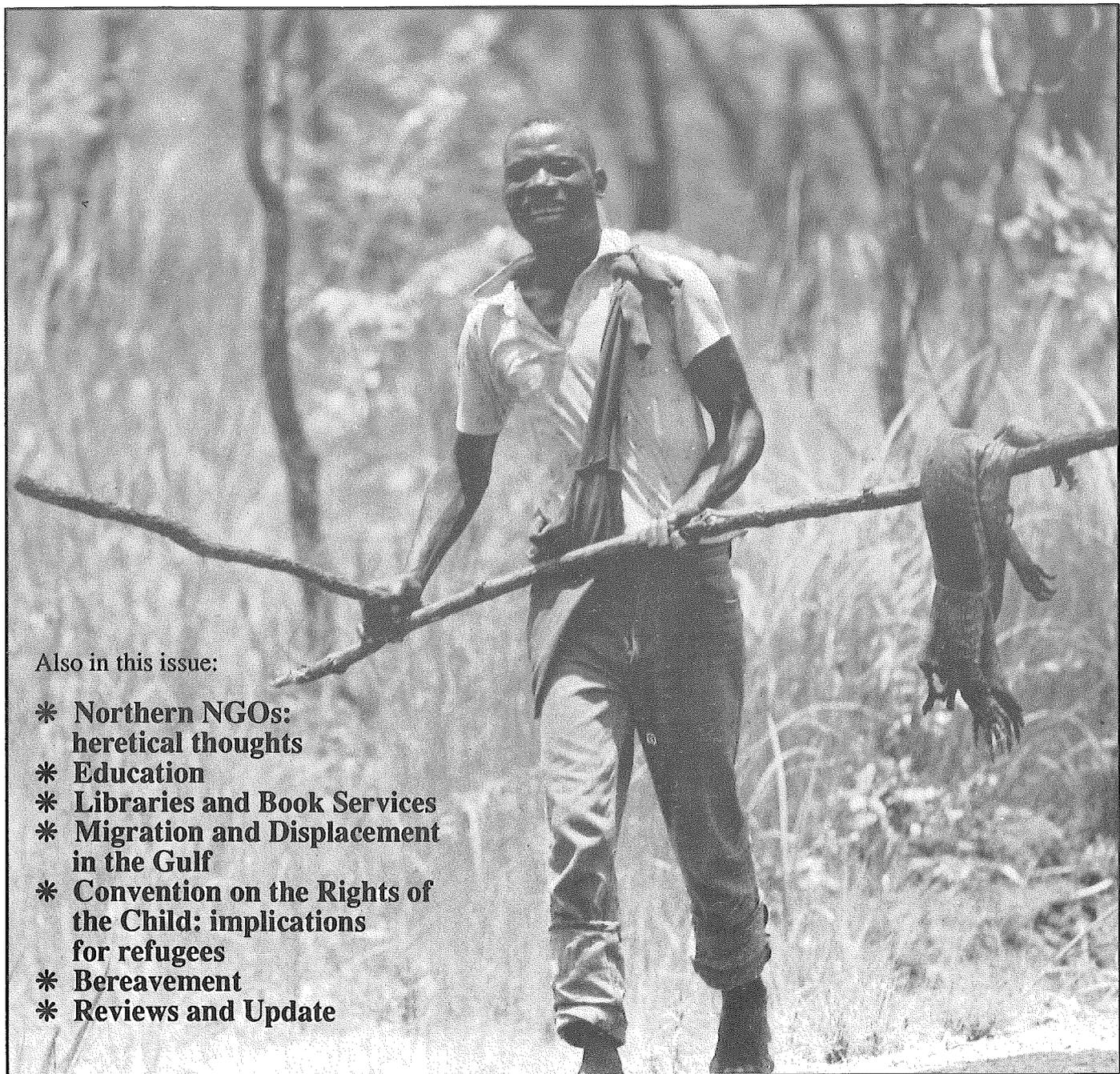


## AVOIDING CAMPS



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heretical thoughts
- \* Education
- \* Libraries and Book Services
- \* Migration and Displacement  
in the Gulf
- \* Convention on the Rights of  
the Child: implications  
for refugees
- \* Bereavement
- \* Reviews and Update

*Securing resources from outside camps is crucial to refugee livelihood*

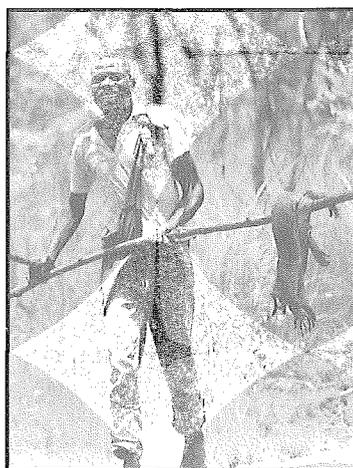
*Photograph by B. Harrell-Bond*

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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

members in 75 different countries around the world. If you are not already on the mailing list and would like to become a member of the RPN, please fill in the application form found on page 35 of this issue and return it to the address given below.

This issue of RPN was edited by JoAnn McGregor and Sheila Aikman. The layout, design and printing is by OXFAM.

As the success of any network depends on the participation of its members, short articles and other information which will be of value to the wider community involved in refugee work are always needed. Contributions to the RPN - articles, letters, poetry, responses, comments, information - are all very welcome. Please send us feedback on past issues and suggestions for future RPNs. Write to:

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# AVOIDING CAMPS



*Chopping firewood, Mauritanian refugees in a camp in Senegal*

*Photograph by Jeremy Hartley*

**R**efugees generally dislike camps and avoid them as much as possible. They tend to use them only as a 'safety net' when all else fails, as support for their most vulnerable family members, or where there are security problems. Camps can be a health risk, and increase disease exposure. For example, data on refugee health show a clear correlation between camps of increasing size and elevated mortality (1); data collected by Médecins sans Frontières on the 1990 pellagra epidemic in Malawi indicate that camp populations were more severely affected than were self-settled refugees (2).

Camp life also undermines refugees' livelihood, may strain local resource bases more than a dispersed population, work against stated goals of integration in the host country and may generate more hostility from local communities than self-settlement. Camp populations lose autonomy over their own life; recommendations adopted by the World Federation for Mental Health last year also emphasise the adverse affect of camp life from a mental health point of view (3).

These dangers are well known, and the advantages of supporting refugees' integration in the local economy are well established. The UNHCR handbook, written in 1982, guides field officers only to establish camps as a last resort and notes

that: 'A solution that maintains and fosters the self-reliance of the refugees is always preferable'.

Since the second International Conference for the Assistance of Refugees in African in 1984 (ICARA II), some provision has been made to assist self-settled refugees. Funding is available for projects assisting 'refugee-affected areas' through UNDP, and from the EEC under LOME IV article 255. In theory, the need for putting refugees in camps in order for them to be counted prior to qualifying for assistance has thus been obviated.

At the field level, however, self-settled refugees continue to be put into camps. In so doing, the relief effort is often creating and perpetuating vulnerability. While security is sometimes a legitimate ground for creating camps, all too often, camps are created for the sake of convenience of counting refugees, the facility of delivering aid, and the desire to control food distribution. Unfortunately, current systems of accountability to donors encourage tight agency control of refugees in camps, and money is more readily attracted to refugee assistance programmes if refugees are visible (4).

In the following articles, RPN looks at two recent cases where camps were created and had adverse affects on the refugee populations. The first example is based on the experience of Mauritians in Senegal and shows how refugees' vulnerability was increased by the creation of camps and was reflected in nutritional status. The second example from Swaziland, shows how in addition to having adverse economic effects, the removal of long established self-settled refugees into camps has the potential to sour relations between the refugees and their hosts and undermine local hospitality.

These case studies are accompanied by excerpts from the recommendations of the Food Aid Coordination Conference in September 1990, which discouraged the creation of camps. Many of these recommendations were reiterated at the recent Nutrition Symposium held in Oxford in March 1991, the recommendations from which will be disseminated through future issues of RPN.

*Notes:*

1. Graph presented at the Conference on 'Responding to the Nutritional Crisis of Refugees', Oxford, March 1991.
2. Malfait P. *et al* 'Outbreak of Pellagra Among Mozambican Refugees in Malawi'. Presented at Nutrition Conference, March 1991.
3. Reprinted in RPN 9.
4. Harrell-Bond, B. and Leopold, M. 'Counting the Refugees: The Myth of Accountability'. Presented at Nutrition Conference, March 1991.

## MAURITANIAN REFUGEES IN SENEGAL

### Background to the Conflict

Since April 1989, intense ethnic conflict has erupted in Senegal and Mauritania, and some 180,000 persons have been expelled to their respective 'countries of origin'. Violence unleashed against blacks in Mauritania was matched by attacks on 'alien' economically advantaged Moor shopkeepers in Senegal. This recent violence is part of deeper resentment in the two countries of the longstanding prejudicial treatment of blacks in Mauritania. However, it came to a head with the extension of economic and racial policies to the very heart of black Mauritanian and Senegalese society - their lands in the Senegal River Basin.

In Mauritania, the dominant segment of the population is now taking over lands in the Senegal Valley that it had previously ignored, having favoured investment in commerce, livestock, mining and oases. With the construction of dams, the focus of donor attention on the valley, and increasing value of the land, the Mauritanian elite now recognize that considerable wealth is to be made in agriculture, and land is being forcibly alienated from its owners, generating a crisis of refugees.

In the wake of the conflict over the struggle to acquire irrigable land by people outside the valley, the Mauritanian Government decided to invoke nationality, and forbid 'Senegalese' to farm north of the river, first seizing lands belonging to 'foreigners', then forcibly expelling black Mauritanian nationals as well. The Senegalese government retaliated by closing portions of the frontier to Mauritanian livestock and segments of the Senegalese population have retaliated with attacks on shops and people identifiable as Moors.

### Reception in Senegal

The Senegalese Government recognizes three categories of expellees: refugees (black Mauritians), repatriates (Senegalese who were working in Mauritania), and uprooted (Senegalese who owned and farmed land on the right bank of the Senegal River, claimed by Senegal as part of its national territory).

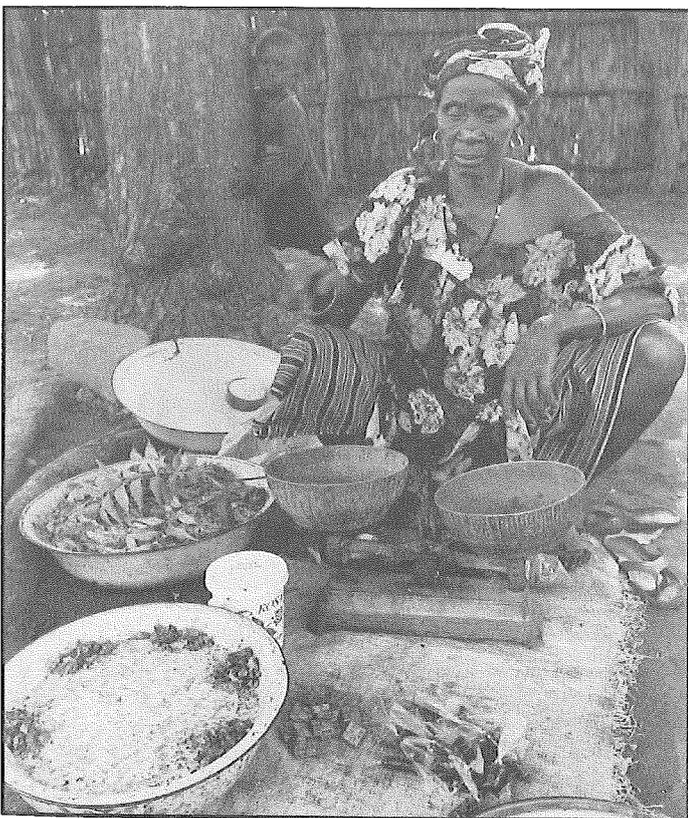
Refugees and repatriates have settled either within local Senegalese villages or in camps with a population of 100-2,500 just outside Senegalese settlements. The sudden influx increased the population of the Fleuve region (660,000) by 15%

and put a heavy burden on the local social and economic infrastructure. As most had all their possessions and official papers confiscated by the Mauritanian army, they were initially heavily dependent on the help they received in Senegal. Local people offered the refugees shelter and on many occasions shared food stocks with them.

As the river was the centre of the region's agricultural economy, and the land on its banks constituted seasonal graze for nomadic pastoralists from a much wider area, there had been much economic and other interchange across the river, and hence the international border. The agricultural population also share language with the refugees (Wolof in the West, and Peul in the East of the region).

#### **The Relief Effort**

The assistance given by the local population was supplemented by relief provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and later by the UNHCR and several Senegalese and foreign NGOs. The UNHCR took over from the ICRC in July 1989. UNHCR took primary responsibility for the general food distribution programme, while basic curative health care and public health measures (water and sanitation) were delegated to NGOs.



*Marketing in Senegal*

*Photograph by Jeremy Hartley*

UNHCR's first move was to attempt to evacuate the refugees to bigger camps along the main tar road before the beginning of the rainy season (July to October). The aim was to make them permanently accessible for food distribution, medical care and sanitation measures. However, this was not achieved, partly because refugees were reluctant to leave the places they had already chosen to settle.

During the rainy season refugees' inaccessibility is aggravated. When the water level rises, large groups of villages and refugee settlements along the riverside are cut-off. In the 1990 wet season approximately 200,000 local people and 12,000 refugees were affected. The best means of transport for this season would be the Senegal River, but the volatility of the military situation in the area and the frequent shooting incidents make this option impossible. Hence food is delivered to distribution points along the tar road. Refugee communities living away from the road have to collect their rations by their own means. This generally involves hiring a car or a horse cart at the cost of 500 CFA per family per month (the equivalent of 6 kgs of rice).

From July 1989 to December 1989, the ration comprised sorghum, rice, cooking oil, sugar, beans, dried fish, tomato paste, onions and salt and amounted to 1,955 kcal/person/day. Monthly distributions targetted 60,000 refugees and displaced people. From January 1990, the ration was reduced to 1,700 kcal/person/day and the displaced lost their entitlement. UNHCR Senegal justified these changes with the argument that the new rations were sufficient to cover the nutritional needs of the refugees. It is unclear on what basis this decision was taken. For populations who are fully dependent on relief, a daily ration providing only 1,700 kcal/person/day is inadequate.

#### **Food shortages**

Delays in delivering food at the distribution points regularly caused inconvenience for the refugees who had to buy or borrow to bridge the gap. However, the ration generally arrived within the planned month until April 1990.

After April 1990, however, there have been major logistical problems of food supply. UNHCR food stores in the region were empty and new supplies from outside were insufficient to meet needs. Rations were inadequate in quantity and quality. As a result, 27,000 refugees in Matam received an average of only 695 kcal/person/day. Serious nutritional problems were anticipated, as this was the hungry season, and locals were sharing their limited resources with the refugees and displaced. It was anticipated that during the rainy season, both transport and the food situation would get worse.

### Nutritional Status

The deteriorating conditions were the background for the MSF-Holland nutritional status survey and assessment of the food situation amongst refugees and locals. The results of the survey showed a malnutrition prevalence of 8.2% amongst refugees and 5.2% amongst the local population (malnutrition being defined as less than 80% of the W.H.O median weight-for-height value). Acute undernutrition (less than 70%) was significantly higher amongst refugees living in camps (9.3%), than amongst those integrated in local villages (5.3%).

### Survival Strategies

Whilst there was undernutrition, the level was not as high as anticipated given the grossly inadequate rations. The dynamics of the food markets in the areas where the refugees were settled were such that the increase in demand caused elevated prices, and created problems for those dependent on locally purchased food stocks. The fact that many refugees were not in camps helped to prevent nutritional status from further deteriorating for the following reasons:

1. Local food stocks were shared with refugees, particularly with those living outside the camps, which partly explains why they were better nourished.
2. Refugees found opportunities in the local economies; as petty traders (of milk drinks, firewood and goats), or as herders for local cattle owners. Others made bricks or caught and sold fish - although in doing the latter they risked being shot by Mauritians on the other side of the river. Again, opportunities of this sort were greater for those who were not concentrated in camps.
3. During the dry season, when the river could be crossed, groups of armed refugees raided cattle from the Mauritanian



**Problems of transport are aggravated during the rainy season**  
Photograph by Jeremy Hartley

side of the river at night. Frequent armed clashes with the Mauritanian army during these raids resulted in casualties. Refugees reported that the cattle were theirs and had been confiscated before they were expelled from Mauritania. Other sources said that any cattle found on the Mauritanian side of the river were stolen. Thousands of cattle were brought into Senegal in this way, and were an important source of income for refugees.

### Conclusion

The only reason why there was not a major nutritional crisis, is that refugees were able to find their own means of support, especially those in the villages. Those who were outside camps were less dependent on outside relief and more able to integrate in local communities. The fact that self-settled refugees were dispersed over a sizeable area minimised the load on local food resources, and meant that local food stocks were able to stretch to meet the additional need. The environment enabled the gathering of 'wild' foods such as fish which were not significantly depleted (again facilitated by refugees' dispersal).

