnosis of post traumatic stress disorder. This has the advantage that the biography of the survivor is taken into account, but it still ignores the cultural meaning of loss, victimization, violation, etc. The draft for the next DSM manual recognizes that a range of symptoms follow a distressing event, and one of the proposed modifications does allow for the refugee's own explanation of their experience. Culture is still not taken into account, however, and the focus is still on symptoms rather than meanings.

How do we treat those who come to mental health workers with complaints such as sleeplessness or flashbacks or some of the other hallmarks of post traumatic stress disorder? To treat the symptoms can be counterproductive. Nightmares, sleep disorders and startle reactions can be ameliorated with medication, but other symptoms, such as avoidance, shame, and decreased involvement with other people may be prolonged. Also, the treatment may further estrange survivors from their culture. For Cambodians, the kruu can diagnose and interpret refugees' illness, their cultural meaning and expression, and thus can help psychiatrists to treat patients.

This article is a digest of a paper entitled 'From Post-traumatic Stress Disorder to Cultural Bereavement' in press, in the journal Social Science and Medicine. It is also one part of a paper delivered at the International Research and Advisory Panel, Refugee Studies Programme, January 1991.

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EASTERN EUROPE

BEFORE OR AFTER THE WAVE? THOUGHTS ABOUT THE ADEQUACY OF HUNGARIAN REFUGEE LAW

By Boldizsar Nagy

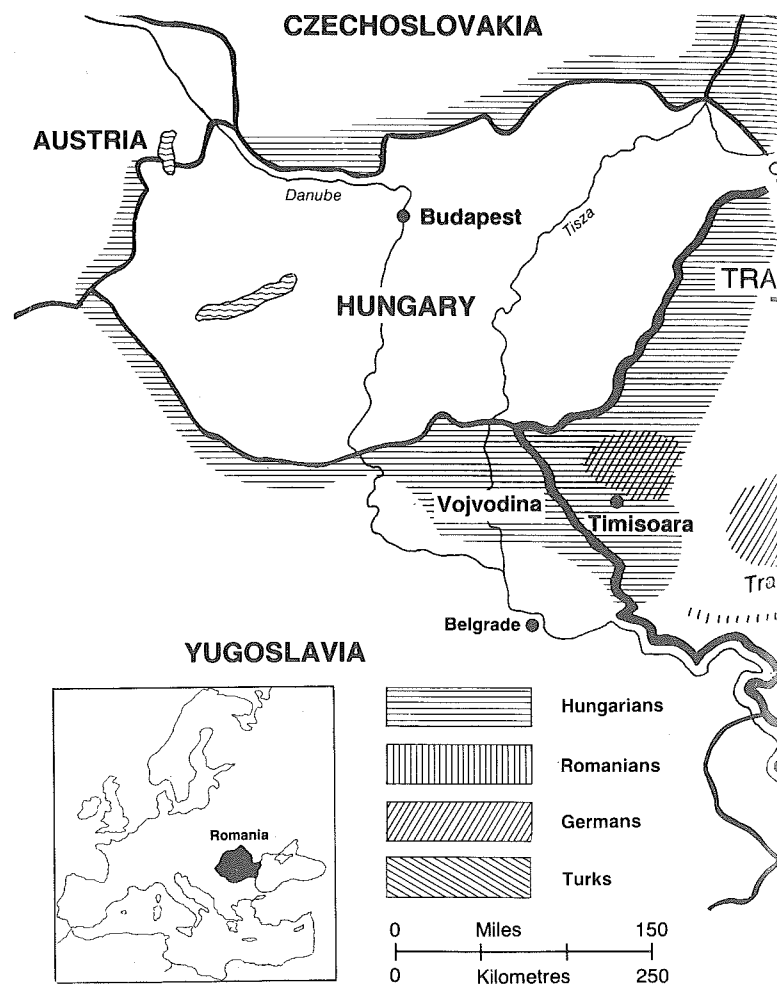
In Hungary in July 1991, no one knows whether the great refugee wave is already over or yet to come. Since late 1987, tens of thousands of Romanians have arrived, fleeing deteriorating political and economic conditions in their home country and severe human rights violations directed particularly at ethnic Hungarians in Transylvania. Since 1989 Hungary has also been used as a funnel to the West from other Eastern European states as the opening of the Austrian/Hungarian border removed technical barriers to movement. East Germans used this route to reach West Germany prior to any change in the former German Democratic Republic. Many recent asylum seekers in Hungary regard their stay as temporary: although the ethnic Hungarians are numerically the largest, Romanians, Germans, Russians, Lithuanians and Ukrainians have also sought resettlement in the West. Only a tiny percentage of these (8.8% since 1989) have actually achieved this goal.

With regard to future refugee flows, recent tragic events in Yugoslavia and constant tensions in the Soviet Union are a source of uncertainty for Hungary as a neighbour of both. In addition, options for resettlement are drying up: the effect of restrictionism in the West will be to increase pressure on poorer countries such as Hungary.

In the 1990s, receiving states are considering Hungary to be a 'safe' country where political persecution can no longer be assumed, and the practice of the Cold War and Post Cold War years of recognizing everybody who managed to flee from Eastern Europe as a refugee has been abandoned. Hence the steady stream of asylum seekers leaving Hungary which continued into the late 1980s have dwindled. From 1983-1988 25,000 Hungarian asylum seekers were registered in Western Europe, USA and Canada.

In 1989, Hungary adopted the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees and the 1967 Protocol. Other constitutional, legal and procedural changes have also been made to deal with the new issue of long term settlement of large numbers of refugees and other immigrants. The overwhelming majority of the 35,000-40,000 Romanians who have arrived in the last three years will stay in Hungary.

Immediately after the accession to the Geneva Convention, a new formulation concerning refugees was adopted as part of the radical amendment of the 1949 constitution reflecting the



Main Minority Populations in Romania and its Neighbours.

end of the socialist era and the beginning of a multiparty parliamentary system which states:

'Hungary grants asylum for those foreign nationals, who in their country of nationality, or for those stateless persons who in their residence are persecuted for racial, religious, national, linguistic, or political reasons.'

Before its amendment, the Constitution had incorporated an ideologically loaded phrase on refugees, the execution of which was solely within the discretion of the party, and there were no further formal legal rules concerning procedure or protection. Refugee reception was only extended to communists or in rare individual cases to African or Asian freedom fighters who participated in leftist movements. The wording of the old Constitution was as follows:

'Everybody who is persecuted for his democratic behaviour, or for his activity to enhance social progress, the liberation of peoples or the protection of peace, may be granted asylum'.

Refugees in Hungary now have the rights of Hungarian citizens with the exception of the right to vote, and excepting holding jobs legally restricted to Hungarian citizens. However, they are not subject to compulsory military service, they have the right to obtain the refugee travel document, participate in free Hungarian language education and usually are relieved from the three years domicile requirement otherwise required for naturalization.

These changes have been made rapidly in response to changing



Minority Rights Group, April 1990.

conditions, and are far-reaching but a number of issues are still unresolved and unregulated, and there are some contradictions.

The adoption of the Geneva Convention was not a product of thorough political debate, rather it was the consequence of an almost personal initiative of the (then) foreign minister. Its adoption was seen as a means of settling the politically very uncomfortable dispute with Romania (which was a military ally of Hungary) over the 35,000-40,000 Romanian citizens, the majority ethnic Hungarians who refused to return to their home country having experienced harassment, open discrimination and psychological threats under the Ceausescu regime.

