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GENEVA ALSO FOR LOWMAN

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SUBJ: LAND REFUGEES IN THAILAND. DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM

1. WE HAVE STRESSED THAT THE GENEVA CONSULTATION SHOULD ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF LAND REFUGEES AS WELL AS THE CRITICAL BOAT REFUGEE EMERGENCY. ~~WE BELIEVE~~ ~~THE~~ THE STATISTICAL UPDATE ON LAND REFUGEES PROVIDED BELOW WILL BE USEFUL FOR REFERENCE DURING THE CONSULTATION.

2. LAND REFUGEE POPULATION IN THAILAND IS NOW OVER 135,000 (120,000 HIGHLANDERS AND ETHNIC LAO FROM LAOS, 15,000 REFUGEES FROM CAMBODIA AND 1,500 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES FROM LAOS). THE LAND REFUGEE POPULATION HAS INCREASED BY ABOUT 40,000 IN THE FIRST 11 MONTHS OF 1978 (EVEN AFTER DEPARTURES THIS YEAR OF ABOUT 22,000 PERSONS) - A 45 PERCENT INCREASE OVER LAST YEAR AND THE LARGEST ANNUAL INCREASE IN ANY YEAR SINCE REFUGEES

BEGAN ARRIVING IN THAILAND IN 1975. THE UBON CAMP POPULATION ALONE HAS RISEN TO 37,000 FROM 10,000 IN 1977, ~~AND 5,000 IN 1976.~~

3. THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF REFUGEES REGISTERING IN CAMPS EACH MONTH HAS BALLOONED TO 5,700, INCLUDING APPROXIMATELY 4,000 MONTHLY ARRIVALS AND ABOUT 1,700 "LATE REGISTRANTS" IN THE CAMPS. SINCE AVERAGE MONTHLY DEPARTURES AMOUNT TO ONLY ABOUT 2,000, THE STATIC CAMP POPULATION INCREASES BY AN AVERAGE MONTHLY FIGURE OF 3,700, of which 100 are Khmer, 2500 ethnic Lao, and 1100 Hmong and other minority groups from Laos.

4. THE HEAVY INCREASE IN TOTAL LAND REFUGEE POPULATION HAS COME DESPITE 75,000 DEPARTURES TO THIRD COUNTRIES SINCE 1975. ABOUT 48 PER CENT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE US AND 40 PERCENT BY FRANCE, WITH ONLY ABOUT TWO PERCENT ACCEPTS BY OTHER COUNTRIES. SOME 35 PERCENT OF THE LAND REFUGEE POPULATION - ~~OR 48,000 PEOPLE,~~ HAS BEEN IN CAMP FOR OVER THREE YEARS, WITH VIRTUALLY NO PRESENT HOPE OF THIRD COUNTRY RESETTLEMENT. IN ADDITION, ~~ONLY~~ 50% OR MORE OF THE NEW ARRIVALS WILL BE PASSED OVER FOR RESETTLEMENT BY THIRD

5. There is now a minimum waiting period of one year in camp before a refugee can be considered for the US program. JVA pre-screening of new entrants indicate that the number of qualified refugees will continue to outstrip available slots. For example, with only 2,800 slots remaining under the present parole program for land refugees of all categories, there are now 12,000 Cat III refugees alone who have registered and appear to meet the spirit of the criteria. (Numbers, of course, are available for eligible Cat I and II refugees). By 30 April 1979, we expect that new registrants will bring the total of LRP-eligible Cat III refugees, for whom numbers are not now available, to about 15,000, not including refugees in Nongkhai and Ubon who arrived since May 1978.

Thus, the requirement for US parole of all categories for next year appears to be a minimum of _____ land refugees from Laos, excluding those who arrive during the course of the parole, i.e., the one year delay rule.



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Bangkok, Thailand

7 December 1978

Rabbi Tanenbaum:

Attached is a package prepared for Leo Cherne based on the materials we went over with you earlier today.

I am also attaching some notes on your meeting with the Ambassador and some data extracted for your background use.

We have really benefited from your views and your commitment which has given all of us a shot in the arm. Those of us who listened to you at Burt Levin's house last night, got the feeling that we have a very key player on our side.

I am sorry that my trip to Geneva will prevent me from accompanying you all to Nongkhai. Please make sure that you give Bill and Mac your views on structuring the Cherne visit to Nongkhai.

I look forward to remaining in touch.

Jared

Enclosures

P.S. Your Newsday article based on the St. Louis incident links the Indochinese refugee problem to an earlier era in a graphic and poignant manner and has special meaning for me. It will become part of our standard reading menu for visitors.

POSSIBLE FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The exodus from Indochina continues unabated and so do its attendant horrors. People shot when trying to cross the Mekong River. Boats pushed back into the open sea. Refugees drowning en-route when boats capsize, sometimes within sight of land. Refugees robbed and raped by pirates. Ships of many flags refusing to stop for refugees in distress. Camps unfit for human habitation. Women and children sleeping on beaches. Infectious diseases on the rise. Polluted drinking water. Shortage of medical and food supplies. Major epidemics a constant threat. And while all this is happening, the countries of first landing have not been given firm assurance that the world is ready to accept the stark fact that the responsibility for the fate of the refugees does not rest with the countries adjacent to Indochina.

2. The consultation that took place in Geneva on December 11 and 12 under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is the first major step toward the internationalization of the problem. Its recommendations (we will have to wait to find out what they are) are unobjectionable. It is now up to the governments that profess an attachment to human rights to act generously and quickly. The United States has increased its quota for Indochinese to about fifty thousand (). But except for France, none of Europe's democratic countries has gone beyond a token response to the terrible calamity that has befallen Southeast Asia. And Japan, a country that has always encouraged its citizens to seek opportunities in other lands, remains hermetically closed to Indochina's exiles. Some countries have tried to substitute money for a readiness to accept and absorb refugees. Yet even their financial contributions to the United Nations High Commissioner's Office have been wretchedly inadequ

3. The figures have an eloquence of their own. There are now refugees in the camps of Thailand; on the beaches of Malaysia; in Hong Kong and Macao; in the Philippines, Indonesia and Singapore. There are reported to be 160,000 Sino-Vietnamese refugees in the People's Republic of China and Cambodian refugees in Vietnam.

And while Hmong, Laotian and Cambodian refugees enter Thailand each month by land, refugees make it across the South China Sea by boat. From month to month, the numbers have almost doubled. And there is no end in sight. Yet, at the same time, the present sum total of acceptances by countries of resettlement does not exceed 10,000 a month for land and boat cases.

4. Unwilling (and sometimes unable) to respond to this emergency, one common excuse offered by governments that prefer to look the other way is that the boat people are not real refugees but migrants who, having "bought" their way out of Vietnam, or left with the connivance of Vietnamese officials, do not deserve the compassion of their fellow men. This position flies in the face of the generally accepted definition of the term refugee and is not consonant with historical experience. Huge numbers of refugees flee Indochina in the dead of night, through minefields and closely guarded borders, and huge numbers are caught in their attempts, or drown, or die, after having succeeded in eluding the border guards along the rivers, land borders, and sea coast of their countries. The escape of others may not be quite as dramatic though their losses are no less severe. They

are all refugees because they all are leaving their homelands where they were persecuted or where they feared persecution for reasons of religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or their political opinions. Moreover, mass flights have always required the readiness of the persecuting governments to let people go, usually for a fee or a bribe or other economic advantages. Many Jews were able to leave Germany with special passports before World War II. It was indifference, a lack of comprehension and concern by receiving countries that prevented more of them from leaving, and thus saving themselves from the gas ovens of Auschwitz.

It may well be that the Sino-Vietnamese are the Jews of 1978. It is all the more disturbing that their compatriots, whether in Taiwan or in Singapore, do not seem to realize the terrible consequences of their inaction. If Hong Kong can accept tens of thousands of legal entrants and refugees each year, the claim of economic hardship or considerations of security are quite unconvincing. No nation has yet bled to death because it has been moved by the plight of refugees. But there are many nations that have benefited by not growing calluses on their hearts.

5. There is one refugee group among the many that are now barely getting by in refugee camps, which deserves particular attention--the hill people of Laos, the Hmongs as they refer to themselves. They are the survivors of the undeclared war against the Hmong community that is being waged by Laotian and Vietnamese troops. Their hopes are being obliterated and their families decimated. Having been our allies during the years of the ambiguous conflict in Laos up to the very end in 1975, they have a special claim to help from the United States and acceptance into the United States if no other country with living conditions more congenial to their way of life will have them. (this

paragraph to be expanded in line with your findings.)

6. While great progress has been made in sensitizing the world to the suffering of Indochina's refugees and in opening up resettlement opportunities that did not exist a year ago, it is clear that we have a long way to go before we can responsibly speak of having formulated a comprehensive long-range policy for the solution of the problem. Such a solution calls for a three-pronged approach. Conditions in the camps for boat people in Malaysia and Thailand have become so bad that catastrophe is unavoidable unless a new holding area opens up in Southeast Asia. Guam and Wake Island are practical possibilities. An Indonesian island may be an alternative, but only if the government's consent can be obtained quickly. Simultaneously, the departure rate from the countries of first landing must be stepped up, not only to the United States, Australia and France, but to countries that thus far have taken few or no refugees. Thirdly, the policy of the United States and a few other governments to require ships sailing under their flags to pick up refugees from universal policy. boats flying SOS signals must become a / Only when these taken steps have been implemented will the death toll be reduced and only then can one expect countries of first asylum to move toward settling refugees in their own territories, with technical assistance and generous financial contributions from the international community.

7. The Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees, having concluded its second fact-finding mission to Southeast Asia, makes the following recommendations:

(1) The United States should declare its readiness to continue its massive resettlement program for Indochinese refugees beyond its present target date of April 30, 1979 and move toward an open-ended program that will continue as long as refugees continue to come.

(2) The UNHCR appeal for more countries to accept a fair share of the Indochinese refugee population must be supported by an high-level approaches as well as by appeal to the sense of decency and concern of its citizens.

(3) The Maritime unions of all nations should be requested to boycott the ships of countries that flout the Law of the Sea which requires all captains to come to the rescue of shipwrecked people.

(4) Malaysia, Thailand and all other countries of first landing must remain open to boat people and land refugees and, in return, be reliably assured that they will not be penalized for their humanitarian acts.

(5) The funds available to the United Nations High Commissioner ~~might~~^{must} be immediately brought up to a level that will enable him to make more the life of refugees in the reception camps/bearable.

(6) Guam, Wake Island, or any other suitable territory should be designated holding areas for refugees who have to be moved speedily from the crowded and unsanitary camps in which they now languish, as well as for newly arriving refugees seeking safe haven, or refugees rescue^d by passing ships.

These six recommendations are interrelated. It is the deep conviction of all members of the Commission that less will not do.

(There are no recommendations regarding the agencies in the US and their financial problems. This item does not really fit into the findings. For the troubles of the agencies here one did not have to travel to Malaysia. I'd suggest that this item be left out of the on-the-spot findings but stressed in the statement we will make after the Commission's return.)

12/8/78

BLIND COPY TO LEO CHERNE

NEAL BALL
ONE AMERICAN PLAZA
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

December 18, 1978

The President of the United States
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

Your statement on human rights and demonstration of compassion for Indo-Chinese refugees was very much needed and will, I'm sure, be welcomed by the rapidly growing number of Americans who feel we must do more to alleviate the suffering of the nearly 180,000 refugees now in detention camps.

As you made your statement, I was leaving Malaysia at the end of an inspection visit to four refugee camps and was proceeding to Thailand where I viewed camps near the border of Laos and Cambodia.

My visit as a private citizen and businessman preceded a similar but more thorough visit now being undertaken by a citizens commission headed by Leo Cherne. Their view of the Indo-Chinese refugee situation will be among the most comprehensive made by any group and it comes at a particularly critical time.

You have my best wishes, prayers and continuing support.

Respectfully,



Neal Ball

American Hospital Supply Corporation

December 26, 1978

Mr. Leo Cherne
Executive Director
The Research Institute of America
589 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Leo,

Welcome home!