The fact that refugees were dispersed through a large region in small settlements and local villages was an important precondition for survival during a period in which official rations were grossly inadequate. Such failures are normal considering the funding, political and logistical crises that are a feature of relief programmes. If the UNHCR had succeeded in its initial strategy (mid 1989) of evacuating the refugees from their initial settlements to bigger camps along the tar road, the food and nutrition situation in June 1990 would probably have been considerably worse, if not catastrophic. The failure to supply adequate food also exacerbated protection problems as refugees initiated cattle raiding - important as a means of survival.

Nevertheless, the alternative strategy of rural settlement is also problematic, and the population increase caused by the influx is causing problems in some areas. Ecological problems are to be anticipated from the increased strain on gathered resources, the encroachment on increasingly marginal land, and limited water resources.

*The main part of this article is based on a paper by Koert Ritmeijer of MSF entitled 'Refugees' Food Acquisition Strategies in Times of Inadequate Rations: The Case of Mauritanian Refugees in Senegal', presented at the recent Symposium, 'Responding to the Nutrition Crisis Among Refugees: The Need for New Approaches' March 1991.*

*The section 'Background to the Conflict' is summarized from M. Horowitz (1989) 'Victims of Development' in Development Anthropology Network Vol 7. No.2.*

## EXPANDING CAMPS FOR MOZAMBICAN REFUGEES IN SWAZILAND

In late 1984, refugees from southern Mozambique crossed the border into Swaziland. The majority are not registered - estimates of their total number range from 60,000 (UNHCR) to 134,000 (Government of Swaziland). They live in the villages close to the border, in other rural areas, and in towns. In addition there are two camps, with a population of 14,500 Mozambicans between them.

There are no prospects for self-sufficiency in either camp - in one there is no land at all for agricultural production, and in the other land is sufficient for limited plots for only 250 families. Opportunities in the labour markets in the vicinity of the camp are seasonal, and jobs are insufficient to cater for the

populations concentrated in the camps. Trading is limited by the isolation of the camps, the low purchasing power of the refugees, legal constraints on trading, purchase of goods in bulk and lack of access to markets. Hence the future for the camp populations is one of continued dependence, a fact that is recognised by all agencies involved. In contrast, refugees in the border areas can, with support, be economically self-sufficient, and their presence could contribute to the development of a marginalised part of Swaziland.

For the first four years of their stay in Swaziland, self-settled refugees did not receive any international aid, and relied on their own survival strategies, together with assistance from local villagers. Refugees on the border do not own land, but some have been given temporary use of small plots by host families. Few, if any, families produce enough of their own to meet annual consumption needs. Refugees rely mainly on piecework for small scale Swazi farmers, daily labour on large commercial farms, self-employment as artisans and traders and on remittances from family members in employment either in Swaziland or South Africa.

Refugees in the border villages act as a cheap labour pool. This has benefited many small-scale farmers on Swazi Nation Land who have been able to increase production by more thorough weeding and timely harvesting, or by increasing the area they cultivate. Commercial farmers have also benefited.

### The Border Feeding Programme

Following drought in the area in 1987, the Government made a request for food aid to the border villages and from 1988 to November 1990, a border feeding programme operated in two of the border chieftainships, catering for 10,000 - 12,000 refugees who were registered with host families. Maize and beans were supplied by World Food Programme, the programme being coordinated by a Task Force of Government, UNHCR and NGOs. Refugees were registered as linked to particular local hosts with both their and their hosts' names appearing on the ration card. Food was distributed on a monthly basis.

At the October 1990 food distribution, refugees were informed that if they wanted to continue to receive food, they would have to move to Malindza refugee camp for which transport would be organised. Although the move was voluntary, many refugees did not perceive it as such. Even though the phasing out of the border feeding operation had long been planned, it was implemented at the height of the hungry season in a year when the first harvest was going to be delayed due to the late arrival of the rains. All those left on the border are now considered self-sufficient, and neither they nor the communities hosting them receive assistance.



*Preparing maize in Malindza Refugee Camp, Swaziland*  
Photograph by J. McGregor

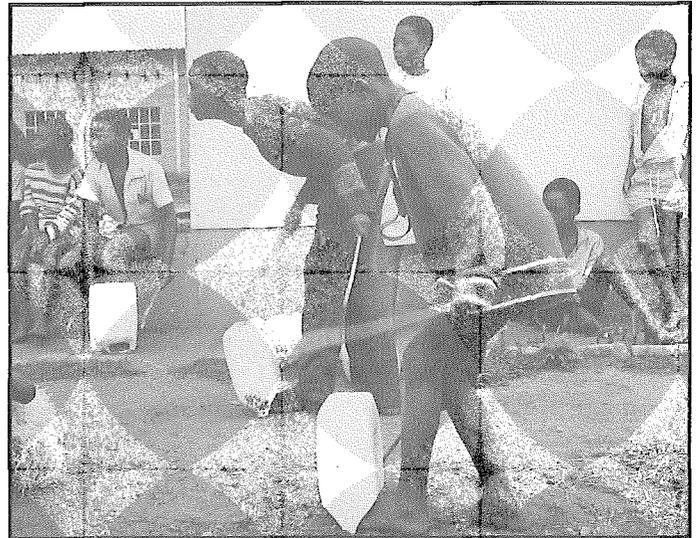
The border feeding programme was discontinued on UNHCR's initiative and justified on grounds of its high cost, abuse by Swazis, and by the alleged effect it was having on the border agro-economy. Due to the high degree of mobility in the refugee population, registration was highly problematic, and many were said to be profiting out of the programme who were not refugees or who did not need the food: Swazis were said to be taking the food themselves, there were also allegations of food being sold over the border in Mozambique.

The food distributed was said to be undermining Swazi's agricultural production - they were said to be becoming lazy and relying on the aid rather than planting their own food. The food distributed was also said to have caused a change in the area away from the production of foodstuffs, and was encouraging cotton production. Some farmers were accused of not planting at all - though this superficial interpretation was due to the drought in the year that particular observation was made. The change to cotton had already been well underway prior to the refugee influx, and had accelerated due to the additional labour provided by refugees. Cotton planting was not substituting maize production, however, merely complementing it in those families where labour and capital for other inputs were available. Basic research would have revealed the error in reasoning concerning the effects of maize distribution.

#### **Reluctance to move to the camps**

Despite the problems of life in the border villages, refugees were reluctant to move to camps as food aid is not regarded as adequate compensation for the lack of freedom, the crowding, and the loss of dignity involved in becoming dependent on handouts. Others simply see Malindza as a death trap, or a place of no hope. Although the death rate in the camp is in this instance no higher than outside, it is perceived to be so by the Mozambicans. It is anticipated that many refugees will try to remain on the border; less than one thousand moved from the border areas to the camp in the first two months of the removal operation.

Concerning the food aid they had received and their opinion of the phasing out of the feeding programme, refugees' general response was that one does not complain when someone ceases to offer gifts. After all, the core of their food consumption was the product of their own labour. Before the feeding programme began in 1988, they had survived on their own and had not depended on handouts. Many of them had arrived in 1984 and had survived on their own resources up to 1988, helped by their local hosts during the first season or two, often eating in their hosts' kitchens. Refugees did, of course reciprocate with their labour and after 1988, by sharing the food aid they received.



*Mozambican children playing drums in Malindza Refugee Camp, Swaziland*

*Photograph by J. McGregor*

Some refugees had not been able to create a secure livelihood in the self-settled border areas. The minority of refugee families who had left the border areas for Malindza, commonly cited the lack of food and constraints on livelihood in the border areas as their reason for moving.

#### **Effect of the border removal programme**

For those refugees choosing to remain in the border area, the border removal programme has increased their insecurity. There is great suspicion of the motives of the policy makers. Although they were told that the removal was to be voluntary, many do not believe it; in some areas there are rumours circulating which reflect these worries, as well as reinforce them. Some people fear that they will be forced to move by the army or police if they refuse to go voluntarily. Others fear that they will be sent back to Mozambique.

In some areas the rumours that their move to Malindza will be forced have led refugees to desert their homes and cross the South African border. In at least one home, Mozambican children, who had been left in Swaziland with relatives for safety, have now been collected and returned to Mozambique. Their family feared the children would be taken to Malindza as orphans.

The relationships established at a local level between the refugees and their hosts have been put into jeopardy by the effort to move refugees to Malindza. Local leaders of the host communities resent that the feeding programme was stopped and the decision taken to move refugees without consulting them. They say that the rumours and suspicion are making



*Mozambican refugees making mats Photograph by J. McGregor*

their role as hosts more problematic. For example, refugees now fear to report their presence to the chiefs and local authorities. Thus chiefs cannot keep track of who is moving through their area, nor have they been informed who has been moved out to the camp. One chief described the situation as follows:

The refugees were well-settled in this area, although there were of course problems here and there. But that does not mean that they should have been removed without the knowledge of the chief's kraal. Many things happen to the refugees in my chieftainship without my knowledge. They have moved refugees to the camp without telling me whom they have moved, I have only heard about the removal plans and activities through rumour. I do not have a problem with those who want to leave, my problem is with those who remain, and those who are still coming.

This removal of refugees has changed our attitude to refugees, both those who came earlier and remained in our area, and those who are still coming. It makes us less compassionate. Before, the refugees were with us, under our care, but now they are under UNHCR. Those who remain in the border area are left 'hanging' - under whose charge are they? For example, in this area we have burial places. When someone dies, the death is reported to the chief and the individual is buried in this area. But where are the refugees going to be buried now that they are no longer under our care and included in our community? We think that there will be problems in the future, because we will be staying with people who are not known to the Government. If we do not know those with whom we stay, how can we trust them? For all we know they could be wild dogs with rabies.

This is how we will think of refugees who come from now on. And refugees are now afraid to be known and do not want their presence to be reported to my kraal. I shall not continue to register refugees now that they are being taken to the camp. Those refugees who are already here are now under the care of UNHCR, and the new ones coming now have no father. They will be told to follow the others. Now we are confused as to what we should do. Previously we used to offer some little help to refugees. If someone wanted a job, say labouring at Tabankulu [large-scale citrus and sugar plantations], we used to write a letter of introduction, saying where they come from and that we know of them. We did this also so that they should not be troubled by the police. Now that UNHCR have taken the refugees, should we stop?

Although the presence of refugees had not resulted in antagonism between the two communities, self-settled refugees in the border areas place a heavy strain on existing social services in a marginalized part of the country. Improvement of social services in the border areas and assistance to communities in developing their infrastructure would have widely felt benefits for both refugees and locals. This strategy could be employed to the benefit of refugees in the short term and their hosts in the long term, using the funds available for the purpose. Refugees' presence in the border villages has not in this instance caused undue pressure on resources such as firewood and building materials due to the topography of the Lubombo plateau where they have settled. A relatively high proportion of the land is steep and rocky, unsuitable for agriculture, and is adequate to meet needs of firewood, timber and other wild resources.

Instead of refugee assistance programmes taking advantage of the opportunities for general development which refugees in the border areas represent, existing camps in which there is no prospect for self sufficiency were expanded. This was done using funds from the very LOME clause intended specifically for the assistance of self-settled refugees and their hosts, in support of projects which do not discriminate between beneficiaries. It is doubly ironic that this project is causing the relationship with hosts to deteriorate by removing some refugees.

*There is little existing documentation evaluating assistance to refugees outside camps. RPN welcomes contributions by members who have experience of such programmes.*

*This is extracted from a report prepared by Refugee Studies Programme for the World Food Programme and EEC, 'Mozambicans in Swaziland: Livelihood and Integration'. March 1991.*

# RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REFUGEE FOOD AID CO- ORDINATION MEETING

The following recommendations were made by the Refugee Food Aid Co-ordination Committee, at a meeting of UNHCR, WFP and NGOs 19th September 1990. They have been reproduced here as they present many challenges to the way food aid operations are conducted in practice in many countries around the world. We would draw your attention in particular to section V, which questions a long-established first principle of emergency relief - that of putting people into camps.

## I. Assessment

1. Nutritional surveys made by NGOs and other technical staff should examine *food security at the household level*, not solely malnutrition among children.
2. Surveys should be made and interpreted in conjunction and in reference to conditions in *the host country*.
3. Special attention should be paid to assessment of the food inputs of refugees themselves, i.e. the degree of *self-sufficiency* and to the assessment of their own capabilities and/or the support needed to help refugees produce their own food.
4. Most new refugee groups will initially be totally *dependent* on external food aid. Therefore, food intervention should *not* be delayed before formal assessments are completed.
5. One area where NGOs should become more involved is in *evaluation/monitoring of the food distribution*, to ensure refugees receive an equitable food ration.
6. Technical expertise from NGOs should be included in all *UNHCR/WFP Food Assessment Missions* wherever possible.
7. NGOs should participate at the *earliest stage* of any new refugee situation; particularly in any multi-disciplinary emergency assessment mission or feasibility study.
8. Assessment of food needs should also consider the possible food requirements of affected local populations in refugee areas.

## II. Logistics/Management

1. Many logistical problems are insurmountable and therefore *positioning food in advance* and *buffer stocks* should be further emphasised in food aid planning.
2. Donors should be more aware of the adverse effects of malnutrition and deficiency diseases owing to food delivery delays (late shipments) and strive to ensure their *procurement and delivery* so as to avoid gaps in the food supply to refugees.
3. Food aid requests to donors should be made *in good time*, especially avoiding delayed appeals in new emergency situations.
4. UNHCR, WFP and NGOs should strive to *limit the number of donors* contributing to refugee groups in a given country, this is in order to avoid complications in co-ordination.
5. Problems can be expected periodically owing to commodity shortages, sharply rising fuel costs as at present, etc. Donors should be prepared to respond to these emergencies with alternative supplies and/or additional cash contributions.

## III. Technical Issues

1. Technicians should agree on what comprises an *acceptable food ration* for different circumstances in order to avoid confusion among food planners. U.N. technical agencies should be consulted for this purpose.
2. The general food ration to dependent refugee groups must ensure adequate *vitamins/minerals* to avoid the increasing incidence of nutritional deficiency diseases. Fortification as a potential intervention should be seriously pursued.
3. Technical expertise from NGOs can be viewed as an essential contribution toward operational activities, and secondment of such staff to UN agencies should be further pursued.

## IV. Co-ordination

1. The exchange and co-ordination of information and actions is paramount to the success of both headquarters and field operations. In this context, an inter-agency *'Food Co-ordination Committee'* should be established in the Field to meet regularly in all major refugee situations. Members of the committee should include the host government, the UN, major donor countries, NGOs and representatives of the refugee population.
2. A system should be established to strengthen *'doomsday communication'* between NGOs, the UN and donors for new or likely refugee emergency situations. UNHCR should co-ordinate such a system.
3. NGOs should inform UNHCR of any food donations by and/or through their agencies to refugee programmes, and the UNHCR food aid tracking tables should be utilised to assist co-ordination by all concerned parties.

## V. Policy

1. An examination of the dangers of *'established camps'* for refugees should be made by the UNHCR, given that restriction of movement and lack of economic integration often results in food aid dependency and therefore nutritional problems.
2. The possibility of *cash distribution* instead of food in some refugee situations should be seriously studied jointly by UNHCR, WFP and donors as this might be a more cost-effective and nutritionally supportive intervention than food aid.
3. If NGOs are included as *'equal partners'* from the start of the operations, many can contribute substantially with regards to mobilisation, food resources, planification, ('logistical and technical support'). Mechanisms for ensuring their equal participation should be jointly explored.
4. Resource constraints do indeed exist at present and are hampering operations in the food sector. This necessitates even more the need to strengthen *managerial efficiency* among and within the UN agencies and the international community at large.
5. An original objective of the food aid system was to channel surplus food multilaterally to people in need. Some progress has been achieved to modify this system to be based on needs rather than resources; but a needs based system should be emphasised in future policy planning.

# NORTHERN NGOS: SOME HERETICAL THOUGHTS

The following article criticises the way in which Northern Non-Governmental Organisations (NNGOs) operate. It is written with specific reference to Southern Africa, but many of the points raised apply equally elsewhere. Both authors work for NNGOs and the criticisms that follow are testimony to an unusual openness, which must make for greater flexibility to adapt quickly to changing circumstances.

## **The Road Northern NGOs have travelled**

From relative obscurity a decade ago, NNGOs have now found themselves catapulted into prominence as authorities on development. Governments and multilateral agencies now channel more of their funds through NNGOs because there is an underlying belief that they are in touch with the grassroots and can disburse resources more effectively and efficiently. This perception of NNGOs comes from their years of direct field experience and their 'hands-on' approach of direct contact

with communities and local organisations. This experience, gathered from many parts of the world, has enabled NNGOs to formulate development theories and practices which differ substantially from the top down, high capital investment programmes of many multilateral and bilateral agencies. But there is now a danger that NNGOs are becoming prisoners of their own orthodoxy in prescribing the same development paradigms for very differing situations and circumstances.

Over the last 50 years there has been a gradual shift in the activities of development NNGOs from a welfare orientation to a more development approach and finally to so-called facilitators or catalysts of change.

The welfare approach was an attempt to provide immediate relief from poverty by transferring both material and human resources to the poor and suffering. Such an approach was often accompanied by information 'about' the Third World and a public policy of lobbying for more governmental and NGO resources to be diverted to developing countries. The transfer of resources, or welfare approach, although still applicable in



*NGO staff at work in Southern Sudan, 1985*

*Photograph by B. Harrell-Bond*

disaster or emergency situations, was regarded by the end of the 1960s as a paternalist 'Alice in Wonderland' approach to the immense problems of world poverty and underdevelopment.

