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Jana Lipman. ***In Camps: Vietnamese Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Repatriates.*** Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020. ISBN: 978-0-52-034365-8 (hardcover, $85.00); 978-0-52-034366-5 (paperback, $29.95).

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Introduction by Amanda C. Demmer, Virginia Tech

It isn't often that five separate reviewers offer nearly unanimous praise for a book, but such is the case for Jana Lipman's *In Camps: Vietnamese Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Repatriates.* The book is the inaugural title in the University of California Press' new series in Critical Refugee Studies, and, according to the reviewers, is "geographically expansive, meticulously researched, and cogently written," an "excellent book" with "a narrative account so smartly and compellingly organized" that it is "essential reading." In short, it is a "landmark contribution."

Lipman's account (re)casts the narrative of the post-1975 Vietnamese diaspora in compelling and revealing ways. *In Camps* brings readers on a chronological and geographic journey from 1975 to the early 2000s, using camps in Guam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Hong Kong as case studies. Multiple reviewers commend Lipman's organizational framework, suggesting that the book is as a model for cogent and compelling writing.

In Camps' commitment to telling the story of the Vietnamese diaspora from the focal points of camps in Southeast Asia invites readers to reconsider familiar narratives. Lipman's approach, in Evyn Lê Espiritu Gandhi's words, "decenters the United States as the main site and actor of post-war Vietnamese refugee resettlement." While the US and UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) both appear in *In Camps,* the book highlights the activism of diasporic actors, who, in Lipman's rendering, are not merely recipients of policy but active agents in shaping and framing local and international programs. *In Camps* sheds light on resistance strategies and diasporic networks in general and, as Sam Vong notes, also improves our understanding of specific organizations like Boat People SOS and the Indochinese Refugee Action Center.

Another major contribution of the book is its foregrounding of the importance of regional actors in Southeast Asia. Two particularly important inflection points are the 1979 Geneva Conference (where 70 nations created the multilateral framework that underwrote refugee policy in the region for a decade) and the 1989 Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA), which altered the status quo reached in 1979 and governed ongoing Vietnamese resettlement until 1996. *In Camps* persuasively argues that Southeast actors and policy models were instrumental to the creation of the 1979 and 1989 programs. More specifically, Lipman demonstrates that officials in Malaysia (which hosted the majority of the boat people in the years preceding 1979) implemented intentionally controversial policies in order to incite action from more powerful political brokers like the US and UNHCR. *In Camps* also shows how many of the changes implemented in the 1989 CPA were pioneered in Hong Kong and then implemented more broadly thereafter. As Julia Irwin notes, these discussions about forging international refugee programs were deeply entangled with broader debates about humanitarianism and human rights, threads Lipman weaves throughout the book with nuance and clarity.

In Camps, while incredibly vast in its temporal and geographic frames, also inspires questions that resonate beyond the book's parameters. Carl J. Bon Tempo, for instance, wonders how Lipman's book "might help us reshape the narratives of U.S. immigration history more generally." Bon Tempo is also curious about how Lipman's keen insights into debates about the definition of "refugee" in the Vietnamese context "compared to, influenced, and was shaped by" concurrent debates about Cuban and Central American migrants during the same period. Given that Lipman has also published work on Cuban refugees and US-Cuban relations, she seems especially well suited to answer this question.[1]

The review by Erik Harms articulates the many ways Lipman's themes and questions might be further developed by future scholars. Harms suggests that readers "are left with a rather undeveloped understanding of Vietnam between 1975 and 1988" and that more explicit integration of Vietnamese Studies and Vietnamese Refugee Studies would help us better understand both fields and highlight the incredibly nebulous boundary between the two. While complimentary of Lipman's

[1] Jana K. Lipman, *Guantánamo: A Working Class History between Empire and Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Jana K. Lipman, "A Refugee Camp in America: Fort Chaffee and Vietnamese and Cuban Refugees, 1975-1982," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 33:2 (2014): 57-87.

"important framework for thinking about the almost dizzying array of factors that converge around the story of Vietnamese refugees," Harms also notes that the case study approach requires Lipman to "skim the surface of each place it touches" and to almost completely omit locations which do not serve as case studies, including Thailand, Singapore, and Japan. A study which fully integrates Thailand—which hosted the majority of the so-called "land people" (Cambodians and Laotians)—with *In Camps* and other studies of the Vietnamese diaspora would be an especially welcome addition to the literature on this topic.[2] Ultimately, then, for as much as the book beautifully accomplishes, *In Camps* is also a gift to future scholars for the footholds it provides into areas in need of new research. What seems undisputable, however, is that we will be reading and citing Lipman's latest book for quite some time.

Participants:

Jana K. Lipman is a Professor at Tulane University. She is the author of *In Camps: Vietnamese Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Repatriates* (University of California Press, 2020), *Guantanamo: A Working-Class History between Empire and Revolution* (University of California Press, 2009), and co-translator with Bac Hoai Tran of *Ship of Fate: Memoir of a Vietnamese Repatriate* by Trần Đình Trụ (University of Hawaii Press, 2017). Her scholarly work has also appeared in *American Quarterly*, *Journal of American Ethnic History*, *Journal of Military History, Radical History Review*, and other venues.

Amanda C. Demmer is an assistant professor in the history department at Virginia Tech, where her research and teaching explore the intersection of US foreign relations, war and society, and migration studies. Her first book, *After Saigon's Fall: Refugees and US Foreign Relations, 1975-2000*, was published in 2021 by Cambridge University Press.

Evyn Lê Espiritu Gandhi is Assistant Professor of Asian American Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her interdisciplinary work engages critical refugee studies, settler colonial studies, and transpacific studies. Dr. Gandhi is the author of *Archipelago of Resettlement: Vietnamese Refugee Settlers and Decolonization across Guam and Israel-Palestine* (University of California Press, 2022). Her writing has been published in *Critical Ethnic Studies*, *MELUS*, *Amerasia Journal, Canadian Review of American Studies*, and *LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory*.

Erik Harms is Chair of the Council on Southeast Asian Studies, and Professor of Anthropology and International & Area Studies at Yale University. His research focuses on urban anthropology in Vietnam, and he is the author of *Saigon's Edge: On the Margins of Ho Chi Minh City* (Minnesota, 2011) and *Luxury and Rubble: Civility and Dispossession in the New Saigon* (California, 2016).

Julia F. Irwin is an Associate Professor and Associate Chair of History at the University of South Florida. Her research focuses on the place of humanitarian assistance in 20th century U.S. foreign relations and international history. Her first book, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening* (Oxford University Press, 2013) is a history of U.S. international relief efforts during the First World War era. She is now finishing a second book, *Catastrophic Diplomacy: U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance in the American Century*.

[2] Court Robinson, *Terms of Refugee: The Indochinese Exodus and the International Response* (London and New York: Zed Books, 1998); Valerie O'Connor Sutter, *The Indochinese Refugee Dilemma* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1990); Aihwa Ong, *Buddha Is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, and the New America* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2003); Sara E. Davies, *Legitimising Rejection: International Refugee Law in Southeast Asia* (Leiden and Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2008); Yến Lê Espiritu, *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refuge(es)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

Carl J. Bon Tempo is associate professor of history at the University at Albany, State University of New York (SUNY). He is the author of *Americans at the Gate: The United States and Refugees during the Cold War* (Princeton University Press, 2008) and co-author, with Hasia Diner, of the forthcoming *Immigration: An American History* (Yale University Press, May 2022.)

Sam Vong is Curator of Asian Pacific American History at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. He received his Ph.D. in History at Yale University. He is currently working on a book project that examines the making of a Southeast Asian diaspora after the Vietnam War and the politics of resettling Southeast Asian refugees in Latin America, the United States, and other parts of the globe.

Review by Evyn Lê Espiritu Gandhi, University of California, Los Angeles

Jana K. Lipman's *In Camps: Vietnamese Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Repatriates* is geographically expansive, meticulously researched, and cogently written. Its key interventions are twofold. First, the book decenters the United States as the main site and actor of post-war Vietnamese refugee resettlement, drawing attention instead to the understudied roles that Guam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Hong Kong played in hosting those Vietnamese who were displaced in the wake of war. Attending to patterns of power and resistance as well as the specificities of local dynamics, *In Camps* deftly cuts across area studies divisions that would otherwise separate analyses of the Pacific from Southeast Asia, and American from British imperial influence. Second, Lipman posits the in-between space of the refugee camp as a site of political contestation. Taking the Nazi extermination camp at Auschwitz as paradigmatic, Giorgio Agamben famously theorized the camp as a "pure, absolute, and impassable biopolitical space" and the refugee as a figure of bare life, stripped of all political value.[3] *In Camps*, in contrast, attends to Vietnamese activism, protests, and demonstrations, both within the camps and across the diaspora, positioning the refugee as a key political actor, who intimately shaped regional responses as well as international aid. To narrate this transnational history, the book draws on an impressive archive of material: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

(UNHCR) sources; UK and U.S. government archives, including hundreds of declassified documents from the U.S. State Department and the British Colonial Office that Lipman petitioned through the Freedom of Information Act; newspapers from Guam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Hong Kong; and NGO reports, ephemera, interviews, and photographs. Of particular note is the memoir of Vietnamese repatriate Trần Đình Trụ, which Lipman found while conducting research at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. and subsequently edited, translated with the help of Bac Hoai Tran, and published under the English-language title, *Ship of Fate*.[4]

In Camps is the first book to be published in University of California Press's new Critical Refugee Studies series. First outlined in Yến Lê Espiritu's 2006 article "Toward a Critical Refugee Study: The Vietnamese Refugee Subject in US Scholarship" and later elaborated in her 2014 book *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refuge(es)*, the emerging field of critical refugee studies "conceptualizes the 'refugee' as a critical idea but also a social actor whose life, when traced, illuminates the interconnections of colonization, war, and global social change."[5] Although Lipman did not herself conduct many of the oral histories cited in the book, and due to linguistic limitations relies almost exclusively on English-language sources, *In Camps* nonetheless succeeds in depicting Vietnamese refugees as complex social actors. Lipman reveals how refugees challenged the limits of nation-state humanitarian frameworks that offered basic sustenance while denying human rights, such as freedom of mobility, protection from persecution and refoulment, and agency over refugees' own migratory trajectories. In chapter one, for example, Lipman details how more than 1,500 Vietnamese on Guam "unsettled the U.S. government's rhetoric of humanitarianism and generosity" by demanding the right to return to their homeland in Vietnam (24). When confronted with the U.S. government's hesitance because the U.S. did not have diplomatic relations with either the new Provisional Revolutionary Government in the south or the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the north, Vietnamese repatriates protested, engaging in hunger strikes, staging demonstrations and 'walk-offs,' and comparing themselves to prisoners of war. In sum, "Vietnamese repatriates inverted Americans' understanding of rescue and positioned

[3] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 123.