In the note I sent to you through Bob DeVecchi, I promised some observations, comments and suggestions. Here they are:

I was shocked and angered by what I saw in the camps. Human suffering is doubly tragic when it is needless. As a former director of the United Nations Association in Illinois, I was an active advocate of that organization, but I find myself mystified by its minimal presence and bureaucratic responses.

Diplomatic initiatives can be useful in persuading Malaysia and Thailand that improved health and some education are not steps to make settlement in the camps permanent, but indeed will accelerate resettlement. Positioned as pre-transit activities, I believe increased cooperation can be found.

There need not be widespread malaria in these camps. There is no reason for eight children to have died from pneumonia for lack of an oxygen tent. It is incredible that a man should have suffered gangrene for twenty days and died without proper medical treatment. I especially was bothered by the suggestion that resources from the United States cannot be applied because of procedural problems at the other end.

My suggestion to Bob and Nancy McLaren was the appointment of a logistics staff member who knows government customs procedures and can devote full time to making sure needed supplies, personnel and equipment are brought in. (If we have to make similar contributions to provincial hospitals near the camp, that can be done too.) The State Department says there is no problem getting money for this kind of effort, but I have raised some private funds which would allow us to get started if it seems to be a good idea.

I was sorry to learn that Dr. Pascal would be leaving the area in February. He would seem an excellent man to keep on, serving several camps in the matter of health education and sanitation. He has devised some innovative and successful approaches which could be shared with other camps and his role could be defined so that it would not be threatening to other doctors practicing there. I found some funds for at least partial support for him, if it should be decided that this is workable, and would raise additional money if the initial experience proves successful.

We have told the International Red Cross that we will cooperate and get other people in our industry to cooperate with them in any way, now that they are involved in Malaysia. There are other resources we can bring to bear as soon as vehicles can be developed.

The transit camps were disappointing. With these people bound for resettlement, there should be less government opposition to improvements. I'm afraid we are going to have a situation here eventually where refugees are characterized as being unhealthy and I know this is going to affect the work that needs to be done to build support for them and to resettle them in the U.S. More innovation can be brought to bear on this matter, and we raised some ideas in Malaysia which may go into effect. Again, I don't have any doubt that personnel and materials can be arranged if there is a desire to improve the situation.

As I probably have said daily since I returned to the States, the bright spot in all of this was the committed and effective work of the JVR operations and the sense of urgency on the part of many of our Foreign Service personnel. So few are doing so much. If you ever need a lengthy testimonial on behalf of the International Rescue Committee, this trip provided the experience that permits me to make it.

I don't fully understand the ICEM Operation. Nevertheless, one of the best questions to be raised during the trip was by an ICEM representative who simply questioned our preparation in the United States to receive the number of refugees who would be arriving through the end of April.

Agencies, at least those in the Chicago area, agree that the new numbers will place an enormous burden on them and that additional resources are necessary to meet the task.

While my long range interests are in higher quotas, I want to be of whatever help I can in the next four months to make sure we are in a solid position to accommodate current quotas. (I don't think unused quotas or unresettled refugees under existing quotas would be the strongest case before a congressional committee considering future policy.)

How can resettlement efforts be expanded?

Public opinion is coming around on the issue. The work you've started so long ago and the gradual increased press awareness (topped off by some of the boat incidents) is really bringing responsiveness which I find encouraging.

But there still aren't sufficient vehicles for private involvement and support, and I think this is one of the reasons there hasn't been more industry involvement, or more in the way of private citizen sponsorship of families.

December 26, 1978

This is complicated somewhat by debates among agencies as to how people should be resettled and who is qualified to help in resettlement. But I think these have been resolved nicely in the Chicago area, and we have an approach here which could be a pilot project for other cities.


We've formed a group called the American Refugee Committee, and its job is to develop sponsors and bring them together for a session on what sponsorship means. The three major agencies in Chicago rotate meeting with these groups and form a continuing link on resettlement. We also get former sponsors together with new sponsors so that much of the initial questioning and advice can be handled without going back to the agencies and creating new work loads on them. This saves the agency for the special kinds of problems that may come in some cases, and commits the individual sponsor to the following: meeting the refugees at the airport, taking them to an apartment which the individual sponsor has located and furnished, providing warm clothing, enrolling the refugee in English lessons and for Social Security, finding a job and providing initial food supplies.

We are using this approach in close cooperation with Jewish Family Services, Travelers Aid, and Catholic Charities in Chicago. We hope it can account for 100 additional refugees per month through the end of April, and our first few weeks of experience have produced nothing to alter that goal.

The committee approach fills another need. Most of the local agencies working on the refugee problem have it as one of many issues or areas of involvement. This doesn't suggest they are anything other than effective in their refugee work, but it does mean that they can't be entirely devoted to being advocates for Indo-Chinese refugee resettlement. I believe that the committee will help fill that gap.

I outlined this approach to Bob DeVecchi and Marc Tanenbaum on the trip, and I am eager to mesh our efforts here and in other cities, with any similar activities under way (to avoid duplication.) This will be a national effort and the mobilizing of resources can go a long way toward handling some of the near term aspects of resettlement problems. Perhaps announcement of this activity can be a follow-up to a Commission recommendation. What the future will be, especially the Viet Nam influx, is so uncertain. That the current refugee situation can be resolved seems possible. And that the efforts you've undertaken are helping alleviate this tragedy is a joyous aspect of this Holiday season.

With warm best wishes always,



NB:mr

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CITIZENS COMMISSION ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

CARE OF INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE, INC.

386 PARK AVENUE SOUTH • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016

TEL. (212) 679-0010 • CABLE: INTERESCUE, NEW YORK

January 3, 1979

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

The Honorable Dale S. deHaan
Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10
SWITZERLAND

Dear Dale:

As you know, our Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees spent several weeks in Hong Kong, Malaysia and Thailand in December. We were moved to take this second study trip to that area by the tragically obvious fact that the sheer magnitude of the problem now in many ways makes it one of a different character.

Of all the camps, transit centers, detention centers and other locations we visited, the situation in Malaysia was not only much the most desperate but is virtually certain to result in unavoidable tragedy. On the one hand, Malaysia must be applauded for her willingness to provide first asylum for so many thousands of the boat people. But on the other, the decision to move what are now more than 27,000 of these people to Pulau Bidong involves little short of sheer horror. Even with the best of intentions and good planning, 27,000 people cannot be crowded into 85 acres of living space without the near certainty of epidemics, polluted water, and other circumstances of which I know you're well aware.

But there is an additional flaw about which I write with great reluctance. In fact, in more than thirty years of deep experience with a variety of refugee problems and great admiration and debt for the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, I have never felt compelled before to say what I am about to.

The acting chief representative for the High Commissioner in Malaysia is a disaster. He is paralyzed by the magnitude of the problem

he faces. He is indecisive and has failed to take steps which are both urgent and even now may be too late.

Under the best of circumstances, the most essential supplies are difficult to move from Trengganu to Pulau Bidong. As you know, during the monsoon season, the frightful currents, the sand bars, the coral reefs make any passage impossible for days at a time and contain an element of risk on the quietest of days. The monsoon rains have the happy effect of providing fresh rain water. Virtually none of that fresh water was available that wasn't caught by the individual efforts and ingenuity of the refugees. A supply which might have lasted for months is simply not there because timely arrangements for catch basins and cisterns were never pressed toward construction.

I spoke to Chris Carpenter about what the plans were when the rains end as they usually do in mid-February and he spoke vaguely of a water-carrying barge somewhere near Singapore that they are "thinking of chartering." When I asked whether a contract for such a charter had been made, the answer was both blank and negative. In fact, he doesn't know with any uncertainty if it will even be available nor is there another even in contemplation if it is not. Nor are there any other plans (and only God knows what they might be) made which could provide an absolute minimum of unpolluted water when the rains end.

I had absolutely no authority to do so and have never done so in my life, but after 43 years in management, I simply felt in the interests of humanity that I had to outline to him some very basic principles of planning, management and deciding. I had no heart for the undertaking for two reasons. It was presumptuous of me to interfere, and I had a sense that it would do no good whatsoever. To put it as bluntly as I know how, the man is utterly unsuited for that responsibility. The total staff is grossly inadequate to the magnitude of the problem for the UNHCR in Malaysia. And we left with no feeling that the government of Malaysia would discontinue piling more bodies on what one of our group dubbed "devil's island." Every one of us who visited Pulau Bidong and saw the operation in Trengganu had an opportunity to talk to Mr. Carpenter and his two colleagues and we are all of exactly the same opinion about Mr. Carpenter.

There is a chance that this is slightly exaggerated and harsh. Two bits of data alone nevertheless require that I convey this to you: The week before we arrived, the remarkable record-keeping system which is being maintained by the apparently excellent Vietnamese self-government on the island recorded 108 cases of infectious hepatitis. By the time we arrived six days later, 84 additional cases had been identified. This suggests an epidemic, even if there were not another case walking around not knowing what was sickening him or her.

Four public latrines have been erected, each with four totally unprivate adjoining holes used by men, women and children who hold their noses while they relieve themselves. Sixteen toilets for 27,000 people must set some new record. Bayard Rustin tasted the one source of fresh water supply we ran into and spat it out saying, "The taste of shit and salt is overwhelming."

I don't want to accidentally imply that any or all of this is the fault of the UNHCR. It is simply a background against which one is compelled to measure the quality of the talent for action, for planning, for decision, for getting things done or pushing others to do them. The gentleman presently in charge does not have that talent. Indeed, he hadn't been on the island in some weeks, though he was in Trengannu. He didn't come to the island when we were there, though at least one of his colleagues did. One perfectly sound reason for this could be that he was busy seeing to it that a barge loaded with food and sitting in the harbor for several days was towed out to Bidong. But it wasn't, despite the fact that the weather for two days running provided as mild a sea as you'll find at this time of the year with neither rain nor much wind, though of course there remains the treacherous entrance to the harbor and the dangerous reefs around the island.

We when left the island, there was a half-day's supply of food in storage. Medications were needed and unavailable. There was a dentist eager to use his services. He had the necessary injectable anesthesia but no needles were available, disposable or otherwise.

We had an excellent visit with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister. They eagerly tried to be helpful, providing a plane which took us across Malaysia and a helicopter which took us to Pulau Bidong. Nevertheless, our Commission felt that it could not leave without writing personally and confidentially to the Prime Minister urging that he end the further crowding of people on that one island, while simultaneously urging that we would try to be as helpful as we could be to speed U.S. assistance, the assistance of other governments, and the internationalization of these burdens. Needless to say, that letter contained no reference to the matter which I now bring to your attention.

I hate to see a decently motivated young man lose his job. But I hate even more to see decent people unnecessarily lose their lives. I write to you as candidly as I have because of my years of admiration for the intelligence, the energy, the commitment you have given to the refugees.

With deep concern and gratitude,

Sincerely,



Leo Cherne

LEO CHERNE
Chairman

WILLIAM J. CASEY
Co-Chairman

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CITIZENS COMMISSION ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

CARE OF INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE, INC.

386 PARK AVENUE SOUTH • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016

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Bangkok, December 21 -- The Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees completed its fact-finding study in Southeast Asia today with an appeal to the world community of free nations to take massive action in providing final asylum for the refugees fleeing by land and sea from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The Commission, set up with the assistance of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), issued a series of recommendations which will be submitted, on its return to the United States, to the White House, State Department, Attorney General, Congressional leaders and Committees, as well as to intergovernmental bodies such as the UNHCR and private sector groups.

Leo Cherne, Chairman of the Commission, announced at a news conference in Bangkok today the Commission's recommendation that the international effort must include a declaration of the United States that it will continue its ongoing resettlement program beyond the present target date of April 30, 1979, and move toward a continuous, generous, open-ended parole program to be carried out as long as the refugees are created. (The text of the recommendations will follow).

A statement introducing the recommendations said that the vast increase of refugees fleeing by boat from Vietnam, and overland from Laos and Cambodia, has placed an intolerable burden on Asian countries of first asylum, in particular Thailand, Malaysia, and Hong Kong.