The development or 'self-help' approach supports projects which aim to increase local or grassroots capacity to meet social and economic needs and to control the resources needed for 'sustainable development'. During the 1970s, NNGOs started to look for partner organisations in the context of this self-help strategy. NNGOs, with the help of partner organisations, started to develop a critical analysis of North-South links and to lobby on global and regional causes of poverty, such as trading links, commodity prices and apartheid. During this period in Southern Africa, NNGOs started programmes of support for recently established national and local NGOs and parastatal organisations in newly independent countries and even - within the confines of Charity Law - in solidarity with national liberation movements.

Facilitators of change; this was the new orientation of NNGOs in the 1980s. The analysis was that while small-scale development projects might assist groups or communities, significant development or change could not occur without challenging unjust economic and political relations within and between nations. This led to various responses from NNGOs which were placed under the umbrella of 'social development', i.e. social organisation and social awareness. Social organisation is used to refer to activities which aim to reinforce or create local organisations that aspire to improve living standards and defend basic community rights. This amounts to



*Development work in Zambia*

*Photograph by B. Harrell-Bond*

reinforcing the organisational capacity of Southern NGOs both at local and national levels.

Social awareness is a much broader and more ambiguous term, and is seen by some NNGOs as an end in itself rather than a means of identifying concrete needs and practical actions. 'Animation' techniques are often used, primarily those associated with Paulo Freire's popular education movement developed in Latin America. Freire's philosophy is fundamentally a political one which offers the promise of utopian revolution through a process of self-awareness and individual liberation. The philosophy was developed in the context of Latin America with its traditions of organised peasant movements, political opposition, Catholicism and liberation theology - a very different reality from that which exists in Southern Africa.

Animation has now become a popular activity supported by many NNGOs in Southern Africa, but is it a liberating force or a new form of colonial control?

Recently a community in rural Zaire was visited by an NGO representative. At a village meeting he asked the community what their needs were. After some discussion they said they needed a vaccine to prevent their chickens dying. The representative said he could offer them a course in animation, but would be unable to provide a chicken vaccine!

A Zimbabwean development worker when asked in 1980 what she thought of white voluntary organisations, replied: 'besides guilt and the missionary instinct, it's this permanent overriding feeling that they know best'. Perhaps she is still right, and only the rhetoric has changed after decades of NNGO involvement in Southern Africa.

#### **Northern NGO Culture and Practice**

A culture and language have grown up around the activities of NNGOs which can create an insularity, making them prisoners of their own rhetoric and captives of their own practices. What might once have been radical, progressive thinking can all too easily become fossilised into sterile orthodoxy.

NNGOs have created their own jargon. Here are some of the favourite words in their development dictionary:

empowerment, partnership, process, animation, participation, grassroots, additionality, networking, strategising, brainstorming, workshops, programming, evaluation, training, gender awareness, non-project work, the poorest of the poor, groups/parties, task forces, resourcing up, flagging up, pre-identification missions.

In the various fora in which they seek to publicise their work, NNGOs have all too frequent recourse to such words. Even people at great distance from the development coalface are trained to incant these to the faithful, like some religious ritual. On occasion, it is possible that the words may have some meaning; all too often, we suspect, they tend to mystify and form part of a process of collective self-deception.

By contrast, here are some words which NNGOs almost never use:

product, economic analysis, growth, cost effective, efficiency, accountability, decisions, hierarchies, material benefits, effective management, enterprise.

Perhaps in the Thatcher decade these words and phrases have been hijacked by the Right. If this is the case then others should start to reclaim this vocabulary. Value for money and effective management should and must be concerns of the NNGO world, for we owe it both to partner organisations and to supporters to deliver a good product using an efficient and fair process.

Although there are some hopeful signs to the contrary, all too often NNGOs do not spend sufficient time analysing the contexts of situations in which they seek to intervene. This lack of rigorous analysis, especially economic and social analysis, can make development work at best ineffective, at worst disastrous. There is a deep distrust of academics and where there is analysis, all too often it is of an amateur nature. As a consequence of the lack of research NNGOs have a tendency to see the world as they want to see it rather than how it really is.

The example of Mozambique is instructive. There, discovering an absence of Southern NGOs, many NNGOs responded by setting up their own operations - and indeed have now become virtually governments unto themselves - rather than working through the existing government structures. This represents a process of institutional undermining rather than institution building. NNGOs also employ local staff to make their interventions more authentic. Whilst in many countries this would be a commendable practice, in Mozambique it has had a detrimental effect on the functioning of the country. Many of the small body of professional and well qualified Mozambicans have been lured away from strategically important ministry posts in health and education to work in jobs in the NGO sector which are paid in foreign exchange. Surely it is a self-fulfilling prophecy when NNGOs then say that they are forced to become operational because of weak government structures?

#### Consultancies

The decline of African universities and research institutes is well known and well documented. Over 120 Zambian

academics have left the University of Zambia over the past three years, primarily because they could no longer perform as scholars and make ends meet. In such a context, NNGOs walk in offering consultancies paid in foreign exchange, though generally paying less than for expatriate scholars. So, those scholars who remain spend much of their time outside their official workplace doing consultancies, whose purpose and utility vary greatly. The attraction for the local scholar is simply acquiring precious foreign exchange. For the NNGOs, it is a way of cynically exploiting the labour market and hijacking local knowledge to provide endorsement of some pet project - it being much easier to push a scheme if it has some reputable local endorsement. A meeting of Southern African economists in Harare in 1988 aptly compared consultancies to a form of prostitution

A workshop in Cambridge in March 1990, on *Rural Development in Context: Planners and History in Central, Northern and North-Western Zambia*, produced a remarkably rich variety of papers on the recent agricultural history of Zambia. But closer examination revealed that virtually all of this work had been supported or commissioned by NNGOs or Governments. There was a certain embarrassed recognition of this fact, but no one stopped to ponder its implications at a deeper level, among them, that such work very often remains private to the commissioning agency and so does not enter the public domain. Ironically, on occasions when some of the arguably more progressive NNGOs seek to build up local research capacities by encouraging in-depth studies of community-based projects, they find themselves outbid by agencies which pay more and demand less, both in time and foot-slogging.

#### Northern NGOs and North-South Relationships

Many NNGOs currently try hard to pretend that they are not funding agencies at all, placing great emphasis instead on their 'non-funding' work. The notion that, to misquote Hilaire Belloc:

Whatever happens

We have got

The money

And they have not

would be deemed abhorrent, offensive, deeply embarrassing, or some combination of the three. NNGOs now go to enormous lengths to disguise this simple reality from themselves and to pretend that they are not really donor agencies at all. Hence the great investment in the overused words 'partners' and 'partnership'.

'Partnership' features prominently in the rhetoric of both NNGOs and SNGOs. It is a word much used and frequently abused. Indeed, an Oxfam regional meeting in East Africa in

1989 suggested that 'we should not allow ourselves to use such a term unless it is true.' More often the word conveys an aspiration rather than a reality (though when it does become a reality it can obviously be a mutually rewarding and very positive experience). It should be recognised that, as in life, partners come together by design or by default. Some are chosen and some are thrust upon one!

NNGOs need Southern partners much more avidly than vice versa. After all, they provide the justification for and means through which development work in the South can be conducted. But the relationship is fraught with possibilities for abuse, especially on the Northern side. To give just a few examples:

With the sudden and unexpected independence of Namibia this year, there has been a desperate and undignified scramble for partners by NNGOs - so much so that there were insufficient to go around! Something similar took place in Zimbabwe after 1980 and the process is now beginning in South Africa. In such scrambles, NNGOs often conspire to conceal 'their' partners from their competitors.

Partly to meet the requirements of Charity Law, British NGOs, when they pontificate on world events, often assert that they do so on the basis of their 'field' experience alone. The favourite phrase is 'our partners say...' implying that it must therefore be alright. But such verbal acrobatics allow the NNGO to get off the moral and political hook and prevent it from taking committed positions on a range of issues. Moreover, if partners should say something with which an agency disagrees, there is a discrete silence - for example, on the gender awareness of the Mujahideen. NNGOs should not deceive themselves; they choose their partners and then selectively repeat what the latter say.

Double standards can sometimes exist too in the relationship between NNGOs and SNGOs. Consider funding arrangements. Most British NGOs rely on public donations to fund their domestic and overseas work. The public are encouraged to give generously to the general work of the NGO and not to tie or earmark their donations to particular projects or activities. This is because some activities and budget items like administration and home and overseas office expenses, while acknowledged to be essential to good development work, are difficult to fundraise for in isolation. However, when it comes to NNGOs funding SNGOs, rarely are funds released for southern partners to allocate as they see fit. Instead a 'project obsession' comes into play - money must be earmarked for a neatly packaged project, so the NNGO can market it for fundraising purposes.

In 1987, Oxfam asked one of its former Field Directors to write a report on contingency planning in Southern Africa. The report did not quite come up to expectations. Instead, it argued that:

International NGOs have to consider very carefully their role. There is a real danger that some NGOs may be taking on roles for themselves that the local situation is not demanding and may in fact be counter-productive in terms of strengthening local initiatives, organisations etc. Some international NGO activities or initiatives are breathtaking in their neo-colonial style and approach to the extent that, in some of the Front Line States, local NGOs are more concerned about the 'imperialist' intention of foreign NGOs than they are about the present and potential dangers of South African destabilisation, (Michael Behr, *Contingency Planning in Southern Africa* Oxfam, May 1987).

This suspicion of the motives of NNGOs has grown more widespread since those words were written. There is suspicion at various levels: are NNGOs dominating and swamping SNGOs through their power and resources? Are they exploiting SNGOs for their own benefit, consulting or ignoring them at will? Are they setting far too many agendas and calling an endless succession of unwanted meetings on the 'crisis in Africa'? Are they using the South as a dumping ground for young, unskilled 'volunteers' in the manner of the former colonial empires? Are they seeking, in ways subtle and unsubtle, to perpetuate neo-colonialism? In the more crass cases, are they spies, seekers after lost souls or *soi-disant* exporters, selling their country's goods, notably vehicles? The role of agencies based in Britain, given Britain's historical role in Southern Africa, is especially sensitive.

#### **The Withering Away of the State**

The state is withering away at a local level in countries such as Mozambique and Zambia, though not quite in the manner that Marx predicted. Gallantly stepping into the breach come the NNGOs (and sometimes the Northern government agencies), very much in a neo-colonial role. Whole districts, or sections of once-functioning government ministries, are handed over to foreigners to run, especially in health and social services. This process is enhanced as structural adjustment programmes bite even deeper. Forty percent of Kenyan's health requirements are now provided by NGOs. The net result is both increased dependency and increased chaos, with a bewildering complexity of language, modes of operation and philosophical styles in operation, ranging from the fully participative to the totally directive. The more NNGOs are prepared to move in, the easier it becomes for governments to reduce support. 'The NGOs will look after you' they tell the people, when called to account for their inactivity. But NNGOs have notoriously short

time frames; they are rarely able (even if willing) to commit themselves for more than three years ahead. The more sensitive are of course aware of the dilemmas and contradictions involved in this highly dangerous process, though original ideas on how to resolve it are conspicuously absent. But NGOs cannot seek to replace the state, for they have no legitimacy, authority or sovereignty and, crucially, they are self-selected and are thus not accountable.

#### Appropriate Role and Response

Despite the above criticisms, it must be emphasised that NNGOs still have a positive contribution to make towards development both in the North and the South. Pundits tell us that people in the West are suffering from 'compassion fatigue' and in the Eastern Block the new democracies now appear to be more worried about their own internal problems than with support and solidarity with the developing nations. In this new international political environment it is more than ever important that NNGOs try to keep issues affecting the South on the agenda of various governments and institutions. They must continue to speak out about the causes of and possible solutions to poverty and underdevelopment. Macro changes in the political and economic relationships between North and South often have a far greater impact on the poor in developing nations than do aid programmes. For this reason it is essential that NNGOs continue to campaign and lobby for changes in these relationships.

Moreover, the transfer of money and resources to projects and programmes in the South is carried out, on the whole, more effectively and efficiently by NGOs than by multilateral and bilateral agencies. But the NGO world must not become complacent with its theories and practices of development. NNGOs for most of their existence have rightly challenged the orthodoxy of official aid programmes and have formulated alternative development strategies based on field experience. However there is now a danger that NNGOs could become too dogmatic in the implementation of these strategies. NNGOs must continue to learn from experience and have flexible responses to different and changing situations. They must not rely on rhetoric or be apprehensive about adopting new ways of working to improve effectiveness. They must not lose sight of the fact that support for a 'development process' is a means to an end, not an end in itself.

Now, more than ever, NNGOs have a responsibility to try to analyse and understand the changing world we live in, and to share this with partner organisations. If well-tried models in the East and West have failed the majority of humanity, where do we go from here?

By Jenny Rossiter (SCF UK) and Robin Palmer (OXFAM)

#### THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR: TWO NEW JOURNALS

The voluntary, or non-profit sector is rapidly expanding. It has a significance and power which is not generally recognised - in North America, for example, the yearly budget of the non-profit sector exceeds the budget of all but seven nations in the world. Despite its size and influence, this sector has been subject to little research, and there is a dearth of information about it.

Two new journals broach this subject from rather different viewpoints:

1. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Non-Profit Organisations (Revue Internationale de L'Economie Sociale / Internationale Zeitschrift zum Verbands- und Vereinswesen)*, Editors Helmut Anheier and Martin Knapp, Manchester University Press. Subscription: institutional £40; individuals £15.

The first issue of *Voluntas* was published in May 1990. It is concerned with research on non-profit organisations and voluntary activity in countries around the world. Voluntary non-profit organisations, private non-profit associations, non-governmental organisations, philanthropic foundations and charitable trusts are all encompassed within its scope. It is a bi-annual publication in English but provides a resumé of the main articles in both French and German.

Issue 1/1 contains articles on: the role of voluntary social welfare organisations; the possible role of the non-profit sector in Hungary; competition between non-profits and for-profits; government/third sector relations and the crisis of the welfare state.

2. *Development in Practice: An Oxfam Journal*. Edited by Brian Pratt. Published by Oxfam.

*Development in Practice* seeks to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among non-governmental organisations engaged in overseas development work. Produced three times a year, it assesses OXFAM's own experience together with that of other NGOs. Subscription rates for 1991 are £30/\$60 for Europe, plus 25% for other parts of the world, except the Far East where 35% is added.

Volume 1, Number 1 includes articles on:

- Building partnerships between Northern and Southern development NGOs;
- A community perspective on a participatory primary health care project in Ecuador;
- Pastoral development and the use of para-vets in southern Sudan;
- Financing primary health care: an NGO perspective.

It also contains books reviews, project notes and conference notes. Further details can be obtained from Oxfam Publications, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DZ.

# EDUCATION

For refugees, education is the key to the future. However, both in countries of first asylum and in countries of resettlement, educational provision is often highly inadequate. In emergency situations, secondary education is not considered part of the relief package, and is commonly underfunded even if the situations are protracted. In the following articles, RPN looks at a recent initiative in Britain to campaign for improving refugee education. Recently produced educational materials on refugees are then reviewed. The third article describes an exceptional initiative taken by the Tanzanian government which has extended its national library services to refugee settlements. This is followed by information about organisations supplying books or running book grant schemes which can be approached if the host government does not provide such services.

## THE REFUGEE EDUCATION CHARTER

The Refugee Education Charter is being promoted to address the inadequacy of educational provisions for refugees in the UK. Drawn up by the Refugee Education and Training Working Group and sponsored by more than one hundred refugee organisations working throughout Britain, the Charter has been signed by refugees of all nationalities. It is based on ten principles for refugee education and is intended to be used to lobby for a nationally planned and coordinated policy for refugee education.

Education is one of the most expensive services provided by local governments in the UK. Due to the limits imposed on local government spending by the central government, local authorities have huge budget deficits. Faced with the necessity of cutting services, many schools have done away with services which are crucial for refugees, such as the provision of English as a Second Language (ESL), learning support teachers and mother-tongue teachers. There are currently approximately 9,000 refugee students waiting for places on ESL courses in Greater London. Adult education budgets have also been cut and there is a shortage of teachers in some areas. In one London borough, Camden, there are 400 refugee children living with their families in temporary bed and breakfast accommodation who receive no schooling at all.



*Children in a UK primary school*

### THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF THE REFUGEE EDUCATION CHARTER

#### 1. Schooling for Refugee Children

Refugee children have special educational needs: they may suffer psychological and emotional stress which affects their learning. Some have missed years of schooling and many need specialist language support. In Britain, they are faced with a totally new system and unfamiliar teaching methods. Some refugee children learn their mother tongue in schools run by refugee organisations. These play an important role in helping refugee children maintain their identity, learn about their cultural backgrounds and prepare for return home if and when this becomes possible. But such schools are severely under-resourced and in many cases receive little or no funding from local education authorities. To enable refugee children to overcome these difficulties and realise their full potential a number of steps could be taken.

1. Information about refugees, their societies, culture and language need to be included in mainstream education so that misconceptions about refugees and other minorities are broken down. Teachers should receive information about refugee issues as part of their in-service training and refugee teachers should be employed if and where possible.
2. Home-school liaison is an integral part of a good educational service, and can be used more than at present to promote multicultural and anti-racist attitudes.
3. In keeping with current educational policy, refugee children should receive English language support which is integrated into mainstream schooling. In addition, there should be support for the maintenance and development of their mother-tongue to



Photograph by G. Sayer/OXFAM

provide a solid foundation on which to build good skills in English.

