

**a place  
of refuge**

# a place of refuge

a positive approach to  
asylum seekers and  
refugees in the UK

Church House Publishing  
Church House  
Great Smith Street  
London SW1P 3NZ  
Tel: 020 7898 1451  
Fax: 020 7898 1449

ISBN 0 7151 4071 X

GS Misc 762

Published 2005 by Church House Publishing.

Copyright © The Archbishops' Council 2005.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or stored or transmitted by any means or in any form, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system without written permission which should be sought from the Copyright Administrator, Church House Publishing, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ.

email: [copyright@c-of-e.org.uk](mailto:copyright@c-of-e.org.uk)

Unless otherwise stated, the Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, and are used by permission. All rights reserved.

This report has only the authority of the Council that approved it

Printed by Creative Print and Design Group Ltd,  
Ebbw Vale

# contents

foreword	vii
<b>chapter one</b> introduction	1
<b>chapter two</b> theological basis: solidarity and compassion	6
1. The Hebrew story	7
2. Jesus as marginalized	8
3. members of one body, citizens of one world	9
4. unconditional hospitality	11
5. finding the space	12
<b>chapter three</b> problems encountered in the asylum and refugee discussion	13
1. biased media	14
2. racism	15
3. ignorance	17
4. mistrust of Government sources	18
<b>chapter four</b> claims against asylum seekers and refugees	20
1. 'they are flooding in and taking over'	20
2. 'Britain is a "soft touch"'	22
3. 'they are given huge benefits and live in luxury'	24
4. 'they are given superior housing'	26
the story of 'Section 55'	27
5. 'they are lazy and won't work'	30
6. 'they are taking all our jobs' – unskilled labour	33
7. 'they are taking all our jobs' – skilled labour	36

8. 'they are criminals who enter and stay in the UK illegally'	38
<b>chapter five</b> asylum seekers, refugees and gender issues	42
1. rape not a form of persecution?	43
2. inconsistency of treatment	44
3. procedure and trauma	45
4. gender exclusion	47
<b>chapter six</b> wider contributions of refugees to the UK	48
1. historical contribution	48
2. cultural and social contribution	50
3. spiritual and personal contribution	53
<b>chapter seven</b> conclusions and suggestions for action	56
1. tackling problems at source	56
2. humanity and hospitality	57
3. suggestions for action	58
useful contacts and resources	61
notes	64

*A Place of Refuge* was commissioned by the Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Council and is commended by the Council as a contribution to study, discussion and action. It was written by Hannah Skinner, Economic Policy Affairs Adviser to the William Temple Foundation ([www.wtf.org.uk](http://www.wtf.org.uk)). The Council gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Foundation in providing research and briefings on economic affairs.

# foreword

The issue of asylum continues to generate passion and controversy, as events in 2005 have demonstrated. Two factors are often in short supply in the political debate: first, an acknowledgment of our moral and legal obligations towards people who have fled from their own country as a result of persecution and other serious threats, and second, a clear grasp of the facts behind the statistics which are bandied about.

When the General Synod debated the issue in February 2004 and requested a study of the arguments for a more positive approach to asylum seekers, it was seeking clarification of both moral and factual issues. This carefully researched report advances a Christian case for policies based on compassion and solidarity. It also explains the legal basis of the asylum system and examines the economic and other contributions made to the UK by asylum seekers and refugees. In the process it casts doubt on many popular assumptions and stereotypes.

The report does not attempt to tackle the larger question of immigration. Nor does it advocate a programme for wholesale reform of the asylum system. Nevertheless, by focusing on the people who are driven to seek asylum, it provides an informed and humane contribution to the larger debate. For the churches it makes suggestions to help them fulfil their duty of hospitality to the displaced and dispossessed. It reminds us that whatever the problems involved in framing a just system to deal with their claims, asylum seekers and refugees are fellow human beings with much to offer to our society.

✠ Tom Butler  
Bishop of Southwark  
Vice-Chair, Public Affairs, Mission and Public Affairs Council

chapter one

# introduction

This report has been prepared in response to the General Synod motion on asylum of February 2004, which requested a study of the arguments for a more positive approach to asylum seekers.

It addresses issues relating to refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. It is important to note that the terms 'asylum seeker' and 'refugee' denote different groups of people, and the difficulty of attempting narrowly to distinguish between them is discussed throughout. Some of the problems experienced are common to each group: for example, racism, prejudice and the hostile claims of some sections of the UK media. The term 'asylum seeker' is used by some as a pejorative label for any foreigner perceived to be causing problems for the UK. These incorrect and often harmful uses also serve to confuse the definitions employed in public debate.

## definition of terms

The term 'refugee' applies to those who have been granted indefinite leave to remain in a country under the 1951 United Nations (UN) Convention on the Status of Refugees. Asylum seekers are those who have applied for refugee status in a country, but are waiting for a decision to be made about their legal right to remain in that country. The vast majority of those arriving in the UK as a result of fleeing persecution in their home countries therefore arrive as asylum seekers, and become refugees only if a positive decision is made allowing them to remain. This presents the UK with a different situation from some other countries, for example the USA, which allow access only to those who have already applied 'offshore' for refugee status. Proposed changes in British policy may lead to the same situation here in the future, but the current system means that people enter the UK, apply for asylum, and then receive a decision on their right to remain.

The 1951 UN Convention defines a refugee thus:

A person who is outside his/her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution.<sup>1</sup>

According to this definition, the departure of refugees from their homes is forced and their arrival in the UK is not voluntary. It is important not to confuse refugees with economic migrants. A tension is created by the overlap between these groupings: many of the least developed countries also suffer from internal conflict, creating populations suffering from economic deprivation as well as fear of persecution. The UN High Commission describes this overlap as 'mixed-motive migration and establishing the primary motive of an asylum seeker is a difficult but necessary task for Home Office officials in defining the legal basis for a person to remain in the UK'.<sup>2</sup>

While there is some confusion in the public mind between the two groups, for example, the popular assertion that the UK is being 'flooded' with refugees and economic migrants, the nature of refuge seeking is wholly different. The wider issue of economic migrants, as people who make a voluntary choice to leave their country in order to seek a more prosperous way of life, will not be addressed here.<sup>3</sup> This is not to devalue or overlook this issue, but to give a sharper focus in order to set out the issues relating specifically to refugees and asylum seekers.

## rejection of asylum claims

It is important to note that many asylum claims are rejected, and that the person is then returned to his or her home country when safe passage can be arranged. (The case of those whose claims are rejected but whose return to their country of origin is, paradoxically, judged unsafe will be discussed later.) This is not because the person is deemed a 'bogus' asylum seeker – as will be outlined in this report, it is not possible to claim asylum illegally – but because it is not possible to demonstrate the 'well-founded fear of persecution' necessary for refugee

status to be granted. Verifying a 'well-founded' fear is sometimes difficult, and it would be incorrect to suggest that all asylum claims are legitimate. Sometimes the claim is rejected on procedural grounds.

However, the crucial issue for the UK is the response to asylum seekers on arrival, whilst they wait for a decision, and after the decision is made (whether their claim is upheld or not). There is a moral and legal imperative to protect them and provide a just decision on their right to remain. A decision cannot be made justly on the assumption of criminality. Specifically Christian considerations in responding to asylum seekers will be outlined below.

## terminology in this report

It must be acknowledged that this report will make use of definitions and groupings of people. Many in the refugee community are uncomfortable with such terms:

The word Refugee is a label. As soon as you say the word you put a bad picture in someone's mind.<sup>4</sup>

I don't like to be called a refugee. It singles you out. In God's eyes, we are all human, we are all individuals.<sup>5</sup>

In an ideal world such reliance on labels would not be necessary, but for clarity and ease of understanding the terms 'asylum seeker' and 'refugee' will be used as defined above. Awareness is necessary that such labels cannot wholly represent people within such groupings, or do justice to their individuality and intrinsic worth.

## the Others

Similarly, use of 'the Other' to denote those from without our community is a common feature of contemporary academic writing. However, this homogenized abstraction can obscure the God-given particularity of each created person. Here it will be used in the plural ('the Others') to remind us of human diversity, cautioning against the desire for 'sameness' that may later 'condemn us as lacking in prophecy and Christian vision', and balancing universal dignity and individual difference.<sup>6</sup>

There is an argument that all humans are asylum seekers in terms of our ultimate destiny ('strangers and pilgrims', Hebrews 11.13, AV) and so there are no 'Others' on earth. The term 'Others' is not intended to convey absolute difference but to acknowledge the spectrum of human identity and to create an imaginative context for welcoming and affirming newcomers to the UK.

## the shape of this book

- Chapter two outlines the theological basis of the report, making explicit the Christian perspectives that have informed the analysis. It is a reminder that the Church represents a global, religious tradition founded on particular ideas given by faith stories and identities. This section is seen as contributing to a process rather than offering a final theological 'product'. It is hoped that the understanding of theology as an evolving dialogue will enable theological thinking to be changed by what it learns from people at the margins.
- This report explores the contribution of refugees holistically, embracing economic, spiritual, social, cultural and personal contributions. Economic contributions are discussed in Chapters three and four. These chapters show that the range of economic contributions is large and variable: for example, participation in the UK health service and crucial sectors of unskilled work. To aggregate these contributions as one 'lump sum' would overlook the difference and present a misleading snapshot of current figures, as opposed to exploring the different economic activities within the refugee community.
- Discussing the economic contribution of refugees also involves acknowledging that there is economic cost to the UK in providing for them when they arrive as asylum seekers. The extent and complexity of this cost is also examined in Chapters three and four. As a tool for understanding the accommodation situation of some asylum seekers, an account of Section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 is included.
- Chapter five focuses on some of the gender-related aspects of asylum seeking. This highlights the vulnerability of some of the most marginalized of an already marginalized group (the majority of this group are women), and draws attention to specific difficulties encountered by some asylum seekers.
- Further contributions of refugees – social, cultural, spiritual and personal – are discussed in shorter sections in Chapter six. This

does not indicate that these contributions are of less significance, but demonstrates the need to examine first the influence and impact of negative claims made by some sections of the UK media. As these claims mainly focus on economic arguments – for example, that asylum seekers refuse to work and claim disproportionate levels of State benefit – Chapters three and four provide the report's primary focus, while Chapter six sketches a wider picture in the light of the preceding economic arguments.

- Recommendations are offered in Chapter seven, in order to draw together themes addressed throughout the report and to suggest Christian responses to the issues raised.

chapter two

# theological basis: solidarity and compassion

Assessing asylum policy from a Christian perspective necessarily engages with the demands of solidarity and active compassion that are so abundant in the Scriptures, and in the teachings of Christ in particular. Solidarity and active compassion become foundational principles for response to asylum seekers and refugees. They are of great significance in the Bible, and have provoked much theological reflection in the history of Christianity.<sup>1</sup> However, to speak of these principles as concretely existing is to do them and ourselves a disservice. They are 'not yet' to be striven towards. John Reader defines justice and democracy similarly – 'both are always "still to come"'.<sup>2</sup> He asserts that democracy and justice become dangerous when they are claimed to have been achieved: 'Whose version of democracy are we talking about here and exactly how close to the ideal of democracy are those who are claiming it as their own?' Likewise solidarity and compassion must be seen as utopian, Messianic concepts that place before us 'a horizon which remains ahead and unattainable, but one which allows us to judge how far we still have to travel'.<sup>3</sup> As we pray for the coming of the kingdom of God, our action must reflect our desire, creating glimpses of God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven.

Solidarity and active compassion are not fully realizable because of the constraints and contingencies of the present. We live in a fallen world and it is not possible to offer solidarity and active compassion to all. There are other realities, such as safety, fear and cost, that blur and smudge clear-cut ideals. The French philosopher Jacques Derrida's exploration of unconditional hospitality is discussed later, but for now it is sufficient to assert that solidarity and active compassion are eschatological principles. Finding space between the 'now' and the 'not yet' in which we can strive to fulfil these divine goals offers a great challenge, and our practical response to the Others in our midst will be a test of our vision and faithfulness.

Solidarity is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as 'agreement and support resulting from shared interests, feelings or opinions', and compassion as 'sympathetic pity and concern for the suffering of others'.<sup>4</sup> Active compassion, therefore, can be described as being motivated by this sympathetic pity and concern to act with and, if necessary, on behalf of, those who are suffering. It leads us to stand in solidarity through personally internalizing, and thus sharing, others' interests, feelings or opinions. Likewise, solidarity necessarily involves feeling compassion sufficiently to offer agreement and support. The two can be seen as mutually reinforcing – one leads necessarily to the other and both are enhanced by experience of the other. Participation in this cycle of solidarity and active compassion provides a means of assessing performance in the present, and also offers hope and expectation for the future.

## 1. the Hebrew story

Solidarity and active compassion are primary biblical imperatives, dominant in the Old as well as the New Testament. A practical command for meeting the needs of newcomers to a country is given in Deuteronomy:

When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the alien . . . so that the LORD your God may bless you in all your undertakings. When you beat your olive trees, do not strip what is left; it shall be for the alien . . . When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien.<sup>5</sup>

The Others – refugees, exiles and 'asylum seekers' – are often encountered within the Bible. For God is identified as the God who cares for the exiled and the stranger, who brings justice to the oppressed and calls on people of faith to care for the strangers and foreigners in their midst as they care for each other.<sup>6</sup>

When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.<sup>7</sup>

The Hebrew story is one of exile, persecution, oppression and residence in different lands. Abraham and Sarah escaped famine in Canaan and fled to Egypt. Isaac was forced from the land of the Philistines and his son Jacob – like Abraham and Sarah before him – escaped famine in Canaan by fleeing to Egypt. After Joseph's success in Egypt, the Israelites came to live there, but after the death of Pharaoh found themselves subject to slavery and ill-treatment. Fleeing this persecution, the Hebrews wandered in the desert for 40 years before they reached Canaan. Even after the conclusion of the exodus, however, the story of persecution, captivity and exile continues – captivity under the Assyrians and then the Babylonian exile.<sup>8</sup> The Israelites came to view themselves as a people freed by a God who stands with the oppressed and who called them to do likewise.

## 2. Jesus as marginalized

This concern for homelessness and displacement continues in the story of the New Testament. Joseph and Mary were forced to flee to Egypt with the baby Jesus to avoid Herod's killing of infants. In adult life, Jesus continued to identify himself with the displaced and marginalized: 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.'<sup>9</sup> His ministry took him far from his own home to places where he chose to spend time and eat with the outcast and oppressed. The idea of Christ as a stranger in the places where he travelled, and thus the identity of the stranger linking to Christ, is a powerful motif in today's world of refugees. Jesus spoke of God's kingdom, in which the current world order would be reversed and 'the last will be first, and the first will be last'.<sup>10</sup> He taught that faithful obedience to God was marked by acts such as offering hospitality, and that response to the marginalized reflected a person's response to him: 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'<sup>11</sup>

The biblical teaching on solidarity and active compassion with the displaced and oppressed is clear and unequivocal.<sup>12</sup> God's love is not restricted to specific groups – defined by ethnicity, religion, gender, social status or economic contribution – and neither should be the outreach of the Churches. There is nowhere outside God's love, and there is nowhere outside our responsibility. To turn away from human need would be to disregard a fundamental teaching of Jesus, and we must recognize a special responsibility to the most marginalized. Our

response to Others amongst us involves embracing a complex web of difference and provides a test of our solidarity and active compassion.

