

---

book writing style would be well served by an unacademic (dare we say journalistic?) narrative that openly uses the chronology of her time in the Sudan as a framework. And we could use a more visually descriptive sense of people and places.

The weaknesses of Harrell-Bond's study disappear in the awesomeness of her achievement. She has provided a point of beginning to all the players -- donors, private and governmental, administrators and, most of all, the recipients of policy, the refugees and their hosts -- to imagine a kind of help that is unimposed. Then the "giving" would look more like sharing and the "Haves" would concede to the "Havenots" some of that asset valued most: power.

Dawn MacDonald is a journalist who has recently returned from a fact-finding trip to the Ogaden desert region of Ethiopia where the UNHCR oversees a \$40 million recovery programme for returning Somali refugees. She wishes she had read Dr. Harrell-Bond's book prior to her journey.

### **Renato Camarda**

#### ***Forced to Move***

Introduction by Ronald V. Dellums  
Edited by David Loeb and Susan Hansell  
Translated by Susan Hansell  
and Carmen Alegría  
San Francisco: Solidarity  
Publications, 1985

#### ***Out of the Ashes: The Lives and Hopes of Refugees From El Salvador and Guatemala***

London: El Salvador Committee for Human Rights, Guatemala Committee for Human Rights, War on Want Campaign Ltd., 1985

#### **by Tanya Basok**

*Forced to Move* and *Out of the Ashes*, two recent books on Central American refugees, complement one another in several ways. *Forced to Move* focuses only on Salvadorean refugees, mainly in Honduras. *Out of the Ashes* describes the situation of Salvadoreans and Guatemalans who seek asylum in other Central American countries, Mexico and the United States.

*Forced to Move* is based on testimonies by refugees, volunteers, doctors, nurses, priests, Honduran solidarity workers, UNHCR representatives and others. Except for a short introduction, chronology of the crisis and the update at the end of the

book, there are no interventions by the author. The reader faces the task of reconstructing events and forming a picture of camp life from scattered bits of information revealed in testimonies. *Out of the Ashes*, on the other hand, offers a precise and succinct summary of the refugee situation through a more detached narrative. *Out of the Ashes* is informative, while the other book is very moving. The former appeals to reason, the latter to emotion.

One needs only compare the titles of these two books in order to understand the difference in their focuses. The title "Forced to Move" brings out images of repression, violence and coercion. There is a photo of a family (mother, father and two children) on the cover. Next to them stands a soldier holding a gun. *Forced to Move* is a collection of stories about why Salvadoreans had to abandon their homeland, why and how they were relocated against their will from La Virtud camp to Mesa Grande and why they were being forced to move from Colomocagua and Mesa Grande to yet another area in 1983. It is a textbook of human suffering.

By comparison, *Out of the Ashes* is a statement of hope, of resurrection and of reconstruction of the lives of refugees. In contrast to the deadly image of the gun, the cover of *Out of the Ashes* presents symbols of life and hope: green trees, blooming flowers, women cooking food, people wearing brightly-coloured clothes. The book is an ode to human strength and resistance in the face of overwhelming problems. It portrays rebuilding of the society under the difficult conditions of camp life. Refugees do not give up but, instead, organize literacy classes, carpentry, hammock-making, pottery and other workshops. They cultivate land and form committees. Once a week they call a general assembly of all camp residents.

There are occasional references to these aspects of the refugee life in *Forced to Move*, but they are rare. There are photos of religious ceremonies, theatre performances and classes for children in the chapter on life in the camp. However, the text which accompanies these photos covers repression of refugees and solidarity workers by the Honduran army. A photo on page 43 depicts women during the elections for the refugee coordinating committees. Information on these committees is missing, however. While a few pages are devoted to the determination of the Salvadoreans to work, learn and produce in the camp, most of the book is a denunciation of violence aimed at innocent

people by the Salvadorean and Honduran armies.

*Forced to Move* raises anger which is necessary in order for people to react to this injustice. *Out of the Ashes* inspires faith and hope in the will to survive.