*Refugee children should be given the specialist support and help they need in school. Their experiences should be reflected in the curriculum and their bilingual abilities valued.*

## **2. Learning English**

In the UK, there is no statutory obligation to provide English language classes for newly arrived refugees. Indeed, a number of factors militate against refugees receiving suitable English language tuition: the provision of courses in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is patchy; they are concentrated in Adult Education Institutes where they are subject to fluctuations in funding and are generally under-resourced; and there tends to be competition for places, long waiting lists and large classes. Furthermore, it is difficult for refugees to find out about ESOL courses and little incentive because there are no local authority or other statutory grants available. A national policy is needed, backed up and supported at the local level to provide adequate English language training for all refugees arriving in this country as soon as they are able to pursue it.

*The right to learn the language of the host country is as basic as the right to food and shelter. A planned programme of intensive English language training should be available to all refugees who need it.*

## **3. Access to Further and Higher Education**

The British education system is not geared to assessing qualifications gained abroad and many refugees are unable to

provide evidence of qualifications gained in their own country. Finances are often an additional barrier, because most refugees are not entitled to statutory grants for at least their first three years in this country. In order to survive, the majority have to claim Income Support and, as a result of all the regulations and obstacles to education and training created by the Income Support and Social Security, most refugees have to take up non-advanced further education courses which offer more flexible hours. Rather than be discouraged as at present, refugees should be actively encouraged to seek education. This will not only reduce unemployment, but also enrich British society with the wealth of experience and skills that refugees bring with them.

*Refugees should have equal access to further and higher education courses. Positive steps should be taken to make these courses more responsive to the needs of refugees.*

## **4. Professional Requalification**

Many refugees end up in jobs which are well below their ability and expertise because, on the whole, professional bodies expect people with overseas qualifications to start all over again. The transferability of qualifications gained from abroad is a serious problem too.

*Refugees have the right to practise their own professions. There should be a national system to assess competence and recognise qualifications, skills and experience gained overseas.*

## **5. Financing Refugee Education and Training**

The fees and awards regulations set by the Department of Education and Science (DES) demonstrate a bias against refugees who have been granted exceptional leave to remain in the UK. While those with refugee status are entitled to pay home student fees and to receive mandatory grants, those with exceptional leave to remain have to have three years' ordinary residence in the UK before they become eligible for a mandatory grant. Asylum seekers are treated as overseas students for the purpose of awards for full time courses and the Home Office decision on asylum applications can take years rather than months. The DES should respond positively to the long-standing campaign by refugees and agencies to treat those with exceptional leave to remain in the same way as people with full refugee status. Asylum seekers should become entitled to the same rights after six months if their asylum application has not been decided by the Home Office.

*Refugees should have financial help geared to meeting their education and training needs.*

## **6. Removing Barriers for Women**

The usual problems refugees face in getting access to education are compounded for women. Often they have lower initial levels of literacy and education than men, as well as having responsibility for childcare and domestic chores. They may

experience a greater isolation, insecurity and poverty than do men. The national policy on refugee education should identify women as a special target group for access to English language training and other educational opportunities.

*The special disadvantages suffered by refugee women in gaining access to education and training should be redressed. As well as suitable courses and childcare provision, more research, outreach advice and flexible grant aid are needed.*

### **7. Refugee Statistics**

There is a dearth of information on refugees in the UK, which is one of the few European countries which does not collect basic statistics. The only statistics available on refugees come from the Home Office annual record of asylum applications and provide little information that is useful for those concerned with providing them with services. At the local level, authorities are unaware of the numbers and composition of their local refugee population and as a result, refugees are not accounted for and their needs are generally ignored.

*Detailed statistics on the gender, age, location and family structure of refugees should be collected nationally and locally, to allow the development of appropriate education services.*

### **8. Advice and Information**

In terms of advice and information about education, recognition of the diversity of the refugee experience is an important first step. This means making education and careers advice relevant and accessible when the refugee needs it. Many refugees are unaware of choices open to them, especially the field of higher education.

*Legal and educational advice and information should be made available to all refugees who need it, both in English and in community languages.*

### **9. Consulting Refugees**

Under the 1988 Education Reform Act, all Local Education Authorities (LEAs) have an obligation to consult the community about their needs. Despite being obliged to consult refugee community organisations in their area, however, LEAs have so far failed to survey their 'public' to identify how many refugees they are responsible for. Hence they have neither contacted nor consulted them.

*Education policy and provision should develop in consultation with refugees and organisations representing them. Procedures for consulting refugee organisations should be established by the government and local authorities.*

### **10. Resourcing Refugee Programmes**

Excellent policies are devised in many organisations, but fail in practice because no one is given the responsibility, time and money to implement them. Either the mandate and membership of the Refugee Education, Training and

Employment Forum must be changed to give it authority to draw up and take forward a national policy on refugee education; or an alternative structure must be found or created which can achieve this task in consultation with refugee communities and agencies. Once a policy has been formulated and agreed, a Unit must be created, with access to the relevant ministries, located in the DES or the Home Office, or established as a quango. Adequate central government funding will be essential for the implementation of a refugee education policy. At present there is not one civil servant with specific full-time responsibility for refugee education.

*Resources must be made available to implement this refugee education policy.*

### **Campaigning on Education**

The Refugee Council and the World University Service are both committed to campaigning for and promoting the Refugee Education Charter and to establishing its ten points as policy for refugee education in the 1990s. One of the most important ways of campaigning locally on the Education Charter is to stimulate interest in your local council. The Council should be able to provide you with a list of all the different committees and sub-committees they have, some of which could be interested in the Charter.

Press releases can be drawn up and councillors, MPs and MEPs contacted. Adult Education Institutes, College Principals, local teaching unions and inspectors can also be lobbied. Most Community Relation Councils have education officers who may be willing to help organise a delegation to visit a councillor. Even if all you do is make the Council think more about the refugee communities in its area, you have achieved a great deal.

*The Charter was formulated by the Refugee Education and Training Working Group, a UK policy committee comprised of representatives from the World University Service (UK), the British Refugee Council, Refugee Action and various English as a Second Language (ESL) projects and community organisations in London.*

*If your organisation wishes to sponsor this Charter, or needs more information, please contact the Administrative Assistant of the Refugee Education Advisory Service (UK), 20 Compton Terrace, London N1 2UN.*

## EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS ON REFUGEES

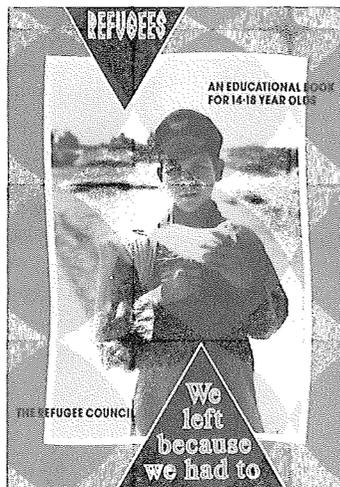
**REFUGEES: We left because we had to, An Educational Handbook for 14-18 Year Olds (1991), by Jill Rutter.** Published by the Refugee Council, 3 Bondway, London SW8 1SJ, 148 pages, price £5.00. ISBN 0-946787-04-2.

**Refugees by Linda Hitchcox (1990).** Published by Franklin Watts, in the 'Issues' Series, 96 Leonard Street, London EC2A 4RH, 32 pages, price £7.50. ISBN 0-7496-0172-8.

**REFUGEES: We left because we had to** is an A4 softbacked book about refugees and their specific problems presented through a multiplicity of media - pictures, drawings, cartoons, maps, newspaper cuttings and refugees' stories. It combines teachers notes with case studies and student activity sheets in one thick handbook which is intended for use in the classroom and provides a wide range of material to challenge assumptions and stimulate debate and discussion for both teachers and students alike. The handbook is geared to humanities teaching at middle and secondary school level and is particularly relevant to teachers of modern studies, sociology and citizenship as well as the Key States and Attainment Targets in English, History and Geography.

The handbook is divided into four sections. The introduction asks 'who is a refugee?' and 'what is meant by human rights?'; the second section looks historically at the growth of multi-ethnic Britain from the Huguenots in the 16th century to the present day. In the third section almost one hundred pages are dedicated to material on refugees in different parts of the world today. Information is provided and questions raised on broader issues such as media coverage, torture and the arms trade, which are examined in relation to refugees in a thought-provoking way. Section four is concerned with issues facing refugees trying to settle in Britain.

Throughout the handbook, the teacher is provided with suggestions and guidelines for a wide range of activities, such as carrying out surveys, holding a press conference, comparing



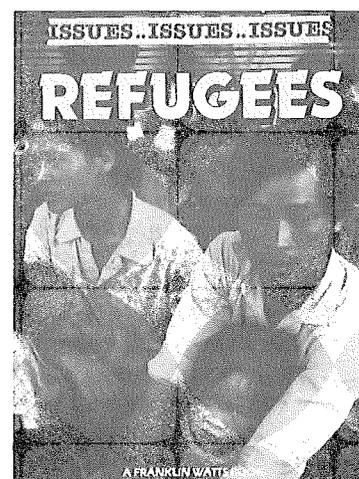
different kinds of reporting, discussing refugee problems and independently researching specific issues. The book includes a list of further resource materials, a reading list for both teachers and students, and details of organisations involved in refugee issues.

The handbook assumes that both teachers and students are familiar with working in small groups where the students can use their own initiative and carry out tasks cooperatively and independently of the teacher. The activities call for a wide range of written and oral skills and encourage the further development of these through diverse reporting activities.

Rutter's book makes stimulating and compelling reading and will go a long way towards the important task of ensuring refugee issues are incorporated into mainstream education. Furthermore, it will encourage children to challenge misconceptions about refugees, break down myths and confront bias, stereotyping and racism.

**Refugees** by Linda Hitchcox is one of a series of books by Franklin Watts designed to discuss important current issues. Other topics in the series include 'acid rain', the Gulf Crisis and human rights, and are written by specialists in their fields. Linda Hitchcox is a social anthropologist who has been engaged in research on forced migration since 1985. Jill Rutter, Education Officer for the Refugee Council and author of **REFUGEES, We left because we had to**, acted as consultant.

**Refugees** is an A4 sized hardback with big, bright photos and maps which reinforce and complement the text. It is divided into 13 chapters each dealing with an issue pertinent to refugees, addressing questions such as 'who is a refugee?' and 'what is being done?' Hitchcock identifies some of the causes of population displacement, and the problems refugees face during flight and uncertain reception. In so doing a picture of the refugee crisis worldwide is presented.



Unlike Rutter's book, Hitchcox's book is not aimed specifically for teaching purposes, though one of its main uses will undoubtedly be in school classrooms and the school library. It is a resource book which will be equally appropriate and valuable in a public library or general bookshop for both the background information it presents on refugees and the analysis of the

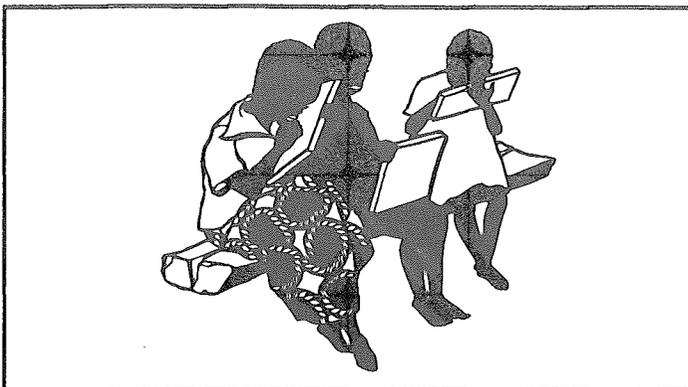
refugee situation in the world today. *Refugees* is suited to a wide range of readers from junior primary school children up through secondary. The clear and concise contents page allows easy use of the book and quick access to information.

*Refugees* will provide an important source of complementary material for school children engaged on activities arising from Rutter's book. Together, *REFUGEES, We left because we had to* and *Refugees* form important new and up-to-date additions to a growing literature on refugee studies for children.

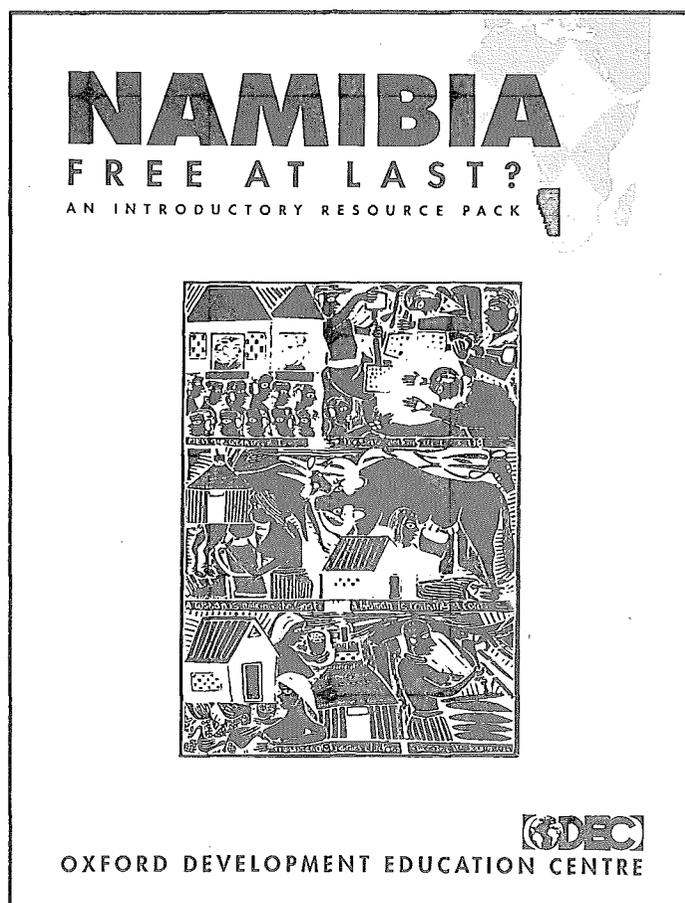
***NAMIBIA Free At Last? An Introductory Resource Pack*** compiled by Judy Kendall and Alex Lipinski at the Oxford Development Education Centre, East Oxford Community Centre, Princes Street, Oxford OX4 1DD. The pack includes a wall map, a poster, teachers notes, 9 factsheets and 6 case studies.

*NAMIBIA Free at Last?* is a resource pack for use in upper/middle/secondary school levels in Geography, History and English as well as cross-curricular lessons. The brief factsheets and case studies of individual life histories are presented with beautiful black and white illustrations and photographs which enliven the text. Their plastic covering makes them sturdy, durable and ideal for use by students. Accompanying the sheets and case studies are teachers notes which provide background information and ideas for using the materials in class. The notes include a list of further reading materials which will allow both teachers and students to delve deeper into the issues presented in the factsheets and case studies.

Although designed to be used individually, the factsheets and case studies together provide a comprehensive picture of the history of the Namibian people, and groups and sectors within Namibian society. They provide examples of their diverse situation, composition and needs such as women's position in society, young people's education and Namibians in exile. The



Graphic by Keiko Koizumi



material encourages students and teachers to draw parallels between life in Namibia and Britain, without denying the differences.

One factsheet focusses specifically on exiles and the some of the individual case histories consider the flight of Namibians into exile in Angola, Zambia and other parts of the world and their conditions as refugees as well as the problems and uncertainties which faced them on their return to Namibia after independence.

While the focus of Rutter's and Hitchcock's books is on refugees in general, this set of learning materials is concerned with Namibians. Here, issues which are important to refugees such as flight, political turmoil and repatriation are presented in the context of a specific nation, its people and its history.

*NAMIBIA, Free at Last?* is a practical and informative pack which will serve as a spring board for many new directions of inquiry and study including women's rights, the global economy, health and, of course, refugee issues.

Sheila Aikman

## LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES FOR REFUGEES

Reading materials are crucial for the success of educational programmes. As refugee camps are often located in remote regions, access to books is usually limited. In the following, Oreste Makafu, librarian in Tabora Regional Library, describes how the Tanzanian Library Board has extended its services to refugees. This is followed by information on some organisations running book grant schemes, or supplying books which can be contacted by refugees and/or those assisting them.