### 3. members of one body, citizens of one world

This is a daunting and challenging assertion. It requires a recognition of common citizenship within the world, uniting solidarity and compassion. This cosmopolitan thought originates partly in Greek Stoic thought. This dictated that the Stoic is a citizen of the world because, wherever he or she is, he or she lives according to reason, and is at home in the midst of his or her own.<sup>13</sup> Early Christianity developed its own vision of shared identity and citizenship when St Paul adopted the metaphor of the body (a common feature of contemporary political theory) to express his understanding of unity and interdependence in the Christian community. Christian solidarity has a unique basis and a particular quality, but its social and ethical implications have wider relevance. The Pauline model of the body of Christ can provide a paradigm for society, valuing all contributions and particularly creating an understanding in the wider world that the seemingly least important is in fact of the greatest value and significance.<sup>14</sup> 'Humans are intended to live in community with one another, a form of living that is modelled, albeit imperfectly, by the Christian church.'<sup>15</sup>

As Christians share in membership of the body of Christ, and draw on this experience to shape their participation in society, Christian theology offers a distinctive voice in debates about refugee policy, expressing solidarity and active compassion. A response 'in Christ' is required to the displaced and vulnerable people among us. In addition, human creation in the image of God, as portrayed in Genesis, demonstrates the dignity and worth of each individual. Every encounter, be it with a person of any faith or none, brings us face to face with the image of God. Holding this understanding alongside a model for society in which the most vulnerable are highly valued creates a powerful prophetic voice that can be raised to challenge hostility and indifference to asylum seekers. The biblical tradition affirms the goodness of all God's creation, entailing that all human beings are equal in dignity, while also acknowledging a special concern for the most marginalized and apparently 'lesser' members of society. This social priority is again reflected in Paul's analogy of the body of Christ: 'God has so arranged

the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member.'<sup>16</sup> Compassion and solidarity involve commitment both to the whole and to the marginal; this can be expressed as 'differentiated solidarity'.

The knowledge that other Christians are fellow-children of God is complemented by the conviction that all human beings are citizens of God's world. Holding the interdependence of the body of Christ alongside the belief that all humans are created in the image of God enables us to combine concern for the whole of humanity with the recognition that the apparently 'least' of its members are in reality the most important. The idea of 'cosmopolitan citizenship' draws attention to the potential responsibility of Christians, Churches and Christian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for the welfare of all people. This responsibility is fulfilled by the demonstration of compassion and solidarity through practical hospitality. It involves raising 'a voice for the voiceless' and challenging the dark and unjust conditions that force people to leave their homes and families in the first place. Despite the financial cost of the asylum system in the UK, we must be prepared to meet the cost, both financial and non-financial, of solidarity and compassion.

Belief in the God-given worth of all people generates respect and welcome for the contribution each person can make, whether economic, social, spiritual, cultural, or individual. This allows them freedom to be and do as God designed, and as they choose. Enabling this contribution, however, is a sensitive task that requires compassion for their circumstances, and willingness to provide and care while they overcome obstacles to participation in society: for example, there are 'often serious psychiatric problems resulting from torture' as well as the overwhelming disorientation and trauma implicit in asylum seeking.<sup>17</sup> Refugees cannot be seen as a de-humanized 'problem', nor even simply as potential social or economic contributors, but must be affirmed and loved as valuable individuals.

## 4. unconditional hospitality

Alongside the theological basis for responsibility towards asylum seekers and refugees, interdisciplinary conversation can also be fruitful. The French philosopher Jacques Derrida recognized the challenge of the Others in ways that illuminate Christian concerns. Unconditional hospitality, he asserted, is the very first opening of relation to the Others.

. . . to open my space, my home – my house, my language, my culture, my nation, my state, and myself. I don't have to open it, because it is open, it is open before I make a decision about it: then I have to keep it open or try to keep it open unconditionally. But of course this unconditionality is a frightening thing, it's scary.<sup>18</sup>

The imposition of rules, boundaries and limits is inevitable; it is necessary in life to condition the unconditional. The question how far this conditioning of hospitality can qualify the Christian ideals of solidarity and compassion poses a challenge. What conditions can be imposed on the love for our neighbours that Jesus taught? Derrida was clear that holding unconditional hospitality as an ideal provides a yardstick for performance. There may be no satisfactory answers to this dilemma, but neither can we cease struggling with it.<sup>19</sup>

It is important to revisit the distinction between asylum seekers and migrants, and their different reasons for seeking hospitality. Whilst the migrant stands to lose a better quality of life if her or his request for hospitality is rejected, the asylum seeker stands to lose his or her life. If we see solidarity and compassion as utopian, Messianic ideals that we cannot yet fully attain but are obliged always to pursue, it is only through seeking God's wisdom that we can discover their scope and application in the messiness of the present.

Derrida also argued that the idea of the cosmopolitan community, whilst valuable and important, is limited by political factors, which include the authority of the State, citizenship and strict control of residency.<sup>20</sup> He acknowledged the principle of state sovereignty that underpins international law, but advanced the idea of the New International as a new version of the cosmopolitan citizen.<sup>21</sup> The New International calls for a new concept of democracy that is unconditional and welcomes the Others. Economic thought is at the heart of this – the idea of opening one's own space, goods, house and nation. However, the primary

principle of unconditionality is accompanied by criteria and rules of limitation.

Christian theology can fruitfully enter into dialogue with Derrida's analysis. The unconditional welcoming of Others acknowledges both the best and worst possibilities of the interaction. The relationship of trust between strangers is an example of the 'social capital' that many churches demonstrate in their work with refugees and asylum seekers. Derrida's thinking on hospitality strove to distinguish between inclusion and assimilation.<sup>22</sup> This reflects another important aspect of hospitality towards asylum seekers and refugees. Whilst accepting and welcoming them into one's own space, the aim is not to acculturate or assimilate individuals so they simply reflect oneself. Each person's individuality must be affirmed as reflecting the diversity of God's creation, and the sanctity of each life upheld. Christian compassion must recognize solidarity whilst celebrating difference.

## 5. finding the space

It can be argued that this New International individual is a utopian concept, but the contemporary context calls for urgent reformulation of existing norms of citizenship. Christians are called to offer a place of welcome and act with compassion and grace, reflecting the universal love of God that has a special concern for the marginalized. The current situation of many asylum seekers demands that Christian thought and action embody divine love and create 'the reality of tomorrow'.<sup>23</sup> Creating the reality of tomorrow involves persevering prayer and faithful action.

The underlying causes of asylum seeking must, therefore, be tackled, with the imperative not to turn away anyone who is in genuine danger – an imperative attested by biblical teaching and human rights alike. The uneasy tension between the ideals of solidarity and compassion and the need for rules and conditions must be accepted and worked with. For Christians this is an example of finding the space in an unjust and divided world to live in anticipation of God's kingdom of peace and justice.

## chapter three

# problems encountered in the asylum and refugee discussion

Recognition of the need for criteria and rules means there are problems with accepting all who wish to enter the UK. However, different criteria must apply to those fleeing persecution and oppression from those applied to other migrants. Asylum seekers are extremely marginalized and vulnerable people. They have ceased to be under the protection of the governments of their own countries, and are unable to return home through fear of persecution.

Beyond the embrace of family and group, and outside the protection of the law, the refugee is reduced to the status of naked, abstract humanity, an exemplum of universal human nature before it becomes concrete through the individualization action of community and equalizing effect of law.<sup>1</sup>

This dehumanization violates the Christian estimate of the intrinsic worth of each individual. Our response to asylum seekers and refugees is, therefore, a faith issue, yet it is also a pragmatic issue as we strive to integrate them. However, since the presence of asylum seekers and refugees generates many negative reactions, it is necessary to examine some of the claims currently made against them.

According to Migration Watch UK, a group committed to reforming the UK asylum policy, 80 per cent of British people want to see 'much tougher immigration controls'. The fact sheet goes on to assert that 'this includes 52% of the ethnic minority communities' and, by implication, the desire for a 'much tougher' approach is not simply white racist sentiment.<sup>2</sup> Whether or not the survey truly represents the UK population, it is evident from the most cursory look at recent press coverage that there is in the UK strong negative feeling towards asylum seekers and refugees. Before moving to a more detailed examination of the accusations commonly made against them, it will be helpful to examine some of the causes of public perceptions.

# 1. biased media

The main source of most people's knowledge regarding asylum seekers and refugees is the mass media. The media, especially certain sections of the press, shape opinions and suggest attitudes that are often misguided, incorrect, negative and even hostile. In periods of concentrated coverage of immigration and asylum issues, asylum seekers, refugees and economic migrants are demonized and mythologized. This scapegoating of the Others among us distorts the truth and is clearly irreconcilable with principles of solidarity and compassion. However, engaging with these media representations requires us to recognize that such propaganda succeeds because it plays on existing fears.

Frequent references in some newspapers to 'illegal immigrants' (a term not defined in UK law and not used as a category by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate), 'bogus asylum seekers' and 'asylum cheats' have resulted in such language becoming commonplace in public discussion.

A MORI poll carried out in May this year asked respondents what word the media most uses when referring to asylum seekers and refugees. The top answer, mentioned by 64%, was 'illegal immigrant'. 'Bogus' was cited by 22% of respondents.<sup>3</sup>

Reports that asylum seekers and refugees are 'above the law' and receive preferential treatment in housing and health care foster resentment and prejudice. The Refugee Council asserts that the British media are 'liberally peppered with the use of negative language and misinformation around the issue of asylum'.<sup>4</sup> This ranges from demonizing whole ethnic groups – for example, the 'Roma gypsies' and 'Eastern European crime lords' who would apparently flood the UK following the EU expansion of 1 May 2004 – to vilifying individuals and families. In March 2001 a Romanian family was seized upon by some of the media as personifying the 'bogus asylum seeker problem'.<sup>5</sup> A picture of Mihaela Miclescu, aged 18, and seven months pregnant at the time, filled an entire page of the *Daily Mail* under the headline 'Asylum Seeker or Gangster Queen?' The paper devoted 5,000 words to the family in three days, describing them as 'bogus' asylum seekers and criminals.

By the end of the week, the Miclescus had become full-blown enemies of the State. The Gypsies . . . were characterised as a magpie race, seeking to fill their homes with tacky, shiny installations paid for by other people.<sup>6</sup>

When the family members were released from detention pending a Home Office ruling, they disappeared from London and from the official asylum system. This vilification, personal or general, is an unacceptable exercise in fear and humiliation. The approach of sectors of the UK media must be challenged in view of its apparent influence over much of the population.

## 2. racism

Angelina Jolie, goodwill ambassador for the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), identifies racism as one of the major problems facing refugees:

The biggest problem could be the hostility, negative stereotyping, misperception and in some cases, downright racism faced by refugees. The mistaken negative perceptions about refugees often result in a cascade of concrete problems for them including anti-refugee legislation, abuse of refugees' human rights, severe drops in donations for refugee operations, and even brutal behaviour toward them.<sup>7</sup>

Racism, as a prejudice held against other ethnic groups, can play a large and destructive part in refugee discussions. However, it is simplistic to represent the issue as British citizens pitted against all foreigners. For example, racism expressed towards asylum seekers may not be directed at entire ethnicities, but only those from an ethnic group proposing to enter the UK. Positive regard for an ethnic group in its own country may not extend to welcoming the same people into the UK. This may indicate that some racism is founded on perception of immediate threat to a locality or region. In addition, it may indicate a fear of the loss of traditional culture and identity, which, through a lack of other language, is being expressed in racist terms. Another possible reason for the expression of racism is the belief that asylum seekers and refugees are receiving preferential care and attention. Acknowledgement

of these complications does not in any way condone racism, but suggests that understanding the motivation and fears behind some racist sentiments may help in dealing with them. For example, it is more effective to refute the belief that asylum seekers receive more benefits than UK citizens experiencing poverty than to denounce those who express anger at this alleged fact as racist.

There are some who hold steadfast views about the supremacy of one ethnic group over others, based purely on prejudice and discrimination, and Christians must reject and contest such views. Whilst relatively few people in the UK will openly admit to racist opinions, more covert attitudes of hostility and prejudice towards asylum seekers and refugees are sometimes expressed under the guise of concern for the British way of life and culture. The Migration Watch UK web site includes a section entitled 'What You Say'. In this area, members of the public are free to express their views regarding asylum seekers and refugees. Although every contributor clearly states that he or she is 'not a racist', the derogatory and dismissive comments made demonstrate a fear and lack of sympathy for asylum seekers and refugees:

One cannot walk down any street in central London without being accosted by 'asylum seekers' begging, holding out their children as bait.

. . . they are sponging off the state at our expense . . . [my town has] been taken over by Koreans . . . I don't want to see foreigners taking over everywhere.

The whole fabric of our society is changing for ever, by people who have no allegiance to us at all . . . we don't want to be surrounded by Halal butchers, and Sari shops.

. . . the ever increasing number of foreign faces on our streets are [sic] beginning to make us feel uncomfortable in our own country.<sup>9</sup>

Such attitudes fail to respect human dignity and diversity, but maintain ill-informed attitudes based on media-created stereotypes. However, these attitudes also demonstrate confusion and fear among sections of the UK population. Beneath many of the xenophobic assertions on the Migration Watch discussion board there lurk misunderstandings of the

nature of asylum seeking in the UK – many of the misunderstandings, once again, propagated by the media.

However, racism is not confined to those who define themselves as native Britons. Inter-ethnic antagonism is also a problem for some asylum seekers and refugees, especially where individuals from ethnic groups who are in conflict in their countries of origin come together on arrival in the UK. Such racism is often violent, and may provoke violent retaliation.<sup>9</sup> A further problem associated with racism against asylum seekers is that it is often not reported to the police. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) attributes this to language and cultural barriers, and a widespread misunderstanding of the role of the Police Service.<sup>10</sup>

### 3. ignorance

Racism and intolerance are buttressed by ignorance of the facts about asylum seekers and refugees in the UK. Given the role of the media, and lack of direct experience of the situation, it is clear that many people find it hard to remedy their ignorance. There are positive and informative resources, but alarming headlines and confusing arguments obscure them from public awareness. Despite the supposed 'floods' of asylum seekers entering the UK, the vast majority of the public has never actually encountered one. Distorted statistics and inaccurate reporting in some sections of the media can hide the stories and the individuals represented within them.

As stated earlier, there is considerable confusion in the public mind between asylum seekers, refugees and economic migrants. There is no need to repeat the distinctions here, but this confusion is a fundamental problem in combating prejudice and ignorance. There are points of overlap, where it could be argued that economic migrants are fleeing oppression caused by absolute deprivation just as much as refugees are fleeing persecution by governments or other groups. However, working within the legal definition of refugees in the 1951 consensus, there is a fundamental difference between these two groups. Ruud Lubbers, head of the UNHCR, poses the problem thus:

The impressive body of international law designed to protect refugees is under intense pressure . . . . But we

must guard against indiscriminate rejection of foreigners. Refugees are already finding it increasingly difficult to access safety . . . We have to be clear about who is a refugee and who is a migrant, and not sacrifice one to keep out the other.<sup>11</sup>

## 4. mistrust of Government sources

Further confusion and ignorance about the true situation of asylum seekers and refugees arise from lack of trust in the figures provided by the UK Government. An extreme example of this is demonstrated by the British National Party (BNP), which states:

In view of the Home Office's appalling record of lies and deceit on every question relating to immigration and race relations, we can only warn journalists to check and double check any claim made by the Government before repeating it.<sup>12</sup>

However, it is not just the BNP who thinks that the UK Government is failing to provide an accurate portrayal of refugees in Britain. In reaction to an article in the *Sunday Times* of 7 March 2004 headed 'Lid blown on migrant cover-up', Migration Watch UK issued the following comment:

The *Sunday Times* story takes us behind the spin to the heart of what is really going on at the Home Office. The Government's claims of 'managed migration' are exposed as a charade and the story reveals the lengths to which they are prepared to go to hide the real facts. Revelations of this kind make it difficult to take at face value anything the Government tells us on this subject.<sup>13</sup>

The suspicion that politicians may play on the fears created by the media in order to win votes also creates a climate of distrust towards government policy and statistics on refugees. The author Hari Kunzru, addressing the Refugee Council annual general meeting, declared:

I find myself increasingly appalled by the way in which the media works to create a climate of fear and mistrust of outsiders. In such a climate . . . politicians take on

populist legislation which really doesn't help to solve the problems in our system – but it may win them votes.<sup>14</sup>

This distrust of official UK government statements and statistics about asylum seeking and refugees is adding to the public's confusion and paranoia about the situation. Migration Watch UK states that:

We believe that the prevailing misinformation and the failure openly to address the substance of these matters give rise to rumour and suspicion which can only encourage the rise of the extreme right, to which we are strongly opposed.<sup>15</sup>

Challenging misinformation and raising awareness of the true UK asylum situation is an important task for the Churches in contributing to public debate.

