

Book Review

in the long term, "it will save Adjustment Assistance Program (AAP) funds." Still,

despite the success of the Host Program in general...it has remained a pilot project...if it is conceded that the project is successful, consideration should be given to increased funding, enlargement of staff, and program expansion.

The comments recorded above highlight the realism of settlement issues for refugees in Canada and the realistic problems encountered by both hosts and the hosted. Assistance to the many peoples who have been forced to flee their homelands and to settle here is given in many ways, by many Canadians, through organizations, community groups or individual commitment.

We salute the dedicated Host Program staff and the hundreds of volunteers from the private sector for making their dedication a Canadian concern.

And we commend our Canadian newcomers for their persistent struggle to rebuild their lives, to adjust to their new 'way of life' and for their cultural contributions to our multicultural society.

Most of today's refugees will become citizens; as 'Coming Canadians' they will, in time, enter the annals of Canadian history as 'immigrants' and share with those who came before them that,

they will vary in their wants and aspirations, their fears and hostilities, from group to group, within groups, and from region to region within Canada. But everywhere they are significant parts of the population to which attention must be paid.¹

Endnote

¹Jean Burnet with Dr. Howard Palmer: "Coming Canadians": An Introduction to a History of Canada's Peoples. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988, page 54.

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Uprooting, Loss and Adaptation: The Resettlement of Indochinese Refugees in Canada. Kwok B. Chan and Doreen Marie Indra (eds.) Ottawa: Canadian Public Health Association 1987.

Marilyn Walker

Uprooting, Loss and Adaptation is an important collection of articles by ten different contributors on the Indochinese immigrant experience. The contributors have many years of experience in refugee related areas. Indra, for example, has been working in the academic as well as the practical field since 1975. Two of the contributors are themselves refugees. The volume includes a survey of existing research, considerable new and valuable information, a comprehensive bibliography, and suggested directions for future theory and research.

It is only since 1978 that Indo-Chinese peoples have entered Canada in large numbers, making them among Canada's newest ethnocultural groups, and one of the most significant groups in Canadian immigration history. Most of the Indochinese entered as refugees following the political turmoil of the 1970's. The 'new' refugees, as Nguyen describes them in chapter 4, have arrived from the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Their backgrounds, language and needs are radically different from Canada's 'traditional' European refugees.

Uprooting provides an excellent profile of this unique group of immigrants, their backgrounds and problems of settlement in Canada, as well as the history of academic, government and public response. With authority, academic rigour, and sensitivity, the book treats the refugee experience essentially as a human one. The Indochinese have been disaggregated into their separate countries of origin - Vietnamese, Khmers, Laotians, and Chinese Vietnamese. While past research has focused on the Indochinese as refugees and assumed a certain homogeneity, Indra suggests that "future research strive to focus on the differences brought on by the variables of age, gender, social class and country of origin."

Separate chapters include a historical review of the Canadian research literature and its deficiencies, beginning with

the first phase of research which, because of the sudden arrival of the refugees, centred on the immediate provision of services and the settlement process. Ten years later, Indra points out, we are still lacking information in a number of key areas. Most research has focused on the Vietnamese and Chinese Vietnamese, and almost none on the Lao and Khmer. As Indra points out earlier, it is intriguing that Canada was reluctant to accept Lao and Khmer. Perceived as rural people, it was thought that they would not adjust well to life in Canada. And we still lack information on such areas as gender, which Indra sees as "clearly a fundamental factor in the whole temporal process — in becoming a refugee, in flight, in the camps, in resettlement and adaptation." Nor has any work been carried out by the respective 'new' refugee communities.

Other chapters discuss the psychological problems of Chinese refugees in Quebec; economic and socio-economic adaptation; and the interface between the Indo-Chinese immigrants and Canadians, including a discussion of the government vs. private sponsorship program. These authors contend that the private sponsorship program does not necessarily prove to be superior.

A particularly interesting chapter looks at the importance of the Chinese Vietnamese family in dealing with difficult economic and social conditions, as well as the emerging strains on the family from the migration process. The sense of loss about family members left at home, and a feeling of uprootedness from one's place of birth and from neighbours and friends, are major factors in feelings of loneliness and marginality in the new environment. Chan and Lam find a resulting preoccupation with the "eternal and omnipresent past in Vietnam adaptation to their immediate situation."

In the chapter following, Nguyen proposes the use of a theoretical framework as a way of understanding both the refugee/immigrant situation, and factors of eventual adjustment. The refugees find themselves in a new situation where the skills, knowledge, values, attitudes, etc. are no longer appropriate. The support system provided by the old situation has been largely lost. Nguyen outlines