



CANADA'S PERIODICAL ON REFUGEES

REFUGE

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The Insecurity of El Salvadorean Refugees

by Jeremy Adelman

A young girl burst into the schoolhouse frantically warning us that the "soldados" (soldiers) were entering the refugee camp. Elena, a Belgian teacher who coordinates the education program in one of the seven camps which constitute the larger camp of El Salvadorean refugees called Mesa Grande, rushed to the door. Rapid instructions on the afternoon's classes were given to the teachers who were meeting with her. Hurrying through the maze of ramshackle buildings and fields, Elena explained that this was not an uncommon experience. Honduran troops (as the defense forces of the host country of these refugees) enter periodically into the camps. Haste was needed to minimize the chaos and paralysis of all work and activity which inevitably follow the sighting of the battalion.

From the sight where most of the schools were concentrated, six soldiers could be seen half a kilometre away, entering the camp after climbing the steep hill which surrounds the plateau of Mesa Grande. The children, having fled the classroom at the news of the ap-

proach of the soldiers, were scattered in the fields, observing from a distance the movement of the troops. In an attempt to restore order, Elena encouraged the teachers to resume classes and treat the incident as a regular event that should not disturb essential activities. Elena then turned to the kids who, after being called, slowly made their way back to class in time to finish the last ten minutes of school.

Meanwhile, the soldiers continued to meander through the camp, waving their rifles or sticks at the refugees. The Salvadoreans had ceased whatever they were doing to watch with trepidation and fear, despite the frequency of military visits, as the soldiers (who to the refugees were indistinguishable from those they had fled back home) passed by.

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Refugee child in Camp Colomocagua.

Jeremy Adelman, 1983



REFUGE

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Canadian Foundation for Refugees Plans Refugee Newsletter

August 3, 1983

Dear Dr. Adelman:

Please find enclosed an outline for a prototype NEWSLETTER that the Canadian Foundation for Refugees will produce for distribution across Canada. The Foundation invites both community agencies and individuals concerned about the cause of refugees to assist in this undertaking. It is the intention to publish the newsletter on a quarterly basis starting with the first issue in early fall (October).

The newsletter will assist the communication among those people involved in aiding refugees. It will form part of the networking mechanism so that workers can share with each other their experiences, concerns, issues, approaches and/or solutions. This should thereby help overcome feelings of isolation.

Editor's Note: Above is an excerpt from a letter sent to me by the Canadian Foundation for Refugees. Why is the Foundation planning to produce such a newsletter when *Refuge* is already being published? Further, the proposed contents of the newsletter overlap ours. This is a waste of government funds. One or the other should not be published. We would like to hear the views of our readers.

Dear Howard:

We appreciate the opportunity to comment before publication of your note.

At the outset, we wish to express our total disagreement with your 'Editor's Note'. The type of newsletter we wish to publish is not being published by anyone. *Refuge* doesn't begin to serve the need we are addressing. Both *Refuge* and our newsletter should be published, as they serve two very distinct areas of concern and endeavor re refugees.

The statements you make are very biased. You are however entitled to your own opinion.

The letter you received was sent to some 200 persons and organizations working with or on behalf of refugees. We have presently received 25 responses; 23 are positive, enthusiastic and extremely supportive of this effort, one is withholding their (sic) opinion, and one (yours) opposed.

Earlier, we mentioned that there are two areas of concern and endeavor re refugees. These are advocacy and assistance. These two areas are not in competition; they are complementary. By the same token, there will always be some areas of overlap between the two as it is impossible to always keep them as unique and mutually exclusive areas

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Letters

To the Editor:

While my wife and I were on a recent visit to the USSR, we visited with several refusenik families. These people were all members of the Jewish religion and were being helped, in some form or other, by synagogues and/or other Jewish organizations in the free world.

However, at the home of one of these families, we met another family: the Churins. Igor Churin and his wife Ann and their two children are not Jewish, belonging to no religious group of any kind. Because virtually all of the help

for refuseniks comes from religious organizations, Christian and Jewish, the Churin family has been the recipient of none. We were struck by this apparent inequity and so are seeking the assistance of some non-sectarian group that would undertake to assist the Churins.

Igor Churin, an engineer specialist in structural and mechanical vibrations, applied for his exit visa about 5 years ago. It was denied and he was immediately demoted to the position and salary of a beginner and stripped of his doctoral standing, continuing to work in the same plant in his reduced status. He is a most remarkable man, fluent in English, German, and of course Rus-

sian. He learned English completely on his own, by listening to Voice of America broadcasts. He appears to be an extremely intelligent, high-principled man who wished to emigrate because, as he says, he seeks a better life for his children (Tanja about 11 and Alexander about 7). They are good people who would be a credit to any society in which they chose to live.

Is there any help that anyone can offer these fine people?

Paul H. Klein

Willowdale, Ontario

Their address: Igor Churin

Profsojuznaja 75-3-95

117342 Moscow, USSR

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El Salvadorean Refugees
(cont'd from p. 1)

Elena, like many others who work to organize and maintain crucial activities, fights a rear-guard battle against the destabilizing actions of the military. Moreover, a pervasive sense of uncertainty and insecurity exists beyond regular military incursions, which the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) seems incapable of dealing with in an effective manner. This generic sense of insecurity undermines broad efforts to provide an interim "home" to displaced Salvadoreans in all the camps, of which Mesa Grande is the largest in Honduras.

There are four dimensions to the insecurity which prevails in the camps. First, uncertainties arise from forces outside the camps' boundaries, such as military incursions. Second, internal factors, (such as petty crimes and jealousies) generic to any society, are exacerbated by the tensions of a concentrated refugee camp experience. The third and fourth dimensions involve insecurities about the past and future. Both contribute to a present sense of unease. The past experience of violent upheavals from traditional lifestyles and values back home and placement into circumstances (camps) alien to the Salvadoreans create an environment of uncertainty. The uncertainty of the future is caused partly by the unpredictable nature of events within El Salvador (determining whether or not the refugees can return home) and partly by the UNHCR's general policy of "reubicación" (camp resettlement) to

which the refugees are emphatically opposed.

