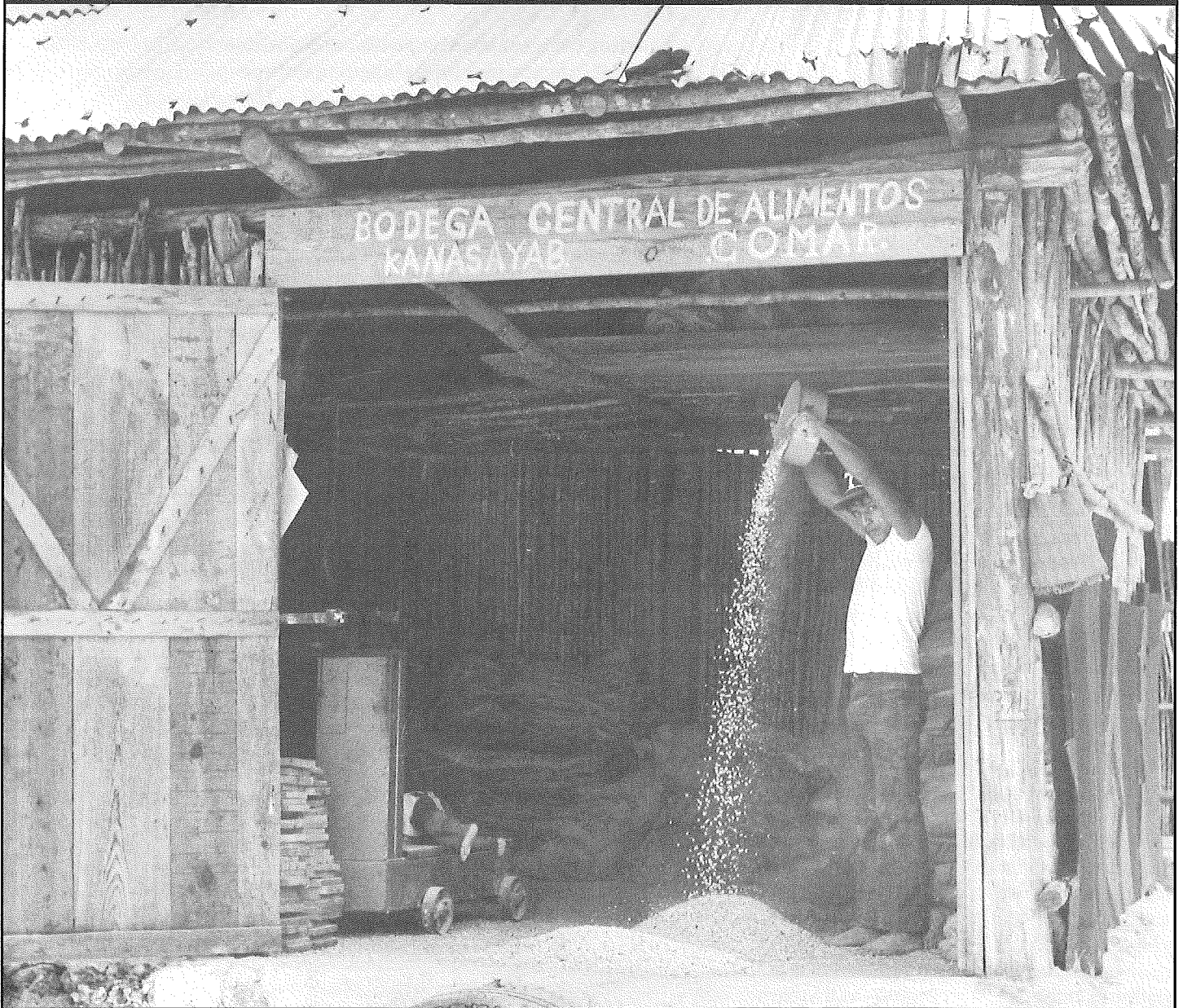


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## POLICY, PRACTICE AND PRACTITIONERS

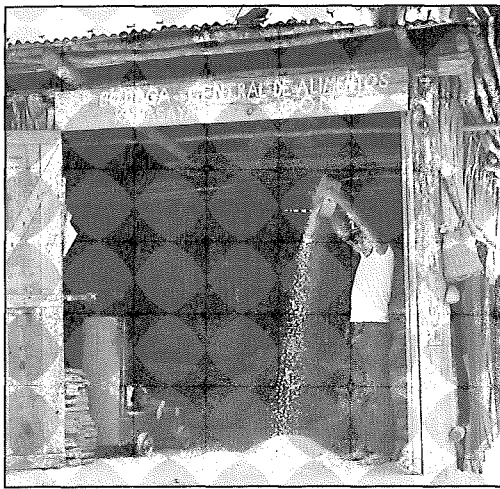


Mexico

### In this Issue:

- \* Psychological Distress and Relief
- \* Overcoming Barriers and Building Bridges

- \* Sex, Lies and International Law
- \* Women in Detention - The Vietnamese in Hong Kong



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# PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AND RELIEF WORK: WHO HELPS THE HELPERS?

by Sarah D. Stearns

*How do you work with people who have suffered unspeakable horrors? It is not easy, and it is overwhelming. The first year almost everyone on our staff suffered from nightmares. This was particularly prevalent after Tuesday, which is the day when we see a lot of patients. No one on the staff could get up Wednesday morning. Then, gradually, we began to realise that this is a reality of the service. Not only are we a family clinic to the community, but we also have to be a family clinic to the staff, to ourselves.*

Richard Mollica, M.D., Director, Indochinese Psychiatric Clinic, Boston, MA

## Introduction

Much attention has been devoted to the negative psychological effects of violence, war, famine and torture on refugees. Less literature exists however, on the psychological difficulties encountered by relief workers, reflecting a lack of awareness on the part of institutions that trauma encountered by relief workers does not rank high on the list of priorities in emergencies. When situations are extreme and personnel is in short supply, there is little time to concentrate on workers and their troubles.

It is of course possible, as some have asserted, that relief agencies are fully aware of the effects of psychological trauma on their personnel, but refuse to recognise openly the fact lest they become targets for disability claims (Dunning 1988). It is, however, important to recognise that in many instances the problems relief workers encounter can limit the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. The psychological difficulties helpers face may shape interactions between them and the people they endeavour to assist. Models from disaster relief literature may be used to explore methods for countering stressful or traumatic events.

## The helpers

Who are the 'helpers' - those individuals who have chosen a career in human services? In the case of relief workers they are men and women who have chosen to put themselves in situations where ordinary means of assistance have failed and a 'relief effort' is necessary. Frequently these persons are idealistic humanitarians, hoping to 'make a difference' by working in a helping profession. Relief workers, perhaps because of their idealism, may have a difficult time when placed in an assistance program, as the experience can yield more disillusionment than reward. Alexander de Waal speaks of the difficult choices relief workers must make, and of the resulting helplessness and impotence they may feel given the limited resources available and the overwhelming nature of the work.

Most people who start working for relief agencies in Africa have not had previous experience of knowingly contributing to the suffering and death of large numbers of people. Relief agencies do not tend to attract people who have had this sort of experience, and they do not include it in their job description when they are recruiting. Yet the disturbing activity of voluntarily being unpleasant to strangers is one of the most frequent experiences confronted by agency personnel in a relief situation. (De Waal 1988:1)

De Waal cites personal examples of this 'wilful harmdoing': eating lunch while malnourished children looked on, or failing to argue that a sick woman needed transport to hospital three hours away (the woman consequently died).

Relief workers do not always have adequate preparation for their positions, especially if their organization is responding to an 'emergency'. Arriving suddenly in an alien environment, workers (like anyone), may encounter culture shock - having to adjust to new sights, sounds, climate, customs, etc. Workers may additionally encounter 'disaster shock', when faced with the human carnage and suffering that have led to mass flight.

Workers may have little time to adapt before being forced to assume multiple responsibilities. Work hours are long, and the new experience can be overwhelming. Some staff may suffer early breaks in mental functioning, although others manage to immerse themselves entirely in their work in an effort to ignore or combat the stress.

It is not uncommon for relief workers to identify at first with the people they are there to help. Before defence mechanisms are firmly in place, (separating the worker mentally from acute suffering), strong guilt feelings may emerge. Emotions akin to 'survivor guilt' are aroused as workers, uncomfortably aware of their own mortality, experience relief or even pleasure that the tragedy was not one which involved their families, or in fact, themselves. This feeling of pleasure can later result in intense guilt and/or confusion. Relief personnel may even 'see' a relative in the place of a refugee (Raphael et al 1980). This kind of occurrence is particularly disturbing when it involves children.

'Counter-transference' is a term that encompasses the relief worker's emotional interaction with clients. This can occur when the helper has unresolved inner conflicts that resonate with the refugee's experience. John Talbot explains: 'Counter-transference issues are of particular significance in crisis intervention because they tend to be about frightening aspects of one's life which are often unconscious and difficult to deal with such as violence, abandonment, death, helplessness, degradation and maiming' (Talbot 1992). Rather than creating a more empathetic relationship between helper and client, counter-transference generally serves as a distracting element in the therapeutic relationship.

Mental health workers and relief workers often find that, like the clients they serve, their emotional and physical health is affected by traumatic events. Common emotional reactions are shock, confusion, sadness, irritability, helplessness, tiredness, frustration, and intrusive thoughts about the trauma. Physical reactions may include sleep disturbance, gastrointestinal complaints, greater susceptibility to illness, erratic eating habits, and increased smoking and drinking (Talbot 1992).

Mental health workers may experience a sort of 'secondary' or 'vicarious' trauma themselves, when hearing about traumatic events in the course of therapy sessions (van der Veer 1992). Richard Mollica, head of the Harvard University Program in Refugee Trauma, speaks of his own difficulties in processing and integrating traumatic stories, and in viewing drawings that portrayed traumatic events: 'What I have shown you are paintings and drawings that have been brought to therapists. It is very hard to listen and deal with this material. In the next drawing, two men are being disemboweled. It took me three years to get over this' (Mollica 1990:24).

In the mental health profession, an emphasis is placed on 'supervision' where therapists may discuss their difficult or disturbing cases with another experienced professional. This discussion enables the therapist to share her feelings and make personal sense out of difficult material. Relief workers rarely get this chance to 'debrief', and so must develop coping mechanisms which allow them to function on a daily basis amid acute human suffering.

## Coping mechanisms

Everyone has, and indeed needs, his/her own coping mechanisms to function adequately. There are times however, when these adaptations, while serving a protective function for one person, may be largely inappropriate for the situation at hand and may be detrimental to a relationship.

De Waal (1988) posits that relief workers strive to reduce cognitive dissonance (the uncomfortable state of entertaining two opposing ideas at the same time) and to preserve their self esteem through denial. This denial takes two forms:

1. Workers deny their own responsibility in people's suffering. They deny the voluntariness of their own actions and, when given the opportunity for initiative, often refuse to act. An agency worker in Tanzania told de Waal, '[The agency] makes the policy, and I don't want to be lumbered with the blame if something goes wrong' (de Waal 1988:3).

2. Relief workers do not want to believe that they may be voluntarily harming the people they came to assist. They may therefore refuse to see that their actions contribute to harm, or in fact, to pain. De Waal argues that expatriates tend to rationalise, believing that Africans do not feel pain and death the way that Westerners do, but are instead 'used to' death and suffering (de Waal 1988). Regarding this 'rationalisation', Barbara Harrell-Bond comments, 'There is perhaps no more dramatic way of expressing psychological distance or for denying a common humanity' (Harrell-Bond 1986:205). This may be less a rationalisation, than a general ignorance on the part of expatriate workers of cultural differences in the expression of trauma.

In either case, the idea that 'traumatic events are not disturbing to refugees' can lead to a general dehumanisation of refugees. They may be seen by agency workers as 'problems', as opposed to 'people with problems,' (Waldron, 1987), as objects to be pushed through the system, to be fed, clothed, housed, counted and accounted for. Somehow to view hundreds of thousands, or even millions of people as individuals - as human beings who feel emotions intensely, who care deeply about their families, their country, their lifestyle - would be to paralyse even the most balanced of relief personnel. Some manner of coping mechanism is necessary to blunt the truth of this realisation.

Not all coping skills are individually determined. The actual structure of an aid organisation's operation may have built-in coping mechanisms. Refugee camps have been characterised as resembling Erving Goffman's concept of the 'Total Institution' (Waldron 1987, Fozzard 1986), as places of 'residence and work, where a large number of like situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life' (Goffman 1961 in Fozzard 1986:1).

Shirley Fozzard notes that, as a total institution, power in a refugee camp is held by staff alone. Decisions are made in a top-down fashion, as access to information is reserved for staff only. There is also a general separation observed between staff and refugees; she cites separate eating facilities, and staff housing outside the camp perimeter. This physical, and perhaps more notably *emotional* separation is maintained as an institutional measure for dealing with the inequality that exists. Fozzard quotes Goffman: 'There is always the danger that an inmate will appear human. If what are felt to be hardships must be inflicted on this inmate, then sympathetic staff will suffer' (Fozzard 1986:3). In fact Fozzard herself notes in the closed





OXFAM's Bill Yates with children in Mala camp, Zambezia, Mozambique

Photo: OXFAM

camps in Hong Kong that, while some staff got personally involved (and at times *over-involved*) with the refugees, other staff needed to separate themselves and create distance. 'For others the conflict was too great, and they preferred to work exclusively from the offices outside the wire, removing themselves as much as they could from any real conflict with the residents inside the camp' (Fozzard 1986:7).

## Burnout

As a group, relief workers are especially at risk for developing a condition called 'burnout', perhaps one of the most debilitating ways the mind copes with stress. First coined in 1970, the term has come to mean a state of emotional exhaustion characterised by fatigue, frustration, negative self concept, and loss of interest in clients (Rawnsley 1989). Workers may become depressed, bored, discouraged, and irritable, while complaining of somatic symptoms as well. Their initial sympathy may be replaced by a cynical and indolent attitude toward their clients' (van der Veer 1992:241).

In 1980 Edelwich and Brodsky detailed the steps of disillusionment as workers approach burnout. First there is *enthusiasm* with unrealistic expectations and over-investment, making up for personal disappointment. Second, *stagnation* occurs when the person becomes aware that the job is not quite what s/he imagined, and that it cannot make up for what is missing in his/her personal life.

This leads to *frustration*, feeling disappointment in the limitations of the job, and questioning his/her own competency. Last *apathy* sets in to defend against chronic frustration (Weiner 1989).

Some feel burnout is a phenomenon due in large part to the personality attributes of care givers in general. Helpers tend to be quite altruistic, idealistic and dedicated in their professions. They may have perfectionist tendencies, a need to prove themselves, and may experience difficulty in saying 'no' and in delegating tasks (van der Veer 1992). Furthermore, care givers may set for themselves unattainable ideal standards of care, and may feel low self worth when they fail to live up to these standards (Selder and Paustian 1989).

Others argue that burnout is situational, dependent less on the helper, than on the organisation for which he/she works, or the conditions under which she/he is expected to perform. In refugee camps, the relief worker may feel particularly frustrated that the bureaucracies of assistance programmes (programmes which are theoretically designed to *assist* refugees), are in fact doing them harm. Sidney Waldron comments, 'In this sense, both [refugees and relief workers] are victims of an imposed structure. The service staff reacts to these situational determinants; it does not create or control them' (Waldron 1987:6). The expectations of the organisation which employs the helper may be very different from, or may actually be in conflict

with, the expectations of the refugees, as well as those of the helper (Talbot et al 1992; Voutira and Harrell-Bond 1992).

In the case of the refugee relief worker, there are certainly elements of both the individual and situational causes for burnout. One key determinant may be a lack of sufficient and appropriate training. If helpers feel unprepared, or insufficiently trained, they may feel personally inadequate (Raphael et al 1980). Even with training however, the scope of the refugee problem may be overwhelming for helpers, including experienced practitioners. Marilyn Rawnsley notes, 'If a client population's needs or problems are generally perceived by the care giver to be beyond his personal and professional resources, then the probability of burnout is greatly increased' (Rawnsley 1989:52).

### Seeking assistance

It is not uncommon for relief workers to avoid seeking mental health services, even when they feel the need. In a situation where there are 'victims' and 'helpers' in an established power structure, it is the victims who are seen as weak, helpless, resourceless, and the helpers who are viewed as strong, powerful, resourceful (Raphael et al 1980, Harrell-Bond 1986, Clark 1985). With this in mind, relief workers may see the need for counselling as a personal weakness, priding themselves on their ability to endure, to maintain self-control and invulnerability. While they may feel the need for counselling, workers may not want to admit to having a 'mental problem' for fear of losing the respect and confidence of their co-workers. Refusing to seek help, however, will most likely hinder their ability to do their job well.

Some workers experience a 'high' as they feel they are working closely with death, but have avoided its grasp. This rush may push workers beyond their limits. Raphael et al (1980:445) describe this phenomenon with regard to rescue workers: 'The person involved sometimes describes a sense of being "split" - one part carrying out the tasks with no exhaustion, the other taking in, but not responding to the emotionally draining and distressing sights revealed by the rescue task'.

### Finding solutions

Much relief work is done on an emergency basis. Barry Stein (1986) comments on the lack of 'institutional memory' that has characterised work with refugees. Refugee matters are continually dealt with on an ad hoc or emergency basis. Yet instead of treating each situation as new and unique, models could be developed that would establish regular methods for addressing the psychological needs of refugees and relief workers. More experience with, (or exposure to), trauma on the part of individual workers does not mean needs will be lessened. Talbot et al comment: 'Trauma or disasters are not situations to which one can become

accustomed rather there is a need to develop ways of dealing with such experiences' (1992:42).

### Individual strategies

People who work in settings of chronic stress or frustration, and aim for longevity in the field, must find their own, healthy ways of coping. There are many preventative measures relief workers in the field may take to avoid extreme stress reactions like burnout. To decrease vulnerability, adequate preparation is crucial. Before being assigned to a position, it is essential to gather as much factual information as possible about the political situation, the culture and language of the people to be assisted, and the actual work conditions that prevail. Early knowledge can aid in emotional preparation.

In the field, a 'buddy system' can be established, where two workers look after each other, conscious of each other's early warning signs of stress and inappropriate responses. Care should be taken to measure, not only verbal response ('I'm fine.'), but also appearances and behaviour. Co-workers can be a valuable source of encouragement and support. When providing this support, care should be taken to listen. Sharing war stories is less useful to the co-worker who is stressed, than attentive listening.

Living quarters should be made as comfortable and homey as possible, with a comforting object from home and a picture of the worker's family. Workers should attempt to eat well, avoid excessive use of alcohol, and should try to engage in some form of regular exercise. Keeping a journal is often useful. As much as possible, workers should schedule breaks for themselves, and should find a quiet area in which to relax.