# claims against asylum seekers and refugees

Specific claims against asylum seekers and refugees will now be examined in more detail. The word 'claim', and not the popularly used term 'myth', will be used in order to demonstrate willingness to take the assertions seriously and not to begin with the assumption that they are pure fantasy.

## 1. 'they are flooding in and taking over'

This is one of the most common claims regarding asylum seekers and refugees. High statistics are reported and sensational claims made:

1.5 million visas are issued every year yet there are no checks on departure.<sup>1</sup>

. . . we, the native British people, will be an ethnic minority in our own country within sixty years.<sup>2</sup>

. . . net foreign immigration at the present level of nearly 250,000 a year.<sup>3</sup>

However, such figures disguise the reality of asylum seeking. A true picture of who is entering and leaving the UK is not obtained by 'lumping together' all migration figures, and apparently contradictory figures create confusion and paranoia.

Of the asylum seekers who arrived in 2002, about 10 per cent were granted indefinite leave to remain (refugee status) – that is, 8,100 people. In addition, a quarter of applicants were given exceptional leave to remain, an arrangement that allows people to stay because the Government accepts they need protection but does not want to give them refugee status. This category was replaced in April 2003 by Humanitarian Protection and Discretionary Leave, which allows the

person to stay for a period of three years and may be extended or made permanent on appeal after this time. Upon adding the 13,000 cases won on first appeal, it can be seen that about half of applicants in 2002 were accepted as having well-grounded fear of persecution.<sup>4</sup> The total number of applications for asylum in 2002 was 84,130.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, approximately 42,000 refugees were allowed to settle in the UK in 2002.

It is also to be noted that among the rejected category were some 12,000 applications – 15 per cent – refused on ‘non-compliance grounds’. This means that they did not have their case heard for procedural reasons, such as failing to fill in paperwork correctly or missing an immigration interview. It is not possible to know whether their cases would have been accepted or not. Such figures present a very different picture of refugee flows to the UK from that implied by sensationalist headlines.

[Globally] Over the last four decades, the percentage of refugees has stayed around 8 per cent of the total migration flows.<sup>6</sup>

However, research has shown that people in the UK imagine the reality of asylum seeking to be very different from the facts:

The British public overestimate the number of the world’s refugees and asylum seekers hosted by the UK by ten times.<sup>7</sup>

In addition, the British population believes the UK to be taking a disproportionately higher number of refugees than the rest of the world, prompting speculation that Britain is a ‘soft touch’:

Britain the No.1 refugee magnet.<sup>8</sup>

A MORI poll demonstrates the impact of such misinformation, showing that people vastly overestimate the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK. On average, people think that 23 per cent of the world’s refugees and asylum seekers are in the UK, more than ten times greater than the reality, which is actually less than 2 per cent.<sup>9</sup> Even within the EU, in 2001, Britain ranked only tenth in terms of asylum applications in relation to the overall population. Some organizations argue that the UK has the highest number of asylum applications, based on the fact that, in absolute figures, the UK had the highest number of

applications for an industrialized country. However, as a proportion of the population, Britain ranked eighth, in 2002, receiving 1.8 applications per 1,000 residents.<sup>10</sup> The assertion that refugees deliberately target the UK as a good destination is partly refuted by the evidence provided by asylum seekers who claim they did not know their final destination when they arranged to be smuggled from their home countries by human traffickers. (Evidence as to why some refugees specifically choose the UK as their destination is discussed later.)

## 2. 'Britain is a "soft touch"'

The claim that Britain is a 'soft touch' for asylum seekers appears doubtful in the light of comparative proportions of successful applications:

In 2001, Canada granted protection to 97% of Afghan asylum applicants, where the UK granted only 19%. Somali applicants had a 92% success rate in Canada, where in the UK it was only 34%. 85% of Colombian applicants in Canada were granted protection, against a mere 3% in the UK.<sup>11</sup>

As the EU tightens border controls, it is becoming increasingly difficult to get into Europe at all. The following section, dealing with asylum seeker benefits, accommodation and Section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, also demonstrates that Britain is not making things easy for refugees to enter.

In fact, the countries taking disproportionate numbers of asylum seekers and refugees are the direct neighbours of states experiencing conflict, civil war or persecution. Of the fourteen and a half million refugees in the world, five million are in Asia. Of these, one million are in Peshawar in Pakistan:<sup>12</sup>

During 1992–2001, 86 per cent of the world's estimated 12 million refugees originated from developing countries, whilst such countries provided asylum to 72 per cent of the global population (source: UNHCR). If you consider global refugee and asylum seeking populations in relation to the host country's size, population and wealth, the UK

ranks 32nd. Taking the greatest burden are Iran, Burundi and Guinea.<sup>13</sup>

Regardless of popular British perception, most refugees do not end up in Britain or America, but in developing countries. This creates further economic and social burdens on countries already struggling with poverty. For example, in 1999, Tanzania received more refugees than all Europe.<sup>14</sup> Tanzania is also on the UN's list of Least Developed Countries.<sup>15</sup>

Asylum seekers who are able to choose the UK as a destination give reasons that do not support the belief that they come here because they regard Britain as a 'soft touch'. Listening to some asylum seekers and refugees at a recent seminar, the following reasons for wanting to come to the UK emerged:

The UK is safe. There is no war in England. There is more security and less crime – we don't have to be fearful of people.

The media image of the West in developing nations is of a flawless society.

English is taught around the world, so people come here because they can speak the language.

The prevalent view is that in England you can 'make it'.

It is apparent that, for those fleeing conflict or persecution situations, stability and peace in the UK equate with a grounded and secure culture. These reasons correspond with findings of the Institute of Public Policy Research. Its research suggested asylum seekers come to the UK for four main reasons:

- to be with relatives or friends;
- to speak or learn English;
- in the belief that the UK is a safe, tolerant and civilized country;
- because of historic links, such as through the former British Empire.<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, asylum seekers are neither 'flooding here' nor doing so believing that the UK is a soft touch. However, it is undeniable that public perception is of great importance. If the UK public feel, from whatever cause, that they are being 'swamped', resentment and fear

will result. Research from Icar, an academic unit specializing in analysing asylum, criticizes the way that the UK Government has dealt with the British public's concerns and fears. Whether these fears are warranted or not, they are still valid, 'legitimate local concerns and fears which are not in themselves prejudiced or xenophobic'.<sup>17</sup> The research found that, when questions and worries were ignored, attitudes of local residents quickly hardened into resentment. The power of shared imagination and fears should not be underestimated, and sections of the UK media should be challenged about their misrepresentation of the truth.

### 3. 'they are given huge benefits and live in luxury'

One of the most frequently made claims is that asylum seekers and refugees are costing 'the British taxpayer' billions. Rumours abound that asylum seekers and refugees are lazy, refuse to work, claim huge benefits and get given the best accommodation and health care. Not one of these claims is substantiated. However, it is undeniable that the asylum system is expensive:

In the financial year ending in 2002, the asylum and immigration system cost £1.7bn. That's a lot of money – but for a government which spent £400bn last year, it's the equivalent of the Chancellor losing his wallet. There are hidden costs in the asylum system, such as additional funding to schools, but they add very little to the main figure.<sup>18</sup>

These figures also fail to take into account the contribution that refugees and asylum seekers make to the UK economy when they are able to begin working.

Most asylum seekers granted refugee status, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave in the UK are of working age. Therefore, from the time when they are able to begin work in the UK, they are in a position to contribute to economic growth through taxes and other forms of social participation. Yet those of us born in the UK have State money spent on us from birth – receiving free health care, education, child, and many other, benefits. From this perspective, a refugee is far more likely to end up 'in credit' with the State than a UK resident born in Britain.

A Home Office study estimated that the foreign-born population paid about 10 per cent more to the Government than it received in expenditure:

Broadly speaking, over the life cycle, natives are a net fiscal burden while they are in compulsory (state financed) education; net fiscal contributors when they are in employment; and net burdens again when they are unemployed, retired or require expensive medical services . . . [however] since the UK does not incur the same costs for educating first generation migrants as it does for natives it is likely that, overall, migrants and natives, will have different fiscal impacts. The age profile and labour market outcomes of migrants [also] suggest they are likely to make some net fiscal contribution – particularly since during the period in which they are most likely to be unemployed, immediately after arrival, they may be ineligible for unemployment benefits.<sup>19</sup>

Work conducted in the USA by the National Research Council (NRC) shows a similar conclusion. Whilst first-generation migrants imposed an average net fiscal cost of \$3,000 at present discounted value, the second generation yielded an \$80,000 fiscal gain.<sup>20</sup> This catching-up and overtaking the native population in earnings is known as the 'assimilation hypothesis'.

A popular perception in the media, and one propagated by organizations such as the BNP is that asylum seekers are able to claim massive State benefits. These are reportedly larger than the State pension, and the ease and freedom with which these benefits are handed out is apparently a large draw for asylum seekers wishing to enter Britain. Again, these claims are untrue.

Asylum seekers are not allowed to claim benefits through the mainstream welfare system. Until 8 April 2002, they were supported through a voucher system. This was replaced by the Asylum Registration Card (ARC) system, under which cash payment can be claimed at the post office. The maximum basic income support for UK citizens earning too little and owning too little capital to live on is £87.30 for an adult couple. However, asylum seekers receive 30 per cent less than this. The amounts received are shown below (basic income support received in addition to other benefits, wages or capital for British citizens is shown in brackets):<sup>21</sup>

	<b>Level (from 12 April 2004)</b>
Qualifying couple	£61.11 (87.30)
Lone parent aged 18 or over	£38.96 (55.65)
Single person aged 25 or over	£38.96 (55.65)
Single person aged 18 – under 25	£30.84 (44.05)
Person aged 16 – under 18	£33.50 (33.50, but 44.05 in some instances)
Child under 16	£42.27 (60.45)

The commonly used threshold for determining UK citizen low income is 60 per cent of median income. In 2001/02, before deducting housing costs, this equated to £187 per week for a couple with no children, £114 for a single person, £273 for a couple with two children and £200 for a lone parent with two children.<sup>22</sup> Evidently, the asylum seeker support level lies well below this threshold. Furthermore, claims that asylum seekers receive more state money than pensioners are unfounded. The full Basic State Pension is currently £4,027.40 per year (i.e. around £77.45 per week) for a single person and £6,437.60 per year (or £123.80 per week) for a married couple.<sup>23</sup>

## 4. 'they are given superior housing'

The above figures do not include accommodation costs, which can be claimed by asylum seekers who are destitute, or who can prove they will become destitute within 14 days. Contrary to popular opinion, asylum seekers have no say in where they are housed. In April 2000, a policy of dispersal came into effect whereby asylum seekers were placed outside London and the South-East, as these areas were judged to have borne a disproportionate burden. Whilst waiting for their asylum decision, some refugees are housed in detention or 'removal' centres.<sup>24</sup> They can even be housed in prisons, and there is no time limit on the period of detention. Detainees do not initially even receive a written explanation of the reasons for their detention:

According to a UNHCR study, reports indicate that the UK detains more people for longer periods and with less judicial supervision than any comparable country in Europe (Reception Standards for Asylum Seekers in the European Union, 2000).<sup>25</sup>

This means that, pending a decision on an asylum seeker's right to stay, the individual or family may be placed arbitrarily in a centre for an indefinite period. Those so placed are frequently moved around, breaking the relationships they may have formed with lawyers, faith-based groups or other refugee assistance groups. Other asylum seekers are placed in poor-quality council housing, where they are sometimes isolated or face racial harassment from neighbours.<sup>26</sup> If a positive decision is made and an asylum seeker is granted refugee status, he or she no longer qualifies for financial help from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) and is eligible for the mainstream housing and benefits rights of any other UK resident.

## the story of 'Section 55'

On 8 January 2003, the controversial Section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 was implemented. This removed welfare support from any asylum seeker who did not claim asylum at port of entry, or who did not apply as soon as reasonably possible if entering the UK illegally or on a student or business visa. Groups working with refugees feared this measure would force many asylum seekers into destitution. In December 2003, the UK Government announced a concession allowing people to claim asylum within 72 hours of arrival, but this simply increased frustration among refugee groups, as many asylum seekers are not able to prove the exact time at which they entered the UK.

There are many reasons why asylum seekers do not claim asylum straightaway: indeed, the more trauma a person has suffered, the less they may be able to follow correct procedures. The Home Office maintained that Section 55 would deter those who were not genuine asylum seekers and those not in need of state support from obtaining assistance, without penalizing genuine claimants.<sup>27</sup>

However, on the eve of the implementation of the legislation, the Refugee Council stated that the removal of support from all in-country applicants would affect two-thirds of the UK's refugee population, rather than the supposed minority of abusers at whom the Government was aiming.<sup>28</sup>

There is no sound factual basis for discriminating against those who claim asylum once they are in the UK – in fact the Home Office's own figures show that around 65 per cent of positive decisions are given to in-country applicants.<sup>29</sup>

As refugee assistance groups predicted, this measure caused huge poverty and destitution among asylum seekers. For many in-country asylum seekers it was too late to apply for support, as they could not prove that they had sought asylum at the first reasonable opportunity. There were also many practical problems, such as bureaucratic inefficiencies, which resulted in a shortage of officers at ports to deal with asylum claims.<sup>30</sup> The legislation has forced many asylum seekers to have to sleep on the streets whilst awaiting decisions, or to appeal to already underfunded refugee assistance groups, or even other refugees, for help. In December 2003, the Refugee Council conducted a survey of 132 refugee organizations to assess the impact of Section 55. The results included the following:

- 74 per cent of all organizations that responded reported clients' being refused support even though they had applied for asylum within a few days of arrival;
- 74 per cent reported seeing Section 55 clients forced to sleep rough;
- 66 per cent reported clients with health problems as a result of being made destitute by Section 55; 69 per cent reported clients with mental health problems;
- 74 per cent reported clients lacking essential items such as clothes and toiletries;
- 74 per cent reported clients who experienced hunger.<sup>31</sup>

These figures demonstrate that this attempt to minimize abuse of the asylum system created unacceptable poverty and desperation. Refugee assistance groups said that the legislation denied basic human rights to those asylum seekers who could not apply within the set time. Added to the trauma many had suffered in their countries of origin, and the arduous journey many had undertaken to reach safety, it was apparent that Section 55 served to oppress further the desperately vulnerable. (The situation also undermined the notion of the UK as a 'soft touch'.)

In May and June 2004, the situation improved. A landmark judgement in the Court of Appeal ruled in favour of three destitute asylum seekers who had appealed against negative decisions on their initial asylum applications, and had experienced the withdrawal of basic support because they were judged not to have applied for asylum within 72 hours of arrival. Their lawyers claimed that this violated human rights guaranteed by Section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Following this decision, the Home Office reinstated basic levels of support to asylum seekers even if they failed to claim asylum within the specified time.