The UNHCR cannot rectify uncertainties related to the violent experience of the past. Nor can it do much about internal "social" tensions, though the UNHCR does foster internal management of civil order by the refugees themselves, and, in the case of violations, depends on the Honduran law enforcement agencies and judicial system. The UNHCR can play a critical role in relation to the problem of external uncertainties and future camp policy. In both areas the UNHCR has experienced some successes and some failures. The extent to which the UNHCR can prove effective in these realms is conditioned by the local structure within which the UNHCR finds itself.

The UNHCR provides protection to refugees and seeks "durable solutions to their problems". The discharging of these responsibilities is done through national or local authorities (such as the erstwhile Honduran Refugee Commission — CEDEN), and/or through other UN and international agencies (OXFAM, Catholic Relief Services, Médecins sans Frontières, etc.). UN guidelines stipulate "a formal link between UNHCR and the national authority responsible for the protection of refugees". The aim is to unite the UNHCR with appropriate national bodies in a cooperative discharging of the duties of the UNHCR.

Honduras is neither a signatory to the *Convention* nor to the *Protocol*; nor does it have a national agency charged with cooperating with the UNHCR.

The implications of this are twofold: (1) the UNHCR has no collegial affiliate to discharge its basic functions even though it has the support of international and foreign agencies, and (2) Honduran authorities are not bound by international stipulations on refugee "status" or "treatment". The first implication creates a higher degree of burden than is desired by the UNHCR. The second has profound ramifications on the ability of the UNHCR to use the international legal infrastructure in support of its policies.

Simply put, the abstention of Honduras from the attendant clauses of international law referring to refugees gives local and national authorities arbitrary powers — accountable only to local or national law. The effectiveness of the UNHCR in providing security within the two main spheres of external (political) factors and future policy towards the camps is hamstrung by the limitations imposed by local authorities. To preserve its already beleaguered relationship with the authorities, the UNHCR systematically chooses not to react strongly in the event of infractions. Also, given its negative image in Honduras, the UNHCR tries to mollify tensions with the authorities by relinquishing its responsibility to preserve security for refugees and those dealing with them.

In the realm of external (political) factors, this is manifest in several ways. Constant insecurity is created by military incursions. Recently, the military imposed an embargo on all building supplies indefinitely. Further, Honduran workers paid to provide services driving lorries, teaching or basic engineering are subject to fear of harassment by the military. One Honduran fumigator working with a Canadian nutritionist in Camp Colamocagua was picked up by the military for allegedly not having his identification papers in order. The UNHCR, in order not to jeopardize its tenuous link with the authorities, exerted little pressure on the military and left the Canadian nutritionist to arrange the release. The coordinator of workshops (hired by Catholic Relief Services) in one of the camps spoke candidly of his fear of arbitrary arrest.

In the daily, *La Prensa*, on June 23, 1983, the UNHCR was accused of harbouring guerrillas in Mesa Grande who conducted regular raids into nearby

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Camp Mesa Grande. Honduras.

El Salvadorean Refugees (cont'd from p. 3)

towns. UNHCR coordinators Maria Carmen Aubanell (Mesa Grande) and Mercedes Aubanell (Colamocagua) were named "principal suspects". Other international workers were accused of having links with the Palestinian Liberation Organization and disseminating "Marxist literature" amongst the refugees.

The multitude of external factors which contribute to the general unease, compounded by the arbitrary legal ties which characterize the relationship between Honduran authorities and the UNHCR, severely limits the UNHCR's ability to provide the refugees with a sense of security.

Problems of insecurity are worsened by the policy the UNHCR has adopted vis-à-vis the future of the camps. In this case, the UNCHR cites the danger posed by the camps' proximity to the border between Honduras and El Salvador as reason for resettlement of the camps. The possibility of incursions by the Salvadorean military or agents of ORDEN (ultra-rightist terrorist organization) does exist — particularly at camps Colamocagua and San Antonio which are within earshot of El Salvador. Such incursions did occur in the now-defunct camps of La Virtud and San Juan de Guarita. The response then was to erect a new camp, now Mesa Grande, further inland and move the refugees out of the border region. The move also sought to derail accusations of guerrilla affiliation with the refugees.

The establishment of Mesa Grande has insulated the refugees from death squads and the Salvadorean army. But accusations of guerrilla ties, as exemplified by the article in *La Prensa*, still abound. Moreover, the actions of the Honduran military continue unabated, allowing fear and uncertainty to persist despite resettlement.

The resettlement policy is further confused by the apparent schism between local authorities who are content to leave Mesa Grande intact and the UNHCR who adamantly maintains its policy of resettlement. The authorities would seek the resettlement of other camps, but would prevent implementation of durable solutions by denying access to lands, markets and work. The UNHCR foresees the disbanding of Mesa Grande and its re-establishment

elsewhere as a move towards a more durable solution. When pressed on the incongruity with government policies, the UNHCR spokesman simply refers to "negotiation" as the means to finding an agreement.

Much energy and resources have contributed to the construction of the camps and the development of a feeling of a "temporary home". None of the refugees spoken to would like to move. All expressed weariness at constant shifting and mobility, and pointed to their struggle to recreate from scratch within the camps the semblance of a life they led in El Salvador. To begin now to uproot the refugees once again, *without their consent*, would be tantamount to undoing all that has so far been achieved.

Resettlement in an appropriate area would go a long way to establishing a "durable solution" by giving refugees access to local markets and labour mobility. But as it stands, the most seriously considered region is the province of Olancho — where hundreds of thousands of migrant Salvadorean workers were persecuted and subsequently evicted during the "Soccer War" of 1969 and where memories of that period still linger amongst some of the refugees. Recent documentation of extensive human rights violations (including the abduction and murder of a French-Canadian priest) and the barbarism of local authorities belie the humanitarian intent of this serious proposal.

Moreover, the establishment of an American military training base for thousands of Salvadorean soldiers in nearby Puerto Castilla makes the possibility of resettlement to Olancho, not of genuine interest in the welfare of the refugees, but a policy designed with larger geo-political permutations.