### Organisational strategies

Agencies need to acknowledge the potential psychological harm that can result from relief work. An early commitment to addressing the psychological needs of their personnel can avoid or ameliorate later difficulties, and will certainly improve the effectiveness of their assistance programmes.

### Self-awareness training

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) recommends conducting self-awareness training sessions for relief workers, where motivations for helping may be explored. Within this session, workers may express their expectations about their role and tasks, versus a discussion of the actual role and tasks of the programme. Individuals can express what they gain from a service role, and are confronted with two common pitfalls of the helping profession, the 'Jehovah complex' and the 'Magna Mater complex'.

The Jehovah complex occurs when relief workers' attitude is one of omnipotence, an ability to solve all problems. This complex reinforces the 'victim's' feelings of passivity and

helplessness. Unfortunately, it has been demonstrated that this is an all too common experience in refugee relief efforts (Harrell-Bond 1986; Clark 1985).

The 'Magna Mater' complex is equally destructive, as the worker adopts the problems of the world as his/her own. Much emotional energy is required for this stance. The worker can quickly become discouraged, and may begin to view the client as 'uncooperative' or 'ungrateful'.

The self-awareness session provides a forum for a discussion of the helper/helped relationship. It is important to emphasise that this relationship is not similar to friendship because the relationship is not one of equals.<sup>1</sup>

The session enables the participants to examine how they may become better helpers by evaluating their needs and feelings. These may include: why they need to help others, what frustrates them, what makes them angry, how they express their sorrow, how they handle their guilt feelings. A better understanding of self will aid them in the field.

### ***In situ* monitoring**

In the field workers should be monitored for signs of stress, and co-workers should intervene where coping mechanisms seem inappropriate. 'Acts of depersonalisation, objectification, and sabotage could be monitored and pointed out, and inappropriate behaviour modified' (Dunning 1988:292). 'Time on task', overall functioning, level of stressful exposure, and fatigue must also be considered. Workers can be removed to a more secure location for a short time, so that they may rest and regroup emotionally, but most agree there is a need to maintain group contact during this time (Dunning 1988). Furthermore, agencies should provide regular time off, and should endeavour to rotate their personnel through low stress and high stress areas, limiting time in high stress positions as much as possible.

### **Debriefing**

Preparation is essential, yet even for the most aware or experienced worker, traumatic experiences in the field need to be acknowledged and addressed in order for workers to make personal sense of them. Debriefing is a way of achieving these aims. Dunning (1988) describes the three types of debriefing methods currently used: one designed to teach about the effect of trauma (the 'didactic' approach), and two which address psychological/therapeutic functions.

The 'didactic' approach seeks to educate about psychological and behavioural reactions to trauma. One of the benefits of this approach is that relief personnel can reflect on their reactions without the stigma often attached to mental disturbances. Notes Dunning, 'If workers know that symptoms are common and predictable, their emergence is not as traumatic, hence not as likely to be exacerbated by anxiety or refusal to seek resolution' (1988:300). The didactic approach can suggest a structure for future treatment, and can facilitate acceptance of counselling, should that be required.

The second and third forms of debriefing have been labelled the 'psychological' method, because they are based on the premise that cathartic reactions to trauma are useful in its resolution. As in the didactic debrief, individuals ventilate their feelings about a disturbing event, and also discuss the signs and symptoms of the stress response. However the structure of the debriefing session, and the goals of the session are very different.

One form of psychological debrief is the 'Critical Incident Stress Debrief (CISD)', where participants disclose emotional and behaviour response to the traumatic event. A facilitator oversees the three components of the session: 'ventilation and assessment of stress response, support and reassurance, and resource mobilisation through referral (Dunning 1988:302). The intervention occurs soon after the event, within 24 to 48 hours, and its effectiveness decreases with elapsed time. In this debrief, workers may 'discuss their fears, anxieties, concerns, guilt, frustration, anger, and ambivalence about the event' (Dunning 1988:302).

While the CISD method is useful for education, and for generating group support, the concept of a *specific event* may not be applicable to the refugee situation. There may be days or weeks that are more stressful than others, but the situation of a relief worker in a refugee camp is probably one of chronic, not acute stress. The debriefing models have evolved out of disaster and emergency relief literature, so we must take the salient points, and create appropriate models for the refugee relief worker.

The second form of psychological debrief may be more appropriate for these workers. The 'continuum of care' approach is not limited by a particular event. It instead focuses on the capabilities of the worker, and on skills workers need for surviving traumatic experiences. Peer support is strongly encouraged, and supportive training is provided (including listening and counselling skills). This method calls for an ongoing relationship between workers and support services.

Dunning stresses the need for involvement at an agency level, for without this type of support and commitment, intervention strategies will be less effective. 'The first step in intervention strategies for mass emergencies for emergency agencies is to determine the extent to which the

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<sup>1</sup> Harrell-Bond et al (1991:3) comment on the problem of unequal status between helpers and helped. 'The exchange of gifts defines the status and power relationships between the giver and the recipient; receiving places the recipient in a position of obligation, an inferior position vis-à-vis the benefactor'.

organisation is willing to program itself to mitigate possible deleterious effects on workers and department. The decision to commit the agency's resources ... directs the manner in which feasible programs can be implemented' (1988:304).

## Conclusion

Relief organisations could improve their overall effectiveness by paying closer attention to the psychological needs of their workers. Sensitivity to workers' needs could in turn lead to greater sensitivity to the needs of refugees. Training programmes that focus on working *with* refugees, as opposed to working *for* refugees, that focus on refugees as people 'we must assist to do what they want for themselves' as opposed to people 'for whom we must do something' (Harrell-Bond 1985:3), would alleviate some of the stress of relief work from the start. Workers could be trained, not to adopt the troubles of the world as their own, but to participate with the refugees in the process of rehabilitation.

Many of the problems faced by refugees come as a result of poor planning by relief agencies. The so-called 'dependency syndrome' is probably due in some part to the way agency staff treat the people they are assisting (Clark 1985). The tendency to blame the victim will do little to advance the progress of relief work, and does much to limit what could be a fruitful relationship between relief staff and refugees (Waldron 1987; Voutira and Harrell-Bond 1992).

Similarly, many of the problems encountered by relief workers are due to the lack of understanding within agencies for whom they work. Better initial training which is sensitive to the personal motivations of relief workers is necessary. Attention to the stress responses of workers in the field and a commitment to firmly established, regular debriefing procedures to address these responses is crucial. The well-being and overall effectiveness, not only of relief workers, but of assistance programmes as a whole, rests upon the implementation of these tasks. ■

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# MAYBE IT COULD HELP SOMEBODY\*

by Mikus Kos Anica

There is an extensive literature on the psychological problems of refugees and various helping strategies, but from my own experience, the more directly you are involved, the less time and energy you have for reading. Therefore, I decided to present some suggestions from the experiences of those giving psychological help to refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina (BH) in Slovenia.

In Slovenia, 70,000 refugees, of whom half are children, live in camps and with foster families. The question was how to provide help for the children and their parents. All have suffered multiple stress and some have gone through extremely traumatic experiences. All constitute a population at risk of emotional and psychological disorder, many already had reactive and other deeper emotional disorders.

Over the past year, a Slovene mental health team has developed a community-based and population-orientated model. At the moment, psychological help to refugee children and their families covers almost all the camps and the schools in Slovenia.

The suggestions reflect a broad background of experience: behind each point made, there are stories of activities, relationships, difficulties, mistakes, disappointments, sorrow and satisfaction on the part of members of the mental health team.

Here, then, is some of our advice:

1. Start fund raising for the development of psychological help as soon as the refugees arrive in the host country. Do not abandon fund raising efforts because of other immediate priorities (shelter, food, health care). Psychological problems will soon appear, and fund raising takes a long time. Funders behave as if they are taking a decision about supporting a space project for which time has no importance. You will have difficulty explaining to them that for human beings who are suffering, every day that passes is of great importance.

2. Do not believe those in charge of refugee camps or others responsible for refugees when they say that there are no important psychological problems among refugees. Such statements reflect low sensitivity to the emotional state of refugees and resistance to the introduction of mental health workers in the camp. At the same time, do not predict psychological disaster and incurable psychological damage in children who have experienced war situations. Millions of children in Europe experienced World War II and there is no proof that in their adult lives they suffer from special psychological disorders. (This statement does not apply to children who were exposed to extreme situations like concentration camps.) There are two main reasons for extremely pessimistic predictions: the political one - to demonstrate the monstrosity of the enemy - and professional vanity - the desire to demonstrate the indispensability of mental health professions.

3. In the first weeks of exile, not even the refugees themselves will show a need or even an interest in having

access to mental health help. Do not be offended or discouraged if you get the impression that your help is not needed. It is always like this at the beginning. Preventive mental health activities should be introduced in places where a great number of refugees live (camps, schools, etc.), and mental health professionals should visit these places. It is unrealistic to expect refugees to seek help in clinics away from their everyday environment.

4. Camp officials and other individuals with positions of responsibility have good reason for being reluctant to open the door to mental health workers. Mental health workers discover problems caused by the organisation of camp life, human rights violations, and so on. They make a lot of suggestions - some realistic, some unrealistic - for improving the situation of individual refugees or of the whole refugee community, and they often try to bring pressure to bear to effect change. In a word, mental health workers can be a nuisance, especially during the difficult initial stages when relief workers are overwhelmed with problems concerning the basic needs of refugees. But later, the majority will welcome the mental health team and a mutually beneficial dialogue and effective collaboration can develop.

Do not forget that those in charge of camps are also in a very difficult situation, and that they also need support. If there is resistance from the managers to mental health team visits to the camps, try to begin in a non-threatening manner. We have sometimes started with the detection and treatment of sleeping disorders in children, and only later did we gradually expand our activities in other areas.

Inform the director of the camp, social workers, primary health care workers and other people about your aims, your work and your findings. Try to collaborate with them, even if you have reservations about their attitudes and behaviour towards refugees. Also inform the responsible authorities: (Refugee Office, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Local Authorities, and UNHCR)

about your activities. All officials working in these institutions are overburdened with information. Therefore, send them only short, written summaries.

5. The basic paradigm of psychological help for most refugees should be the 'ecosocial paradigm' with community-based activities (according to the WHO strategies for 'mental health for all'). Special attention should be paid to protective factors and processes, and to the development of coping strategies in refugees.

You will be much more effective if you integrate your work in some pre-existing structure. The school is the most important structure in the life of refugee children. Teachers can recognise children with problems and emotional disorders. Apart from their mothers (most children live in exile without their fathers), teachers are the most important people in children's lives. They spend several hours every day with the children. They can offer considerable emotional support to their students, and they usually do. They are influential people, and they will help you gain access to the refugee community. Teachers will support you because they want to help children with emotional problems and because they are aware that you are also helping them in their efforts to educate.

Teachers can help by screening children with the most severe emotional disorders. They know the child, the family, and the traumatic events which the child has experienced. They can ask children to draw, to write or complete sentences. They can identify the children with learning difficulties. The material produced by children in schools and teachers' observations are sufficient to screen out children with severe problems. This is also the cheapest way of screening. Yet these diagnostic tools offer a valuable insight into the problems of all children.



*A Collective Centre for Bosnian Refugees in Slovenia*

Consider also the stress of the teachers. This is of great importance when teachers are themselves refugees. When you work in an organisation specifically for children, you can prevent new forms of stress to which children might be exposed; for example, the stress linked to school failure.

6. The energy of your team is the most precious component of your project. Maintain it and nourish it by all possible means. Engage workers who have accepted strategies of community-orientated mental health work. This is especially important in the initial stage of the project. Only use mental health workers who are sympathetic to refugees. It is extremely important that mental health workers speak the language of the refugees.

Mental health workers should be paid for their time. Their work with refugees requires special knowledge acquired through practice. People who are experienced in this work are very valuable, and fees serve as an incentive to continue the work. Even so, some of them will leave because of being 'burnt out'.

Find people who can act as promoters of mental health in the refugee community (social workers, psychologists, physicians, and specialised teachers). Integrate them in the mental health team. Working together is the best formula. You will learn a lot from them, and they will gain knowledge and receive support from you. Working in a mental health team will improve their self-respect, and will motivate them to develop different activities. A team with mixed personnel will be accepted far more readily in the refugee community than a team consisting only of professionals from the host country. Workshops for refugees on mental health can serve to promote mental health. Refugees who have participated have commented, 'We were treated like human beings and professionals, and it gives us the will to survive, to be active, to help other people'.

Mental health workers should be informed about the attitudes, the behaviour, and social norms of the refugee community; especially about those factors relevant to the refugees' psycho-social functioning and mental health. They must be particularly sensitive to the refugees' own resources. The greatest skill is found in being able to integrate professional knowledge with the wisdom of the refugee community and with its healing resources. The organisation of the day-to-day life of refugees, their relationships with and treatment by the managing team in the camp and by other organisational structures, and the attitudes of the local population are of major importance for the psychological well-being of a refugee population.

7. Mental health help is not politically and socially neutral. Involvement in support activities has political and social implications. Adopting the ecosocial paradigm and community orientation, you will of necessity also act as a social activist. Be aware of the political and social

consequences of your work. Do not expect your project to run as you planned. There will be important changes in the content, timing and organisation. Accept a certain amount of confusion as a necessary part of the project.

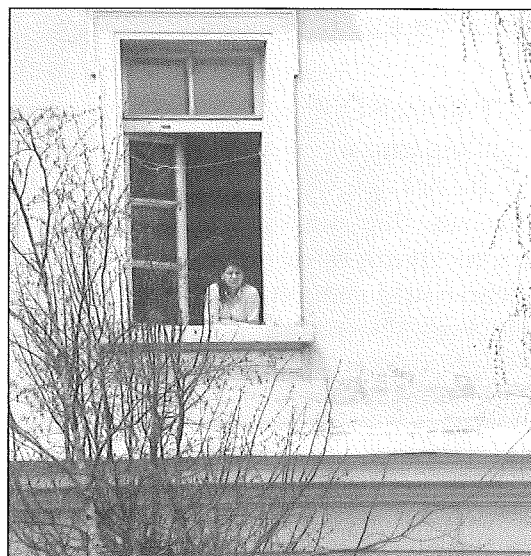
The contact between mental health workers from the host country and refugees has many very important side effects: a number of influential professionals will become aware of the human qualities of refugees and of their misery. With this knowledge, they can influence public opinion in a positive way in the host country, where the population is often suspicious or unfriendly towards refugees. They can mobilise various resources in the host country and abroad. And, what is of great importance, they can become advocates for refugees' rights and needs.

Collaborate with mental health professionals from abroad. People with good intentions will come, and the great majority of them will be helpful. But a word of caution is necessary. Some come, guided primarily by professional curiosity, and consider the refugee situation as an opportunity for interesting research. Fortunately, they are rare. The problem with many of those who do have the best of intentions is that they are not sufficiently informed about the situation.

8. Many mothers of pre-school children will be clients of primary health care services. Translate your knowledge into simple messages which can be helpful for both parents and children. Talk to groups of parents and tell them that they should cuddle their children, talk to them, overcome their own despair to support the child. Tell mothers that they are the most important people in the lives of their children. Mothers may have lost many of their social functions, but the importance of their parental role has increased.

Tell the children that it is normal to be sad and frightened in such a situation. Encourage them to engage in various activities. Help them to identify activities, dreams and interactions which might help them to overcome their sadness and distress. Children with deep emotional wounds will need special support. Therefore, the special resources in the refugee community (family support, extended family support, involvement of teachers and volunteers) should be mobilised for them. Help children and parents to eliminate symptoms which cause secondary damaging effects on the child's life, or additional difficulties in the immediate environment (sleeping disorders, bed wetting, aggressive behaviour).

9. Do not be over-concerned to find only major psychiatric problems. With the majority of refugee children, you will find 'silent sorrow' without dramatic symptoms. The usual psychiatric terms of reference are not useful for their suffering, neither is a narrow psychiatric approach.



*Bosnian woman in detention camp*

Do not screen for disorders for which you cannot provide help. The content of problems is more important than the numbers. Enter the refugee community, talk with the children and the parents, and you will get a better understanding of their problems. If you need figures to develop services or for fund raising, use small samples and data from others who have studied similar situations. Later there will be time for epidemiological surveys.

Avoid counter-productive competition among mental health services or teams. Work with refugees is difficult, but it is also a source of rewards and benefits. You are in a new professional field; you can publish important papers; you can be the first to publish a paper on some special refugee problem; you can see yourself as the noble person helping the poor and helpless; you can receive funds for your projects. All this can create damaging rivalry. Try to be honest and realistic in the evaluation of your work. Do not waste too much time, energy and money in psychological tests for evaluations. Find other indicators of the impact of your work.

10. Be careful to reach the sections of the population with the greatest needs. As in everyday life, opportunities and options are exploited by the most assertive members of the community. For instance, volunteers' activities often involve those adolescents who are the most healthy, who have not lost their zest for life or their sense of curiosity. Therefore, take an interest in the most deprived and most psychologically distressed members of the community. n

*Mikus Kos Anica, a Consultant Child Psychiatrist, is Director of the Counselling Centre for Children, Adolescents and Parents in Ljubljana, Slovenia.*

**\*Editors' note:** This paper has been edited and adapted from a paper 'Maybe it could help somebody', presented at a conference held in Utrecht, the Netherlands, June 1993

# OVERCOMING BARRIERS AND BUILDING BRIDGES<sup>1</sup>

A UNHCR Branch Office shifted to larger premises. The Branch office had just discontinued its contract with its counselling implementing partner; moved to new premises; and had an influx of new refugees. As before refugees did not need to come to the Branch Office and no arrangements were made to receive refugees in the new premises. This oversight created a host of problems for the office. In the process, no arrangements were made for receiving refugees at the office. The refugees had to stand at the front gate where guards could decide who could come in and who could not. There were allegations that the guards only permitted those who paid them a fee to enter. Most of the refugees waited outside on the mud road hoping to find their way in when the gate was opened. The most aggressive fared best.

The staff, who were expected to meet refugees, were often not available and there was a further bottle-neck created by the interpreters who were entrusted with organising the flow of refugees. They, too, were suspected of taking bribes and other favours from refugees who wanted to have an appointment with the officer in charge. The refugees became frustrated and there were sometimes angry exchanges between them and the staff. On one occasion the refugees attacked and injured the officer. As a result of this episode, further barricades were created between the refugees and the staff, and special security measures were adopted to safeguard the staff.

The refugees sometimes resorted to writing letters, which were copied to Headquarters [UNHCR, Geneva]. When these were sent back from Headquarters, the refugees concerned were penalised. Some refugees also tried to manipulate the situation by meeting the staff on their way home.

