

mass movement of refugees is in sight beyond the hope for eventual voluntary repatriation to their state of origin.

Protection is the title of Part Three of the book. A chapter is first devoted to protection through international institutions, chiefly the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the protection of refugees through general international law and treaty. Treaty standards are afforded a descriptive chapter of their own.

In the ensuing chapter on protection in municipal law, Goodwin-Gill examines procedures for the determination of refugee status and the criteria for the grant of residence for 7 states in some detail and 28 others summarily. Canada is one of those states selected for summary treatment. An examination of that summary description, which runs to less than a full page, is reassuring in that it is reasonably accurate and gives rise to only a few quibbles, understandable in the light of such brief treatment. At the present time, Canadian procedures for determination of inland refugee claims are being subjected to enormous pressures created by the volume of claimants, and also criticism on grounds of procedural fairness. As this review is written, the prospect is that a commission or committee will be established within the next few weeks to advise the Federal Government as to how the current procedure should be changed to cope with obvious deficiencies in the present scheme. Goodwin-Gill's moderately detailed and also his summary descriptions of the procedures in other states would undoubtedly form a useful starting point in the search for viable alternatives.

Conclusions are set forth in a separate Part Four. By and large, they repeat much of what has already been said in earlier chapters. One may perhaps be excused for reflecting that the author's concluding remarks might have been more effectively conveyed in two or three pages instead of sixteen. A further seventy pages of various Conven-

tions and other documents, a list of selected resolutions relating to refugee issues adopted by the U.N. General Assembly, and a list of states party to the more important Conventions and Protocol are included as annexes at the end of the book, together with a selected bibliography and comprehensive index. They should prove of value to anyone engaged in research on refugee issues.

Goodwin-Gill's comprehensive and well organized treatment of refugee issues represents a substantial contribution to the relatively limited literature emanating from a common law jurisdiction on the international law aspects of the refugee. It deserves a place in the library of anyone with a serious interest in the developing law relating to refugees.

*William Angus is a professor of law at Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto who specializes in immigration and refugee legal issues.*



Elisabeth Burgos  
*Me llamo Rigoberta Menchu y asi me nacio la conciencia*  
Barcelona: Argos Vergara, 1983

*by Alex Zisman*

Compared to the news coverage of El Salvador and Nicaragua, the prevailing turmoil in Guatemala (and particularly the predicament of its refugees) has commanded relatively little international attention. Even when clashes between the army and the "subversives" are reported and the grim and dramatic situation of the refugees is recalled, few efforts are made to bring into perspective and examine the deep-rooted causes of this social unrest.

The autobiographic testimony of Rigoberta Menchu, as relayed to the ethnologist Elisabeth Burgos, proves rewarding as a source of understanding of the present reality experienced by the Guatemalan people. Over 60% of

Guatemala's population is indigenous, belonging to twenty-two ethnic groupings of Maya descent — a people who have fiercely managed to preserve, throughout the centuries since the Spanish conquest, their cultural patrimony and identity.

Rigoberta Menchu, a Quiche Indian in her early twenties who only began to learn Spanish (the language used in these memoirs) when she was twenty, provides an amazingly rich and revealing personal account of the customs, traditions and beliefs of her community. She portrays the convoluted relationship between her people and other segments of the population, ranging from the *ladinos* or *mestizos* to the oligarchy, a ruling elite comprised most prominently by landowners and the higher echelons of the army. As the daughter of a peasant leader in a country where land provides the main means of subsistence to the indigenous population, Rigoberta Menchu gained insight more readily than others into the subtle nuances governing the social and class intercourse in Guatemala before committing herself to work as a catechist.

In Guatemala, semi-feudal traditions are still predominantly observed, particularly in the countryside. Even the military (which, except for the decade culminating with the overthrow of Jacobo Arbenz Guzman in 1954, has managed to exercise a steady rule for over a century) has learned that possession of land is one of the most effective guarantees of status and power.

Disillusionment with rulers such as Kjell Legaraud, who promised land reforms only to turn these promises against the peasants, and dispossession of the richest land by prepotent landowners in connivance with the army, led the peasants (comprising mostly the indigenous population) in the mid-seventies to strengthen their organization.

Human-rights violations began to escalate as the organized peasants began to

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