"It is clear that permanent resettlement assurances are vital if these countries are to be encouraged to keep their shores and borders open to refugees, thus averting the human tragedy of tens of thousands forced back to face harsh punishment and, in many cases, death," the report stated. "The high numbers now fleeing, and the number that may yet come, makes it irrefutably clear that the few countries which have assumed the resettlement responsibility for most of the refugees must now further increase their effort. Of equal urgency is the necessity to involve many additional countries which have not yet participated in the final resettlement process."

In full and frank discussions with the Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers of both Thailand and Malaysia, the Commission concluded that possible denial of final asylum may well emerge unless actions are taken to relieve these nations of their burden.

The Commission's report and recommendations ended with the following passage: "This human tragedy was not caused by free world nations receiving the refugees. It is rather being caused by the three Indochinese countries which have and continue to generate the exodus by their repression and cruelty. It is their flagrant violation of basic human rights which compels refugees to flee; to leave behind their homes and possessions; to risk their lives and their children's lives; to face stormy seas; to suffer the depredation of pirates who

pillage, rape and kill; to cross borders and rivers; to be captured and killed; and often to face inhuman conditions in refugee camps. It is the governments of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia which must shoulder the responsibility and the blame for this tragedy."

The members of the Citizens Commission visited the refugee camps and transit centers in Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong and Macau from December 2 to December 22. The Commission had extensive discussions with officials of the governments it visited, with American ambassadors and with other U.S. personnel; with representatives of the UNHCR and with local and foreign voluntary agencies. Members of the Commission were: Leo Cherne, Chairman of both the Commission and the International Rescue Committee; William J. Casey, former Under-Secretary of State, who represented the Commission at the Geneva meeting of the United Nations on December 11-12; Warren C. Meeker, Chairman of the Research Institute of American; Bayard Rustin, President of the A. Philip Randolph Institute; Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, Director of Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee; Mrs. Lawrence Copley Thaw, a member of IRC Board of Directors; Robert DeVecchi, Director of the Indochina Program of IRC, and Alton Kastner, Deputy Executive Director of IRC.

The text of the Commission's recommendations follow:

Recommendation #1: The United States should declare its readiness to extend its resettlement program for Indochinese refugees beyond its present target date of April 30, 1979. It must move toward a continuous program that will go on as long as the refugees are created. United States acceptance of refugees must be doubled to 100,000 to assure countries of first asylum of being relieved of their burden. Nothing less than 100,000 is likely to meet the needs generated by the present flow by land and sea from the three countries of Indochina. The resettlement program must be directed equally to the plight of people escaping by land as well as by boat.

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Recommendation #5: The Commission recommends to the Government of the United States that extreme measures must be taken to relieve governments of first asylum from the extraordinary problems they face. To this end, we propose that the United States consider, in consultation with other appropriate governments, the establishment of an international center or centers. Knowing that this proposal is much the most complex and difficult to achieve, we nevertheless urge its prompt and serious consideration. We are persuaded that no other single step or combination of steps can avert impending tragedy, sustain the patience of the countries of first asylum, and provide the time necessary for the international community to mount a resettlement program adequate to the flow which now exists and which may even grow larger.

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Recommendation #9: We urge the President of the United States to take the lead in a nationwide effort to increase public awareness of the plight of Indochinese refugees, and the need to respond generously to this most fundamental human rights emergency. Only Presidential leadership will alert the American people to the magnitude of the problem, mobilize their generous impulses and stimulate offers of sponsorship and assistance vitally needed to assist the voluntary agencies in carrying out their responsibilities to resettle the refugees.

We cannot end this statement without stating that the responsibility and blame for the tragedy of Indochinese refugees rests squarely on the shoulders of the three countries whose brutality has led to their flight: Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

The Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees

12/21/78

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

386 PARK AVENUE SOUTH • NEW YORK, N. Y. 10016 • (212) 679-0010

To: Rabbi Marc Tauschbaum

Date: 12/27/78

From: Al Kastner

Subject:

Dear Marc,

The Commission's recommendations
are attached.

Best wishes,

Al



LEO CHERNE

Chairman

WILLIAM J. CASEY

Co-Chairman

MEMBERS OF COMMISSION

MSGR. JOHN AHERN

KENNETH CAUTHEN

CECIL B. LYON

WARREN C. MEEKER

JAMES A. MICHENER

JOHN RICHARDSON, JR.

MRS. THELMA RICHARDSON

BAYARD RUSTIN

ALBERT SHANKER

RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM

MRS. LAWRENCE COPLEY THAW

STEPHEN YOUNG

ROBERT DE VECCHI

LOUIS A. WIESNER

CITIZENS COMMISSION ON INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

CARE OF INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE, INC.

386 PARK AVENUE SOUTH • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016

TEL. (212) 679-0010 • CABLE: INTERSCUE, NEW YORK

Bangkok, December 21 -- The Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees completed its fact-finding study in Southeast Asia today with an appeal to the world community of free nations to take massive action in providing final asylum for the refugees fleeing by land and sea from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The Commission, set up with the assistance of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), issued a series of recommendations which will be submitted, on its return to the United States, to the White House, State Department, Attorney General, Congressional leaders and Committees, as well as to intergovernmental bodies such as the UNHCR and private sector groups.

Leo Cherne, Chairman of the Commission, announced at a news conference in Bangkok today the Commission's recommendation that the international effort must include a declaration of the United States that it will continue its ongoing resettlement program beyond the present target date of April 30, 1979, and move toward a continuous, generous, open-ended parole program to be carried out as long as the refugees are created. (The text of the recommendations will follow).

A statement introducing the recommendations said that the vast increase of refugees fleeing by boat from Vietnam, and overland from Laos and Cambodia, has placed an intolerable burden on Asian countries of first asylum, in particular Thailand, Malaysia, and Hong Kong.

"It is clear that permanent resettlement assurances are vital if these countries are to be encouraged to keep their shores and borders open to refugees, thus averting the human tragedy of tens of thousands forced back to face harsh punishment and, in many cases, death," the report stated. "The high numbers now fleeing, and the number that may yet come, makes it irrefutably clear that the few countries which have assumed the resettlement responsibility for most of the refugees must now further increase their effort. Of equal urgency is the necessity to involve many additional countries which have not yet participated in the final resettlement process."

In full and frank discussions with the Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers of both Thailand and Malaysia, the Commission concluded that possible denial of final asylum may well emerge unless actions are taken to relieve these nations of their burden.

The Commission's report and recommendations ended with the following passage: "This human tragedy was not caused by free world nations receiving the refugees. It is rather being caused by the three Indochinese countries which have and continue to generate the exodus by their repression and cruelty. It is their flagrant violation of basic human rights which compels refugees to flee; to leave behind their homes and possessions; to risk their lives and their children's lives; to face stormy seas; to suffer the depredation of pirates who

pillage, rape and kill; to cross borders and rivers; to be captured and killed; and often to face inhuman conditions in refugee camps. It is the governments of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia which must shoulder the responsibility and the blame for this tragedy."

The members of the Citizens Commission visited the refugee camps and transit centers in Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong and Macau from December 2 to December 22. The Commission had extensive discussions with officials of the governments it visited, with American ambassadors and with other U.S. personnel; with representatives of the UNHCR and with local and foreign voluntary agencies. Members of the Commission were: Leo Cherne, Chairman of both the Commission and the International Rescue Committee; William J. Casey, former Under-Secretary of State, who represented the Commission at the Geneva meeting of the United Nations on December 11-12; Warren C. Meeker, Chairman of the Research Institute of American; Bayard Rustin, President of the A. Philip Randolph Institute; Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, Director of Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee; Mrs. Lawrence Copley Thaw, a member of IRC Board of Directors; Robert DeVecchi, Director of the Indochina Program of IRC, and Alton Kastner, Deputy Executive Director of IRC.

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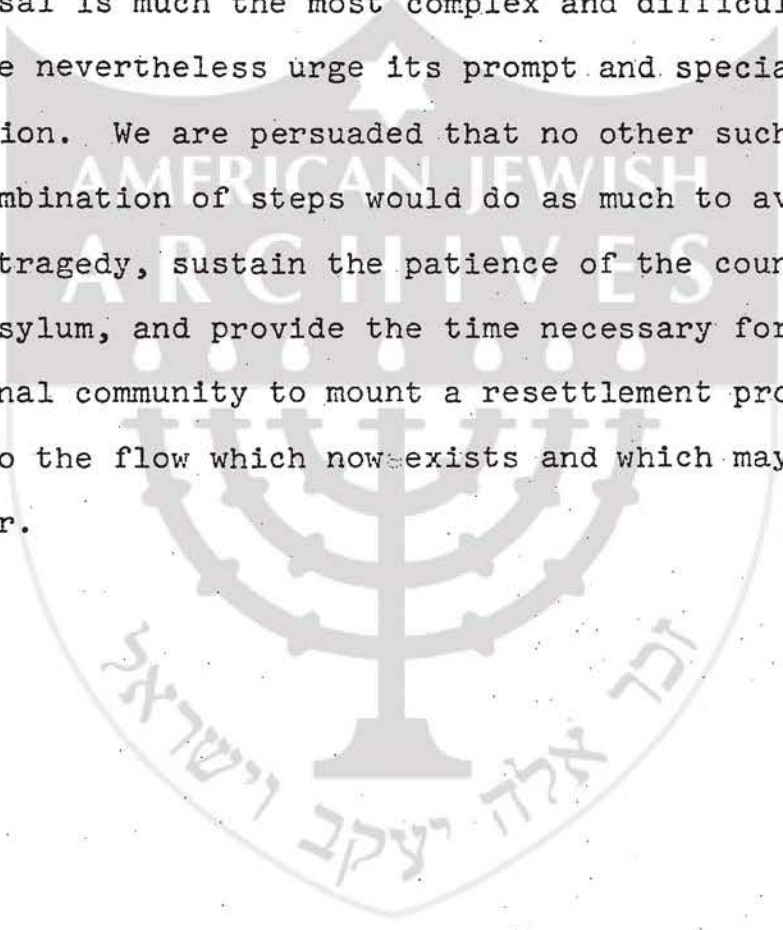
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The Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees

12/21/78

No Room In the Inn

"How history repeats itself!" the Rev. Russell Bennett told his congregation at Fellowship Congregational Church this week.

As Bennett sees it, the 1978 version of the inn where there was no room for the Christ Child is Malaysia and Thailand, where there are huge refugee camps and severe development problems, so those countries cannot take any more of the people fleeing from Communist oppression in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos — the "Boat People."

Bennett has challenged his congregation to "adopt" a Cambodian family as their community Christmas gift.

The group is within \$300 of the \$3,000 needed for the family's transportation.

They will also need to find a place for the family to live, help them learn English and find them jobs. But Fellowship Congregational members are old hands at that. This will not be the first refugee family they've adopted.

And they'll know the joy of Christmas.

→ He was in attendance at the breakfast.

Tulsa
12/17/78



World news

Desperate refugees in 'hell' ship leap

HONG KONG (UPI) — Claiming they had run out of food, water and hope, desperate Vietnamese refugees on a freighter anchored off Hong Kong began jumping overboard yesterday. Patrol boats plucked them from the sea and put them back.

Another shipload of 2,400 "boat people" anchored off the Philippines received their first nourishing meal in weeks but also were told to go away.

In Hong Kong, officials continued to insist that the 2,700 refugees crammed aboard the 2,794-ton freighter Huey Fong anchored off the colony since Saturday were "not our responsibility."

They again ordered the freighter to proceed to its next port of call — Taiwan.

But the refugees, who were reportedly holding the captain of the freighter prisoner, refused to leave when informed that the Taipei government had declared it could not accept them either.

A spokesman for the refugees told officials in a ship-to-shore radio conversation that conditions aboard the Huey Fong were rapidly deteriorating.

Meanwhile, the Philippines appealed to the United States and other nations to accept the boatload of refugees anchored off its shores, warning that otherwise they would be towed out to sea again.

Relief workers delivered supplies of eggs, fish, pork and beans to the freighter and the refugees had their first full meal in weeks.

The refugees have been at sea for at least a month. Some 230 of them drowned when they tried to scramble aboard the freighter that plucked them up from Vietnamese coastal waters Dec. 6.