It was into this context that a new staff member arrived at the Branch Office. Being new was an advantage. Not affected by the culture that had developed, it was possible to make a fresh beginning with the support of the supervisor and the cooperation of some colleagues. Creating opportunities for dialogue between conflicting groups - staff and refugees - in a non-threatening atmosphere was essential.

After examining the situation, a few very simple modifications to procedures and structures were made. These were:

1. A separate entrance for refugees was arranged where they could wait for appointments. As there was no space in the building, the garden was used as an open reception area.
2. A system of appointments was established for the various officers that the refugees wished to meet.
3. A rota system was established with different staff assigned

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<sup>1</sup> **Editors' Note:** The above is an edited excerpt from an article by Marie Lobo, Senior Social Service Officer, UNHCR, which was first presented at a conference, 'Trust and the Refugee Experience', at Bergen, Norway, April 1992. This case illustrates how some simple structural changes on the part of UNHCR staff helped modify attitudes and reduced antagonisms between them and the refugees. This is a summary of a situation that took place over a period of time. Many problems had to be ironed out but with persistence and perseverance and a belief in people and their strength, goodwill prevailed. This made refugee participation a real experience.

to see refugees on different days of the week.

4. A form was designed on which the refugee visitor would write his or her problem and get an answer if an appointment were not required.

As there was no money to buy seating for the reception areas, one refugee made benches and tables from scrap wood. These crude pieces of furniture were an improvement on the previous situation. No benches were ever stolen.

The effects of even these simple steps were dramatic. The refugees came and waited quietly. They found it a congenial place to establish contact with members of their community.

As the reception area was now being used as a meeting place, refugees were asked if they would like to have a community centre. Premises were identified and rented. As the budget was insufficient to furnish the centre, the refugees agreed to make their own if they could be provided with the necessary tools and materials.

A charitable agency provided a tool set, paint and paint brushes. Another agency provided scrap wood from crates. Some good wood was also obtained and was kept for the time when the skills of the carpenters had improved and suitable designs had been decided upon.

Refugees were involved in the planning and implementation of the Centre. Other activities began: music and some dance classes, cooking sessions, and special activities for women and children in the afternoons when they were free to come. The UNHCR staff were given flexible times to attend the centre in the late afternoon after regular working hours. They could thus be available to the refugees in a relaxed atmosphere and without the strain of the office routine.

Having the UNHCR staff meet refugees outside the office at





*UNHCR official with Indochinese refugees in Thailand.*

*Photo: L. Taylor*

the community centre and in a situation of equality without the barriers of desks, doors, guards, forms and formalities, helped refugees to see the UNHCR staff as persons with whom one could discuss one's problems. It helped to change the old images and perceptions of the staff as authority figures, who had to be cajoled, manipulated and feared.

Accessibility and being there at the right time was essential. The right psychological moment does not always fit into a schedule which is predetermined; being available to use events creatively to build bridges required an attitude of mind and maturity of understanding as well as the sincere desire to enhance the lives of others. It was necessary therefore to be accessible at most times with a high degree of reliability. Keeping appointments and commitments were part of the investment made by staff, sometimes at great personal inconvenience.

Change was not restricted to the refugees; staff attitudes changed as well. Staff who had perceived the refugees as violent and abrasive, demanding and manipulative, now began to see them as caring, even lovable, and clients who could be dealt with reasonably and with understanding, and without the fear of being taken advantage of. Instead of being referred to as numbers, or by nationality, they were called by their names. The term 'refugee' was used very sparingly, if at all, as for many this term has negative connotations and served to provoke hostile responses.

In a refugee situation time is of the essence. While there is a need for a prompt and sensitive response, it is always necessary to keep in mind the long term implications of durable solutions for each and every contact with refugees. There must be no false promises or quick solutions on one day which lead to problems the next day. There is often no time to invest in long,

drawn out counselling, a prompt sensitive response is what is needed and an approach which is transparent and open. There was therefore a great need for experienced and competent counsellors, social workers and community workers, who would be able to give the correct messages from the start through their attitudes and sensitive programme planning. This was not possible and so ongoing training of existing personnel was undertaken to fill in gaps as they appeared and help staff to learn from experience.

The following lessons were learned in the process:

I International staff keep rotating. As each new person arrives, the relationship between refugees and UNHCR staff suffers. Each person brings elements into the situation which can either enhance or destroy what has been built up. To overcome this problem, a period of overlap is vital to maintain continuity and to allow time to convince new staff of the value of the new approaches.

II Another way to prevent this discontinuity is to invest in training local and refugee staff to carry on the services, regardless of the presence or absence of international staff. (As security risks lead to the evacuation of international staff at very short notice, this approach has become a necessity in many places in the world.)

III Values and attitudes need to be clarified at all levels and communicated clearly. Budgeting and other practical details should flow out of the needs of the people and not the other way around.

IV Solutions do not usually require great changes or great expense. Large budgets do not always necessarily mean better services. ■

# CREATING MARGINALISED DEPENDENT MINORITIES

## RELIEF PROGRAMMES FOR REFUGEES IN EUROPE

by B.E. Harrell-Bond \*

The crisis of those uprooted by the war in Bosnia has prompted an outpouring of humanitarian concern from ordinary people as well the mobilising of European non-governmental agencies, many of which have established offices in the neighbouring host countries. Unfortunately, however, if the situation in Croatia and Slovenia is typical, despite knowledge of the negative consequences elsewhere, humanitarian agencies are busy implementing relief programmes in Europe. These relief programmes are *marginalising refugees and displaced Croats as dependent minorities*, rather than providing the basis for encouraging tolerance while they are in exile.

Precisely because the relief model is now being implemented in the context of Europe, humanitarian agencies are provided with a unique opportunity for learning. Slovenia and Croatia are experiencing first-hand what it means to be the target of such approaches. Some articulate their resistance in remarks such as 'We are not Ethiopia', or 'We are civilised'. If this resistance can be turned into dialogue, the situation provides an opportunity for the humanitarian regime to improve approaches to assistance everywhere, because the problems of the relief model appear all over the world - *including in Ethiopia!*

There are many issues which would benefit from open discussion. For example, while the sectarian practices of Christian humanitarian agencies often go unchallenged, the arrival in the region of large numbers of Muslim agencies has made the fear of proselytising a salient issue. At the same time, both Christian and secular agencies could learn a great deal from the humane and respectful 'style' of giving by some of those Muslim agencies observed.

### Some background

Both Croatia and Slovenia have been recognised as independent states and have become members of the United Nations within the last two years. At the same time as these new countries are responding to the challenges of restructuring governmental and economic institutions and developing a new legislative system, they are having to cope with the humanitarian crisis caused by the war.

Very briefly, the war in Croatia began to displace people in late 1991, affecting both Croatia and Slovenia. Refugees from Bosnia began to arrive in both countries from April 1992. Although Slovenia has attempted to seal its border with Croatia since August 1992, Bosnians continue to arrive. In Croatia there are an estimated 535,000 Bosnian refugees and Croats, displaced from the territories occupied by Serbian forces. Slovenia estimates that it is currently hosting some 70,000 refugees from Bosnia. While the majority in both countries are still 'spontaneously settled', i.e. are living with local families, the others are variously housed in available empty buildings.

In Croatia, refugees are not being barred from working and, even where they are living under camp-like conditions, there are no restrictions on their freedom of movement. In

Slovenia, however, refugees are not permitted access to gainful employment, and freedom of movement from some of the collective centres is restricted.

### The relief model

As documented in so many other host countries, imposing an internationally-funded relief model results in practices which disadvantage both refugees and their hosts. Donor states rarely grant bilateral aid directly to host governments; it is normally channelled through multilateral inter-governmental organisations (IGOs) and/or through non-governmental agencies (NGOs) based and staffed in the donor state. Donors, in exchange for aid, expect certain concessions: for example, the right to determine what is purchased, and where.

Since the mid-1980s, donor governments have demonstrated greater confidence in the work of NGOs over IGOs, leading to increased competition for funding and complicating efforts to achieve cooperation at the field level. Donors expect *their* agencies to take major responsibility for designing policy, shifting the direction of accountability from the host government to the donors. Accountability is defined in terms of financial probity rather than the effectiveness of programmes in meeting the needs of the beneficiaries for whom the funding is intended. Very few relief programmes are subject to independent evaluation.

The degree of media attention and the strategic interests of the donors are major factors which determine the amount and length of time that aid will be available. In addition to government sources, NGOs raise money from the public, depending on images of helplessness and dependence.

These appeals influence the design of programmes which fail to account for refugees' own energies, skills and determination to reconstruct their lives. Perhaps it is the general assumption in the world of the donors, that victims are without resources, which contributes to the sense that ultimate responsibility lies with the foreign agencies.

That Croatia and Slovenia find themselves following the norms of the relief model has occurred as a consequence of the presumption that the crisis is temporary and their decision to accept international aid. Neither government has been able to persuade donors to invest funds in projects which would be developmental, that is, in the expansion of social services and employment.

Both countries have established special refugee offices. In Croatia, this office is directly responsible to the Vice President; in Slovenia, to the Prime Minister. In theory, responsibility at such high levels of governmental decision-making is important; in practice, it has led to the isolation of these offices from government ministries. For a successful refugee policy to be developed, there is a need for greater cooperation and coordination with line ministries.

As a number of studies have demonstrated, and as is becoming evident in Slovenia and Croatia, the relief approach is not only wasteful but has its own dehumanising dynamic. Relief programmes foster bureaucratic interests in maintaining a dependent constituency. In the interests of 'efficient' distribution, relief programmes encourage the confinement of refugees in one place; they encourage authoritarian styles of management. One of the most effective methods of 'control' (though inefficient in ensuring an adequate diet) is to keep refugees dependent on communally cooked food, a general practice in Croatian and Slovenian collective centres.

The relief model also conditions the content of requests. The Slovenian Office of Immigration and Refugees requested funds for sewage system installation and other infrastructure in villages housing refugees. The request was not met. As a result, a strategy of requesting long-term development needs that also served the immediate demands of refugee influxes has been weakened. So the Office requests fax machines, typewriters, computers and vehicles, the paraphernalia for running a refugee relief programme. By so doing, Slovenia runs a doubly perverse risk: investing in an office whose future bureaucratic interest may be to maintain refugees on relief to justify jobs and all the paraphernalia.

Some other characteristics of the relief model include:

- by presuming that needs are uniform, the relief model fails the most needy, creates greater social differentiation, and wastes resources thereby needlessly driving up costs;
- by presuming that the agencies which represent the international donors have superior knowledge; it ignores resources and institutional strengths of the host society, thus weakening them;
- by failing to recognise the resources which refugees themselves bring to the situation, the relief model inhibits the mobilisation of these resources and networks for the benefit of both the refugees and the local economy;
- by ignoring the needs of, and its impact on, the local population, the relief model is essentially socially divisive;
- relief programmes inhibit efficient systems of accountability and thus create opportunities for corruption of both individuals and institutions.



*Bosnian children in Slovenia*

*Photo: RSP*

### **Earmarking aid**

The pernicious impact of earmarking relief only for 'refugees' has been widely documented. In Croatia, such earmarking has led to tension between refugees, internally displaced, refugees and local residents. Some local people already resent the fact that refugees are fed without working. Although still very isolated events, there have been attacks on centres in which displaced Croatians and refugees live.

Displaced Croatians complain that they have become second-class citizens in their own country. One cited his experience of standing in a queue in which the Bosnians were all asked to step to the front of the line because earmarked aid was for the refugees, but not for displaced Croatians.

The relief model is so often wasteful of resources that it seems to be an essential characteristic. One refugee centre, in which two doctors and four nurses were taking care of a population of around 500, is located only a few minutes walk from a medical centre. Yet funds are being used to install a small clinic with hospital beds in the refugee centre, rather than investing in the local hospital.

Such an approach can create feelings of resentment towards refugees among the host population. Moreover, when the centre (previously an army barrack) is closed, there is no guarantee that the facilities will be used again. On the other hand, investment in the local medical infrastructure would benefit the whole of the population of the town.

## Inappropriate aid

Another problem endemic to the relief model is the donation of inappropriate materials. This includes food with which people are unfamiliar (e.g. bamboo shoots) and do not know how to prepare. Inappropriate or outdated medicines are also a frequent problem. More to the point, many, if not most supplies can often be purchased in-country.

Transfer of cash for purchase would stimulate the local economy. If the funds were provided, factories are said to be capable of producing all the needed drugs. In Slovenia, some donated drugs were found to be out-of-date, entailing additional costs for this hard-strapped government just to destroy them safely. These governments have been faced with another problem generally associated with relief programmes: what to do with donated items which come in too small a quantity to distribute equitably. If the government took the logical step, selling such items on the open market, using the funds for its refugee budget, it risks accusations of 'corruption'.

Agencies such as OXFAM UK manage to avoid discouraging such spontaneous responses to human need by establishing methods for dealing with inappropriate contributions, either by selling them in their shops or disposing of them. The cash raised by sales in OXFAM shops is available for appropriate assistance which uses refugees' abilities and maintains self-worth and dignity.

## Do Slovenia and Croatia need foreign agencies?

Normally, line ministries have responsibilities for sectors such as health and education, but in Croatia and Slovenia a mushrooming number of agencies, both inter- and non-governmental, have arrived to assume 'responsibility' for managing the humanitarian crises. It is difficult for the governments to assess the professionalism of agencies or to reject them - they represent access to donor funds.

Their relative accessibility has also led to a myriad of well-meaning individuals and groups collecting material assistance (most of which could have better been purchased locally), driving across Europe, and on arrival, demanding the right to distribute to particular individuals in particular collective centres. One agency looked at children's teeth. Instead of coordinating with the medical services, it gave children money to pay for dental treatment. In some cases, agencies have insisted on using the distribution of items for publicity (i.e. fund-raising) purposes.

Perhaps the most bizarre example was the behaviour of an agency which links 300 school children from one EC country with 300 refugee children. The Slovenian Office for Immigration and Refugees was unable to stop representatives from going to three centres to distribute chocolates to 100 'linked' children per centre. Not surprisingly, since the centres housed more than 100

*Slovenian Government official at Refugee Centre*

*Photo: RSP*



youngsters, in one a riot ensued, providing a unique 'photo opportunity' and wide press coverage.

As usual in such situations, there are numbers of trained, highly motivated professionals, both refugees and hosts, persons fully capable of responding to the variety of needs presented by the humanitarian crisis and often within the normal framework of service delivery. From the beginning of the emergency, many of them undertook voluntary work, and locally-based NGOs (including religious) have been established to assist the uprooted.

Despite some efforts by foreign agencies to fund these local initiatives and to work in partnership with nationals and refugees, partnerships are invariably unequal. They have weakened the capacity of national institutions and have introduced competition for external sources of funding, undermining the basis for cooperative relationships among local people who are committed to the building of their own institutions of civil society.

## Humanitarian crises: an opportunity for building civil society

The humanitarian crisis can be a catalyst for the development of those mechanisms and institutions of civil society that are needed in much of central and eastern Europe. The response to the initial crisis on the part of local non-governmental groups, including church-based organisations, has already been mentioned.

The question of the nature of the post-socialist state itself is challenged by a crisis which focuses attention on humanitarian and wider human rights issues. Such issues - representing as they do a challenge to the basic morality of a society - can be used by the Government and the concerned public as a major 'entry point' for addressing the wider issues of human rights, economic and political development.



and the need to further strengthen the institutions of civil society.

Encouraging the development of the non-governmental sector which is not controlled by, but works in cooperation with and advises the government, can help to mediate against the concentration of political power solely in the hands of the state, thus safeguarding a pluralist, democratic society.

## Conclusion

Refugees in Slovenia and Croatia represent a long-term issue. They will be unable to repatriate in the foreseeable future and the policy of returning refugees to 'safe zones' in Bosnia, although still advocated by some, is widely believed to be unworkable.

If these countries *were* to adopt a developmental approach, one immediate action might be to phase out the relief programme and use budgets to fund the expansion of the current welfare system to include the refugees. Relief programmes tend to benefit only the few institutions providing the services, and it may well be more economical to give direct funding to the refugees who would spend it locally.

The social and economic costs of maintaining the present approach to refugees will ultimately - if not already - be higher than the cost of adopting developmental strategies which use both external and internal sources of funding to strengthen the institutions of Government and civil society. Moreover, compared to Croatia, given the relatively small numbers of refugees and the end of the emergency phase, international aid to Slovenia is already tailing off. The Government is already being reminded that 'as a European country, it must take responsibility for the costs of assisting refugees'. This is ironic given that the relief model, which cannot be sustained without outside assistance, was initially imposed on the country by the donors.

There is, however, considerable fear of potential social disruption caused by absorbing refugees into the existing welfare system and promoting economic self-sufficiency by allowing refugees the right to work. For either of these governments to break out of the present dependency/relief model will require a great deal of sensitivity, courage and political will. There is a general belief that if refugees are able to support themselves, they would not return to their home country. In fact, experience suggests that the first people able to repatriate are those who have been able to secure themselves and to save up for rebuilding their lives on return. *The repatriation of those who have been impoverished by a relief system only creates another relief crisis in their country of origin.*

\* **Editors' Note:** This article is an extract from 'Les programmes d'aide aux réfugiés en Europe et la création de minorités dépendantes et marginalisées' in *Le Courrier* No. 140, Juillet-Août 1993: 68-71.

## REFUGEE STUDIES PROGRAMME ACADEMIC COURSE OF STUDY 1993-1994

Founded in 1982, the Refugee Studies Programme at Oxford is devoted to the multi-disciplinary investigation of forced migration. The RSP conducts basic and policy-oriented research involving academics, policy makers, professionals, international agency personnel, and refugees. The RSP sponsors a wide range of publications, lectures, seminars, symposia, and workshops for practitioners, in addition to its Academic Course of Study and Visitors Programme. RSP has a large documentation centre of materials on forced migration. Academic and professional links with individuals and institutions throughout the world facilitate an exchange of knowledge about refugees.

RSP is part of Queen Elizabeth House, a Department of the University and Oxford's International Development Centre. Members of the House may attend any lecture or seminar, and by arrangement may follow many of the courses offered by the different programmes within the House, as well as those offered by a University faculty. Affiliation with the RSP offers access to Oxford's extensive library and archival resources.

### RSP VISITOR'S PROGRAMME AND FOUNDATION COURSE

The Visitor's Programme brings together graduates, researchers, academics on sabbatical leave and agency personnel to undertake study and training. Visitors affiliated to the RSP are also members of the University community and have access to its libraries and archives.