The UNHCR's adoption of such a policy; (1) exacerbates the current feeling of uncertainty on the part of the refugees and (2) puts into serious question the ability of the UNHCR to operate effectively under the weight of arbitrary legal structures. Fear of Honduran military reprisals and bureaucratic belligerence has made the UNHCR compromise on its dual function of protection and provision of durable solutions. The persistence of external uncertainties which are only partially resolved, the unpredictability of the future (whether or not resettlement will occur) are in part caused by

the UNCHR's structural dilemma. This dilemma is in turn caused by the nature of Honduras' general refugee policy.

Despite the UNHCR's commendable record in providing services, supplies, and material requirements to Salvadorean refugees, it falls short on the more complex problem of providing a secure environment in which the refugees can take a brief respite from the tensions of war which surround them.

Jeremy Adelman was one of the founders of Operation Lifeline and spent this past summer in Central American refugee camps.

Canada Accepts 134 Freed Salvadorean Political Prisoners

The Constituents Assembly in El Salvador declared, on May 5 this year, a 60-day amnesty (Ley de Amnistia y Rehabilitación Ciudadana) for political prisoners, guerillas and exiles who wished to either reintegrate into El Salvadorean society or to resettle in a new country. During the amnesty period, El Salvador released approximately 550 out of a possible 730 prisoners.

As a result of the amnesty, Canada has admitted 134 freed Salvadorean political prisoners. With them came 139 family members. They have been admitted to Canada under the authority of the Oppressed Persons and Political Prisoners Program.

When the amnesty was declared, the Canadian government sent a team of external affairs officers who had experience in Latin America to San Salvador. The El Salvadorean government allowed the Canadians to examine and identify political detainees released under the amnesty program. Canada was prepared to accept for resettlement prisoners who had been detained for legitimate, non-violent political activity.

All the prisoners admitted to Canada were government sponsored. Most have been resettled in either Quebec or Ontario because of available financial assistance and the existence of community support groups. Many are now living in smaller cities such as London, Ottawa, Kitchener, Hull, Quebec City and Sherbrooke.

Struggling for Freedom of Expression in El Salvador

by
Vida Cuadra

The Agencia Periodística Independiente (API) was created in 1978 by a group of independent journalists in El Salvador to promote independent, objective journalism. API specialized in denouncing human rights violations. I acted as Director-President. We published a newsletter and a weekly international magazine.

In October 1979, a junta took power in El Salvador. Three months later, a state of siege was declared. We began to receive threats. In 1980, the office was raided for the first time by the national guard. I was detained and brought to their headquarters where, after one hour, I was set free. No charges were laid.

We continued to be threatened by paramilitary gangs ("death squads") and by telephone calls demanding that the agency be closed and that I leave the country. Despite the perpetual climate of fear, we continued our work convinced that we were bringing a measure of truth to the Salvadorean people.

The Events

On January 15, 1981, a raid was conducted by soldiers and the national police. Most of the staff were taken to prison.

I was not in the building when the soldiers arrived, but upon hearing of the raid I immediately went to API. The block had been cut off by the armed forces; 200 soliders occupied the building.

I entered the building accompanied by other journalists, among them Francisco Ramirez Avelar (secretary of the journalists' union), who worked in our international news bureau. I asked the head of the military operation to explain their presence. He replied that, given the existing state of siege in the country, API had to be closed and all of us had to be taken in for interrogation. The soldiers emptied API of its equipment and files.

In addition to the three journalists, two printers, the proofreader and two secretaries were taken to National Police Headquarters. We were detained there for one month. Our food consisted of beans, stale tortillas and coffee with iodine three times a day; the iodine was intended to minimize the sexual

drives of prisoners. The prison cells were dark and filthy, the interrogations intensive. We were not tortured, but during our entire stay, we were held "incommunicado".

On February 13, 1981, we were assigned to military courts and transferred to different detention centres. The men were sent to "La Esperanza de San Luis de Mariona" prison in the city of Mejicanos. The women were sent to the "Women's Jail" of Llopango (Department of San Salvador).

Illegal Detention

Six of the prisoners were freed in June, 1981 by the Supreme Court. Francisco Ramirez and myself, however, were found guilty under the charge of "misinformation". Four months later, our case was handed over to the Military Courts of First Appeal.

Our detention was ruled illegal because "misinformation" is not a crime under any of the country's Legal Codes. The judge of the Military Court ordered our release. The Ministry of Defense opposed his ruling and arbitrarily decided to continue our detention, which lasted two years and four months.

Life in Llopango, the Women's Jail

In the penitentiary, the political prisoners were grouped in one section with four common dormitories, a kitchen and a service area. We rose at 5:00 A.M. and retired at 7:00 P.M., with lights out at 10:00 P.M. During the day we did housework in teams. Food was deficient. No milk products, fruits or vegetables were available. Medical attention was minimal.

We organized ourselves into a committee called "Committee of Salvadorean Political Prisoners" (COPPES). COPPES pushed for improvements in the living conditions in the penitentiary. When a necessary reform was identified, COPPES would present it to the Minister of Justice and to the Direc-

tor of Penitentiaries. If the demands went unattended, national and international campaigns were organized to denounce injustices.

While I was in prison, three hunger strikes were organized, one of which lasted 42 days. During these strikes, only water and honey were available. Those on strike were placed in one of the dormitories while the rest of us helped by boiling the water, preparing propaganda, etc. At the end of each strike, approximately 72% of the demands were met. The quality of food and sanitary conditions were improved. More medical consultations per day were obtained, including the use of an ambulance for emergencies. Two visiting days were allowed. During those days political and cultural activities were organized. We were able to obtain blackboards and desks which were used for teaching in our section. We even had a newspaper where we could denounce the innumerable disappearances and human rights violations in El Salvador.

Amnesty Law

On May 16, 1983, the 60-day Amnesty and Rehabilitation of Citizenship Law was enacted. Through it, 600 out of 800 political prisoners were released. Nevertheless, the Committee of Mothers of Political Prisoners and Disappeared People of El Salvador denounced the Law, stating that it would actually increase repression in El Salvador. They also claimed that the numbers of disappearances and political prisoners had actually increased (by 1,000) at the same time the Law was decreed.

I left prison on May 21. My colleague, Francisco Ramirez, did so a couple days later. While in prison, I had been offered asylum by the governments of Belgium and Canada through the office of the Archbishop of San Salvador. On July 7, sorrowful at having to leave El Salvador, I entered Canada with my son.

