

settlements'. The truth is that many of the refugees in this position have left their own country to escape persecution and have been unfortunate enough to end up in places where UNHCR is unable or unwilling to offer them assistance. Such has been the case of the Oromo refugees in Sudan's Blue Nile Province, who have not been included in the UNHCR's programme for that country, and would therefore be classified as self-settled or spontaneous. In fact, they have the same needs as those in organized camps, but have to depend on the Oromo Relief Association for assistance. Efforts by the provincial authorities in Blue Nile and the Oromo Relief Association to get them official international help have not been successful.

'Irregular movements' are also defined in UNHCR terms. The Thesaurus defines these as

refugees or asylum seekers who move from countries in which they have already found protection, in order to seek asylum or permanent resettlement in another country without the prior consent of the national authorities. . . .

This is wishful thinking and relates more to the unwillingness of third countries to accept refugees than to the intentions of the refugees. Many refugees who leave their first country of asylum do so precisely because there is no real protection for them where they are. This applies both to refugees in countries which have not signed the Convention but are referred to as 'safe' by the countries to which they move, and to those nations who, although they are signatories to the Convention, have a bad record for *refoulement*. A good example of this is Kenya, a signatory to the Convention, which has openly confirmed its intention of returning refugees to their country of origin and has a long record of doing just this.

A number of terms are not defined at all in the Thesaurus. There are references to 'self-determination' and to 'separatism', but these are not spelt out. How, then, do you classify activities undertaken in pursuit of a people's desire to gain control over their own destiny and homeland? Are they seeking self-determination or are they separatists? In a world committed to maintaining the status quo — which often means endorsing arbitrary boundaries established by colonialism and conquest — this is an important question and the use of the term 'separatism' is often derogatory, implying the illegitimacy of the struggle.

It could be, therefore, that the publication of the Thesaurus will lead to the same sort of discussions about terminology and policy as those that took place at the meetings of the Working Party which compiled it. It would then be doubly useful.

Mary Dines *Rights and Justice, London*

Refugees in Europe — A Minority Rights Group Report. By Danièle Joly with Clive Nettleton. London: Minority Rights Group, 1990. 32pp. £2.95. ISBN 0-946690-79-0.

Refugees — The Trauma of Exile. Edited by Diana Miserez. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987. xv + 340pp. Sfr. 25. UK £10. ISBN 0-7923-0112-9. English and French Editions.

The Minority Rights Group has established a reputation for topical, candid and tightly written reports, and this one is no exception. Aimed at the general reader, it presents a clear picture of current European refugee issues. A brief historical foundation covers

the emergence of the international refugee system in Europe. An uncomplicated legal overview and a discussion of the numbers involved, is followed by an excellent description of attempts to harmonize European procedures — Schengen, Trevi and the European Commission approaches — along with some of the restrictive measures employed by states. The Report concludes with three reflective essays on achieving a common European refugee policy, on settling refugees, and on their social, cultural and political rights. The conclusions, partially drawn from the December 1989 Netherlands Institute of Human Rights conference, are enhanced by the authors' own recommendations.

Persons involved in the refugee regime — in research, teaching, as an NGO or in the public service — are aware that brevity in the written or spoken word is not a strength of the discipline. But this is precisely what makes *Refugees in Europe* valuable. It is manageable for those who have no time to read; it will inform a community study group as well as senior civil servants of what is happening in Europe, yet the specialist will find it useful, too, for personal updating. It has many applications because of its concise, logical presentation. For example, anyone teaching refugee law will be delighted at the statement, 'No absolute definition or international law on refugees exists or is possible'. Again, concerning numbers, 'there are less than a million refugees in Western Europe' and 'it can no longer be claimed that the majority of asylum-seekers are from outside Europe'. 'Public opinion', often given as the reason for restriction, is analyzed from the point of view of what influences it. The report mentions government decisions, intemperate media coverage of isolated refugee incidents and 'some negative aspects of NGO work' like 'lack of professionalism . . . and occasional rivalry between agencies . . .' Through it all, 'two trends have emerged: firstly, governments have introduced measures to curb the number of asylum-seekers; secondly, after an initial decrease, the numbers have continued to rise'.