Section 95 outlines that provision must be provided for asylum seekers and their dependants who are destitute, or are likely to become so within a prescribed period – destitution in this situation being defined as not having accommodation or any means of obtaining it, or having accommodation but not being able to meet other essential living needs. (This provision is that administered by NASS.) Article 3 rules that people must not be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The Home Office had claimed that Section 95 or Article 3 would not be violated, as asylum seekers would find accommodation in shelters and refuges for the homeless. It was argued, with support from the homelessness charity Shelter, that it was not possible for the three claimants to obtain accommodation and they were forced to sleep on

the streets, with little access to food or sanitation. It was ruled that this had adversely affected their physical health, and that their experience could be regarded as degrading and inhuman. Therefore, actions under Section 55 were proved to have violated Section 95 and Article 3 and were judged to have been unlawful.<sup>32</sup>

As Lord Justice Jacob noted in his closing remarks, overshadowing the three individual cases was the fact of 666 others similarly placed. Following this judgement, the Home Office began to review the operation of Section 55, and, as a short-term measure, has granted emergency accommodation to destitute asylum seekers. Des Browne, the UK asylum and immigration minister, is currently considering the possibility of repealing Section 55 or, more probably, amending it to take account of human rights requirements.<sup>33</sup> However, the Home Office has indicated that it intends to appeal against the Appeal Court's decision, which could take at least a year. The Refugee Council's Chief Executive, Maeve Sherlock, has warned against this:

Fighting [this] ruling through higher courts is bound be costly and long drawn out. We urge ministers not to pursue that course, but instead follow the logic of this change of approach, which will ensure asylum seekers have the basic essentials with which to live.<sup>34</sup>

## 5. 'they are lazy and won't work'

A further claim levelled against asylum seekers is that they refuse to work. This statement contradicts another criticism, that they are taking British people's jobs. However, asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants are often highly resourceful and motivated people. This is evident from the journeys they have undertaken and the fact that they have been able to leave their own countries. Many of them are highly educated and qualified people, but asylum seekers are legally prohibited from working.

Until recently, asylum seekers were allowed to apply for permission to work in the UK if they had been in the country waiting for a decision for six months or more. On 23 July 2002 the Government withdrew this right. This now means that asylum seekers are fully reliant on benefits until it is decided whether or not they can stay in the UK:

Home Office research has shown that asylum seekers would by far prefer to support themselves than be supported by the Government, yet the law prevents them from doing so. Sadly, it is asylum seekers who are demonised for 'draining' the State when, despite commitments on refugee integration, they are discouraged from being independent.<sup>35</sup>

This means not only that asylum seekers have no choice but to rely on the NASS benefits system, but that their integration into the UK is considerably held back. Given that some wait years for a decision, independence and the ability to contribute to society are vital for asylum seekers' own personal worth and the relationships they develop with their UK neighbours:

Finding employment is a crucial, if not the single most important factor in the successful integration of asylum seekers and refugees. A job not only brings a degree of economic independence, but also builds self-esteem and provides an opportunity to contribute to the host community.<sup>36</sup>

If an asylum seeker is granted indefinite leave to remain, he or she is automatically granted permission to work. This permission covers all family members of working age. Even then, many refugees find it hard to enter employment immediately. They may be bewildered by the UK labour market or have difficulty knowing how to sell their skills to a potential employer.<sup>37</sup> Unfamiliarity with the English language can also create a major barrier to work and education.<sup>38</sup> English as a Second Language (ESOL) courses are run by colleges, community centres and training centres for low or no fees in an attempt to improve this aspect of integration. Asylum seekers are entitled to take these courses even before refugee status, discretionary leave or humanitarian protection is granted. However, access to these courses is not guaranteed and ESOL classes are heavily oversubscribed, several authorities having waiting lists of over 200.<sup>39</sup>

Even with the help of various resource and advice centres, some refugees struggle to find employment. A Home Office paper reports that:

a survey of 236 qualified and skilled refugees in London in 1999, who were entitled to work, found that 42 per cent of those with refugee status . . . were unemployed. (Peabody Trust/London Research Centre 'Refugee skills-net, the employment and training of skilled and qualified refugees', June 1999.)

Similarly, a 1995 Home Office study found that only 27 per cent of refugees were employed, while 36 per cent were unemployed. *This is likely to reflect difficulties in accessing English language training, and a lack of knowledge of the UK job market; as well as more general barriers to employment.*<sup>40</sup> [italics added]

The above excerpt is also mentioned in Migration Watch UK material, but the section in italics is not included and the reasons for some refugees' struggling to find employment are disregarded. The impression given by Migration Watch is that refugees simply choose not to work, preferring instead to live on benefits. The evidence against this is clear from the high level of qualifications and professional experience many of them have. It would not make sense for such people to make the dangerous journey to the UK to live on a Jobseeker's Allowance. The Refugee Council has provided the following evidence of refugee potential for work:

- a. 56 per cent of those aged 18 or over had a qualification;
- b. 23–33 per cent had a degree or postgraduate qualification;
- c. 42–66 per cent were working prior to arrival in the UK;
- d. 65 per cent of asylum seekers speak at least two languages in addition to their first language and 60 per cent of asylum seekers are under 30.<sup>41</sup>

Therefore, according to refugee research and support groups, refugees actively want, and are able, to work. Although employment was not the dominant reason for coming to the UK, it was found to play some role because, according to the researchers, they wanted to support

themselves – this is ‘mixed-motive migration’.<sup>42</sup> This does not overshadow their flight from persecution and oppression, but demonstrates that the will to survive includes the desire for independence and self-sufficiency. The work of organizations such as Refugees into Jobs is impressive in its facilitation of this desire, and the Government should strive to find efficient ways of integrating refugees into the workplace.

The wealth of evidence that refugees are capable of working, and that many are professional, qualified individuals, is of great importance. It disproves the assertion that all refugees are lazy people who refuse to work and demonstrates the need to aid refugees as they seek UK employment. Of course, it is important to note that different refugees contribute and cost different amounts, just as any UK resident does. Even with support and the necessary qualifications, not all skilled people are able to find employment. The value of a person is not diminished if he or she is not working. However, the ability to be independent and fulfil one’s own self-chosen purposes is important in recognizing the intrinsic and integral worth of human beings:

I felt for the first time like a person again, not a refugee. (Refugee doctor, on a course to prepare himself for requalification.)<sup>43</sup>

## 6. ‘they are taking all our jobs’ – unskilled labour

This assertion, though inconsistent with the previous claim, is as frequently and vehemently made. If refugees find it so hard to find work, how can it be true that they are also ‘stealing’ it all? However, claims that refugees are filling up the low-paid, unskilled employment sector abound:

The Government points out that there are about ½ million vacancies but they do not say that there are seven times that number of British people who would like to work . . . What is happening is that Londoners are, in effect, being squeezed out of London by the arrival of 200,000 foreigners a year.<sup>44</sup>

However, these unskilled jobs remain unfilled because the pay is so low – possibly below the minimum wage – that for many it would not be worth giving up Jobseeker’s Allowance. Meanwhile, refugees are prepared to work for less: they are taking work that other UK residents will not take. Their acceptance of low pay keeps firms’ costs down, lowering prices, and may enable companies to take higher profit margins. This serves to boost domestic demand:

companies will be spending more, whilst consumers see an increase in the purchasing power of their money, and hence buy more. The impact of this extra purchasing will be to increase employment in many other sectors of the economy. So any jobs lost by British workers will be speedily replaced, whilst consumers on the whole will benefit from greater spending power.<sup>45</sup>

The assertion that asylum seekers are taking too many British jobs also relates to the ‘lump of labour’ fallacy. The assumption that there is a fixed quantity of work that governments must strive to allocate equitably is strongly disputed by economists. In fact, the demand for labour depends upon productivity and wage costs.<sup>46</sup> In short, if refugees are really contributing to the economy, then more jobs (often in higher paid sectors) will inevitably follow. A Home Office report outlines that native unemployment is primarily a structural phenomenon, and that, therefore, ‘migrants will have no effect on the job prospects of natives’.<sup>47</sup>

A further issue is the long-term employment prospects of refugees, as well as of economic migrants. While the UK economy is strong, higher demand for labour creates jobs for these people but, when demand falls, the result will be unemployment for them. This prospect is more closely related to economic migration than asylum seeking and so will not be pursued here, but it should be noted.

There is also a demographic argument for the need for migrant labour in the UK. Longer life expectancy and lower birth rates mean that there will be proportionately fewer economically active people. This could lead to lower productivity and other effects, such as pressure on pensions. Other countries are coming to rely on migrant labour: for example, Mexican workers in the USA. The EU is also increasingly turning to migrant labour to do its unskilled work: Moroccans pick tomatoes and peppers in hothouses in south-eastern Spain; Poles harvest vegetables in Germany; Sikhs from the Punjab pick fruit in Belgium; and Russians

harvest crops in Ireland.<sup>48</sup> Building, cleaning, child care and catering are among the industries coming to rely on migrant work. Migration Watch UK has suggested that, instead of using foreign labour, the Government should encourage women to have more children and create incentives for longer working lives.<sup>49</sup> However, as asylum seekers are actively trying to find work in this country, it would make sense to allow them to fill the vacancies that UK-born workers will not fill:

In order to keep its working-age population stable between now and 2050, at current birth and death rates, the European Union as a whole would need [to import] 1.6m migrant workers a year. To keep the ratio of workers to pensioners steady, the flow would need to swell to a staggering 13.5m a year in the EU as a whole.<sup>50</sup>

While these figures are hypothetical, the underlying point is valid: Europe's working population is falling, while European aspirations to do only clean, sedentary, well-paid jobs are constantly on the rise.<sup>51</sup> The figures also refer more generally to 'migrant workers', of which refugees constitute only a small percentage. However, the need for foreign unskilled labour is clear, and refugees are meeting some of that need. It is debatable whether it would be feasible to sustain mass immigration to keep the UK non-worker to worker ratio stable, but migrant workers, and refugees as a small percentage of this group, should be recognized as valuable contributors to unskilled work.

There is a danger in meeting this need for unskilled labour through asylum seekers and refugees. These vulnerable people often have to rely on human smugglers or traffickers to get them into the UK. This is often on the understanding that the traffickers will be repaid once the refugees arrive. It is common for the traffickers to arrange work for the refugees, the wages of which will go directly towards their repayment. This can be hazardous, because unregulated. Recent tragedies have brought to public attention the 'slave labour' conditions in which many migrants are forced to work.<sup>52</sup>

There has been widespread condemnation of such practices, but it is preferable not to drive underground those who organize this illegal market. Instead, members of affected communities must be encouraged to alert the authorities about what is going on, and the workers should be able to transfer to legal, safe work if they have obtained indefinite leave to remain.

## 7. 'they are taking all our jobs' – skilled labour

In addition to the unskilled work that refugees undertake, there are also vacancies in the UK for skilled professionals, which many refugees have the qualifications and experience to fill. The Refugee Council, along with organizations such as the British Medical Association, provides the following statistics:

- The Refugee Council/BMA Refugee Doctors' Database Project has registered more than 920 unemployed refugee doctors in the UK;
- The Royal College of Nursing maintains a database of Refugee Nurses containing data about over 150 refugee nurses, the vast majority of whom are unemployed, in the UK; and
- The Refugee Council/British Dental Association Refugee Dentists' Voluntary Database has over 100 unemployed refugee dentists currently living in the UK.<sup>53</sup>

There are currently acute shortages in some areas of medicine. The prohibition on asylum seekers' working until granted leave to remain and the difficulties for refugees seeking to enter the workplace have led to a bizarre situation. While qualified asylum seeker doctors, nurses and dentists are unemployed and unable to work in the UK, the Government runs schemes abroad to recruit migrants who can fill these posts:

applicants who can currently be deemed as having a 'priority application' are those who are legally entitled to work in general medical practice in the UK.<sup>54</sup> (Advice given to foreign workers considering applying for work visa in the UK for economic reasons.)

If asylum seekers were able to work during their reception phase, or were more easily able to obtain work when resident, many of these vacancies would be filled. The BMA and the Refugee Council have therefore established a Refugee Doctor Database:

We know that there are many refugees in the UK who are qualified doctors. Some of them have been able to carry on working as doctors in the UK, but many have found it very difficult to find out information, to pass the exams for

registration with the General Medical Council and to get medical jobs in the UK.<sup>55</sup>

This influx of highly skilled refugee workers could make a valuable contribution to the UK economy and healthcare service. This is in direct contradiction to claims that refugees will cause pressure on the health service to intensify greatly.<sup>56</sup> Instead of causing strain on the UK health service, refugees are actually in a position to help solve some of its problems.

Through integration into the UK workforce, refugees, therefore, do make a fiscal contribution to the UK economy. In addition, the wealth generated by refugees actually outweighs the cost for the country in processing their claims and NASS support:

Home Office research found that people born outside the UK, including refugees and asylum seekers, contributed a staggering £2.6 billion to Treasury coffers in 2000, 10 per cent more than was given in support.<sup>57</sup>

In 2001 the UK's foreign-born population accounted for ten per cent of the national gross domestic product – eight times as much as North Sea oil.<sup>58</sup> If there were no foreign-born people in the UK, taxes or borrowing would have to rise, or expenditure would have to be cut, by £2.6 billion (the equivalent of about one penny on the basic rate of income tax).<sup>59</sup> Although refugees form only a small percentage of this foreign-born group, their contribution to this sum is undeniable. A Home Office report concludes that 'on average and overall, migrants are not a burden on the public purse'.<sup>60</sup>

The work that refugees undertake has benefits for both refugees and the UK. Research published by the Home Office in December 2002 found migrants, including refugees, were making 'a positive net contribution to the British economy'.<sup>61</sup> Enabling self-sufficiency is good for the self-worth of every human being, but work is also of economic benefit to the individual's country of origin. Remittances – the money foreign workers send back to their family in countries of origin – can have a large and positive impact on developing countries. This value obviously depends upon the GDP of the receiving country:

Migrants from Lesotho sent back nearly \$184 million to their country in 2001. It is almost a quarter or 26.5 per

cent [sic] of Lesotho's GDP. Though India receives nearly \$9 billion in remittances every year, this is only two per cent of the country's GDP.<sup>62</sup>

In addition, the money earned can be of considerable value to migrants. Working on a farm in the Lincolnshire village of Gedney Dyke, 96 farm workers, allowed to work in the UK for the farming season, are completing tasks such as picking, cutting, washing and packing spring onions for a British supermarket chain:

They are young Latvians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Poles, Czechs and Belarussians, just a handful of the 10,000 seasonal workers recruited each year under an official British scheme to import farmhands. The British government lets these migrant workers stay only between April and November. But during that time, even at the minimum farm wage, they can earn more than they ever dreamed of back home . . . One Latvian, who studies engineering in Riga, says he took home so much last year that he is back again this season.<sup>63</sup>

The motivation for such work is obviously different from that of refugees, but such anecdotes perhaps demonstrate why they are prepared to work for low wages. The work done by refugees creates personal gain for them and collective gain for the UK.