Vida Cuadra Hernandez is a 30-year-old journalist from El Salvador. She came to Canada in July 1983 after being freed from prison under the 60-day Amnesty declared in May 1983.



Britain's economic decline has been well publicized. The high unemployment rates in the old industrial cities of Liverpool, Birmingham and Manchester have made headlines. In the midst of this employment crisis, Britain took in over 16,000 Southeast Asian refugees. How have they fared?

Three recent publications of Peter Jones* document Britain's program of resettlement of Indochinese refugees, the largest proportion of whom were ethnic Chinese from North Vietnam. Unfortunately, Jones generalizes from the British experience incorrectly to conclude that, "the majority (of refugees from Vietnam) have been expelled because of their ethnic identity." (p.2, *Vietnamese Refugees*) This and other minor flaws detract only slightly from Jones' study of the resettlement of the Indochinese refugees in Britain. But his generalizations caution one to suspect that many British generalizations reflect more on the particularity of Britain than on general truths.

As in Canada, where the escalation of our involvement began with the intake of refugees from the ship the "Hai Hong," Britain's escalated involvement began in October 1978 when the British ship, the "Wellpark", rescued over 380 boat people at sea and the "Anco Sceptre" rescued 100 later that same year. In 1979, Britain began by agreeing to take in 1,500 refugees from camps in Hong Kong and ended up rescuing over 1,400 refugees at sea and pledging to take in 10,000 more from Hong Kong at the landmark conference in July of 1979.

In Britain, even when the largest proportion of refugees were ethnic Chinese, there was, according to Jones, "the almost complete absence of an established ethnic community" for support. This is in spite of the fact that Hong Kong is a crown colony. The cultural divide was considered enormous. Britain saw its ethnic Chinese from Vietnam in the same light as Canada viewed its Vietnamese, Kampucheans and Laotians. There was another similarity. Unlike the United States which received, at least in

the early waves, a high proportion of the managerial-professional class of Vietnamese, in Britain, as in Canada, the proportions were relatively small.

What makes the situation of the Southeast Asian refugees in Britain unique is the rate of unemployment. For refugees resident in Britain for over two years, the male employment rate is only 36%. *Only 36% employed!* Was the source of the problem Britain's dire economic circumstances?

Three non-government organizations assisted in the reception and resettlement of the refugees: the British Council for Aid to Refugees (BCAR), the Ockenden Venture, and the Save the Children Fund (SCF) which combined with government representatives to form the Joint Committee for Refugees from Vietnam (JCRV).

Unlike Canada, but characteristic of Europe, the refugees to be settled in Britain were first brought to reception centres (intended initially to be for 3-4 months) under a policy of dispersed clusters so that not too many would be settled in any one area while, at the same time, there would be sufficient numbers to constitute a community for mutual support.

There was a third and major difference between the U.K. program and that of other countries. Resettlement of the refugees became the charge of the local authorities, the volunteer agencies and the local support group with very little central funding allocated to the resettlement stage after the refugees left the reception centres. Contrast this with the Canadian two-track system of strong federal and provincial support complemented by strong commitments of local support groups, the private sponsors.

The main problem in Britain is housing because there is virtually no private market in low priced accommodation. Local authorities and housing associations which controlled the housing stock were called upon to make housing available which they did in response to

the media blitz on the refugees and which they later failed to do as the refugees receded from the headlines. The result was increasing lengths of stay in reception centres.

The U.K. also had problems with its ESL program, not simply the common ones of co-ordination and lack of fully developed and satisfactory teaching materials, but a unique one of displacement. Unlike the continent, the refugees were not kept in reception areas until they had mastered a basic understand-

Refugee Ne

A number of studies are underway in Canada, assessing the adaptation of the Southeast Asian refugees to Canadian life and the effectiveness of Canadian programs. One of the first of these to reach publication stage is the Ottawa-Carleton Southeast Asian Refugee Research Project entitled, "Refugee Needs Assessment", written by Dr. San Duy Nguyen, Terence Cooke and Tuan Q. Phung.

The key issues, as this report reveals, are, jobs, language and family reunification.

Based on a survey of refugees, sponsors and service agencies, the report assesses the adjustment of the refugees and their needs and problems. In the survey group, 43.5% were ethnic Chinese, 32.7% Vietnamese, 14.0% Cambodian and 9.8% Laotian, almost equally divided between men and women. The spouses of one-sixth of the household heads were not living in Canada.

The employment profile, with 23% listed as unemployed, gives cause for concern; though the rate declined relative to the length of stay in Canada. Surprising are the differences among the ethnic groups; Laotians were below the average with an unemployment rate of 17.2%, while Cambodians were well above the norm with almost 35% unemployed. This is balanced by the fact that in two-thirds of households a second member of the family was working, though almost all the refugees had low level jobs. Only 15% of privately

Asian Refugees

ing of the language but were resettled where and when housing became available. Not only did this result in a second resettlement without adequate linguistic tools, but the local authorities frequently lacked the wherewithal to provide an adequate level of ESL training. Further, the language training in the reception areas was disrupted as refugees flowed through with widely differing lengths of stays.

If the economic situation in the U.K., the lack of central sustained resettlement

support, the housing bottleneck, and the disruptions in ESL training were not sufficient, the volunteer agencies had their own weaknesses. BCAR's problems arose largely because the staff were recruited based on experience in Southeast Asia, or at least on colonial experience, rather than familiarity with problems related to a social work within the U.K.

The U.K. experience can be viewed from another perspective. Ontario, for example, resettled approximately one-third of the 80,000 Southeast Asian refugees who came to Canada. Between Project 4000 in Ottawa, the various branches of Operation Lifeline and other local support groups, there was a maximum of 25 employees in total in Ontario to resettle 27,000 refugees; roughly one employee per 1,000 refugees in the non-governmental sector. In the U.K., the Ockenden Venture grew from a very small organization into "an agency with over 200 staff and 26 reception areas" to settle an estimated 5,000 refugees in the northwest of Britain; that is, one staff per 25 refugees and one reception area for 200 refugees. The bureaucratization of refugee resettlement in the non-government organizations is staggering, so one is surprised to read that "Ockenden is characterized by a strong philosophy of voluntary help."

