



STANDING ALONGSIDE REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN DONCASTER

A view from the edge

Doncaster Conversation Club Newsletter

05 July 2018

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Perspective

By Paul FitzPatrick

The world's refugee population stood at 25.4 million people at the end of 2017, having increased by more than 10 per cent since the previous year. This is the highest known total to date, and the sixth year in a row of annual increases.

Sub-Saharan Africa saw the largest increase in refugee numbers in 2017 with the population increasing by more than a fifth to 6.3 million, driven mainly by the crisis in South Sudan which led to 1 million people fleeing their homes.

By the end of 2017, a total of 6.3 million Syrians had been classified as refugees. The majority of these refugees (3.4 million) were hosted in Turkey – the country that hosts more refugees than any other globally. Syrian refugees have been granted asylum in 129 countries worldwide, including large numbers in Lebanon, Jordan, Germany and Iraq.

Sub-Saharan Africa is now home to 31 per cent of the global refugee population, overtaking Europe last year. Ethiopia hosts the second largest refugee population in Africa, sheltering over 920,262 registered refugees and asylum seekers as of 31 May 2018. In the first five months of 2018, 29,211 refugees arrived in Ethiopia, including 4,436 in May. These include 2,157 refugees from South Sudan and 2,094 from Eritrea. Ethiopia is not alone: Uganda also hosts around 1 million refugees.

Ethiopia accepts this situation - with help. They don't complain like Europe does, or attempt to throw up walls (as the President Trump wants to and Israel and Spain already have). They don't try to leave refugees to drown in the Mediterranean. Time for Europe to rethink? And for the UK to abandon its deafening silence on the subject?



Epworth Music Day

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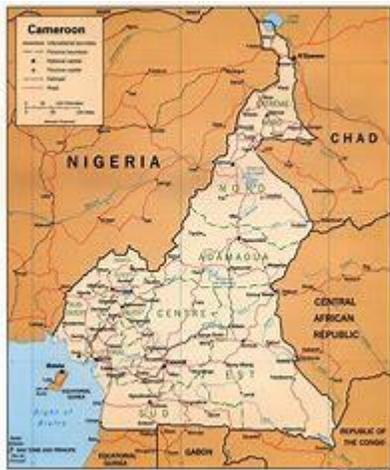


Celebrating Refugee Week

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Cameroon – the tragedy of western colonialism and imperialism [Part 1] By Vincent Arah [REMA]

Portuguese explorers reached the coast of Cameroon in the 15th century and named the area *Rio dos Camarões (Shrimp River)* upon seeing the Wouri River filled with shrimps. The Germans later called it Kamerun and it eventually became Cameroon in English. After the scramble for Africa and the Berlin conference of 1884, Cameroon was handed over to the Germans as a colony and was ruled by Germany until 1916. Following the defeat of Germany in the 1st world war by the allied forces, the French and the British partitioned the territory loosely known at the time as Kamerun amongst themselves.



The British Southern Cameroons was part of the United Nations Trust territory of Cameroons under the United Kingdom's administration from 1916 -1961. British Southern Cameroons was created by the British Order in the Council of June 26, 1923. By this act the British Southern Cameroons became a distinct territory and a unit of self-determination and governance. The French part of Cameroon became a

new French mandated colony, to be known as French Cameroun.

French Cameroon and the British Southern Cameroons were separate UN Trust Territories with separate agreements and each governed separately by Article 76(b) of the UN charter. British Southern Cameroons was ruled from Lagos – Nigeria by the British Governor General until 1954, when the members of parliament of the British Southern Cameroons in the Nigerian Regional Eastern House of Assembly walked out and returned to Buea – capital of the British Southern Cameroons, where they formed a thriving parliamentary democracy which lasted until 1961.

From 1954 the then British Southern Cameroons established and practiced self-governance, with its government, Prime minister, parliament, judiciary and House of Chiefs. From 1954 – 1961, British Southern Cameroons had three successive governments. These governments conducted free and fair elections in which power changed hands peacefully. However it is worth noting that the territory remained under the authority of the Governor General who continued to administer the Southern Cameroons from Lagos – Nigeria where he was based. The British Governor General had a duty to prepare the territory of Southern Cameroons towards self – rule and independence.