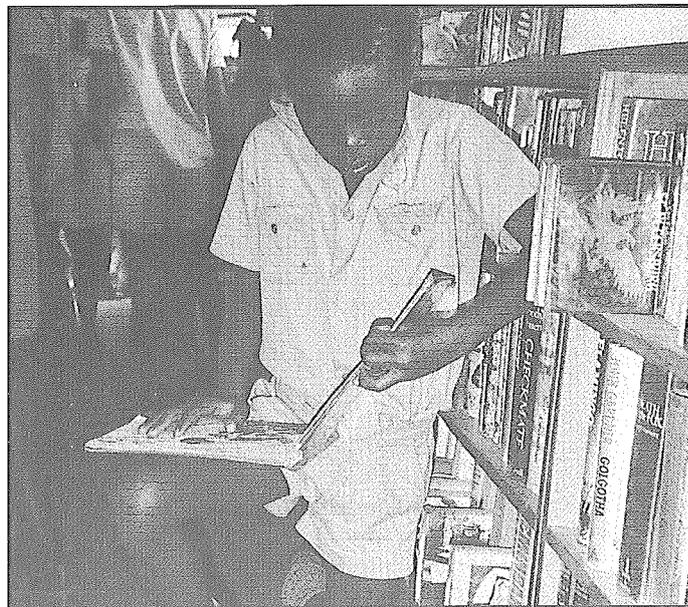
### Tanzania's Village Libraries

Tanzania's village level library services take two forms. The first type are termed 'static centres' for which books are requested and kept by a local level official, such as an educational officer, or a village health worker, who also takes responsibility for loaning books. Alternatively, in villages where there are proper buildings, the Library Service provides equipment and training for a fully-fledged library, with shelving, reading facilities, cupboards, etc. This latter type are those which are being set up in the refugee camps in Tanzania. The refugee camps in Tanzania have been established for 10 years or more, one comprises exclusively Burundian refugees, and the other mainly Burundians with a few Ugandans and South Africans. One centre has been established in each of the two villages which have a population of 8000.

### Policy of the Tanzania Library Services Board

The Tabora Regional Library's involvement with the provision of library services to refugee communities is in effect a realisation of a long-standing objective of Tanzanian library policy of extending services to all communities. Julius Nyerere, opening the National Central Library in Dar-Es-Salaam referred to it as: 'the hub of the wheel from which spokes will have to reach to all parts of the country'.

The Board aims to provide libraries in each of Tanzania's twenty-one regions. So far, this has been achieved in fourteen and efforts are being made to provide libraries in those regions which still lack them. Once these regional libraries are successfully established, as is the case in Tabora, it is the responsibility of regional librarians to extend their services to the district level and beyond that to community level. The Board aims ultimately to provide library services to all communities with the administrative structures to look after and manage library materials, and thereby ensure their optimum use.



*Photograph by Ranfurly Library Service*

The refugee community, as part of Tanzanian society, has a right to access to library and information services provided by the Tanzania Library Services Board.

### The Regional Library's wider role

Apart from extending library services to villages, and running the main regional library, the regional library services are also an integral part of the Adult Education Programme run by the Ministry of Education, which also operates in the refugee settlements. In this context, the regional library is responsible for supplying texts for functional as well as post-literacy classes on topics such as nutrition, child care, handicrafts, carpentry and print-making. They also support book production programmes for the same purpose. The Rural Newspaper Programme is also part of the library's wider role. For this purpose, the country's twenty one regions have been combined into seven zones, each of which has a rural newspaper covering issues of relevance to those in the Adult Education Programmes. In Tabora, plans are underway to develop a newsletter covering refugee issues, as well as child health.

### Refugees' enthusiasm for libraries

Refugees initiative in voicing a need for access to libraries was a key to the extension of library services to the settlements. Many refugees regularly travel from their settlements to the regional library where they have registered and come to borrow books. During such visits, they have urged staff to extend services to the settlements where they live, thus making resources available to those who cannot afford the time or money for transport to Tabora. Adult education staff working in the settlements have also emphasised the need for library resources to support their programmes.

# ORGANISATIONS PROVIDING BOOK SERVICES



## RANFURLY LIBRARY SERVICE

### THE RANFURLY LIBRARY SERVICE

The Ranfurly Library Service (RLS) is a book aid charity which sends more than 650,000 books to developing countries every year in response to requests from libraries, schools and training colleges and other institutions worldwide. RLS identifies needs in particular regions or for particular types of books and responds by setting up special projects targetted at fulfilling those needs. For example, in many African countries there is a crisis in the supply of secondary school textbooks. While local publishing caters to some extent for the primary level, most secondary texts still have to be imported. The high costs of importing books means that many schools are beset by an appalling lack of textbooks.

In 1989 over 100 teachers and librarians from developing countries visited RLS to choose books from its stock. RLS has sent consignments of selected books to Can Tho University, Vietnam; Buna Community Library, Solomon Islands; Beirut University, Lebanon; The Alpha Centre, Dominica, East Caribbean, and many other parts of the world.

RLS puts each book through a rigorous screening procedure to ensure that it is suitable for use overseas. Librarians sift through supplies of old and new books converting them into a highly targetted and valuable resource. Those books which are rejected because of poor condition or unsuitable content are sold in the UK to meet running costs or are pulped to be made into recycled products.

For further information about the RLS and its range of services write to:

Sara Harrity, Director  
Ranfurly Library Service  
2 Coldharbour Place  
39-41 Coldharbour Lane  
Camberwell  
London SE5 9NR



### THE CODE BOOK PROGRAMME

The Canadian Organization for Development through Education (CODE) supports libraries for refugees throughout the world. It provides educational materials in both English and French. While CODE considers supplying books to the third world to be an important part of its work, it believes that this is only a short term solution to the shortage of reading materials in schools, libraries and resource centres. Therefore it actively supports indigenous publishing programmes in planning, writing, illustrating and printing. CODE ships supplies of paper to a wide variety of publishing projects, teachers and literacy organisations trying to produce materials that reflect their own culture, language and priorities. It is currently funding the purchase of duplicating machines and typewriters, desktop publishing equipment, and an offset printing press in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Mali respectively.

CODE also produces its own quarterly newsletter, *Ngoma*, which brings news of its programmes, discussions of post-literacy and publishing projects, and specific feature articles on issues related to literacy and education. Further information on CODE programmes

can be obtained from:

Canadian Organization for Development Through Education  
Director, Book Programme  
321 Chapel Street  
Ontario  
Canada K1N 7Z2  
Tel: (613) 232-3569

### THE INTERNATIONAL BOOK BANK



IBB

International Book Bank Inc.

The International Book Bank is one of the largest book-sending agencies in the world. It works as a clearing house for the procuring and shipping of large quantities of educational materials on behalf of other agencies such as CODE and UNESCO. The IBB has a computerised, annotated booklist of approximately 1 million volumes received from publishers, school boards, institutions, libraries and individuals. Overseas clients can select books from the IBB list and also have specialised booklists compiled to suit their specific purposes.

For further information write to:

IBB  
608-L Folcroft Street  
Baltimore MD, 21224  
USA

### INTERMEDIATE TECHNOLOGY 'BOOKS BY POST' AND BOOK SUBSIDY SCHEME



The Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) is an independent charity which gathers and disseminates information, and advises on the choice of technologies appropriate for developing countries. It produces an annual book catalogue *Books by Post* of over 600 titles published by Intermediate Technology, and others.

Books in the catalogue are on themes of appropriate technology and development issues, such as agriculture and forestry, building and construction, communications, co-operatives, education, energy (biogas, solar, water, wind, biomass), boats and fisheries, food processing, health, enterprise development, manufacturing and handicrafts, primary industries, recycling, roads and transport, textiles, water supply and sanitation, workshop equipment. The titles are annotated, and cost detailed.

Books can be bought by mail order. In addition, IT has a book subsidy scheme. This operates through NGOs rather than individuals or specific project staff. NGOs can apply to IT for subsidy of the requested books. IT does not provide free books. The catalogue and further details of the subsidy scheme can be acquired from:

Intermediate Technology Publications  
103-105 Southampton Row  
London WC1B 4HH  
Tel: 71 436 9761

RPN would be interested to hear of any other book supply or subsidy schemes with which readers are familiar. We are currently compiling a register of periodicals which can be received free of charge which we hope to include in the next issue.

## A Student's Life in Site II

The bamboo cottage  
Roof-thatch leaks  
Ragged walls,  
The same place  
For studying, eating or sleeping  
At a bamboo table.  
Having lack of stationaries,  
Studying documents  
Narrow place for learning  
Noisy study area  
With the thick air  
The pollution of streams  
Serious and wild diseases  
In a prison that has no walls,  
And has no roof,  
But it's free for various decisions  
A student's effort for studying  
Improving knowledge in camp  
Extension of education  
Developing societies  
Civilisation of people  
And human rights education.

San Sopal



## Site Two Students

Site Two is a place that has  
Confidence for refugee students.  
But sometimes they worry  
And are lazy.  
So they have many problems to study.  
Study is very important for me.  
It will be easy to choose a job.  
Many of us study  
English, French, and Japanese  
Many students would like to speak  
And many students are shy.  
Poems and Geography  
Are very interesting for me.

Souyong



*Photograph by G. Sayer/OXFAM*

## CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child entered into force as international law on September 2nd, 1990. It reinforces and expands basic principles of human rights in relation to children. Rights not previously included in any of the other international instruments are introduced for the first time, such as those of certain categories of children - the handicapped and refugees, and also the right to family reunification.

Twenty years before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drafted, a Declaration relating specifically to the rights of children was formulated. The 1924 Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child, however, was not binding since by definition, a Declaration cannot be enforced; states do not ratify it and no responsibility is placed on them to abide by any of the provisions. In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights further reinforced the rights of the child in some of its provisions for example it proclaimed that 'motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and

assistance', and 'all children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection'.

In contrast, to these early documents, the 1989 Convention sees the child as an individual, and the text changes its emphasis accordingly, from 'entitlement to childhood' to the 'rights of the child'. The conception of obligations concerning parental responsibility towards the child has also changed. Hence the term 'motherhood' has been replaced by the 'responsibility of both parents for the child'. The concept of 'care and assistance' in the Declaration is now in the form of specific obligations of the state and of the parents of the child.

### **The Rights of the Child**

The rights of the child fall into the following four categories:

- a) Protective rights: the right to protection from abuse and neglect, protection from economic exploitation, protection from sexual abuse, protection from torture, cruel treatment or punishment, protection from being affected by armed conflict.

b) Social rights: the right to primary and preventive health care, the right to compulsory and available free primary education.

c) Positive rights: the state is obliged to provide special protection for children deprived of family environment (institutional placement).

d) Civil rights: right to opinion and freedom of association.

The Convention defines a child as anyone under 18, although the definition is flexible in countries where age of majority is attained earlier. However, a child is forbidden from participating in combat only up to the age of 15.

The Convention deals with the 'family', in particular the child's right to live with his/her parents under article 9 and the right to family reunification as expressed in article 10. Article 18 deals with the principle of joint parental responsibility. This provision is connected with Article 23 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which states that 'in case of dissolution, state provision shall be made for the necessary protection of the children'.

Article 19 of the Convention, however, acknowledges that children may require protection from their own particular guardian. It states that it is the State's responsibility to protect children from all forms of maltreatment perpetrated by parents (or others) responsible for their care and to undertake preventive and treatment programmes in this regard. The protection of the child according to this article goes far beyond previous ones and recognises family violence and the phenomenon of abuse as vices against which the children must be protected.

#### Children with Special Needs

The Convention clearly recognises differences among children and their special needs. For instance, Article 23 deals with handicapped children. This is the first time this category of children has been included for protection in an international human rights instrument.

Refugee children (article 22) are another category of children with special needs. The Convention specifically states that every child who is seeking refugee status or is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and practice shall receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in order to enjoy applicable rights set forth in the Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the States are party. The Convention clearly states that all of the above applies to children, whether accompanied or unaccompanied.

**Articles with particular relevance to refugee children**  
While all articles in the Convention are intended for the protection of all children, the following are particularly significant for refugee children and for UNHCR which is responsible for protecting these rights.

\* The right to have a name from birth and to be granted a nationality (article 7).

\* States undertake to respect the right of the child to *protect* his/her identity, including nationality, name and family ties and if necessary *restore* them (article 8).

\* States shall insure that a child not be separated from his parents against his will, unless such separation is in the interests of the child (article 9).

\* The right of the children and their parents to leave any country and to enter their own for the purpose of family reunification (article 10).

\* A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his family environment shall be entitled to special protection and assistance by the State who when considering solutions should give 'due regard to the desirability of continuity in a child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background' (especially relevant for finding suitable foster families for the children).

\* The right of children of minority communities and indigenous populations to enjoy their own culture and to practice their own religion and language.

#### The Implementation and the Monitoring System

States are required to submit reports to a Committee of 10 experts within 2 years of the Convention coming into force, and thereafter every 5 years. The Committee may request further information and it may recommend to the General Assembly to request the Secretary-General to undertake on its behalf studies on specific issues relating to the rights of the child.

State obligation to ensure the implementation of these rights, is in the words of the Convention: 'in accordance with their national law' and their 'obligation under the relevant international instruments in particular where the child would otherwise be stateless.' Deficiencies in national law could be reported within the mechanism for monitoring, and through this, pressure could be placed on States to change national legislation. As of early 1991, 71 countries have ratified the Convention.

Judy Lown, Visiting Study Fellow, RSP.

# BEREAVEMENT

## PAST VERSUS PRESENT

By Joao Boavida

There is a growing body of literature which attempts to explain the behaviour and psychological suffering of refugees in terms of 'bereavement'. It makes the analogy between losing home, family, job, language, culture and country and the grief experienced at the loss of a relative or friend.

The problem with this literature is that it is applied to all refugees - and may inhibit rather than extend our understanding of the differential impact of being uprooted on diverse groups or social classes or individuals. This article looks at bereavement and how it generates different responses on the part of refugees who have had the misfortune to experience being forcibly uprooted. It is based on my observations of the East Timorese refugee community in Melbourne of which I was part. I avoid putting excessive emphasis on the trauma experienced by an individual refugee. I believe that by focusing only on the negative aspects of the experience of being uprooted, one is simply helping to perpetuate the hopelessness of the refugee's plight.

### Exile as Bereavement

A study of Chilean exiles in Great Britain (Munoz 1986), sees the traumatic period of exile as an ongoing dynamic process. Exiles constantly face the conflict between links to the homeland and their political cause and the need to integrate or adapt to a new life. As in the case of bereavement, exile takes an individual refugee through a succession of traumatic stages, which produce different psychological responses. The exiles' personal past or what Munoz calls the 'ghost reality' is the main obstacle to recovering from loss and integrating into the host society. Another common interpretation in the literature, is to see grief as an integral part of the process of assimilation and acculturation (Bauskauskas 1981).

These approaches are useful in understanding part of the refugee experience. However, one of the failures of research on forced migration is the tendency to treat refugees as an undifferentiated mass. Refugees are not an homogeneous group. They come from a great variety of social, political and economic backgrounds and their experience varies from individual to individual, group to group and country to country. Refugees' political, economic and social background is important to consider, as it shapes both their ability to cope and their means of coping with life in the host society.

### The Experience of Separation

'Life is no longer worth living. I survive the present by living on the past and only the future will tell how well I have coped'. This was a spontaneous response to a friend's question on how I was coping with the new life a few months after I arrived in Melbourne, Australia. My friend jokingly took me for a dreamer and the weight of my answer quickly dissipated. Surely, my friend was right. I was probably dreaming, but it was a painful daylight dream - one about the past which is now a lost present: family, language, job, culture and country. It was a cloudy dream in which I had no sense of direction and time. Though I knew I had always been confident of my moves, this time I was losing control over my existence - I started to feel powerless and somehow very dependent on my friends. I lacked strength and was overcome by the trauma of separation which left me vulnerable and emotional, facing the battle of past versus present.

I knew, however, that past versus present without future was a waste of time and hence quickly responded by working out strategies for rebuilding the past under present realities for a promising future. It is what I call the frustrating and long process of innovation. From this experience, I have come to understand 'bereavement' as a hard and continuous battle of past versus present with the future gradually emerging with a sense of confidence.

### Refugees from East Timor: Background

In order to understand the framework of Timorese refugee experience, one needs to look at the political causes of flight. According to Amnesty International, the Indonesian invasion and occupation of East Timor has so far cost 200,000 lives - equivalent to one third of the total population. Given the relatively small Timorese population and the importance of the extended family, almost every East Timorese refugee has lost a family member.

East Timor was under Portuguese colonial rule for nearly five centuries. The despotic nature of European imperialism and the nepotism of the rulers had for centuries denied their subjects the very basic human rights. People grew up in an atmosphere of political naivety and were totally marginalised by the colonial power. Geographical isolation and the nature of the colonial structures made it exceptionally difficult to diffuse the alien socio-political and cultural elements which colonialism brought to the island.

The turning point for East Timor came in 1974, with the successful military coup in Portugal and the overthrow of the Portuguese fascist regime. The Timorese people were politically unprepared for the abruptness of change. Two main political parties, UDT and ASDT (today known as FRETILIN),

were born under probably the most premature political conditions one could imagine. UDT, a party led by bureaucrats, initially wanted East Timor to remain under Portuguese administration. FRETILIN's radicalism opted for immediate independence.

As ideological differences became increasingly uncontained, UDT decided that it was time for guns to do the talking. Civil war broke out in August 1975, but within three weeks FRETILIN was victorious. However short that hiccup of success, it proved to be fatal - leaving a divided people who were unable to put up effective resistance to the Indonesian invasion, which eventually took place in December 1975.

Both the civil war and the Indonesian invasion and occupation created refugees. 10,000 refugees were born out of the civil war, mostly members of UDT. Of these, 2,300 were evacuated from Dili to Australia, while most of the rest fled to Indonesian West Timor where, ironically, the Jakarta government in



*A Fretilin Rally, 1975*

*Photograph by O. Strowel/CIIR*

cooperation with the Red Cross, facilitated their exit to Portugal, Macau and Taiwan. By 1989, 6,700 Timorese refugees were resettled in Australia and of these 2,850 presently live in Melbourne (Thatcher et al. 1990).