Associated Press Photo.
An elderly Vietnamese woman sitting yesterday in the stinking hold of the aging freighter Tung An, anchored off Manila with 2,300 refugees aboard it.

TABLE 2

*As of Dec. 31, 1978.*Indochinese Refugees Resettled in Third Countries

France	38,955
Canada	6,991
Australia	5,501
Malaysia	1,570
Belgium	1,023
Federal Republic of Germany	993
New Zealand	663
United Kingdom	518
Denmark	352
Norway	225
Austria	223
Italy	214
Netherlands	168
Switzerland	122
Israel	66
Other	1,158
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 58,742

12 January 1978

~~SECRET~~
CHANUKAH - MANKIND'S FIRST VICTORY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

by Marc H. Tanenbaum

(Rabbi Tanenbaum, national interreligious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, has just returned from a fact-finding mission of the International Rescue Committee on the plight of the Vietnamese boat people and Indochinese refugees. He was recently honored by Sacred Heart University, Bridgeport, Conn., as "the Human Rights Rabbi of America," and in a nationwide poll of religion editors was voted "one of the ten most respected and influential religious leaders in our nation.")

~~Tomorrow evening~~ *On Sunday night (Dec. 24th)*

at sunset, the Jewish people throughout the world will light the first Chanukah candle, thereby beginning the observance of the joyous eight-day Festival of Lights.

Chanukah commemorates the victory of Judah the Maccabee ~~(the Hammer)~~ and his small group of Jewish followers in Palestine over the massive invading armies of the Syrian Empire, and then the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem which the Syrians had defiled.

The story of Chanukah reads like a simple Bible tale, but its meaning today is profound and universal.

The Syrian Emperor, Antiochus IV, tried ruthlessly in the year 167 BCE to suppress the Jewish religion and culture and to convert Jewish Palestine into a Hellenistic colony as a means of enforcing political conformity to his imperial will - anticipating remarkably the totalitarian ideologies of Joseph Stalin, Adolph Hitler, Idi Amin, and other political tyrants in the world today.

In his campaign to melt into one, unified, totalitarian lump the many diverse religious, ethnic, and linguistic groups over which he had ruled in the Middle East, Antiochus decreed - in the Nuremburg laws of his day - that all his subjects, but especially the Jews, had to submit to a common culture, Hellenism, and observe one state religion, that of Zeus Olympios.

The First Book of Maccabees describes that suppression of human rights in these words (Chapter 1, verses 41 to 58):

"The king then issued a ~~arax~~ decree throughout his empire; his subjects were all to become one people and abandon their own laws and religion. The nations everywhere complied with the royal command, and many in Israel accepted the foreign worship, sacrificing to idols and profaning the Sabbath...Anyone discovered

in possession of ~~the~~ a Book of the Covenant, or conforming to the law (of Moses) was put to death by the king's sentence."

To faithful Jews, these alien ways were ultimate offenses to everything that gave meaning to their national and religious lives, and they rather suffered martyrdom than deny their God and their right to be a free people.

"Though all the nations within the king's dominion obey him and foresake their ancestral worship," Mattathias, the father of the Maccabees, declared, "though they have chosen to submit to his commands, yet I am my sons and brothers will follow the covenant of our fathers...We will not obey the command of the king, nor will we deviate one step from our forms of worship." (I Maccabees 2:45-48).

The Maccabees then swept through the land of Palestine, pulling down the pagan altars, restoring the Jewish religious cult, and driving the imperial Syrian hordes from the Jewish soil of the Holy Land thereby "breaking the power of the tyrants."

In effect, this Maccabean victory was the first successful triumph in the struggle for human rights, particularly for freedom of conscience and pluralism, in the history of mankind. Had the Syrians defeated the Maccabees in that epic struggle for the right of every group to be itself, in its own terms, Judaism might have perished, and quite conceivably, Christianity and Islam would never have emerged. That's how fateful Chanukah was for the whole human family.

While the rituals of Chanukah - the lighting of candles on each of the eight nights, the giving of gifts in families and to the poor, the spinning of the dreidle-top (with Hebrew letters for the message, "A great miracle happened there") - all serve to recall the religious and military achievements of 2,000 years ago as a past event, "the Chanukah connection" this year will inevitably be made with the denial of human rights for millions of human beings on almost every continent of the earth.

Chanukah 1978 ^{to be recalled} will heighten the consciousness of the Jewish people, and ~~hopefully~~ that of many others, to rekindle the Maccabean spirit in today's troubled world - to refuse to stand by

idly, to capitulate to modern-day ~~tyrants~~ tyrants who desecrate the dignity of ~~the~~ human being created in the sacred image of God by denying religious and political freedoms.

Those denials of human rights have reached epidemic proportions in our world today. Amnesty International reports that "torture has been standard administrative practice in more than thirty countries and has occurred in more than sixty."

The president of Freedom House, John Richardson, Jr., declares that "two thirds of all the world's peoples still suffer political repression, cannot expect relief from the courts and are denied free speech and access to news media."

During my trip ten days ago to Southeast Asia as a member of the Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees, I saw firsthand how destructive of human life and of the human spirit the violation of human rights can become, and how urgent is the need, in the spirit of the Maccabees, to mobilize to resist every form of human oppression.

Off the coast of Malaysia, I saw with my own eyes how a group of fanatic Moslems shoved back a boat-load of Vietnamese boat people and ethnic Chinese into the South China Sea, resulting in some 200 men, women, and children drowning in turbulent waters as if they were rats. That is the price that the human family is paying for religious and ethnic hatred that denies human beings the elemental right of asylum from the pervasive Communist oppression in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

In Thailand, I visited a camp of Cambodian refugees, in Aranyaprathet, with whom ^{whom} I spent hours in extended conversation. That "dialogue" with the gentle Khmer people was the closest experience I have ~~yet~~ had to that of listening to Jewish victims of the Nazi holocaust. Not 35 years ago, but during the past two years, an estimated two to three million Cambodians have been systematically massacred by the Communist Khmer Rouge regime who are seeking ruthlessly, like Antiochus and Adolf Hitler, to create a totalitarian "new society" by liquidating all ideologically "non-pure" people. And, as was the ~~case~~ nightmarish case with the six million Jewish victims of Nazism, the world is ~~now~~ standing by silently once

again.

This callousness to human suffering, this wave of dehumanization, this indifference to upholding human rights is also to be found in the Middle East, Europe, Africa, Latin America, and even in the North American continent.

How many of you are losing sleep over the ~~fax~~ horrendous facts that 40,000 Christians and Muslims have been massacred in Lebanon; that the PLO terrorists/^{daily} bomb innocent Christians as well as Jews; that some 300,000 black Christians have been systematically & murdered by Idi Amin in Uganda; that innocent Christian and Jewish civilians are being tortured and killed in Nicaragua, Argentina, Chile, and Paraguay; that the Soviet Union regularly harrasses and persecutes Evangelical Baptists and Jews and denies basic religious liberties in that proletariat utopia; that Catholics and Protestants are murdered every day in Ireland; that a quarter million Greek Orthodox and ~~Jewish~~ Muslim refugees languish in camps in Cyprus; that "illegal aliens" and native American Indians are made to feel they are second-class citizens in America, still the greatest democracy in the world?

The sheer recital of the magnitude of violations of human rights can be depressing and runs the risk of paralysing our will and ability to stem this tide of abuse of human dignity.

A prayer recited daily during Chanukah might help all of us "overcome" such demoralization, and in fact, renew our spirits to challenge the evil of indifference, and the indifference to evil.

"Then did you, O Lord, " the Chanukah prayer reads, "in your abundant mercy rise up for them in the time of their trouble; you did plead their cause; you did avenge their wrong; you delivered the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, and the arrogant into the hands of them that occupied themselves with your Law."

Like the Maccabees of old, if small groups of people of conscience, in this country and in other parts of the world, will remain steadfast in their commitments to the "Law of Human Rights" - and will mobilize to press our government and every government to enforce the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we may yet find a way to help turn the world away from its present course of barbarism and anarchy to the achievement of a human society

illuminated by reverence for human life and for human conscience.

Geneva Conference
(Dec. '78)

Chron

INCOMING CABLE

From : Geneva
Sent : 5 Dec. '78
Rec'd : 5 Dec. '78

HCR/375 Following agenda for consultations being issued five
December

PRIMO Introductory Statement by the High Commissioner
and general discussions

SECUNDO Granting of Asylum

TERTIO The caseload and problems

A) Land cases; Thailand

B) Land cases: Vietnam

C) Boat cases

QUARTO Rescue at Sea

QUNITO Durable solutions - including resettlement in
third countries and material assistance.

SEXTO Considerations for future action

SEPTO Summing up by UNHCR

UNHCR GENEVA

OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Restricted

29 November 1978

Original : ENGLISH



HCR/CSEA/2

GE.78-11685

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its twenty-ninth session, in October 1978, the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme welcomed the High Commissioner's intention to call consultations with all interested governments on the problem of refugees in South East Asia. This Note has been prepared for the consideration of participants in the consultations that are to be held in Geneva on 11 - 12 December 1978.

Purpose of the consultations

2. In considering the need for consultations, the Executive Committee recorded its concern that the number of refugees in South East Asia was growing and recognized the difficulties encountered by countries in the region, particularly since current resettlement programmes did not provide sufficient places for the numbers involved. The Committee felt that there was need to bring to the attention of the international community the increasing magnitude of the problem and urged all concerned to give full consideration to means of resolving the problem by giving appropriate assistance to programmes in countries of the region, and by intensifying action to promote resettlement of the refugees in a wider range of countries.

3. Further, the Executive Committee expressed deep concern as to the fate of refugees in distress on the high seas and adopted a decision recommending a series of specific steps to be taken in this regard.

4. The High Commissioner wishes to express his deep gratitude to all who have supported his efforts: the countries of the region and of resettlement, those who have contributed financially and many intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. While it is evident that the problem of refugees and displaced persons in South East Asia derives from the social and political evolution of the region, the work of the High Commissioner must remain entirely humanitarian and non-political. He is, therefore, heartened by the appreciation and understanding of his role as expressed by all concerned. It is his firm view, however, that a major and co-ordinated response to the problem is required of the international community. To be successful, the response must recognize the inter-relationships in the region as a whole and their external dimensions. It is imperative that the refugees and displaced persons be helped wherever they are, in all parts of the region, not merely selectively. Failing this there will be additional reasons for problems to spill over frontiers.

5. Since the Executive Committee met, it is evident that the difficulties have heightened, not eased, as the number of refugees and displaced persons has increased. This is true both in respect of those who have crossed land frontiers, and those who have taken to sea.

6. It has always been the purpose of UNHCR, which now needs to be reiterated, that humane and durable solutions should be found for refugee problems as rapidly as possible. Traditionally, these solutions have required either voluntary repatriation, the self-sufficiency of refugees in countries of first asylum, resettlement in third countries, or a combination of these measures. Whatever the solution, however, the starting point has of necessity been the granting of at least temporary asylum.

7. The present predicament of the refugees and displaced persons in South East Asia derives from the fact that conditions for promoting the traditional solutions have not yet been fully met. First, except for a limited number, voluntary repatriation has not provided the answer. Second, the development of self-sufficiency has been hindered by the scale and complexity of the problem and the continuing influx. Third, resettlement elsewhere - the only solution which could quickly and dramatically ease the difficulties in countries of first asylum - has not kept pace with the growing dimensions of the problem. Taken together these circumstances have affected asylum practice.

8. It is the High Commissioner's view that the forthcoming consultations must address these problems so that solutions can be devised and action taken on the widest possible basis and with the widest understanding.

9. It must be stressed that, ultimately, it is in the power of governments, not of UNHCR, to create the fundamental conditions in which existing problems can be resolved, and fresh problems avoided. The efforts of UNHCR cannot substitute for the will and determination of governments to achieve durable solutions. Indeed, the choice and achievement of such solutions does not, in the final analysis, depend on UNHCR alone, or on the individual refugee, but on the decisions of governments. It is for these reasons that the present consultations are most timely.

II. ASYLUM

10. It is obvious that unless at least temporary asylum is granted, not only is UNHCR unable to promote durable solutions but tragic loss of life can occur.