According to partly unpublished bilateral treaties with Romania these Romanians should have been returned to Romania. A bilateral agreement on the avoidance of double citizenship stated that nobody could acquire the nationality of the other state before being formally released from previous citizenship. At the time the Convention came into force on October 15, 1989, tens of thousands of Romanian citizens were staying in Hungary on the basis of temporary residence permits, issued in clear but benevolent violation of both the bilateral agreements and the domestic law regulating the presence of aliens in Hungary.

It was thought that Hungary's obligations under the 1951 Convention would override the duties stemming from the bilateral treaties with Romania and would entitle Hungary to

give protection to the persecuted members of the Hungarian minority in Romania who managed to cross the borders. However, with the exception of a few hundred they never entered the refugee recognition procedure, since they simply did not apply within the thirty day period granted to refugees *sur place* following the enactment into Hungarian law of the 1951 Convention. So they live in Hungary without genuinely fitting into any legal category: they are neither formal immigrants, nor simple tourists, nor aliens temporarily residing in Hungary for a special cause like business employment, studies or the like.

They should have a status in the law rather than one based on generosity. Otherwise the deterioration of the labour market situation and the gradual impoverishment of the population could quickly generate a very intolerant atmosphere conducive to their expulsion against which there will be no protection unless their status is codified.

The evolution of Hungarian refugee law must also work towards eliminating the discrepancy between the Constitution and the Convention definition. The geographic limitation on the Convention has been maintained such that status is only granted to refugees fleeing European events. This was possible, since in adopting the Convention, version a) of Article 1B was chosen, meaning that refugees of non-European events do not qualify for protection. However, this contradicts both the Constitution in which no geographic limitation is stipulated, and the mandate of UNHCR who now have an office in Hungary. Refugees who are recognized by the UNHCR representative in Budapest, but to whom the Convention is not applied in Hungary as a consequence of the geographic limitation, are in an unclear position. These issues need to be clarified by putting refugee law and policy into the context of policy towards minorities and aliens, and immigration law. This must be done whilst at the same time upholding the spirit of the main human rights conventions which have been signed (The Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms). Both prevent expulsion and extradition of an asylum seeker to a country where he is to face torture or inhuman or degrading treatment. Further, one could also claim that the principle of non-refoulement has become customary international law independently of the Geneva Convention.

Immigration Policy, Humanitarian Concerns

Hungary's current immigration policy does not specify criteria for preferential treatment for any category of immigrants. The text even allows an interpretation according to which everybody would be entitled to immigrate to Hungary if no grounds for exclusion existed. Two particular issues concerning the Hungarian ethnic minorities in other countries stand out: the return of Hungarian citizens abroad who have lost

ETHICS ETHICAL AMBIGUITIES IN REFUGEE ASSISTANCE

by Patricia Pak Poy RSM

citizenship and the status of the Hungarian minorities living in neighbouring countries who could be a specific preferential group.

There should also be a policy towards victims of man-made and natural disasters who do not qualify as Convention refugees. They should be exempted from the usual requirements foreigners are supposed to meet if they want to stay or reside in Hungary. The rules in force concerning the entry and presence of foreigners were adopted in 1982 and although modifications have occurred since then, they still reflect the spirit of the closed authoritarian society, giving almost unlimited and unchecked authority to the police to decide on permission to enter and stay as well as to revoke these decisions. A much criticized feature is that there is no appeal against an administrative decision of expulsion. This still needs change.

International Cooperation

International cooperation and harmonization of legislation in former socialist countries is breaking down rapidly. If significant differences occur, states will receive refugees unevenly. This may lead the more liberal countries to unilateral restrictions which would be bad for refugees as well as for neighbouring states. As Poland is about to adhere to the Convention and Czechoslovakia will follow later, the Convention could serve as a starting point for harmonization.

The most significant challenge is coming from the increasingly restrictive practices in Western Europe, and joint agreements which will result in controlling the influx of asylum seekers. The proposals of the 'Schengen' group of countries, if adopted, will have far-reaching and negative effects. Individual states will no longer be duty-bound to hear asylum claims and offer every refugee a measure of protection; and refugees' movement will be restricted by controls on the carriage of refugees who do not have the documents demanded by the member states. These changes may then serve as a model for other European states.

Hungary is prevented from becoming party to these agreements as long as only members of the European Community may join, although the possibility that non EEC states will join cannot be excluded. However, even from outside, similar measures could be adopted and social burdens avoided. Hungary and other Eastern European states have to decide whether to set similar measures, or to preserve the humanitarian spirit of the Human Rights Conventions and the Geneva Convention.

Extracted from 'Before or After the Wave? Thoughts About the Adequacy of the Hungarian Refugee Law', presented at the International Journal of Refugee Law Colloquium, Geneva, July 1991. Published by the International Journal of Refugee Law in a special volume devoted to the Colloquium.

Introduction

Ethical dilemmas are faced by everyone who works with refugees. In situations which are highly charged politically, however, the choices are particularly ambiguous. For example, assistance programmes in the camps on the Thai/Cambodia border are exploited politically not only by donor countries but also by resistance movements and staff are inevitably perceived as partisan. Trying to find ways of working within unjust structures without at the same time making the structures legitimate poses further dilemmas. An example of this would be work in the Hong Kong Detention Centres.

The following discussion is based on my experience with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and the Mercy Refugee Service (MRS). It looks at how these organisations deal with situations which raise questions about their activities, their policies, even their very *raison d'être*. Helping organisations have a responsibility to reflect constantly on their actions. They neglect this at their own expense, and more important, at the expense of the refugees and asylum seekers whom they are serving. The JRS encourages its workers in 'ethical reflection' placing special emphasis on *being with* and *doing with*, rather than *doing for*. It sees its work as 'accompaniment' and sharing with refugees as well as working collaboratively with local churches and agencies.

The Thai-Cambodian Border

At Site 2 on the Thai-Cambodian border, JRS staff work under the umbrella of the Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation (COERR). The leadership in the refugee camp is predominantly in support of the Kampuchea People's Liberation Front (KPLNF) which itself forms an uneasy coalition with the Sihanouk loyalists and the Khmer Rouge. Other camps on the border are dominated by other political groups. Not all Khmer are sympathetic to the leaders of the camps in which they find themselves.

Camp residents have been caught in the crossfire from both sides: pressured into saving their food rations to help the fighting forces and kept as prisoners in the camp on the demands not only of the Thai Ministry of the Interior but by their own camp leaders who need the show of numbers. Fear of the many land mines in the vicinity of the camp further curtails their movement.

Alignment with the 'authorities' puts the workers in an ambiguous relationship with refugees and in 1990, JRS reconsidered its role there: should it withdraw from the border and stop supporting or appearing to support a particular faction in the civil war? Or would this be a betrayal of those who valued not only material services but the support and friendship

of an international group which could ensure some public knowledge of their plight?

Whitehead Detention Centre, Hong Kong

Involuntary repatriation is on the cards for asylum seekers in Whitehead. This, together with the recent talks between Britain, Hong Kong and Vietnam about a 'centre' for repatriates outside Hanoi is causing acute anxiety in the Detention Centre. Last year saw an increase in violence among the Vietnamese in Whitehead. The violence was particularly directed against the expatriate community and the Hong Kong authorities as a protest against the unjust rejections in the screening process for refugee status and at the prospect of forced repatriation.