Those preparing for research degrees or for work in the field of forced migration are designated Visiting Study Fellows. Study Fellows follow a nine month multi-disciplinary Academic Course, the Foundation Course, which includes both required and optional courses, and are individually evaluated. Those wishing to transfer credit for their study must make arrangements in advance with their own universities. Each year a select number of persons with advance academic degrees, a proven record of publication and a specific research programme regarding forced migration are affiliated as Visiting Research Fellows.

For further information about the Foundation Course of Study or affiliation procedures and fees for the Visitor's Programme, please write to:

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## RESPONSES TO *LE COURRIER* ARTICLE

*(Editors' note: These responses were received on the Refugee Studies Programme's new discussion newsgroup for E-mail users, entitled 'Forced-Migration'. For details of how to participate in this newsgroup, see page 40.)*

From **Dr. John Allcock**, Research Unit in South East European Studies, University of Bradford, UK

I send a couple of comments which I hope will be useful. I confine myself to the 'field' issues, and have no comment on the 'policy' side of things.

1. The phrase about Bosnian refugees 'living with families' is potentially misleading. A large number of them live with other Bosnians, often their own kin, who came to either Croatia or Slovenia as migrant workers before the war. In other words, the reception and care of refugees involves a very large measure of self-help. The phrase used suggests a level of hospitality by the 'local' (i.e. Slovene or Croat) population which is often far short of this.

2. The interpretation of communal cooking facilities as indicative of a desire to 'control' needs to be nuanced. The camps I visited were initially set up to house migrant construction workers, and had thus always had communal cooking facilities. ... In fact, individual families were allowed (in spite of a significant fire risk which in Britain would have been used to justify their prohibition) to keep small electric rings in their rooms on which they were able to prepare not only traditional coffee but small local specialities. It was specifically remarked to me how important this was as a means of enabling people to continue to reaffirm both family independence and traditional collective identity.

3. The comment that 'displacement' status is socially divisive is correct: but it could be developed. It does not only work in the way suggested, to produce a sense of disadvantage among the 'displaced'. The other side of the coin is that the 'displaced' have all kinds of rights (including political and municipal organisation) which are not available to 'refugees'. They are at the forefront of a propaganda effort, and hence there is a kind of morale boost here. How this will change when they realise that they are not in line for any long-term privileges remains to be seen. In the short term, however, there are many indications of their being 'upper class' rather than 'second class' refugees.

4. The article tends to convey the idea that refugees and the displaced are victims of a system which is shaped by agencies and the state, and that their problems stem from this. While I would not wish to challenge the correctness of that view overall, it is very one-sided. They create their own problems also. I encountered a very interesting attempt to provide skilled and remunerative work for displaced women in Zagreb. This was (at least at first) damaged by the efforts of the camp Committee. As men

they were resentful of the way in which the scheme would have given conspicuous economic independence to the women of the camp. Better women who are dependent, even if the cost is that we are all poor!!!

5. I query whether the 'relief model' is simply imposed upon the Slovenes. There are all kinds of ideological pay-offs for their going along with this. ... By accepting the 'relief model' it underlines their own claim that the problem is a 'Balkan' problem which is nothing to do with them.

From **Dr. Robert E. Mazur**, Sociology Department, Iowa State University

The experiences well described herein are painfully familiar though I hope no-one considers them 'timeless'. It is now incumbent upon researchers, practitioners, and refugees in the broader 'refugee community' to articulate principles and a comprehensive framework for significantly restructuring the institutionalised 'relief model' and realistically avoiding such 'costly' problems. It must be grounded in solid social science analysis and based on well documented representative 'successes'.

From **Vance Geiger**, Department of Anthropology, University of Florida

I am not surprised by Harrell-Bond's description of the situation regarding refugee relief in Croatia and Slovenia. I also would not be in disagreement with the assertion that the present model of refugee assistance relying on a relief model, or approach, implemented by IGOs and NGOs is misguided.

I should like to mention, by way of this comment, that academics and researchers have contributed to this problem with repeated allusions to dependency among refugee populations. The literature on the refugee populations I have studied, Vietnamese refugees in the Philippines and Khmer refugees repatriating to Cambodia, is replete with assertions of dependency (Hitchcox 1987, 1990; Knudsen 1983; Long 1991; Mortland 1987; Tollefson 1989) including the Khmer border camps (Reynell 1989; Rogge 1990). I found, after spending two years living with refugees in the Philippine Refugee Processing Center in the Philippines and four months conducting research among repatriated Cambodians, that the descriptions of refugee dependency were very misleading. Unfortunately, perceptions of refugee dependency have become so pervasive that policies have become incorporated in the planning and

implementation of refugee assistance. These policies have had the effect of reifying the concept of refugee dependency into a 'given', no longer to be questioned as an issue to be debated.

The problem is further exacerbated by theoretical approaches that tend to argue for the applicability (I believe incorrectly) of analogies between refugees and mental patients, concentration camp inmates, prisoners and children (see for example Chan 1990, and Chan and Loveridge 1987). I believe that approaches that emphasise the maintenance, recreation and rebuilding of a way of life for both individuals and groups who have experienced a period of profound uncertainty would be a better portrayal and lead to a better understanding of the refugee experience. The work of Anthony F.C. Wallace (1956a and b, 1970) and Peter Marris (1975 and 1980) are two good examples.

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#### From Dr. Ken Wilson, Refugee Studies Programme, Oxford

Vance Geiger is certainly correct that the damaging stereotype of 'relief dependence' amongst refugees has been insufficiently challenged in some quarters, but I would draw the attention of readers to the findings of work in Africa. The masterful review of the African literature by Gaim Kibreab (1991), for example, allocates five pages to a detailed treatment of what he believes is a largely imagined phenomenon. Kibreab even insists that:

In my rather extensive survey of the literature on refugees in camps in Africa, I have yet to come across a single piece of evidence to suggest that African refugees in camps are in the grip of "dependency syndrome". In fact all the available studies on refugees in camps show that they leave no stone unturned to earn an income, either to supplement their diet, to make up for the things not included in the aid package or to make material progress. (1991:38).

Kibreab argues that the original notions of dependency grew out of perceptions of World War Two refugees in Europe (cf. Murphy 1955) and not out of the mental patients/concentration camp material as posited by Geiger. Furthermore, by showing how refugees often pretend to be dependent to negotiate for aid in the peculiar social contexts of relief programmes, he (and others working in Africa) make rather interesting use of the social work theory that Geiger correctly intimates has often been inappropriately applied to refugees.

Why are African refugees not in the grips of the 'dependency syndrome'? Kibreab argues that even when in camps African refugees have rarely been subject to the kinds of social control and systematic assistance that once generated dependency in Europe (1991:39). I have myself been more cautious arguing that whether or not 'dependency' ever

exists at a population level, African refugees have always received so little aid or protection - and usually so late and inappropriately - that they have always been obliged to maintain the initiative. In terms of the debate over the relief versus the development model of assistance the implications are clear. Agencies should support refugees' own struggles to meet their welfare needs by providing genuine entitlements (e.g. by distributing cash), and then simultaneously tackle the constraints on people's own livelihood activities and the regional economy (Wilson 1992). Indeed it is so often the bureaucratisation of relief that goes hand in hand with reduced rights for economic

participation that becomes the greatest threat, not only to refugee welfare but also to self-esteem. ■

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# SEX, LIES AND INTERNATIONAL LAW\*

by Estelle F. Strizhak and Catherine Harries

The reports of mass rape of women in Bosnia are undeniably horrible and terrifying. Organisations and concerned individuals have responded with a challenge to the world community to prosecute the perpetrators of such acts in an international tribunal. While such a tribunal would be indisputably desirable, any attempt to prosecute rape as an international crime will run into a number of unique barriers.

Perhaps the two most significant barriers are that state-sanctioned rape is not listed anywhere as an international crime and that rape as a weapon of war is not defined as a war crime.<sup>1</sup> Historically, international humanitarian law, while acknowledging and condemning rape, began by defining the act as a crime against honour. Despite several amendments to this definition, the international community has not yet acknowledged rape as a 'war crime'.

In the first modern (post-World War II) effort to protect the victims of war internationally, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949<sup>2</sup> established general guidelines for the protection of civilians during times of conflict. Certain 'grave' breaches of the Convention are listed as 'war crimes' and, as such, become grounds for international political and/or judicial action. However, while rape of civilians is prohibited by Article 27 of this Convention, it is described as an attack against the 'honour' of a woman and is not included in Article 147 among the list of 'grave breaches' defined as 'war crimes' - such as 'wilful killing, torture or inhumane treatment ... wilfully causing great [as opposed to simply unnecessary] suffering or serious injury to body or health ... not justified by military necessity'.

The 1977 Geneva Protocol I strengthened the language on rape, referring to it as an 'indecent assault'. However, Article 75 of this Protocol still distinguishes between 'indecent assaults' and the list which provides the basic elements of 'war crimes', and which includes 'violence to the life, health, or physical or mental well-being of the person' such as murder, torture, corporal punishment and mutilation. This is the list of offences found in the Geneva Convention and Protocol which may be called 'war crimes' since they constitute 'grave' breaches.

<sup>1</sup> International law has two primary sources - customary law defined by the practice of states and conventional law created by binding covenants or agreements. In the most general sense, international crimes are those crimes which theoretically offend all of humanity, and are consequently triable in any state or by an international tribunal. Such crimes may be perpetrated by states (for example, in certain cases of aggression or torture) or by private individuals (for example, in the case of piracy and, some argue, terrorism).

<sup>2</sup> The conventions and agreements which form the basis of this article may be found in A. Roberts and R. Guelf (eds) (1989) *Documents on the Laws of War*, 2nd Ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press; and Columbia University Center for the Study of Human Rights (1992) *Twenty Four Human Rights Documents*, New York: Columbia University Press.

In Article 85, Protocol I created an additional list of 'grave' offences, which included perpetrating inhuman practices based on race (such as apartheid) and making a civilian population the object of attack. However, neither rape nor inhumane practices based on gender were specifically added to this list of 'war crimes'.

The language of Protocol I indicates that international action is permissible *only* if rape is associated with some other crime involving attacks on civilians. Rape, in and of itself, is simply considered an attack on women, and is not considered of grave enough concern to be tried in an international arena.

The Convention on the Prevention and the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide created an additional international crime which can be prosecuted by any signatory state. In theory, at least, a prohibition on government-sanctioned rape may be included under the Article II prohibitions on 'causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group', 'deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or part' and 'imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group'. Under the Convention, what is now referred to as 'ethnic cleansing' is clearly a crime. The status of mass rape under this Convention is less clear, however. Prosecutors must be able to prove that the rape had the particular 'intent to destroy ... a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group'.

Under the Genocide Convention, the prosecution of perpetrators who choose their victims based solely on sex is excluded: women are not considered a discrete 'group' under international law. In practice, therefore, while mass rape may be evidence of the crime of genocide, it is not, in and of itself, an international crime. Once again, the offence against women becomes secondary to the offence against their ethnic group. Moreover, international law requires that intent - some definite plan of extinction - be the basis for this action if prosecution is to follow.

The norms incorporated in other human rights treaties

dealing with discrimination against women, for example, while establishing state obligations, do not codify international crimes. The remedial systems which they establish are therefore much weaker, in particular the machinery established by the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Although it has been alleged that other treaties, such as the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, create a code of international customary law which would permit prosecution by any state, it is doubtful whether any individual state would pursue such prosecution, particularly in matters of rape. State-supported torture, for example, has been recognised by certain US courts as a crime conferring 'universal jurisdiction' which can be tried in the courts of any country, regardless of where the crime takes place. This position has been specifically rejected by other US courts and the Supreme Court has yet to resolve the question. Such judicial uncertainty is compounded by US political reluctance to recognise systematic gender-based discrimination as a violation of international customary law.

If rape is not a crime according to Conventions and Protocols, or a customary international crime, or a crime of genocide, it may fall under the more general prohibition of crimes against humanity, defined by the Nuremburg Charter Article 6(c) as 'murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population ... or persecution on political, racial, or religious groups'. In order for a crime to be considered 'against humanity', it *must* occur in connection with a 'war crime'. While the war crime in question could be 'ethnic cleansing', the list of groups specifically precludes sex as a basis for persecution. Again, therefore, rape could serve as evidence to support proof of some other 'crime against humanity' but it could not stand as a crime by itself.

Rape by itself, therefore, is not an international crime. Legal arguments have been made for reading a prohibition on rape into existing documents and attaching it to other crimes. As sad and revealing - and as necessary - as this strategy is, this will ultimately be the only route that advocates can take to bring ex-Yugoslavian leaders to justice. Any attempt to declare rape a formal international crime at this point will clearly run into further legal and political obstacles.

Declaring rape an international crime by immediately amending the international documents discussed above will not permit the prosecution of current offenders, as established by Article 15 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: it is too late. It may however prevent future violations of a similar nature, as the perpetrators will be aware that they are subject to prosecution. Politically, however, the barriers to achieving such amendments are

daunting. The first barrier is the lack of commitment to international action on war crimes in particular and international criminal law in general, as indicated by the 40-year tortuous history of the proposed international criminal court. The United States has strongly opposed the concept, most recently in a 1990 State Department Report. Additionally, the composition and orientation of the United Nations may also be highly resistant to formalising rape as a war crime. Only one woman has ever sat on the International Court of Justice and no woman has ever sat on the International Law Commission.

In general, violence against women does not command the same concern as violence against, for example, political prisoners. In the end, the perpetrators of mass rape will only be brought to justice if the international community so desires, regardless of the wording of the Geneva Convention or the Genocide Treaty. International law, including the law of war, often camouflages a normative struggle whose outcome is determined largely by power. If a tribunal were to be convened and were allowed to proceed on the assumption that rape is an international crime, such a trial would send a message that women are not weapons of war and that attacks on a population on the basis of sex for whatever purpose are as illegitimate and intolerable as attacks on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity or national origin.

If such a change in international law were made, those raped in the course of conflict or at the will of the state simply because they are women, would be viewed as victims of an internationally reprehensible crime and equally as worthy of defence as women raped because of their ethnicity.

However, in its current state, international criminal law does not send these messages. ■

*Estelle Strizhak is an Immigration specialist and an International Rescue Committee Member of the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children.*

*Catherine Harries is a Legal Intern (JD candidate) at the Columbia Law School.*

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**\* Editors' Note:** The title of this paper is a pun on a popular American film 'Sex, lies and videotape'. It in no way implies a conflation of rape with sex.

# SUNCOKRET\*

## Centre for Grassroots Relief Work

Suncokret is an NGO that coordinates grassroots relief work of international and domestic volunteers. Its main goal is to meet the needs of refugees and displaced persons in Croatia and in Bosnia-Herzegovina, primarily their psycho-social needs, and particularly those of children. The objectives are to mitigate the effects of war and participate in post-war reconstruction and rehabilitation.

In summer 1992 a group of students and peace-movement activists from Croatia joined by international volunteers through the peace organisation, 'Anti-War Campaign Croatia', started working in some of the refugee camps in Croatia in an attempt to respond to the needs of refugee children and young people.

As the number of civilians victimised by war increased, we realised that needs and demands for help and psycho-social support for displaced people and refugees in our country could not be fulfilled by the number of professionals available. Therefore we started to organise projects which were created and carried out by groups of domestic and foreign volunteers, led by Suncokret co-leaders in each camp.

Suncokret organises voluntary work in projects that respond to psycho-social, educational and environmental community needs. Our general aim is: *to mitigate the effects of war and enable grassroots participation in post-war reconstruction from psycho-social to environmental aspects.*

We strive to incorporate the values and goals for which we work in the structure of our programmes by using cooperative and non-violent means in our work for a peaceful society.

The foundations of our programmes are the human resources of those involved. We are committed to the values of grassroots work - from person to person, making links among groups and supporting and benefiting from already existing networks.

The core of our work is not therapy, it is human communication; and this we find has therapeutic effects on refugees. Living and working in the camp is also a sign of solidarity that restores hope, self-esteem and trust in refugees.

We are committed to working *with* people rather than *for* people. Our intention is to empower and support self-help initiatives and to promote active coping strategies. We try to avoid becoming needed or depended upon. We encourage the involvement of refugee teenagers, parents and women in planning, conducting and evaluating of activities.

We try to structure our organisation so that it embodies our commitment to networking and decentralisation. A great deal of responsibility and decision-making power is given to the groups of volunteers that work in the camps and which are closest and most receptive to refugee initiatives and contributions.

We have learned to value differences and appreciate the diversity of human beings. In a social context in which differences are seen as undesirable and threatening, we try to develop Suncokret projects as a means of enabling people from different nationalities, cultures, backgrounds and abilities to work together in a spirit of mutual learning and tolerance.

We are able to respond to a wide range of refugee concerns. Flexibility of programmes and openness to what refugees themselves identify as important for improvement of their situation in the camps results in a variety of small projects specific to certain times and places.

Even though we are not directly involved in everyday politics, we see our work as political. Our projects involve practical protection of human rights, especially the rights of the child. They also provide a learning experience for all involved and contribute to the development of democracy.

Involvement in the Suncokret project has long-term implications at the grassroots level, not only for refugees and Suncokret workers in Croatia and in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but also through many international volunteers from all over the world: the network of individuals, groups and organisations that are informed about, concerned with and practically involved in responding to the needs of war victims spread across the boundaries of groups or states.

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\* The word Suncokret consists of two stems, *sunc-*, which means 'sun', and *kret-*, which means 'turn, move'. Therefore Suncokret means 'one who turns after the sun', and is the Croatian word for sunflower.

# WOMEN IN DETENTION

## THE VIETNAMESE IN HONG KONG:

### A WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVE ON DETENTION

**Executive Summary of the June 1993 assessment conducted by Community and Family Services International.**

#### Introduction

To better understand the situation of the Vietnamese women in detention camps in Hong Kong and the subsequent impact of detention on these women and their children, Community and Family Services International (CFSI), in cooperation with the International Catholic Child Bureau (ICCB), conducted a systematic assessment of the needs of the women, and the stresses and traumas experienced by the women as well as their children. The assessment followed on from an earlier review of children in detention 'Living in Detention', 1992.

The objectives of this assessment were to:

1. enable representative groups of women in the camps to articulate their concerns and needs;
2. share these with women in other camps so as to understand their situation more objectively;
3. document the psychological effects of detention on women and their children; and
4. provide relevant data to programme managers to assist them in the development of suitable and relevant programmes in Hong Kong and Vietnam.

The assessment provided data on the women's experiences of trauma on the journey to Hong Kong and while in detention, their perceptions of daily problems and needs, and their stress levels; also the experiences of trauma and stress levels of their children under 10 years of age. It examined the cumulative effects of these factors on the women's well-being and their capacity to function while in detention, and the possible implications for their future. The women in detention actively participated in all stages of the assessment.