[4] Đình Trụ Trần, *Ship of Fate: Memoir of a Vietnamese Repatriate*, trans. Bac Hoai Tran and Jana K. Lipman (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017).

[5] Yến Lê Espiritu, "Toward a Critical Refugee Study: The Vietnamese Refugee Subject in US Scholarship," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 1:1-2 (2006): 410-433; Espiritu, *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refuge(es)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 11.

themselves as the captives and the U.S. military as the captor" (38-39), arguing that "the only possible humanitarian action would be to allow the Vietnamese to return and reunite with their families" (49). Although the Vietnamese repatriate protests were ultimately successful and refugees were granted a ship to return to Vietnam, Lipman cautions against reading this story as a "triumphant rejection of U.S. imperialism or a romanticized revolutionary victory," given that upon their return many of the repatriates were imprisoned in reeducation camps and forced to perform back-breaking labor (49).

Chapter five similarly highlights Vietnamese refugee activism, forwarding a critical refugee studies framework. Lipman documents how both Vietnamese within Hong Kong's refugee camps and Vietnamese Americans in the U.S. mobilized the language of human rights to condemn Vietnamese refugees' prolonged detention, involuntary repatriations, and poor camp conditions, including the use of tear gas and excessive force by Hong Kong police. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt highlighted the discrepancy between state-given citizenship rights and inalienable human rights, emphasizing the inadequacies of the nation-state structure to guarantee the latter for non-citizen refugees.[6] Critical ethnic studies scholars since then, namely Sylvia Wynter, have argued that a human rights discourse that appeals to the state for recognition may unwittingly reproduce rather than challenge exclusions based on race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability, and as such the very category of the human—particularly its conflation with Man—needs to be interrogated.[7] As a historian, Lipman refrains from passing judgment on the Vietnamese refugees' political articulation of human rights, instead explaining how they deftly navigated Cold War tensions to condemn human rights abuses in Hong Kong, criticize the human rights violations of Communist-unified Vietnam, and appeal to the U.S. and the UNHCR to protect refugees' human rights by preventing forced repatriation.

Another key feature of critical refugee studies is the method of "critical juxtaposing," which Espiritu defines as "the bringing together of seemingly different and disconnected events, communities, histories, and spaces in order to illuminate what would otherwise not be visible about the contours, contents, and afterlives of war and empire."[8] Organized into six chapters that discuss the Vietnamese refugee camps in Guam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Hong Kong from 1975 to 2005, *In Camps* critically juxtaposes the history of postwar refugee resettlement with the much longer histories of American and British empire and colonialism. As Lipman highlights, Guam has been a U.S. territory since 1898, and as such has yet to experience "modern political independence" (24). Guam's territorial status facilitated the unfettered construction of U.S. military bases on Indigenous Chamorro land—bases that played a key role during the aerial bombing campaigns of the Vietnam War, and then again in the processing of Vietnamese refugees during Operation New Life. Indeed, although the U.S. initially planned to host Vietnamese refugees—then called 'parolees'—at Clark Air Force Based in the Philippines, President Ferdinand Marcos did not comply, forcing the U.S. military to quickly pivot to Guam as the first major U.S. processing center for the displaced Vietnamese.

Meanwhile, Malaysia's former status as a British colony as well as its "anxieties about the place of Chinese Malaysians and the history of communism in postwar Malaysia" shaped its desire to "fiercely defend[] its borders and sovereignty" (53). Because of its geographical location in Southeast Asia, Malaysia could not afford to be as selective in refugee admissions as Western countries such as the U.S., and as such Malaysia's leaders pressured the UNHCR and resettlement countries to change their refugee policies to alleviate the burdens placed on first-asylum countries. The Philippines' own long history of first Spanish and then American colonial rule, and then its status as a postcolonial nation, influenced the development of the Philippine Refugee Processing Center in Bataan (1980-1994), which was tasked with providing English-language and American cultural orientation classes taught by Filipinos to "'transform' the Vietnamese into good Americans" prior to their resettlement in the U.S. (91). Later, this (post)colonial history shaped President Fidel Ramos's decision to allow 'screened-

[6] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, 1973), 267–302.

[7] Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument," *CR: New Centennial Review* 3:3 (Fall 2003): 257-337.

[8] Espiritu, *Body Counts*, 21.

out' Vietnamese to stay in Palawan instead of being repatriated back to Vietnam—a decision that "combined a long-standing rhetoric of compassion and humanitarianism with a tenacious Cold War anti-communist Catholic politics" (201).

Last, Lipman writes that Hong Kong, although still a British colony at the time, was less "beholden to the U.S. government's prerogatives" than Guam and the Philippines, and as such could reject UNHCR protocols that considered the Vietnamese as de facto refugees and instead treat them as asylum seekers, whose refugee claims needed to be individually vetted (127). Those who did not pass such screenings were forcibly repatriated. Under consideration as well was the impending return of Hong Kong to Chinese Communist rule in 1997, which further made Hong Kong more immune to the United States' "quickly calcifying Cold War anti-communism" (128). In sum, imperial dynamics shaped regional politics, including expressions of sovereignty as well as colonial control.

Recent books by Simeon Man, Khatharya Um, and Ma Vang have highlighted the transpacific dimensions of the Vietnam War—that is, how American's War in Vietnam affected not only the U.S. and the postcolonial struggle in Vietnam, but also the surrounding Southeast Asian countries of Cambodia and Laos, as well U.S. allies in South Korea and the Philippines and U.S.-occupied Pacific islands such as Hawai'i.[9] But transpacific connections—or what Espiritu calls "critical juxtaposing"—did not cease with the war's end. *In Camps* builds on this existing scholarship to examine the transpacific dimensions of the postwar Vietnamese refugee resettlement regime. I have taught this book in my Critical Refugee Studies class, and think it would make an excellent addition to syllabi on the transpacific, the Vietnam War, and refugee resettlement. *In Camps* has also deeply informed my own research on Vietnamese refugees in Guam, and I recommend the book to anyone who is interested in postwar refugee politics, Vietnamese and otherwise.

Finally, a note about language. Across the book, Lipman attends to how Vietnamese "refugee status depended on time, place, global alliances, and local politics," charting how the displaced Vietnamese were alternatively referred to as "refugees," "asylum seekers," "illegal aliens," and "boat people" in the archival documents and contemporaneous discourse (19). As such, she chooses to use language such as "Vietnamese within the camps, Vietnamese Americans, and the diasporic Vietnamese community" for precision (19). While I appreciate Lipman's historical attention to political distinctions, in this review I have chosen to default to the term "refugee" for two reasons. First, as Lipman herself notes, in oral histories and memoirs, displaced Vietnamese "consistently identified as refugees," and "to refer to Vietnamese in the camps as anything other than refugees seems disrespectful and just another attempt by a government or international body or authority to deny their rights and narratives" (18). Second, I draw from Vinh Nguyen's more capacious definition of the refugee subject, captured by his term "refugeetude," which indexes the elongated temporality and modes of relationality that exceed narrow legal definitions of who constitutes a legitimate "refugee" in the eyes of international law.[10] Indeed, *In Camps* highlights moments of refugee activism that refuse local and supranational arbitrations over refugee status, guiding readers towards more expansive understandings of refugee politics across space and time.

[9] Simeon Man, *Soldiering Through Empire: Race and the Making of the Decolonizing Pacific* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018); Khatharya Um, *From the Land of Shadows: War, Revolution, and the Making of the Cambodian Diaspora* (New York: New York University Press, 2015); Ma Vang, *History on the Run: Secrecy, Fugitivity, and Hmong Refugee Epistemologies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021).

[10] Vinh Nguyen, "Refugeetude: When Does a Refugee Stop Being a Refugee?," *Social Text* 139, no. 2 (June 2019): 109–31.

Review by Erik Harms, Yale University

In Camps is filled with remarkable and often dramatic episodes from the stories of Vietnamese refugees in the camps of asylum and then transit centers in Guam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Hong Kong. The stories alone make for gripping reading, and the book is especially compelling for the way it vividly depicts the engaged activism of people in the camps themselves. Instead of abjection, the book emphasizes agency and activism, and for this reason alone should be essential reading in courses on refugee studies as well as late-twentieth century Asian politics. While always mindful of U.S. hegemony, the book recenters the narrative around Asia and reminds readers that the Vietnamese refugee experience is not to be reduced to a side story in U.S. history but is in fact central to Inter-Asian history, global diplomacy, and changing understandings of humanitarianism. It forcefully argues that these histories were in many ways driven by the engaged action of Vietnamese people both in the camps and in the Vietnamese diaspora. These actors played a fundamental role in pushing and transforming global approaches to humanitarianism, and the book makes an important move by highlighting the agency of refugee actors in the camps themselves and by centering their stories at the core of the book.