The appalling conditions in Whitehead and the lack of effective administration cause untold suffering for the asylum seekers. How can we work in Whitehead without being seen to condone the prison conditions which exist there, which allow refugees no self-responsibility and force them to be totally dependent except perhaps for getting themselves off their bunks to face another day? How can the continuing violence be faced? How can victims of torture and rape best be counselled? How can rules be upheld which technically forbid workers to post letters for refugees? How to keep silent when the local doctors 'go slow' on medical treatment for very sick children? How to stay calm in the face of ritual stomach slashing, knowing that the one phone in the section has been out of order for a month? How to justify the tear gas and the truncheons?

In such stressful circumstances, NGOs risk the danger of expending more energy maintaining their own organisations and themselves than in assisting the refugees. One easy solution for JRS workers would be to withdraw from Whitehead and have nothing to do with a structure they feel is unjust. But what kind of contribution does such a high moral stand make for the refugees and asylum seekers in the camps and detention centres?

Collective ethical reflection

In the Christian spiritual tradition, the true process of discernment requires that we 'know ourselves', that is know our biases and search for and articulate the ethical principles on which we make our decisions. There will always be conflicts of interest or, at least, conflicting claims and the following principles can provide a basis from which to work:

- i) the needs of the poor take priority over the wants of the rich;
- ii) the freedom of the dominated takes priority over the liberty of the powerful;
- iii) the participation of the marginalised groups takes priority over preservation of an order which excludes them (in Hollenbach, D., *Claims in Conflict N.Y. 1979*).

Collective reflection involves considering different actions from as many perspectives as possible and sharing experiences. In the context of working with refugees this requires an understanding of the causes of displacement, the rights of asylum seekers, the duties of host countries and issues of protection. In searching for moral alternatives, the prevailing value system must be analysed, as must the political, socio-economic and historical situation.

After five months of critical reflection the JRS group working on the Thai-Cambodia border decided to continue its involvement in education and health programmes with COERR but not to increase the JRS in-put. We decided to develop a programme more explicitly centred on peace and reconciliation initiatives; and to work in Cambodia in solidarity with the people. This decision is now being implemented and in Phnom Penh a vocational training centre for amputees has been opened. The centre will teach skills of fitting, carpentry, mechanical and electrical repairs. Village outreach is also planned, as is preparatory work for reconciliation of families in Phnom Penh with those who will be returning from the border following an effective peace settlement.

At Whitehead any repatriation programme must be based on a just screening process. Those at risk must have the freedom to choose whether to return or to resettle. Accurate information on the country of origin must be provided and protection and monitoring of returnees must be assured together with material and psychological support which pays full respect for their human dignity (Report of the JRS Meeting 1990). Forced repatriation from Whitehead will inevitably involve confrontation with riot police and military, and concomitant bloodshed.

In an attempt to improve the screening process for resettlement, the Australian group 'Lawyers for Refugees' changed its objective from appeals to pre-screening interviews. The latter were found to be more influential in the outcome of a process which is often far from fair and efficient. This change was welcomed, though it does not imply we believe resettlement is preferable to repatriation. Solutions must be found by listening to what refugees and asylum seekers themselves want.

Conclusion

Collective ethical reflection is a 'way of working', one which puts the refugee at the centre of concern. It is fully participative and has the potential to make assistance more efficient in its delivery. But its major contribution is promoting greater integrity between those engaged in refugee assistance and refugees themselves, so that their rights as human beings may be protected and their lives be enhanced.

REVIEWS

***I Don't Understand What It Is Saying* by Francesca Buglioni and Leander Neckles (1991). Published by the Migrant Support Unit, London Voluntary Service Council, 68 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JR, UK. Price £6.95 for voluntary organizations or £8.95 for statutory and commercial organisations.**

'*I Don't Understand What It Is Saying*' documents the inadequacy of language facilities to refugees and migrants in London, and provides a useful guide to the limited services which are available.

The lack of translated material currently available to refugees in London is severely hampering the work of refugee agencies. The research on which the report is based showed that provision is patchy and where information is translated, it is often not relevant or in the wrong language. Groups such as Somalis, Kurds and Spanish-speakers are often 'forgotten' by the local authority because of their low numbers in comparison to other groups. In addition, there is no clear division of responsibility for providing or funding translated written material and expertise among local community groups is often wasted.

The report lists the variety of agencies providing translated information including local councils, health authorities, translation agencies and community groups. This is a useful guide to local authorities and community groups on the current language and other services available for refugees and migrants. Agencies working to meet refugees' language and other needs are listed borough by borough.

The report recommends that clearer lines of responsibility be drawn up, and illustrates the success of specific projects based on partnerships among statutory bodies and migrant community organisations.

***Refugee and Immigrant Resource Directory 1990-1991* by Alan Edward Schorr (1990). Published by Denali Press, P.O. Box 021535, Juneau, Alaska. Price US\$37.50 ISBN 0-938737-19-8.**

This is one of the richest and most thorough directories on public and private organisations serving refugees and immigrants. It provides extensive and detailed data on the almost one thousand national, statewide, and local associations, networks, organisations, foundations, policy groups, government branches, academic institutions and other bodies that work on behalf of refugees and immigrants in the United States. It contains a comprehensive listing of the specific services or programmes offered by organisations: among the

forms of assistance indexed are those concerned with advocacy; community education and /or political organising; cultural, academic enterprises; and social services. There also is a listing of organisations which provide religious activities for migrant groups and actively offer sanctuary to Central Americans denied safe haven in the US. Furthermore, the directory's appendices offer a comprehensive analysis of the current state of US refugee policy as well as a listing of other key documents and statistical data available on US refugee and immigrant populations.

Schorr's directory provides a guide through the complex and ever-growing infrastructure which exists for refugees and immigrants in the US. It should be in the library of every US refugee and immigrant programme administrator, US refugee and/or immigrant service organisation, US government office dealing with refugees or immigrants, and academics conducting research on forced and voluntary migrants settled in the US. The above offices and institutions should also ensure that the book is made available to refugees and immigrants themselves as well as to their more poorly funded self-help organisations.

Since a large number of the organisations in this work are the recipients of federal funds, one wonders why a reference manual of this type is not published by the US government as part of its major commitment to multi-ethnic refugee populations. It seems that refugees and immigrants deserve more than having to rely on private publishers for a clear diagram of the social actors who may dramatically affect their working and indeed non-working lives.

Lorraine Majka

***SAMSARA: Death and Rebirth in Cambodia* by Wilen Bruno 1989. 28 Minute 16mm colour film and videocassette. Available for purchase or rental from Elle Bruno, 163 Fairmount Street, San Francisco, CA 94131, USA.**

Cambodia has now experienced twenty-two years of civil war, genocide and foreign occupation. For the survivors, the trauma of the Khmer Rouge period (1975-1978), when between one and two million Cambodians perished still leaves deep psychological scars. Everywhere there is evidence of the destruction wrought in the name of a viciously deformed ideology which emptied cities, tore down Buddhist temples and broke up families. Pol Pot's 'Year Zero, when blood ran as deep as the belly of the elephant', lives on in nightmare reality with the thousands of amputees maimed by Khmer Rouge mines, dilapidated cities and child victims of poverty and neglect. 'Why should we plant trees when no one will enjoy their shade?' asks one survivor in Ellen Bruno's powerful

documentary which brings alive the human dimension of Cambodia's ongoing calvary.