11. Various important principles relating to asylum have found expression in international instruments, notably the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the Final Act of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries which adopted the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the Convention itself and the 1967 Protocol on this subject, the United Nations Declaration on Territorial Asylum of 1967 and various resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly. Some of these principles have, additionally, been incorporated in resolutions and recommendations adopted within the framework of regional organizations. These principles include the right to seek and enjoy asylum; the fundamental principle of non-refoulement; the principle that the granting of asylum is a peaceful and humanitarian act and that as such it cannot be regarded as unfriendly by any other State; and the particularly relevant principle that where the granting of asylum gives rise to difficulty, other States should consider, in a spirit of international solidarity, appropriate measures to lighten the burden on the State concerned.

12. There is, therefore, a strong humanitarian tradition in favour of admitting asylum seekers to the territory of States where asylum is sought. Indeed, it is in this spirit that the governments of States in South East Asia have generally adopted liberal practices as regards the granting of at least temporary asylum. The attitude of States in the region is clearly affected by a variety of important factors including the prospects for durable solutions outside their territories. The question of temporary asylum cannot, therefore, be considered in isolation. However, it is especially important, in view of the increasing numbers seeking asylum, that humanitarian principles should be uniformly followed and that practice should be in harmony.

III. THE CASELOAD AND PROBLEMS

13. These consultations are to address the problems of three groups of concern to UNHCR: first, the some 195,000 persons who arrived overland in Thailand since early summer 1975, of whom over 130,000 remain in that country; second, the some 150,000 persons who arrived overland in Viet Nam; and third, the some 85,000 persons who have taken to the high seas since mid-1975 of whom over 40,000 await durable solutions. In this Note the first and second groups are referred to as "land cases" and the third as "boat cases". Details of their problems are contained in the High Commissioner's reports to the Executive Committee and the General Assembly. A summary of the situation is given below. (Statistical information as of 30 November 1978 will be provided at the consultations.)

Land cases: Thailand

14. The first agreement between the Government of Thailand and UNHCR for material assistance was concluded in July 1975. There were then approximately 40,000 recently arrived Indo-Chinese in Thailand. The subsequent developments may be seen from this table:

<u>Land cases</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u> <u>to 31 Oct.</u>	<u>Cumulative</u> <u>total</u>
Arrivals	77,169	32,931	31,214	51,378	192,692
Departures	12,755	22,859	10,936	17,271	63,821
Remaining caseload	64,414	74,486	94,764	128,871	-

Of the 128,871 remaining persons who arrived by land, 112,962 came from the Lao People's Democratic Republic, 14,765 from Democratic Kampuchea and 1,144 from Viet Nam. (Details of the additional 11,834 persons who arrived by sea, of whom 2,541 remain, are given in paragraph 19.)

15. The continuing influx has placed a severe strain on the authorities. Two centres alone now contain over 70,000 persons (Nong Khai and Ubon Ratchatani). Durable solutions have fallen far short of the needs of the situation. Voluntary repatriation has not provided the answer except for a few. In an important development the Thai Government has recently agreed to elaborate a pilot-project for a self-sufficiency programme to benefit both the displaced persons and the Thai rural population. Hitherto only resettlement in third countries has

provided a durable solution. The principal countries of resettlement for land cases are shown in the following table:

Country of resettlement	1975/76	1977	1978 to 31 Oct.	Total departures
Australia	572	487	1,672	2,731
Austria	132	14	1	147
Belgium	18	141	37	196
Canada	503	21	106	630
France	13,907	9,374	6,056	29,337
Germany, Fed. Rep. of	208	164	140	512
Malaysia	1,400	178	-	1,578
New Zealand	2	-	3	5
Norway	87	3	-	90
Switzerland	5	1	1	7
United Kingdom	23	23	37	83
United States	19,445	507	8,449	28,401
Six other countries (each under 100 total)	71	23	10	104
Total land case departures	36,373	10,936	16,512	63,821

Land cases: Viet Nam

16. Since 1975 a number of refugees and displaced persons have arrived in Viet Nam from Democratic Kampuchea. In April 1978 the Government of Viet Nam requested the High Commissioner's assistance in providing humanitarian aid. The Vietnamese authorities estimated that by mid-1978, 150,000 refugees and displaced persons had arrived from Democratic Kampuchea. The majority are living in eight southern provinces, while several thousand are living in Ho Chi Minh City. A substantial proportion of those who have arrived are children, while the rest mainly comprise women and the elderly. Most of those who are now in the provinces are of rural background, whereas those in Ho Chi Minh City are former city-dwellers. The Government of Viet Nam has also informed UNHCR of a large number of former Vietnamese residents of Democratic Kampuchea who have now arrived in Viet Nam and of an extensive movement of the local population away from the border.

17. Emergency relief, including World Food Programme food supplies, is being provided as a first step in a programme designed to help the majority of refugees to become self-supporting through rural settlement in the 1979 phase of the programme. Plans foresee the establishment of 10 settlements in eight provinces. Whilst food aid will remain an important component of the scheme, assistance will be required for agriculture and fisheries, health and education. The Government has already provided land for cultivation. Apart from initial relief assistance, plans for the refugees in Ho Chi Minh City foresee improvements in lodging, education and other facilities as well as projects to promote self-sufficiency, despite the high level of unemployment in the city.

18. Among the refugees of urban background, a certain number have expressed the wish to be resettled in other countries. Movement is already taking place, notably to France. Further details are being compiled of those who might be eligible for resettlement on the basis of close family or other ties.

Boat cases

19. The problem is illustrated by the following table, which does not reflect the arrival of over 10,000 persons in November, who are presently being registered by UNHCR.

<u>Arrivals in</u>	<u>Aug. 75/76</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978 to 31 Oct</u>	<u>Cumulative total</u>	<u>Not accepted at 31 Oct</u>
Australia	111	861	665	1,635	-
Hong Kong	196	1,007	4,956	6,159	3,546
Indonesia	244	679	2,450	3,381	1,623
Japan	348	851	678	1,877	636
Malaysia	1,157	5,817	33,172	40,146	23,532
Philippines	712	1,153	2,443	4,308	2,130
Singapore	121	308	1,611	2,040	847
Thailand	2,699	4,536	4,599	11,834	1,684
17 other countries (each under 350 total)	37	452	853	1,342	205
Total arrivals	5,625	15,664	51,433	72,722	34,203
Departures	2,332	9,571	22,952	34,855	
Remaining	3,293	9,386	37,867 (of whom 3,664 accepted)		

20. In 1978, and notably since September, the monthly rate of arrivals has increased markedly :

	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>
January	200	1,925
February	623	1,565
March	664	2,257
April	650	5,012
May	1,817	5,569
June	2,038	4,929
July	1,267	6,232
August	1,048	2,829
September	1,927	8,591
October	2,717	12,524
November	1,704	
December	1,009	

This increase has placed a severe strain on accommodation and relief arrangements, particularly in Malaysia where 9,994 of the total of 12,524 arrivals in October disembarked, an influx which was exceeded in November.

21. The principal countries of resettlement for boat cases are shown in the following table :

<u>Country of resettlement</u>	<u>1975-77</u>	<u>1978 to 31 Oct.</u>	<u>Total departures</u>	<u>Accepted awaiting departure</u>
Australia	2,414	6,866	9,280	925
Canada	330	520	850	280
France	1,532	829	2,361	97
Germany (Fed. Rep. of)	166	71	237	3
New Zealand	414	7	421	-
Norway	139	252	391	30
Switzerland	119	141	260	18
United Kingdom	88	488	576	-
United States	6,389	12,881	19,270	2,308
10 other countries (each under 100 total) and other solutions	312	897	1,209	3
TOTAL boat case departures	11,903	22,952	34,855	3,664

22. The issues raised by the boat cases are complex and certain aspects require new approaches and solutions. The problem of boat cases is, self-evidently, of international concern. Whatever their motives for leaving, once at sea the circumstances of all such persons have presented a grave humanitarian problem which requires an international solution. Boat cases need special measures to accord them protection. In addition to the problem of rescue at sea, which is examined later in this Note, three stages are involved: securing permission to land, interim material assistance and finally, a durable solution.

23. Many countries make permission to land conditional on the expectation, and in some cases the guarantee of resettlement elsewhere, and may set a time or numerical limit on this permission. Both the first and last stages of the process thus involve the exercise by governments of sovereign prerogatives, which UNHCR can only - but must - seek to influence on humanitarian grounds. It is essential, therefore, that on the one hand the rates of departure provide a reasonable expectation that durable solutions can be achieved and, on the other, that the prior conditions set for disembarkation should indeed follow humanitarian practice, and at a minimum not lead to loss of life or otherwise place refugees in grave jeopardy.

Rescue at Sea

24. Some 15 per cent of all boat-case arrivals have been rescued on the high seas by passing vessels. The craft used by the boat cases are often over-loaded and more suited to coastal waters. Boat cases have also reported that passing vessels have ignored distress signals. Regrettably, therefore, boat cases have been lost at sea, not only when rescue was not at hand, but also after disregard of distress signals.

25. The rendering of assistance to persons at sea whose lives are in danger has long been recognized as a legal obligation incumbent upon all ships' masters. The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1960, which has been ratified/acceded to by 98 States, spells out the mandatory nature of rescue at sea and defines the role of masters of ships from whom assistance is requested. This duty is reinforced by the obligation imposed on Contracting States by Article 1 of the Convention to adopt national legislative or administrative measures to ensure the effective implementation of its provisions. The Convention, additionally, imposes an obligation upon Contracting Governments to ensure search for and rescue of persons in distress at sea around their coastline.

26. The Law regarding rescue at sea is thus clear and unambiguous. However, three factors give rise to special difficulties when considering boat cases. The first is the problem of disembarking rescued boat cases; the second the financial consequences of the rescue; and the third the nature of the distress.

27. In the circumstances for which the international law was framed, persons rescued at sea are disembarked without difficulty at the next, or often the most suitable, port of call. A state is under an obligation to make arrangements for the repatriation of its nationals rescued at sea. This does not apply to the boat cases, who seek asylum. As a result, the authorities of the next port of call,

if they are prepared to permit landing at all, generally require a guarantee, both for resettlement in another country and for care and maintenance pending resettlement. There have also been instances in which a state has not permitted disembarkation on its territory even from vessels flying its flag.

28. In the majority of cases flag states or states of ownership of rescuing ships are ready to provide resettlement guarantees, whilst interim care and maintenance is assured by UNHCR. In certain cases, however, the flag or ownership state may be either unwilling to provide a resettlement guarantee or unable to do so quickly for practical reasons.

29. Thus UNHCR is frequently faced with the necessity of finding a country other than the flag/ownership state which would be ready to guarantee acceptance of a specific person or group of boat cases. This naturally necessitates negotiations with potential resettlement countries, to whom individual cases have to be submitted for approval.

30. An important related consideration is safety after rescue. The rescuing vessel may not have sufficient life-saving equipment for all those rescued. If disembarkation at the first port of call is not possible, masters may then be forced - or alternatively refuse - to continue their voyage in breach of national maritime safety regulations.

31. As a result of the delay in obtaining disembarkation permission, or sometimes even refusal of permission to land altogether, the rescue ship can incur heavy financial penalties for the time over-stayed at port and consequent loss of business.

32. International law relating to rescue at sea assumes that the distress is real; many countries provide severe penalties for false distress calls. However, just as boat cases have reported that genuine distress signals have been ignored, so they and masters have also reported that distress signals were made by craft in circumstances in which the craft making the distress signal was either not in danger, or only in danger as a result of action taken on sighting a potential rescuer. The possibility that the craft is not in distress, for example if in calm weather it was first sighted exhibiting no distress signals and making way normally, may thus be a factor influencing the master's decision.

33. None of these factors can condone failure to comply with the law regarding rescue at sea. However, the dilemma faced by a master in such situations is very real. The Executive Committee at its twenty-ninth session commended the masters and owners of ships that had rescued refugees and the states that had offered them temporary or permanent asylum, and decided on measures designed to encourage the rescue of boat cases. The decision inter alia called on states to instruct ships flying their flags to rescue refugees, coastal states to provide at least temporary asylum and all states to apply special and accelerated procedures to provide durable solutions for refugees rescued at sea. Swift implementation of this decision would help to save life.