## 8. 'they are criminals who enter and stay in the UK illegally'

As mentioned previously, 64 per cent of the British public feels that the word most commonly used about asylum seekers in the media is 'illegal'.<sup>64</sup> Use of such terms, with headlines like 'Losing the War on Asylum Crime' (*Daily Mail*, 26 November 2002), has encouraged the belief that asylum seekers and refugees are criminals who are somehow breaking the law just by being in the UK. However, there is no such term as 'illegal asylum seeker' in British law. As the UK signed the 1951 Convention on the rights of refugees, everyone has the right in law to apply for asylum in the UK, and to stay until a final decision has been made. Therefore, claims such as the following made by the BNP actually advocate the removal of the human rights of asylum seekers:

We will also clamp down on the flood of 'asylum seekers', all of whom are either bogus or can find refuge much nearer their home countries.<sup>65</sup>

Even if the individual has arrived illegally, perhaps through being 'trafficked' or through using false documents, the asylum seeker is still legal. Article 33 of the 1951 Convention prohibits governments from discriminating against asylum seekers because of the use of false documents. Indeed, these are often the only way to access the UK when fleeing persecution. Nor is going to traffickers to be smuggled in an indication of lack of credibility. Often in situations of persecution or conflict there are no other ways of leaving countries of origin:

During major unrest, for example in Afghanistan or Sierra Leone, there may be no flights out of the country. And how do you get a passport from your country's authorities if it is they who are persecuting you?<sup>66</sup>

If one looks at the countries of origin of the majority of asylum seekers, it becomes clear why people leave their homes and travel to safety in other countries, including Britain. In 2002, the top ten countries of origin were all dominated by troubled histories, current conflicts and human rights abuses:<sup>67</sup>

**Nationalities applying for asylum most frequently in 2002**

Iraq  
Zimbabwe  
Afghanistan  
Somalia  
China  
Sri Lanka  
Turkey (mainly Kurds)  
Iran  
Pakistan  
DR Congo

*Source: Home Office*

From this, it is clear that conflict is a major 'push' factor in prompting people to leave their home countries. Many of these are very poor developing countries; nevertheless, the Institute of Public Policy Research has concluded that the major causes of migration from them are war and persecution, not economics:<sup>68</sup>

While acknowledging there was obviously evidence of some economic migrants attempting to use asylum in the EU, it pointed out that there were many desperately poor countries which were not major sources of asylum seekers. What's more, the Home Office's own research into the decision-making of

asylum seekers found their principal aim was to reach a place of safety.<sup>69</sup>

Therefore, most asylum seekers and refugees are not 'conmen' who seek to enter the UK for nefarious purposes. Even those who are not granted indefinite leave to remain, discretionary leave or humanitarian protection have committed no crime in applying for asylum: they have exercised a fundamental human right. Since more than half of all asylum applications in 2002 were accepted, it becomes apparent that there are many legitimate claims. In addition, one-fifth of rejected claims were refused on grounds of non-compliance: in other words, the asylum seekers were not able to complete the Statement of Evidence form, in which they have to outline in English their reasons for seeking asylum, within a ten-day deadline. Such procedural rejections have increased since the implementation of Section 55 and do not reflect the substance or credibility of the asylum claim.

Of course, not all asylum claims are genuine and warrant the individual's being granted leave to remain. However, if over half of claims in 2002 were judged genuine, it is of utmost importance that those responsible for making decisions on asylum begin with an unprejudiced stance. An attitude that assumes criminality or that the claim is false seriously threatens the individual's right to a fair decision.

ACPO has completed research that demonstrates that there is no evidence of higher criminality among refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>70</sup> In fact, according to ACPO, refugees and asylum seekers are more likely to become victims of crime than perpetrators. There are also claims from some sections of the media and other organizations that asylum seekers whose applications have been refused 'go underground' and remain in the UK illegally. While there is some evidence of this, the full extent cannot be known, as these people are not available to be counted. Despite this, unsubstantiated claims are made that '80 per cent of failed asylum seekers stay on illegally'.<sup>71</sup> However, in UK law, 'failed asylum seekers' are entitled to appeal and remain until a final decision has been made. The Home Office recognizes other reasons why it may not be able to remove someone from the UK immediately, ranging from illness and imminent childbirth to refusal by the country of origin to accept the person back without documentation.<sup>72</sup> These are not indications of non-compliance with the system.

An impasse also arises when an asylum seeker is refused the right to stay in the UK, yet cannot return home because it is considered unsafe to travel. There may be no flights or transport into the country of origin, or no safe passage across a neighbouring country. The asylum seeker can apply for Hard Case support, providing hostel accommodation until he or she can be removed. If the hostel is a long distance from the person's residence during her or his asylum claim, she or he may choose not to leave familiar surroundings. In addition, hostels have a reputation among the asylum seekers for being unsafe and insecure. Consequently, many 'hard cases' become destitute: they are not remaining illegally, but, paradoxically, their country of origin is considered safe to live in yet unsafe to return to.

In summary, it is not technically possible to seek asylum illegally. Passage from a country of origin may be illegal, but, once in the UK, an asylum seeker is protected by human rights legislation. There is no evidence that asylum seekers are criminal or dangerous people. In fact, they are more likely to be victims of crime. Finally, while some asylum seekers do remain illegally after a final refusal, there are many who do not have the choice to return. These considerations undermine sensationalist headlines about asylum crime and underground refugees and should reassure the public that most asylum seekers are not criminals.

## section 55 – postscript

On 28 June 2004, measures were introduced which mean that NASS support will not be withheld from any asylum seeker, unless alternative sources of support, such as night shelter, food and basic amenities are available. The Section 55 withdrawal of support now only applies to the small number of long-time resident immigration offenders who only apply for asylum to avoid being sent home. However, these reformed measures are only temporary. The Home Office is pressing ahead with its appeal against the judges' decision, and describe the new section 55 procedures only as an 'interim approach'. Minutes from a National Asylum Support meeting held in August 2004 state that:

it [is] not likely that the appeal [will] be heard until early in 2005 and that the judgement [is] therefore not expected until around the spring of 2005.

(Home Office: National Asylum Support Forum (NASF) meeting 6; available on Home Office web site)

## chapter five

# asylum seekers, refugees and gender issues

Having examined a number of general issues, the focus of this chapter is on certain gender-related aspects of asylum seeking.

Women make up more than half the number of migrants. According to figures from the year 2000, women constituted 52.4 per cent of global migrant population. This is an increase of nearly four per cent from 1960, when the percentage was 48.5.<sup>1</sup> Yet in 2001 women formed only 22 per cent of the refugee population in the UK. This lower figure perhaps reflects lack of economic and social independence for women in situations of conflict and persecution, the high risk of sexual or physical assault when travelling alone, and inability or unwillingness to undertake long journeys with children.<sup>2</sup> Despite the relatively small percentage of women refugees in the UK, their situation raises issues of great importance.

Women Against Rape (WAR) estimates that over 50 per cent of female asylum seekers in the UK are fleeing rape, mostly by soldiers, police or other agents of the state.<sup>3</sup> There are also reports of women suffering further abuse at the hands of peacekeeping forces and other aid agencies whilst attempting to escape persecution in their country of origin. This is a shockingly high proportion of rape victims, and it demands a humane and efficient method for processing their asylum claims. According to women's and refugee groups, such procedures do not currently exist in the UK asylum system.

Already members of an extremely vulnerable group, these women are further marginalized and disempowered by the 'great difficulties' they face in claiming asylum on grounds of sexual abuse.<sup>4</sup> Although in recent landmark cases some female asylum seekers have been granted indefinite leave to remain, due to their reasonable fear of suffering if they return home, women's action and refugee groups report that many women continue to face difficulties in obtaining a positive decision.

# 1. rape not a form of persecution?

The main difficulty reported is the tendency of adjudicators to focus on the form of persecution – sexual assault – rather than its motivation, which may be political, religious or social oppression. Although it may be accepted that a claimant has been raped or sexually assaulted, the act may be attributed to something other than systematic persecution. On reviewing a number of case studies where claimants' initial rejections have been overturned at appeal or tribunal, it is clear that adjudicators too readily dismiss rape as 'a very serious criminal act of sexual gratification' or regard it as driven by 'simple dreadful lust' rather than viewing it as a form of torture and persecution.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, it is more easily judged safe for a woman to return to her country of origin, although substantial danger may be recognized on appeal. That erroneous decisions are being made in such extreme and crucial circumstances is greatly disturbing:

At her Appeal Hearing, the Home Office conceded that Ms B from Côte D'Ivoire had been raped but suggested it had been carried out by 'rogue elements of the military'. The Special Adjudicator accepted BWRAP's [Black Women's Rape Action Project] evidence that Ms B had been raped as a result of her political activities and ruled that because of what had happened, 'she would be at risk were she to be returned' and that 'if she were rounded up again that in itself may amount to persecution'. She was later given full refugee status.<sup>6</sup>

Categorizing sexual abuse and rape as criminal evades the grim reality of their use to persecute, oppress and torture women. The use of rape as a feature of war and political and ethnic persecution has been documented throughout history:

During the occupation of Nanking in 1937, Japanese troops were reported to have raped thousands of women. During the battle for Bangladeshi independence in 1971, Pakistani troops were reported to have raped more than 200,000 Bengali women. For Americans in the Vietnam War, it was a routine method of demonstrating their contempt for the people of Vietnam. But although it is one of the commonest features of 20th-century brutality, it has also been one of the most hidden.<sup>7</sup>

More recent reports of systematic rape being used to torture and oppress civilian populations come from Kosovo and Rwanda. The latter includes the horrifying use of 'biological warfare' against women through deliberate infection with the HIV virus. Accounts of violent rapes, often by groups, carried out for days, in front of children, parents or husbands demonstrate how sexual abuse can be used to degrade, humiliate, torture and defeat certain ethnic and political groups. Despite such evidence, female refugees fleeing rape are often refused asylum on the grounds that their experiences of sexual abuse are unconnected to any other torture, beating or interrogation they may have suffered. This was the experience of Ms X from Uganda, who was interrogated and raped by soldiers but initially refused asylum on the grounds that these incidents were unrelated.<sup>8</sup> Stephanie Harrison, a barrister who works with asylum seekers, asserts:

The authorities are reluctant to accept that rape constitutes persecution. If they do accept that rape has taken place, they tend to believe it is just about men's sexual desire.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. inconsistency of treatment

A complicating factor is the apparent inconsistency in treatment for claimants from different countries. Whilst WAR reports being able to assist in the successful appeals made by Kosovan women who were raped by soldiers in mass torture and degradation exercises, appeals by African women appear to be less successful. WAR attributes this to the 'racism inherent in asylum'. For example:

Whilst the UNHCR cites lack of psychiatric services in Kosovo as grounds for granting the right to stay to those in need of such specialist services, no such consideration is, to our knowledge, given to protect those who flee from war-torn Africa.<sup>10</sup>

These inconsistencies appear to reflect the belief that, in some African countries, the quality of life is so low, and incidence of rape so high, that rape victims have less right to consideration than victims of other crimes. This is illustrated by a case in which the Home Office accepted that Ms X, a refugee from Zaire, was raped, but refused to believe that

it happened during her three weeks' detention in Zaire because rape was commonplace in Kinshasa. Such decisions are alarming and merit investigation and urgent remedial action.

### 3. procedure and trauma

Human rights groups report that procedural deficiencies can make it harder for female victims of abuse to claim successfully. Like anyone else, they are required to claim asylum within 72 hours of arriving in Britain, and must outline in detail to the port official the nature of their persecution. These interviews are short and the woman's children, if travelling with her, often need to remain in the room as childcare is not available. These circumstances contribute to the woman's distress and discourage her from outlining clearly the nature and extent of her persecution. According to refugee and women's groups, experiences such as that of one Kenyan woman are common:

I was interviewed by young men on arrival. My young son was in the room. I couldn't say a word about such things.<sup>11</sup>

Such claimants may also be suffering from a pattern of symptoms (known technically as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or Rape Trauma Syndrome) that makes it difficult for them to testify. The symptoms may include persistent fear, loss of self-confidence and self-esteem, difficulty in concentration, an attitude of self-blame, pervasive feeling of loss of control, and memory loss or distortion.<sup>12</sup> In addition, where the interviewing official is male, further problems can ensue. Victims of sexual violence may be reluctant to share details of their experience, because of the stigma attached to their assault or as a result of the trauma they may be suffering.

In cases where female asylum seekers have later changed their evidence to include sexual violence that they did not mention at their initial interview, they have been suspected of lying in order to strengthen the claim. Some legal victories for women in this situation have helped raise awareness among officials and adjudicators, but the overall problem for victims of sexual violence who feel unable to outline their experience in the way required has not been resolved:

The Home Office disputed Ms M's claim for asylum all the way to the High Court, arguing that the two years of imprisonment and rape she suffered was insufficiently different to the slaps around the face she had originally reported to overturn their decision to refuse her. Nine years after Ms M fled Uganda, Mr Justice Sullivan accepted WAR's evidence that the trauma she suffered meant that she had been 'unable' not 'unwilling' to speak about the rape she suffered, and therefore the new information must be considered.<sup>13</sup>

Dr Stuart Turner, who works at the Traumatic Stress Clinic in London with refugees from around the world, explains why some victims of rape are unable to report their experiences immediately upon arrival in Britain:

Rape stands out from every other experience of violence. It leads to a very specific avoidance response. The rape victims that we see tend not to speak for a very long time about their experiences, maybe for many years. That is partly because of their genuine fear of rejection by others, and also because of their deep feelings of shame and trauma.<sup>14</sup>

Rape Trauma Syndrome must be taken seriously by the Home Office. Although rape as persecution is not uncommon, the experience is unique to each individual, and reports from refugee and women's groups, human rights groups and legal representatives demonstrate that this is not being treated sensitively or efficiently in the UK. Other countries, such as Canada and Australia, have gender-specific guidelines for processing asylum claims, including the provision of female interviewers for female refugees, and training on the specific persecution that women face, but the UK has not introduced such measures.<sup>15</sup>

## 4. gender exclusion

Another difficulty for female asylum seekers lies with the definition of a refugee – a person who ‘has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her ethnicity, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion’. As this definition does not include gender, certain problems experienced primarily by women – for example, rape – are excluded because they are not mentioned in the 1951 UN Convention. However, Human Rights Watch reports some improvement in this area and suggests that the international community is gradually recognizing gender-related persecution as a basis for asylum. For example:

The UNHCR has interpreted the refugee definition to consider women asylum seekers with gender-related claims as members of a ‘particular social group’. Two broad categories of gender-related claims have been identified: those in which the persecution constitutes a *type* of harm that is particular to the applicant’s gender, such as rape or genital mutilation; and those in which the persecution may be imposed *because of* the applicant’s gender, for example, because a woman has violated societal norms regarding women’s proper conduct.<sup>16</sup>

This development is encouraging, but it is clear that much distance has still to be travelled in ensuring that persecution through rape or other sexual abuse is recognized as a reason for granting asylum. Effective means must be found to help women who suffer this common yet uniquely distressing persecution as they seek to enter and contribute to the UK.

# wider contributions of refugees to the UK

In encountering Others, in the person of the refugee or asylum seeker, we are called not simply to give but to acknowledge what we can receive. Our relationship with refugees is not a one-way process, but one that can teach and refresh us. As we are created in the image of God in the Holy Trinity, so we are created for relationship with others. Our engagement with strangers is fruitful in the reform of our thinking, and reminds us of the God-given capabilities and unique dignity of all. Just as Abraham and Sarah were unaware that they were offering hospitality to angels, it is possible to overlook the potential for our 'strangers' to bear wisdom and contribute greatly to our Churches, society, culture and personal experience.<sup>1</sup> Having already examined the economic contribution of refugees in the UK, these broader contributions will now be discussed.

## 1. historical contribution

Welcoming the positive difference that refugees have brought to the UK, and acknowledging the possibility of future change and evolution is of great importance:

Until refugees are seen as a credit to the nation, rather than a burden on society, we are in danger of denying future generations the benefits that they bring with them.<sup>2</sup>

Despite negative reactions, refugees have made a great contribution to the UK throughout history. Negative reactions have often been prejudiced, including discrimination between refugee groups from different countries.<sup>3</sup> Professor Tony Kushner, co-author of *Refugees in an Age of Genocide*, asserts that a sense of guilt has led to a sympathetic and compassionate response to some refugees: for example, the feeling that the UK had let down Poland during World War Two drove many resettlement plans for Polish refugees.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, other groups were treated unjustly: during that war, the Government interned some 27,000

Jews as 'enemy aliens' alongside Nazi sympathizers. Yet both groups contributed greatly to the UK: Poles were instrumental in building new houses and reducing labour shortages, and Jewish refugees were notably successful in developing businesses in the depressed areas in the North.