#### Background of the assessment

The Vietnamese people first began seeking asylum in Hong Kong in 1975, and continued to land in the Territory in significant numbers until late 1991. Up until mid-June 1988, all arrivals from Vietnam were recognised as refugees and were eligible for resettlement. In 1988 Hong Kong introduced a refugee status determination procedure. Under this policy, Vietnamese are held in closed detention centres pending a determination of their refugee claim. For many individuals this process has taken at least two years. If denied refugee status, the options are limited to returning to Vietnam under a UNHCR voluntary repatriation programme, or the orderly return programme agreed by the Hong Kong, British and Vietnamese governments. Many of those denied refugee status have returned to

Vietnam but thousands have also opted to stay for more years in the detention camps.

The assessment was conducted in two parts:

1. A series of focused discussions were conducted in five camps, in which 1,065 women between the ages of 18 and 70 years participated. The objective of these discussions was to elicit the major concerns (themes) of women and to review these concerns in the hope of clarifying the causes and effects of these concerns. The themes of the discussions included joblessness, public and personal hygiene, medical care, stress, provisions, protection and safety, leisure and recreation, and education of children.
2. A questionnaire survey collected data from 370 women who were randomly selected from 7 camps. The women were interviewed by trained Vietnamese women using the following questionnaires:
  - i) **Biodata questionnaire:** providing background information on the women's situation in Vietnam and their present living conditions in Hong Kong;
  - ii) **Traumatic events schedule:** recording the traumatic events experienced by women:
    - a) en route to Hong Kong
    - b) in detention centres;
  - iii) **Daily problems questionnaire:** recording the daily problems facing the women in detention centres;
  - iv) **Self-report questionnaire:** a measure of emotional well-being.

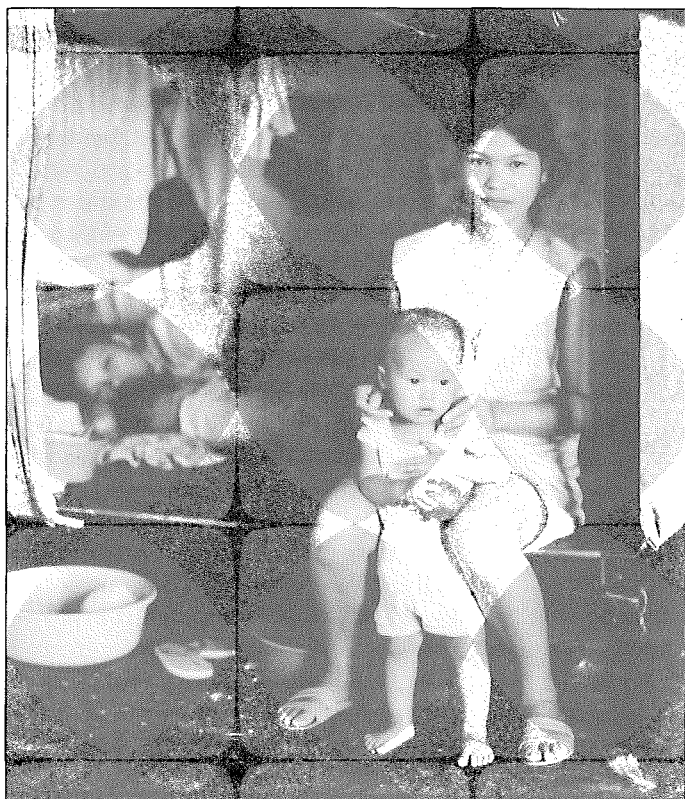
#### Findings

The assessment revealed that the cumulative effect of the women's experience of traumatic events and the daily problems that characterise their lives in detention is such as to seriously compromise their emotional well-being. They are severely depressed and anxious, and their capacity to make decisions, particularly with regard to the future, is thus affected. Women with children are more affected, and the extent to which their children experience negative events is a contributing factor in determining their emotional well-being. They are concerned not only for the effect of the violence that characterises life in detention on themselves, but also on how it influences the children.

#### Conclusion and recommendations

Although the assessment was conducted with women and focused on issues that are of particular importance to them, it would be counter-productive for the results to be shared only with them. In many respects, the negative effect on their emotional well-being is due to their situation of disempowerment and vulnerability *as women*. They are not the perpetrators, but the *victims* of abuse, intimidation





*Sham Shui Po Closed Camp, Hong Kong Photo: H.J. Davies*

and neglect of their needs and concerns as women and as mothers. In this sense it is important that the community understands the severe effects on both women and children if the situation continues unchanged. 'Community' is meant to convey not only the Vietnamese in detention, but the voluntary, international and governmental agencies that work in the detention centres. These organisations must not leave the population in detention to face the reality of their circumstances unaided, nor use the results from the assessment as another stick with which to beat them. The bleak picture which emerges from the assessment demands that the population in detention be enabled by *humanitarian means* to resolve the impasse that is so evident in their inability to reach a decision about their future, whilst recognising the effects of detention on themselves and their families. This latter issue was discussed in the meetings with the women, albeit often in an 'oblique' manner, and bearing in mind that in the majority of cases it is *not* the woman herself who makes decisions, but her husband/partner or other male family member.

1. The results of the assessment should be shared with groups of people in detention, through a process of community education, and also with the agencies working in the detention centres, UNHCR, and camp management. This information campaign needs to be carefully planned to ensure full dissemination throughout the camps as well as at different levels within the involved organisations. A high profile inter-agency campaign to launch the women's report and to disseminate the results could serve as a catalyst to

further enhance the women's network as well as develop their involvement and resourcefulness. Such an inter-agency approach could also facilitate the design of programmes to respond to the needs substantiated by the assessment.

2. The assessment's results should also be shared beyond Hong Kong in an attempt to address the needs of women and their children when they return to Vietnam. It may be possible to target government bodies, women's groups and organisations already operating in Vietnam, and particular organisations assisting with the reintegration of returning Vietnamese.
3. The extent to which many of the women's concerns are in fact *family* issues should be emphasised. Their efforts to develop more effective strategies to cope with their experiences should be supported. This will result in increased benefit to them and their children. The women should not be expected to respond alone to the implications for intervention from the assessment. In this regard it is important also that the men are not alienated by falling into the trap of 'beating' them with the assessment results.
4. The process of the Focus Group Discussions, the questionnaire survey, and the feedback of the survey results has enhanced the development of the women's groups and activities. This momentum should be used to initiate more self-help groups and further promote women's participation in the camp decision making.
5. The networks of women that were established during the focus group discussions should be maintained and supported as sources of assistance and information. They have provided a much needed medium through which the women have been able to express their concerns in a constructive manner.
6. The women's anxieties about repatriation should and can be addressed by providing them with information from sources that they trust. The women themselves with the assistance of agencies working in the camps are best placed to determine these 'reliable' sources, and to ensure that the information is widely disseminated and available for discussion. ■

*CFSI is a non-profit, international organisation specialising in social and mental health services for uprooted persons. They can be contacted at:*

5/F., New Horizons Building Kai Tak Refugee Departure Centre 2 Kwun Tong Road Kowloon, Hong Kong Phone: +852 716 3033 Fax: +852 382 747	or	MCC-P.O. Box 2773 Makati Metro Manila Philippines Phone: +63 2 522 1936/7 Fax: +63 2 521 2114
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# THE DETENTION OF REFUGEES SEEKING ASYLUM

The detention of asylum seekers has become a routine practice in many countries around the world. For example, in 1982 the government of Hong Kong established 'closed camps', the most extreme form of detention, as part of its policy of what has come to be referred to as 'humane deterrence' for asylum seekers. The idea that detaining refugees would achieve this result has become more widely accepted - and practised - in many countries around the world.

In the United States, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) detains several thousand 'aliens' at any one time, many of them being refugees seeking asylum. It operates seven detention facilities with a total capacity of over 2,000 and has the use of some 1,000 non-INS detention facilities, including state and local jails, federal prisons, and private facilities under contract with the INS. Of those detained, 80 per cent come from eight countries: El Salvador, Mexico, Haiti, Guatemala, Cuba, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, and Honduras. INS policy is incompatible with US federal regulations under the 1980 Refugee Act, which provides the statutory right to claim asylum. Blanket detention serves as a clear obstacle to the exercise of this right.

Persons are detained in Britain under the powers of the Immigration Act of 1971 which authorises detention only where there is 'no alternative'. The overriding consideration is whether a person is 'likely to comply voluntarily' with any restrictions imposed, including any arrangements for removal from the country. Annually, over 3,000 people are detained under immigration laws with perhaps up to a third of these being refugees seeking asylum. Refugees arriving in Britain may be detained while their applications are being considered, after they have been refused entry, or before being returned to their country of origin. Detainees include men, women (including pregnant women) and children who are held from five days up to eighteen months. Asians and Africans constitute the groups most frequently detained. A relatively low rate of absconding is used to justify detaining asylum seekers on a regular basis. When people are detained there is often no right to apply for bail, and no time limit laid down for detention. Release is entirely a matter of Home Office discretion. It is also not necessary for this Office to give any substantive reasons for extending detention. Applications for bail are usually made to an immigration adjudicator, not to the courts.

Suicide attempts are not uncommon among detainees, and instances of actual suicide occur from time to time. For those refugees who are detained, one may assume that the experience constitutes severe stress and increases the already known vulnerability of all refugees to mental health problems. This in particular would be the case where the refugee has previously been a victim of torture and imprisonment.

Moreover, detention of asylum seekers violates human rights law. International norms, established by treaty, prohibit the arbitrary arrest or detention of anyone. Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that 'everyone has right to life, liberty and security of person'. Articles 9 and 13 further provide that 'no person shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile', and that 'everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state'. Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights similarly prohibits states from arbitrarily interfering with the liberty or security of the person. The 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol explicitly protect refugees who are seeking asylum from penalties imposed on account of illegal entry, and from unnecessary restrictions on their movements. The UNHCR Executive Committee has stressed that 'in view of the hardship which it involves, detention should normally be avoided except on grounds presented by law'. The fact that the detention of refugees seeking asylum has not been the subject of major public debate in no way diminishes its injustice. ■

**(Editors' Note:** This article was extracted and adapted from a longer paper, 'The detention of asylum seekers: an unjust and unworkable policy' written by Michael Feinberg. A useful list of sources from which it is drawn is available for those who wish to read more on this topic.)



Lamine Baali, the London-based Polisario Representative, interpreting for Ms Khadija Hamdi, a leader of the Saharawi Women's Organisation, who visited the RSP this year. The Saharawi people - from the former colony, the Spanish Sahara - have been living in exile since 1975. Their struggle for self-determination continues.

# WHAT WELCOME?

*(Editors' Note: The letter below was extracted from information supplied by Stop the Detentions Action Group.)*

Dear Editor,

Since 1990, Zairean asylum seekers arriving in the UK have received some of the harshest treatment of all nationalities. Many have been detained on arrival, often for months. Even those with competent solicitors and those with physical evidence of torture have been refused refugee status. Some have been returned to Kinshasa under guard. Most of these have never been heard of again and are presumed dead. The majority are granted Temporary Admission while their claims are being considered, a status that leaves them liable to detention at any time.

On Monday 19 April 1993, following a hunger strike in March, Zaireans at Haslar prison, some having been detained for months, decided to write a letter to the Immigration and Asylum Division. They were not only depressed, but concerned about one of their group who was in constant pain, talking of suicide and allegedly denied medical attention for a tropical illness. The English translation of their letter is as follows:

Gosport  
19 April 1993

REQUEST FOR TEMPORARY ADMISSION

Your Excellency,

We humbly wish to bring to your attention the aim stated above.

Your Excellency, you are not unaware of the state of political crisis prevailing in our country at the moment, nor the traumatic state of mind we are suffering.

This is why we are now asking you to deal favourably with our cases within the brief period of one week, beginning on April 19th, granting us Temporary Admission until the situation at home returns to normal.

At the end of this period, you will be responsible for any consequences that may follow.

Yours faithfully,

This letter, signed by ten of the Zaireans, was faxed by the Prison Governor to the Immigration and Asylum Division of the British government. Reportedly, the refugees waited calmly - there were no boycotts, hunger strikes or 'acts of indiscipline' as later alleged by an Immigration Officer. The reaction to their letter was to remove them the next day

from Haslar, hand-cuffed together in pairs, and to disperse them to the criminal prisons at Winchester, Dorchester, Lewes, and Sutton.

A solicitor who was interviewing another client on 20 April was told to leave the building as her 'life was in danger'. Presumably, prison authorities wanted no-one to witness the events, especially if the Zaireans resisted. A regular prison visitor arriving that day was simply told that 'All the Zaireans have gone'. Two other detainees did not know what had happened to them and were very concerned. Two of the 'Haslar Ten' were able to phone solicitors and a friend the next morning to inform them of the events. They requested that their letter and story be communicated widely.

A copy of their letter has been attached to the dossier of each of the ten men, and some report being told that writing it would 'cost them dearly' in relation to their applications for asylum. Two of them were pressurised into signing papers revoking their claims for asylum; fortunately friends and solicitors got these statements set aside. On 1 May, one of the 'Haslar Ten' was released and given Temporary Admission. Two who were sent to Winchester have since been returned to Haslar. The other seven remain in prison. ■

*(Stop the Detentions Action Group can be contacted at:  
18 Spillman's Road, Rodborough, Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK).*

**(Editors' Note:** the latest information (15 August 1993) on the Haslar Ten: two have been released with Temporary Admission; one has been sent back to Zaire and there is no news of his whereabouts; two others have had their claim to asylum refused and are awaiting deportation. The Home Office tried to deport another who, because of his fear of being killed upon arrival in Kinshasa, resisted and was severely beaten. He is back in prison with 'facial injuries inflicted by police'. His solicitor is pursuing the assault matter and trying to lodge an appeal.)

## Letter from Pakistan

On 7 August 1993, Ahmed Farooq, Government of Pakistan Official working in the office of the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees, and former Visiting Study Fellow at the RSP wrote:

The last few months have been very busy as in addition to the Refugee Operation of the Afghans, I am also looking after the 372 Bosnian refugees recently arrived in Pakistan.

Yes, we are also hosting the Bosnians and it is an experience quite different from that of managing the Afghan refugees. Whereas the Afghans in Pakistan did not have to undergo a major cultural, social or even climatic change, for the Bosnians it is altogether a different world. For them everything is alien, starting from language to socio-cultural norms. Another thing which sharply differentiates the Bosnians from the Afghans is that whereas the Afghan refugees predominantly represented rural backgrounds, had little or rather no exposure to education and the associated understanding of individual rights and privileges other than tribal ethics which stress collective responsibility based on tribal and family affinities, to the extent of self-negation, the Bosnians with their Western background and higher literacy level are ... demanding privacy and right of

speech and opinion. [As a result] very interesting dynamics are seen operating in this refugee population. A few of the observations I have made are:

- a) a rather fast development of internal bureaucracies with a dictatorial tone and style;
- b) ... internal conflicts and dissensions to a level where disagreements are based on positions rather than issues;
- c) emergence of pressure ... groups with efforts ... to be recognised by the host government as the spokespersons and representatives of the whole populations (though in no way can this claim be substantiated);
- d) decision making of the host government and efforts to ignore their [the Bosnians'] opinion.

[There are] many other ... interesting things [which can] be studied in this refugee population... Do not forget that this is the first time that European refugees are being hosted by a developing Asian Country. ■

**(Editors' Note:** In fact, after the Second World War a number of refugees were hosted in parts of the then British Empire as well as in Egypt. Today Bosnians have found their way to more than one African country, for example, Swaziland and Zambia. Pakistan, however, has taken a unique position in offering a quota for Bosnians.)

## LITERATURE ON PSYCHO-SOCIAL ISSUES RELATED TO FORCED MIGRATION

This year, through funding from the Harvard Medical School, the RSP commissioned Professor Alastair Ager (1993) to review the literature on refugee mental health. Most research, he found, is concerned with refugees resettled in western, developed nations. Much may be learned from such analyses, but in global terms, they are atypical. Generally, the experience of being a refugee is borne in the poorest countries of the world: less than 17% of the world's refugee populations reside in the West.

Studies following the Second World War demonstrated that the psychological or mental health consequences of the experiences of people who have been forcibly and involuntarily uprooted differ significantly from migrants who have some control over the decision to move. Refugees were found at significantly increased risk of psychotic illnesses; the severity of war experiences predicted rates of psychiatric illness; and length of stay in the country of resettlement did not reduce rates of vulnerability. Recent literature, more clinically oriented, reflects 'the reality of psychiatric services in western countries being presented

with symptomology of a nature and extreme which they were ill-equipped to deal with'.

Despite this body of knowledge, and other work acknowledging the role of culture in shaping the experience of mental ill-health, in the early 1980s humanitarian agencies remained unconvinced that the trauma of refugees in Africa or Asia need be addressed. For example, in their review of 'refugee health care in developing nations, Simmons et al. (1993) make no reference to mental health issues of any sort'.

Today, however, 'psycho-social' interventions have become a fashion with both UN and non-governmental agencies. In one country, for example, a programme for traumatized children is being implemented (less than 100 are enrolled) which, if it helped 500 children, would cost US\$8,000 per child. As Ager (1993) has warned, 'The willingness of agencies to fund mental health programmes in the developing world has, however, outstripped the development of coherent research literature with respect to which such programmes might be valuably guided'.

For further information on the Harvard Medical School project and how copies of the publication may be obtained, write to: **Professor Leon Eisenberg**, Department of Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Mass. 02115, USA.

# RETURNEES TO JORDAN AND YEMEN

## THE AFTERMATH OF FORCED MASS REPATRIATION

by Nicholas Van Hear

In the first part of 1993 I made research visits to Yemen and Jordan to investigate the social and economic impact of two recent involuntary mass movements of migrant or minority communities in the Middle East: the movement to Jordan of about 300,000 Jordanians, largely of Palestinian origin, from Kuwait and other Gulf states, and the movement to Yemen from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other states of around 800,000 Yemenis. Both forced migrations occurred in the wake of the Gulf crisis of 1990-91. Interviews were conducted with more than 100 returnees in various parts of each country. Statistical and other published material was collected from governmental, international and non-governmental agencies bodies. Interviews or consultations were also held with officials of governmental, international and non-governmental agencies, and with Yemeni and Jordanian scholars concerned with the returnee issue. The following presents some preliminary findings of this research.

### Character of the returnee population: Jordan

The involuntary return of 300,000 Jordanians, mainly of Palestinian origin, has typically been characterised as the mass arrival of a wealthy class of middlemen and professionals. While they certainly did include well-to-do businessmen, and those who held positions as professionals, technicians, managers and administrators in Kuwait, the returnees also included less well-off labourers, drivers, clerks, artisans and other semi-skilled workers in the emirate. Up to 30 per cent of the Jordanian/Palestinian population in Kuwait may have fallen into the latter categories.