On the 1st of January 1960 the French Cameroon, gained independence from France and was known as "*La République du Cameroun*" (LRC). On

1st October 1961 the British Southern Cameroon was granted independence in a weird and bizarre manner. Awkward in the sense that instead of granting outright independence to Southern Cameroons, a plebiscite was organised on 11th February 1961 in which the following questions were put to the British Southern Cameroonians:

Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Federation of Nigeria?
Or
Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent country of La République du Cameroun?

The third option to achieve independence on its own as requested by the local government of the British Southern Cameroons was turned down by the UN and the British Government. With the two above-mentioned unpleasant options imposed on her, the British Southern Cameroons voted on 11th February 1961 to gain independence by joining the French Cameroon.

The United Nations on April 21 1961 voted for the independence of the British Southern Cameroons. According to the United Nations resolution 1608(XV), the independence of the Southern Cameroons was to take effect on October 1st 1961. Among other things Resolution 1608 clearly stated in Article 5 that "the Administering Authority Britain, the Government of Southern Cameroons and the

government of La Republique du Cameroun were to initiate urgent discussions with a view to finalising before 1st October 1961 the platform by which the agreed and declared policies of the parties concerned (British Southern Cameroons and French Cameroon) would be implemented". With two autonomous territories coming together, it was agreed that the discussion would culminate in the signing of the treaty of union that was to be registered with the United Nations; signalling the birth of an entirely new Country.

This discussions took place from the 17th – 21st of July 1961 and curiously Britain whose mission is was to advocate for Southern Cameroons and to stand as witness to the birth of this union between the English and French Cameroon did not attend the discussion consequently no treaty of Union was ever established between Southern Cameroons (English speaking) and La République du Cameroun (French-speaking). So there exists no treaty validating the union deposited at the UN Secretariat as was requested. Some have argued the lack of such a treaty makes Cameroon as it is today an illegal State. However the new entity became the Federal Republic of Cameroon. Under this new framework/ arrangement, the British Southern Cameroons became known as West Cameroon and the entity La République du Cameroon became known as East Cameroon in a federation of two states equal in status and stature.

Under the federal system of government only a few of the government departments were run

from the central government in Yaoundé while the bulk of the departments were managed by local governments of East and West Cameroon respectively. Under the federal constitution Cameroon was to be a bilingual, bi-cultural and bi-legal country. English speaking Cameroonians studied in English, used Common law in their legal system and practiced their Anglo-Saxon culture. French Cameroon used French in Schools and practiced civil law. The constitution made it clear that English and French shall be the official languages of Cameroon and equal in status. Article 47 of the federal constitution of 1961 stated categorically that the form of the state shall never be changed or be altered in any form.

In a move considered by the English speaking Cameroonians as a strategy to assimilate them and eradicate their English heritage, the then President under the influence of France decided to organise a referendum on 20 May 1972 to change the political configuration of the country from Federal Republic of Cameroon to United Republic of Cameroon. Voters were given two choices YES or OUI. OUI in French means yes. So voters had to vote yes or yes in favour of changing the form of the state. The significance of this referendum was that power was transferred from the Federal states to the central government, incarnated by the President of the Republic. The change of name from Federal Republic to United Republic was unconstitutional because it was in clear violation of Article 47 of the federal constitution mentioned above. This change signalled the demise of the federal state of English

speaking West Cameroon. As a consequence, English speaking Cameroons lost its state assembly, government and all other State institutions.

In Part 2 of this article, which will appear in next month's edition, Vincent will bring the history of Cameroon up to date to reflect upon the current violence and disturbances which are leading to the displacement of thousands of people.