At the same time, the book also shows how human agency is never unfettered. By emphasizing mutually impinging connections across multiple scales and across space and time, the book develops an important framework for thinking about the almost dizzying array of factors that converge around the story of Vietnamese refugees. There are at least six factors that Lipman repeatedly emphasizes, and they are all entangled with each other in ways that both drive the narrative and reveal its complexity: (1) the events transpiring within Vietnam itself; (2) the political policies and diplomatic ambitions of different nations in the Inter-Asian region that hosted Vietnamese refugees most immediately after their flight from Vietnam; (3) the experience and activism of people "in camps"; (4) the activism of a global Vietnamese diaspora; (5) the role of global humanitarian policies and frameworks about refugees, especially those connected to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR); and (6) the continued role of U.S. hegemony and politicized aid in Asia, where most of the camps were located, and in global policy.

One of the key successes of this book is also its major challenge. By intertwining all these factors into a single volume, it paints a comprehensive and overarching perspective that offers readers a clear narrative to follow. However, there are vast bodies of scholarship associated with each of the six factors noted above, not to mention each of the five countries discussed in the book. Since no single scholar can master all of these literatures, Lipman's rich and vivid storytelling, while offering fast-paced and engaging reading, is often forced to skim the surface of each place it touches. At times, this leaves the more complex historical context of each national host of the camps somewhat undeveloped. Furthermore, there are key ways in which the Inter-Asian perspective inadvertently flattens the history of the place where the book's main protagonists come from: post-1975 Vietnam. While the sweeping history of the camps is compelling and well told, the focus on Inter-Asian connections and agency only really appears at those moments when people have left Vietnam.

The unintended effect of this framing is to depict life 'outside Vietnam' as a place of agency, while depicting life inside as a place devoid of it. It also risks reproducing a notion that the stories of Vietnamese inside Vietnam and outside Vietnam are entirely separate stories. Such a disconnect between Vietnam and its diaspora, however, has been increasingly challenged by a good deal of recent scholarship that is questioning the fictional boundary between Vietnam Studies and refugee studies. At this moment, when such scholarship is beginning to take off, it would have been useful to see more engagement with the work of scholars who move fluidly across the disciplinary boundaries of Asian Studies and Asian American Studies.[11]

[11] For important works crossing the boundaries between Vietnam and the diaspora, it is worth reading across the corpus of work written by Nguyen-Vo Thu Huong, which spans topics about both places. Key works include Thu-Huong Nguyen-Vo and Grace Kyungwon Hong, "The Grammar of Failure: Dispossession, Mourning, and the Afterlife of Socialist Futurities," *Social Identities* 24:2 (2018): 155-172, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2017.1327142; Nguyen-Vo Thu-Huong, "Forking Paths: How Shall We Mourn the Dead?," *Amerasia Journal* 31:2 (2005): 157-175, DOI: https://doi.org/10.17953/amer.31.2.g232251372h12k78; Nguyễn-võ Thu-hương, *The Ironies of Freedom: Sex, Culture, and Neoliberal Governance in Vietnam* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008). Other useful examples of scholarship working on topics spanning Vietnam and Vietnamese diasporas include Lan Duong, *Treacherous*

In order to fully realize Lipman's emphasis on Inter-Asian connections, then, readers will do well to look deeper into the way the Vietnam side of the story is just as interconnected as the story Lipman tells about life outside it. As the anthropologist Christina Schwenkel has forcefully argued, depictions of socialist Vietnam (and the socialist world more generally) tend to fixate on tropes of isolation, and often unwittingly perpetuate descriptions of socialist societies as places of immobility, outside of history.[12] While this is clearly not Lipman's intention, the very effort to locate agency within the camps, when juxtaposed against a less developed picture of life in Vietnam, risks reproducing a notion that Vietnam is not a place where agency could thrive, and which was only connected to the world when one was on the way out. After the fall of Saigon, history did not only continue "outside" Vietnam, or in other nations in Asia, and it did not somehow come to a stop within.[13]

The light Lipman shines on agency within the camps is bright and welcome. But as with photography, brightening the exposure of some parts of a frame can risk turning other parts into silhouettes. For example, when the protagonist of chapter one, Tran Dinh Tru, returns to Vietnam, the richness of the story we heard about his activism and efforts in the Guam camp abruptly ends. The reader is then left with a rather undeveloped understanding of Vietnam between 1975 and 1988. While Lipman is correct to emphasize the bleakness of Vietnam's reeducation camps of that period, and while the stark contrast we encounter hews closely to the way Tran Dinh Tru has narrated his own experience, it is important for readers to know that there was also human agency even under the bleak conditions in Vietnam. This has been documented in sources about reeducation camps, including the ones Lipman notes in a brief footnote (page 48, footnote 101), and also in the broad social science scholarship on life in Post War Vietnam. In some ways this should be an obvious point: after all, the agentive actors in the camps and in Vietnam are in many cases the same people, and the act of getting by in Vietnam, just like the act of leaving, is all part of a connected story of human beings acting in the world. There were agentive actors even within Vietnam's reeducation camps, as the remarkable stories collected from the time by Huỳnh Sanh Thông so poignantly show. The authors of those stories not only depict but themselves constantly deploy irony, sarcasm and resistance in the face of great oppression. At one point, Thông notes, wryly, ""Socialist reeducation" produces extreme individualism."[14]

None of this is at odds with Lipman's project. What these points suggest is that her insights about the role of agency and mobilization in the camps should also be applied to the study of Vietnam itself. It also suggests just how important it is to continue thinking about Vietnamese refugee studies and Vietnamese Studies together as part of a broader project.[15]

Subjects: Gender, Culture and Trans-Vietnamese Feminism (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012), Janet Hoskins, *The Divine Eye and the Diaspora: Vietnamese Syncretism Becomes Transpacific Caodaism* (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2015), and Quan Tue Tran, "Remembering the Boat People Exodus: A Tale of Two Memorials," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 7:3 (2012): 80-121, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1525/vs.2012.7.3.80.

[12] Christina Schwenkel, " Rethinking Asian Mobilities: Socialist Migration and Post-Socialist Repatriation of Vietnamese Contract Workers in East Germany," *Critical Asian Studies* 46:2 (2014): 235-258, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2014.898453.

[13] To be fair, this chronological depiction of Vietnam's history having come to a stop in 1975 is not only an academic trope; it also appears in Vietnamese descriptions of Vietnam's south before and after 1975. For ethnographic descriptions of how some residents in Vietnam's south depict the country as having stopped between 1975 and the early 1990s, see Erik Harms, *Saigon's Edge: On the Margins of Ho Chi Minh City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 108-109; Philip Taylor, *Fragments of the Present: Searching for Modernity in Vietnam's South* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 56-88.

[14] Huỳnh Sanh Thông, ed., *To Be Made Over: Tales of Socialist Reeducation in Vietnam*, The Lạc-Việt Series (New Haven: Council on Southeast Asian Studies: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1988), xii.

[15] For a strong statement of the importance of bringing Vietnam Studies into dialogue with Asian American Studies, see Fiona I. B. Ngô, Mimi Thi Nguyen, and Mariam B. Lam, "Southeast Asian American Studies Special Issue: Guest Editors' Introduction," *positions: asia critique* 20:3 (2012): 671-684. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1215/10679847-1593492.

Oscillating between the perspectives of real historical actors in the camps and the larger context within which the lives of those actors played out, Lipman repeatedly and importantly reminds us to seek out cases where the agency of individuals and the decision-making of individual countries created a complex range of feedback loops that interact with structural processes.

This is just as important for understanding the postwar history of Vietnam as it is for understanding the camps outside of Vietnam. The very same historical period Lipman traces from the perspective of the camps was marked by a range of agentive transformations within Vietnam as well. For example, the scholarship on Vietnamese decollectivization, which describes a process of dismantling socialist agriculture that played out over almost exactly the same period Tran Dinh Tru was held in reeducation camps, has shown how top-down agrarian policies pushed by the Communist-Party dominated state were undermined from below, by peasants.[16] While Lipman's engagement with the Vietnam side of the story largely rests on discussions of the country's refugee policies, scholars like Ben Kerkvliet have shown that there was a much more complex dynamic playing out between the party and the people within the country as well.[17] Similar stories have been told about so-called "fence-breaking" (Phá rào), whereby policies of bureaucratic centralism were incrementally broken down by actors at many levels of society. And these tales of agency have been documented about everything from everyday traders[18] to political dissidents,[19] television broadcasters,[20] ward-level officials,[21] spirit mediums[22] and the broader story of the revival of ritual practices, festival and cultural expressions.[23]

Highlighting this scholarship is not meant as a criticism of Lipman's project, but as an invitation for all scholars who are interested in the Vietnamese experience to further explore the connections between diaspora politics outside of Vietnam, and the agentive experiences of people in Vietnam. Even as readers see the intimate voices of brave and forceful individuals in the camps, Lipman's book also shows how those individuals not only transformed but were always constrained by Inter-Asian dynamics in the region as well as the changing context of international politics and policies, not only within and among the countries where the camps were located, but also in the diplomatic sphere of international humanitarianism and geopolitics. It is worth adding to this matrix of interconnections the transformative connections between Vietnamese in the

[16] For an early study of peasant resistance to state cooperatives, see Adam Fforde, *The Agrarian Question in North Vietnam, 1974-1979 : A Study of Cooperator Resistance to State Policy* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1989).

[17] Đặng Phong, *"Phá rào" trong kinh tế vào đêm trước đổi mới [Economic "fence breaking" on the eve of đổi mới]* (Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Trí thức, 2009).