The Save the Children Fund operated in the far north and north-east of Great Britain and adopted a very decentralized structure. The result was a staffing ratio of one per twelve refugees. In reading the report, one gets the strong impression that the resettlement of Indochinese refugees produced employment for the British. If there was a staffing ratio of 1:12 and only one-third of the refugees obtained jobs after two years, the result is one job for a Brit for every four jobs for refugees — a highly inventive but unproductive way to provide employment. It is not surprising that, "lengthy stays (in reception centres) caused a certain degree of institutionalization amongst refugees who, upon resettlement, came to expect a

degree of aid from support group workers."

The U.S. policy pushed towards extreme *laissez faire*. The U.K. policy seemed to be based on a policy of non-government welfarism, but one which benefited the British and left the refugees with housing bottlenecks, inadequate ESL training (a sizeable majority of the refugees have *regressed* in English proficiency since reception) and high unemployment.

The employment figures provided in Jones' report are staggering. "Of some 3,450 refugees eligible to work (i.e., aged 17-65) *only 16% were employed* at the time of the survey." Contrast this with Canada where unemployment of Indochinese refugee youth is *lower* than for Canadian youth. In the 20-39 age group in Britain only 18% were unemployed. Britain is similar to Canada in one respect — the unemployment of the older age group of refugees over 45 is higher than that of the native population. But although the unemployment rate in Canada exceeds 14%, in Britain the *employment* rate is only 14%. Among refugees in their fifties, only 5% held a job.

Blaming the newness of the refugees for the shocking unemployment rates is nonsense when one provides a comparison with jurisdictions such as Canada. Perhaps Jones is correct that they face "discrimination in the job market." Whatever the explanation, the report is much more of an insight into Britain's structural deficiencies and its decline. It provides valuable information on how and where *not* to resettle refugees.

And if British representatives at international conferences argue that resettlement of refugees is no longer a viable alternative, one can only suspect they are projecting and universalizing from their own structural deficiencies. H.A.

*Peter R. Jones, *Vietnamese Refugees*, Paper 13, Research and Planning Unit, Home Office; London, HMSO; "The Vietnamese in Britain," Bulletin 15, 'Home Office', London, HMSO; "Vietnamese Refugees in the United Kingdom", *New Community*, 1983.

in Canada

sponsored refugees were unemployed while government-sponsored refugees had an unemployment rate of 31%. Nevertheless, 15% were on general welfare assistance, 36.8% owned cars and, of the 83.5% who had television, half had cable service.

As could be expected, the inadequacy of language training received the greatest number (80%) of complaints. But the most serious problems were psychological, primarily caused by the dislocation of families. Such dislocation was widespread with 62% separated from immediate family members.

Another source of longer term concern was the prevalence of depression and anxiety among the refugee population — 55% felt "isolated and lonely"; 85% felt "moderately awkward and out of place living in Canada". But 89% were optimistic about the future with 92% feeling that they were liked and accepted by Canadian people.

In the survey of sponsors, it was interesting to read that 92% maintained contact with the refugees they sponsored even though 24% had moved to other towns or cities. Forty-two percent were still interested in assisting other refugees. No one found the relationship between sponsors and refugees unsatisfactory and 92% said the experience was more than simply satisfactory.

Though far from perfect, an excellent report card. H.A.

Refugee Documentation Centres Meet

(Geneva, June 27 - July 1, 1983)

For the first time in history, a meeting of centres devoted to the collection and dissemination of refugee research and information was held in Geneva under the auspices of the IRIRC (International Refugee Integration Resources Centre) at the Institut Henri-Dunant in Geneva. Representatives of 13 centres (see box) from nine different countries as well as a number of observers from international agencies met to discuss modes of cooperation.

Some centres, such as the Swedish Immigration Board, are government centres (GOs). Others, such as the Australian, were non-government organizations (NGOs). Still others, such as the German, were quasi governmental organizations (Quango's). They also varied in the range of coverage. Some took on the full mandate of migration studies, others, the smaller mandate of displaced persons, and still others restricted themselves to refugees.

Some of these were even more specialized, concentrating on Southeast Asian refugees or only refugees seeking refugee status in the courts in contrast to those involved in mass movements.

In addition to becoming acquainted with each other's activities, the documentation centres agreed to set up an informal network in which the refugee documentation centre in each country would supply all other documentation centres with information and documents produced in its country. These would include: copies of very significant documents available free; publications of the member; lists of important publications available for purchase; abstracts of key documents of that country; an index of all other material produced in that country and acquired or located by the member with a key word index for easy reference; a list of refugee organizations and refugee-assisting organizations in that country.

IRIRC as an international clearing house, will be responsible for providing a working thesaurus for indexing, and

copies of very significant international documents. In addition, it would publish abstracts and a comprehensive index keyworded for easy reference as well as filling in gaps where a country lacked a full capacity documentation centre.

The symposium also passed a resolution urging that "in the planning and budgeting of specific programs, assessment of information, documentation, and research requirements should be made and appropriately supported."

The Refugee Documentation Project invites submissions of

- Abstracts
- Documents
- Reports
- Publications
- Articles
- Names of organizations
- Names of experts.

The RDP will arrange for their redistribution internationally.