**Cynthia Brown, editor**  
***With Friends Like These:***  
***The Americas Watch Report***  
***on Human Rights &***  
***U.S. Policy in Latin America***  
Preface by Jacobo Timerman  
Introduction by Alfred Stepan  
Toronto: Random House, 1985

#### **by Alex Zisman**

Since its inception in 1981 the Americas Watch has been monitoring and promoting the observance of human rights in Latin America. It has periodically published reports and supplements on individual countries in the region. Often enough -- as in the case of the publications dealing with Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras -- the exposure of human rights violations substantially relied on testimonies dealing with the plight of refugees. These reports and supplements were crisp, exceptionally informative and readily accessible to the general public. In *With Friends Like These* the collective effort of the Americas Watch contributors Cynthia Brown, Holly Burkhalter, Robert K. Goldman, Juan Méndez, Allan Nairn and Arye Neier not only follows but handily complements this previous body of work.

The massive flight of Central and South American refugees over the past decades responded -- and still responds -- to a coercive reality fostered by power groups which over the years have been refining and building on a legacy of social and economic inequalities and human rights abuses.

The United States may well have purported to act as a sort of godfather in the region, but, for all its democratic inclinations and sporadic attempts to encourage the improvement of standards of living and limit the disparity of wealth distribution, when forced to choose between social justice and the status quo, it almost invariably leaned towards the latter at the expense of the former. As a result, U.S. human rights guidelines in Latin America often proved contradictory. Despite some genuine concerns for human rights

*Continued . . .*

CANADA'S PERIODICAL ON REFUGEES  
**REFUGE**

c/o Refugee Documentation Project, York University  
4700 Keele Street, North York, Ontario M3J 1P3

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

Continued from page 15

improvements, decision-making, particularly under the Reagan administration, has been all too often marred by policies of convenience, implemented with a penchant for double standards and even calculated chicanery.

While *With Friends Like These* provides a useful socio-political analysis and comprehensive background information on each of the nine countries it focuses on and discusses (Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Colombia, and Peru), the main thrust of the volume is to examine and expose the fascinating but sorry implications of Reagan's policies in Latin America. What emerges amid a deceiving carnival of anti-communist frenzy is a spectre of misrepresented developments, of short-sighted tacit condonations of human rights abuses by oppressive and usually corrupt regimes, "friendly" allies with a tainted record. They should never have been so readily allowed by the U.S. to escape criticism for their unbecoming actions.

The book harbours the discussions about the various countries between a splendid introductory chapter by the editor and a concluding set of recommendations by Holly Burkhalter and Aryeh Neier. The latter open up with an ancient medical maxim: *Primum non nocere* (First do no harm). It is a measure of the frustration that Reagan's human rights policies in Latin America provoke, and a sensible indication of what his self-righteous administration should -- but is not likely to -- be doing. *With Friends Like These* may not alter much the course of the administration's policy-making, but at least it delivers a rotund moral lesson. It is first-rate and a must for all those interested in the monitoring of human rights. And also for those eager to get a better grasp of the causes behind the most blatant examples of the Latin American refugee exodus.

*Alex Zisman is a doctoral candidate in Social and Political Thought at York University and the Media Co-ordinator at the Refugee Documentation Project.*

## Notice to Our Readers

Please note that since *Refuge* is only published during the academic year, the next issue (Volume 6, Number 1) will appear in October 1986.

Howard Adelman will be away on sabbatical next year, and Michael Lanphier will be taking over as Director of the Refugee Documentation Project and Editor of *Refuge* as of June 1, 1986.

Leslie Rider is also leaving us as Managing Editor, and will be replaced by Noreen Nimmons (see box on page 5). *Refuge* will continue to be published four times a year. Alex Zisman will continue as Feature Editor.

We would also like to remind our new friends that we welcome comments and suggestions about our publication from all our readers.

CANADA'S PERIODICAL ON REFUGEES  
**REFUGE**

c/o Refugee Documentation Project, York University  
4700 Keele Street, North York, Ontario M3J 1P3



**I wish to become a friend of the Refugee Documentation Project for the 1986-1987 academic year. I understand that all friends receive *Refuge* as well as information on the research activities of the RDP. My cheque for \$20 (or ) made payable to the Refugee Documentation Project is enclosed.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Province or State \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_