

In what ways do political émigrés differ from other immigrants?

-**Immigrants** are people who come to a country with the intention of permanent residence.

-**Political émigrés** are people who leave their home country in order to escape political turmoil.

The word *Moore* has its roots in French (*émigré*). It was originally applied to those fleeing France after the revocation of the *Edict of Nantes*; however, historically, it is applied more widely to those fleeing the French Revolution, including the Duchess de Polignac, best friend of the French queen, Marie Antoinette.

The word has now also come to apply to those involved in movements of mass emigration to escape political troubles, such as the refugees who fled during the Holocaust, the Russian Revolution, and, of course, the Cuban Revolution.

The United States' immigration policy is based on four main principles:

1. The reunification of families
2. The admission of immigrants with special skills
3. The protection of refugees
4. The diversity of immigrants based on their countries of origin

Source: CRS Report RL32235, *U.S. Immigration Policy on Permanent Admissions*, by Ruth Ellen Wasem.

According to these principles, refugees are especially likely to be accepted into the United States, but a mass exodus occurs in times of revolution and turmoil. Although a large number of refugees may successfully emigrate, it can be very difficult for remaining oppressed people to escape after the United States has already taken in thousands of others. This difficulty is compounded by the troubles that these people experience in their homelands; often, people attempting to flee a country are prevented from doing so by political pressures.

The United States has restrictions for the number of refugees that it accepts each year. When called for, the United States has loosened these restrictions to allow more immigrants into the country. For example, in 1980, the government created the *Refugee Act*, which reduced restrictions on immigration, classified refugees, created the Refugee Resettlement Program, and laid the foundation for the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), which is part of the Department of Health and Human Services. The ORR provides programs and services for refugees and specifically assists Cuban and Haitian entrants.

Source: www.acf.hhs.gov

These services are provided to political émigrés because of their special circumstances. They are different from other immigrants because they are often unable to bring with them many of their personal possessions, and they usually do not have adequate time to prepare themselves for the shock that accompanies quick settlement into a foreign culture. Other immigrants are able to bring items from their previous homes, and they have time to adjust to the idea of resettlement. This protects them from essentially having to start over in an entirely unfamiliar country, which is the fate of many political émigrés.

For the year 2007, President Bush has determined that people from Vietnam, Cuba, the former Soviet Union, and, in "exceptional circumstances," people identified by a United States Embassy in any other location may be considered for refugee status. These 'other' nations may include Iraq, Sudan, and Somalia, among other countries where people are facing political oppression and systematic violation of their human rights.

Source: www.state.gov