[18] Ann Marie Leshkowich, *Essential Trade: Vietnamese Women in a Changing Marketplace* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014).

[19] Huy Đức, *Bên Thắng Cuộc [The Winning Side]* (Los Angeles: OSINBook, 2012).

[20] Giang Nguyen-Thu, *Television in Post-Reform Vietnam: Nation, Media, Market* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

[21] David W.H. Koh, *Wards of Hanoi* (Singapore: ISEAS Publications, 2006).

[22] Karen Fjelstad and Nguyen Thi Hien, *Possessed by the Spirits: Mediumship in Contemporary Vietnamese Communities* (Ithaca: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 2006); Kirsten Endres, *Performing the Divine: Mediums, Markets and Modernity in Urban Vietnam* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2011).

[23] Hy V. Luong, *Tradition, Revolution, and Market Economy in a North Vietnamese Village, 1925-2006* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010); Shawn K. Malarney, *Culture, Ritual and Revolution in Vietnam* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002); John Kleinen, *Facing the Future, Reviving the Past: A Study of Social Change in a Northern Vietnamese Village* (Singapore: ISEAS, 1999).

diaspora, those in camps or who have passed through them, or who know those in camps or who have passed through them, and those they remain connected to in Vietnam. In this regard, the book could and should be fruitfully read alongside important works on Vietnamese remittance economies, which are intimately entangled with and in many ways facilitate these connections.[24]

Despite the inadvertently silhouetted depiction of Vietnam during this period, the book as a whole is remarkably well-crafted and easy to read, developing a roughly chronological approach which proceeds through a progression of events over time, while still emphasizing the importance of place, stressing early on that "where a camp was mattered" (6). As events ricocheted across the region, but also moved across time, readers might do well to imagine the dramatic events of 30 April, 1975—the so-called Fall of Saigon—as precipitating a chain-reaction of chain reactions. The first event produced a series of events which in turn sets off responses in other places. As refugees from Vietnam moved across space and time, their movement led to a series of national-level and global policy frameworks, which also moved and changed over time. All of these events in turn impacted the original chain of events set off by the original chain reaction. For example, the chain of events set in motion by what happened in Vietnam on 30 April, 1975 resonated outward along with fleeing refugees to Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Guam, and Hong Kong (as well as other countries in the region, which are, unfortunately, not discussed in detail in the book), and the responses of these countries in the region were themselves forged in dialogue with the actions and policies of what Lipman calls "majority-white countries" (5) in Europe and North America.

In the book, the reader vividly encounters the ways people asserted their right to humanitarian care and dignified treatment, while also learning about how nations strategically instrumentalized their positions on humanitarianism as a way of expressing their sovereignty, all while nations debated the meaning of words like refugee and the responsibilities a global system of nation-states towards caring for them. One dramatic example, from chapter two, appears when Lipman describes how Mahathir Mohammed, then the deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, publicly threatened to shoot Vietnamese refugees in 1979, stating that "We've already been accused by *Newsweek* of shooting illegal immigrants, so we might as well do it and justify their accusation" (52). Mahathir's comments were, as Lipman convincingly argues, a provocation to members of the international community about their own hypocrisy, and a way in which Malaysia could call out the high-minded humanitarianism of white-majority countries which were at that time limiting the numbers of refugees they would take in, while blaming the humanitarian crisis on countries in the region. Of course, as with my discussion of Vietnam above, this reference to Mahathir and Malaysian politics begs further questions, and while Lipman focuses on the message this stance was sending to the international community, there is not space to dig deeper into the broader context of national politics within Malaysia. Certainly, Lipman is on to something important when hinting at Mahathir's prominence in Malay nationalism, but readers would do well to dig deeper into the work of scholars such as Shamshul A. B. who situate this story in the complex history of Malaysian ethnic politics.[25]

Nevertheless, in examples like this, we can see quite vividly how refugees struggling to find places to land after dangerous journeys at sea were forced to endure indignities and threats to their lives because of global squabbles about humanitarian responsibilities. Chapter three, which focuses on the Philippines' Refugee Processing Center (PRPC), offers another instructive example of the way national leaders strategically manipulated their position on refugees to serve their own ends. The PRPC was an important transition camp, and between 1980 and 1994, roughly 400,000 Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian refugees passed through. But as Lipman clearly shows, it was also manipulated by President Ferdinand Marcos as a way to assert his humanitarian credentials during a period when he was increasingly under critique domestically and

[24] Ivan Small, *Currencies of Imagination: Channeling Money and Chasing Mobility in Vietnam* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018); Ivan V Small, "Embodied economies: Vietnamese transnational migration and return regimes," *SOJOURN: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 27:2 (2012): 234-259, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1355/sj27-2b.

[25] Amri Baharuddin Shamsul, "Identity construction, nation formation, and Islamic revivalism in Malaysia," in Robert Hefner and Patricia Horvatich, eds., *Islam in an era of nation-states: Politics and religious renewal in Muslim Southeast Asia* (Honoulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997): 207-227.

internationally. "By protecting Vietnamese," Lipman convincingly shows, "the Marcos government aligned itself with humanitarianism and refugees and thereby downplayed its own internal repression and persecution of domestic critics" (92). I would add here, however, that it would have been useful to show readers how such pragmatic manipulation of the truth by Marcos, especially about Vietnam, was part of a much longer pattern. For example, before his election in 1965, Marcos promised not to send troops into Vietnam as a way of galvanizing popular support, which was roundly critical of the US intervention; after his election, however, he quickly changed course in order to court US favor.[26] In other words, there is a deeper history to the way Marcos played with the fate of Vietnam and the Vietnamese that would have merited an entire research project of its own.

While examples like these sometimes made me yearn for more detail, Lipman gives enough detail in all cases to suggest key patterns, and the book clearly shows how countries in the region developed their own refugee policies as a way of asserting their own versions of sovereignty, but in doing so impacted the conditions within which other countries could develop their own policies. As a result, the events in each place not only impacted the plight of Vietnamese refugees but set in motion new chains of events that would go on to impact the humanitarian policies of the UNHCR. The story thus comprises an extremely complex array of transformations, and Lipman's ability to arrange the many prongs of the story into a coherent narrative that proceeds through the chapters without losing the reader is a remarkable achievement in itself. Of course, Lipman's decision to bring coherence to such a complex narrative comes at some cost. Reducing the complexity of these stories while moving across case studies and following a linear narrative can at times give the illusion that the cases studied in the book start and stop with the particular periods emphasized for each case (such as the focus in chapter 2 on "Vietnamese in Malaysia, 1975-1979"), or that the only places of importance in the bigger story were Guam (one chapter), Malaysia (one chapter), Hong Kong (which gets two chapters), and the Philippines (two chapters).

The policies in Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and Japan are barely mentioned in the book, and students not already familiar with the literature might come away from the book knowing very little about places not chosen as cases. It would also seem useful to learn more about countries in Asia that are almost never mentioned in conjunction with this story, like Taiwan or South Korea. These countries also had policies and programs for hosting Vietnamese refugees, but they are rarely discussed in the literature. In this way, one might say that Lipman's own skillful presentation of the four cases in the book (Guam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Hong Kong) has the unintentional effect of obscuring the importance of other cases, as well as the broader and even more complex dynamics of the story. Of course, this is not exactly a fair criticism of a book that sheds so much light on the cases it chooses to emphasize. The clarity it brings only emphasizes how much more there is to learn about other cases, and a book cannot cover every angle without becoming too unwieldy. Lipman's careful discussion of all the factors involved should remind any reader that the stories emphasized in the book are in many ways points of entry into a field of study that demands much more attention. In this way, the book should be received as an invitation for even more research in the field of Critical Refugee Studies, and, I would hope, further engagement with scholarship devoted to the histories and social, political and economic experiences of the countries from which refugees come. The fact that it is only the first volume in an entire new series devoted to the topic at the University of California Press is a welcome sign of important things to come.

[26] Joseph Scalice, "The geopolitical alignments of diverging social interests: the Sino-Soviet split and the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas, 1966–1967," *Critical Asian Studies* 53:1 (2021): 45-70, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2020.1870867.

Review by Julia F. Irwin, University of South Florida

In her excellent book, Jana Lipman joins a growing number of historians, anthropologists, legal theorists, and other scholars in examining the refugee camp as a historical subject and object.[27] Lipman's focus is on camps in Guam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Hong Kong, sites that housed some of the 800,000 refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants who left Vietnam by sea after 1975. As the book's title promises, she offers a granular, bottom-up view of the daily life, activism, struggles, and experiences of Vietnamese people living *in camps*. "In order to understand refugee politics," Lipman argues, "one must look at the camps, the places that hosted them, and the people inside" (4). She tells a nuanced social history of encampment, informed by archival research and in-depth interviews, that places Vietnamese agency at the center of the narrative.

Yet if Lipman's book is a history of people living in (and trying to move out of) camps in Asia and the Pacific, it is also so much more. While she focuses on a very local site — the refugee camp — Lipman is equally attuned the national, colonial, and post-colonial histories of the places that hosted these institutions, and to the ways that broader regional, transimperial, and international histories shaped their operations. Although internal politics influenced how local leaders and communities related to the refugee camps they hosted, so did their respective relations with powerful western nations (especially the United States and the United Kingdom), other Asian nations (Vietnam and China, in particular), and international organizations (most notably the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, or UNHCR). Meanwhile, landmark historical events and processes — the Geneva Conferences of 1979 and 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989, and the normalization of U.S.-Vietnamese relations in the mid-1990s — transformed geopolitical calculations and conversations about refugees and their legal status. In short, as Lipman puts it concisely, "where a camp was mattered," both geographically and temporally (6).