The Physic Garden at Epworth Old Rectory



The Quirky Choir

Barnsley's One World Cup

To celebrate Refugee Week, the community arm of Barnsley FC 'Reds in the Community' organised a five-a-side football competition to which groups from across South Yorkshire were invited. It was hosted in co-operation with the British Red Cross and the Refugee Council. Eleven teams participated, of which two were from DCC, which were named Doncaster United and DCC United.

After playing a league table-style contest, the top four teams progressed to the semi-finals.



Both DCC's then contested the final, in which Doncaster United came out on top, beating DCC United 2-0. Adam Ali insisted 'we are all one team'.

Muse Jama, who now lives in the UK after originally coming from East Africa, explained how important events like the One World Cup are for integrating refugees into the English culture.

He said: 'I've really enjoyed it. I've met a lot of people from different cultures and different countries in the world, it's been really nice. It's amazing, I'm really proud to be here and I've had a good time. I've been in this country for five months. My wife and my kids are here as well. It's a different country with different

people but I've met some good friends. The people are really friendly.'

Sarah Sonne of the Refugee Council was delighted with the success of the event and thanked Reds in the Community for it's backing.

She said: 'We've got lots of different teams from refugee backgrounds but we've also got a job centre team and teams from colleges. It's been really nice to show that Barnsley is refugee friendly and to start the week's celebrations. It celebrates diversity. We're really grateful for Reds in the Community for us in this event. It's so nice to see so many people involved and people that we've not seen before who we can tell them a bit about refugees in Barnsley and what they can bring to the community.'



Thanks to the Southall Trust for help in buying t-shirts for the occasion!

Thanks to Doncaster St George's Rotary Club...

...for their donation to support the work of ESOL at DCC.

FORTHCOMING DATES

Until 02 September: The Sea is the Limit - Thought provoking works of art exploring the current and ongoing issues of migration, dispossession and national borders are brought together in a major new exhibition at York Art Gallery.

08 July Town Fields Gala: free events on the Town Fields

11 July How to deal with stress: Meeting House 10.30

17 July The introduction, and impact, of Universal Credit in Sheffield. Sheffield Town Hall from 2 - 530 pm.

18-19 July Annual Conference of the Refugee Law Initiative: Refugee Protection in a Hostile World University of London

19 July Safeguarding training for volunteers

20 July Doncaster Culture week events

21 July Don Gorge Day: discover the River Don at Sprotborough

27 July Talk for new arrivals, followed by an introduction to the NHS. Meeting House 10.00.

28 July DN Festival does space. Free events all day in Nigel Gresley Square outside CAST.

31 July DCC trip to the seaside

Celebrating Refugee Week

Various local organisations made an effort to acknowledge Refugee Week, including the Museum, the Read Junk Food Project, the Unitarian Church, Doncopolitan and the Quirky Choir.

The Museum hosted two events.

The first was on Friday 15th June, and took the form of a Migration Stories display in Doncaster Market Place.

The aim of this event was to invite conversation about migration with people who were passing by and to ask them to think about where they came from and about the movement of people into the Doncaster area. Doncaster is a place whose industrial expansion depended on migrant labour.



Museum staff took along objects from the museum collection, stories and photographs which look at journeys people have

made to come to Doncaster throughout time. A striking object in the collection is a silver coin from Baghdad which made its way to Doncaster during the Roman period.

This event was supported by Hope Not Hate.

Then on Wednesday 20th June the Museum hosted an event at the Museum itself. It included a Conversation Café and tours of the Museum highlighting the migration tales. There was also a printed museum tour to guide visitors.

On Saturday 16th June, Tom McCready handed over the role of Refugee Week coordinator for Yorkshire and the Humber to Jayne Mercer at an event in Doncaster Unitarian Church. Jayne is based in Hull. To acknowledge the occasion, music was provided by Cecil Jones. 'Drum, Sing and Dance' with CJ and The Story Tellers – telling the Story Through Drums'. Originally from Freetown, Sierra Leone, CJ has lived in its twinned city of Hull since 2004, and performs music from around the world in an engaging and infectious manner.



Doncopolitan magazine offered **Alfred Thananchayan** a micro-residency and commissioned a poem from him.

Why I am here?

