

Indeed, there was a widespread feeling among the EVWs that they were regarded as mere 'units of labour' and that insufficient efforts were being made to integrate them into the British community. The result of this disillusionment was that a quarter of the total number of EVWs recruited left Britain in the course of the 1950s (p. 158).

As Kay and Miles point out, from the British point of view the EVW scheme was unique in a number of respects. It marked a decisive break with the controls on immigration enshrined in the various Aliens Orders promulgated by parliament since 1905. Second, not only were such restrictions being bypassed, but for the first and only time the state itself took a direct role in recruiting foreign labour (and a Labour Government to boot!). It was, as the authors quote from a contemporary magazine source, a 'minor revolution' (p. 1). Third, a sizeable proportion of the EVWs were women; that is, female migrants were being recruited as workers in their own right and not as the dependants of males.

It may be, as Kay and Miles suggest, because of the very uniqueness of this scheme that the case of the EVWs has received so little attention from migration specialists. However, implicit in the title of their book is another reason for coyness on the part of scholars. The East Europeans who came to this country as volunteer workers in the late 1940s do not fit neatly into either the 'political refugee' category or that of 'economic immigrant'. The DPs claimed to have political motives—fear of communism—for refusing to return to their homes. While in their camps, certainly, they were recognized as having 'political status' by the IRO. From the British point of view, however, they were simply immigrant labour, albeit recruited under rather unusual circumstances. For scholars, therefore, the EVWs have remained something of an anomaly.

In that case why should we now be interested in what was, by most objective measures, a relatively modest influx? The number of East Europeans entering Britain under the EVW scheme was small when compared with subsequent influxes (indeed it was dwarfed by the number of Polish troops settling as political exiles during the same period). Furthermore, only a tiny percentage of the DP population in Germany and Austria came to this country—most found other schemes, especially in the US, Canada and Australia, more appealing.

One reason for heightened interest, as the authors suggest, has been the political transformation in Eastern Europe. Another is the recent spate of attention given to recent war criminal cases involving former refugees admitted to Western states in the late 1940s. But perhaps a further reason for our interest is precisely the anomalous nature, the lack of 'fit' of the EVW group at a time when the question of the economic versus the political motivations of asylum-seekers is such a burning issue of public debate.

This is a well-researched and thoughtful study. It may be felt by some readers that it paints an unbelievably gloomy picture of the EVWs lost. Nevertheless, it is a valuable addition to the all too sparse literature on what was an important period in the history of British immigration.

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Refugees—Asylum in Europe? Danièle Joly with Clive Nettleton and Hugh Poulton. London: Minority Rights Publications, 1992. x + 166 pp. £8.95. ISBN 1-873194-10-2 (pb).

Readers accustomed to the high quality, narrowly adversarial publications offered by the MRG will not be disappointed in reading this slim volume. A new series, it expands

into book form what MRG has done so well for two decades with issue oriented monographs. Danièle Joly, the principle author of this book, wrote the 1990 MRG Report on the same subject which was reviewed in JRS Vol. 3(4). She uses the same basic structure with significant revision and updating to mid 1992. Clive Nettleton prepared some of the sections and Hugh Poulton wrote four chapters (10, 11, 12, 13) on refugees in Eastern Europe.

'Mass Movements—The Need for an International Refugee System' is the opening historical essay and flowing from this the essential backdrop: of conventions, categories, new refugees, recognition, numbers, asylum decision making, restrictions. For the most part these are cast in a helpful discussion of trends and issues. The Eastern Europe section covers changes since 1980 among target sending countries. It touches on the plight of minorities and special groups such as the ethnic Germans, Roma, Vietnamese guest workers and Jews. The last several chapters on Western Europe highlight the now familiar common state practices, some criticisms of new arrangements and a valuable section on political backlash and the challenge to it. A conclusion on 'The Future of Refugees in Europe' was written by MRG in consultation with the authors.

One may ask, why another descriptive publication on refugees? Everyone knows that refugee workers the world over have no time to read. Ron Baker said that a decade ago and things have got worse, not better. Scholars usually have their own specialized information networks and seldom refer to generalist books. There are potential readers among other publics in Europe, such as teachers, university students, public servants, NGOs, church workers and the like, but how many use English well enough to struggle with it in small print to learn about refugees? Based on utility alone, does the book run the risk of being linguistically marginalized in Europe from the moment of publication? Probably not.