While the characterisation of the returnees as a wealthy class obscures the diversity of wealth among them, even those who had not accumulated wealth on any substantial scale had led relatively comfortable lives in Kuwait and other Gulf states. A majority of returnees now found themselves impoverished, relatively or absolutely, in Jordan. Savings that were brought back or assets subsequently recovered from Kuwait were rapidly depleted. Moreover, for many this was their second or even their third uprooting. As one elderly returnee put it: 'In 1948 I was 22 and I was able to start again. In 1967 I was 41 and I was able to start again. In 1990 I was 64 and now I am unable to start all over again.'

Two or more years after their arrival, the following categories of returnee households can be discerned:

- The poor household, perhaps female-headed, whose small savings were spent on transport back from Kuwait, rent and living expenses. Accommodation is poor, with one or two rooms for a family of eight, nine or ten. Slightly better off are those who have managed to secure low cost housing, or those from families of the 1948 exodus who have access to their parents' housing in a refugee camp serviced by UNRWA.

- Households headed by a former clerk, foreman, or artisan in Kuwait's public or private sector (perhaps in addition running a small business in the afternoon), now in expensive but inadequate rented accommodation. Some income may now come from running a taxi, a grocery shop or confectionery store. The car brought back from Kuwait had to be sold because of high customs duty and high running costs, and the proceeds were used to buy the taxi or to rent and stock the shop.

- Households headed by an accountant, doctor, university lecturer, other professional, technician or manager in Kuwait. A substantial service allowance and other entitlements (extracted from Kuwait after a lengthy campaign), and perhaps some savings, may have largely been sunk into house building; alternatively land for house building may have been bought before the crisis with funds accumulated in Kuwait; in either case savings left over are low. Such professionals were commonly unemployed, although some have set up farms, shops, bakeries or small restaurants, on their own or with returnee partners; this business is unrelated to the work for which they are qualified. Cars were usually parked unused or sold because of inability or unwillingness to pay import duties.

- A minority of wealthy households, headed by businessmen, industrialists and professionals who have managed to re-establish themselves in their previous line of business. They may have built a new house or are extending an existing one that was formerly used for periods of leave from Kuwait. With substantial savings or capital to cushion them against initial hardship, they later invested on the stock market or in their own businesses. However, many of those who had large fortunes in Kuwait have lost them, or are only gradually recovering them; moreover, even those who have retrieved their assets may find it difficult to break into Jordan's business world without the essential contacts that they developed over long periods in Kuwait.

There is growing evidence of the emergence of returnee interest groups. I came across three such organisations, of which one - the Cooperative Society for Gulf War Returnees - stood out as particularly effective.

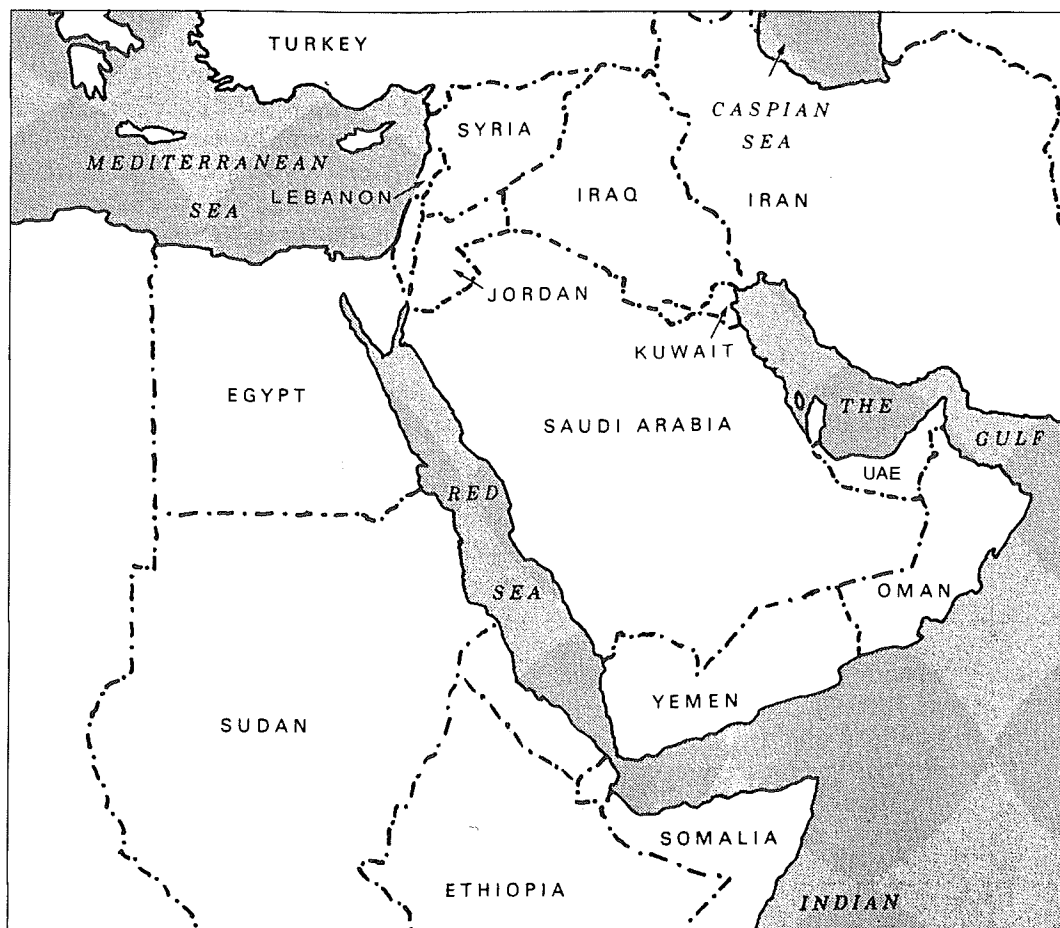
Although commercially oriented in its stated aims, the society has been fulfilling largely charitable and advocacy roles: it runs an efficient and well-attended clinic (for which there are plans for expansion), it operates a welfare or hardship fund, and it is active in publicising the returnees' case through public meetings and the media.

Returnees have addressed themselves collectively to two main areas of lobbying. First, they campaigned against the imposition of punitive import duty on the cars and other household effects they brought back with them; they argued, with some justification, that import of these items was hardly a matter of choice and so they should not be taxed in the normal way. Some modest concessions were made by the government, but import duty remained a major point of contention among returnees.

The second area of activity has been in assisting with the registration of claims for compensation for losses incurred in the course of the mass exodus, for submission to the UN Compensation Commission in Geneva. Claims by returnees to Jordan are thought to total \$3 billion. Under the terms of the 1991 Gulf War cease-fire, funding for compensation is supposed to come from UN-supervised sales of Iraq's oil, but there is little sign that Iraq will comply with this.

### Character of the returnee population: Yemen

The mass return to Yemen comprised both short-term migrants and, like the Palestinians in Kuwait, long-established expatriates. It included migrant workers who might have been away for five, six or seven years. But it also included what should be properly regarded as minority communities of alien origin - foreign residents, not migrant workers. These long-established communities were of two types: the classic middleman minority of traders, merchants and those engaged in services, and a lumpen minority who scratched a living in the informal sector.



On the basis of official sources and my own interviews, perhaps four broad types of returnee can be identified:

- People from the Tihama (the coastal strip running along the Red Sea) and from Aden and its hinterland, who constituted about half of the returnees. Typically, they were in Saudi Arabia for long periods (20-60 years), with their families; I encountered many second and even some third generation returnees. These people had effectively made their lives in Saudi Arabia and did not intend to come back to Yemen, links with which they had all but severed, retaining only perhaps knowledge of their family's place of origin. They were usually poor, typically making a living by unskilled labouring, service or by 'carrying things'; they constituted a lumpen minority of alien origin. Given the length of their stay abroad they were least able to integrate into Yemeni society and many now lived in very poor conditions in shanty settlements around the ports of Hodeidah and Aden.
- Building contractors, artisans, drivers and labourers, drawn from all regions of Yemen. Typically those from Yemen's Central Highlands stayed in Saudi Arabia for shorter periods (of five to seven years) than those from the Tihama, and would send remittances and make at least occasional visits home, thus keeping up their links with the home community; most of these were able to find at least



some accommodation on their return and, albeit with difficulty, some means of livelihood.

- Yemenis in retailing; shopkeepers, restaurateurs, bakers and others in the middle ranks of the marketing and service sector. Often these were long-term residents in Saudi Arabia. They were forced to sell their businesses at a loss, but some were able to establish themselves once back in Yemen.

- Well-connected Yemeni merchants and bankers, often very rich, well integrated into Saudi society, and who sometimes had secured Saudi nationality. They were often from the Hadramawt region in the east of Yemen: Hadramis also accounted for about two-thirds of the returnees from Kuwait. They were a classic long-term middleman minority, with a centuries-old tradition of residence abroad. They had nevertheless maintained links with their homeland and had invested substantially in property and construction; some had in fact returned to Yemen after unification in May 1990, before the Gulf crisis, to take advantage of anticipated oil wealth.

With the exception of some of the returnees from Kuwait, there is little evidence of formal returnee self-organisation, at least in terms of organising to lobby, argue or advance their case. There were organisations involving small numbers of returnees in at least two of the returnee shanty settlements in Hodeidah, but these appeared to be dominated by local residents, and under the authority of the local *agil* - men appointed by the governorate to be their representatives in local communities.

Some political parties, particularly Islah, a party based on appeals to Islam and to tribal loyalties, were moderately active among the returnee communities in the run-up to elections held in April 1993. Shanty dwellers are reported to have voted heavily for Islah. At the more informal level, returnees participated in cost of living riots that broke out in major Yemeni towns in December 1992.

### **Impact of the mass repatriations to Jordan and Yemen: burden or benefit?**

The mass migration from Kuwait and the Gulf added between nine and ten per cent to Jordan's population, pushing it close to four million. Although the short- and medium-term consequences of the mass arrival have been negative and disruptive, some longer-term benefits are already apparent.

Macro-economic indicators suggest that a remarkable economic turnaround has accompanied the arrival of 300,000 Jordanians from Kuwait and the Gulf. The wealthier returnees brought back with them a large amount of capital, although in future years remittances to Jordan will be greatly reduced. Evidence of this capital inflow was

most obvious in construction activity, which turned Amman and other major towns into vast building sites; in greatly increased bank deposits; and in heavy investment in the stock market. A surprise economic boom was reported towards the end of 1992, although the relative importance of the returnees' contribution and of the government's structural adjustment programme, overseen since 1989 by the IMF and the World Bank, was a matter of debate. GDP grew by an exceptional eleven per cent in 1992, with six per cent growth projected for 1993 and five per cent subsequently.

These positive macro-economic signs co-exist with individual trauma and tragedy, unemployment and apparently spreading poverty. From the vantage point of the IMF, the World Bank and the Central Bank of Jordan, the mass repatriation has benefited Jordan. From the point of view of those concerned with human development, the picture is less clear.

Even the economic benefits are ambivalent. For understandable reasons (among them insecurity resulting from the recent trauma of uprooting and the prospect of a political settlement in the Occupied Territories), after investing in building, returnees with capital have generally tried to keep their investments liquid, rather than setting up businesses that directly create employment.

Nevertheless, with a little more imagination and some modest external support, Jordan could turn to its advantage the third major population influx that it has had to accommodate since 1948. In the meantime there is scope for non-governmental organisations to assist those returnees who have been least able to find their feet. Such assistance may eventually indirectly help to improve the position of their relatives in the Occupied Territories whose incomes were supplemented heavily by remittances from the Gulf.

Evidence of the positive impact of the mass return is less convincing for Yemen than for Jordan. If the estimate of 800,000 returnees is accurate, Yemen will have absorbed a seven per cent increase to its population within three months in 1990. There has been a large influx of capital (the equivalent of three years' remittances was received in 1990), which though smaller than that to Jordan is still substantial and may eventually have some comparable effects. Unlike the Jordanian case, there is minimal prospect of recovery of further assets from Saudi Arabia (although some may be forthcoming for the returnees from Kuwait), and the prospects for re-emigration to Saudi Arabia or elsewhere are very limited. Returnee investment has been seen in parts of the country and the economy - in the Hadramawt and in some pockets of agriculture - but the minority of returnees who have been able to find work, conditions are uninspiring, and the prospects are grim for those scratching out a living in shanty settlements.

An Emergency Recovery Project (ERP) to assist returnees, costed at \$58.6 million and financed by the International Development Association (the World Bank's soft loans arm), USAID, the German government, the UNDP and the government of Yemen, has been running since the third quarter of 1991. The project envisages the construction of feeder and secondary roads (employing returnees in road-building); improving education and vocational training for returnees; selling agricultural inputs to returnee farmers at subsidised prices; and the provision of returnee housing and infrastructure. However the ERP has been painfully slow in its implementation. Indications of the ERP's lack of impact include the lack of awareness by returnees and indeed by some of the agencies assisting them that any such programme was under way - even though it has run half of its four-year course and reportedly half of its funds had been spent.

More remedial treatment is needed in Yemen than in Jordan. For many returnee shanty dwellers probably a feeding programme, means of establishing security of tenure and provision of infrastructure are needed as pre-conditions for creating means of livelihood. A strengthening of the hitherto modest efforts to encourage a return to agriculture would bring considerable benefits in the longer term, for there is still potential to turn the massive population return to Yemen's advantage. ■

*The research on which this report is based forms part of a wider comparative study of the impact of forced mass repatriations of migrant workers and expatriate communities. The study is funded by a research award from the UK Economic and Social Research Council (R000 23 3831).*

## Policy makers need research

**The importance of research to policy making was dramatically illustrated during a chance meeting in July between an Italian anthropologist who had been conducting research in Somalia, Dr. Francesca Declich, and Mr. Johnson Brahim, the Home Affairs official from Tanzania. The story is worth repeating as the information may be useful background to others hosting Somali refugees.**

Two hundred years ago, before Tanzania became a state, a group of people from this region were sold into slavery. Through an uprising, some of them - the Zigula - gained their freedom. Unable to make the long journey back to their original homeland, they settled and began cultivating along the Juba river. With attempts to recapture them, their life in Somalia was neither easy nor peaceful. Even after slavery was abolished, British and Italian colonisers subjected them to compulsory labour. Efforts of some to assimilate through language and religion did not improve their position; those who converted to Christianity were subject to further discrimination in terms of access to health services, education and employment. Unlike many of the other Bantu-speaking groups, also former slaves in Somalia, an estimated 20,000 Zigula retained their language as their passport to their homeland.

Although among those who have fled Somalia, they reject the notion that they are refugees. However, unaware of their history, the Tanzanian government has insisted the Zigula (known in Tanzania as the Zigua) be treated as the other Somalis, remaining in the same camps. Not surprisingly, former slaves and former masters do not make peaceful bedfellows.

Resolving this case will be a challenge to the Tanzanian State whose own existence, in its present form, postdates the Zigula's forced migration as slaves. Reuniting these people with members of their own group in their own homeland will go a long way towards helping them regain the dignity and the identity they lost so long ago as slaves.

# TRAFFICKING AND SLAVERY OF MOZAMBICAN REFUGEES IN SOUTH AFRICA

*A report from the United Nations Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Eighteenth Session, Geneva, May 1993.*

Anti-Slavery International has been receiving reports from Mozambique and South Africa since 1990 on trafficking and slavery. There has been a considerable amount of press coverage of the problem. Over the last year researchers in Mozambique and South Africa have been finding out more about the trade, and interviewing refugees in Transvaal and in the townships.

The depth of human tragedy in Mozambique has caused thousands of distressed Mozambicans to flee into South Africa, perhaps as many as 250,000. Each month about 2,000 are arrested and deported back to Mozambique through Komatipoort border post. Since the October 1992 ceasefire in Mozambique the refugee influx into South Africa has increased and even now there are on average 1,000 new arrivals in Kangwane homeland each month.

They know only too well the meaning of anguish, grief, misery and sorrow. The journey is intense and harsh with either an electric fence, land mines or the Kruger National Park to cross first before arriving safely, and of course avoiding the South African authorities for illegal entry into the country.

The electric fence is 63 kilometres long and separates South Africa from Mozambique's Maputo province. Although the fence is not permanently electrified and not at lethal levels, it still inflicts serious injuries to people trying to cross the border. Local communities and the South African Council of Churches have campaigned for the electricity to be permanently switched off.

Refugees who are found outside the boundaries of the two homelands of Gazankhulu and Kangwane face the danger of being caught by the South African police or by the South African Defence Force. They would then be sent back to Ressano Garcia, a desolate village inside Mozambique on the South African border, which is often cut off from supplies and surrounded by bandits. The only way to escape from this village is to re-enter South Africa.

These conditions have led to a thriving trade in the smuggling of human beings across the border and into South Africa. The guides are usually Mozambican with a good knowledge of the guerrilla-infested bush outside Maputo and how to cross the electric fence. The guides are called 'marheyane', in Shangaan meaning 'one who sets clever/devilish traps'. The guide will deliver the refugees to the address requested. If the fee cannot be paid by relatives or friends, a valuable possession, which could be an identity card or a child, is retained by the guide until the complete sum is paid. This can take many months as farm wages are very low. In the case of women, the guide will sometimes sell them off as brides, concubines or as domestic servants.

The guides work with certain taxi drivers, often of Mozambican origin, who now have South African identity cards. The payment for the taxi ride is an added debt which has to be paid off in some way.

ASI has many testimonies from girls and women who have escaped from their bondage. Many report that they never considered going to South Africa until they were enticed with a job. Some already had jobs in Mozambique. However, the difficulties of living in Mozambique made the offer attractive. Often the offer was made and accepted so quickly that they did not have time to return home. Others say that they were abducted. Most guides carry dangerous weapons, knives or guns. The women all describe aggressive and violent buyers who claim total ownership and control. Whenever the women objected the buyer would remind them that they had been paid for and threatened them.

Guides will also take 'orders' for people, usually women and children. The use of young boys and girls for prostitution continues in South Africa. In 1992 ASI received reports of 11- to 12-year olds forced into prostitution. A 12-year old Mozambican girl interviewed by ASI in Johannesburg in December 1992 reported the following:

'A Mozambican man from Joni came and offered my parents work for me and my sister. As my father and mother had no work they said yes. I did not know what I had to do for the man, but when I arrived in Joni he slept with me to teach me my job. I miss my family.'

Several cases of abduction had been referred to the local tribal courts and police, but so far none have gone to trial; in some cases the accused have absconded. In some cases the police take no action. In other cases the trial has been delayed so long that the victims have given up and left the area. In one particular case local people were afraid to give

evidence to the police because the woman agent was suspected of procuring people for witchcraft. As in similar situations worldwide working to help the victims is very dangerous both to the field worker and to the victim.

