

REFUGE

c/o Refugee Documentation Project,
York University, 4700 Keele Street,
Downsview, Ontario M3J 2R6

Editor:

Howard Adelman

Managing Editor:

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Editorial Board:

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Typesetting and Layout:

Seagull Graphics Inc.

Refuge is dedicated to encouraging assistance to refugees, by providing a forum for sharing information and opinion on Canadian and international issues pertaining to refugees. It is published five times a year, in October, December, February, April and June. It is a non-profit, independent periodical supported by grants from the Canadian Foundation for Refugees, Operation Lifeline, and the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission; by private donations; and by subscription payments of \$10 a year. It is a forum for discussion, and the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of its funders, staff or Editorial Board.

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Logo design:

Dreadnaught Cooperative Inc.,
Toronto

Second Class Mail Registration No. 5512
ISSNO229-5113

Correction

In the Note on the Politics of Counting the World's Refugees (page 12, Sept. - Oct., 82 *Refuge*), the fifth sentence should read, "The number of Palestinian refugees *does* include children of refugees ..."

Letters

To the Editor:

We have just recently received the September/October issue of *Refuge* and read with a great deal of interest, your open letter to The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy.

We wish to commend you for your efforts and want you to know that we will support and assist you whenever possible.

Audrey Johnson, RSW
Coordinator,
Nanaimo Refugee Coordination
Society

(See following letter)

Indochinese Refugee Social Assistance Programs in Europe and the United States

One of the important functions of *Refuge* is the analysis and interpretation of key reports on refugees. In the last issue, we informed readers of three important studies on the resettlement of the Indochinese in Canada. In this issue we compare three reports, two American and one European, which analyze the assistance offered in refugee resettlement.

In July of 1982, the Council of Europe, through its Steering Committee for Social Affairs (CDSO), published a report by consultant Reinhard Lohrmann, who is the chief of the Research and Documentation Unit for the Department of Planning, Liaison and Research of the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM) in Geneva. The report deals with the social situation and social measures concerning people seeking political asylum or having refugee status in the member states of the Council of Europe.

A "Profile of the State Refugee Resettlement Programs" (undated) prepared by the Office of State Services of the National Governors' Association on the basis of surveys conducted during the 1980-81 fiscal year is very similar to the European report. Both compare data from different jurisdictions (independent nation states in the Council of Europe; states in the American union). Each reflects the preoccupation of the different perspectives. Both reports begin with the customary background material and numerical comparisons of the different jurisdictions, then each diverges. Given the different problems — America, a federal state with divided jurisdictions, relies much

more on the non-governmental sector than Europe — it is not surprising to find the Governors' report concentrating almost entirely on problems of administration and coordination.

The European report concentrates on the actual social measures provided for the refugees — reception centres, housing, resettlement patterns, social assistance, language training, education, health, secondary migration and family reunification. These are more or less the same topics dealt with in the Second American report prepared in February focussing on the refugee assistance program of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) of the Department of Health and Human Services. Unfortunately, this American report was not written by an independent consultant with a knowledge of and experience in refugee matters, but by the surveys and investigations staff of the Committee of Appropriations of the U.S. House of Representatives. The lack of independence and expertise in this case is combined with such poor social science methodology and such illogical reasoning wrapped up in tendentious moralizing that the result tells us more about the political attitudes of the authors and, perhaps, about the U.S. government than about refugee assistance programs for the Indochinese. The feature article in this issue takes the Congressional Report as its centrepiece and uses the European report and the Governors' report as a Greek chorus from which comments and insights can be gained into one policy direction active in the U.S. government.

Dear Mr. Axworthy:

We are responding to a recent press release that the number of immigrants to Canada will be reduced.

We accept the logic of reducing the number of immigrants at this time when our country is unable to provide employment to its citizens but we believe Canada would be evading its duty more if we close our doors to the hapless refugee who faces a life of utter hopelessness until we extend a helping hand. We therefore ask that the refugee portion of the immigrant quota not be reduced in spite of bad economy.

We also suggest that the government might relieve the public pressure by once again suggesting to individual Canadians that they can sponsor refugees.

Turning to another facet of immigration, we ask that Canadian officials involved in

counselling normal immigrants, and perhaps even those refugees who might have a further option, acquaint these people with the realities of life in Canada. It would appear that many have unrealistic expectations.

If potential newcomers have the hurdles and alternatives clearly set out for them by Immigration counsellors at the time of interview, then many decisions made about coming to Canada clearly become their own responsibility and no blame can be laid at the door of the Canadian government.

Our concerns have evolved from our frequent and direct contact with these new immigrants.

David L. Handley
President,
Nanaimo Refugee Coordination
Society