There is no straight answer to questions about the fate of refugees who were born out of the Indonesian invasion and occupation - Indonesia has since successfully managed to restrict the flight of refugees from East Timor. Hence, East Timor has become an 'open refugee camp' for the remaining Timorese population presently under Indonesian occupation. Those who did manage to leave (like myself), did so either with the help of the ICRC or of their own accord - only possible after bribery with large amounts of money.

UNHCR does not regard Timorese refugees travelling on Portuguese or Indonesian passports as genuine refugees. Possession of a valid passport simply means being regarded as a tourist. UN officials greet applications for refugee status (such as my own) with the response: 'jump on your head'. I had a passport with a tourist visa and the UNHCR appeared unable to understand why I had to apply for 'refugee status' despite the many interviews and explanations of my well-founded fear of political persecution.

#### **Loss and its nature**

Loss entails critical changes which demand the very best and/or worst of refugees in responding to the crisis and to the requirements of survival in a dilemma of choosing past over present or vice-versa.

For both 'ex-colonial bureaucrats' and the 'less-privileged', loss of past involved a loss of job, extended family, language, culture and country. The former also lost the status, power, authority and privilege they enjoyed within the colonial system. In the new country they are placed on the same footing as their former class opponents. In both cases one cannot determine the weight of loss - because loss itself, whether great or small in material terms, is after all a total uprooting, and as such it is equally devastating.

The two groups remember their past in different ways; the 'ex-colonial bureaucrats' tend to dwell on and idealise the past as a means to surviving changes in their new life space. For the 'less-privileged', the past can almost be a forgotten history and the present becomes a hollow which is merely filled with work, with surviving.

#### **Workplace: The melting pot**

The factories where Timorese refugees usually ended up when they first arrived in Australia, have multiple functions. They are not just a source of income, but are socialising institutions

where refugees come into contact with workmates of diverse backgrounds. They introduce refugees to a totally new world within the new country. The roar of the machines, rolling of belts, blasts of swear words, different kinds of people and the forms of English being spoken by more than 100 language groups, all make for one of the most confusing Babel Towers in today's modern history. This highly chaotic melting pot of languages and cultures manages to be held together along the huge belts of the production line.

Factory work is by all definitions a dirty job. Salaries are low for refugees and migrants who are cheap labour for factory owners. Immigrants and refugees are usually hard working and quiet, always punctual for fear of losing their positions. These attributes encourage bosses to further exploit refugee workers by giving them the lowest paid and dirtiest jobs. They are in a helpless situation: to leave the dirty job to others is outside their power because if they do so, they will end up in the dole queue. As the Social Security allowance is hardly sufficient for survival, most refugees have no choice but to stick to their present jobs.

It is within this setting that the Timorese refugees of both social backgrounds mix together doing the very same job, which never would have been possible under the colonial administration in East Timor. While the melting pot of the workplace brings the two groups physically together, it also helps to bridge the social gap between the two.

Feelings of solidarity, understanding and friendship seem to have strengthened and united the two groups, but their awareness of the past is strongly present too. Although the refugees spend most of their time at such workplaces, in no way do they feel part of them, nor do they have a sense of belonging. While this feeling is shared by both groups, the 'less privileged' tend to cope better with the hardship than the 'ex-colonial bureaucrats'.

#### **Innovation: The best way out?**

Acknowledging that socio-political changes literally can take place overnight can help individuals to come to terms with changes in their personal life.

The frustrating lack of progress in bringing about a political settlement to the issue of East Timor is always in the mind of East Timorese. Fifteen years on and the Indonesian occupation of the former Portuguese colony remains unshakable. However, internal political divisions are beginning to heal, and Timorese people are now coming together. Former political foes sit together and lobby for the same target: self-determination for the East Timorese people.

In the refugee world, with a population of 10-25 million people, the relatively small number of East Timorese refugees can hardly raise an eye-brow. In the multicultural society of Australia's 17 million people, the East Timorese are an ethnic minority. The Timorese refugee community are indeed in a weak position. However, it is this weak position that keeps East Timorese refugees on the track of survival. The political stalemate, changes in life space, internal political changes and being an ethnic minority can all generate feelings of hopelessness. These in turn demand the very best or worst of the individual refugee in looking for a way out. For most of the Timorese refugees, 'innovation' is probably the best way to describe this exit. In accepting the fact that they are now, in relation to the younger generation born outside East Timor, witnesses to a living history, they have come up with innovative approaches to their problems; such as contributing to the revival of aspects of East Timorese culture and values.

Insofar as my experience is concerned, I have come to a stage of evaluating the hard and long process of bereavement in the form of past versus present. I have come out both a loser and a winner. I have lost, for the very fact that I am outside my country. But loss should not overshadow the gains, for winning usually requires the very best of an individual refugee. I know I should not over-emphasise the 'win-lose' equation, but after all we live in a materialistic society where competition is our daily bread. I have won my way through the battle, only because I was a survivor in search of a future. Since my main ambition was to further my education, I had a good motive for keeping my head above water and, sure enough, four years later I came out of the University with the piece of paper I had been striving for. At present I am in the process of furthering that ambition.

While the 'ex-colonial bureaucrats' and the 'less-privileged' respond differently to bereavement according to the nature of their loss, the new life space of the melting pot brings the realisation that, after a given period of time, the individual either resigns to the mercy of the long battle of past versus present, or comes up a winner with an innovative contribution to the future.

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# GULF WAR

## MASS MIGRATION AND MASS DISPLACEMENT DURING AND AFTER THE GULF WAR

In mid April 1991, two million Kurds, about half the population of Iraqi Kurdistan, were reported to be on the move as they fled the Iraqi military and made for the Turkish or Iranian borders or for the relative security of mountains away from the main towns. Up to 500,000 Kurds were said to have crossed the border into Turkey, and more than a million Kurds and Shias were reported to have moved into Iran, with numbers climbing daily. Many more massed on the borders in miserable conditions awaiting entry into these two countries.

If these estimates are correct, the total number of people involuntarily displaced since the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq on August 2 1990 must total between four and five million, possibly the largest mass displacement ever in so short a space of time. The five months to December 1990 saw the flight of more than a million Arab, Asian and African migrant workers and professionals from Iraq and Kuwait, mainly into and through Jordan. More than 800,000 Yemenis were also expelled from Saudi Arabia. In 1991 the pattern of flight has become even more complex, posing a serious challenge to the agencies charged with handling mass involuntary migration.

During last year's mass exodus from Kuwait and Iraq to Jordan and other neighbouring countries, international agencies, under the coordination of the UN Secretary-General's special representative Sadruddin Aga Khan, formulated a programme to deal with further flight expected during and after the outbreak of hostilities. The programme - the Regional Humanitarian Plan of Action - was revised and updated in January 1991. But the scale and complexity of the involuntary migrations that have occurred were not anticipated in the UN contingency plans, which had to be further revised after the ceasefire. In addition to the mass exodus of Kurds and Shias to Turkey and Iran, the Regional Plan will have to take account of a whole series of other forced migrations.

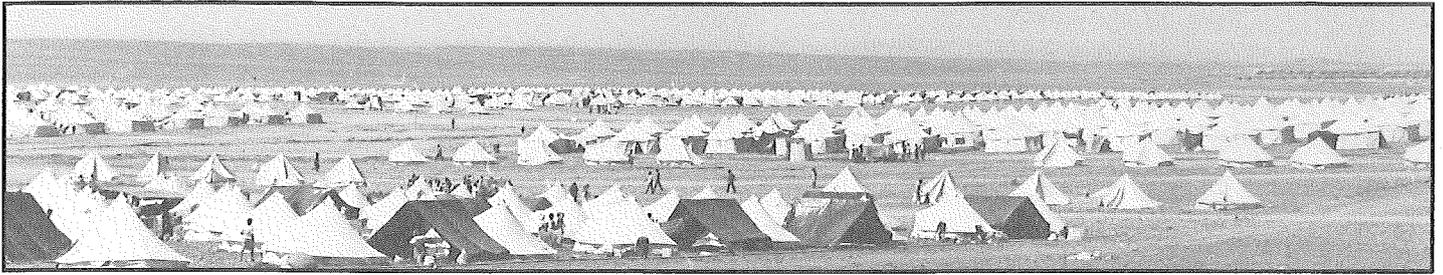
Flight of Palestinians from Kuwait has been in prospect as a result of violence against the Palestinian community by Kuwaiti militia groups avenging alleged collaboration. Reports of killings and torture have been mounting. The human rights organisation Middle East Watch believes that at least 2,000 Palestinians and other Arabs have been detained and tortured.



*Water point in a Jordanian camp*

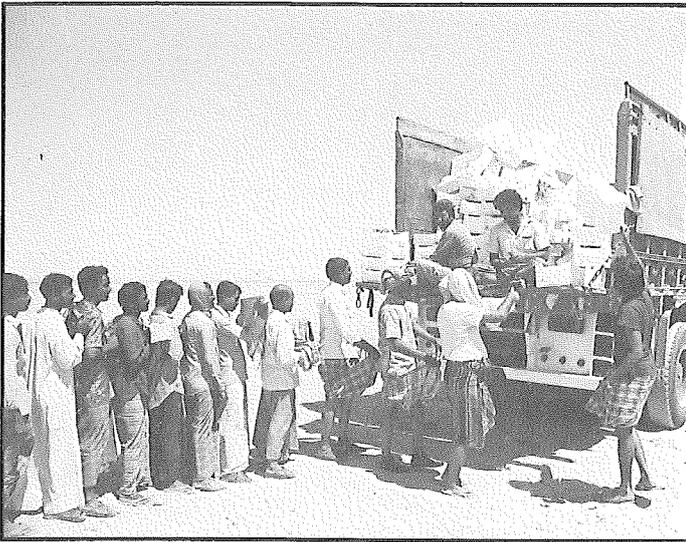
Amnesty International has called for an investigation of the arrest and alleged torture of Palestinians and other Arabs since the ousting of Iraqi forces. Estimates of the Palestinian population still in Kuwait vary widely - figures of between 60,000 and 150,000 have been quoted. Palestinians in the emirate before 2 August 1990 were thought to have numbered between 300,000 and 400,000. Many had lived there all their lives and not a few had accumulated substantial assets. Unknown numbers of Palestinian residents - perhaps half the pre-August 1990 population - left before and during the war, and those alleged to have been brought in by the Iraqis are thought to have left when they retreated. The Jordanian authorities say that 250,000 Palestinians and Jordanians, largely from Kuwait, have returned to Jordan, compounding that country's beleaguered position. Many of these holders of Jordanian passports have rarely been to their country of nationality. Others have gone to Lebanon, Syria and some to the Occupied Territories, exacerbating already great social, political and economic strains there. But there are in addition substantial numbers of Palestinians long-settled in Kuwait who cannot make claims on these destinations for refuge.

Another distressing movement has been the attempted return of Asian and Arab migrant workers formerly in Kuwait, and of Palestinians, Jordanians, Iraqis and others who held professional or administrative posts in the emirate. Many of these would-be returnees fled or were kidnapped to Basra, were subsequently freed by rebel Iraqi forces, and attempted to return to Kuwait - only to be turned back by the Kuwaiti authorities at the border. In mid March, US troops controlling the ceasefire line in southern Iraq reported that up to 500 vehicles carrying returnees were arriving daily. Some of those allowed to cross the border have been accommodated in camps on the Kuwaiti



*Camp in Jordan*

*Photographs by P. Sherlock/OXFAM*



*Refugees in Jordan*

side, with some provision of assistance by Red Cross and Red Crescent organisations. Those refused entry accumulated in makeshift camps in southern Iraq, dependent on hand-outs by allied troops. Some Kuwaitis who lost their papers during the conflict - or never held them - found themselves denied entry and stuck in camps sharing the pitiful conditions of others refused entry into Kuwait.

Both professionals and workers of non-Kuwaiti origin either in the country or trying to return may be affected by the Kuwaiti authorities' announced intention to reduce its population and in particular its dependence on foreign labour. This assertion is inconsistent with reports that Kuwaiti employers have been recruiting in Turkey to make good shortfalls in labour left by the departure of foreign workers last year. Some migrants from Sri Lanka were also reported to be returning to Kuwait under new contracts - although most are said to be making for other destinations in the Gulf. Nonetheless the insecurity of foreign workers will be heightened not only by the treatment of the resident Palestinian population, but also by discrimination against foreigners in the distribution of food in 'liberated' Kuwait.

The 63,000 Iraqi prisoners of war, deserters and those captured, appeared relatively secure while held in Saudi Arabia. But large numbers of them - including many Kurdish conscripts - were said not to wish to return to Iraq while Saddam Hussein was still in power. Many of these would presumably fall under the mandate of UNHCR. Towards the end of March, allied forces were reported to have resumed taking the surrender of Iraqi troops involved in the civil war, adding to the numbers whose cases would have to be scrutinised before their repatriation.

In addition to those who found themselves outside their homelands, there were unknown numbers of people displaced within Iraq, first by the allied bombing and then by the rebellion and its attempted suppression. They included both civilians and disaffected soldiers and deserters. Many fled to southern Iraq in the zone controlled by allied forces after the cease-fire. They dreaded the withdrawal of US forces, and as this began to happen many made for the narrow 'demilitarised zone' on the Iraq-Kuwait border. UNHCR was reported to have undertaken responsibility - as an 'exceptional' measure - for the 27,000 people in allied-occupied southern Iraq as US forces withdrew. But it is hard to see how others displaced within Iraq can be protected or assisted until the political and military situation becomes more stable, although some may benefit if greater humanitarian assistance is allowed into Iraq and can be distributed.

In response to the Kurdish exodus, a major revision of the Regional Humanitarian Plan of Action began towards mid April when Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan was reaffirmed as coordinator of an expanded relief programme, which now included the operations on the Turkish and Iranian borders. Facilities reportedly developed under the previous contingency plans were apparently not put to use in Turkey, while sheer numbers would have overwhelmed the facilities said to have been prepared in Iran. It appears that when refugees did not arrive in the numbers anticipated during the war, development of facilities for reception and relief in the four main countries of destination was suspended. The facilities envisaged - to cater for 100,000 refugees in each of Turkey, Iran, Syria and Jordan - were in any case evidently underfunded: of the \$175 million estimated cost of the contingency plan, only \$38 million was reported to have been received and spent.

The maelstrom of mass migration and displacement unleashed in the Middle East has once again highlighted serious shortcomings in the international system for providing protection and assistance to people in flight. The tragedy also shows the consequences of placing the abstract principle of national sovereignty above concern for fundamental human rights. And it graphically draws attention once more to the international community's ostrich-like refusal to confront the causes rather than the consequences of such mass exodus.

Shortcomings in protection and assistance are not principally the result of incompetence by the responsible international agencies. To their credit, UN and other international bodies and non-governmental organisations did anticipate and coordinate planning for mass exodus from Iraq and Kuwait. Facilities to receive refugees were organised in Jordan, Syria, Turkey and Iran, and food and medical stocks were positioned - although they proved inadequate for the scale and nature of the Kurdish exodus.

# REFUGEES OR MIGRANTS?

But the system has been structurally incapable of fully effective operation. The UNHCR, UNDRP, ICRC and other bodies that attempt to deal with mass exodus rely on the consent of governments to operate - often the very perpetrators of the human rights abuses that are at the root of the matter. The agencies are beholden to governments for access to refugee populations. Further, to be recognised as refugees and be eligible for international protection and assistance, those in flight must cross national borders - which normally requires the consent of the country receiving them. Otherwise they remain in the limbo of 'internal displacement', beyond the reach of international protection. The abject misery of Kurdish refugees stranded on the mountainous border between Iraq and Turkey illustrates once again the consequences of these constraints on international action.

These limitations on international action may be partly challenged if the proposed 'safe havens' and/or 'humanitarian centres' are successfully established. Indeed, the establishment of such centres within Iraqi territory - whether under western military or UN protection - appears to break important new ground in displaced people's protection and assistance. However their establishment may also bring major problems - not least the creation of yet more long-term displaced populations.

The failure of the wider international community to address the root causes of mass exodus has been highlighted many times before, but bears repeating in the light of the current crisis. Despite warnings over and over again of the consequences, repressive regimes have been propped up, and local and regional conflicts have been cynically manipulated. Arms sales for short-term politico-strategic ends have continued unabated; even now there is talk of resuming sales of weapons to states in the Middle East currently 'friendly' to the west - thereby setting in motion once again the truly vicious circle that we have just witnessed.

Pure altruism is too much to hope for in international relations. But a marriage of humanitarianism with self-interest is conceivable. It is in the economic, political and security interests of the international community to use its influence to encourage trends towards real democracy, self-determination and the accommodation of the legitimate aspirations of minorities in pluralistic polities. It is in no-one's interest to have yet another large, long-term refugee population idling away their lives in camps - yet this is precisely the outcome in prospect for the Kurds and many others forcibly displaced in the Middle East since last August.

Nicholas Van Hear, April 1991

## THE CASE OF THE PONTIAN GREEKS

New waves of mass migration are currently taking place on the Eurasian continent: Kurds, Albanians, Germans, Greeks and many other peoples are finding themselves in the midst of immense political upheaval and in many places pressures have mounted such that they have little or no alternative but to emigrate. Old grievances are finding new political expression, and, increasingly, this involves violence and intimidation. Whether or not such groups will be considered refugees will largely depend on the willingness of states to receive them. The Pontian communities from the Soviet Union are a case in point. In Greece, they are being received under a policy allowing immigration of ethnic Greeks from around the world.