The problem of exploitation and slavery are only an extension of the dilemma which the Mozambican people face in South Africa. They have no refugee status and thus have no legal protection in the country. They are vulnerable, defenceless, unprotected and easy to manipulate. When they consider their flight to South Africa, little thought is given to the possibility that things might get worse.

It is hoped that the General Peace Accord agreed towards the end of last year will, in the long term, lead to an improvement in the situation in Mozambique, not only reducing the number of people fleeing but maybe even allowing refugees to return to their homes and land. However in the meantime ASI makes the following recommendations:

1. That the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is able to extend her present very limited mandate in South Africa to cover the situation of the thousands of Mozambican refugees in South Africa;
2. That the planned fact-finding tour by UNHCR to establish the status of the refugees takes place as soon as possible and that information is sought from the non-governmental organisations who have been active in this area;
3. That in due course the governments of Mozambique and South Africa review their position with regard to international instruments; neither government is party to the 1956 United Nations Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery;
4. That information be disseminated within the two countries on the rights of refugees;
5. That the South African police take effective action against the traffickers and give adequate protection to the victims;
6. That the South African police take action against child prostitution. ■

*For further information, contact:*  
Anti-Slavery International  
180 Brixton Road  
London  
SW9 6AT  
Tel: +44-71 582 4040  
Fax: +44-71 587 0573

## 4TH INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND ADVISORY PANEL (IRAP) CONFERENCE

5-9 January 1994  
Somerville College, Oxford

The Refugee Studies Programme will convene the fourth meeting of the International Research and Advisory Panel (IRAP) conference on forced migration in Oxford from 5-9 January 1994.

The conference provides an inter-disciplinary forum to facilitate intellectual exchange and communication between researchers and practitioners.

A keynote address by Professor Ernest Gellner, entitled 'From the necessary to the redundant stranger' will be followed by a number of specially commissioned 'state of the art' review papers which will provide a critical examination of research literature in refugee studies, organized by geographical region. These will include studies both of contemporary refugee flows, and of the lesser known and almost forgotten forced migration movements in the pre- and post-war period. In addition, it is planned to establish an independent professional association of refugee studies. Finally, plenary and workshop sessions will focus on themes identified as key issues for the 1990s, as well as new directions in research on forced migration.

Workshop sessions will take place on the following themes:

1. *Violence and its psycho-social impact*
2. *Repatriation: the meaning of home and return*
3. *Repatriation and reintegration*
4. *Host responses to forced migration*
5. *Changing political contexts of persecution, violence and flight*

For registration form please contact:

Ms Ruth Burton  
IRAP Conference Administrator  
Refugee Studies Programme  
Queen Elizabeth House  
21 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LA  
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 865 270722  
Fax: +44 865 270721

The Eighth Joyce Pearce Memorial Lecture  
19 May 1993

**TOWARDS A TRUE REFUGE**

by Aung San Suu Kyi

The eighth Joyce Pearce Memorial Lecture, held by the Refugee Studies Programme of Queen Elizabeth House in honour of the founder of the Ockenden Venture, was written by Aung San Suu Kyi, Honorary Fellow of St. Hugh's College and Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1991. As she has been detained without trial since 1989 in her country, Burma, the lecture was delivered by her husband, Dr. Michael Aris, Fellow of St. Antony's College. He addressed an attentive audience of over 400 in the Examination Schools, and the lecture was also broadcast to Burma on the BBC World Service.

Sir Claus Moser (Warden of Wadham College) was a particularly suitable choice to chair the lecture in his capacity as Pro Vice-Chancellor. In introducing the speaker he alluded to his own position as a refugee from Nazi Germany, and spoke of Aung San Suu Kyi's 'tireless fight for democracy, human rights, individual freedom and dignity'. He quoted Vaclav Havel, President of the Czech Republic, who called her 'quite the most outstanding example of the power of powerlessness'.

Dr. Aris spoke of the strange contrast between the 'relative peace' of Oxford, which he and his wife had enjoyed for many years before her return to Burma in 1988, and the political situation in Rangoon. He extended Aung San Suu Kyi's thanks to Sir Claus, and to Dr. Peter Carey (Fellow of Trinity College), who was responding to the talk.

Aung San Suu Kyi's lecture began by considering the Burmese word for refugee - *dukkha-the*, which means 'one who has to bear suffering'. In this sense, she wrote, none of us can avoid knowing what it is to be a refugee. As with normal everyday suffering, the major world catastrophes which produce large numbers of refugees have their roots in common human failings. Material wealth alone is not an adequate measure of human well-being, and mental or spiritual poverty is as bad as, or worse than, a mere lack of physical goods. In Burmese, the same words are used for spiritual and material wealth (*chantha*) or poverty (*hsinye*).

She went on to note the Buddhist concept that the cause of suffering lies in 'the rigid mental state that comes of a prolonged and unwavering concentration on narrow self-interest'. It was unreasonable to expect that everyone should put the welfare of others above their



*Dr Michael Aris delivering the 1993 Joyce Pearce lecture on behalf of his wife, Aung San Suu Kyi, who is being held as a prisoner of conscience in Burma.*

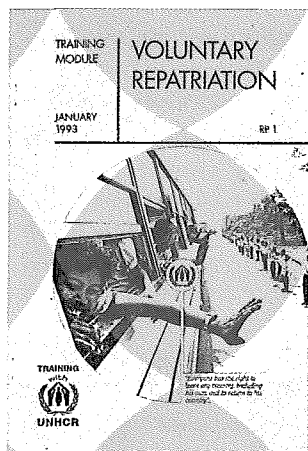
own, but governments, and other institutions which influence public opinion, should encourage people to realise that an individual's real self-interest cannot be divorced from the interests of others. True security - a true refuge - cannot be guaranteed by material well-being alone, she said, but only by rooting social and political structures in 'a framework of values which uphold minimum standards of justice and tolerance'.

In the post Cold-war world, Aung San Suu Kyi said, it was frequently thought that nations, especially developing countries, need only concentrate on economic development, but, as with individuals, their moral and spiritual values are of central importance if their inhabitants are to achieve *chantha* in the broad sense of the word. She concluded by asking whether the age-old dream of a just, kind and reasonable society was impossible. Sir Karl Popper had said that the darkness had always been there, but the light was new. This small light requires tending if it is to grow enough to produce a brighter world.

In his response to the lecture, Dr. Peter Carey gave other examples from the South-East Asian region of countries 'whose heart has atrophied'. He concluded that Aung San Suu Kyi's example meant, however, that 'a new heart begins to beat in Burma'.

*Mark Leopold*





## Voluntary Repatriation

UNHCR Training Module RP1, January 1993.

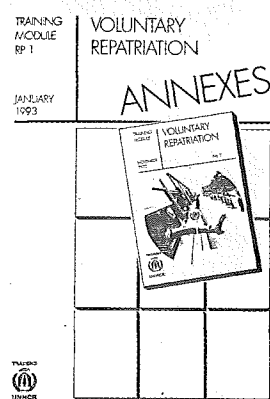
The recent UNHCR training manual on repatriation is an important initiative, which has been well put together, and which will clearly be of great value, not only to the field staff of the UNHCR. It combines the procedural/managerial issues with attempts to promote thought and reflection on wider policy issues. It also contains numerous materials and examples of agreements etc. I was struck by the case studies. When I first encountered them in the text I initially sensed the yawning gap between official procedures and the challenges faced by staff in the field, in war or post-war situations in which repatriation is typically conducted. On the other hand, when I came later to the suggestions for action on the case studies, I saw these as most convincing and indeed encouraging. In fact this made me think that more of that kind of presentation might have been done to give the staff a 'problem awareness' and 'problem orientated' perspective throughout the manual. Perhaps the notion of 'dilemmas' could be used in order to help staff think through how they manage the competing claims on policy from the different parties in any operation.

Based on field experience in southern Africa, I have two broad criticisms of the manual. Firstly, by and large, national governments are presented as rather monolithic and generally hostile to the refugee interests, as are 'national liberation movements'. (Many fieldworkers might be forgiven the rejoinder that HCR, under donor government influence, has often been similarly hostile to the interests of refugees.) Surely it would be more useful to suggest that HCR staff should think about how they can make alliances with those local or national authorities who hold the most progressive attitudes towards the refugees, including those at the grass-roots, for example, chiefs and local counsellors. This approach is a much more productive way to help refugees, than only interacting with the 'Minister of Interior', and may increase the capacity for positive governmental involvement.

My second broad criticism is probably more important. The manual appears to encourage the assumption that the UNHCR has much more capacity to influence events on the ground than it really does in practice. This is despite the fact that the manual does recognise 'spontaneous' repatriation, and at several points remarks that the role of HCR is to support peoples' own efforts and not to try to determine everything. This is a welcome and necessary advance in thinking, given that in recent decades even official figures show that, on average, more than 90 per cent of refugees repatriate outside official programmes of (ostensible) assistance. But more awareness of the extent of constraining contingent factors is surely desirable to enable UNHCR staff to see their activities in context.

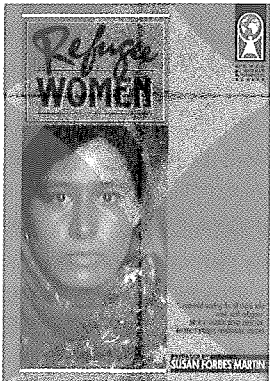
In Mozambique, for example, HCR spent several years planning with hopelessly over-optimistic notions about their capacity to be the central actor in the process of return in a situation where its ability to achieve conditions conducive to return, or to offer incentives to refugees to be part of the UN plans, were simply absent. The planning process continued to churn out documents irrespective of the continually pointed out lack of infrastructure within Mozambique to implement them. While the manual now makes a strong appeal to HCR staff to take local conditions into account when planning repatriations, unless HCR transforms its 'culture of planning', it seems likely that a basic ignorance of local conditions will continue to lead to programmes of little significance.

The decision of when to initiate repatriation is a major dilemma that can paralyse UNHCR: moving people quickly might expose them to risks of resurgent violence and inadequate means to support village life in home areas. On the other hand, delaying repatriation may lead (as it has in most parts of Mozambique) to the departure of most refugees prior to official programmes, without any support for their livelihoods in the process, or the recognition that the very act of returning home is a major contributor to the achievement of local peace agreements. Returnees in Mozambique, as in many other countries, maintained their homes in the camps whilst they rebuilt homes and opened fields inside Mozambique. This challenges bureaucratic and legal assumptions and makes donors fear 'double registration' for aid across the border, but it is highly effective from the point of view of the returnees.



UNHCR's lack of capacity to shape repatriation profoundly may be extreme in Mozambique, but this weakness is in fact widespread. A cynic might even assert that Africa has the capacity to absorb, almost limitlessly, the good and bad intentions of outside aid agencies with minimal effects on its own socio-economic processes. While such a view is extreme, the most enduring feature of most agency-sponsored repatriation programmes is that they have little effect, either on the return itself, or the long-term welfare of the returnees. This lack of impact reflects the gap between the objectives of plans and the capacity actually to implement them. This manual contains excellent material on the need for flexibility, but the point here is that plans must not be too ambitious and divorced from local realities. If officials can be trained to understand the limitation of the instruments at their disposal to effect change, they can then deploy the limited resources they do control to much greater effect. Such an awareness might also lead to changes in methods of working: away from a grand-plan-in-offices approach, to one of problem solving in the field, based on knowledge accumulated from local sources. Such a method of working also serves to transform the officials' perceptions of the capacities of the refugees. They are the ones who have to plan their futures and their return, and it will be *their* task - whether they succeed or fail - to create productive and integrated communities.

Ken Wilson



## Refugee Women: A Review

by Susan Forbes-Martin, 1992, London: Zed Books Ltd, 140 pp.

This book is a contribution to one of the current debates concerning refugees: refugee women, a group whose needs and resources deserve particular attention. It is an attempt at capturing the experience of refugee women and the efforts of agencies to assist them.

The book begins by examining the meaning for the women of being a refugee. It observes that women are the major losers in times of civil disorder. Protection therefore, both legal and physical, is critical for them. Once a framework of protection is instituted, women can, without fear, participate in the critical process of resolving their problems. Sensitivity to women as a group in need of specific protection owing to their gender should thus constitute a primary concern for any serious interventionist programme.

Appropriate participation by women is discussed as a prerequisite for the success of any programme. This ties in with the assumption that the successful planning and implementation of any project is dependent upon the involvement of the target group(s) in assessing their own needs. However, analysis of many refugee situations shows that women are yet to be involved in the identification of their needs, and hence in projects aimed at helping them.

An issue discussed in the book is the inaccessibility and inadequacy of assistance provided to refugee women in all sectors. The book exposes the contradiction between the idea of greater self-sufficiency and the fact that only very few women's projects provide long-term economic sufficiency for the participants. (This reminds one of the proliferation of 'income-generating' projects among refugee populations that generate no income in many situations.)

In addressing the question of durable solutions, the issue of sustainable development, i.e. improvement of local economic capacities and reduction of vulnerability is discussed. The need to provide women with the proper help to meet in third countries is discussed in this book.

This book is well worth reading; it offers useful insights on the plight of refugee women. For practitioners, it provides both a situational analysis, and offers suggestions for appropriate action. It also forms a foundation for any serious research on refugee women, at any stage of the refugee cycle. The Annexes of this book are particularly useful for practitioners; particularly Annex 1 which deals with methods of organising meetings and workshops on this topic. As stated in the Foreword, it serves as a basic guide to this important subject.

Monica Kathina

# UPDATE

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## CONFERENCE REPORTS

The UNHCR, Geneva, and the Pharos Foundation for Refugee Health Care, Utrecht, The Netherlands, in collaboration with the WHO/EURO, organised a **European Consultation on 'Care and rehabilitation of victims of rape, torture and other severe traumas of war in the republics of ex-Yugoslavia'**. This took place from 17-19 June 1993, in Utrecht, The Netherlands.

Representatives from European organisations and (mental) health professionals - in particular those who have already gained experience in offering psychosocial assistance to displaced persons from/in the Republics of ex-Yugoslavia - participated at the consultation.

The medical and/or psycho-social assistance to refugees and displaced persons from/in ex-Yugoslavia who suffered (sexual) violence was discussed during this meeting. Particular attention was focused on the provision of care and support for both women and men who have been subjected to sexual violence and other forms of organised violence.

Copies of the recommendations and of the proceedings of the consultation are available from:

Pharos Foundation for Refugee Health Care  
Hoofdvestiging  
Herenstraat 35  
Postbus 13318  
3507 LH Utrecht  
Phone: +31 30 349800  
Fax: +31 30 364560

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## PUBLICATIONS

*Nouvelles Sahraouies: Des Femmes Sahraouies en Suisse* No. 68, Juin 1993.

*Nouvelles Sahraouies* is published quarterly in French. It is a collection of news briefs, articles, reports on international meetings, and interviews with refugees, that detail the situation in Western Sahara and Morocco. This issue is particularly concerned with women's role in resettlement, focusing primarily on the need for education and training for professional roles in society.

Contact:  
Comité Suisse de Soutien au Peuple Sahraoui  
Case Postale 177  
1211 Geneva 8  
Switzerland  
Phone: +41 22 320-78-11

*Children of the Storm*, Official publication of the Children's Rehabilitation Center, Vol. 4 No. 1, January-March 1993.

The quarterly publication of the Children's Rehabilitation Center, this journal includes profiles, artwork and writing by children in the Philippines' civil war zones, covering psycho-social issues, rehabilitation, and refugees/internally displaced. Thorough and readable accounts of the experience of the Children's Rehabilitation Center in its work with Filipino child victims of war. Focusing on children suffering physical health problems, emotional disorders and social maladjustments due to traumatic forced displacement, strafing and bombing, massacre, disappearance, and other forms of human rights violations. Annual subscription rate (foreign air mail): US\$12.00.

Contact:  
Children's Rehabilitation Center  
122 Dr. Lazcano Street  
Diliman 1103  
Quezon City  
Philippines.

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## NEWSLETTERS

### *Zimrights Newsletter*

A year ago the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (Zimrights) was registered in Harare as 'campaigners for human rights'. Its formation was prompted by the need to educate people concerning their rights and duties as citizens of this country. The association plans to establish regional, provincial and district structures throughout the country. The principle objectives include carrying out investigations into alleged human rights abuses, assisting victims of abuses to claim legal remedies, and networking both locally and internationally with other human rights organisations. Zimrights intends to focus on problems of the poor and homeless and such marginalised groups as refugees. They have produced their first *Zimrights Newsletter*, June 1993.

For further information contact:  
Zimrights Editorial Office  
182 Samora Machel Avenue  
Harare  
Zimbabwe  
Phone: +263 4 796586  
Fax: +263 4 796588/9

## THE RSP VISITORS PROGRAMME

The Visitors Programme brings together students, practitioners and senior academic researchers, some of whom are also refugees, from different regions and different disciplines. Study Fellows follow a supervised course of study. Research Fellows use RSP's resources for independent study, the development of course materials for teaching in their own universities, or undertake supervised study. Visitors may obtain access to the many specialised libraries found throughout the University and are also actively encouraged to involve themselves in student activities in Oxford.

RSP is part of Queen Elizabeth House, the University of Oxford's International Development Centre, and all applications for attachment are reviewed by the QEH Affiliations Committee. On the basis of their *curriculum vitae* and references, successful applicants may be designated Visiting Research Fellows or Visiting Study Fellows. The latter undertake 9 modules of RSP's multi-disciplinary Foundation courses.

Application forms are available from:

The Director  
Refugee Studies Programme  
Queen Elizabeth House  
21 St Giles  
Oxford OX1 3LA  
UK

Fax: +44-865-270721

Please indicate a preferred beginning and ending date for your proposed attachment, your study/research objectives and your planned funding sources. More specific information concerning fees, application procedures, requirements and facilities will be forwarded to interested applicants.

*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*

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

I am able to make a contribution towards my annual subscription of:  £20  £40  \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheques payable to RSP/QEH

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Geographical area of interest \_\_\_\_\_

Type of organisation (eg. NGO, international agency, refugee-based, individual, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

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

## Announcing an E-Mail Discussion List:

### *FORCED-MIGRATION*

The Refugee Studies Programme has initiated a discussion network entitled **Forced-Migration** for E-mail users.

This new discussion list intends to encourage greater exchange of information and to promote discussion on refugee and forced migration issues.