*I asked my rights.
They asked me bribe.
I got angry.
They sent the army.
I protest.
They banned me as terrorist.
They throw the stones,
burned their own vehicle.
Put the blame on me.
I asked questions,
they replied it with weapon.
Government labelled me fringe
element.
Accused me antisocial movement.
Arrested under act of treason.
In midnight Police searched my
house.
They shot my colleague in mouth
because she is speaking too much.
I asked clean water to drink.
I asked clean air to breathe.
They put the cases in court
against me
under section:
301 Inciting the violence
101 Inflicting damage to the
public property
202 Attempt to murder.
... I became refugee.*

QUIRKY CHOIR SUPPORTS REFUGEE WEEK WITH DONCASTER CONVERSATION CLUB

By Pat Cassidy



Quirky Choir is certainly getting around this year. The choir was privileged to join with Doncaster Conversation Club on Friday 22nd June for an evening celebration of Refugee Week at the Quaker Meeting House in Doncaster. Like Quirky Choir, Refugee Week is celebrating nationally its 20 year anniversary in 2018, making this collaboration particularly significant.

The evening began with Lillian Hollidge providing a presentation about the recent fund-raising activities of the Conversation Club. Thanks to the generous support of retailer Mountain Warehouse (they provided an additional 25% discount on top of their full sale price), she managed to purchase a supply of sleeping bags for donation to the refugees of Moria camp, Mytilini, at Lesbos Island in Greece. Lillian volunteered to work at this refugee camp in February 2018, and recounted the many deprivations and hazards endured by the refugees there. The sleeping bags proved an invaluable resource during the cold winter months.

The remainder of the evening proved a joyous celebration of community, solidarity, singing and laughter. The welcome and hospitality of the Conversation Club was matched only by their enthusiastic participation with the Quirky Choir as they sang their way through a diverse international repertoire, including material from Hawaii and Africa.

Quirky Choir has gone from strength to strength since it was started 20 years ago by darts (Doncaster Community Arts). The continued support of darts, together with the generous funding provided by Arts Council England in 2018 means that Quirky Choir's 20th anniversary year will be one of creativity and performance. If you are interested in the Quirky Choir "Popping Up" at your event and venue this year then please contact Quirky Choir leader Janet Wood by telephone on 01302 558051 or e mail jwood@thepoint.org.uk.



A visit to Epworth Music Day



There were 39 of us, and we travelled by coach to Epworth.

Albania	2
Burundi	1
Cameroon	1
DRC	2
Iran	3
Iraq	5
Jamaica	1
Kosovo	1
Mauritius	1
Mongolia	5
Somalia	1
Sudan	5
Syria	4
UK	6
Zimbabwe	1
Total	39

Musicians of all sorts performed at various venues around the town. Since it was a beautifully warm day, no-one had to retreat indoors.

Some comments from those who went

It's amazing day. I enjoyed to listen to music and meet new friend. I am walking around to village centre. It's very clean and nice people. They smile to you. Really I am very happy. Thanks a lot for all.

Today the event of music day was nice and very joyful time with all the DCC club. Feel very happy with all of

them and they were very friendly. Weather was so nice and sunny day. I did enjoy my time in Epworth. First time came here. It was a nice place to visit. I wish next time Conversation Club take us a nice place we haven't seen. Thanks a lot.

I have enjoyed. It was wonderful and amazing. I spend my time with my friends watching and listening the music. It was really nice. Thank you.

I enjoyed the music and also the little village shops and charity shops.

Great. Thanks for all people organise this event. I am so happy. I enjoyed, saw new places, listen different kinds of music. I like traditional English music too.

Yes, I enjoyed the trip. I enjoyed music from various groups and different types of music.

Yes, I enjoyed the day because they give me a little candy and a cupcake.

Yes, I enjoyed the Epworth music festival. I enjoyed many kind of musics. Guitar, violin and ukulele player were very well. The sounds beautiful. Sorry family take a lot of energy. Thanks for showing us this nice music events.