IV. UNHCR ASSISTANCE

34. The arrival of land and boat cases has necessitated a major expansion of UNHCR activities in the region. In early 1975 UNHCR had 11 professional staff assigned to 5 countries in the region. UNHCR presently has over 30 professional staff in 9 countries.

35. Financial assistance has been provided as follows, figures include programme support :

	<u>Thailand</u>	<u>Viet Nam</u>	<u>Other countries</u>	<u>Total</u>
1975-76	10 439 242.71	--	7 559 408.53	17 998 651.24
1977	9 483 736.24	--	4 920 526.34	14 404 262.58
1978 (as of 30.11.78)	12 915 766.00	500 000	13 426 597.00	26 842 363.00
TOTAL (US\$)	<u>32 838 744.95</u>	<u>500 000</u>	<u>25 906 531.87</u>	<u>59 245 276.82</u>

36. The following are the requirements on the basis of the present caseload and in addition to food aid already provided by the World Food Programme under its emergency procedures to Thailand and Viet Nam:

1 Jan. 1978 - 28 Feb. 1979

Thailand	Basic needs	12 000 000
	Resettlement	4 400 000
	Sub-total	16 400 000
Viet Nam to 31 Dec.1978 only	Basic needs and local integration	750 000
	Resettlement	-
	Sub-total	750 000
Other countries and areas	Basic needs	19 200 000
	Resettlement	1 000 000
	Sub-total	20 200 000
Programme support		2 104 000
Total US\$		39 454 000

37. Details of the requirements for areas other than Thailand and Viet Nam are :

1 Jan. 1978 - 28 Feb. 1979

Hong Kong	5 500 000
Indonesia	1 600 000
Japan	1 310 000
Korea	40 000
Macau	650 000
Malaysia	8 200 000
Philippines	600 000
Singapore	600 000
Others	700 000
Total basic needs	<u>19 200 000</u>



38. Contributions have been made available or conditionally pledged to UNHCR towards the US\$ 39 454 000 revised target as follows:

<u>Donor</u>	<u>Amount pledged or contributed, or value</u> <u>(US Dollars)</u>
Governments	
Australia	1 500 242
Belgium	258 065
Canada	663 821
Cyprus	520
Denmark	748 223
Germany, Fed. Rep. of	1 502 483
Japan	7 734 234
Netherlands	669 643
Norway	775 194
Sweden	872 478
Switzerland	323 082
United Kingdom	2 920 601
United States	8 500 000
EEC (300 MT butteroil CIF)	429 000
Sub-total	26 897 586
Non-Governmental organizations and others	191 966
Carried forward from 1977	2 483 105
Total at 30 Nov. 1978	<u>29 572 657</u>

39. The rapid increase in the caseload has necessitated successive upward revisions of earlier estimates of financial needs. Available funds have either been committed or are in the process of being committed. Some US\$ 10 million is still required to meet the 1 Jan. 1978 - 28 Feb. 1979 revised target. It is already clear that the estimates for the remainder of 1979 as approved by the Executive Committee at its twenty-ninth session will need upward revision. These needs will be reviewed early in 1979.

V. CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

40. From the foregoing, it will be seen that durable solutions must still be found for a large and growing number of refugees and displaced persons in South East Asia. Without major decisions and initiatives being taken by governments, those facing prolonged dependence on international relief are likely to increase.

41. In these critical circumstances, governments might wish to determine the measures that should be taken in connexion with the following:

- (i) The immediate problem is to secure asylum, even if temporary, particularly for boat cases. As is clear, the practice of States in the region varies from country to country and, not infrequently, it is also related to the numbers arriving and the prospects for third country resettlement. There is need to establish, agree upon and implement uniform policies that are in keeping with international humanitarian principles.
- (ii) Given the fact that new arrivals have in large numbers been concentrated on a few areas in the region, the further question arises as to whether there can, as a temporary expedient, be a wider sharing of the refugee caseload in the region, pending processing for resettlement and the elaboration of durable solutions. This may be needed, particularly as present accommodation is severely over-crowded as a result of the increasing rate of arrivals.
- (iii) A major and swift increase in resettlement opportunities is urgently required. Equally, there is a need, recognized in the decision adopted by the Executive Committee at its twenty-ninth session, to promote the resettlement of refugees in a wider range of countries than hitherto. Ways and means of achieving this objective, which might benefit from the involvement of regional organizations, could be considered.
- (iv) The early announcement of numbers to be accepted by both existing and new resettlement countries is needed in order to allow the pooling of arrangements and advance planning. Steps that can be taken to this end may be discussed.
- (v) More liberal and flexible resettlement criteria for both land and boat cases would allow due emphasis to be placed on humanitarian needs and on the refugee's own choice. These would also allow both an optimum utilization of the pool of numbers and the re-allocation of numbers to areas of greatest need. Existing criteria could advantageously be examined.
- (vi) Certain governmental resettlement procedures rely on regional selection teams or even individual case referral to capitals. Present procedures, including the deployment of immigration staff, might be reviewed.
- (vii) Ways and means might be examined to draw more fully upon the special skills and expertise of non-governmental organizations.

- (viii) Where persons leave their countries in order to reunite with their families abroad, countries of origin and those where such family reunion would take place may wish to formulate appropriate bilateral or multilateral procedures if this has not been done. Humane in itself, this would provide an alternative and more practical means of reuniting families than presently available. In this connexion, bilateral or multilateral arrangements resulting in more regular migration procedures might also be considered.
- (ix) Considerations relating to the stability of the region as a whole indicate a need for multilateral and bilateral efforts directed towards the improvement of economic conditions in the Indo-China peninsula. International assistance could help redress the devastation caused by war and successive natural calamities and influence the decisions both of those who might wish to repatriate voluntarily and of those who might otherwise consider leaving for economic reasons.
- (x) There is an evident need to develop self-sufficiency projects, and the pilot project being elaborated in Thailand is a most welcome development. The social consequences of idleness and prolonged dependence on relief assistance are well known. As such projects are identified they should be considered for most generous financial backing from the international community.
- (xi) There is a need to increase the numbers of countries contributing financially to meet the requirements brought to the attention of UNHCR. Costs in the area are rising and governments may wish to consider making early budgetary provision.

VI. CONCLUSION

42. The Report of the High Commissioner was considered by the Third Committee of the General Assembly on 13-14 November 1978. The resolution, which was adopted by consensus, commended Governments "for the humanitarian spirit in which they have received refugees and for the generous manner in which they have contributed to alleviate suffering". The resolution went on to urge Governments "to continue to co-operate closely with the High Commissioner in efforts to achieve the self-sufficiency and, where possible, the integration of refugees in countries of asylum, and to accept for resettlement, on the widest possible basis, refugees from countries of first asylum". The resolution further urged Governments to facilitate the work of the High Commissioner by the "scrupulous observance of humanitarian principles with respect to the granting of asylum and the non-refoulement of refugees".
43. The present consultations will have served an important purpose if they give practical expression to these imperatives. In limbo, awaiting durable solutions, the refugees and displaced persons of South East Asia require the urgent assistance of the international community. The measures to help them must be defined, in these consultations, with greater clarity, and then implemented with speed.

A Chronology of the International Rescue Committee's

Special Studies, Commissions and Specific Rescue Projects

The International Rescue Committee is the merged combination of similar-purposed organizations. The first was formed immediately after Hitler came to power and was known as the International Relief Association. The second group was formed on June 25, 1940, three days after the French signed the Armistice agreement with Germany. That entity was the Emergency Rescue Committee. In 1942, both of these voluntary associations merged as the International Rescue and Relief Committee. In the period following the end of World War II, when the relief function made necessary by the presence of thousands of displaced persons in Europe came to an end, the word "relief" was dropped from the organization title and it has continued ever since as the International Rescue Committee.

To this day, the purpose of the Committee is what it was in 1933: to assist those who, often at risk of life, are in flight from totalitarian countries. It makes no distinction among the totalitarian character of the countries from which people flee, whether left, right, or some other form of nondescript terror.

During the 45 years of this continuity there have been a number of occasions when special committees or commissions of distinguished Americans were created or stimulated by the IRC for a sharply-focused, single-purpose, suddenly urgent or as a result of a particular refugee crisis. On some occasions, the memberships of these special-purpose groups were selected entirely from the Board of the IRC. More often, however, a broader spectrum of American experience was drawn upon in order to maximize the depth and effectiveness being focused on the particular problem or study to be conducted, as well as to enlarge public understanding of the particular refugee crisis or issue. What follows is a brief description, not of the variety of refugee crises to which the IRC has responded and to which it remains responsive, but those occasions when special purposes, usually sharply focused and of limited duration, were undertaken:

March 1933 -- The consequences of Hitler's rise to power

Shortly after Hitler's rise to power, a small group of Americans met to determine what could be done to assist those whose political opposition to Hitlerism would put them in jeopardy or cause them to flee Germany. Among those who gathered for that urgent study were Reinhold Niebuhr, John Dewey, Amos Pinchot, Sterling Spiro, Bryn Hovde and Paul Brissenden.

After briefly consulting with leading anti-Nazi academicians and democratic political leaders in Europe, that group decided that an organized effort to help those

who would have to flee should be created, and the International Relief Association came into being. It was mistakenly assumed that the numbers who might have to flee would be limited and the need for the organization's existence temporary.

November 1933 -- The flight of the intellectuals

The academics in the IRC (assisted by others drawn from the outside) formed a special body to look into the specific question of how employment might be found for the professors, scholars and scientists after their resettlement in the United States. The problem of adequate use of their special capabilities was complicated by the fact that the United States was at the very depth of its Great Depression. This study led to the conclusion that, in addition to seeking placement where possible in existing universities, an effort should be made to form a new educational entity to keep intact this extraordinary group of European intellectuals. That recommendation undoubtedly played an influential role toward what led to the formation of the University in Exile which, in turn, formed the core of The New School for Social Research.

June 1940 -- The French trap

With the fall of France, that country which had for the years before the war become a major haven for those fleeing the countries occupied or threatened by the Nazis, suddenly became a trap closing in on the most gifted and courageous of the men and women who were clearly identified as having opposed the rise of fascism. The Nazis occupied three-fifths of the country, including the Atlantic Coast down to the Spanish border, and the agreement signed by Marshall Petain bound the French government "to surrender on demand all persons under German jurisdiction named by the German government." To close the trap, Marshall Petain grounded all planes, cancelled all sailings, and stopped issuing exit visas.

A group of individuals in the United States met to determine by what means hundreds of the leading political figures, scientists, educators, artists, writers, businessmen, and others on Hitler's "wanted list" might be saved. That inquiry led to two actions. The first was the formation of the Emergency Rescue Committee, headed by Dr. Frank Kingdon.

In March 1942, this Committee merged its efforts with the predecessor International Relief Association and in one common undertaking, the leadership talents of both extraordinary groups of American leaders were harnessed. To John Dewey, Reinhold Niebuhr and their colleagues assembled during the prewar years were now added the leadership of, to name a few, Professor Charles Beard, Dr. Frank Kingdon, college presidents Harry Gideonse and William Allan Nielson, George Shuster, Robert Hutchins, Alvin Johnson, and the distinguished journalists Dorothy Thompson and Elmer Davis.

June 1940 -- Operation Rescue

But as the merged organizations gathered a rare assembly of leadership talent, still another step had already involved a rare assembly of audacious and self-effacing courage. Under the leadership of Varian Fry and with the vital support of Anna Caples, Paul Hagen, Harold Oram, and volunteers from Switzerland, France, Spain, Portugal and Africa, an office operating primarily in Marseilles was set up for the ostensible purpose of providing stipends to needy refugees in Marseilles for food, clothing and medicine. The actual purpose of the operation, functioning under the cover name "Centre Americain de Secours" was by one method or another using false passports of five nationalities to enable as many as possible to escape the country, sometimes as "seamen," or, more frequently, by escorting the individuals, in ones and twos, across the Pyrenees. Using a number of "safe houses" along the escape route (especially the home of sculptor Aristide Maillol) those being smuggled out of Marseilles were accompanied on foot across mountain passes where they were placed in the hands of individuals who undertook to continue them along this underground railway through Spain either to Portugal or North Africa. One young Czech refugee, representing the IRC, joined the staff of the Centre to assist in the escape of others like himself.