Eschewing politics, the film concentrates on the world of ordinary Cambodians who live on as survivors of their country's terrible holocaust. 'Clinging to the wreckage' might have been an apt sub-title for this elegy on suffering and survival. The images are poignant: a farmer plants rice seedlings in bone dry ground knowing that without rain the crop will fail, a peasant woman husks rice and reflects on what it will take to eke her family through to the next harvest, a

young girl starves herself to death in hospital after losing all her family and both limbs in a Khmer Rouge train attack, and a famous singer stirs memories of pre-1970 Cambodia and is recognised in concert by her long-lost daughter. Images of death, images of life, the eternal oscillation of despair and hope in a world of *Samsara*, the ever-turning wheel of suffering of present day Cambodia.

Peter Carey
Trinity College, Oxford

PSYCHOSOCIAL ADAPTATION OF REFUGEES

6-10 April 1992

presented by
Carolyn Williams, PhD, University of Minnesota

A course designed to introduce professionals working with refugees to the psychosocial processes influencing refugee behaviour and adaptation.

The course covers:

1. Theories of refugee behaviour and commonalities of experiences of refugees coming from diverse cultural groups.
2. Cultural factors in refugee behaviour and adjustment.
3. Cross-disciplinary perspectives on refugee mental health.
4. The distinction between mental health symptoms and actual disorders, with a focus on the most common mental health problems seen in refugee populations.
5. The assessment of, and treatment strategies for refugee mental health.
6. The special needs of high risk populations: women, children, the elderly, torture/trauma victims, and the disabled.
7. The psychosocial adaptation of care-givers.

For further information please contact:

Course Training Officer, Refugee Studies Programme, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford,
21 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LA.

UPDATE

PUBLICATIONS

New Publication

The International Catholic Migration Commission has resumed production of its biannual magazine *Migration News*, the first issue of which came out in April 1991. It has taken on a new design and new brief so that it not only presents a view of the work of the Church around the world, but will initiate in-depth discussion on migration issues. This first issue included a discussion of ICMC's new direction to mark its 40th anniversary, views and reviews of NGOs and development strategies and notices about ICMC's work. *Migration News* is available in English or French.

Anyone interested in subscribing to *Migration News* should write to:

Coordinator of Communications

ICMC

Rue de Vermont 37-39

Case Postale 96

CH-1211 Geneva 20

SWITZERLAND

Women's Commission Newsletter

Through overseas delegations, advocacy and public education, the **Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children** speaks on behalf of women and children around the world who have been forced to flee from their homes because of war, civil strife, famine or persecution. In March 1990 the Women's Commission launched its new Newsletter which provides information about its work throughout the world, its campaigns and programmes.

The second issue, June 1991 reports on the visit of a Women's Commission delegation to Thailand and Laos to assess the needs of Hmong and Lao women and children in the context of voluntary repatriation. It also discusses work with displaced people in Liberia and lobbying activities in Washington for recognition of the needs of refugee women and children. For more information about the work of the Women's Commission write to:

Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

c/o International Rescue Committee

386 Park Avenue South,

New York NY 10016

USA

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*

Network News

The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, California, publishes a Newsletter which aims to strengthen national educational efforts, and facilitate communication and coordination among advocates and organisers working with refugees in the US. The latest issue, April 1991, includes articles on the US Free Trade Agreement with Mexico, Mexican border conflicts and reports on a study of the needs of undocumented women in California. It details a court case raised by an immigrant worker without documents against her employer for sexual discrimination. Equal rights advocates regard this as a benchmark case because '50 per cent of new immigrants are women and children who often work under questionable conditions'.

The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights can be contacted at:

*310-8th Street, Suite 307
Oakland, CA 94607, USA*

Liberian Working Group

The Refugee Service in Rome has established a forum, the Liberian Working Group, to bring together organisations and persons ready to assist the victims of the current crisis in Liberia. It produces a newsletter of current information about the needs of the Liberian people: the refugees, the emergency situation and the reconstruction of the country and of the church.

The second newsletter (June 1991) brings news of the current political situation in Liberia from a wide range of sources and reports as well as practical information about conditions in Liberia in its 'News in Brief' section. This issue presents a detailed report on a visit to Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia by two members of the Society of African Missions in February and March of this year.

In the border region of Sierra Leone, in a response to disagreement over the inadequacy of food distribution, some refugees have formed an organisation called the **Liberian Refugee Association**. It comprises some 20 - 30 individuals who act as representatives for the refugees to the relief organisations and local government officials. The Association also helps refugees with individual difficulties and organises funerals and celebrations.

For further information about the Newsletter, the Liberia Working Group and the Liberian Refugee Association contact:

*Jesuit Refugee Service Office
C.P. 6139
00195 Rome
ITALY*

Mauritanian Action Network

At the end of 1990 exiles and volunteers who had been working in Mauritania formed the Mauritania Action Network to focus world attention on the human rights violations there. The Network uses the radio, television and press to attract attention and disseminate information about human rights abuses which are accelerating the flight of individuals, families and whole villages to Senegal and Mali to escape the violence. It is currently lobbying members of the US Congress to pressure the Mauritanian government to put a stop to the persecution of tens of thousands of Mauritians.

Information about the Network and its activities can be obtained from:

*Mauritania Action Network
P.O. Box 34781
Washington DC 20043-4781
USA*

Report on Refugee Women in Australia

A report by Eileen Pittaway of the Australian National Consultative Committee on Refugee Women (ANCCORW), commissioned by the Bureau of Immigration Research, highlights the serious underestimation of the incidence of past torture and trauma among refugee women in Australia. **Refugee Women - Still at Risk in Australia: A Study of the First Two Years of Resettlement in the Sydney Metropolitan Area** is based upon surveys of 204 women from 17 different countries and shows that up to 80 per cent of refugee women coming to Australia from Latin America, Indo-China, the Middle East and Africa had experienced a high or medium degree of trauma and torture.

Pittaway notes that there is a tendency to minimise public discussion of atrocities committed against refugee women, as if the women may be exposed to more suffering through open discussion. Hence the inadequacy of present services has not been appreciated. The women interviewed identified certain services as essential for their successful resettlement: English language provision, secure and affordable accommodation, income support, employment services, childcare, emotional support, and therapy, orientation and information services.

Eileen Pittaway can be contacted at the ANCCORW address below. The report is published by:

*Australian Government Publishing Service
GPO Box 84
Canberra ACT 2601
AUSTRALIA*

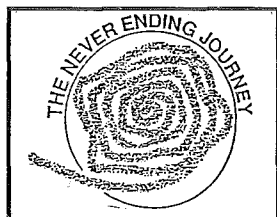
CONFERENCE REPORTS

International Conference on Refugee Women

From the 31 May to the 3 June *The Never Ending Journey*, an international conference on refugees with particular emphasis on refugee women took place in Sydney, Australia. The conference was organised by the Refugee Council of Australia and the Australian National Consultative Committee on Refugee Women (ANCCORW). The conference provided an opportunity for service providers and recipients to share information about needs and how well these are currently being met. One session explored the 'roadblocks' experienced by refugees on their journey: persecution, torture, trauma, lack of and inadequate and unsuitable service provision and many more.