The book's six chapters — all case studies of a particular camp in a different location and at a different moment — illustrate these points persuasively. For instance, local leaders in Guam, a U.S. territory, were highly constrained by the U.S. government's diplomatic goals and strategic interests when it came to decisions about both refugee camps and repatriation policies. In contrast, their counterparts in Malaysia, a former British colony, found far more space to assert their sovereignty and independence vis-à-vis the camps housed in that nation. In the Philippines, a former U.S territory that maintained close ties to the United States, local government leaders saw hosting camps as an opportunity to burnish their nation's humanitarian credentials while still placating U.S. interests. And in Hong Kong, geopolitical tensions stemming from the impending shift from British to Chinese control, together with growing concerns over migration from mainland China, led leaders to adopt a more controversial and hostile policy towards Vietnamese refugees. Local histories of encampment, as these chapters reveal, were inseparable from broader global dynamics.

As a study of refugees and refugee politics, *In Camps* also makes a valuable contribution to the entangled histories of humanitarianism and human rights during the late twentieth century. Although scholars have most often studied these topics in isolation, Lipman joins a growing cohort of historians and political scientists who are calling attention to both the links and tensions between these concepts.[28] In the refugee camps of Guam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Hong Kong, as

[27] See for example Maja Janmyr and Are J. Knudsen. eds., "Dossier on Humanitarianism in Refugee Camps," *Humanity*7:3 (Winter 2016): 391-468; Darcie Fontaine, "The Politics of Neutrality: Cimade, Humanitarianism, and State Power in Modern France," *Humanity* 9:2 (Summer 2018): 245-270; Peter Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[28] See for example Michael Geyer, "Humanitarianism and Human Rights: A Troubled Rapport," in Fabian Klose, ed., *The Emergence of Humanitarian Intervention: Ideas and Practices from the Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 31-55; Michael Barnett, ed., *Humanitarianism and Human Rights: A World of Difference?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Theresa Keeley, *Reagan's Gun-Toting Nuns: The Catholic Conflict over Cold War Human Rights Policy in Central America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2020); Kevin O'Sullivan, *The NGO Moment: The Globalisation of Compassion from Biafra to Live Aid* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Amanda Demmer, *After Saigon's Fall: Refugees and*

Lipman shows, visions of humanitarianism and human rights sometimes coexisted and at other times sharply contradicted one other. For the many players in her story — the U.S. and British governments, leaders of Asian countries and colonies, the UNHCR and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), activists in the Vietnamese diaspora, and Vietnamese refugees themselves — humanitarianism and human rights were neither fixed nor universal concepts; they were deeply contested. Individuals, groups, and states sparred over both the meanings of these terms, their very personal consequences for asylum seekers, and their legal implications, for refugees, international organizations, and foreign governments alike. Across the late Cold War era and its aftermath, definitions of humanitarianism and human rights were constantly in flux, as was the relationship between them. While they sometimes behaved as "close cousins," Lipman argues, in other cases they became "fierce competitors," operating in "direct conflict" with one another (165, 200).

Lipman calls attention to these patterns and complicated dynamics at many points throughout the book. During the 1970s, for example, even as the U.S. government became a vocal champion of human rights, U.S. officials simultaneously took steps to limit Vietnamese migration to the United States, blocking a potential solution to the humanitarian refugee crisis. The UNHCR, meanwhile, stressed its commitments to alleviating humanitarian suffering while its critics disparaged the organization for ignoring human rights violations that occurred within Guamanian and Malaysian camps. In this complex international milieu, Asian leaders from the 1970s on sought to claim the title of 'humanitarian' for themselves, given that they and their compatriots were the ones hosting the camps and actively responding to refugee issues. In so doing, leaders like Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos sought to demonstrate their humanitarian credentials while downplaying accusations of their human rights violations (chs. 2 and 3). Within the camps and across the Vietnamese diaspora, meanwhile, Vietnamese refugees and their allies employed humanitarian and human rights rhetoric to lobby for improved living conditions and protection, to protest unlawful detention, and to make claims for both asylum and repatriation. Through her careful analysis of both the language and practice of humanitarianism and human rights, as these examples attest, Lipman offers ample insights to scholars working in both fields.

Alongside its discussions of humanitarianism and human rights, *In Camps* also offers a thoughtful meditation on both 'refugees' and 'camps' as historical, linguistic, and legal categories. At the outset of her book, Lipman urges her readers to ask themselves several key questions: "Who is a refugee?" and "Who determines this status?" (4). Throughout the book's chapters, she examines evolving and competing definitions of the term 'refugee,' and of such closely related concepts as 'asylum seekers,' 'illegal immigrants,' and 'economic migrants.' Like 'humanitarianism' and 'human rights,' each of these terms meant different things to different groups at different times throughout the late 20th century and into the early 21st. But if the category of "refugee" was a constructed one, Lipman shows, it also carried very real material consequences for the nearly 800,000 individuals who left Vietnam after 1975.

Similarly, Lipman invites readers to think more deeply about camps and their various functions, both deliberate and unintended. "Refugee camps," she writes, "exist uneasily within a continuum that includes humanitarian resources on the one end and prisons on the other" (6). On the humanitarian end of this spectrum, some of the camps Lipman examines aimed to provide for the basic needs of their occupants, offering them shelter, food, and life-saving protection. On the other end, several of the refugee camps that Lipman studies shared many similarities with jails and other sites of incarceration. Inhabitants of Hong Kong's "closed camps," for example, were prohibited from leaving the premises, a strategy that authorities employed to deter future asylum seekers (134-42). Would-be repatriates to Vietnam, held in Guam against their will, insisted "we are not POWs" (33), while critics of a camp in Palawan, in the Philippines, disparaged the site as "little better than a prison" (206).

While Lipman highlights these extremes of humanitarian relief and detention, the camps she writes about functioned in still other ways as well. During the 1980s and early 1990s, as she documents in chapter 3, the Philippine Refugee Processing Center performed multiple roles. For its occupants, this camp went well beyond providing emergency aid to and meeting the

U.S.-Vietnamese Relations, 1975-1995 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Samuel Moyn, *Humane: How the United States Abandoned Peace and Reinvented War* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2021).

basic needs of its inhabitants. It also offered them visits with social workers, English classes, and a comprehensive range of other welfare services. For the Marcos administration, this 'model camp' served as a site of exhibition and propaganda, designed to put the country's humanitarian commitments on full display. For the health care professionals, teachers, and social workers who worked there, meanwhile, it became a place "to gain professional experience, participate in rewarding work, and gain a sense of satisfaction from their students and an international community" (111). And for the U.S. government, it functioned as a site of Americanization and cultural orientation, designed to prepare Vietnamese refugees for their future lives in the United States. As this single example attests, refugee camps could — and did — serve multiple purposes and advance multiple interests, often at the same time.

In Camps is a history of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, but it is also, quite explicitly, a history of the present. In both the book's introduction and its epilogue, Lipman writes with passion and compassion for refugees in our contemporary world. She urges readers to remember the history of Vietnamese refugees and encampment as we grapple with ongoing refugee crises in Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, and Central America.[29] She also encourages readers not to demonize or neglect refugees, and to pay close attention to camps and the local and geopolitical conditions that shape them. Perhaps most importantly, she urges us not to depoliticize refugees. Rather than treating these individuals as geopolitical pawns or passive victims, Lipman argues, we must recognize refuges as activists and agents in their own destinies. Her timely book invites us to reflect on the very recent history of Vietnamese refugees, asylum seekers, and repatriates as we confront current refugee crises, and as we continue to debate the meanings of humanitarianism and human rights across the twenty-first century world.

[29] In its last annual report, the UNHCR estimated that 82.4 million people throughout the world are currently displaced due to "persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order." See UNHCR Report, "Global Trends in Forced Displacement in 2020," https://www.unhcr.org/60b638e37/unhcr-global-trends-2020.

Review by Carl J. Bon Tempo, University at Albany, SUNY

One of the many fascinating individuals we meet in Jana Lipman's new book, *In Camps: Vietnamese Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Repatriates*, is Truong Viet Doi. She arrived in Hong Kong on June 16, 1988, part of a group of seventy-eight Vietnamese who escaped from Central Vietnam aboard two boats. Truong Viet Doi was not the first member of her family to flee Vietnam; her husband had left two years earlier, headed to Hong Kong, received refugee status, and resettled in Edmonton, Canada. She aimed to follow the same path. But, a roadblock arose: Hong Kong on June 15 – one day before she landed – had changed its policies regarding those fleeing Vietnam. No longer would individuals like Truong Viet Doi automatically qualify as refugees and enter an internationally agreed-upon resettlement process. Instead, Hong Kong authorities would determine the legal status of each Vietnamese. If they determined that the person was fleeing persecution, then resettlement as a refugee was likely. If not, Hong Kong detained and repatriated the individual.

For Truong Viet Doi, in June of 1988, both the physical and legal ground upon which she stood shifted in ways that determined her future. It is that dynamic, the movement of Vietnamese in the last decades of the twentieth century and the evolving legal categories that host governments, international NGOs, and interested countries (like the United States) assigned them, that stands at the center of Lipman's wonderful book. This is an elegantly written, clearly argued, and meticulously researched account, with a narrative so smartly and compellingly organized that it should be required reading for historians at the beginning of their writing careers.

The book's narrative spine is a series of chronologically ordered case studies that focus on different refugee camps in different parts of southeast Asia that received Vietnamese who fled by sea after 1975. The story begins in Guam, where a group of Vietnamese refugees decided in 1975 that they wanted to return to Vietnam rather than seeking resettlement. Waging a campaign (and against U.S., Vietnamese, and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees objections), they finally repatriated to Vietnam, only to be thrown into reeducation camps. The next two chapters examine how Malaysia and the Philippines ran their camps, with the former's government pushing back against Western and NGO expectations that they welcome every refugee while the latter's government happily worked with the U.S. and NGOs, and the refugees themselves, to ease camp life and resettlement. Here, Lipman interestingly plays out how the colonial past of each country shaped its contemporary polices towards the Vietnamese.