Full Name	Acronym	Coverage	Library	Publications	Technical References
Clearing House on Migration issues	CHOMI (Australia)	migration	32 hours weekly	- quarterly abstracts - bibliographies - a magazine <i>Migration Action</i> - occasional papers and reprints	none
Refugee Documentation Project	RDP (Canada)	refugees	35 hours weekly	- bibliographies - periodical, <i>Refuge</i> - occasional papers - research reports	microcomputer d-Base II
Danish Refugee Council	DRC (Denmark)	not known	not known	- not known	not known
	CeDrasemi (France)	Southeast Asian refugees	Research only	- bibliographies - monographs (12)	no
Zentrale Documentations stelle Der Freien Wohlfahrtspflege Fur Fluchtlings, e. v.	ZDWF (Germany)	specializes in refugees and asylum seekers in West Germany	specialized library	- relevant jurisprudence - countries of origin - keyword catalogue	microfilm EDP data bank
Displaced Persons Centre	DPC (Netherlands)	refugees in Southeast Asia		- periodic Review - special Reports - monographs	no
Human Rights Information and Documentation Systems	HURIDOCs (Netherlands)	human rights	a co-op network	- Thesaurus on human rights	yes
Statens Invandrarverk (Swedish Immigration Board)	SIB in general	migration	yes	- not known	not yet
Cooperative Européenne Longo Mai	CEDRI (Switzerland)	Turkish & Kurdish refugees and immigrants in Europe	no	- Information Bulletin	no
	CREDIS (Switzerland)	research and documentation on refugee resettlement in Sweden	yes	- monographs	no
International Refugee Integration Resource Centre	IRIRC (Switzerland)	refugees with a focus on settlement issues	yes	- <i>Refugee Abstracts</i> - bibliographical indexes	data bank
Association for the Study of the World Refugee Problem	ASWRP (Switzerland)				
Center for Migration Studies	CMS (U.S.)	migration	yes	- <i>International Migration Review</i> , special issues, monographs	not yet

Intergovernmental Committee for Migration

In July, close to 10,000 refugees and nationals emigrated under the auspices of ICM. Among the 10,000 were 6,000 Indochinese, 2,000 Eastern Europeans, 620 Central Americans, 350 Western Europeans, 140 Africans and 70 Afghans. In addition, ICM arranged the transfer of 2,853 Indochinese refugees from the asylum areas of Southeast Asia to the Refugee Processing Centres at Bataan, Philippines (2,778) and Galang, Indonesia (75).

There was a slight increase in the flow of Soviet Jews during July, with 167 arrivals in Vienna. Of this number, the highest monthly total thus far this year, 41 were resettled in Israel and the remaining 126 were transferred to Italy for resettlement processing to other countries.

The government of El Salvador asked ICM to assist in resettlement of Salvadoreans who could benefit from the new Amnesty Law and who chose to leave the country. By the end of July, ICM had moved 306 persons (85 to Australia and 221 to Canada).

ICARA II

ICARA II, the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, will take place in Geneva from 21 to 23 of May, 1984.

Tamils Displaced in Sri Lanka

Rioting erupted on July 24, 1983 in Sri Lanka. As many as 25,000 Tamils remain "interned" in refugee camps established by the government of President Jayawardene in the aftermath of the recent wave of violence. Unofficial estimates are that over 500 Tamils have been killed and as many as 100,000 left homeless. Since early August, many of the homeless have moved or have been transported by the government from the camps to Jaffna in the north where the Tamils have a numeric majority.

Canadian Tamils, the Tamil Eelam Society of Canada and independent committees of people concerned for the well-being of friends and relatives in Sri Lanka approached the Canadian government with appeals for assistance to allow Tamils into Canada in order to escape the situation in Sri Lanka.

World News

Fewer Vietnamese Rescued at Sea

Fewer Vietnamese refugees are being rescued at sea than in previous years. Refugees continue to speak of many ships passing them by, the UN reports. Over the previous three years, 18% of all boat people arrivals were rescued at sea. This year only 6% have so far been rescued at sea. Numbers are increasing, however, and in June, 444 Vietnamese were taken on board by 20 passing ships.

UNRWA News

Robert Dillon, United States Ambassador to Lebanon, has been named the next Deputy Commissioner-General of UNRWA. He will succeed Alan Brown who is due to retire from UNRWA at the end of January 1984 after five years' service.

In June, UNRWA announced its appeal for \$13 million to rebuild destroyed Agency schools, clinics and offices, to reconstruct refugee camp roads and drains and to provide cash grants to allow 3,200 destitute families to repair or rebuild their homes.

The United Kingdom has pledged £500,000 (\$764,500) towards these efforts. Japan pledged \$8 million for this year and Australia has contributed \$1,268,000.

New UN Group Holds First Session

The first session of a 25-member Group of Governmental Experts on International Co-operation to Avert New Flows of Refugees established by the General Assembly in 1981 was held this year from April 12 to 15. Its mandate is to undertake a comprehensive review of the problem of averting new flows of refugees, with a view to developing recommendations on appropriate means of international cooperation in the field, having due regard to the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign states.

Honolulu Meeting Focuses on Refugee Situation in Southeast Asia

Representatives of the governments of Australia, Canada, Japan and the United States, as well as representatives of the UNHCR, held informal meetings in Honolulu, Hawaii, on August 1, 2 and 3 to discuss the current refugee situation in Southeast Asia. Participants gave their views of the situation in the area and covered a wide range of subjects including current rates of resettlement, refugee care and maintenance, voluntary repatriation, the Orderly Departure Program from Vietnam, anti-piracy efforts, number of persons in first asylum countries and the need for a renewed effort to broaden international participation in the Southeast Asian refugee program effort.

In this last regard, participants agreed to urge the UNHCR, which was recognized by all parties as the key coordinating agency in refugee relief, to maintain its efforts to secure the broadest degree possible of international participation in the resettlement and relief program for Southeast Asian refugees. All participants agreed that the long-term solution of the problem will require implementation of a mix of policies. In this context, the parties noted that voluntary repatriation was an important goal.

Participants also restated their commitment to the nations of first asylum to help solve the problem through the resettlement of, and provision of assistance to those refugees, until a humane and lasting solution to their plight could be achieved.

The countries represented believed it was important that those contemplating departure understood that the limited available resettlement opportunities were for refugees only.

The meeting was mindful of the burden on the countries of the region receiving the inflow. Their sustained humanitarian response was appreciated.

The representatives acknowledged the usefulness of, and need to continue, orderly departure opportunities to contain the problem.

Finally, they agreed to continue the process of consultations and to ask other interested countries to participate at future meetings.



Refugee Issues

"Refugees Issues: Current Status and Directions for the Future", Refugee Policy Group, Washington, D.C., 1983.

In the short compass of 36 pages, this booklet provides an excellent comprehensive summary of most of the key refugee policy and program issues. There are four sections dealing with the initial crisis period, permanent solutions, resettlement and domestic assistance issues in the U.S. and problems of definition.

