

Refugee Backlog Grows — Processing Stops

"Gordon Fairweather, chairman of Canada's new Immigration and Refugee Board, said yesterday that he has neither enough money nor personnel to clean up the mounting backlog of more than 50,000 refugee applications."

Richard Cleroux, *The Globe and Mail*, August 31, 1988

"The Immigration Department has ordered its staff across Canada to stop processing refugee claims because the current system is overloaded and will not exist when hearing dates come up for most of the cases filed this year."

Victor Malarek, *The Globe and Mail*, September 10, 1988

"Persistent rumours that the federal Government will soon announce a form of amnesty for refugee claimants have triggered a stampede at immigration offices in Toronto and Montreal."

Victor Malarek, *The Globe and Mail*, September 15, 1988

Visas to Curb Panamanian Influx

On September 7, Minister of Employment and Immigration Barbara McDougall announced the immediate imposition of a visitor visa requirement for Panamanian citizens wishing to come to or pass through Canada. The visa requirement was instituted after a wave of over 1,200 Panamanians fleeing the regime of Manuel Antonio Noriega creat-

ed, according to immigration official Georges Quintal, the worst onslaught of refugee claimants at Dorval Airport in 20 years. Close to 500 Panamanians also sought refuge at Lester Pearson Airport in Metropolitan Toronto. While the majority of these Panamanian claimants appear to be escaping mainly economic hardship, the group also includes active opponents,

former government insiders and members of the armed forces who would face certain persecution back home. The Minister indicated that the imposition of visitor visas is necessary to maintain the integrity of the Canadian immigration programme. The recent Panamanian claimants will join the 60,000 odd backlogged cases in the refugee claims system and wait in limbo for a solution to their plight.

African Turmoil: The Heat Is On

- Over 750,000 refugees from Somalia and Sudan have fled to Ethiopia in recent months. UNHCR deputy Director Arthur Dewey indicated that 400,000 Somali refugees moved into eastern Ethiopia since the eruption of civil war in northern Somalia late in May. Sudanese refugees are fleeing a combination of civil war, famine and floods in southern Sudan. This flash flood of emancipated refugees happens at a time when hundreds of thousands of Eritreans have been

turned into refugees as a result of increased Ethiopian attacks on civilians over the past five months to counteract military victories by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front. Most of the Eritrean refugees have been forced to leave a surplus-producing area, and their displacement is bound to exacerbate dramatically the starvation problem faced by millions in Ethiopia.

- Tribal violence and savage army reprisals in northern Burundi

accounted for a flow of close to 50,000 refugees to Rwanda over the past month and a half. Most of the refugees belong to the Hutu tribe, the largest but weakest of the two dominant forces in the country. The minority Tutsi control the government and the army, and have proved ruthless over the years in fending off any attempts to wrest power away from them.

RDP Update

The Refugee Documentation Project at York University is currently involved in the following projects:

- The "International Refugee Crisis Project", a colloquia series involving scholars who will also give a public lecture on their specific field of expertise.
- The "Refugee Women in Canada Project: Initial Adaptation and Integration Issues (Phase II-research)"
- "Refugees in Policy and Practice", the annual academic seminar series, co-sponsored with the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.
- "The Refugee Crisis: British and Canadian Responses", an international symposium co-sponsored with the Refugee Studies Programme at Oxford University.
- Expanded publication plans of scholarly papers, reports and theses.

The RDP Resource Centre, with its continuously updated library and data base classification system, is open to students and the public from Monday to Thursday from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm.



CANADA'S PERIODICAL ON REFUGEES
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Conferences

- The Refugee Studies Programme at Oxford University and the Refugee Documentation Project at York University are co-sponsoring a conference on "The Refugee Crisis: British and Canadian Responses". This event will take place at Oxford on January 4-7, 1989. For further information contact: RSP, Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St. Giles, Oxford OX1 3LA, UK, or the Refugee Documentation Project, Suite 290J, A.S.B., York University, 4700 Keele Street, North York, Ontario, Canada M3J 1P3.
- The International Refugee Crisis Project is organizing a Colloquia series on the "Global Crisis in Refugee Migration" at York University. A series of eight seminars will take place between October 1988 and May 1989, focusing on specific topics such as a new conceptual model for the refugee

problem, foreign policy, development and security problems of countries of first asylum, regional organizations, refugee resettlement and backlash, and the international organizational framework. The colloquia will provide an opportunity for scholars, civil servants, practitioners and stu-

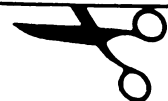
dents to communicate concerns about refugees. For further information write to: International Refugee Crisis Project, c/o Refugee Documentation Project, Suite 290J, A.S.B., York University, 4700 Keele Street, North York, Ontario, Canada M3J 1P3.

Global Crisis in Refugee Migration Preliminary Schedule

- Oct. 21, 1988: *Causes and Norms: Towards a New Conceptual Model of Refugees*
- Nov. 4, 1988: *Development Programmes and Refugees*
- Dec. 9, 1988: *Countries of First Asylum: Development Policy and Settlement*
- Jan. 20, 1989: *Countries of First Asylum: Security Problems*
- Feb. 3, 1989: *Regional Organizations*
- March 3, 1989: *Refugee Resettlement and Backlash*
- April 7, 1989: *Refugee Resettlement and Public Policy*
- May 5, 1989: *An International Organizational Framework*

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I wish to become a friend of the Refugee Documentation Project for the 1988-1989 academic year. I understand that all friends receive *Refuge* as well as information on the research activities of the RDP. My cheque for \$25 (or) made payable to the Refugee Documentation Project is enclosed.

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