The aims of this group are as follows:

- *to increase understanding of the causes, consequences and experiences of forced migration worldwide.*
- *to exchange information concerning ongoing research around the world.*
- *to inform the members of teaching and training opportunities.*
- *to inform the members of upcoming conferences and other academic events.*
- *to provide the members with up-to-date information on refugee crises in their respective countries.*
- *to link academics from a wide variety of disciplines.*

If you have an E-mail address, and would like to join our discussion group, here are the instructions:

1. send message to:  
**mailbase@mailbase** for JANET users in UK  
**mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk** for overseas users.
2. in the text of the message, not in the subject field, you should type:

Join forced-migration [first name] [last name]  
*for example:*

Join forced-migration John Smith

We look forward to your membership in this discussion list, and to a useful exchange of information.

# Journal of Refugee Studies



Edited by Dr Roger Zetter  
Refugee Studies Programme, University of Oxford

The **Journal of Refugee Studies** provides a major focus for refugee research. Selected papers include:

**Mark Gibney et al.** USA Refugee Policy: a Human Rights Update; **Koichi Koizumi** Refugee Policy Formation in Japan; **Jayantha Perera** Political Development and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka; **Anthony Richmond** Reactive Migration: Sociological Perspectives on Refugee Movements; **Karmela Liebkind** Ethnic Identity, Depression, and Anxiety among Young Vietnamese Refugees and their Parents

Free sample copies are available for inspection. Please write to Journals Marketing Department (RPN), Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP, UK

Published by Oxford University Press in association with The Refugee Studies Programme, University of Oxford

**OXFORD JOURNALS**



## FORD FOUNDATION GRANT FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN REFUGEE PRACTITIONERS

The Refugee Studies Programme has received funding from the Ford Foundation since July 1992 to support short attachments for senior practitioners with experience in Southeast Asia.

Government officials or senior practitioners who are interested in writing up their experiences and conducting research using RSP's documentation centre and resources, and who are willing to teach in-service courses and/or seminars with RSP, are invited to apply for periods of not less than one month.

Interested applicants should write, with c.v., to:  
Dr. Barbara Harrell-Bond,  
Director  
Refugee Studies Programme  
Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LA,  
U.K.  
Fax: +44-865-270721



# Short Courses and Workshops at RSP - 1993/94

## Policy Development for the Reception and Assistance of Asylum seekers in Europe

*6-day Course, 6-11 December 1993*

Since the end of the Cold War and the breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, Europe has experienced the largest movement of forced migrants since World War II.

Responding to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe in a humane way has posed challenges for policy makers. This course is designed to inform those responsible for the development and implementation of refugee policy. It will be of particular value to government officials and NGOs in Eastern and Central Europe, the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

Cost: £250 for 6-day course (including workshop on 'Tomorrow's Conflicts and Forced Migration'), excluding accommodation

Venue: Taylorian Institute, St Giles, Oxford

(Some financial assistance may be available for a limited number of applicants from host countries who have no possibility of sponsorship)

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## Tomorrow's Conflicts and Forced Migration

*1-day Workshop, Saturday 11 December 1993*

This workshop will bring together specialists - academics and diplomats - to consider current events in the former Soviet Republics, including the Baltics, and their implications for forced migration. Dr Jonathan Eyal, Royal United Services, Institute for Defence Studies, will conclude the workshop.

Cost: £15 for participants attending this day only

Venue: Taylorian Institute, St Giles, Oxford

Registration: 8.30 - 9.30 am, Workshop 9.30 am - 5.30 pm

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## Law of Refugee Status

*Weekend Workshop, 14-15 May 1994*

Professor James Hathaway, Associate Dean of Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto, is presenting a repeat of his successful, comprehensive workshop on the interpretation of the UN Convention definition of a refugee. Through a mix of lecture and working group exercises, participants can grapple with the difficult issues of applying legal norms in the context of scenarios based on actual refugee claims.

Cost: £90 including lunch and refreshments, excluding accommodation

## 1994 International Summer School

*4-week Course, 4-29 July 1994*

The RSP's International Summer School is the only forum of its kind to present the results of academic study, to reflect on the implications for work in the field as well as the opportunity to share experiences. It is designed primarily for senior and middle managers from host governments and agencies who are engaged in planning, administering and coordinating assistance to asylum-seekers, refugees and internally displaced people.

Participants will have the option of being evaluated on the course.

The Summer School covers the following major areas:

- International Refugee Law
- Refugees, International Relations, Assistance Agencies and Refugee Societies
- Psychological and Sociological Aspects of Forced Migration
- Approaches and Issues in the Management of Refugee Assistance

Participants have the opportunity to extend their stay for two weeks of guided, private study and visits to relevant organisations.

Cost: £1,950 for the 4-week Summer School, inclusive of bed and breakfast accommodation from 3-29 July inclusive. The optional 2-week extension will cost a further £650 for the period 30 July to 12 August, inclusive of bed and breakfast accommodation.

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## Humanitarian Aid in Complex Emergencies

*5-day Course, 5-9 September 1994*

Since the introduction of the policy of preventive protection, humanitarian aid is increasingly being delivered to refugees and displaced populations in conflict situations.

This course for practitioners working in areas of military conflict aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the issues involved. Covering humanitarian law, the relationship between types of war and relief provision, coordination of relief, protection of vulnerable populations, the role of the UN, repatriation and various aspects of the reconstruction of communities. Case studies of recent complex emergencies will be considered from the perspective of the UN, the military and NGOs. The course will also provide an opportunity for participants and presenters to share and compare experiences and perspectives.

Cost: £350 excluding accommodation

**For more information, and application forms, please contact: The Education Unit, Refugee Studies Programme.**

# SUPPOSE POLICY MAKERS HAD LISTENED?

(Editors' Note: We are grateful to Mr. Anthony Wilson for making the following letter available to the RSP library. It demonstrates the value to researchers of archives of personal papers in writing up the still lacking 'institutional memory'. Written almost 25 years ago, among other issues, it points out the failure of humanitarians to involve and work with affected governments and the dangers of earmarked aid. These problems have been regularly raised since its writing in 1969. Why are such messages persistently ignored by those who determine policy for refugees and returnees?)

16th July 1969

Mr D Dodwell  
Secretary  
Campaign for African Refugees  
University of Warwick  
Coventry

Dear Mr Dodwell

Thank you for your letter of 6th July, and earlier appeal. The reason for our not replying sooner is that I have been giving the most careful consideration to the subject: may I take this opportunity of passing on my thoughts?

The project itself obviously falls into two parts: fund-raising in this country, and the field programme in Africa. I do not wish to comment in any detail on the former, except to say that the need for funds for a London office mentioned in your second letter is not specifically included in your first list of expenses; I also notice that the list of "prominent personalities" does not include any of the High Commissioners or Ambassadors of the countries most concerned. I wonder if this is an act of policy on your part, since this is a "British" appeal? Or that because of the very delicate political implications of the project, you felt it unwise to request their public involvement? Or, that they have themselves declined on one of these grounds?

Your first letter was not specific as to how the money is to be spent: you only said it "could be handed over to the U.N.H.C.R."; this inevitably leaves us wondering how the figure of £2 m. was arrived at, as well as how it would be spent. In another of your papers which I have received, you list the countries from which some of the refugees come; some tens of thousands from Mozambique are now in Malawi. However, the Malawi authorities have hitherto refused external offers of assistance, since this would draw attention to the fighting going on in Mozambique, and President Banda considers that good relationships with the Portuguese authorities must take priority if Malawi's interests are to be paramount. Very severe strains could take place between e.g. the Congo Leopoldville and Tanzania, and the Sudan and Uganda, if there were to be massive inputs of aid to one side of the border alone - at a time when African countries are trying desperately to reduce inter-state tensions over "artificial" boundaries. Similarly, the allocation of development funds within these countries is a question of the highest political importance: schemes intended for refugees alone could produce the kind of reaction from host nationals which can cause severe strains. This has been recognised by the U.N.H.C.R., who is working with other U.N. agencies on regional development schemes, to benefit all those living in the areas concerned.

Under the heading "The Solution", you list the items needed to settle a family. Other settlement schemes in Africa have been unable to reduce the true cost of

settling individuals to below £100 per head - including access roads, etc.; and I wonder what is the role of the 25 lbs. of maize and cowpeas? This would not be sufficient to see a family through more than a very short period and certainly not long enough to raise a harvest in virgin bush. If their new environment includes medical facilities, schools, roads, water resources, extension services, eradication of tsetse fly and bilharzia (how?), they will be far better off than the host communities. No-one would object to progress along these lines: but what is the political reaction of the governments involved to help on this scale to immigrant groups?

I have no desire to offer destructive criticism: but you will appreciate that two million pounds is a massive sum to inject into countries whose total development funds from all sources may be only three times this amount. You rightly say that refugees are well-received by the local population; there is a long tradition of the movement of peoples in Africa, and the refugee problem is only a part of this. I do not claim to see any easy solution, and money certainly helps; but this is an African problem, and its solution must rest in African hands - with outside assistance if asked for. I wonder if your campaign sees the position in this way?

You are surely right in planning a heavy newspaper and television cover at the time of the campaign. Have you discussed this yet with the countries involved? As you know, Governments are very suspicious of visiting journalists and cameramen, especially in border areas - where the refugees are. The southern part of Tanzania is virtually closed to foreigners because of the guerilla bases run by FRELIMO; and journalists are not likely to find the new Sudanese government more sympathetic to reach the southern provinces than its predecessors. Obviously, any attempt to obtain material without the agreement of the Governments would be disastrous for the aim of the project (which is not the collection of funds, but the settlement of refugees); and, as I have pointed out, this publicity would be directed to areas where both internal and external political relationships are extremely delicate.

Perhaps you have considered all these points, but did not consider it necessary to say so explicitly in your appeal. If you can assure us that not only the U.N.H.C.R., but the governments of the countries concerned, are all in full support of the scheme, I will be pleased to present your case to my Trustees; equally, I would be pleased to meet any of your officers or sponsors and discuss these problems further, if you thought it helpful. Meanwhile, I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Chataway for his information.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony E. Wilson  
Administrative Secretary

# LETTERS

RPN welcomes responses to the personal viewpoints expressed in these letters.

## COMMENT ON TERENCE DUFFY

The article written by Terence Duffy in January 1993's issue of RPN is rather surprising, if not shocking. Apart from the fact that all the activities mentioned are, on average, one year old, the paragraph 'Refugee/Host Relations and Mediation' presents a quite inaccurate picture of the actual situation.

First of all, the author shows how poorly informed he is by continually referring to 'the refugees from Croatia', when the vast majority of refugees living in Slovenia for nine months are from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Secondly, it would appear that he does not have the slightest idea of the position and role of the organisation MOST [the former Voluntary Service Slovenia] in the refugee centres in Slovenia. MOST did not 'innovate', but only enabled foreign volunteers to contribute to on-going projects which were initiated by our Association. The aim was to support the local volunteers (Slovenian and Bosnian) in their current work in the centres.

Furthermore, the terms of collaboration between the Association and MOST are that MOST provides foreign volunteers without special skills and raises funds for accommodation and food for these volunteers. The Association integrates the foreign volunteers into its projects (sometimes a difficult task because of language problems) and takes care of the supervision and education of these foreign volunteers.

As the information in the article is quite dated, I would like to stress the following. It is possible that, one year ago, MOST tackled 'the problem of ... the friction their [the refugees'] presence has created among the local host population'. The reality today shows that either they gave up, or they failed. We are equally aware that the problem of integration in Slovenian society is

one of the most important issues at present. Our answer up to now has been to develop voluntary work involving both Slovenian and Bosnian volunteers.

I hope that the information on civic initiatives in the former Yugoslavia will be updated in the near future. A full description of specific projects is in preparation and will be forwarded to you.

**Dominique Cochard**, *Association for Preventive and Voluntary Work, Ljubljana, Slovenia*

## RESETTLEMENT IN PAKISTAN

*Letter (excerpts) from a former RSP Fellow.*

I completed my assignment in Pakistan as the long-term socio-economist and I was about to go home at the end of June when the World Bank and the Government of Sindh invited me to be the Resettlement Planner of a huge resettlement project in Pakistan. The project is known as Chortiar Reservoir Project...

The people have still not been relocated. The area is the remotest in Pakistan: no roads and in some places, one has to go by camel-back or by boat. ... Now I am planning a census of all the affected households and then ... a plan to relocate them elsewhere. It is fascinating to learn how people react to the project differently and how their world view(s) are shaped by politico-religious processes. The main problem for me to resolve is to motivate people to move out of the area on a land-to-land basis. Many do not want to leave their lands at all; some prefer cash compensation to land compensation. The more fluid group is transhumant pastoralists who come in groups from the Thar desert during the summer to graze their cattle. All are equally interested in obtaining compensation from the government.

**Dr Jayantha Perera**

## SPECIAL THANKS TO JOANN MCGREGOR

Dr JoAnn McGregor, who edited the RPN from 1990 until June of this year, has accepted a research fellowship at the University of Swansea which will allow her to continue her research and writing interests on refugees in southern Africa on a full-time basis.

The staff of the Refugee Studies Programme wish her well and we are sure that all of the members of the Network will join with us in thanking her and her several part-time assistants for their good judgement in selecting materials which fulfil the objectives of this Newsletter and the Network.

## New Senior Academic Appointment

A priority set in RSP's second Five Year Plan (1992-7) was the appointment of a senior academic to be responsible for the teaching and visitor's programme.

The RSP now welcomes suggestions of, or enquiries from potential candidates for this position which is to be advertised in the autumn.

Priorities for disciplines to be added to the RSP research staff are psychology and economics. Scholars who are interested in attaching their research to the RSP are invited to request a copy of our 'Guidelines for Outside Funded Research'.

# NEWS FROM RSP

## New Director appointed

On 14 July 1993, Dr. Frances Stewart, a Senior Research Officer at Queen Elizabeth House (QEH) since 1972, took up her new position as Director of the University's International Development Centre (IDC) at QEH. The IDC is the RSP's parent body within the University of Oxford. The IDC is now managed by an Inter-Faculty Committee (IFC), chaired by the Vice-Chancellor.

## International Summer School

This year's four-week International Summer School included nineteen representatives of humanitarian agencies and ten senior government officials from Africa and Europe. This unusual mix of participants provided a unique opportunity for researchers, humanitarian staff and government officials to gain a better understanding of each other's interests, objectives and perspectives. Several of the government officials were able to take part in an extended programme to meet with officials in the Home Office, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Overseas Development Administration, UNHCR's London Office, and several non-governmental agencies which work with refugees. The European Community funded several of this year's participants and has agreed to fund five more government officials from SADCC countries at next year's Summer School.

The impressions recorded in the reports to the RSP of some of those who came this year are worth noting.

'It is now worth mentioning the only item left for RSP to organise ... is how to form organisations to deal with refugees and needy persons. There is a need for us, as government managers, to inform government on policy, planning, decision-making, organisation and effectiveness.'

'Please send my appreciation and thanks to the EC ... tell them that I will pass on what I have learned to the [other] government staff, agencies and to the refugees themselves.'

'It is a pity that we ... [never] thought of organising a workshop to train the staff ... who are citizens of the country.'

'We learned a lot from these meetings, especially the programmes undertaken by voluntary organisations assisting asylum applicants who are rejected and face being deported ... to the countries (of origin) where they may face punitive measures. The

various voluntary groups have ... built up a network of assistance ranging from legal to social security and developmental. We were further impressed [with the] system whereby refugees are organised into communities. It was also encouraging to note the system by which the government assists refugees ... through funding [their] voluntary organisations ... something which is not practised in the countries from which we come, where such organisations are never financially assisted by those governments. On the other hand, we were dismayed by the way in which asylum seekers are sometimes inhumanely treated, particularly putting them under detention. It was more striking because the treatment is practised by a country like UK which is supposed to be exemplary in observing and adhering to International Instruments on refugees and human rights. The detention facilities, to our dismay, are being expanded.'

'My appeal to the RSP ... is that they should further facilitate similar participation by more staff - both from government and NGOs ... who work with refugees. I can already envision the usefulness of the course. ... Among the groups to be targeted should be the Immigration and Police, since these in most cases are the first government officials that refugees and asylum seekers come into contact with.'

## Staff activities

It is only recently that those concerned with human rights per se have begun to include refugees as targets of their concern. Since February 1993, with the appointment of **Dr. Chaloka Beyani** whose position is funded by His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan, the RSP has been able to play a much more active role in promoting knowledge of human rights law as well as in monitoring their observance in refugee situations.

Dr. Beyani has participated in research/monitoring missions with the Lawyers' Committee on Human Rights on the Protection of Refugees in Africa in Kenya, Sudan, Malawi and Mozambique. Together with Dr. E. Voutira, Ms Mary Dines and Dr. B.E. Harrell-Bond, Dr. Beyani participated in a seminar on refugee protection at the Harvard Law School in February; his paper was entitled: 'Documenting Persecution in the 1990s: Problems of Refugee Protection in Africa'. He has also given the following lectures: 'The Concept of Human Rights, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in International Law' at the Faculty of Law, University of Buffalo, Buffalo, New York, March 1993; 'Humanitarian Intervention and

Responses to International Crises' to the Special Advisory Group to the Commonwealth Secretary General, April 1992; 'Internally Displaced Persons in International Law', the Ford Foundation, March 1993; 'The Content, Scope and Duration of Returnee Protection', UNHCR Round Table meeting on Voluntary Repatriation, Geneva; and 'Displacement During War and Armed Conflict', OXFAM seminar, June 1993, World Human Rights Conference, Vienna. His book, *Restrictions on Internal Freedom of Movement and Residence in International Law*, will be published by Clarendon Press, Oxford, in 1994.

During the next academic year, Dr. Beyani will be teaching a course, 'The International Legal Order, Human Rights and Forced Migration' as part of the RSP's Foundation Course (see page 17). In September and October 1993, he is scheduled to speak on refugee protection and human rights issues in Tanzania, Kenya, Finland, and the Netherlands.

**Dr. Ken Wilson** will take a three-year 'leave of absence' from the RSP from September 1993 to work as the Ford Foundation Programme Officer for Mozambique. The Ford Foundation programme there is expected to focus on issues of rural reconstruction and development, natural resource management and rural governance with a focus on central Mozambique. It will seek to mesh continued support for higher education and state administrative capacity with the promotion of rural initiatives and perspectives; the means to achieve this will (in no particular order of priority) combine research, training, forums for reflection and policy debate, and experimental rural development and natural resource management programmes.

## Conference

Refugee Studies Programme, in conjunction with King's College London and the Royal Geographical Society, organised a one-day conference in London on **Refugees and Environmental Change**, on 29 September 1993.

## People on the Move

Refugee Studies Programme is about to acquire a near complete set of the journal, *People on the Move*. The set, however, is lacking three issues: No. 8 1974, No. 39 1983 and No. 48 1987.

RSP would be grateful for help in locating these issues.