The stories' turning point comes in Hong Kong in the late 1980s, the focus of the next two chapters. A variety of internal and external forces led Hong Kong in the 1980s to oppose the policy architecture of refugee resettlement that camp nations, NGOs, Vietnam, and individual nations (like the U.S.) had hammered out after 1975. As Truong Viet Doi learned, Hong Kong instead insisted that it had the right to sift through the newcomers, determine their refugee status, and then either resettle or repatriate them accordingly. Hong Kong, then, brought an end to the Vietnamese boat arrivals automatically being considered refugees, a change that engendered fierce, but ultimately unsuccessful, opposition from Vietnamese American refugee advocates and from the fleeing Vietnamese themselves. NGOs and the Vietnamese, American, and British governments all rather quickly acceded to this development, which shrunk the Hong Kong camps to barely over one thousand residents by 1997. A final chapter returns to the Philippines and shows a different path: the Filipino government continued to welcome the Vietnamese, either resettling them on the islands or helping them find new homes elsewhere. Here, Lipman points to the peculiar mix of anti-Communism, Catholicism, visions of humanitarianism in the Philippines, as well as Vietnamese-American diasporic activism that pointed to this conclusion.

The contributions of *In Camps* are numerous, but let me focus on a few stand-out points. At its heart, *In Camps* is a history of refugee policies and their evolution, but it breaks new and important ground in a few fashions. The most important is the introduction of refugees like Truong Viet Doi to the narrative. Other refugee policy histories, and here I include my own

book,[30] focused on government and NGO actors, but Lipman's work shows just how greatly refugees themselves, by protesting their conditions in the camps and urging resettlement, shaped the course of events. Likewise, in Lipman's telling, diasporic actors, especially those based in the United States, emerge as actors in the policymaking drama. Historians like Stephen Porter and Meredith Oyen have uncovered similar phenomena, but it is easy to forget how recent this development is in the scholarship.[31] Lipman's account is one of the best fine-grained studies we have of the thinking and actions of these diasporic refugee networks.

In Camps is also interesting for the way it deals with the transition between the colonial, the Cold War, and the post-Cold War moments. Too often, scholars tend to see these as discrete moments and eras, understandably so because it lends narrative coherence to our storytelling. We all need, after all, convenient starting and stopping points. This is especially true of histories of refugees that have a Cold War or post-Cold War narrative structure. Lipman does away with such markers. The Vietnamese refugee challenge lends itself to this task because it existed through the last decades of the twentieth century and into the next century. But the effect is important. She shows how imperial and colonial pasts shaped how those governments that were hosting camps dealt with both the Vietnamese arrivals and the foreign governments and NGOs. Hong Kong and Malaysia, for instance, both felt the long hand of British imperialism as they navigated refugee aid programs. In the Philippines, anti-Communism shaped that society's reactions to the Vietnamese during the 1980s, as the Cold War still rumbled to its conclusion, but also in the 1990s as it disappeared. In full disclosure, Lipman and I recently participated in a conference addressing "Refugees and the (Global) Cold War" and one of the interesting discussions at the conference was the utility of the Cold War as a chronological backbone in refugee history. *In Camps* smartly thinks through this chronological and narrative issue by showing how colonial, Cold War, and post-Cold War themes stretch beyond the timelines we assign them.

In the conversational spirit of these forums, let me ask a few questions that I hope the author might take up in her response. (I fully recognize, too, that these questions ask for a wider lens than the book takes but I am not implying that Lipman should have expanded her book) First, I wonder about how Lipman's recasting of this vital episode in refugee history might help us reshape the narratives of U.S. immigration history more generally? This is no small matter; hundreds of thousands of Indochinese arrived in the U.S. during the 1970s and 1980s, though not all were the Vietnamese who escaped via the sea and who Lipman chronicles in her book. Nonetheless, I'm curious about her thinking on how this important story of newcomers arriving in the United States intersects with, and changes, larger American immigration history.

Second, Lipman shows us how the concept and definition of "refugee" was rethought during the Vietnamese episode. But, this happened all over the world in these same years. One can point to the debates in the U.S. about arrivals from Cuba (leading to the memorable "wet foot, dry foot" policy in which those Cubans who landed in the U.S. – dry foot – were granted asylum while those interdicted at sea – wet foot – were returned to the island) and the even more wrenching discussions and fights about those fleeing Central America and whether they were 'political' or 'economic' refugees. Thus, my questions are simply about how the Vietnamese episode detailed in *In Camps* compared to, influenced, and was shaped by these other refugee policy challenges in the same time period. And how did the decisions coming out of Hong Kong in the 1980s jibe with other revisions to the idea of what a refugee was?

These questions ultimately, I hope, are a tribute to Lipman's book. They point to the important stories and ideas at the heart of this excellent scholarship, stories and ideas that shape the worlds of migration and international politics today more than

[30] Carl J. Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate: The United States and Refugees during the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.) I also think the important book by Maria Cristina Garcia follows this state-centered approach. See Maria Cristina Garcia, *The Refugee Challenge in Post-Cold War America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[31] Stephen Porter, *Benevolent Empire: U.S. Power, Humanitarianism, and the World's Dispossessed* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Meredith Oyen, *The Diplomacy of Migration: Transnational Lives and the Making of U.S-Chinese Relations in the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016).

ever. We need more histories like this if we are both to better understand migration history and to craft better and more just policies and treatment of the globe's displaced.

Review by Sam Vong, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History

Historian Jana K. Lipman has written an important book on the history of Vietnamese refugees, covering the years between 1975 and 2005. Her illuminating account of the migration and encampment of Vietnamese after the end of the Vietnam War offers a much-needed re-examination of Vietnamese refugees, asylum seekers, and repatriates. *In Camps* builds on older works, such as W. Courtland Robinson's *Terms of Refuge: The Indochinese Exodus and the International Response* (1999), which remains an informative piece of scholarship for the invaluable data that Robinson had gathered.[32] Lipman's book is also in conversation with and extends the work of scholars in the field of Critical Refugee Studies, particularly that of Yen Le Espiritu who has been at the helm of charting new approaches to refugee studies that elucidate the connections between refugee movements and the role of U.S. empire.[33] As the author of the inaugural book in the exciting new series *Critical Refugee Studies* at the University of California Press, Lipman provides a powerful model in how to write an international history of refugees, while paying close attention to the nuances of local and national contexts. *In Camps* joins a wave of innovative books recently published in the United States about Southeast Asian refugees, including Mimi Thi Nguyen's *The Gift of Freedom* (2012), Phuong Tran Nguyen's *Becoming Refugee American: The Politics of Rescue in Little Saigon* (2017), Ma Vang's *History on the Run: Secrecy, Fugitivity, and Hmong Refugee Epistemologies* (2021), and Amanda Demmer's *After Saigon's Fall: Refugees and US-Vietnamese Relations, 1975-2000* (2021), to name several.[34] Together, these works show that even after the end of the Vietnam War more than forty years later, the legacies of the war—in this case refugees—continues to generate exciting new questions and issues that are relevant to our current times.

Lipman examines the nature of the camps that sheltered and detained Vietnamese refuge seekers, the domestic policies that gave shape and governed the camps, and the experiences of Vietnamese within the camps. According to Lipman, "in order to understand refugee politics, one must look at the camps, the places that hosted them, and the people inside" (4). In service of this main argument, Lipman goes beyond the familiar site of the continental United States, expanding the geographical contours of Vietnamese migration and its diaspora. While scholars since the mid-1970s have largely focused their attention on Western countries that admitted large numbers of Vietnamese refugees, including the United States, Canada, and Australia, Lipman's account focuses instead on "colonies and independent states in the American and British imperial orbit" (13). Her narrative takes the reader across an expansive terrain, from Guam to Malaysia to Hong Kong and the Philippines (13). Stitching these various sites together in this powerful framework reveals the ways in which these colonies, U.S. territories, and independent states were constrained by and negotiated U.S. Cold War priorities as they respectively navigated the Indochinese refugee crisis (4). By bringing these seemingly disparate sites into conversation with each other, Lipman enables readers to see how independent states, U.S. territories, and British colonies were entangled in broader international debates about human rights and humanitarianism. And in shifting away from the more familiar sites of the United States, she brings greater visibility to the camps and detention centers which lie in what she refers to as the "places in between" where government officials, international actors, local workers, and Vietnamese refugees converged and "fought over who would or would not be a refugee" (5). In so doing, Lipman has shifted the marginal spaces of Guam, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and the Philippines to the front and center of this vexing history.

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[32] W. Courtland Robinson, *Terms of Refuge: The Indochinese Exodus and the International Response* (London: Zed Books, 1998).