In the summer of 1941, Varian Fry was expelled from Marseilles. Yet the operation continued from this point on in the hands of a group of Europeans until November 11, 1942. On that day, the German Army occupied the "unoccupied" zone of France, and Operation Emergency Rescue came to an end.

The young Czech on the rescue squad managed to leave via North Africa and from there to the United States. After a period in the U.S. Army until the close of the war, he became a member of the staff of the IRC in New York. He is Carel Sternberg, and he's been the IRC's Executive Director during the last twenty years.

The British Navy provided an essential \$10,000 to the underground operation in exchange for an agreement to arrange the escape of several hundred members of the British forces interned in an old fort in Marseilles. Altogether, 2,000 of the most able, courageous and gifted men and women on the "wanted list" were brought to safety. Among them were Jacques Lipchitz, Marc Chagall, Konrad Heiden, Franz Werfel, Heinrich Mann, Andre Breton, Andre Masson, Wanda Landowska, Hans Habe, and Hannah Arendt. In addition, there were the political activists, the anti-Nazi business executives, scientists like Nobel Prize winner Oscar Meyerhof whose escape from France and resettlement in the United States additionally enriched all of American life and culture.

1945 - 1946

A group of IRC Board members and other distinguished Americans like Eleanor Roosevelt became increasingly exercised over the forceable repatriation to the Soviet Union of Soviet civilians and soldiers who had fled the Soviet Union or had been taken prisoner by the German army. This body of individuals formed the core of those who, through the able leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt, protested to the allied governments and to the UN this gross violation of human rights. This effort was largely unsuccessful except in the focus of principle which Eleanor Roosevelt led and which culminated in the United Nations Human Rights Convention.

1948 -- The Iron Curtain Refugee Commission

In the summer of 1946, alarmed by a succession of defeats at the polls, the Kremlin decided to crack down. In quick succession, the Communists in Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary and East Germany moved to suppress the opposition and to install totalitarian regimes modeled on the Stalinist pattern. With the Communist coup, in February 1948 in Czechoslovakia, the Iron Curtain had descended over the whole of Eastern Europe. A commission was formed to examine the implications of this widening of the Iron Curtain, particularly in terms of jeopardy to those democratic leaders of the newly "acquired" countries. The commission included Admiral Richard E. Byrd, Lt. General Walter Beadle Smith, and General Carl Spaatz, with the support of 27 state governors and other community leaders. This newly formed IRC campaign quickly organized emergency assistance for the thousands of new escapees along the Iron Curtain from Sweden to Turkey and helped arouse the conscience and understanding of the American people by placing before them, in case history after case history, the true but incredible story of the "massacre of the innocents" in the Communist-dominated countries.

1948

By 1948, it became apparent that the variety of relief and resettlement efforts in motion were inadequately meeting the needs of a group of people who were always difficult to place effectively -- the exiled professionals. Under the chairmanship of Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, assisted by the Reverend Laurence J. McGinley, S.J., President of Fordham University, and Dr. Millicent C. MacIntosh, President of Barnard College, and aided by an initial gift of \$100,000 from the Lessing J. Rosenwald Foundation (the single largest grant ever made by that Foundation), the IRC recommended a sharply focused effort to assist these professionals. Dr. Niebuhr stated the function crisply: "Never before in the 20th century has any nation been presented with a greater opportunity to contribute so directly to the preservation of invaluable creative sources and to the enrichment of its own civilization."

With an additional grant of \$500,000 from the Ford Foundation and another \$200,000 from other sources, that commission was able to report by March 1952 that 1,700 refugee professionals had been resettled, who, with their families, numbered 3,227 persons.

During this interval, the health of IRC's chairman, Reinhold Niebuhr, began to fail and he was finally led to suggest to the Board that Leo Cherne, who had been actively involved in the Committee since the end of the war, succeed him as chairman.

1950-1951 -- The Berlin Mission

The year 1950 was one of crisis and testing for the West. In June of 1948, the Communists had instituted the Berlin Blockade in an open effort to starve the people of West Berlin into submission. The West had disarmed to a dangerous degree -- but the challenge of Berlin was one that could not be ignored. The United States responded to the blockade with the Berlin Airlift.

A voluntary citizens group was formed to determine the means by which the American people might add their assistance to the City of Berlin as the Airlift dragged on. Under the leadership of Richard E. Byrd, General Lucius D. Clay and former Secretary of State Sumner El Welles, and with the strong encouragement of High Commissioner John McCloy, "Project Berlin" was added to IRC's undertakings. It involved an emergency appeal to enable the massive shipment of foods in desperately short supply in Berlin. Though the cost was estimated at \$1,000 for each 50,000 pounds of food delivered, and the goal was set at 2 million pounds of food, the emergency appeal brought in sufficient funds to ship 4,224,000 pounds of milk, butter and cheese to the people of Berlin.

Winter of 1953 -- Project Berlin II

Ernst Reuter, one of Germany's leading anti-Nazi political figures of the 1920's and 30's was twice imprisoned and sentenced to death by the Nazis. He escaped Nazi prison after the first sentence, intent on continuing his efforts. After his second escape, he was assisted by the IRC to refuge in Turkey where, during the war years while working as an engineer, he directed the work of the IRC for those refugees fleeing eastward. At the close of the war, the IRC provided his transportation back to Berlin, where he became the first Mayor of a free Berlin.

The ravages of the growing Cold War, the destruction inflicted on the city by the Berlin Blockade did little to discourage the flight to West Berlin of several hundred thousand East Germans. More than one in every ten in a city plagued by unemployment and surrounded by Soviet-occupied territory, was a refugee. During the winter of 1952,

as many as 6,000 refugees a day were fleeing to a city which had neither accommodation nor work for them. Urged on by Mayor Reuter, a committee of Americans was formed to quickly explore the possibility of American help in meeting this new and massive refugee crisis.

Under the leadership of General Lucius D. Clay, John McCloy, General Carl Spaatz, Paul Hoffman, Admiral Richard E. Byrd and Leo Cherne, Ernst Reuter was brought to the United States to confer directly with President Eisenhower. On January 21st, Mayor Reuter told the press that Berlin's plight had become so critical that the city needed immediate assistance from its Western friends if it were to remain free. This special committee organized a national campaign. Reuter addressed scores of meetings from one end of the country to another and within the first few weeks \$850,000 in cash assistance was provided from private American sources and hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of essential goods were shipped directly to Berlin.

1954 -- The Flight from Hanoi

Within the first weeks after the Geneva Armistice ended the civil war in Vietnam and provided for the right of any individual in North and South Vietnam to change his residence, the flow of refugees from North Vietnam into Saigon became massive. A committee of IRC Directors was formed to explore the question whether the IRC should, for the first time, assist in a refugee resettlement program in an Asian country. The committee included IBM's Arthur Watson, Dwight Eisenhower's former SHAEF aide Jock Lawrence and Joseph Buttinger, and a decision was made that Leo Cherne travel to Saigon to determine whether a role appropriate for an American agency existed.

President Ngo Dinh Diem told Mr. Cherne that he was particularly concerned with the problem of the refugee students and intellectuals. His new country was desperately short of leaders and administrative cadres. Among the refugees there was an abundance of talent. Properly utilized, this talent could make the difference between survival and extinction for free Vietnam.

After several weeks' exploration, Cherne reported the urgency of assistance to the political leaders of the long-suppressed democratic parties who were fleeing South, and, in particular, to the students and faculty of the University of Hanoi who, almost as a body, sought sanctuary in the South. Upon Cherne's return to the States, Joseph Buttinger volunteered to go to South Vietnam to organize reception and resettlement efforts for this group.

The IRC continued its programs of assistance, particularly for the professionals and academic refugees, until 1961 when the IRC ended its operations in Vietnam in protest against the Ngo Dinh Diem government because of outrages committed at the University of Hue and among Buddhist dissidents.

February 1956 -- The Donovan Commission on the Soviet Redefection Campaign

Toward the end of 1955, there were numerous reports of Communist pressures on escapees from the Iron Curtain countries, aimed at inducing or forcing these escapees to return to their homelands. The International Rescue Committee received increasing evidence from refugee leaders in the United States and Europe that the Communist redefection campaign was not sporadic or haphazard but that it was international in scope, extravagantly financed, carefully planned and centrally directed.

In February 1956, the IRC organized an Emergency Commission under the chairmanship of Willian J. Donovan to assess the problem in detail. It was the commission's assignment to study and evaluate (1) the Communist objectives, (2) the methods employed, (3) the extent and effectiveness of the redefection campaign, and (4) possible counter measures. The commission spent three weeks in February in France, Austria, Switzerland, and Germany. It met with officials concerned with the refugees and it interrogated and took written testimony from hundreds of individual refugees.

The commission found that the principal objectives of the redefection campaign were (1) to break the back of the liberation movements in exile, (2) to discourage others behind the Iron Curtain who were disposed to consider escape, (3) to deprive the West of the propaganda element inherent in the mass escape of refugees from the Communist "paradise," (4) to provide the Communist propaganda apparatus with a steady supply of redefectors, whose stories of "disillusionment" in the West were most useful for general consumption at home and for broadcasts to the uncommitted countries of Asia and Africa.

Members of the Donovan commission included Clairborne Pell, Sheba Strunsky Goodman, Willian vanden Heuvel, Irving Brown, Leo Cherne, Joseph Buttinger, Angier Biddle Duke, and Richard and Karin Salzman. An extensive report on the purposes, techniques and consequences of the redefection campaign was issued by the commission on its return to the United States, presented to President Eisenhower and eventually the Soviet redefection effort throughout the world ground to a halt.

1956 -- Operation Budapest

On October 23, 1956, within hours after the overthrow of the Soviet-dominated government of Budapest by students, workers and defecting militia, the IRC appealed to Dwight D. Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson (then in the closing weeks of the national campaign) to express the sympathy of the American people. Uncertain of the effect on their respective campaigns, neither candidate chose to identify himself with the Hungarian Freedom Fighters.

This led to Angier Biddle Duke and Leo Cherne flying to Austria to determine what might be done to provide non-military assistance to the students and worker councils and the revived free political parties in the suddenly democratic Austria.

John Richardson, a corporate lawyer, volunteered his services throughout this period and, in fact, arranged for a gift of 100,000 units of Terramycin to accompany Duke and Cherne on their trip in the hope that it might be brought to Budapest. Cherne and Marcel Faust, head of IRC's Vienna office, drove to Budapest carrying the essential antibiotics, other medicines, food and clothing and placed them in the hands of the leadership groups. Faust and Cherne were the first Americans to visit with Cardinal Mindszenty within two hours after his release from seven years in prison, leaving with him a large shipment of drugs as a token of private American identification with the freedom struggle.

1956

With the suppression of the Revolution, thousands of Hungarians began their flight from Hungary to safety in Austria. Under the leadership of General William Donovan and with William vanden Heuvel, Herman Steinkraus, Claiborne Pell and James Michener, this commission went to the frontier to determine what emergency assistance would be needed to assist those in flight, many of them young children sent across alone with only name tags for identification. The commission returned to recommend a major U.S. resettlement effort. This helped to stimulate a national program which in a brief period of time brought close to 40,000 Hungarian refugees to the United States.

Shortly thereafter, Claiborne Pell returned to Vienna where for nearly a year he directed the IRC's Hungarian refugee effort in Europe.

October 1957 -- The Zellerbach Commission on the European Refugee Situation

The historic events in Central Europe, which included the East Berlin riots, the riots in Poznan, Poland, the convulsion in Hungary, all contributed to so vast a wave of political refugees seeking safety in the free countries of Western Europe that in October 1957 the IRC thought it desirable that a high-level commission be formed to assess the problems and needs of this vast movement of people seeking sanctuary. Under the chairmanship of Harld L. Zellerbach, with Angier Biddle Duke as co-chairman, the commission included Eugenie Anderson, Irving Brown, Mrs. David Levy, Eugene Lyons, and the Right Reverend James A. Pike.