One senses a trend in European refugee/asylum thinking over the past two or three years, going beyond narrow state restrictive action as an end, towards genuine political concern for solutions. This is new and may be linked to a number of factors like the ex-Yugoslavia crises, the ever present potential of restless East European people moving West or, more likely, the global economic slowdown which reduces both employment potential in industrialized countries *and* the available amounts of Official Development Assistance (ODA) which aims to improve impacted areas in developing countries so that people will stay home and not move to Europe. These and other post cold war realignments, combine to edge the 'movement of people' towards the core agenda of a receiving state. Since a large number of industrialized and newly industrializing nations are now in regional groupings like the European Community, the North American Free Trade Area and the Pacific Basin, the 'movement of people' takes on, perhaps for the first time, a transnational dimension outside a United Nations framework.

Evidence is circumstantial but nevertheless growing. It is not found in refugee literature so one's antenna must be finely tuned. Jacques Attali, a faithful weather vane of official French thinking, writes in *Millennium* that in the absence of the Third World quickly reaching First World standards they will simply migrate to it.¹ The intellectual-political discussion is most often found in current writing about 'civil society' and how to achieve it.

Thus, the contribution of *Refugees—Asylum in Europe?* may not be to the 'converted' and traditionally sympathetic MRG audience, but instead to those new policy makers who a few years ago never gave refugees a second thought but are doing so now. These people need the issues delineated in a clear, non-academic way that briefly exposes all aspects and adds to an individual knowledge base. In this respect *Refugees—Asylum in Europe?* performs the task admirably due both to content and to a no-nonsense

writing style, appropriate for European policy level non-initiates, most of whom have a good working knowledge of English.

How does a reviewer critique a traditional MRG presentation like this which is simply repackaged and expanded? Perhaps by touching on what it does not do but what MRG should begin to think about, and here two main points emerge from the text itself. The section on the European backlash against refugees covers the aggravating role of the press, vocal right wing parties, hoodlum assaults and the rest. It suggests, but does not actually say, that ordinary folk throughout the EC have an undefined, unspecified fear of foreigners, bordering on xenophobia.

MRG to its credit was among the first to explain to the world at large what was happening to various minorities. It has been doing this now for twenty years—saying more or less the same thing. More recently, along with ECRE and the WCC it is among the premier advocacy groups in Europe. But when does advocacy end and a deeper responsibility begin to educate its devoted audience, this reviewer included, to allay some of the genuine fear it describes so well in the book?

Two examples may be cited. 1993 is designated by the Community as the 'European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations'. The key issues are related to the shortfall of social funding to maintain this older population and not to refugees. But it is no secret at all that the same European population statistics show dramatic growth among older people in the immediate future and not enough babies born to replace them. It is more than obvious that refugee and asylum policy is covertly linked to population replacement in Europe today. Politicians, heads of state and civil servants cannot tell their own people that 'new Europeans' are needed to make up the shortfall of births. Nor, that these 'new Europeans' will be staffing the service industry that their own children decline to work in, including looking after institution-bound elderly people in the nation's old age homes. These facts, well conveyed by MRG to its readers, are a form of advocacy, but in addition it begins to address the issue of fear and to educate the fearful.

Lastly, the passion of advocacy in *Refugees—Asylum in Europe?* conveys another more subtle message, the sense of European victimhood—as if all of the world's disadvantaged majority is coming to Europe, when by comparison to Asia and Africa, the numbers in Europe are small. This is so because some of the important new developments in the refugee regime are not part of the standard MRG message to readers. 'State Responsibility' is one of these developments. In its own slow, ponderous, bureaucratic way the international community is coming around to focus on the sending state's responsibility in the movement of its people. This is public information. The UNHCR Executive Committee Conclusions (No. 63 XLI) endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations is only the latest and most important move in this direction because it prompted a brilliant December 1992 study by Gervase J. L. Coles for the UNHCR on *State Responsibility in Relation to the Refugee Problem, with Particular Reference to the State of Origin*. Explaining threshold issues like these, along with advocacy, can only enhance the important work of the MRG.

1. Conveyed by Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, in a book review in *The Guardian Weekly*, 9 May 1993.