

War and Refugees, The Western Sahara Conflict, Richard Lawless and Laila Monahan (eds), Frances Pinter, London, 1987 (201pp, price not stated, ISBN 0 86187 900 7).

Two thirds of the contributions, collected papers presented at Oxford University Refugee Studies Programme in 1986, deal at great length with the theory and practice of decolonisation, with special reference to the Western Saharan case. The part played by the World powers in the Western Saharan conflict is analysed on a regional and global level. Further papers discuss the lives of the refugees, and lessons and prospects for people who are in enforced exile and "dependent on the continued interest of the international community".

Hodges writes that the "aim of this collection is to cast fresh light on the multiple facets of the Western Saharan conflict", which, in his view, had "received far less attention than it warranted". In this respect, the inclusion of an informed Saharawian voice would have been appropriate and relevant. The final contributions analyse the role of the Saharawi woman in war and as a refugee. Perhaps the most informative and insightful writing in this collection.

It should be noted that people cannot be independent when depending upon the goodwill of donors. The Saharawi people have transformed this dependent situation by relying upon a fierce selfreliance, having never been a subjugated people and able to endure the remoteness and inhospitality of their desert homeland.

Hodges, Franck and Joffe draw the reader's attention to the violations of the principles of decolonisation laid down by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 1514 of 1960. In the forty year history of decolonisation there have been three exceptions to the decolonisation process, Western New Guinea, the Timor colonies, and the Western Sahara, a Spanish colony that the Moroccans occupied against the wishes of the inhabitants. The case of the Saharawi was heard by the International Court of Justice, and in 1975 the UN General Assembly resolution 3458A (XXX) reaffirmed "the inalienable right of the people of the Spanish Sahara to selfdetermination". But they remain in exile, another flagrant example of the arbitrary nature of international principle.

The Moroccan government has consistently violated the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which they ratified in August 1979, and hundreds of Saharawi have vanished. The disappearances are a further exposure of a disregard for law: "little short of terrorism".

For over a decade 160 000 Saharawi women, men and children have lived in four refugees camps near the Algerian border, fleeing from the Moroccan army who attacked defenseless people with napalm and cluster bombs. The Polisario Front (the armed liberation movement) has been fighting for selfdetermination since 1975 when the Spanish colonialists agreed to divide the Western Sahara between Morocco and Mauritania, without consulting the Saharawian people.

The media usually portrays refugees as passive and helpless, but the Saharawians have created ordered, stable communities. Environmentally the region is inhospitable barren desert, with extreme temperature changes. Food production is difficult and most of the food is provided by external donors and Algeria. Algeria provides more than 90 percent of the funding because of the paucity of international donors. The UNHCR assists only selected vulnerable refugees (World Refugee Survey, 1986).

The Saharawis have an organised daily life in the camps. Except for the very old, every adult has a role in servicing camp life through participation in neighbourhood committees

for health, education, local production, social affairs and provisions. The administration and organisation is strong and effective. There are fully functioning schools, health care clinics, and nutrition centres. Aid is given directly to the Saharawi people, through their own administration. This is the only way the Saharawis can control the aid they receive for the running of the camps. Before 1975 over 90 percent of Saharawi women were illiterate, but measures were taken to make education accessible to all. Women now manage the training centres, and the creches, hospitals and clinics, do the training, teach and nurse, organise, distribute food and other supplies, and bring up the children. Women's rights have been protected by progressive reforms. Arranged marriages can no longer take place without agreement, dowries have disappeared, and women work and argue as equals.

The Saharawi have created an organised, caring society with the full dynamic of women positively involved, both in the struggle for liberation and for their own respect and status, alongside the necessity to survive as nationals of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic.

While this publication is a rigorously researched collection of essays which will serve students of the Saharawi conflict well, there is a tendency to use oppressive academic language which may exclude a wider reading public. In the study of refugees, the refugees themselves know what is best for them, and they deserve to be asked and listened to. All who work in the field of refugee relief, aid and development would be wise to take a look at the Saharawi way of doing things.

Reviewed by M N Mindel, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Child Abuse and Its Consequences. Observational Approaches, Rachel Calam and Christiana Franchi, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987 (x+226 pp, US\$13,95 pbk, ISBN 0 521 316114 6 pbk).

The rather sweeping title of this book is misleading, implying a major theoretical statement or overview of research in the area. In fact the book reads more like a dissertation, being a report of research undertaken by the authors in an English day centre for at risk children. The title 'Family Centre' for the day centre is also misleading, since siblings and fathers or other family members did not attend. Basically it was a day nursery run by highly qualified professional staff with compulsory attendance by mothers at certain times.

The main body of the book details the behavioral observation of eleven children at the centre, in interaction with staff, peers and their own mothers. The account makes valuable reading for anyone considering undertaking research into child abuse, with its emphasis on the importance of direct observation of the child and child-parent communication process, the summary of constraints, and the discussion of the different uses of statistical versus the case study approaches. The lack of a control group is explained, but is nevertheless a weakness. The authors do not discuss the possibility that criterion behaviours might be equally common in controls and there is no way of assessing from the study how much nonabused children might also exhibit watchfulness, hostility, etc.

Another weakness in the book lies in a theoretical discrepancy which might be particularly troublesome in a culture such as ours where some physical chastisement is normative. The authors seem to assume implicitly that any corporal punishment is undesirable, in spite of the fact that they themselves point out that degree of injury has no