Initial prejudices against particular groups tend to be forgotten later, when the refugee community has integrated and contributed to society. The influx of Ugandan Asians expelled by Idi Amin in 1972 was met with much racism and resentment. However, the group has now settled in society and contributes alongside other citizens. By 1981, 37 per cent of male Ugandan Asian refugees were in managerial positions in the UK.<sup>5</sup> These volatile sentiments of rejection and prejudice, followed by acceptance and celebration are a constantly repeated pattern, Kushner argues:

Asylum policy becomes a strange story of history continually repeating itself as every generation willfully forgets the past.<sup>6</sup>

Refugee movements into Britain can be traced over many centuries. Dutch Protestants fleeing religious persecution in the Spanish Netherlands between 1560 and 1575 settled in London and eastern England. Spanish and Portuguese Jews sought refuge in the UK in 1665. The Huguenots, French Protestants, escaped persecution under Louis XIV after 1685. Refugees arrived in Britain during the French Revolution, and the 'year of revolutions' (1848) caused many to seek sanctuary in the UK from across Europe. Jewish refugees from Russia and northern Europe arrived in the late nineteenth century, and the First World War caused over 250,000 Belgian refugees to flee to the UK. During the twentieth century, Basque refugee children, Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany and surrounding areas, Polish refugees from Communism, refugees from the Soviet Union, Hungarians, Ugandan Asians, Chileans, Vietnamese, Bosnians and Kosovans all escaped persecution or war to come to the UK.

These groups brought with them a wealth of skills, languages, experiences and knowledge, and their legacies are still visible.<sup>7</sup> Seven of the twenty-four founders of the Bank of England were Huguenots; Russian Jewish refugee Michael Marks became one of the founders of Marks & Spencer; and the early Jewish refugees brought fish and chips to the UK!

Historically, migrants who arrived as refugees have been among those who have had the most impact on UK society and the economy – in particular, the Huguenots, the Jews and the Ugandan Asians, who played a leading role in the development of the UK's domestic and global financial markets.<sup>8</sup>

Noting these contributions does not imply that only those refugees who become famous or obviously successful should be celebrated. Many refugees in the UK live ordinary lives and their impact on society may not be immediately obvious.<sup>9</sup> The Refugee Council quotes Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, journalist and author, who came to the UK during the Ugandan crisis:

When people talk about the contribution refugees make to society, such as Einstein, it can seem like there is a pressure on refugees to justify their existence by outperforming the indigenous population. But refugees have a right to be here and they have a right to be ordinary.<sup>10</sup>

Through examining the past it becomes obvious that the arrival of refugees in the UK has a long history with many positive results. This can provide a healthy perspective on the contemporary reaction to asylum seekers.

## 2. cultural and social contribution

Migrant arrivals, including refugees, have broadened and diversified the cultural and social life of the UK. The evidence of these refugees and their descendants surrounds us – in art, publishing, fashion, music, sports, foods, crafts, media and politics – moulding Britain into one of the most diverse and multicultural societies in Europe.<sup>11</sup> Such contributions are impossible to quantify: they make up part of the wonderfully patterned and diverse fabric of society, and are so woven into it that it becomes easy to take them for granted. Christians believe that this is how God intends us to be – in mutual relationship with the Others, those who can enrich us with their difference and relate to us in our shared humanity.

It is of course true that the contribution is not universally welcome within the UK. The fear that national identity is being eroded, and migrant influence will overpower quintessential 'Britishness' or 'Englishness' exists throughout society, and can sadly spill over into hatred and violence. Arguments based on synthetic nostalgia disregard the fact that Britain has been changed by migrant influxes from earliest times. Arguments about what constitutes national identity and citizenship are subjective and controversial. Nevertheless, a Home Office paper reports that most British people view the changes associated with migration positively:

Social research shows that the majority [of British people] consistently regards immigration as having a positive effect on British culture. This is true even for many of those who favour a more restrictive attitude to immigration controls.<sup>12</sup>

However, according to sociologist Robert Putnam, studies in the USA show that, increasingly, diverse communities can become those with the lowest levels of social 'glue', or capital. A large survey of American communities suggests that the highest levels of trust and cooperation are present in the most homogenized areas.<sup>13</sup> Whilst there is no current research into patterns of neighbourly behaviour in Britain, the American pattern appears to hold true for large areas:

The 2000 General Household Survey found that the three most mixed areas (London, the West Midlands and the South East) had the lowest proportion of neighbourly people, while the four [least ethnically mixed] areas (Scotland, Wales, the North East and South West) had the highest.<sup>14</sup>

This difference may exist because the most diverse regions are also the most urbanized, but the pattern is worrying and perhaps reflects negative feelings towards migrants. It indicates a paradoxical situation in which most people welcome the contributions of migrants, but are wary of the individuals themselves. Ways must be found to increase positive interaction between communities and prevent the hardening of reserve into resentment.

The fusion of migrant and native culture continues to enrich public life in exciting ways. Nicholas Serota, director of the Tate Gallery, comments:

I think it's a question of recognizing that culture here is much richer than we could define by those who have simply been born in this country.<sup>15</sup>

Consumer choice has also increased dramatically because of migrant presence. Restaurants with cosmopolitan menus and fresh and pre-packed foreign cuisine have provided consumers with global choices in their eating patterns. Total sales of 'ethnic' food in 1994 were estimated at £736 million – a massive change in British eating habits. In 1996, there were 10,000 curry houses in Britain with 60,000 to 70,000 employees and a turnover of £1.5 billion – more than steel, coal and shipbuilding combined.<sup>16</sup> The market in ethnic food for home cooking was worth £129 million a year in 1996.<sup>17</sup> Consumer choice has broadened in many other areas, such as fashion, film and music. This enriches life for everyone and, ideally, increases sympathy between ethnic groups.

The presence of asylum seekers and refugees also contributes to education and schools. Reports from teachers demonstrate that refugee children are often eager to learn, contribute well to lessons and go on to succeed academically:

The head of a primary school in London unequivocally praised the refugee children in her school for being motivated and having a 'burning desire to make a success of their new home and start by making the most of their lessons'.<sup>18</sup> She attributes the improved annual test results directly to the refugee children. 'A lot of the parents have professional backgrounds, while the children's skills are as good as local pupils, but they just haven't acquired the language. They can do that very quickly.'<sup>19</sup>

In addition, more diverse pupils and teachers create broader interests for study, stimulating new curriculum approaches and fostering understanding between cultures.<sup>20</sup>

### 3. spiritual and personal contribution

Jürgen Moltmann, a major twentieth-century German theologian, wrote the following in 1945, aged 18, whilst in a British prisoner of war camp:

We are called to hope!

Let us go forth from our anxieties and learn to hope from the Bible.

Let us reach beyond our limitations in order to find a future in a new beginning.

Let us take no more account of barriers, but only of the one who broke the barriers down.

He is risen, Christ is risen indeed. He is our future.<sup>21</sup>

In this affirmation we hear the voice of one displaced, his world-view disintegrated, and fully reliant on others. Yet the prevailing tone is one of hope and joy, and the centrality of confidence in Christ is clear.

Through listening to the voices of asylum seekers and refugees, we can gain new perspectives on the familiar. Whilst most people in this country are unable to relate directly to the realities of war or persecution, asylum seekers are fleeing them. The negative aspects of such experience are obvious, but sharing it can be positive for all involved. Marcella Althaus-Reid recounts her experience of the Bible as a refugee to the UK:

I spontaneously remembered some lines of Jeremiah which I knew then by heart:

*'Oh, to think that we are so ruined and ashamed! To have had to abandon our nation, and to see our homes destroyed . . . Teach your daughters this mourning song, and teach each other this lamentation: Death has come through our windows and entered into our houses, Death has taken the life of the child in the street, and the young people in the public parks. There are bodies lying in the country . . . there is nobody to bury them.'*

We were used to reading the Bible as if the Scriptures were letters from our own mothers: a retelling of what we had been through, and words of comfort and assurance that, in the end, God's justice will prevail. The Bible was so factual after all.<sup>22</sup>

Such acute perceptions of Scripture can shape and deepen our understanding of familiar texts, and we should welcome them. Contrasting theologies and worship styles also serve to enrich the tradition of Christianity in the UK. Through the process of being open to the experiences and beliefs of Others, our own faith can be challenged and strengthened, as we welcome contributions given from the margins. Welcoming change in our nation and striving for change in ourselves, we can allow God to shape us into the Church and people that he wants us to be. Accepting that we still have much to learn, and working towards the eschatological principles of solidarity and active compassion, we open ourselves up to both the best and worst possibilities of Others as we welcome them into our churches and communities.

The work done by churches in the UK with asylum seekers is of great significance and has been recognized by the UNHCR. In addition to spiritual and personal support, some churches provide legal advice, help with accommodation, English-language lessons and day-to-day assistance:

Churches are among the many groups helping asylum seekers and refugees on a daily basis. The commitment shown to some of the most vulnerable members of our society is meeting a real humanitarian need and deserves to be recognized and commended. [The Churches] are making a real difference to the lives of thousands.<sup>23</sup>

In addition, churches involved in asylum seeker and refugee assistance projects often report on the benefits such work brings to them:

These people are not a problem. They are a resource and if we learn how to tap that resource we can all gain great benefits . . . One church in Liverpool said 'you can't out-bless these people' – what they give us far outweighs any help that we can give them. But we must open our eyes to see it.<sup>24</sup>

It is apparent that churches frequently find themselves 'filling a gap' in provision. The Bishop of Southwark, Dr Tom Butler, has spoken of the importance of churches receiving asylum seekers, 'often because there are very few other places to go'.<sup>25</sup> One example of local response can be seen at Leicester Cathedral, where a scheme was established in 2002 to provide a first point of contact for asylum seekers and help them to claim asylum. Bishop Tim Stevens outlined the reasons for opening the shelter:

The cathedral is at the heart of the city, which is the right place for this to happen. It is absolutely right the church takes the lead in expressing what the Christian churches believe about the alien and the stranger in our midst.<sup>26</sup>

Further examples of Christian-based work can be seen in the initiatives of mission agencies, such as the Church Mission Society (CMS). To help local Christians gain a global perspective on the asylum seeker community in Leicester, CMS brought an international team to the city as part of their 'Everywhere to Everywhere' programme. Four local churches hosted the team and, though they came from different starting points in their understanding of asylum, they were able to learn together. Results of the team's visit included contacts by local churches with the growing Sri Lankan asylum seeker community in the area.<sup>27</sup>

Interaction between those of the same faith, or those of different faiths or no faith, may challenge and cost, but will also bring great gain and the joy of relationship. Stephen Burns writes in the Grove booklet *Welcoming Asylum Seekers: Struggles and Joys in the Local Church* of how 'asylum seekers presented a number of serious challenges and invited some wonderful encounters' in the church in Gateshead.<sup>28</sup>

Personal relationships with asylum seekers and refugees will ultimately bring the largest gain. Through a simple act of friendship, 'the asylum seeker' or 'the refugee' changes from a statistic, a shadowy threat warned of in the media or a dehumanized problem, to a real person. Thus we discover the joys and pains inherent in any relationship, and are reminded of the common identity, yet uniqueness, of each person. Whilst our fallen and imperfect world means that national borders condition our hospitality, through our love and relationships we can offer solidarity and active compassion.

# conclusions and suggestions for action

The main issues raised in this report will now be drawn together to trace the implications that emerge.

## 1. tackling problems at source

Beyond the direct need of the destitute or marginalized in our midst, our concern should be with the causes of refugee flows. Examination of the countries of origin of refugees to the UK (outlined in chapter 4) demonstrates that the main reason for seeking asylum is to escape situations of conflict – note Iraq, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan and Somalia in 2002. Churches have a duty to condemn unjust and violent policies and to advocate resolution of conflict. Many of the nations receiving asylum seekers and refugees must acknowledge their own part in the situations that force people to flee their homes:

The [asylum seeker and refugee] receiving countries behave as though they were not parties to the process . . . . But in fact they are partners. International migrations stand at the intersection of a number of economic and geopolitical processes that link the countries involved.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst civil war, ethnic and social persecution and oppressive regimes are partly responsible for forced migration, the gap between the developed and least developed nations exacerbates the flow of refugees.<sup>2</sup> Extreme poverty in many of the original countries must be alleviated, as it further marginalizes people and pressurizes them to leave home. Financial aid to developing countries will help:

Mr Lubbers [head of the UNHCR] said that if a dollar per citizen, world-wide, was spent on the work of UNHCR then the organization would be better placed to find solutions for refugees in their home countries.<sup>3</sup>

Finding solutions in asylum seekers' home countries is of primary importance, in order to enable people to live in safety and with dignity. This represents a massive and multistranded challenge, to be met by vision and practical measures and supported by faith communities in prayer and service.

## 2. humanity and hospitality

Churches' response to asylum seekers and refugees in the UK must begin from the principles of solidarity and active compassion. Confronted with the unique humanity of each asylum seeker and refugee in our midst, and in relationship, she or he is longer an Other, a problem, a statistic, a victim, a stranger. Instead, she or he is a person created in God's image, to be treated as a member of the body. Augustine Stevens was granted refugee status in 1997 after fleeing the coup in Sierra Leone:

[The label 'refugee' is] not encouraging, it's dehumanizing. It degrades. I am a newcomer, you can call me a stranger for a while, but if you give me a passport, a right to stay, I am just Augustine. I don't need that description: 'Augustine is a refugee from Sierra Leone'. If a British person is working, as they are, in Sierra Leone, you don't go round saying 'John, the Englishman from Birmingham'. You don't go to that extent. You don't even say 'John, the Englishman'. You just say 'John'.<sup>4</sup>

The UK churches have an inescapable duty to stand alongside asylum seekers and refugees. The problems they face and the negative attitudes they encounter must be challenged through prayer and action. Offering solidarity and active compassion to all, despite the constraints of the asylum situation, is the fundamental task. As has been shown in detail, those who initially arrive in need will contribute much to the UK – economically, socially, culturally, spiritually and personally, and as we hope to receive, we should continue to give.

The challenge of combating negative attitudes and the cost of providing for people's needs is complemented by the opportunity to celebrate and give thanks for the many good things they bring. The language we use, the labels we apply, the action we take, the friends we make, the prayers

we pray, the love we show and the voice we raise will test and prove our commitment as we attempt to stand with vulnerable people in their struggles. The gospel we proclaim and the God we serve should be honoured by our response as we seek to view every individual as a representative of the Son of man:

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me . . . Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. suggestions for action

From these considerations a number of possibilities for action by Churches and Christian groups may be advanced:

#### practising solidarity and active compassion (see Chapter two)

Asylum seekers need support on arrival and throughout the application process, whatever its outcome. This support can take many forms:

- Churches should work in partnership with local government and asylum seeker organizations to develop local strategies for the integration of newcomers into the workforce and community.
- The establishment of local support groups could provide asylum seekers with friendship and advice.
- Personal action against destitution could include volunteering with projects such as the International Red Cross's local schemes – giving blankets or food or even offering a spare room for emergency accommodation.
- Those who do not come into direct contact with asylum seekers and refugees can give financial support, which is essential to those working with them.

## dispelling harmful untruths (Chapter three, section 1)

- The Churches must cooperate with refugee support groups in dispelling the misconceptions and prejudices perpetrated by some sections of the UK media.
- Christians can write to the editors of local and national media that publish distorted claims about asylum seekers and refugees in the UK. One group, Mediawatch4refugees, contacts its members when a prejudiced article or programme is published or broadcast.
- The Churches should express criticism whenever the refugee issue is misused for political ends. Christians can write to their MP on the subject.

## opposing racist attitudes (Chapter three, section 2)

- Racist attitudes expressed by individuals and groups must be challenged and opposed. The statements in 2004 by Church leaders, condemning the beliefs of the BNP and encouraging voting in the European elections, were timely and necessary.
- It is important that Churches deal with these problems among their own members and equip them to work for racial justice in society.