I enjoyed the music they played. There was a large variety of instruments and it was just fun.

Enjoy the music events and recalls and repeats familiar songs, dances. How English people do I give credit them all and I enjoy the trip to Epworth.

I love the park. I like the music. The sheep was cute. The strawberry was delicious. It was so fun. The chicken was cute. I like the ice cream (aged 10y).



Brief news headlines

1. Sheffield civic mayor is a refugee from Somalia

Magid Magid is the city's first Somali mayor, first Green Party mayor, and, at 28, the youngest mayor.

He came to Sheffield aged five after six months in an Ethiopian refugee camp with his mother and five siblings who left Somalia "to find a better life".

"Just me being in the post brings an element of difference to the role," he said.

Born in Burao in war-torn northern Somalia, Mr Magid said he did not remember much of his childhood and had never returned to his country of birth.

"I remember just being happy, playing around as you do as a kid, but in reality it was a completely different story," he said.

His family set up home in Sheffield's Burngreave area. He said life was difficult when he and his family arrived, trying to learn the language and adapt to a new way of life. His mother worked as a cleaner to look after her children, with Magid and his siblings acting as translators.

Source: BBC News

2. European Youth Music Refugee Choir...

...is looking for singers. There will be a residential week in Oakham, where the choir will rehearse in parallel with young musicians from around Europe as part of European Youth Music Week, starting on 29th July and culminating in a concert with the orchestra in Leicester Cathedral on 3rd August. City of Sanctuary are extending the invitation to organisations across the UK for refugees to join the residential week. No experience necessary, and all costs, including travel to the course and full room and board, will be covered.

3. South Sudan

The president of South Sudan, Salva Kiir, and his former vice president, Riek Machar, signed a peace deal on Wednesday 27 July in a bid to end their country's protracted civil war.

Despite the agreement, signed in neighbouring Sudan, and known as the Khartoum Declaration, many worry that a lasting resolution to the conflict is still a long way off. Peace deals signed by both leaders have fallen apart in the past, and the war now involves numerous smaller parties. Just two years ago, the pair struck a similar agreement that soon unravelled.

4. Guardian report

On 20th June, World Refugee Day, the Guardian published a record of the 34,361 migrants and refugees known to have died trying to reach Europe. The list is the work of a group of researchers who have accessed an astonishing range of sources to find what evidence they can to honour the names of so many who have died. The list is available at www.list-e.info

5. Dublin reform?

It looks likely that no significant reform of the Dublin arrangements is going to emerge among EU Negotiators. The Visegrad 4 have stuck to their position that no "solidarity" mechanism in the form of relocation should be included, and certainly nothing mandatory, while the Southern states insist on mandatory and automatic relocation or a deeper reform of the allocation system.

There are many worrying developments. The Danish Prime Minister leaked the information that a group of Member States is trying to set up camps in a European country outside the EU, which is 'unattractive' for asylum seekers - speculation centres on Serbia or Albania.

For further informed comment see ECRE Bulletin 8 June.

A view from the edge Doncaster Conversation Club Newsletter

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To receive a copy of this newsletter by email, send a message to Paulfitzp@aol.com

Please send your contributions and suggestions to the same address.

Doncaster Conversation Club offers opportunities for local people and people who have sought asylum in the UK to join together to share friendship, while offering support and practical help.

The Club seeks to create a relaxed, friendly and supportive environment, and works on the principles of

Ownership – *everyone can get involved*

Impartiality – *it is not affiliated to any political or religious body*

Confidentiality – *what you say is private*

Respect – *for each other's differences and individuality.*

The Club is pleased to acknowledge the support of **Doncaster Society of Friends (Quakers), The Red Cross, The Refugee Council, Migrant Help, The Foyle Foundation, DIAL Doncaster, South Yorkshire Community Foundation, The Doncaster Clinical Commissioning Group, St Leger Homes, Club Doncaster Foundation, M25, Riverside Housing, DARTS, CAST, Fareshare, The Ruth Hayman Trust and Doncaster Minster.**

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The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual contributors.

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