It is hoped that the feedback from the participants will go some way to influencing future policy and making service provision more responsive to the needs expressed by those who need them. Many of the papers presented are being printed by ANCCORW and distributed at the cost of \$10.00. For copies and details contact:

PO Box 86
Camperdown
NSW 2050
AUSTRALIA
Tel: (02) 565 9111
Fax: (02) 550 4509



Conference on Age in Exile: a British Response

A one-day conference on the needs of elderly refugees in Britain was held in November 1990, and encompassed important issues such as special-needs housing, residential care, welfare rights and pensions, care in the community as well as the role of refugee community organisations. The workshop recommendations emphasised the need for coordination and co-operation between local authorities, health authorities, health services, the Refugee Council and voluntary organisations.

The conference followed up some of the issues raised two years ago at a European conference on Age in Exile held in Amsterdam and was attended by representatives of different organisations working in community care. It was sponsored by Islington Council's Race Equality and Community Affairs Committee and the Refugee Council.

For further details of the conference and the recommendations contact:

Kate Allen
Director of Settlement Services Division
Refugee Council
3-9 Bondway
London SW8 1SJ

Umbrella Organisation for Senior Citizens in London

The Standing Conference of Ethnic Minority Senior Citizens (London) (SCEMSC) is a charity which brings together retired members of ethnic minority groups in the Greater London area. At present there are over 32,000 ethnic minority elderly living in London and by the turn of the century it is estimated that this number will reach at least a quarter of a million. Since 1982, when the first Conference was held, the failure of statutory and voluntary organisations to recognise the special cultural, religious and linguistic needs of ethnic minority elders has been a main theme of the work of SCEMSC.

SCEMSC campaigns for adequate basic state retirement pension, or financial assistance for those ineligible for such a pension. It brings together information about services and provisions for ethnic minority elders, and acts as a resource and reference centre for agencies seeking advice. Conferences, seminars, classes, lectures and exhibitions are organised, and materials are produced and disseminated. Recent SCEMSC publications include training leaflets in 10 different languages, for elderly people with diabetes and a video on Primary Health Care in 7 different languages.

For further information and membership, apply to:

The Standing Conference of Ethnic Minority Senior Citizens
5-5a Westminster Bridge Road
London SE1 7XW
Tel: 71 928 0095

Report of the Colloquium on Problems and Prospects of Refugee Law

Geneva 23-24 May 1991 by Khadija Elmadmad

1991 is the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the establishment of the Office of the UNHCR. To commemorate this event, a Colloquium on Refugee Law was organised by the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva in collaboration with the UNHCR.

Among the participants were practitioners, lawyers, university teachers, students, and representatives of NGOs and international organisations. The keynote address was given by Mrs. Sadoko Ogata, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. She described the humanitarian crises in different parts of the world, the shortcomings of the current legal framework and the lacunae in refugee law as defined in the 1951 Geneva Convention. Furthermore, she presented an overview of the sad situation of today's refugees and asylum-seekers.

The colloquium had three main themes: 1. the changes in perspective for refugee law and policy, 2. the relationship between international action in favour of refugees and other

areas of international concern, and 3. the evolving functions of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Presentations were made by academics and researchers from institutions in Switzerland and abroad and by UNHCR researchers. It was agreed that the Convention was unsatisfactory because: 1. some states are advocating a restriction of the clauses of the Convention, and 2. some NGOs and international organisations want to expand its scope to include more unprotected persons.

Two schools of thought emerged during the discussion: one advocated the adoption of a new international instrument on refugees, and the other preferred to keep the existing document with a more inclusive interpretation. Some participants proposed reforms in the organisation of international humanitarian protection and assistance by merging all the current international humanitarian organisations, including the UNHCR, into one. This suggestion was, however, opposed by the majority of the participants, who held that the UNHCR should be allowed to do its work with some changes mainly in its funding system.

All participants agreed that there is a need to protect refugees and asylum-seekers and to guarantee their human rights. They identified a pressing need for increasing financial support from rich countries for economic development in the developing countries. It was argued that this would help prevent refugee flight to the 'North'. There was also an agreement to involve the states which generate asylum-seekers in solving refugee problems.

Fresh reflections on refugee law are needed, especially after the recent events in the Gulf. Democracy and human rights should be guaranteed today at both national and international levels. There is a need to respect all human rights - civil, political, economic and cultural, as well as the right to development and peace.

ECRE Seminar on Information

From the 10-11th June 1991 users and handlers of information about refugees met at a seminar organised by the European Consultation on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE). The aims were to identify the kind of information needed by European agencies assisting refugees, to underline the importance of 'information exchange' and to build on the achievements of ECRE, the INFODOC group and IRDN in standardising information storage.

The seminar produced the following areas for future action:-

1. Expanding and organising ECRE, INFODOC network

It was considered important to expand the exchange of

catalogues on floppy disks; explore the possibility of direct electronic exchange of catalogues; look at the feasibility of producing abstracts; develop audio-visual data-bases and seek common methods of cataloguing them; promote the thesaurus and the indexing guidelines; and define how documentation centres can contribute to serve the needs identified below.

ECRE agencies should consider the need for a specialised database or documentation centre on European issues and support the training of handlers.

2. Making information accessible

Documentation centres should ensure that there is easy access to important documents or that substantial documents are available in summary or abstract. Agencies should provide staff time for abstracting. Specific needs were identified as including: easy to up-date fact sheets presenting essential information on recurring issues in enquiries for public information or press officers and detailed political and technical information needed in the daily work of practitioners.

Information users should establish the general patterns of their needs and establish contacts with producers in order to generate targeted and packaged information. Information on the 'country of origin' is also crucial and this should be available from more than one source. The biannual reports which are produced following ECRE meetings should be more widely disseminated.

3. Links between handlers, producers and users of information

Personal contacts were seen to be the most effective but more use should be made of existing newsletters. Once the International Refugee Electronic Network's (IRENE's) trial period is ended agencies should be encouraged to share information through its electronic mailing/bulletin board.

A directory of European information sources should be compiled with ECRE network. Better use of information sources, such as UNHCR and Amnesty International, should be looked at, while considering the desirable parameters of co-operation between NGOs and governmental and inter-governmental agencies.

'Europe 1992 Making the Most of the Opportunities'

A one-day conference on the implications for voluntary organisations of the European Single Market and European integration was organised by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and the *Directory of Social Change* in London on 16th July 1991. The conference covered such issues as:

* changes in charity and taxation law

* similarities and differences between UK voluntary and

community organisations and their counterparts in mainland Europe

* social trends in Europe relevant to the UK voluntary sector

* lobbying, fundraising and grantmaking in Europe

* nationality, immigration and race in Europe

Speakers stressed the difficulties voluntary organisations have in making their voices heard when decisions relating to immigration and asylum issues are decided outside both national and European Community levels, by secret meetings of Ministers such as the Trevi Group.

Enslaved Refugees

The **United Nations Working Group on Slavery** took place in Geneva at the end of July. Some of the presentations referred to refugee groups. For example attention was drawn to Afghan refugees working as bonded labourers in Pakistan, and the annual 'round-ups' by the military of Haitians in the Dominican Republic and forced labour on sugar plantations. **Anti-Slavery International** presented a report to the Working Group on Women about Burmese refugee women in Thailand being sold to brothel owners and forced into prostitution.

For details of the work of Anti-Slavery International contact:

Anti-Slavery International

Brixton Road

London

REPORTS

Report from Fact-finding Mission to the Occupied Territories

A Report of the findings of a mission to the **Occupied Territories** in June 1990 has been published as a report entitled '**Mental Health of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip**'. The 106 page report is wide ranging with chapters on legal matters and human rights; children, education and research; family and community; and health services.