## making information available to local churches and Christian groups (Chapter three sections 3 and 4)

Free material giving the facts of the asylum situation and relating them to gospel concerns should be easily obtainable.

- Copies of this report could be distributed in the churches nationally and locally.
- Local churches could be encouraged to distribute to their congregations material and resources relating to the local asylum situation.

## requesting the UK Government to develop gender-specific procedures (Chapter five)

Specialist procedures for female asylum seekers fleeing rape and other gender-specific persecutions should be developed.

- Reforms could be suggested in the light of procedures developed in other countries, such as Canada and Australia.

*a place of refuge*

- Female officers should be employed to interview women in such situations, and proper childcare facilities should be provided.

## recognizing the contribution of refugees (Chapter six)

The contribution of refugees and asylum seekers to the UK economy, society, culture and religious life should be acknowledged and made known more positively. Refugees are valuable economic contributors as part of wider migrant groups. Their participation in under-resourced sectors such as health care is notable. The diversification and enrichment of our society should be celebrated and not lamented.

# useful contacts and resources

## Refugee Council

Good source of information on recent UK Government legislation, advice for refugees and asylum seekers. Clear and useful summaries of asylum news, and section dispelling prevalent asylum myths.

Refugee Council  
3 Bondway, London SW8 1SJ  
Tel: 020 7820 3000  
Fax: 020 7582 9929  
[www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)

## BBC News web site

'In depth' sections entitled Migrant World, and Destination UK. A very clear and helpful background to asylum issues, with a useful glossary of asylum definitions and legal terms. Online forums with interactive question and answer times with key asylum figures.

Migrant World web site:  
[news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking\\_point/special/migration/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/special/migration/default.stm)

Destination UK web site:  
[news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in\\_depth/uk/2001/destination\\_uk/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/uk/2001/destination_uk/default.stm)

## Asylum Aid

Good section on women refugee issues, and information about refugee and asylum seeker related campaigns.

[www.asylumaid.org.uk](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk)

*a place of refuge*

## Home Office web site

Some clear advice for asylum seekers. Links to good reports. Outline of asylum law in the UK.

[http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/laws\\_\\_\\_policy.html](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/laws___policy.html)

## Refugee Action

Information on active campaigns, including women refugees' safety, and valuable information on local work and volunteering.

The Old Fire Station  
150 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8SB  
Tel: 020 7654 7700  
Fax: 020 7401 3699  
[www.refugee-action.org.uk](http://www.refugee-action.org.uk)

## Women Against Rape and Black Women's Rape Action Project

Helpful outline of many female refugee and asylum issues. Case studies and outlines of past and present cases.

Crossroads Women's Centre,  
230a Kentish Town Road, London NW5 2AB  
Tel: 020 7482 2496  
Fax: 020 7209 4761  
[www.womenagainstrape.net](http://www.womenagainstrape.net)  
[www.bwrap.dircon.co.uk](http://www.bwrap.dircon.co.uk)

## Church of England

Material on asylum and refugee issues, including Asylum briefing paper (GS Misc 731) and report of General Synod debate in February 2004. Go to 'search' and enter 'asylum'.

[www.cofe.anglican.org](http://www.cofe.anglican.org)

## Roman Catholic Church

Previous press releases from the Roman Catholic Church concerning refugee and asylum seeking issues. Go to 'Search this site' and enter 'refugee' for most recent statements.

[www.catholic-ew.org.uk](http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk)

## Methodist Church

Previous press releases from the Methodist Church concerning refugee and asylum seeking issues. Go to 'Search this site' and enter 'refugee' for most recent statements.

[www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk)

## URC (United Reformed Church) web site

Document, 'I was a Stranger', outlining the experience of local churches with asylum seekers.

[www.urc.org.uk/reform\\_magazine/articles/lea\\_road/index.htm](http://www.urc.org.uk/reform_magazine/articles/lea_road/index.htm)

## CMS web site

Annual Review outlining an example of work with asylum seeking communities in the UK.

[www.cms-uk.org/index.htm](http://www.cms-uk.org/index.htm)

# Notes

## chapter one introduction

1. *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (online). Available at [www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home](http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home). Date of publication, 1951.
2. Dominic Casciani, *Asylum Questions: Aren't they economic migrants?* (online). Available at [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3075505.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3075505.stm). Date of publication, July 2003.
3. For a helpful 'jargon buster' of frequently used terms in asylum debates, see [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3380397.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3380397.stm).
4. Quotation from a Sudanese woman in *The Heritage and Contribution of Refugees in the UK* (online). Available at [www.refugeeweek.org.uk/refugees/contribution.pdf](http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk/refugees/contribution.pdf). Date of publication unknown.
5. Quote from Farid, a 16-year-old lone refugee from Afghanistan, in Refugee Council, *Credit to the Nation: Refugee contributions to the UK*, Eaveswood Colour, 2002.
6. Marcella Althaus-Reid, 'Veniamos de OTRAS Tierras: A Reflection on Diasporas, Liberation Theology and Scotland' in William Storrar and Peter Donald, *God in Society: Doing Social Theology in Scotland Today*, St Andrew Press, 2003.

## chapter two theological basis: solidarity and compassion

1. These concepts of solidarity and compassion are crucial within many walks of Christian life. The Papal Social Encyclicals refer frequently to the principles, Pope Pius XII outlining their origins thus: '[the] law of human solidarity and charity which is dictated and imposed by our common origin and by the equality of rational nature in all men, to whatever people they belong, and by the redeeming Sacrifice offered by Jesus Christ on the Altar of the Cross to His Heavenly Father on behalf of sinful mankind.' (Pope Pius XII, *Summi Pontificatus* (*On the Unity of Human Society*) 20 October, 1939. Available online at [www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/P12SUMMI.htm](http://www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/P12SUMMI.htm). Date of publication unknown.)
2. John Reader, *Blurred Encounter: A Reasoned Practice of Faith*, Aureus, 2004, p. 42.
3. Reader, *Blurred Encounter*, p. 42.
4. *Oxford English Dictionary*, OUP, 1995.
5. Deuteronomy 24.19-21.
6. Author unknown, *Biblical and Theological Reflection* (online). Available at [nat.uca.org.au/unitingjustice/issues/asylum/biblical.htm](http://nat.uca.org.au/unitingjustice/issues/asylum/biblical.htm). Date of publication, 3 December, 2003.
7. Leviticus 19.33-34.
8. *Biblical and Theological Reflection*. See note 6.
9. Matthew 8.20.
10. Matthew 20.16.
11. Matthew 25.40.
12. In the Old Testament, different responses are instructed towards different ethnicities: 'You shall not charge interest on loans to another Israelite, interest on money, interest

on provisions, interest on anything that is lent. On loans to a foreigner you may charge interest, but on loans to another Israelite, you may not charge interest, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all your undertakings in the land that you are about to enter and possess' (Deuteronomy 23.19-20). However, the basic offering of refuge to all seems accepted: 'Slaves who have escaped to you from their owners shall not be given back to them. They shall reside with you, in your midst, in any place they choose in any one of your towns, wherever they please; you shall not oppress them' (Deuteronomy 23.15-16). This acceptance of refugees continues in the New Testament. This is shown through Jesus' aligning himself with the marginalized and the stranger and teaching his followers to welcome such people (Matthew 25.35).

13. Author unknown, *The Philosophy of The Stoics* (online). Available at [radicalacademy.com/philstoicism.htm](http://radicalacademy.com/philstoicism.htm). Date of publication unknown.
14. 1 Corinthians 12.22-23.
15. E. Graham, 'Good News for the Socially Excluded? Political Theology and the Politics of New Labour', *Political Theology* 2, May 2000, pp. 49–50.
16. 1 Corinthians 12.24b.
17. Ken Coulter, 'Asylum Seekers: Practical and Theological Considerations' (online), *Scottish Journal of Healthcare Chaplaincy* Vol. 4, No. 2, 2001. Available at [www.sach.org.uk/journal/0402p22\\_coulter.pdf](http://www.sach.org.uk/journal/0402p22_coulter.pdf). Date of publication unknown.
18. *Transcript of A Discussion with Jacques Derrida – Politics and Friendship at the Centre for Modern French Thought*, University of Sussex (online). Available at [www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/frenchtought/derrida.htm](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/frenchtought/derrida.htm). Date of publication, 1 December, 1997.
19. Reader, *Blurred Encounter* (note 2), p. 39.
20. *Transcript of A Discussion with Jacques Derrida*. See note 18.
21. J. Derrida (trans. Peggy Kamuf), *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, Routledge, 1994.
22. *Transcript of A Discussion with Jacques Derrida*. See note 18.
23. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Former Secretary-General of the United Nations, *Review of Re-Imagining Political Community Studies in Cosmopolitan Democracy* (online). Read at [www.semcoop.com/detail/0804735352](http://www.semcoop.com/detail/0804735352). Date of publication unknown. No longer available on this site.

### chapter three problems encountered in the asylum and refugee discussion

1. Costas Douzani, *The End of Human Rights*, Hart Publishing, 2000, p. 365, quoted in John Reader, *Blurred Encounter: A Reasoned Practice of Faith*, Aureus, 2004, p. 40.
2. Author unknown, *Migration Watch UK Leaflet* (online). Available at [www.migrationwatchuk.org/pdfs/Leaflet.pdf](http://www.migrationwatchuk.org/pdfs/Leaflet.pdf). Date of publication, June 2004.
3. Author unknown, *News: Press Myths* (online). Available at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/news/myths/myth001.htm](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/news/myths/myth001.htm). Date of publication, December 2002.
4. *News: Press Myths* (online). See note 3.
5. Emma Brockes, 'Wish you were here?' in *The Guardian: Welcome to Britain: A special investigation into asylum and immigration*, June 2001.

## notes

6. Brockes, 'Wish you were here?', June 2001.
7. Author unknown, *Ask Actress Angelina Jolie* (online). Available at [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking\\_point/3584021.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/3584021.stm). Date of publication, April 2004.
8. Author unknown, *Migration Watch: What you say* (online). Available at [www.migrationwatchuk.org/default.asp?menu=whatyousay&page=whatyousay.asp](http://www.migrationwatchuk.org/default.asp?menu=whatyousay&page=whatyousay.asp). Date of publication, May 2004.
9. Robert Ayling, *ACPO Guide to Meeting the Policing Needs of Asylum Seekers and Refugees* (online). Available at [www.asylumsupport.info/publications/acpo/policing.pdf](http://www.asylumsupport.info/publications/acpo/policing.pdf). Date of publication unknown.
10. Ayling, *ACPO Guide*.
11. Ruud Lubbers, *Refugees and Migrants: Defining the difference* (online). Available at [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in\\_depth/3516112.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/3516112.stm). Date of publication, April 2004.
12. Author unknown, *Another Home Office Cover Up* (online). Accessed at [www.bnp.org.uk/news/2004\\_april/news\\_apr16.htm](http://www.bnp.org.uk/news/2004_april/news_apr16.htm). Date of publication, April 2004. No longer available on this site.
13. Author unknown, *Migration Watch: News Desk* (online). Available at [www.migrationwatchuk.org/default.asp?menu=newsdesk&page=newsdesk.asp](http://www.migrationwatchuk.org/default.asp?menu=newsdesk&page=newsdesk.asp). Date of publication, May 2004.
14. Author unknown, *Media's Asylum 'Feeding Frenzy'* (online). Available at [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/3504195.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/3504195.stm). Date of publication, February 2004.
15. Author unknown. Available at [www.migrationwatchuk.org/frameset.asp?menu=whoweare&page=whoweare.asp](http://www.migrationwatchuk.org/frameset.asp?menu=whoweare&page=whoweare.asp).

## chapter four claims against asylum seekers and refugees

1. Author unknown, *Migration Watch: Frequently Asked Questions* (online). Available at [www.migrationwatchuk.org/default.asp?menu=faqs&page=faqs.asp](http://www.migrationwatchuk.org/default.asp?menu=faqs&page=faqs.asp). Date of publication, June 2004.
2. Author unknown, *Immigration – Time to say No!* (online). Accessed at [www.bnp.org.uk/policies.html#immigration](http://www.bnp.org.uk/policies.html#immigration). Date of publication unknown. No longer available on this site.
3. Author unknown, *Migration Watch: Frequently Asked Questions* (online).
4. Dominic Casciani, *Asylum Questions: Aren't they economic migrants?* (online). Available at [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3075505.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3075505.stm). Date of publication, July 2003.
5. T. Heath, R. Jeffries and A. Lloyd, *Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2002* (online). Available at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb803.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb803.pdf). Date of publication, 28 August, 2003.
6. Author unknown, *Have Your Say Special: Migrant World* (online). Available at [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking\\_point/special/migration/default.stm#](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/special/migration/default.stm#). Date of publication, 18 May, 2004.
7. Author unknown, *Refugee Council Impact Report 2002/2003* (online). Available at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/rc\\_reports/impact/impact\\_03.pdf](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/rc_reports/impact/impact_03.pdf). Date of publication, 27 November, 2003.
8. *The Sun*, London, UK. Date of publication, 14 September, 2002.

9. Author unknown, *News: Press Myths* (online). Available at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/news/myths/myth001.htm](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/news/myths/myth001.htm). Date of publication, December 2002.
10. Dominic Casciani, *Asylum Questions: Are we being swamped?* (online). Available at [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3067869.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3067869.stm). Date of publication, 16 July, 2003.
11. *News: Press Myths* (online). See note 9.
12. Michael Winterbottom, *In This World* (film).
13. *News: Press Myths* (online). See Note 9.
14. Author unknown, *Asylum Aid: Who is a Refugee?* (online). Available at [www.asylumaid.org.uk/AA %20pages/who\\_is\\_a\\_refugee.htm](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk/AA%20pages/who_is_a_refugee.htm). Date of publication, 2002.
15. The UN classifies countries as 'least developed' based on three criteria: 1. annual gross domestic product (GDP) below \$900 per capita; 2. quality of life, based on life expectancy at birth, per capita calorie intake, primary and secondary school enrolment rates, and adult literacy; 3. economic vulnerability, based on instability of agricultural productions and exports, inadequate diversification, and economic smallness. Half or more of the population in the 49 least developed countries listed above are estimated to live at or below the absolute poverty line of US \$1 dollar per day. (Author unknown, *World's Poorest Countries 2003* (online). Available at [www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0908763.html](http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0908763.html). Date of publication unknown.)
16. Casciani, *Asylum Questions: Aren't they economic migrants?* See Note 4.
17. Casciani, *Asylum Questions: Are we being swamped?* See note 10.
18. Dominic Casciani, *Asylum Questions: Can we afford them?* (online). Available at [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3078601.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3078601.stm). Date of publication, 19 July, 2003.
19. Stephen Glover, Ceri Gott, Anais Loizillon, Jonathan Portes, Richard Price, Sarah Spencer, Vasanthi Srinivasan and Carole Willis, *Migration: An Economic and Social Analysis* (online). Available at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/occ67-migration.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/occ67-migration.pdf). Date of publication, 2001.
20. Author unknown, *Survey: Migrants: A Modest Contribution* (online). Available at [www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=1402843](http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=1402843). Date of publication, 31 October, 2002.
21. Author unknown, *The National Asylum Support Service (NASS): Withdrawal of Support from In-Country Asylum Applicants* (online). Available at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/briefings/section55/oct03.pdf](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/briefings/section55/oct03.pdf). Date of publication, October 2003. And author unknown, *Benefit – in England. Income Support* (online). Available at [www.adviceguide.org.uk/nw/index/life/benefits/income\\_support.htm](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/nw/index/life/benefits/income_support.htm). Date of publication, June 2004.
22. Author unknown, *Key Facts* (online). Available at [www.poverty.org.uk/summary/key\\_facts.htm](http://www.poverty.org.uk/summary/key_facts.htm). Date of publication unknown.
23. Author unknown, *Basic State Pension: What is it?* (online). Available at [www.essentialpensions.co.uk/penguide/bsphome.asp](http://www.essentialpensions.co.uk/penguide/bsphome.asp). Date of publication unknown.
24. Under the NIA Act 2002, detention centres acquired the new name of 'secure removal centres'. Author unknown, *Asylum Process: Detention* (online). Accessed at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/publications/infoservice/sample\\_detention.pdf](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/publications/infoservice/sample_detention.pdf) but no longer available on this site. Date of publication, March 2003.