Of the four, the last is the only flawed section. An initial error is trivial: the Roman numeral VI is used when IV was intended. A second error, however, involves faulty logic. Just because "repressive regimes use economic policies as a means of persecution leaving individuals with political and economic motives for leaving", it does not follow that the presence of those economic motives makes it difficult to ascertain whether individuals were persecuted. As long as people are persecuted, by whatever means, and as long as individuals have a legitimate fear of persecution, whatever other reasons they may have for wanting to stay abroad, they qualify as UN refugees.

The real issue is not the dilemma of sorting out economic versus political motives, but the narrowness of the definition. The Tokyo Symposium on Fundamental Rights of Refugees recommended extending the definition to include victims of external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or serious disturbances of public order. Further, the definition would apply to people who leave their place of habitual residence though not necessarily their country. The Refugee Policy Group appears to endorse such an extension. However, (in a quest for balance) they raise criticisms of those who regard refugees from the perspective of real *politick* rather than *principle*. The matter may be resolved by a classification of types of refugees rather than the use of a univocal definition.

They do raise one matter dear to my heart — the proposal to develop a refugee thermometer to weigh different factors so as to designate which refugees should have priority. Other approaches of a more political nature tend to analyze why different countries designate some groups as refugees and

not others. Or they examine the role of the UNHCR in various countries in helping determine refugee status, the level of adherence of various nations to the UNHCR definition, the particular impact of U.S. policy on refugees and the factors to be applied in the determination of refugee status.

As the report points out in Section One, part of the difficulty of definition is the myriad of causes and circumstances which produce refugees — actions of regimes against specific groups or against the whole populace through overt political means or indirectly through economic policies, inhumanitarian international policies, such as those of the U.S. in Central America or the U.S.S.R. in Afghanistan, which *push* out refugees, and international humanitarian policies which have the effect of *pulling* them out.

What is needed, as reported in many publications, is an Early Warning System. In a few brief paragraphs, the report reviews the benefits as well as the pitfalls of such a system (i.e., duplication of existing capacities and a confirmation of the obvious). And yet, without the system, there is virtually no planning or coordination.

Who would operate this Early Warning System? The UNHCR treads a delicate diplomatic tightrope. A special UN office, as suggested by Sadruddin Aga Khan, would be suspected by the West of encouraging a further unnecessary increase in the international bureaucracy. It would be suspected by the East of being a UN mandate to interfere in domestic human rights issues. The voluntary agencies have hands-on experience but little training in, or inclination to, objective analytic reporting. Independent research institutes have strong analytic skills but are lacking in operational experience.

Should such an organization be strictly analytical, utilize public relations or even engage in advocacy? The latter three roles would require delicacy. The organization would not want to be accused of inducing refugees to flee.

Should a special UN office for humanitarian affairs be instituted to

help prevent mass asylum flows or should the world order simply accept them as a fact of life and come to an agreement on how to protect the refugees?

How are refugees to be better protected? How are claimants to be both quickly and fairly adjudicated? These and other issues such as detention centres and temporary refugee status are weighed.

In the section on permanent solutions, it is clear that the Refugee Policy Group is interested in linking development aid to settlement in Third World countries. They are fully aware of the shortcomings of such a policy (i.e., although repatriation may be the best solution it is also the least likely). And resettlement is regarded as becoming increasingly difficult.

The section on resettlement and domestic assistance suffers from its U.S. focus. There is much discussion of the conflict between the divided authority of the State Department and Health and Human Services (HHS). The analysis of the role of voluntary agencies is too sketchy and the outline of alternatives to the current system of channelling aid to refugees is too detached. The operational issues are so well worn that they seem trite in the context of the report.

Whatever its shortcomings, this brief but packed booklet is an essential reference for those involved in refugee issues.

H.A.

Books Received

The World's Refugees: A Test of Humanity. By Gil Loescher with Ann Dull Loescher. An account of the history and current status of the world's refugees. Illustrated with photographs and maps. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1250 Sixth Avenue, San Diego, California, 92101.

* * *

The Global Refugee Problem: U.S. and World Response. THE ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. Volume 467. May 1983. Special editors, Gilbert D. Loescher and John A. Scanlan. \$7.95 (cloth-bound, \$15.00) prepaid. THE ANNALS, c/o Sage Publications, Inc., 275 South Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, California, 90212.



Letters

(cont'd from p. 2)

To the Editor:

I want to let you know how interesting, informative and useful your *Refuge* publication is and has been in the past.

Perhaps you can help me, too. We are interested in a documentation project regarding minor unaccompanied refugees, necessitating travel and related costs. Any financial assistance from interested people and groups would be welcome. Our estimated cost is \$3,300 (U.S. funds). The money would enable representatives from our organization to visit camps in Southeast Asia. The purpose of the visit would be to establish direct contacts in the camps and to search for unaccompanied minors who could be sponsored to come to Canada.

In addition, we want to liaise with interested people or groups in Ontario or elsewhere in Canada who are concerned with these "minors" especially in Central America, Indochina and Hong Kong.

Lloyd Jones
Centre for International
Co-operation
Thunder Bay, Ontario

The Honourable Monique Bégin
Minister of Health and Welfare
Ottawa

Dear Mme Bégin:

What is going to happen to refugee doctors who fail to obtain internships in Canadian hospitals?

Are we as a nation going to stand by and let some man-made rules or bureaucratic red tape cause us to throw away (waste) these human resources and deprive many of our people of better medical services? What is being done to solve this problem, and solve it quickly? Some of these people don't have too much time left in their qualifying period.

Sincerely yours,
E.A. Chenard
Executive Director
Canadian Foundation for
Refugees

Editor's Note: If you wish to see a full text of this letter, please write to the Canadian Foundation for Refugees.

Canadian Foundation

(cont'd from p. 2)

of interest and endeavor. You will always find people and organizations who are primarily interested in one but still having (sic) some interest in the other. Those people and organizations who try to be involved equally in both seem not to be able to do a good job in either area, or one succeeds at the expense of the other.

The advocacy role involves making noise, publishing information, and initiating other activities which focus attention upon, and create interest in refugee problems. The assistance role however, concerns itself with the problems of emergency aid, repatriation, integration and resettlement.