In this article Elisabeth Kontogiorgi and Warren Hatch describe the exodus of the Pontian people from their place of exile in the central Asian steppes back to the regions of the Black Sea, to the Caucasus in the Soviet Union, and to Greece. They also review the respective policies of the Greek and Soviet governments towards the Pontian issue.

The Pontians originally migrated from Greece and colonised the southern coast of the Black Sea two thousand years ago. Over the centuries they built upon their Hellenistic tradition and developed a distinct culture which had special protection within the Byzantine and later Ottoman Empires. The stability they enjoyed came to an end in the wake of the 1828 Russo-Turkish war, and a period of forced migration into the southern Russian Empire began. This flight continued throughout the nineteenth century. Later, in 1918, a further one hundred and fifty thousand Pontians were compelled to move north when Russian lands were turned over to Turkey in accordance with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The remaining 500,000 Pontians were forced out of Asia Minor in 1924 when the League of Nations sponsored an exchange of peoples between Greece and Turkey. The Pontians who ended up in Greece are now in an economic and political position to place pressure on their government to receive Pontians who now want to leave the Soviet Union.

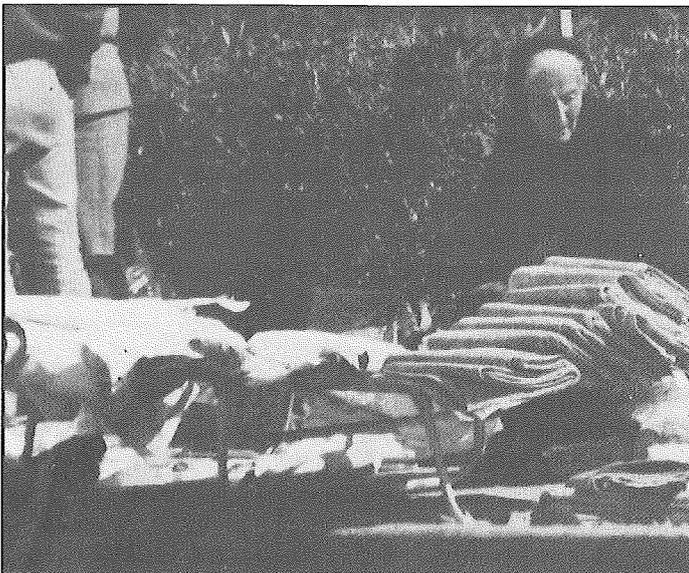
During the early years of the new Soviet state, the Pontians experienced an interlude of cultural freedom under a

progressive nationalities policy. For instance, in Georgia, where most of the refugees had settled, Greek language schools and academies increased from thirty-three in 1925 to some one hundred and forty by 1938, testifying to the growth and strength of the Pontian community. Within the greater region, there were also a number of newspapers, cultural associations and publishing houses dedicated to the Pontian nationality.

In 1938, Stalin put an abrupt end to this brief golden age. Forced collectivisation and rapid industrialisation had already placed great strains on the fabric of Soviet society, and the consolidation of these policies was causing further pressure. Stalinist ideology dictated the creation of a 'new Soviet man', and targeted smaller ethnic groups such as the Pontians for assimilation into the communist culture. These policies involved extreme violence. Schools and newspapers were closed down and a pogrom against the Pontians began which ultimately resulted in the exile of a great proportion of the Pontian community to the mines on the open steppes of Kazakhstan. Here, 50,000 Pontians perished. Such conditions persisted for the next 50 years.

In the early 1980s, the situation of the Pontian community improved considerably in the more liberal atmosphere that accompanied perestroika. They joined other nationalities in mobilising at both local and all-Union levels, inaugurating a revival of Hellenism. Greek, for example, was reintroduced in 1982 as a foreign language in the schools of Georgia.

But the situation of the Pontians in the Caucasus was diverging from that of the exiled population in Central Asia. In many parts of the Caucasus, the Pontian community constitute a



*Pontian woman selling blankets*

*Photograph Ellopia*

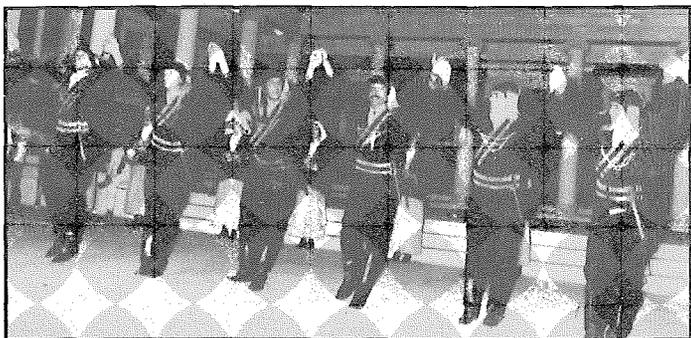
majority, and here they have been pushing for regional autonomy. Their demands are similar to those of the many other exiled nationalities of the Soviet Union such as the Germans and the Meskhetians. The Pontians in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, however, are in a minority and in turn are under immense pressure from the dominant ethnic groups to emigrate, which in practice means either to the Caucasus or to Greece.

At the all-Union level, the Pontians have organised themselves into the 'League for the Unity of Soviet Greeks'. Their initial goal was to encourage Pontian resettlement in a Caucasian autonomous region. But when Gavriil Popov (a prominent economist in the reform movement, and now the Mayor of Moscow) was elected president of the League, a policy shift was effected in recognition of the immense challenges and problems such a population transfer would involve. Their policies are now closer to those forwarded by Argo (the Pontian Culture Centre of Moscow). Their political goal is to mobilise Pontians throughout the country in support of broad cultural recognition, rather than to create a mini-state.

The Gorbachev leadership prefers moderate solutions of this sort for the nationalities problem, and is reluctant to embark on a redrawing of the somewhat arbitrary internal borders and a transferral of populations between them. The question goes beyond economic considerations. The ongoing struggle between the centre and the independence-minded Republics is bound to intensify. The recent referendum on preserving the Soviet Union resulted in no clear mandate and was itself worded deliberately ambiguously, which reflects unease in the Kremlin. Six Republics baulked at even participating in the referendum, including the Baltic Republics, Moldavia, and Georgia, itself a multi-ethnic republic. Led by adamant nationalists, Georgia, indeed, is on the edge of open conflict against Moscow and of civil war with its own ethnic minorities, notably the South Ossetians.

A shift in the source of legitimacy has occurred in the Republics: before it was conferred by Moscow, today it derives more from popular support, and the national elites are acting accordingly. In Central Asia and Kazakhstan, where the situation is even more complex than in Georgia, nationalist movements are becoming more vocal, and violence is on the increase both within and between the nationalities of these Republics. Pontians as a minority see themselves as vulnerable in this situation of instability and violence.

Political uncertainty and increasing ethnic conflict, then, continue to loom and threaten the Pontian peoples, particularly those in Central Asia and Kazakhstan. They are responding by migrating, if not to the Caucasus, then to Greece, in a new mass



*Pontian folkdancers*

*Photograph Eltopia*

exodus. The numbers are telling. In 1989, over 6,000 Pontians left for Greece, at a rate of over 500 per month. In 1990, this rate more than doubled and the figure for the whole year is estimated at more than 20,000.

According to Greek statistics, a quarter of these people are lorry drivers and over half are professionals, students and skilled workers. Thirteen percent are unskilled workers, a mere three percent are agricultural labourers and the overwhelming majority come from urban areas.

After receiving an exit visa from the Soviet Union, Pontians are expected to leave the country immediately, and currency controls allow them to take a limited amount of convertible currency to cover their passage to Greece. There are restrictions on the amount of personal possessions they are allowed to take with them, particularly with respect to electrical appliances and other consumer goods which are in severe shortage inside the Soviet Union. The journey is either by train via Moscow, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia, or from Odessa by ship. Pontians arrive in Greece with something in the order of sixty pounds sterling.

As Greece already has a sizeable professional and skilled workforce, the absorption of the Pontians can be expected to be difficult. The Greek government aims to direct Pontian resettlement, and is providing housing and services in the less developed, northern regions of the country. This policy will also serve to increase the ethnic Greek population in that area in which there is a concentration of Muslims.

Language is a major impediment for the newly-arrived Pontians. Their own language derives from ancient Greek and is quite distinct from the language of modern Greece. As a legacy of the persecutions of the Soviet era, it is a language spoken primarily among the older generation; the youth often know only Russian. According to Government statistics, among Pontians already resettled, only about half have a working knowledge of Greek. The Greek Pontians are strangers in a strange land.

The Greek government has been slow to develop an adequate policy response towards broad Pontian issues and began to respond only after large numbers of refugees had already arrived in Greece and were stretching the limited temporary housing and social services. Before receiving permission to emigrate, Pontians must establish their Greek ethnicity at the Greek Embassy in Moscow, and the small staff is suffering under the strain of applications. In Greece, they also have to wait for a period of three to six months before their Soviet diplomas are reviewed and recognised, so that they can receive legal permission to work. Only lorry drivers are exempt from these regulations. Despite governmental provisions to allow ethnic Greeks migrating to Greece to enter with their personal possessions duty free, in practice Pontians entering from the Soviet Union frequently find that customs officials levy charges.

In December, 1989, the Greek government established a department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to co-ordinate the reception and resettlement of the Pontians with other agencies and organisations. Housing, medical and social services are being set up. Housing, employment and language are the three problems most frequently mentioned by Pontians. As over eighty percent of these same Pontians recommend without qualification that those still in the Soviet Union come to Greece, the government faces a difficult task indeed.

Though no restrictions are made as to where the refugees may settle, relocation centres are being established in the lesser populated areas of the north. This settlement policy is supported by existing Pontian organisations (i.e. those created during the exchange of populations in the 1920s) which argue that state lands should be made available to the refugees for agriculture. In view of the non-agricultural, urban background of most of the refugees, difficulties are to be expected.

The nationalities issue in the Soviet Union is unsettled and is likely to remain so for some time in view of the increasing political instability. For the Pontians of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, increased migration to Greece is certainly to be expected and the Greek state is legally obliged to accept them along with all individuals who are able to establish Greek ethnicity. Greek foreign policy is supporting Pontian organisations in the Soviet Union which promote a moderate, non-confrontational solution. Despite the inevitable strains that will be placed on social and political resources in the coming months and years, Greece must continue to prepare for a new, large influx of Pontian refugees to avoid the even more difficult consequences which will arise from a lack of planning, and to prevent further unnecessary suffering for the Pontian community.

# UPDATE

## RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

The **Tropical Microbiology Unit of the University of Liverpool**, England, is at present extending its interest in the epidemiology of infectious diseases occurring in the aftermath of man-made and natural disasters and particularly in refugee camps. Research focuses on diagnostic procedures which allow rapid and reliable identification of causative agents, which guide curative and preventive treatment and provide valid epidemiological data to enable effective responses to be planned in the future.

The Unit is currently gathering information about available rapid diagnostic tests for microbial and parasitic infections which can provide definitive diagnoses much more quickly than is possible by conventional means. It is investigating their suitability for disaster situations where scientific and technical facilities are minimal. Low-tech systems have great potential in refugee camps and are often available as kits needing little or nothing beyond what is supplied in the package. Some are designed to confirm the identity of previously cultivated organisms but others detect antigens directly in clinical specimens and provide an answer in a few hours or minutes. The results of these tests can then be read visually without the need for instruments and other equipment.

The simplicity of these tests is misleading, however, as the reagents used are produced through the most advanced immunological and genetic manipulation techniques. They are, accordingly, expensive - although there is no outlay for complex equipment. Economic factors more than any other may militate against the application of these rapid systems in refugee camp situations where they could prove to be invaluable. Adequate funding from relief organisations or on the part of the producers would help to remove this obstacle.

The Unit would welcome comments.

For further information contact:

*Dr. David P. Britt*

*Honorary Research Fellow*

*Tropical Microbiology Unit, Royal Liverpool Hospital*

*P.O. Box 147, Liverpool L69 3BX, UK*

## CLEAN WATER IN EMERGENCIES: A NEW INVENTION

Acute infectious diarrhoea from drinking contaminated water, kills over 4 million children per year. Death is due to dehydration and salt depletion but is easily prevented using 'oral rehydration therapy', or 'ORT' i.e. drinking a correct salt and sugar solution.

As sterile drinks are expensive and heavy to store and transport, the infected local water supply is often used resulting in infection. Our invention allows a sterile drink to be prepared from the local infected water supply without external power using the contents of a small packet which is easily stored and transported. The invention uses a low cost, mass produced membrane to give a life saving product.

A mixture of sugar and salt is sealed within a bag made of a cellophane type material that acts as a 'dialysis membrane'. This bag is then immersed in potentially infected water which is then drawn into the bag, however, the 'pores' in the walls of the bag exclude all viruses, bacteria and their toxins, giving a sterile and safe drink. However, where clean water is not available rehydration must still be used to

save the persons life. The invention is intended for emergency use as, in the long term, funds should be spent on ensuring that the area has a stable supply of clean water.

The same principle can be used to prepare solutions for injection (e.g. saline/glucose drip sets). Also, it can be used to rehydrate blood substitutes. This will make it possible to prepare these products at much lower costs than at present and may be a significant factor in the reduction of the spread of AIDS in Africa.

The invention has won the NatWest/BP Award for Technology, as well as the small business section and overall prize winner in the Toshiba Year of Invention Competition. As yet, the product is not being mass produced at cheap cost and field trials are underway. RPN will keep you informed of the results of the field trials and the future availability of the product.

For further information about the project, please contact:

*Dr Philip Munro*

*Managing Director, Hampshire Advisory and Technical Services Ltd.*

*39 South View Rd*

*Southampton*

*SO1 5JD*

*Tel: 0703-786555*

## RESEARCH INTO GHANAIAN REFUGEES AND RESETTLEMENT

**Edward Opoku-Dapaah** is a research student at **York University** and the **Centre for Refugee Studies**, Toronto, Canada. He is working on the adaptation and adjustment of African refugees in the western world and particularly on issues of repatriation, the role of voluntary organisations and factors behind the flight of African refugees. His research brought him to London at the beginning of 1991 where he has been interviewing and gathering information about **Ghanaian refugees** who have resettled in London as part of a comparative study with refugees in Canada.

For further information please write to:

*Edward Opoku-Dapaah*

*Centre for Refugee Studies, York University*

*4700 Keele Street, North York,*

*Ontario, CANADA*

## ORGANISATIONS

The **Centre for Human Rights and Constitutional Law** was established to protect and promote the observance of international human rights and the legal and civil rights of immigrants, refugees, minorities and indigenous peoples. The Centre's first priority is to protect fundamental rights such as education, essential health care, compliance with labour and health and safety laws and freedom from political persecution.

The Centre initiated an '**Immigrant/Refugee Children's Project**' in 1985, to assist unaccompanied immigrant and refugee children apprehended and detained by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). In addition to shelter, the project also provides unaccompanied minors within INS detention or who are homeless with

family reunification/placement assistance, legal aid, medical and mental health care, tutoring and school placement, vocational counselling and recreational/cultural activities.

The Centre has various Human Rights Projects, one of which is the 'Haitian Interdiction Project'. This involves petitioning the OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to determine the legality under international law of the US Government's programme to interdict Haitian boat-people on the high seas and return them without hearings on their asylum claims.

For more information about the Centre's activities, write to:  
*Centre for Human Rights and Constitutional Law*  
265 S. Occidental Blvd.  
Los Angeles  
CA 90057  
USA

#### FILMS

**SAMSARA Death and Rebirth in Cambodia** is a new film produced and directed by Ellen Bruno which documents the lives of the Cambodian people long troubled by war, and brings a humanistic perspective to a country in deep political turmoil. The film focuses on the Cambodians' struggle to reconstruct their shattered society in a climate of war and with limited resources. The death and rebirth of Cambodia are seen through Cambodian eyes and in the context of the enduring spiritual and philosophical beliefs of the Khmer people.

The film is 29 minutes long and available in 16 mm and video. For further details contact:  
*Ellen Bruno*  
163 Fairmount Street  
San Francisco  
CA 94131  
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*

## PUBLICATIONS

The **Indo-china Resource Action Center** in Washington D.C. has recently published a report entitled *Hong Kong: The Other Story; the situation of Vietnamese Women and Children in Hong Kong's Detention Centres*. The report is written by Diana D. Bui and is based on extracts from the personal journal she kept as a member of an IRC-sponsored Women's Commission which visited some of the 44,000 Vietnamese refugees currently incarcerated in 14 detention Centres scattered around Hong Kong, Kowloon, the New Territories and outlying islands. At least 65 per cent of these refugees are women or children under the age of 16.

The report can be ordered through:  
**Indochina Resource Action Center**  
1628 16th Street, NW - 3rd Floor  
Washington DC 20009  
USA

*Rowing with the Current and Bends of the River, an Investigation into the Position of Vietnamese Women in the Netherlands*, March 1990, by Marijke Meijer of the Dutch Refugee Council (Vluchtelingen Werk), looks at Vietnamese women's strategies and suggestions for starting life in The Netherlands. Interviews with 21 women emphasise the importance of the family, and suggest that future policies developed by local or national authorities take into account the importance of the household for many Vietnamese women. The book's title, a Vietnamese expression, conveys the attitude of Vietnamese women trying to construct new lives in the Netherlands: someone who arrives in another house or another country has to adapt, nevertheless, they still have to row their own boat.

