

good reason not to claim refugee status; they are not "resettled refugees". The refugee lobbies of both the United States and Canada have repeatedly argued that since adequate protection *cannot* be found in Mexico (which is not a party to the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and where the UNHCR has some difficulty in fulfilling its protection functions), then the two countries to the north *are* countries of first asylum. The chapter following Bach's claims as much in its first sentence (Gallagher et al, p. 313). The abysmal record of the United States in respect to the low acceptance rate (2-3%) of Salvadoreans and Guatemalans is closely connected with American foreign policy in the region these refugees are fleeing. It is this point that should have been made strongly in Bach's chapter, particularly in view of the themes of this volume.

This book makes quite clear that when the crux of the problem of ameliorating the root causes of refugee movements is not related to the timidity of states in "interfering" with the internal affairs of other states, it may be, by contrast, interference itself (i.e. American military and foreign policy involvement in Central America): hence the apparent intractability of the problem.

Refugees and International Relations deserves a wide audience: the social and political sciences, immigration and refugee lawyers, refugee aid groups, and the educated public. Yet it is unlikely to reach many readers at \$120 (Canadian). I hope that Oxford University Press will consider reducing the price substantially knowing that specialized and important knowledge should be accessible outside of libraries.

Lisa Gilad is the author of *Ginger and Salt: Yemeni Jewish Women in an Israeli Town* (Bolder, CO: Westview Press, 1989) and *The Northern Route: An Ethnography of Refugee Experiences* (St. John's: ISER Books, forthcoming, spring 1990). She is a Part-time Member of the Immigration and Refugee Board. The views expressed in this review are entirely her own and do not necessarily reflect the views or position of the IRB.

New Publication

Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco, *Central American Refugees and U.S. High Schools: A Psychosocial Study of Motivation and Achievement* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989). This study examines the experiences and psychosocial motivational patterns of young people

Steven Cohen *From the Jews to the Tamils: Britain's Mistreatment of Refugees Manchester: Manchester Law Centre, 1988*

by Indhu Rajagopal

Today's refugees are less the detritus of large-scale organized warfare among nations than they are the victims of oppression or persecution which has, in various countries, during different periods and regimes, denied them social identity and individual freedom. Their life stories write a dramatic history of a world rife with bigotted expressions, ethnic, religious, parochial or nationalist. Steven Cohen's *From the Jews to the Tamils: Britain's Mistreatment of Refugees* cuts powerfully through politicians's rhetoric to present directly the experiences of individual refugees.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, Britain's official justifications for its refugee policies show a long-standing and historically continuous adherence to the principle of expediency. Parliamentary politicians's paradoxical statements extol British "generosity" while tightening restrictions and exclusionary provisions against the Tamil refugees. This is reminiscent of the British strictures against European and Russian Jews who sought asylum in Britain to escape persecution in their own countries.

Cohen has struck upon a creative way of proving the burden of his argument. The book unpretentiously examines one of the most important international crises of our times — the refugee problem — from a national policy perspective, but tells the story by reference to the real sufferings of refugees themselves. Comparing Jewish asylum seekers's experiences and the British treatment of them with the plight of Tamil Sri Lankan refugees, the narrative

gains power and pathos as it depicts the plight of individual cases culled from newspapers and reports.

Of all the intense issues raised in this slim volume, the one most interesting and most likely to ease the readers's tensions, is the account of the Sanctuary Movement. It could very well supply an answer to those who question why different cultural groups have their own places of worship and other "psychic shelters" (Porter:1972)¹ in their new countries, or who attribute to "immigrant paranoia" the resistance of newcomers to homogenization by the majority culture. The churches or the temples have proven to be last-ditch sanctuaries from the long arm of what the refugees feel to be the arbitrary and "unjust" measures of the state.

Presenting the details of the sanctuary cases provides a balance to the book's relentless criticism of Britain's anti-human rights orientation in its refugee policies: ironically, the fact that such ethnic and cultural institutions can serve as fortresses from within which otherwise helpless refugees could resist the dominant state, serves as powerful testimony to the resilience of the British democratic essence. Both the ruthlessness and the contradictions of the British refugee policies spring from the dominant state's power and legitimacy which are rooted in both historical traditions and dominant social interests; however, somewhere in between there are interstices of "sanctuaries", a refuge for the resisters against the state. A more theoretical analysis of these themes by Cohen would have been welcomed.

Evidentiary sources for this monograph also demonstrate the openness of information in Britain — media, Hansard, legislative process, and institutional infrastructure. However, this book reveals a striking disregard within the system for the need to reconcile individual human rights with authority. The contradictions expose pungently the limitations of British government refugee policies through the twentieth century. Cohen's book is a welcome addition to the sparse publication in the field of refugee studies and adds a policy dimension to the literature on Tamil refugees.

Indhu Rajagopal is a Professor of Social Science at York University.

¹ John Porter, "Canada: Dilemmas and Contradictions of a Multi-ethnic Society", in *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, Series IV, Volume 10, 1972.

Donors to the Centre for Refugee Studies

Category	Gifts	Donation
Supporter	Subscription to <i>Refuge</i> .	\$25.00
Friend	Invitation to all events sponsored by the Centre, including lectures and colloquia as well as our annual meeting and dinner.	\$50.00
Supporting Friend	Both of the above plus special rates for our publications.	\$75.00
Patron	All of the above plus kisses from the Director.	\$100.00
Corporate Patron	All of the above except kisses from the Director.	\$500.00

To: **Centre for Refugee Studies**
234 A.S.B., York University
4700 Keele Street
North York, Ontario, Canada M3J 1 P3

I wish to receive information on the following: I wish to become a:

Seminar Series <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Colloquia <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Publications <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Supporter <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Friend <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Friend <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Patron <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Patron <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---

My cheque, made payable to the Centre for Refugee Studies, for
 \$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 \$500 \$_____ is enclosed.

Please send the official tax receipt to:

Name _____
 Organization _____
 Address _____
 City _____ Province/State _____
 Country _____ Postal Code _____

CANADA'S PERIODICAL ON REFUGEES
REFUGE

Centre for Refugee Studies, York University,
Suite 234, Administrative Studies Building,
4700 Keele Street, North York, Ontario, Canada M3J 1P3.
Telephone: (416) 736-5683. Fax: (416) 736-5687.
Electronic Mail Via Bitnet Address: REFUGE@YORKVM1.

Postage Paid in Toronto
Second Class Mail Registration No. 5512
Return Postage Guaranteed

Refugee Policy: A Comparison of Canada and the USA

International Conference
Sunday May 27th — Wednesday May 30, 1990
Glendon Campus, York University

The Centre for Refugee Studies at York University and the Refugee Policy Group in Washington, D.C. are convening an international conference to compare Canada and US refugee policies.

The participants in the conference will include both researchers and those involved in policy formation in the United States and Canada. An attempt will be made to pair American and Canadian researchers in the preparation of papers.

The purpose is to focus on a select list of problems which are central to the policy concerns of both Canada and the United States and where they may have been different policies and programmes and/or different research results.

The conference will be organized around general sessions at which prepared papers will be discussed, a parallel series of workshops and meal-time round tables. It is hoped that scholars and policy makers can learn a great deal from a greater understanding of the refugee policies of the two countries.

For further information about this conference please contact Ann Watson at the Centre for Refugee Studies, 234 Administrative Studies Building York University, 4700 Keele Street, North York, Ontario, Canada M3J 1P3.