

many parts of the continent as they are in South Africa, which provides the case study for both the development of refugee law and the state of asylum. Although this book will be useful to those seeking to understand forced migration in Southern Africa, a much more representative range of country studies would need to be incorporated for this volume fully to live up to its professed aim of addressing the challenges of forced migration in Africa as a whole.

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The International Containment of Displaced Persons: Humanitarian Spaces without Exit. By Cécile Dubernet. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001. ix+227pp. £45.00
ISBN 0 7546 1772 6.

When the plight of the millions of persons forcibly uprooted within their own countries began to command international attention in the early 1990s, governments complicit in displacing their own populations and denying their rights were not alone in their wariness of this development. A small but vocal group of scholars in refugee studies also tried to keep the international focus away from internally displaced persons (IDPs), warning that this would play into and perhaps was even driven by the growing interests of asylum states to keep large numbers of potential refugees at bay. Cecile Dubernet's *The International Containment of Displaced Persons* promises to put forward 'an alternative understanding' of the nature of international protection for IDPs (p. 2), but instead reiterates this familiar point of view, and indeed applies it to the same case studies covered by earlier writings on this theme, though even less persuasively. The result is a study that seems bent on stirring up old fears, which rather than reappraisal, and that comes across as callously shunting aside the need (not to mention national and international responsibilities) for protection of displaced persons and other populations at risk in their own countries.

Positing that international efforts undertaken on behalf of IDPs had the more nefarious aim of containing would-be refugees in their countries of origin, the book draws on the cases of Iraq, Bosnia, Rwanda and Somalia to validate this claim. The inclusion of case studies other than those on which earlier writings on containment already have focused perhaps would have led to a more original contribution. Moreover, the text is all too often anecdotal and impressionistic, with sweeping assertions that go beyond the evidence presented and gloss over highly debatable issues. For instance, the argument that '[p]resence *does not* equal protection' (p. 1, author's italics) is presented as accepted wisdom, about which 'most analysts agree' (p. 179), whereas in fact there does exist an alternative school of thought as well as a growing body of evidence that a proactive and engaged international presence can yield protection dividends of consequence. At times, the author jumps to extreme and unsubstantiated conclusions, for example, in suggesting that 'in Rwanda, not only was daily insecurity tolerated, but assaults to provoke specific displacements were *readily endorsed by the international community*' (p. 118, emphasis added). Generally, the text strains to be negative, presumably to reinforce the central argument that it is better not to undertake action on behalf of IDPs; but this has the effect only of calling into question the fairness and seriousness with which the subject matter is approached.

The author rightly criticizes other proponents of the containment conspiracy theory for relying 'on the unexplored assumption that displaced persons are refugees in the making' (p. 35), but does little to dispel this belief. The many reasons (e.g. geography, the localized nature of conflict) why IDPs do not become refugees, even though they can expect more

protection and assistance if they do, go largely unacknowledged; sources spelling out some of these reasons are cited, but quoted only on the point of restrictive asylum policies (Cohen and Deng 1998: 29–30). In short, facts not fitting the book's thesis are sidestepped, treated as inconvenient information.

Too often, those voicing concerns about containment do so in a way that pits refugees and IDPs against one another, which in the end undermines protection for both groups. This volume, as with other writings on containment, ties increased inhospitality to refugees globally to the greater attention accorded to the plight of IDPs. This, however, distracts from the real reasons why refugees are being denied asylum—which most certainly need to be addressed—while at the same time shooting barbs at any efforts to respond to the plight of IDPs. Noteworthy in this regard is the author's warning that 'a researcher's adoption, or reiteration, of harmful frameworks for analysis might lead to neat yet profoundly destructive studies which, for the sake of academic clarity, instrumentalize the persons studied' (p. 32). How aptly this describes what has been done in this book. What is needed instead is a comprehensive approach that ensures protection for displaced persons on *both* sides of the border.

For all its emphasis on containment, it is also striking that the book does not do more to suggest ways of countering this concern and minimizing its harmful effects. Greater use of out-of-country evacuation is advocated; however, this is not a practical solution for the millions of IDPs in need of protection, and not the least because of the powerful interests of states to contain displacement problems within their countries of origin, as is underscored in the book. What also is not sufficiently brought out is concern about the possible consequences for the internally displaced when genuine efforts are not made to protect them where they are; inevitably, not all endangered people will leave their country in an emergency. A more interesting and worthwhile question to explore would be: what should and can be done to help the large numbers left behind? Certainly, the case studies covered by this book point to some of the undeniable practical problems—such as insufficient numbers of UN troops and human rights monitors, the prioritization of assistance over protection, and the recurring shortfall in donor support for displaced persons' reintegration upon return or resettlement—that would need to be overcome.

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COHEN, R. and DENG, F. M. (1998) *Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

AIDS on the Agenda: Adapting Development and Humanitarian Programmes to Meet the Challenge of HIV/AIDS. By Sue Holden. Oxford: Oxfam in association with ActionAid and Save the Children, 2003. xx+400 pp. £14.95/US\$23.95. ISBN 0 85598 469 4.

Is *AIDS on the Agenda* yet another AIDS book for a non-medical audience? Yes, but it is after all a different one. Different, because it goes beyond description (how terribly AIDS affects sub-Saharan Africa) and explanation (why it affects so disproportionately the poor and vulnerable), but leads clearly to what can be done. Different also, because it depicts a realistic view, departing from the 'obligatory optimism that pervades much of the debate on AIDS in Africa' (De Waal 2004).