[33] Yen Le Espiritu, *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refuge(es)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

[34] Mimi Thi Nguyen, *The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and Other Refugee Passages* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012); Phuong Tran Nguyen, *Becoming Refugee American: The Politics of Rescue in Little Saigon* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017); Ma Vang, *History on the Run: Secrecy, Fugitivity, and Hmong Refugee Epistemologies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021); Amanda C. Demmer, *After Saigon's Fall: Refugees and US-Vietnamese Relations, 1975-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

In focusing on these sites outside the continental United States, Lipman does not ignore the influential role of major resettlement countries like the United States. She acknowledges the U.S. government's ideological commitment to taking in Vietnamese refugees, but does not make U.S. officials nor the U.S. government the central protagonists in this story. Rather, by foregrounding these under-examined sites, Lipman has de-exceptionalized the U.S., bringing to light the competing responses of colonies and independent states to Vietnamese refugees. Chapter Two's discussion of how officials in Malaysia responded to the influx of Vietnamese boat migrants, a majority of whom were ethnic Chinese, offers a case in point. Reports of local residents in Malaysia preventing boats from docking on its shores, and even claims of fishermen shooting at boats, captured international attention. In defense of Malaysia's efforts to defend its borders and sovereignty, Home Minister Ghazali Shafie forcefully argued, to the dismay of many outside Malaysia, that such actions were in fact humanitarian because it prevented asylum seekers from having to experience the overcrowded and inhumane conditions in the camps (76). Malaysian politicians called into question the language of humanitarianism deployed by The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United States to coax Malaysia to offer sanctuary to all asylum seekers whom Malaysian officials categorized as 'illegal immigrants.' In this battle over who was a bona fide refugee and which country was more humanitarian, Lipman demonstrates how the language of humanitarianism was not only malleable but also weaponized to serve Malaysia's own Cold War domestic agenda. Malaysia's rejection of Vietnamese migrants ultimately "pushed the American government to recalibrate its own practice of humanitarianism" (54). In the Philippines, in contrast, the Marcos government agreed to host a transit station in Bataan called the Philippine Refugee Processing Center, which is the subject of Chapter Three. Filipino officials seized the opportunity to host Vietnamese refugees to "improve the country's international reputation" and to demonstrate its cooperation on humanitarian issues like the Indochinese refugee crisis (92). Through an examination of how the governments in Malaysia and the Philippines responded to Vietnamese migrants, Lipman convincingly shows that the United States did not possess a monopoly on the definition of humanitarianism, as U.S. officials had sought to continuously demonstrate since the end of the Vietnam War.

Alongside these compelling chapters on Malaysia and the Philippines, Lipman's two chapters on Hong Kong advance our understanding of how Hong Kong dealt with the influx of Vietnamese into the British colony. Similar to Malaysia, Hong Kong acted unilaterally and forged its own response to Vietnamese migrants, essentially breaking away from UNHCR policies as Hong Kong officials experimented with various strategies to discourage the arrival of more Vietnamese. At the height of the Indochinese refugee crisis in the late 1970s, Hong Kong had agreed to accept all incoming Vietnamese as refugees, in line with the Geneva agreement hammered out in 1979 (133). Initially, the camps that housed Vietnamese were 'open,' allowing Vietnamese to find jobs to become economically self-supporting while meeting Hong Kong's need for more workers. In the face of shrinking resettlement offers from the United States and the UK, Hong Kong was faced with thousands of Vietnamese who were awaiting resettlement offers. Hong Kong officials' frustration with Vietnamese, combined with an outbreak of riots in the camps, forced Hong Kong officials to close the camps as a way to deter further Vietnamese arrivals. As part of this new era of "humane deterrence," Hong Kong authorities transferred management of the camps to the Correctional Services Department (138). Soon after, Hong Kong authorities pressed for the repatriation of remaining Vietnamese in camps, despite opposition from the UNHCR, the UK, and the United States, among other countries. And in 1988, the Hong Kong government reversed its position, unilaterally overturning the nearly decade-long Geneva agreement that automatically identified anyone fleeing Vietnam as refugees. This move effectively turned Vietnamese from refugees to asylum seekers, subjecting them to intense screening by immigration officials and made Vietnamese more likely to be repatriated without a legitimate refugee claim (150). All the while, the Hong Kong government maintained that it was upholding the values of humanitarianism. A year later, Hong Kong officials moved to involuntarily repatriate fifty-one Vietnamese, prompting a wave of protests within the camps and igniting activism from across the Vietnamese diaspora. In these two persuasive chapters, Lipman greatly improves our understanding of the complicated landscape in which Vietnamese were immersed in Hong Kong, and how local politics in Hong Kong reshaped the terms of refuge in the Asia region. What I find particularly illuminating in these two chapters is the way in which Lipman illustrates how Hong Kong authorities exerted their power over the UNHCR, an influential international organization that has long dictated the definition of a refugee and the meaning of protection of vulnerable populations.

The diversity of Lipman's source base is nothing short of impressive. She not only painstakingly uncovered new sources through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), but she has also traveled to archives in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, as well as the United States, and dug up a wealth of fresh materials. In so doing, she

weaves together archival materials from five different countries. Of particular importance is her use of UNHCR records, which remain underutilized by scholars studying this topic. These records in Geneva offer a window into the internal debates, executive decisions, and inner workings of the UNHCR, and Lipman has exploited these sources to good use. Lipman is a resourceful researcher, mining oral histories, for instance, that researchers and communities have long known about. In the chapter on Guam, for instance, Lipman draws on extensive oral interviews in the Southeast Asian Archive at the University of California at Irvine to capture how Vietnamese recalled their experiences in Guam. Such evidences may appear minor and episodic, but they strengthen a core argument of Lipman's book which is to amplify the voices and experiences of Vietnamese. In my view, these small, skillful moves contribute to monumental shifts in our understanding of refugees and displaced peoples as not being "speechless emissaries," to borrow anthropologist Liisa Malkki's coinage, but rather people who possess agency and embody histories and can effect change under conditions of precarity and statelessness.[35]

In thinking about refugee agency, one of the eye-opening aspects of Lipman's book is how she brings to light the history of Vietnamese activism in the diaspora. She deftly weaves a story of the ways in which Vietnamese organized in the camps and creatively mobilized networks across the Vietnamese diaspora to effect change. Their activism resulted in not only getting out of the camps for some, but indelibly forcing various governments and international organizations like the UNHCR to recalibrate their understandings of human rights and humanitarianism. For instance, Lipman's examination of Project Ngoc, a student-led organization that lobbied for the resettlement of Vietnamese in Hong Kong, illustrates how local actors intervened in international debates about humanitarianism and repatriation (156-58). In many ways, these sources have been lying dormant for decades, and Lipman has re-enervated them by connecting their local histories to broader international debates. Additionally, Lipman's detailed analysis of Vietnamese activism inside and outside of the camps helps scholars to make sense of the activism that occurred elsewhere in other resettlement sites like Brazil and Argentina, where Southeast Asian refugees staged similar protests before UNHCR regional offices, challenging UNHCR officials to rethink the processes of resettlement as a durable solution. Lipman shows that such activism was neither isolated nor discrete. Rather, they were coordinated acts of resistance on the part of the Vietnamese diaspora which mobilized its communities across borders and multiple continents.

Furthermore, Lipman shines light on a crucial aspect of this history, which is the role of community-based organizations like the Indochinese Refugee Action Center (later renamed the Southeast Asian Refugee Action Center), and Boat People SOS. IRAC has long played an influential role as an organization that advocates and lobbies on behalf of Southeast Asian refugees in the United States. The then director of IRAC Mr. Le Xuan Khoa played an active role as a liaison between government officials and Vietnamese American communities, helping to facilitate the resettlement of hundreds of Vietnamese in the United States. He even helped to mobilize the support of 145 Indochinese organizations in the United States which wrote to the UNHCR in support of Vietnamese refugee claims in camps (156). Similarly, Lipman foregrounds the important work of Boat People SOS. The name Boat People SOS is ubiquitous in the archival records, yet until now scholars have offered little analysis of this organization. The organization channeled financial aid to assist Vietnamese inside the camps, to find better legal representation, and even forged alliances with members of Congress (188-190). Beyond highlighting the crucial work of organizations like IRAC and Boat People SOS, among others, Lipman's book provides much-needed context as to how these organizations emerged, the nature of their work on the ground, and their place within the Vietnamese diaspora. Lipman's research on Vietnamese diasporic activism and Vietnamese organizations will offer an important resource for scholars.

In conclusion, *In Camps* is a beautifully written and well-conceived history of Vietnamese refugees. The book serves as a wonderful model of how to write a history that takes into account local, national, and international histories—and she brings all three into conversation with each other effortlessly. It also helps that Lipman's prose is clear and accessible, making

[35] Liisa Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization," *Cultural Anthropology* 11:3 (August 1996): 377-404.

this book a page-turner from start to finish. This is a landmark contribution that will be consulted for years to come. The analyses presented in this work will be relevant and applicable to understanding refugee movements beyond Vietnam.

Response by Jana K. Lipman, Tulane University

I would like to begin by thanking Thomas Maddux, Diane Labrosse, and my colleagues for their combined expertise, intellectual generosity, and close reading of *In Camps.* It is an honor to be in this forum, and to hear the perspectives and questions from so many scholars I respect. Thank you.

This book was a long and sometimes unwieldy project, and it took me several years until I found the through lines and stories I wanted to tell. As Evyn Lê Espiritu Gandhi notes, along with *In Camps*, I also collaborated with Bac Hoai Tran to co-translate *Ship of Fate: Memoir of a Vietnamese Repatriate* by Trần Đình Trụ.[36] This memoir by a long-serving Republic of Vietnam (RVN) ship captain who chose to return to Vietnam in 1975, rather than resettle in the United States, motivated my own research trajectory. I hope that having the two projects develop side-by-side ultimately enriched both. My goal was for *In Camps* to operate on multiple levels, integrating the global politics of the UNHCR and the 'end of the Cold War,' the specific local pressures on host governments, and the experiences of Vietnamese in the camps. I am thankful that these arguments resonated with the reviewers, and I will spend my time here engaging with their questions and suggestions for further inquiry.

I would like to begin with the question of definitions raised by Espiritu Gandhi. I struggled with language and definitions throughout this project. As I wrote in the introduction, I believe that referring to all the Vietnamese outside of Vietnam as 'refugees' would have clouded my arguments; one of the book's main goals is to trace how the international community defined Vietnamese as refugees, and then later as asylum seekers. I also did not want to place myself in the position of the asylum officer, granting refugee status linguistically to some and not others. Still, I understand Espiritu Gandhi's decision to use 'refugee' in her own work and review. As she notes, Vinh Nguyen's "refugeetude," and Critical Refugee Studies more broadly, emphasize a more capacious and personal understanding of refugee identity, and one not bound by a legal apparatus meant to exclude.