The advocacy role is necessary to create and improve a favourable political climate in Canada for refugees. Your interest has shifted primarily to advocacy work with *Refuge* functioning as an advocacy publication. Similarly, you feel that the Foundation should adopt an advocacy role and get involved with crisis research and other related activities. The Foundation has, however, chosen to concern itself with providing assistance to those working at resettling refugees in Canada.

The Foundation is, however, also interested in public education, in creating among Canadians a climate favourable to the plight of refugees globally and the acceptance of refugees in Canada. It is in this area where there is the greatest potential for overlap between *Refuge* and the proposed newsletter. However, there is not much need for concern since the readers of both publications are or will be the initiated or converted.

As an advocacy forum, *Refuge* is a necessary publication. Everyone we speak to who has read *Refuge* agrees that it is good and should get better. It, however, does not fulfil the basic needs of those involved and working in the resettlement of refugees in Canada.

These organizations need a forum in which they can get to know each other, know who their counterparts are in the next community, in all the communities across Canada. They need to be able to communicate in the parlance of the daily practitioner, not in some academic or intellectual forum or symposium. The Foundation expects to provide that forum in this proposed newsletter. It

will be their newsletter, not the Foundation's; a forum primarily for exchanging and sharing, not debating.

There is a need for both *Refuge* and the type of newsletter we propose. They will complement each other, not duplicate or compete. We want to see *Refuge* continue and expand in what it is doing, and we want to see the proposed newsletter develop and grow. There is room for both.

So, Howard, poll your readers. This is your prerogative and we would be the last to deny you this. Furthermore, we would be very interested in the response you obtain; but only if you poll your readers without bias and try not to influence their opinion. Present both viewpoints and let the readers make up their own mind. Is it asking too much to be treated fairly and without prejudice?

We look forward to your response and the results of your poll.

Sincerely yours
E.A. Chenard
A/Executive Director
Canadian Foundation for Refugees

Editor's Note: Since when is providing information advocacy? Is analysis advocacy? Is the digest and publication of research results advocacy? The Foundation has proven itself incapable of acting on the basis of research results, let alone undertaking any research itself. To call engagement in research advocacy only reveals a total lack of understanding of the meaning of research. The writer mocks logic. Dividing concern and effort for refugees into two exhaustive categories — advocacy and assistance — is silly.

The response is riddled with other conceptual confusions. To be 'without bias' is not to be 'without thought'. We attempt to minimize bias by publishing different perspectives on controversial issues. According to the writer's definitions our position is biased in commenting on the proposed newsletter whereas the "23 positive, enthusiastic and extremely supportive" views are unbiased because the Foundation only publishes information and does not advocate anything.

Canadian News

RSAC Oral Hearings

In early May, oral hearings for refugee claimants began in Montreal and Toronto. The hearings, being tried on an experimental basis, are being conducted by the Refugee Status Advisory Committee (RSAC). Separate interviews will be conducted by an RSAC member after claimants are examined under oath by a senior immigration officer. That same RSAC member will be present at the under-oath examination.

Previously, all recommendations to the Minister were made by the RSAC after it had reviewed transcripts of the examinations conducted by the immigration officer.

The new system is designed to speed up the claims process, to allow claimants to give extra information on the conditions leading up to their claim and to improve the quality of advice that the Minister of Employment and Immigration receives from the Refugee Status Advisory Committee.

Canada Assists Sri Lankans

Canada's Minister of Employment and Immigration, in a recently announced special humanitarian program for Sri Lankan nationals, relaxed immigrant selection criteria for family members and allowed temporary extensions for visitors.

Effective September 9, nationals of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh will need visas to visit Canada.

Refugee Coalition Seeks Solution

The Vancouver Coalition with World Refugees has been organized. Its purposes are as follows:

1. to support "inland refugees", i.e., those persons who have arrived in Canada but whose status is still being

determined by Ottawa; (Until this is decided, they cannot obtain work permits, and are dependent on the help provided by friends and refugee agencies.)

2. to organize new sponsorships of refugees now in camps who can gain admittance to Canada if a private sponsorship is forthcoming;

3. to help those refugees still in camps, and without prospects of being able to return home or to emigrate;

4. to organize an adequate publicity campaign in B.C. communities.

Contact John Conway, Chairman, for further information at 1410 W. 12th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6R 1M8

Personnel Changes

Kathleen Ptolemy is leaving the Inter-Church Committee for Refugees (September 30, 1983) where she has acted as National Refugee Coordinator. She goes to a new position as Refugee Consultant with the Anglican Church of Canada.

Martha Nixon has left her position in CEIC's Refugee Policy Division to become Legislative Assistant to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Douglas I. MacDonald ended his contract as Public Information Officer with the Ottawa Branch Office of the UNHCR, effective August 31, 1983. In mid-September, he leaves for Lesotho (southern Africa) to take up duties as a volunteer worker with refugees under the auspices of World University Service of Canada.

Sue Davis left her position as Legal Advisor to the UNHCR in Canada. She recently married and moved to Toronto.

Rick Stainsby left his position as a researcher for the Refugee Status Advisory Committee (RSAC) to join the UNHCR Protection Office in Canberra.

Unaccompanied Children

The Refugee Documentation Project at York University has received funding from the Laidlaw Foundation, CEIC, and the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services to study *Unaccompanied Children in Emergencies: the Canadian Experience*. The Canadian study is part of an international research program initiated by the International Council of Voluntary Agencies in Geneva.

The goal of the Canadian project is to produce a report which documents and analyses legal and placement considerations for the acceptance, care and placement of foreign unaccompanied children brought into Canada from emergency situations in other countries.

The project directors are Professors Howard Adelman and C. Michael Lanphier. Research is being carried out by Catherine May and Lawrence Lam. Professor Diane Pask of the University of Calgary, and Ann Jayne of the Civil Liberties Union, act as consultants on the legal issues.

If you can provide any relevant information or assistance for this study, please contact Catherine May, Project Coordinator, Unaccompanied Children in Emergencies, c/o Refugee Documentation Project, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Downsview, Ontario M3J 2R6. Telephone (416) 667-3639.