The full report is available only in Dutch but summaries in English, Dutch and Vietnamese can be obtained from:  
**Vluchtelingen Werk**  
3e Hugo de Grootstraat 7  
1052 LJ Amsterdam  
THE NETHERLANDS

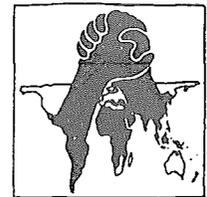
**King County Sexual Assault Resource Center** has published a wide range of books, posters and videotapes on the prevention of child and teenage sexual assault. The Spring 1990 catalogue includes books targeting the Southeast Asian communities in the US. *Helping your Child to be Safe* by Debbie Wong and Scott Wittet, is a 25-page booklet with important information about sexual assault for Southeast Asian parents of children aged 2 to 19. It informs parents what to do if they suspect that a child has been abused. It is available in two editions, one in English-Khmer-Lao and the other in English-Vietnamese-Chinese.

*Be Aware, Be Safe* by Debbie Wong, is geared towards teenagers between 12 and 19 and its illustrations, stories and quizzes help define sexual abuse in an understandable and culturally relevant manner.

A catalogue of materials and information can be obtained from:  
**King County Sexual Assault Resource Center**  
PO Box 300, Renton, WA 98057, USA

The **Third World Network** is a group of organisations and individuals involved in the Third World and development issues, based in Penang, Malaysia. The Network covers economics, health, environment, culture and international affairs. In 1990 two new magazines were launched, *Third World Economics* and *Third World Resurgence*, which are written by Third World journalists economists and researchers. The *Third World Resurgence* provides a Southern perspective on a range of issues confronting the Third World, such as ecology, health, economics and international affairs, while *Third World Economics* presents news and analyses of economic and development trends that aim to reflect the grassroots interests of people in the Third World.

For more information contact:  
**Third World Network**  
87, Cantonment Road  
10250 Penang  
MALAYSIA



The **U.S. Committee for Refugees** publishes a monthly magazine/newsletter called *Refugee Reports* which provides a range of information and articles on refugee issues. The magazine focuses on issues of concern to asylum seekers in the US and on US refugee policy at home and abroad. *Refugee Reports* is also concerned with recent developments worldwide, such as the anticipation of a new wave of refugees in the Gulf, and publishes an update section which provide details about events and conditions in African and Asian refugee camps.

For information about subscription write to:  
**Refugee Reports Subscriptions**  
Sunbelt Fulfillment Services  
P.O. Box 41094  
Nashville, TN 37204  
USA

The **American Council for Voluntary International Action: Inter-Action** publishes a biweekly newsletter called *Monday Developments* with articles and reports on international development issues and global events for staff of humanitarian agencies. Inter-Action is a broadly based coalition of 125 private and voluntary organisations working in international development, refugee assistance and protection, disaster relief and preparedness, public policy and development education. *Monday Developments* is designed to serve as a link between NGOs in the North and the South and is mailed free to a limited number of NGO leaders.

Enquiries should be addressed to the Editor:  
**Monday Developments**  
InterAction  
1815 H Street, NW, Suite 1100  
Washington DC 20006  
USA

#### REFUGEE NEWSLETTER

*HOPE* is a newsletter formerly produced in Northern Shield refugee camp in Ethiopia, but currently being written in London by its editor Ahmed Farah Dene. The Newsletter deals with events and news concerning Somalia and presents items of interest to Somali refugees around the world.

*Ahmed Farah Dene can be contacted at the following address:*

*5a, Grand Parade  
Forty Avenue  
Wembley, Middlesex HA9 9JS  
ENGLAND*

#### MOZAMBICAN TEACHERS' ANNOUNCEMENT

Mozambican teachers who were members of the **National Organisation of (Mozambican) Teachers (ONP)** are trying to contact each other, to continue the organisation, and to exchange ideas about pedagogy and experiences in exile. Please write to RPN and we will try to put you in contact with your colleagues.

Or write directly to:

*Mr. Moses Masinga  
c/o Fr. Somers  
Malindza Refugee Camp  
P.O. Box 29  
SWAZILAND*

#### REPATRIATED REFUGEES HOLD AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

In RPN Issue number 7 we published an article about the amazing determination and cooperation of the Salvadorean refugees in Colomoncagua camp in Honduras and the way in which they had forged a strong and thriving community with skills essential for rebuilding their war-torn country on their eventual repatriation. To evaluate their considerable achievement in Colomoncagua, the community organised an International Conference in Tela Atlantica.

Between November 1989 and February 1990, after more than nine years in exile, the community returned to Segundo Montes in El Salvador and one year later, in November 1990, held the second International Conference on the Development of the 'Segundo Montes' Community. The conference took place in the community and was attended by many NGOs and UN agencies with the aims of evaluating its work over the last decade.

The conference considered the considerable achievements made by the community and the Segundo Montes development model, which has been hailed as a great step forward for communal rights in El Salvador. The Conference also focused on the Community's reintegration into Salvadorean society and its role in the context of popular movements.

We hope to be able to bring RPN readers more information about the conference and the discussions in forthcoming issues but inquiries can be directed to:

*Comunidad Segundo Montes  
Apartado Postal 3357  
Centro de Gobierno  
San Salvador  
EL SALVADOR*

#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR DOCTORAL RESEARCH

In co-operation with the **Refugee Studies Programme**, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford University, England, the **Department of Sociology and Anthropology and the Department of Political Science at Carleton University**, Ottawa, Canada, will accept PhD candidates whose dissertation research within their respective area of specialisation will be concerned with refugees. Candidates will have to meet the entrance requirements for PhD candidates in either anthropology and sociology or political science of Carleton University. The programme will commence in Fall of 1991.

During the first two years of their study, successful candidates will be in residence at Carleton University in order to complete their course work and other requirements. They will spend their third year at Oxford University affiliated as Visiting Study Fellows under RSP/QEH procedures, attending specialised seminars in Refugee Studies and formulating their dissertation proposal under the guidance of RSP staff members. They will defend their dissertation proposal at Carleton University and their dissertation research will be supervised by a committee consisting of staff members from RSP and from Carleton University. The degree will be awarded by Carleton University. Carleton University will try to secure funding for a limited number of eligible PhD candidates from developing countries.

*Inquiries should be directed to the Graduate Co-ordinator of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology or the Department of Political Science, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada K1S 5B6.*

# LETTER

## The Invasion of Kuwait: What Prospects for Former Palestinian Residents?

Among the groups of people most seriously affected by Saddam Hussein's annexation of Kuwait are the many Palestinians (estimated at up to 450,000) who were living in exile in Kuwait at the time of the invasion. They formed one of the largest national communities in a country where the total population of nearly two million included sixty per cent expatriates. Like their counterparts in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States, they had left their homeland for employment and stability although, for most, there was no prospect of permanence once their working lives were completed. Many did not possess passports and no country presently owes them residence as of right.

### Palestinians in Occupied Kuwait

Always precarious, the position of the Palestinian community in Kuwait is now critical. Claims that some few of them helped Iraqi soldiers during the occupation and that

they joined in the pillaging of Kuwait City are too insistent to be disregarded. Certainly the Kuwaiti authorities have accepted the validity of these allegations and have given no indication that they are prepared to condone or forgive such treachery. However, many were already out of the country at the beginning of August 1990. The large majority of those who were obliged to stay avoided any part in the conflict and defied the Iraqis by refusing to return to work, thus undermining any semblance of normality in the country which the invaders were anxious to portray.

### Education - Provision and Deprivation

Previously young Palestinians in Kuwait could enroll in state-provided schools or, if their parents had the means, they could attend fee-paying schools. These had been largely set up in response to the special needs of foreign settlers and provided education for one quarter of all school-age children in the country. Entry to education at tertiary level was competitive, particularly in the most popular Faculties of Kuwait University (Medicine,

Allied Health Sciences and Engineering). Kuwaiti nationals had precedence over foreigners and were accepted with lower school exam results than their non-Kuwaiti counterparts. A surprising number of Palestinians did gain places in science and vocational courses in the University, motivated by the need for good qualifications in order to get well paid employment and ensure a future for themselves when their working lives, or Kuwaiti largess, came to an end. Of the 17,000 students enrolled at the University in 1990, they formed a large minority.

Education has been totally disrupted for all students in Kuwait. Some Kuwaiti nationals and students from other affluent states like Bahrain, have found places in educational institutions in various parts of the world, including Britain. The options for Palestinians are few. Some have been accepted in Jordan but places there are severely limited. Many would like to complete their studies in the West but they have no government funding. The occupation of Kuwait has deprived many of their personal savings and family resources. Many - far more than can be accommodated - have approached the Palestinian or Arab sponsoring agencies for scholarships or other support, but much of the financial backing for these bodies came from Kuwait and the other oil-rich Gulf States and the supply has now been curtailed. Unlikely to be welcome in Kuwait anymore, they cannot simply wait and rely on a return to the former *status quo*. They have been cruelly denied the chance of educational fulfillment, like their brethren in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, where Universities and schools have been forcibly closed.

### Displaced persons, displaced once more?

There are hopeful signs that the Palestinian issue is at last to receive the resolute attention of diplomats and politicians. It is important that the needs of the Palestinians from Kuwait (and, indeed from elsewhere in the Gulf region) are not overlooked in efforts aimed at solving long-standing wider problems. They are displaced persons, newly threatened with displacement once more. As a matter of urgency, the education of their young people needs to be secured to avoid further alienation and disaffection.

Dr. David P. Britt

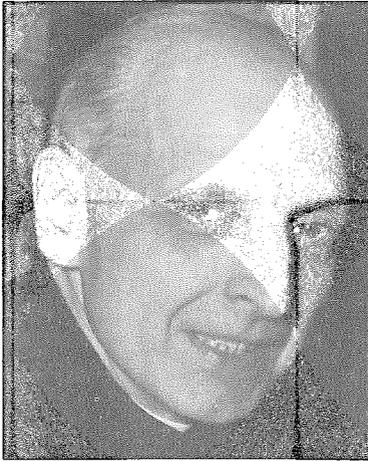
*Palestinian students*

*Photograph by UNRWA*



# NEWS FROM RSP

## FR PEDRO ARRUIPE - A TRIBUTE



Fr Pedro Arrupe died on the 5th February, 1991, in Rome. He was the former Superior General of the Society of Jesus and it was on his initiative that the Jesuit Refugee Service was established in 1981.

We pay tribute to a man whose sensitivity to the plight of refugees and whose compassion inspired his fellow

Jesuits and their colleagues to a response that has seen the establishment of the Jesuit Refugee Service, now active in Central America, Africa and Asia, as well as in countries of resettlement. Fr Arrupe called on the Jesuits and their partners to use their many resources to assist refugees and other uprooted people in a spirit of 'companionship', cooperating with local agencies wherever possible.

Fr Arrupe was born in Bilbao, Spain, in 1917 and was ordained a priest in the Society of Jesus in 1936. He served in Japan from 1936 through the period of the Second World War until 1965. He was then elected Superior General of the Jesuits. Not only a deeply spiritual man, he was a man of action whose influence reached far beyond his own religious order. The Jesuit Refugee Service was his last initiative before he suffered a debilitating stroke. Fr Arrupe's life is one to celebrate with gratitude, and the Jesuit Refugee Service one of its most important legacies.

Patricia Pak Poy RSM  
RSP Ford Fellow 1991

## INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND ADVISORY PANEL FOR REFUGEE STUDIES

### Third Annual Meeting 2-5 January 1992 at Refugee Studies Programme

The IRAP was constituted in 1990 to provide a forum for the discussion and identification of issues related to research on refugees. The annual meetings are attended by scholars in the field of forced migration from a variety of disciplines and academic institutions around the world, as well as practitioners, government representatives and others concerned with refugee issues. The 1992 meeting will be structured around key 'state of the art' themes, each introduced by a Keynote Speaker. The proposed themes are:

- \* Change and Migration in East and South-East Europe
- \* North/South Development and Forced Migration
- \* Cross-cultural Nationalisms
- \* Refugees as Resources for Development

For further details please write to:  
IRAP Conference Organiser, Refugee Studies Programme, Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St. Giles Oxford OX1 3LA, UK

## REFUGEE STUDIES PROGRAMME ACADEMIC COURSE OF STUDY 1991- 1992

- Multi-disciplinary Foundation Course
- \* Refugees in the Contemporary World: an Introduction
    - \* International Refugee law
    - \* Refugees: Psycho-social Issues
    - \* Refugees, International Relations
    - \* Understanding Nutritional Issues
  - \* Field Methods in Social Research - 2 terms

This multi-disciplinary Foundation Course of study is open to all members of the University, Visiting Fellows, and by arrangement to students, researchers, and practitioners from other institutions.

For further information please contact:  
Refugee Studies Programme  
Queen Elizabeth House  
University of Oxford  
21 St. Giles, Oxford OX1 3LA  
Tel: (0865) 270722  
Fax: (0865) 270721

# NEWS FROM RSP

## REPORTS AVAILABLE

Dr Nicholas Van Hear, HRH Crown Prince Hassan bin Talal of Jordan Researcher at the Refugee Studies Programme, has written a series of reports and briefings on issues surrounding refugees and mass displacement. Copies of these reports are available from the Refugee Studies Programme at a cost of 10 pence per page.

'The Mass Exodus from the Gulf' (3 pages)

'Refugees and Displaced People in Africa' (32 pages)

'Jordan Fears a New Refugee Wave' (3 pages)

'Development and Displacement: a Review of World Bank's Development Report 1990 and UNDP's Human Development Report 1990' (4 pages)

'Refugees and Displaced People: Health Issues' (Van Hear and B. Harrell-Bond), (39 pages)

'Perspectives of Poverty' (2 pages)

'The Mass Expulsion of South Yemenis from Saudi Arabia' (2 pages)

'Gulf War Threatens a New Mass Exodus' (3 pages)

'Population Perspectives: Jordan Reeling from Wave of Displaced Migrants' (1 page)

'Report on the Workshop on International Migration with Special Reference to Europe and its Periphery' (6 pages)

## Mozambique: Contemporary Issues and Current Research

A workshop held on February 23 and 24, 1991, brought together 150 academics, students and aid agency workers with an interest in Mozambique. The issues discussed included the war, the causes of the recent breakdown in peace talks and the recent international effort to bring Renamo to the negotiating table and to accept elections. There were also presentations on the situation of refugees and internally displaced people and the social, political and economic changes in the country.

Recent research provided new insight into how Renamo has been successful without gaining significant popular support. Whilst trying to mobilise the population in the areas they administer, they have not been able to overcome their origins as a Rhodesian/South African counter-insurgency group primarily recruited from Shona and Ndau areas. Furthermore, they continue to pressure an increasingly impoverished peasantry to extract resources for the war. Indeed, rising local opposition is driving Renamo out of many areas.

The tremendously destructive effects of the war on Mozambique were all too apparent and the need to enable Government and local institutions to operate was stressed. There was heated discussion of the role played by international agencies and NGOs with some delegates referring to the 'recolonisation of Africa' and others to the need for effective programmes to meet the needs of the population. Rehabilitation efforts, including social and economic reconstruction, needs to be grounded in a thorough understanding of Mozambican

societies and their experience of the war derived from research and particularly from planning and implementation.

The size and diversity of the conference meant that few of the presentations were based on written papers. However, copies of the following can be obtained from the RSP Documentation Centre at a cost of £3 each.

'War, Hunger, Drought and Development: Lessons from Changara, Mozambique' by Yussuf Adam; 'Renamo and the Peasantry in Southern Mozambique: A View from Gaza Province' by Otto Roesch; 'Renamo in Negotiation and Peace' by Alex Vines; 'Notes on the Processes of War in Western Zambezia' by Ken Wilson.

## One-day Symposium: East Timor Fifteen Years On

In conjunction with the Asian Studies Centre of St Anthony's College and the Catholic Institute of International Relations, the RSP held a symposium on the 8 December 1990 to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. It provided an opportunity to air the issues surrounding the long-neglected East Timor question, and was the occasion for the launching of John Taylor's book *The Indonesian Occupation of East Timor, 1974-79, A Chronology* (CIIR/RSP).

The Symposium considered East Timor in a historical perspective; current conditions and opportunities for development; and the possibilities for self-determination and the implications of current changes in the regional and world order for East Timor.

Personal testimonies were given by two Timorese exiles currently living in Lisbon, Paulino Gama and Donaciano Gomes, and Shirley Shackleton, widow of an Australian journalist killed in East Timor, presented a paper.

## The Odyssey of the Pontic Greeks

On 24 November, 1990, RSP organised a Conference at St Antony's College, Oxford which was attended by members of both Greek and British universities and representatives of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The participants presented and discussed papers which set the context for understanding the current movement of Pontians from the Soviet Union to Greece; the migration of Pontic Greeks to the Caucasus in the last century; the development of Pontic culture in the USSR between the wars and the problems of their integration in modern Greece.

The Greek government funded an exhibition of photographs entitled 'The Odyssey of the Pontian Greeks' over the period of the conference. The proceedings of the Conference will appear as a special issue of the Journal of Refugee Studies (JRS).