Eric Harms's review raises the most critiques, but also provides generative and generous comments. Harms pointedly argues that while I provide a complex analysis of Vietnamese in the camps and in the diaspora, the picture is much flatter when it comes to Vietnamese *in* Vietnam. Harms notes the absence of stories of resistance, agency, and politics from *within* Vietnam. Unlike the other reviewers in this forum, Harms's expertise is in twentieth and twenty-first century Vietnam, rather than US foreign relations and migration broadly construed. As such, he highlights the risks for scholars, such as myself, who are trained as US historians and who write international histories. I would argue that *In Camps* does indicate some of the complexity of Vietnamese society. For example, I include stories of Chinese Vietnamese who had been members of the Communist Party, but fled in the late 1970s, and northern Vietnamese who challenged local Communist Party officials, but whose asylum cases were illegible to Hong Kong and US officials in the 1990s. These examples point to dissent and negotiation from within Vietnam. However, Harms's broader point is well-taken, and his review requires some pause and self-reflection. My goal was to de-center the United States, but in the process, I believe Harms is correct that Vietnam (both its government and the people within it) may unintentionally appear even further at the margins.

Harms emphasizes the scholarship in Vietnamese Studies on agency, noting recent publications on Vietnamese political culture, dissidents, traders, and spirit mediums. I note another gap in my work. While I include multiple American and Southeast Asian political actors, I do not provide the same level of analysis on people in the Vietnamese government. While I did not attempt to do this research, there are many questions to explore: How did the Vietnamese government approach migration? Were there debates in Hanoi (or Ho Chi Minh City) about whether to work with the UNHCR? How did

[36] Trần Đình Trụ, *Ship of Fate: Memoir of a Vietnamese Repatriate*, trans. Bac Hoai Tran and Jana K. Lipman (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017).

Vietnamese politicians view migration as an opening to move toward normalization? Was this controversial among Vietnamese government leaders? Local officials? These too are questions to be investigated.

I also agree with Harms that a closer examination of the 'reeducation' camps in Vietnam are part of this larger story. At one point, I planned to organize *In Camps* with the reeducation camps playing a more prominent role throughout, perhaps juxtoposing them with the refugee camps more directly or by including stand-alone meditations on the reeducation camps in between the core chapters. My research interests went in other directions, as they say, but as Harms emphasizes, the very same people often occupied the forced labor camps, and then the refugee camps. I hope that future scholars will build on my scholarship, and perhaps reinterpret it, seeing the connections (and dissonances) within this archipelago of camps.

Harms also notes my focus on Guam, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and the Philippines, at the expense of Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. This too is obviously correct, but I see this critique as less important than the larger questions about the absence of Vietnamese political actors. Instead, this decision reflects the normal choices that scholars make to give structure and coherence to their research. On my first research trip to the UNHCR records in Geneva, I was wide open to where the documents and stories would take me. I spent sevearl weeks combing through the UNHCR files, reading about the 1979 and 1989 Geneva conferences, and going through country files. While there are consequences of narrowing the book's focus, I was able to engage with the specificity of each host site and make broader arguments about the UNHCR's framework, refugee status, and foreign relations.

Carl Bon Tempo's review offers valuable comments, encouraging historians not to get too fixated on the Cold War as the sole explanatory framework for US refugee policy. I appreciate his recognition that *In Camps* wrestles with how the longer histories of imperialism and colonialism intersected with Cold War priorities. The book also bridges the 1989 divide, and it shows how change happened unevenly as it related to refugee policy and US-Vietnam relations. And yet he's right, there remains more to be said on this point. We need far more archival and scholarly work on the 'end of the Cold War' and its uneven trajectories. For example, I write a great deal about the Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA), which was the 1989 international agreement that transformed Vietnamese who arrived in third countries from *de facto* refugees to 'asylum seekers.' I analyze this 1989 agreement in conjunction with the Tiananmen Square massacre, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and ultimately US normalization of diplomatic relations with Vietnam. However, the CPA was of course negotiated *before* these bellwether events. What were the changes in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Cold War and otherwise, and how did they recalibrate refugee policies? In my case, this might include greater attention to the Sino-British Joint Declaration, Doi Moi, and the end of Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia, all of which intermingled Cold War, imperial, and local histories. Following these leads might result in new understandings on how the Cold War shaped regional dynamics, or conversely how regional priorities redefined the Cold War.

Likewise, I believe more research is needed on the Orderly Departure Program (ODP). Although none of the reviewers mentioned it, this is another area that I believe merits more research. The ODP operated from roughly 1980 through the 1990s, and it enabled people in Vietnam to apply from *within* Vietnam to leave. This was a bureaucratic program, brokered by the UNHCR, which needed the cooperation of the Vietnamese government (granting exit visas) and the US government (granting entry visas). The story of people fleeing by boat gained international media attention and retains its emotional currency; but the ODP facilitated the migration of over 500,000 people, and it needs far more attention, than it has received to date.[37] This program also re-orients traditional chronologies for diplomatic historians, as it too spanned the 1989 divide. For scholars of Vietnamese migration, it calls attention to the distinctions and diversity among generations of Vietnamese migrants, moving away from a story centered on 1975, and it speaks to Eric Harms's earlier point, by placing the stories of migration squarely *in* Vietnam.

[37] East Asian Refugee Admissions Program, Fact Sheet, January 18, 2000, https://1997-2001.state.gov/global/prm/fs_000118_eap.html (accessed February 15, 2022).

In their reviews, Sam Vong and Espiritu Gandhi emphasize diasporic activism and Critical Refugee Studies' intellectual investment in 'critical juxtaposing.' My work compares four distinctive sites, Guam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Hong Kong, and I am intrigued by what can further be learned by 'critical' juxtapositions. For example, when I was at the UNHCR archives, I spoke to a UNHCR official who had interviewed asylum seekers in Galang, Indonesia. He spoke about his experiences as a young asylum officer who had to make life-defining decisions, deciding who would gain refugee status (and resettlement in a third country) and who would not (and be slated for repatriation). As our conversation was wrapping up, he mentioned that after his stint in Galang, he was posted to the US naval base in Guantánamo Bay (GTMO). My ears obviously pricked up. As a scholar of the US naval base in Guantánamo Bay, I had not previously placed these two places together – but he went from interviewing Vietnamese in Galang to Haitians in GTMO.[38] Did the international logics of asylum determination, detention, and deportation supersede borders? How might we think about the detention camps in Hong Kong alongside the detention of Haitians and Cubans on GTMO in the 1990s? I did not explore this trajectory in *In Camps*, but if the UNHCR was making these connections and exchanges, as scholars, we should too.

Likewise, critical juxtaposition might allow us to understand protest movements in new ways. As Carl Bon Tempo noted, we recently attended a conference on "Refugees and the Global Cold War." At the event, I learned about Molly Todd's work on Salvadoran protests against the UNHCR in camps in Honduras in the 1980s.[39] Along with the 1989 CPA in Southeast Asia, the UNHCR sponsored a 1989 conference, the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA), and hammered out a regional agreement that responded to the mass displacement of persons in Central America's civil wars. The CPA in Southeast Asia and CIREFCA in Central America were two coterminous UNHCR developments, and both experimented with regional 'durable' solutions to Cold War military conflicts.[40] And just as Vietnamese protested the CPA, Salvadorans in camps in Honduras protested CIREFCA. What might we learn by looking at these two agreements together? How might this allow us to rethink Cold War (and post-Cold War) priorities, the goals of international organizations, like the UNHCR, and the ability of Vietnamese and Central Americans to protest, and ideally reshape, refugee policies? These are intriguing questions and ones which require careful investigation and critical juxtaposition; we should not gloss over significant differences or the specificity of place. For example, the coordinated protests in Central America, often for repatriation on their own terms, in contrast to the Vietnamese protests against repatriation. Still, looking at both agreements together might shed light on how the UNHCR imagined regional cooperative agreements, and the changing dynamics, and limitations, of resettlement in the late 1980s and into the 1990s.

Finally, Julia Irwin notes how *In Camps* resonates with the present. This was intentional and remains a goal. As the Biden administration continues to hold asylum seekers in US jails, and as people are pushed away at the Mexican border, and at other points of entry across the globe, the stakes are real.[41] *In Camps* demonstrates how the US alternately resettled large

[38] Jana K. Lipman, *Guantánamo: A Working-Class History between Empire and Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

[39] Molly Todd, *Beyond Displacement: Campesinos, Refugees, and Collective Action in the Salvadoran Civil War* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2010). Likewise, Sam Vong emphasizes Southeast Asian activism in Latin America in his own scholarship.

[40] One of the few comparative pieces on the two agreements is Alexander Betts, "Comprehensive Plan of Action: Insights from FIREFCA and the Indochinese CPA." *UNHCR Working Paper No. 120*, January 2006, www.unhcr.org/en-us/research/working/43eb6a152/comprehensive-plans-actioninsightscirefca-indochinese-cpa-alexander-betts.html.

[41] Editorial Board, "Biden Promised to End the Disgrace of Private Migrant Prisons. He Still Hasn't," *Washington Post*, February 8, 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/02/08/biden-promised-end-disgrace-private-migrant-prisons-he-still-hasnt/ (accessed February 15, 2022); "After review, U.S. retains border policy of expelling migrants, citing omicron," CBS News, February 4, 2022, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/immigration-united-states-border-migrants-covid-19-omicron/ (accessed February 15, 2022).

numbers of people, and also utilized places far from its borders to discourage migration and limit asylum; the more exclusionary patterns have only intensified worldwide.