'The USSR encompasses 104 nationalities. Of these, 22 number more than one million and 15 have their own republics'. Tensions have emerged due both to 'internal displacements' and the threat of mass exodus. A response to the threat of outward movement may be seen in the year end (1990) efforts by many European nations to supply foodstuffs to the Soviet Union to forestall an exodus.

Lamenting an absence of study on settlement process and an inability to learn from previous experience, the authors conclude, 'the wheel has to be reinvented for each group of new refugee arrivals'. The pioneering 1983 BRC/ECRE study, *The Psychosocial Problems of Refugees*, compiled and edited by Ron Baker, makes the same 'wheel invention' lament. If nothing has been learned in the intervening seven years, it may be that refugee policy and practice is immune to memorization. Enterprising scholars should find out why this is so.

Two observations on this Report. First, the hidden agenda. United Nations, OECD and World Bank statistics all show that European populations are not replacing themselves. Indeed, the average doubling rate for Western European countries is about 125 years. Thus, national refugee and immigration policy, of necessity, is directed toward population replacement. Yet this issue is so controversial it is nowhere addressed, not even in this Report. Second, the Report may be preaching to the converted! English is a minority language hardly used by the average European. Unless some steps are taken to make this valuable document available in other European languages, it will have limited use. A closing thought is that the information in this Report could be adapted by a teacher-author to be used as a school textbook.

Refugees — The Trauma of Exile is an excellent compliment to the Refugees in Europe. The latter, using a macro approach, adequately summarizes the legal-political

regime confronting asylum seekers and refugees. *Trauma* is a micro study about the human beings involved in the process of settling and adapting to Europe's legal-political regime. The book is based on papers presented at a meeting convened by the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies at Vitznau, Switzerland in October 1987. But this was no ordinary gathering of scholars sharing academic research. Instead, the League brought together its own people from national Red Cross societies in Europe and North America, who had direct experience with the psycho-social and other problems connected with the reception and settlement of third world refugees in Europe. Invariably, when the first arrivals came, it was the Red Cross that was called upon to deal with the strangers. In doing so, individuals among the Societies amassed some very practical experience, which is shared in this well edited and readable volume.

Divided into five parts: Disruption, Uprooting, and Flight; On Reaching the 'Safe Haven'; Adaptation and Integration; Support of the Refugee/Asylum Seeker; Three Vulnerable Groups — Children, Women, the Elderly; Sensitization and Training of Agency Personnel and Host Communities, a total of twenty-seven chapters cover aspects under the above headings. They are uniform in the quality of content conveyed, because each of the brief chapters is the product of the authors' experience gained in daily contact with refugees and asylum seekers. Three chapters, for example, deal with persons who have been tortured, others with the mental health of victims of violence during flight, still others discuss the therapeutic value of solidarity and hope. No two Red Cross societies follow the same approach, yet all bring to the work a certain amount of professional interest and dedication. In this respect the book is in the same mode as the 1983 Baker study mentioned above but with the application of some 'collective memory' on the part of the specialists concerned.

Teaching several different refugee courses at university level, one is aware of the many macro studies, surveys and compilations which do little for students who are trying to understand the cumulative effect on the human beings involved. I have successfully used *Trauma* as a complimentary textbook in university courses on migration and refugees and thus have a number of student evaluations written on it. Several of these follow. 'Surrounded by the problem of numbers, statistics and groups of refugees, creates a certain detachment . . . but the personalized accounts help the reader to understand the suffering, trauma and psychological consequences of being a refugee.' 'The long and detailed chapter on the French Red Cross was at first boring, but by the end it was interesting to see how one of the major Western nations deals with some specific processes including, for example, lack of trained personnel.' 'It is certainly useful for those thinking of working in refugee situations, as it gives a rather straight-forward insight into the extreme complexity of several problematic refugee situations'. And, 'I know now what the fears of certain countries are about admitting refugees as in the case of Denmark fearing exotic diseases being brought by some immigrants. This detailed knowledge of the various nuances aids me in understanding and sympathizing with all of the issues at hand.' The complimentary nature of a book like this should not be overlooked by those working in the refugee regime. The League deserves credit for this effort and for making it available in French and English. While the book is not designed as a textbook, teachers must use all legitimate resources to help the increasing number of young and not so young people wishing to understand what is happening around them in Europe.

Raymond J. Smyke *Refugee Studies Program, Webster University in Geneva*