notes

25. *Asylum Process: Detention*. See note 24.
26. Author unknown, *Asylum Aid: Asylum Myths and Truths* (online). Available at [www.asylumaid.org.uk/Fundraising/asylum\\_myths\\_leaflet.htm](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk/Fundraising/asylum_myths_leaflet.htm). Date of publication unknown.
27. Author unknown, *Asylum Seekers 'Sleeping Rough'* (online). Available at [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/3501779.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/3501779.stm). Date of publication, 19 February, 2004.
28. Author unknown, *UK Asylum Law and Process* (online). Available at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/infocentre/nia\\_act2002/joint\\_sment\\_ics.htm](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/infocentre/nia_act2002/joint_sment_ics.htm). Date of publication, 7 January, 2003.
29. Author unknown, *Press Myths: Nailing Press Myths About Refugees* (online). Available at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/news/myths/myth001.htm](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/news/myths/myth001.htm). Date of publication, December 2002.
30. Author unknown, *Are you applying for asylum? You may not be able to apply for Government support* (online). Available at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/info\\_for\\_clients/in\\_country/english.pdf](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/info_for_clients/in_country/english.pdf). Date of publication, December 2002.
31. Author unknown, *News: Press Releases* (online). Available at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/news/april04/relea158.htm](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/news/april04/relea158.htm). Date of publication, 7 April, 2004.
32. Court Transcript: *Neutral Citation No (2004) EWCA Civ 540. Case No: C/2004/0383, C2/2004/0384 & C/2004/0277*. Before Lord Justice Laws, Lord Justice Carnwath and Lord Justice Jacob. 21 May, 2004 (online). Available at [www.asylumsupport.org.uk/docs/limbuela.doc](http://www.asylumsupport.org.uk/docs/limbuela.doc).
33. Ellen Bennet, *14,000 asylum seekers win housing reprieve* (online). Available (following free registration) at [www.housing-today.co.uk/story.asp?storyType=10&sectioncode=306&storyCode=3037344](http://www.housing-today.co.uk/story.asp?storyType=10&sectioncode=306&storyCode=3037344). Date of publication, 25 June, 2004.
34. Author unknown, *Asylum seekers win back their rights to basic food and shelter* (online). Available at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/news/june04/relea171.htm](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/news/june04/relea171.htm). Date of publication, 25 June, 2004.
35. Author unknown, *Press Myths*. See note 9.
36. Author unknown, *The Refugee Council's European Work* (online). Available at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/infocentre/euro/euro001.htm](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/infocentre/euro/euro001.htm). Date of publication unknown.
37. *Refugees into Jobs: Who we are, what we do*, Refugees into Jobs, 2002.
38. Department for Education and Skills, *Working with Refugees and Asylum Seekers: Support material for ESOL providers*, DFES Publications, 2002.
39. Glover et al., *Migration*. See note 19.
40. Glover et al., *Migration* (italics added). See note 19.
41. Author unknown, *The Refugee Council's evidence to the Work and Pensions Select Committee on the Department for Work and Pensions' services to ethnic minorities* (online). Available at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/policy\\_briefings/dwp\\_evidence\\_dec03.pdf](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/policy_briefings/dwp_evidence_dec03.pdf). Date of publication, December 2003. Evidence from sources including 'Welcome to the UK:

A Special Investigation into Asylum and Immigration', *The Guardian*, 2001; The Home Office statistical report; and Alice Bloch, *Refugees' Opportunities and Barriers in Employment and Training*, published for DWP by Her Majesty's Stationery Office's Corporate Documents Services, Leeds, 2002.

42. Casciani, *Asylum Questions: Aren't they economic migrants?* See note 4.
43. DfES, *Working with Refugees and Asylum Seekers: Support material for ESOL providers*, 2002.
44. *Migration Watch: Frequently Asked Questions*. See note 1.
45. Charles Brendon, *Taking over the Asylum* (online). Available at [www.oxfordstudent.com/2003-10-23/focus/6](http://www.oxfordstudent.com/2003-10-23/focus/6). Date of publication, October 2003.
46. Author unknown, *One Lump or Two?* (online). Available on subscription at [www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=103488](http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=103488). Date of publication, October 1997.
47. Glover et al., *Migration*. See note 19.
48. Author unknown, *A Continent on the move* (online). Available at [www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=305497](http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=305497). Date of publication, May 2000.
49. Author unknown, *An Overview of UK Migration* (online). Available at [www.migrationwatchuk.org/default.asp?menu=overview&page=overview.asp](http://www.migrationwatchuk.org/default.asp?menu=overview&page=overview.asp). Date of publication, January 2004.
50. Author unknown, *A Continent on the move* (online). Available at [www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=305497](http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=305497). Date of publication, May 2000.
51. *A Continent on the move*. See note 50.
52. 'Beaten, Starved and Denied Wages: Greeks rescue victims of Britain's latest slave labour scandal', *The Independent*, London, Friday 13 February, 2004.
53. *The Refugee Council's evidence to the Work and Pensions Select Committee on the Department for Work and Pensions' services to ethnic minorities*. See note 41. Evidence from sources including 'Welcome to the UK: A Special Investigation into Asylum and Immigration', *The Guardian*, 2001; The Home Office statistical report; and Alice Bloch, *Refugees' Opportunities and Barriers in Employment and Training*, published for DWP by Her Majesty's Stationery Office's Corporate Documents Services, Leeds, 2002.
54. Author unknown, *Highly Skilled Migrant Workers* (online). Available at [www.iasuk.org/C2B/document\\_tree/ViewAdocument.asp?ID=72&CatID=1&Search=true](http://www.iasuk.org/C2B/document_tree/ViewAdocument.asp?ID=72&CatID=1&Search=true). Date of publication, March 2004.
55. Author unknown, *Refugee doctors' database* (online). Available at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/doctor%20database%20leaflet.pdf](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/doctor%20database%20leaflet.pdf). Date of publication unknown.
56. Author unknown, *Migration Watch UK Leaflet* (online). Available at [www.migrationwatchuk.org/pdfs/Leaflet.pdf](http://www.migrationwatchuk.org/pdfs/Leaflet.pdf). Date of publication, June 2004.
57. *Welcome to Greater Manchester*, Refugees Welcome Here leaflet, available at [www.refugee-action.org.uk/welcome\\_\\_Grtr\\_Manchester.pdf](http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/welcome__Grtr_Manchester.pdf).
58. Glover et al., *Migration*. See note 19.
59. Glover et al., *Migration*. See note 19.

60. Glover et al., *Migration*. See note 19.
61. Author unknown, *UK 'not burdened by refugees'* (online). Available at [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2608479.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2608479.stm). Date of publication, December 2002.
62. Author unknown, *Have Your Say Special: Migrant World* (online). Available at [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking\\_point/special/migration/default.stm#](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/special/migration/default.stm#). Date of publication, May 2004.
63. *A Continent on the move*. See note 50.
64. *Press Myths: Nailing Press Myths About Refugees*. See note 29.
65. Author unknown, *Immigration – Time to say No!* See note 2.
66. Author unknown, *Asylum Aid: Who is a Refugee?* (online). Available at [www.asylumaid.org.uk/AA%20pages/who\\_is\\_a\\_refugee.htm](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk/AA%20pages/who_is_a_refugee.htm). Date of publication unknown.
67. Casciani, *Asylum Questions: Aren't they economic migrants?* See note 4. Table of top ten countries of origin in 2002.
68. Casciani, *Asylum Questions: Aren't they economic migrants?* See note 4.
69. Casciani, *Asylum Questions: Aren't they economic migrants?* See note 4.
70. *News: Press Myths*. See note 29.
71. *Migration Watch UK Leaflet*. See note 56.
72. *News: Press Myths*. See note 29.

## **chapter five asylum seekers, refugees and gender issues**

1. Author unknown, *Have Your Say Special: Migrant World* (online). Available at [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking\\_point/special/migration/default.stm#](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/special/migration/default.stm#). Date of publication, May 2004.
2. Author unknown, *Asylum Aid: Refugee Women's Resource Project* (online). Available at [www.asylumaid.org.uk/New%20RWRP/RWRP\\_About\\_RWRP.htm](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk/New%20RWRP/RWRP_About_RWRP.htm). Date of publication unknown.
3. Author unknown, *Grassroots Women Win Political Precedent for Women's Rights: Rape by Soldiers Cannot be Dismissed as 'Simple Lust'* (online). Available at [www.womenagainstrape.net/RoseVicPressRelease.htm](http://www.womenagainstrape.net/RoseVicPressRelease.htm). Date of publication unknown.
4. Author unknown, *Humans Rights Watch: Refugee Asylum Law* (online). Available at [www.hrw.org/about/projects/womrep/General-68.htm](http://www.hrw.org/about/projects/womrep/General-68.htm). Date of publication unknown.
5. Author unknown, *Court of Appeal Rules on Asylum Case* (online). Available at [www.womenagainstrape.net/Initiatives/AsylumFromRape/court\\_of\\_appeal\\_rules\\_on\\_asylum.htm](http://www.womenagainstrape.net/Initiatives/AsylumFromRape/court_of_appeal_rules_on_asylum.htm). Date of publication unknown.  
And, *Grassroots Women Win Political Precedent for Women's Rights*. See note 3.
6. Author unknown. Available at [www.womenagainstrape.net/RoseVicPressRelease.htm](http://www.womenagainstrape.net/RoseVicPressRelease.htm).
7. Natasha Walter, *Rape as a Weapon of War* (online). Available at [www.bwrap.dircon.co.uk/NWalterIndependent.html](http://www.bwrap.dircon.co.uk/NWalterIndependent.html). Date of publication, May 1999.
8. *Court of Appeal Rules on Asylum Case*. See note 5.
9. Walter, *Rape as a Weapon of War*. See note 7.
10. *Grassroots Women Win Political Precedent for Women's Rights*. See note 3.

11. Author unknown, *Black Women's Web Site Against Racist Sexual Violence* (online). Available at [www.bwrap.dircon.co.uk](http://www.bwrap.dircon.co.uk). Date of publication, September 2002.
12. Nancy Kelly, 'Guidelines for Women's Asylum Claims', *International Journal of Refugee Law*, Oxford University Press, 1994, vol. 6, pp. 533–4.
13. *Grassroots Women Win Political Precedent for Women's Rights*. See note 3.
14. Walter, *Rape as a Weapon of War*. See note 7.
15. Walter, *Rape as a Weapon of War*. See note 7.
16. *Humans Rights Watch: Refugee Asylum Law*. See note 4.

## chapter six wider contributions of refugees to the UK

1. Genesis 18.1-22 (see also Hebrews 13.2).
2. Author unknown, *The Heritage and Contribution of Refugees in the UK – A Credit to the Nation* (online). Available at [www.refugeeweek.org.uk/refugees/contribution.pdf](http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk/refugees/contribution.pdf). Date of publication, 2002.
3. Madeleine Bunting, 'Haven't we been here before?' in *The Guardian: Welcome to Britain: A special investigation into asylum and immigration*, June 2001.
4. Tony Kushner and Katherine Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide*, Frank Cass, 1999.
5. Commission for Racial Equality Report, *Roots of the Future*, CRE, 1996.
6. Bunting, 'Haven't we been here before?', June 2001. See note 3.
7. *The Heritage and Contribution of Refugees in the UK*. See note 2.
8. Stephen Glover, Ceri Gott, Anais Loizillon, Jonathan Portes, Richard Price, Sarah Spencer, Vasanthi Srinivasan and Carole Willis. *Migration: An Economic and Social Analysis* (online). Available at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/occ67-migration.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/occ67-migration.pdf). Date of publication, 2001.
9. Refugee Council, *Credit to the Nation: Refugee contributions to the UK*, London: Eaveswood Colour, 2002.
10. *Evening Standard*, 26 April 2002.
11. Refugee Council, *Credit to the Nation: Refugee contributions to the UK*, London: Eaveswood Colour, 2002.
12. Glover et al., *Migration*. See note 8.
13. Author Unknown, 'Multiculturalism – The Kindness of Strangers?' from *The Economist*, print edition, 28 February 2004.
14. 'Multiculturalism – The Kindness of Strangers?', 28 February 2004.
15. Author unknown, *UK 'not burdened by refugees'* (online). Available at [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2608479.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2608479.stm). Date of publication, December 2002.
16. *Independent on Sunday*, 3 March 1996.
17. *Financial Times*, 25 May 1996. Quoted in [www.strategy.gov.uk/files/pdf/migrationreport.pdf](http://www.strategy.gov.uk/files/pdf/migrationreport.pdf).
18. Refugee Council, August, 2000, iNexile.
19. Refugee Council, *Credit to the Nation: Refugee contributions to the UK*, Eaveswood Colour, 2002.

20. Glover et al., *Migration*. See note 8.
21. Jürgen Moltmann (Margaret Kohl, trans.), *Experiences of God*, Fortress Press, 1981.
22. Marcella Althaus-Reid, 'Veniamos de Otras Tierras: A Reflection on Diasporas, Liberation Theology and Scotland', in William Storrar and Peter Donald, *God in Society: Doing Social Theology in Scotland Today*, St Andrew Press, 2003, p. 127.
23. Anne Dawson-Shepherd, representative of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), in author unknown, 'Churches Told to Welcome Refugees', in *The Church of England Newspaper* no. 5621 (online). Available at [www.churchnewspaper.com/news.php?read=on&number\\_key=5621&title=Churches %20told%20to%20welcome%20refugees](http://www.churchnewspaper.com/news.php?read=on&number_key=5621&title=Churches%20told%20to%20welcome%20refugees). Date of publication, June 2002.
24. 'Churches Told to Welcome Refugees'. See note 23.
25. Rachel Harden, *Bishops speak against 'draconian' Asylum Bill* (online). Available at [www.churchtimes.co.uk/churchtimes/web/pages.nsf/httppublicpages/1922DC4FOA85 BAB080256E8600579D8D](http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/churchtimes/web/pages.nsf/httppublicpages/1922DC4FOA85BAB080256E8600579D8D). Date of publication unknown.
26. Author unknown, *Shelter to help refugees opened in Leicester* (online). Available at [www.bbc.co.uk/leicester/features/faith/features/2002\\_04/shelter\\_church\\_cathedral.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/leicester/features/faith/features/2002_04/shelter_church_cathedral.shtml). Date of publication, 29 April, 2002.
27. CMS *Annual Review, 2003–2004* (online). Available at [www.cms-uk.org/\\_textfile/AnnualReview2004.pdf](http://www.cms-uk.org/_textfile/AnnualReview2004.pdf). Date of publication unknown.
28. Stephen Burns, *Welcoming Asylum Seekers: Struggles and Joys in the Local Church*, Grove Books, 2004.

## chapter seven conclusions and suggestions for action

1. Saskia Sassen, *Guests and Aliens*, The New Press, 1999.
2. Refugee Council, *Credit to the Nation: Refugee contributions to the UK*, Eaveswood Colour, 2002.
3. Author unknown, *UK 'not burdened by refugees'* (online). Available at [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2608479.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2608479.stm). Date of publication, December 2002.
4. Refugee Council, *Credit to the Nation*, 2002. See note 2.
5. Matthew 25.35-40.