It includes recommendations concerning human rights abuses, justice and mental health, and denounces the practice of torture, beatings and other activities that involve individual and collective cruelty. It notes the need for a programme for mental health care which is based on reinforcing helping systems indigenous to the culture, initially working through existing structures such as schools, religious institutions, women's groups etc. Specialist care is also needed for the rehabilitation of people traumatised by detention. The report describes the effects of stress not only at the individual level but also at the levels of the family and the Palestine community. A list of mental health objectives are appended. Copies of the Report can be obtained from:

The Coordinator

The Palestinian Association For Mental Health

PO Box 5386

Nicosia

CYPRUS

Report on Settlement and Integration of Immigrants Conference

A conference on **The Settlement and Integration of Immigrants** was sponsored by the Faculty of Social Work, the Centre of Social Welfare Studies and the Department of Employment and Immigration, Canada. In the Conference report, Ann Wilson highlights the changes which have taken place in managing the resettlement of refugees in Canada.

From being primarily run by volunteers ten years ago, today services are increasingly provided by paid professional staff. Settlement/integration workers need a wide range of abilities and skills including cultural awareness and sensitivity. Wilson emphasises the need for training to be interdisciplinary and backed up by a strong support network. Support should also be available in the form of emotional support for the workers themselves because of the often stressful nature of the work and issues they have to tackle.

PROJECTS

EEC Microprojects Programme

The 12 member states and the 66 African, Caribbean and Pacific states (ACP) of the European Economic Community

signed an agreement in 1984 to promote the development of the ACP states. The Lome III Convention includes funding for a Microproject Programme. Microprojects are community based, small-scale, self-help development efforts which are designed to have an economical and social impact on the lives of rural and grassroots communities. The ideas and requests for a microproject must stem from an initiative taken by the local community and not individuals, and meet a priority need which is demonstrated and observed at local level while at the same time supporting the government's development objectives. The projects are undertaken with active participation of the local community, which on completion of the project takes over the maintenance and running of the programme.

Self-settled refugees can also apply for development assistance from this source. Their inclusion reflects a change in thinking towards the development of 'refugee-affected areas' which is integratory and does not discriminate between refugees and hosts. Further details of criteria of project selection, types of projects eligible for funding and Microproject guidelines contact local EEC Microprojects Coordination Units.

Community and Family Services International (CFSI) is a Philippine-based NGO providing social and mental health services for Indo-Chinese refugees and asylum seekers in Asia. Established in 1981 it provides services such as counselling, community education, paraprofessional training in refugee camps and centres for asylum seekers in Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Indochinese Traditional Healing Center, Philippines

At the Philippines Refugee Processing Center (PRPC) in Morong, Bataan, Philippines, the Indochinese Traditional Healing Center (ITHC) was set up by members of the Community and Family Services International and Cambodian healers in 1985 to provide culturally sensitive service for Laotians, Cambodians and Vietnamese-Chinese. The ITHC aims to increase the level of well-being among the refugee population at the PRPC by integrating traditional ethnomedical practices with modern biomedical treatment and facilitating the close coordination and collaboration between healers and health carers.

Prior to its establishment and official inauguration in 1988, traditional healing had been practised in the Centre entirely separate from the formal medical structure. The PRPC is a transitional centre where refugees are prepared for life in the US and other western countries. It encourages and demonstrates a positive link between western and traditional health care. Through the ITHC, traditional healers gain recognition for their skills and stimulated to become planners for the health needs of the refugees.

The dramatic rise in the number of people served by the Center from 1,779 in 1988 to 8,669 in 1990, testifies to the ITCH's effectiveness.

For further information about the Center or CFSI write to:

*Community and Family Services International
17/A Caroline Heights
1 Link Road
Causeway Bay
Hong Kong*

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Refugee Resource Project

The Refugee Resource Project is a six-month Ford Foundation-funded research project exploring educational and training resources for refugees and other displaced persons in Egypt. In addition to opportunities for study in Egyptian universities and institutes, it is concerned with finding scholarships and programmes abroad some of which are open to refugees.

For more information about the project contact:

*Anita Fabos
Principal Investigator
Department of Political Science
The American University of Cairo
113 Kasr El Aini Street
P.O. Box 2511
Cairo
EGYPT*

RECOGNITION OF ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

The **UK National Academic Recognition Information Centre (UK NARIC)** provides a free advisory service for institutions and organisations which deal with overseas academic qualifications and need to relate them to the British system. UK NARIC works in close cooperation with the **British Council** and its overseas offices and answers enquiries from universities, polytechnics, colleges, professional associations, careers offices and schools either by telephone or by letter. However, photocopies of original certificates and transcripts are needed before the Centre can give specific advice.

Individuals cannot approach NARIC directly but can do so through one of the above institutions, the Refugee Council and the World University Service or, if outside the UK, their local British Council office. Individuals can also consult the *International Guide to Qualifications in Education* which is published by UK NARIC and is the main focus of its work. The third edition of the publication will appear in January 1992. UK NARIC is based at the British Council:
10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BN

MENTAL HEALTH OF REFUGEE CHILDREN IN VIOLENT ENVIRONMENTS

4-DAY SEMINAR
6-10 JANUARY 1992

for

University Students and Researchers,
Staff and Practitioners
in
governmental, inter-governmental and
non-governmental organisations

1-DAY SPECIAL WORKSHOP
11 JANUARY 1992

for

Practitioners only
to consult on specific cases

To be led by a team of international experts on
children and mental health.

For further information please contact:

Course Training Officer,
Refugee Studies Programme,
Queen Elizabeth House,
University of Oxford,
21 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LA.

UNESCO and Study Abroad

Study Abroad is a UNESCO publication devoted to supplying information for those wishing to pursue their studies in another country. It provides information on scholarships and courses at the higher education level available to foreign students in some 120 countries.

UNESCO receives many enquiries for advice about institutions and qualifications and under its aegis six regional conventions on higher education have been signed covering Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, the Mediterranean, and Latin America and the Caribbean. These conventions are intended to provide a framework within which countries can work together to solve specific problems. The conventions are guidelines and statements of principle and their application is entrusted to committees which study obstacles to recognition and draw up recommendations concerning improved mobility of students. Their work concerns exchange of information on higher education systems, the movement of students and academics between countries, the establishment of bibliographies, setting up working relationships with professional organisations.

Inquiries about university qualifications and equivalents can be addressed to national bodies in charge of applying the conventions. Details of such bodies and other institutions offering guidance and information on higher education courses and certificates can be obtained from:

UNESCO

Division of Higher Education and Research
7, Place de Fontenoy
75700 Paris
FRANCE

Oxford University Student Union Scholarship Scheme

The Oxford Student Scholarships Scheme (OSS) is an organisation run by students and offers a limited number of scholarships (less than ten scholarships per year) for highly-qualified people from developing countries to study at the University of Oxford. Scholarships are targeted at people whose political or financial circumstances, or lack of suitable educational facilities at home dictate that further education would not be possible. The scholarships are open to both men and women for undergraduate and postgraduate courses; however, due to the expense and length of medical courses and postgraduate research degrees, candidates applying for the latter are less likely to be awarded scholarships.



Application forms and further information for entry in October 1992 can be obtained by writing to the address below.

Completed application forms must be received not later than 30 November 1991.

*International Office
University Offices
Wellington Square
Oxford, OX1 2JD*

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Low Price Book Scheme

Librarians in developing countries may be interested to hear of facilities available through the British Council. Each local office holds a catalogue of the British Council Educational Low Price Book Scheme. This enables librarians to obtain selected British publications at a reduced rate.

Information about other facilities can be obtained from your local British Council Office.

Free International Newsletters

AHRTAG, the Appropriate Health Resources and Technologies Action Group, has produced a Resource List of 84 international newsletters concerned with clinical or community health work, training and issues related to primary health care. All these newsletters can be received free of charge. The Resource List also details newsletters which require a subscription fee.

AHRTAG's resource centre is a 'clearinghouse' on primary health care which supports the work of Primary Health Care (PHC) personnel in developing countries by providing information on all aspects of PHC. It has a library based in London with documentation on PHC, appropriate health technologies as well as copies of all the free newsletters in its Resource List and other journals and newsletters. AHRTAG itself publishes the following free international newsletters: *A.I.D.S Action*, *ARI News*, *CBR News* and *Dialogue on Diarrhoea*.

Anyone interested in receiving any of the AHRTAG free publications or the Resource List with details of other free publications should write to:

AHRTAG
*1 London Bridge Street
London SE1 9SG*

EDUCATION SERVICES

Travellers and Displaced Persons Education Service

In April 1991, Brent LEA set up the Travellers and Displaced Persons Education Service. Brent has a school refugee population of over 500 students of whom 46% are from Somalia. Surveys carried out by Brent Education Department, have established that these children come from 24 different countries. Refugee pupils are arriving more frequently from

Eritrea, Uganda, Somalia and Iraq.

The service is co-ordinated by Rocky Deans. An Education Community Development Worker has also recently been appointed, whose main role is to liaise with Refugee and Travellers, families on the education of their children, to establish a network of support services, and to assist access for refugee children into primary and secondary education. The service has also set up a voluntary programme which supports newly arrived refugee children in Brent schools.

This initiative came about through extensive discussions with Brent Education Department and the Refugee communities in Brent. The voluntary workers are all refugees. The programme has twin goals:

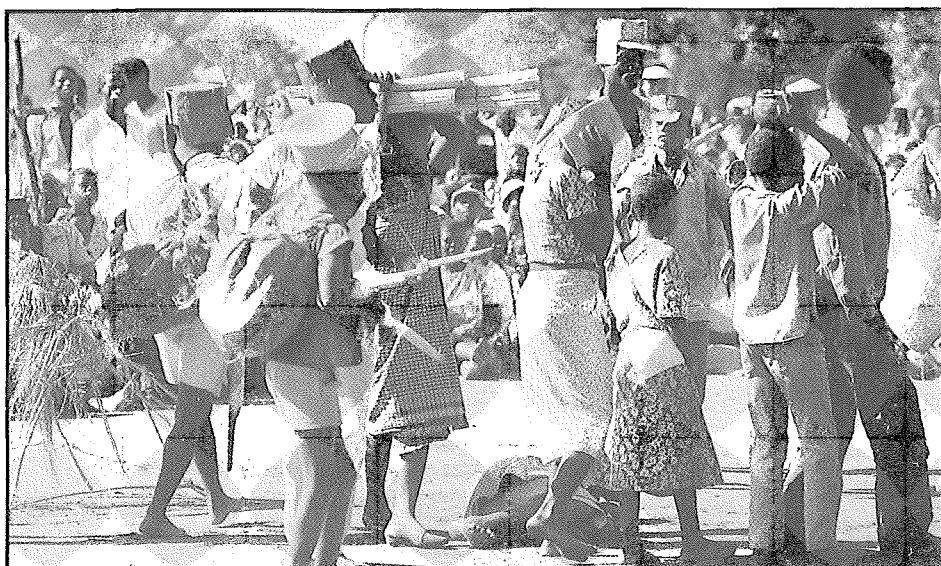
- * To utilise and support the expertise in the refugee community
- * To support newly arrived refugee children in mainstream schools.

Rocky Deans is also chair of Brent's 'Refugees in Continuing and Adult Education Working Group' which meets once a month. Its membership is made up of officers from the Careers Service, Adult Education, Continuing Education and the College of North West London.

Brent LEA has also facilitated the London Steering Group on Refugee Education. The group is made up of nine participating LEAs: Brent, Camden, Ealing, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Hillingdon, Lewisham and Tower Hamlets. The aim of the steering group is to provide a forum to share and support good practice.

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LETTERS



'Drama, Chifunga Camp, Malawi'

Photograph Roger Zetter.

AFRICA REFUGEE DAY - JUNE 1991: CHIFUNGA CAMP, MALAWI

Africa Refugee Day commemorates the OAU's adoption of its Convention on refugees in 1969. It is a day to share the experiences of the six million refugees hosted across the continent. Malawi itself hosts 950,000 Mozambican refugees, more than 10 per cent of its total population.

Chifunga, close to Malawi's western border with Mozambique, is one of the smaller refugee settlements, and with a population of 40,000 refugees was the setting for Malawi's Africa Refugee Day. The events were attended by governmental and intergovernmental delegations and field staff from the dozen or so NGOs who support the \$30 million national refugee assistance programme.

Many aspects of refugee life were presented. A small exhibition mounted by indigenous NGOs demonstrated a variety of projects - income generating activities, training, vegetable growing, homecrafts. The centre piece of the day was a highly organised and lively display of drama, music and dancing which took as its theme the continuity of Mozambican culture and life through war and forced displacement.

The most moving part of the drama was the opening twenty minutes. Encapsulated in a succession of vivid scenes was the transformation of Mozambique from a country of peace and potential (understandably idealised) to one torn apart by war, displacement and the refugee exodus. The first scene was a stylised village setting forming the backcloth for tableaux typifying rural Mozambican life - farming, food preparation, schooling. Gradually this was transformed into subsequent scenes of disruption (children sang of 'the beginning of the troubles') and then a full scale Renamo attack mounted with violence of frightening realism by refugees dressed as MNR military. Dramatically replaying the horror of these experiences, this scene enacted the brutal and indiscriminate 'killing' of women and children, the conscripting of men and the destruction of the village and school. Recreating their flight as refugees, the actors ran, crawled or dragged their families to safety. The cry of 'to Malawi' was greeted by laughter and was a skillful device for relieving the painful tension of the experience.

The Governor of Tete Province in Mozambique (who with the Governors of Niassa and Zambesia Provinces were

visiting Malawi) outlined the aspirations for peace and repatriation to which the refugees listened attentively but perhaps non-committally. A Malawian minister took the opportunity to challenge the donor community to sustain and increase its support for burden sharing in the provision of assistance for both hosts and refugees. This made the main news story in the national paper the next day.

It is difficult to gauge the response of the refugees at Chifunga to the Africa Refugee Day events. Moments of emotion and enthusiasm were balanced by long periods of silence. Perhaps the formality made it difficult for the refugees to identify closely with the events. If, however, this helps to stimulate more spontaneous and informal displays of Mozambican culture the day will have been of much value.

Roger Zetter

Roger Zetter was conducting field work in Malawi and Zimbabwe in May and June 1990, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ILLNESS AMONGST TAMIL REFUGEES IN THE UK

Refugees who have to adapt to a new home and at the same time are trying to recover from the violent situations which led to their uprooting often suffer severe psychological problems. During clinical work with severely mentally ill refugees, we have been impressed by the intensity of the psychological stress caused by uncertainty about whether permission will be given to remain in the country of asylum.

Recently we have done research on the emotional illnesses of Tamil refugees in the United Kingdom, funded by the Nuffield Foundation. We contacted sixty Tamil refugees via three refugee organizations working with Tamils in London. 19 were women and 41 men with a mean age of 35 years. Threats of torture, or the death or arrest of an associate were the reasons for flight

given by 78% of these. More immediate sources of insecurity included housing and employment problems. Only 9 of the 60 participants had secure status in the country; the rest could be removed from the UK at any time.

Each of the participants completed a General Health Questionnaire, a tool which is commonly used for the detection of psychological illness in community based research. Around half the sample had levels of depression and anxiety which often lead to referral for specialist psychiatric treatment.

We would like to take the opportunity to alert doctors to such high levels of emotional illness, as many refugees seek medical help for psychological problems. Doctors may find themselves unsure about appropriate treatment in such cases.

Further research is required on emotional illness amongst different refugee groups in Britain, and the way in which this influences health service contacts. In addition, the relative influence of past and ongoing stressors needs to be explored, including the effects of prolonged uncertainty about refugee status.

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'Mobile Support Teams' were set up at the suggestion of the UN. These were groups of British professionals such as firemen, engineers and doctors some of whom had experience in relief work or had worked in the region. They provided support at short notice wherever needed. It was the first time that units of this type had been drawn up, and they were able to respond quickly and efficiently under stressful conditions.

Phase Three: Reintegration in Iraq, providing basic needs and essential services

This stage of the operation was highly political. Working relations were established with local Iraqi authorities such as the provincial administration, agriculture and health departments. Full involvement of local political and relief organisations was the aim, though this proved problematic as cooperators (and development committee members) feared potential reprisals after the allies had pulled out. In some cases, direct involvement in reconstruction was not possible, and facilitating the operation of the Engineering Works Organization was the main focus. Increasingly work was carried out through the UN who maintained links with the government of Iraq.

Phase Four: Coordination in the Allied Protection Zone between government and NGO relief agencies, UN agencies and the military in the Allied Protection Zone. At time of the seminar this fourth phase was in the future.

Participants at the workshop called for urgent action in the following areas:

- In Northern Iraq, extension of protection and relief beyond the 'Safe Havens' to include practical help for the large numbers of people outside them.
- Extension of protection and aid to the hundreds of thousands of Kurds along the Iran/Iraq border.
- Increased orientation of assistance to rehabilitation and resettlement, particularly support in the rebuilding of Kurdish villages, in the harvest, and reconstruction of the agricultural economy of the region.
- The world community, and particularly the Western media should not ignore the desperate vulnerability of the Shia population of Southern Iraq.

NUTRITION SYMPOSIUM REPORT

The Report of the International Symposium 'Responding to the Nutrition Crisis Among Refugees: The Need for New Approaches', held in Oxford from 17-20 March 1991, is available from RSP at a postage cost of £1.00. The Report contains a Summary of Proceedings, the Recommendations of the Symposium and a Summary of Papers presented at the Symposium, which concentrated on the avoidable deaths from nutrition-related diseases among refugees in camps and settlements who are dependent on international food assistance. The papers of the Symposium will be published in a special issue of the *Journal of Refugee Studies* in early 1992.

NEWS FROM RSP

WORKSHOP ON THE KURDISH REFUGEE EMERGENCY

The Kurdish emergency was the theme of a one-day workshop organised by the Refugee Studies Programme. Held on June 8th 1991 at a time when Kurdish refugees had come down from the mountains on the Turkish and Iranian borders into the Allied Protection Zone, it was entitled: 'The Kurdish Emergency - What Went On, What Went Wrong, And What Next.' Speakers included Dr Dlawer Ala'Aldeen, a Kurdish doctor engaged in relief work in the north-east; Dr Munir Morad representing the Iraqi Kurdistan Front; Dr David Nabarro, Coordinator of the UK Overseas Development Administration relief operation in northern Iraq; Frank Judd, Director General of OXFAM; Ann Clwyd MP, Labour's Front Bench Spokeswoman on Overseas Development; Alexander Sternberg of the Gesellschaft für Berohte Völker; and Dr Nicholas Van Hear of the RSP.

The experience of the combined military and civilian relief operation in Northern Iraq, on the Turkish and Iranian borders and in the Allied Protection Zone should not be lost. From the point of view of the scale of the operation, and the institutional arrangements it required, important lessons can be learned. This was also the first time that the Overseas Development Agency, a British government agency, had been responsible for both coordination and implementation of a relief programme.

Highlights from the presentation by Dr David Nabarro:

Phase One: Emergency relief in the border camps. A survey at the end of March 1991 estimated that deaths numbered in the order of 10,000-13,000 per day among the 450,000 displaced in the mountains on the Turkish border. The aim of this phase of the operation was to reduce the death rate, and the ODA team started its first ever attempt at relief coordination in April.

Local institutions such as the Turkish and Iranian Red Crescent played a key role throughout the operation. At the outset, the ODA worked through, and in close cooperation with these organizations. Nabarro emphasised it would not have been possible to get supplies to those really in need without their help. Flexibility in the arrangements between ODA and NGOs (such as OXFAM, the Red Cross and SCF) was crucial and the lengthy process of vetting proposals was avoided. A more relaxed and risky approach to funding enabled a more rapid response.

Supply delivery involved air drops of tents, blankets and later food and water. The extreme cold and isolation meant that this was the only method of getting supplies quickly to the places where they were needed. The operation was severely criticised

as relief goods landing on people's heads caused one or two deaths. From the mistakes of the early operation, Nabarro stressed the importance of having people on the ground with powerful VHF radios to report specifically what is needed, to call down the drops at precise locations and to keep people away from the dropping zones. Later, the presence of the military (the US Special Forces and Britain's 40th Commando) on the ground at the border sites particularly in Turkey, helped to organize people, made it easier for the Red Crescent and the NGOs to operate effectively and meant air dropping could happen smoothly.

A coordination centre was set up for local and international NGOs, and local authorities. Prior to this, NGOs on the border had trouble in forging links with Turkish authorities. Through the relief coordination office, a central development committee was established with representatives of the Kurdistan Front (KDP, PUK, KPDP), tribal leaders and representatives of the large Christian community in the area, UN officials, military representatives and ODA staff. The committee met twice a week, and tried to ensure that work on the border and in the safe havens took into account the feelings of the local people. One important achievement was to establish a mechanism for local purchase of relief supplies out of Turkey.

Phase Two: Intensive effort to help 450,000 refugees come down from the mountain sites and into secure areas within Iraq. The aim was to ensure a safe return and provide for basic needs within Iraq (i.e. winter-proof shelter, food, primary health care, water supply, sanitation, refuse disposal and power supply where appropriate). Camps were set up for transit purposes and for those who did not go back to their own villages or towns. Again, working with local political leaders was key. The development committee drew on the local political leaders to provide some measure of public order and coordination within the 'safe haven'.

There was a large military input particularly in establishing way stations and transit camps and servicing them with clean water and food. Their help enabled provisioning of such large numbers. The input of civilian agencies was less than on the border in the early stages.

Skills from within the displaced communities were successfully drawn into the relief operation. A 'North Iraq Engineering Works Organisation' was established through the Development Committee to draw Iraqi-Kurdish and Iraqi-Syrian and Iraqi-Arab engineers out of the refugee community and get them working in their own engineering organisation and preparing them to rebuild villages destroyed by the government of Iraq.

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