The commission's report not only described in detail the effects of the refugee influx but recommended to the American people a stable, comprehensive and systematic

participation by the United States in the growing and urgent needs for assistance and resettlement.

1958 -- Medico

Tom Dooley returned to the United States to urge upon the IRC the formation of a commission to visit Dr. Albert Schweitzer in Lambarene in order to formally establish, in Asia, a parallel to Schweitzer's work in the Gabon. Leo Cherne headed that commission, together with Dr. Peter D. Comanduras and long-time Schweitzer friend, Erica Anderson, to appeal for his leadership in the formation of a new group which the IRC would undertake to form -- Medico. Angier Biddle Duke and Tom Dooley, at the same time, led the formation of a support effort in the United States. Dr. Schweitzer had refrained throughout his life from associating with other medical efforts patterned after his. Nevertheless, the week's visit with him produced the first reversal of that policy. He agreed to accept the Honorary Chairmanship of Medico, authorizing us to quote him: "I endorse MEDICO with all my heart." The Medico operation spread rapidly, from missions in Laos to North Africa. Unfortunately, though still in his early 30's, Dr. Tom Dooley discovered while in Laos that he had cancer. He returned to the United States where treatment proved unavailing and with his passing the IRC made the decision to transfer Medico to an organization better equipped to carry on its specialized function. Ever since then it has been a division of CARE.

February 1959 -- The Cuban Revolution

Within one month after Castro's overthrow of the Batista government, two members of the IRC Board went to Havana with a view to determining whether at some point a flow of democratic anti-Batista, anti-Castro refugees might occur.

The flight of Batistianos was expected and occurred early. The IRC played no role in their resettlement. By the end of 1959, the first of what proved to be a large wave of democratic victims of the Castro government began to flee. The IRC was the first agency to offer assistance to these leaders in the long history of the struggle for democracy in Cuba. Within months, the leading members of the democratic wing of the Castro movement disappeared, were lost in flight, or were, like Huber Matos, imprisoned.

The IRC has played a major resettlement role for more than 20 percent of the more than half-million Cuban refugees who fled to this country. The Cuban crisis introduced the volunteer efforts of a group of women who had previously lived in Cuba and who had originated and manned the major relief and resettlement operations in Miami and New York. Among these women are Betsy Landreth, Dolores Leviant, Sophie Gimbel, Nena Goodman, several of whom subsequently became key members of the IRC Board and Executive Committee.

1960 -- The Flight of Chinese Intellectuals

In 1960, Leo Cherne and his business colleague, Carl Hovgard, were urged by close associates of Ngo Dinh Diem in the U.S. and Vietnam to travel to Saigon to see what might be done to encourage the end of growing repression under Diem's presidency. It was the feeling among some members of the Diem cabinet, some Americans there like Wolf Ladejinsky, others here in contact with top figures in Saigon like Joseph Buttinger, Gil Jonas and Wesley Fishel that because of IRC's early help, Cherne would be the one person Diem would most likely listen to. Meetings with him and other members of his government, as well as U.S. Embassy personnel, continued for a week. The promises made at the end were totally encouraging, and included specific commitments to sharply reduce the functions performed by the President's brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu and his wife. But the results proved nil.

Immediately thereafter, Cherne and Hovgard traveled to Hong Kong for an arranged conference with the leaders of Aid Refugee Chinese Intellectuals which had been formed in the late Fifties to assist those fleeing the Mainland. This led to the IRC taking over their entire resettlement effort in Hong Kong under the existing leadership of Halleck Rose and Travis Fletcher and to begin an effort to determine whether any help to the Tibetan refugees in India from the IRC was feasible. Hovgard and Fletcher traveled to meet with the Dalai Lama at Benares. A modest IRC grant was given to the Dalai Lama, but the conclusion was reached that assistance provided by the government of India could not in any significant way be effectively supplemented by the IRC.

1965

The increasing American involvement in Vietnam led to an appeal by President Lyndon Johnson to all voluntary agencies to either increase or initiate assistance to the relief and resettlement of the growing number of war-created internal refugees in Vietnam. Cherne and Wells Klein went to Saigon to determine whether IRC's previous decision to end its operations there should be reconsidered. In concert with the other voluntary agencies, the IRC resumed its operations, concentrating on resettlement, especially among the neglected Montagnard people. One of IRC's resettlement villages was subsequently considered the model resettlement operation in Vietnam.

1968 -- Soviet tanks in Prague

Within hours after the student uprising in Prague following the Soviet invasion by thousands of tanks and troops, William Casey and Leo Cherne left for Europe to determine whether assistance might be provided by the IRC through its European officers

in Vienna and Munich. Casey, on conferring with Willy Brandt, advised Cherne in Vienna that the German frontier with Czechoslovakia was not being used for the flight of refugees and that all indications were that Austria would be the main exit point for a substantial refugee outflow. Casey joined Cherne in Vienna where they made an unsuccessful effort to drive to Bratislava in Czechoslovakia but were stopped by a roadblock of Russian tanks at the outskirts of the city. On returning to Vienna the decision was made to step up IRC assistance to the substantial numbers who were fleeing in what appeared certain would be a major refugee influx.

1971 --The rape of East Pakistan

Late in April 1971, the Chancellor of the University of Chittagong traveled from London, where he had been lecturing, to New York in order to meet with Leonard Sussman of Freedom House and Sternberg and Cherne of the IRC to tell us of the massacre which had occurred two weeks earlier of nearly the entire student body and faculty of the Universities of Dacca and Chittagong, and appealing to us for assistance in bringing this tragedy to the world's attention. In the ensuing sixty days, millions fled East Pakistan to neighboring Bengal, a flight which would ultimately be the largest of this century -- some 10 million refugees.

Angier Biddle Duke undertook to head up a quickly formed commission to go to Calcutta to determine what IRC might do with its modest resources in the face of this human tidal wave. That commission included among its members Lee Thaw, Thomas Phipps, Dr. Edward Weiner, Mort Hamburg. Under Duke's leadership, the commission rapidly surveyed the relief efforts being mounted by the state of Bengal, the government of New Delhi and the voluntary agencies from several continents. It reached a dramatic conclusion: no sum of money IRC could raise could significantly contribute to the needs of 10 million utterly destitute people suffering, in addition, spreading cholera, dysentery and a variety of other killer diseases.

The Duke commission recommended to the IRC and was immediately authorized to proceed to employ all available refugee doctors, on condition that the doctors volunteer to spread their medical capability in as many of the camps as possible and to quickly set up emergency medical clinics. By hiring the physicians directly and supplying them with equipment and supplies provided by the Indian government and the Red Cross, the IRC actually initiated the beginnings of a health system for ten million people. The physicians not only mounted quick emergency assistance but established a nucleus for teaching public health, sanitation and child care to the huge population in the hastily assembled camps.

After the commission returned, Lee Thaw remained to supervise that massive operation during the coming weeks, until she in turn was replaced by Professor Aaron

Levenstein and his wife, Margery, who took advantage of the summer college leave to spend two months enlarging the program. Among other things, they arranged with the Calcutta University group to register all teachers who had come out of East Pakistan. While the IRC mission was there, the University registered 3,800 teachers, including 94 university professors, 839 undergraduate college teachers (with approximately 1,000 registrations still pending), and about 1,900 primary and secondary school teachers.

Using the same formula that the Duke commission had initiated with doctors, the Levensteins employed teachers who, in turn, were assigned to the multitude of camps to provide at least rudimentary education for the millions of young children who were among the refugees. In an especially imaginative adjunct program, the Levensteins employed a score of the most outstanding scholars of East Pakistan who had succeeded in fleeing the massacre of the intellectuals and put them to work recording the history of the entire episode for such a day as a free nation of Bangladesh might be established.

Lee Thaw, Carel Sternberg and Leo Cherne were in Calcutta at the precise moment when the war against Pakistan ended and the nation of Bangladesh was formed. The IRC participated from the very beginning in the re-establishment of the refugees in their homeland, now called Bangladesh. With financing from the U.S. Government, the IRC undertook to restore and enlarge the world's most important cholera center in the capital of the new state.

As an interesting footnote to the episode, Chancellor Chowdhury, who first visited the U.S. to appeal to the IRC, became the first president of the new nation of Bangladesh.

April 1973 -- Fact Finding Commission on Vietnamese Refugee & Children's Problems

The IRC had several years previously increasingly focused on the subsistence and health problems of the war-orphaned children and the children of uprooted families. In the course of expanding this capability, the IRC had established a convalescent center for children who had undergone reconstructive surgery in the Barsky Unit of the Saigon Hospital. In addition, IRC was administering a network of day-care centers for children, self-help projects in refugee camps, providing as well direct medical assistance in the refugee camps.

Suddenly a cease fire agreement was reached by the U.S., accompanied by a progressive withdrawal of U.S. military forces. IRC quickly organized a mission of volunteer leaders shortly after the withdrawal of the last American troops to conduct an on-the-spot survey of refugee and children's programs facing the Vietnamese. The group was headed by Leonard H. Marks, now IRC President, and Angier Biddle

Duke, Honorary Chairman, together with Joseph Buttinger, David Sher, Robin Duke, I.M. Scott, Cecil Lyon and IRC's Deputy Executive Director, Al Kastner. Senator Kenneth Keating, though a member of the commission, remained in Washington to pursue the same inquiry within U.S. government sources in the Capital.

The mission which had traveled extensively throughout Vietnam recommended an extended IRC program of humanitarian assistance especially for uprooted children and war orphans. The recommendations of the mission led, among other projects, to the establishment of a 70-bed intensive care unit for war orphans in Saigon which was opened in December 1973. The purpose of the unit, which served accredited American adoption agencies operating in Vietnam, was to restore the health of orphans and enable them to become candidates for adoption mainly for American families.

1978 -- The Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees

Spurred by information that the parole system was about to come to an end and that further refuge in the United States for Indochinese refugees was increasingly unlikely, the IRC formed The Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees...

* * * *

Even this recital of the special missions of the IRC fails to take into account the numerous instances in which individual members of the Board of the IRC put whatever else they were doing aside in order to undertake an emergency exploration or mission to a troublespot in the world where refugee crises were erupting. Particularly active in a number of such missions were Board members Ambassador Cecil Lyon, Lee Thaw, and staff members Louis Wiesner and Bob DeVecchi. In addition, in the Spring of 1977 Leo Cherne established the first IRC program in Kenya to assist Ugandan refugees, an activity which was subsequently substantially deepened and enlarged by Cecil Lyon.

But of greater importance is the fact that this is at most a record of responses to specific needs and emergencies by special groups, large and small, composed of individuals, some of whom are members of the IRC Board and many who are not. What this record does not tell is of the very much larger work which is IRC's daily responsibility. Russians, both Jew and Christian, Yugoslavians, Biafrans, Kurds, South African blacks, Haitians, Chileans, Argentinians, Lithuanians, Indonesians, and others in the course of an IRC day have crossed the threshold of one of the Committee's offices in 15 countries on every continent except Australia and the Soviet Chinese land mass in the hope of assistance from the IRC.



International
Rescue
Committee Inc.



Annual Report
1978

Introduction

A neatly printed letter from Eagle River, Alaska, arrived at my office recently. It said:

"Hello! I am from Alaska. I was watching the news on TV and I saw the show about the boat-people. I feel very sorry about the refugees and I would like to help. But I am only 12 years old. What I've got isn't much but it will help a little, and lots of my friends will also send some food. When we were watching the show, my mom started crying and I got a knot in my throat. The band-aids are for your doctor and the food for whoever needs it the most."

The letter, which was accompanied by cans of food and band-aids, reminded me how vital the spirit of voluntarism is to the strength of the International Rescue Committee.

The principal volunteer leaders of IRC are the members of our Board of Directors who determine all basic policies, initiate and review the refugee programs, work closely with our professional staff, raise funds, provide financial oversight and perform a multitude of other tasks. During the past year, twelve board members carried out overseas assignments for IRC in Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America.

But voluntarism goes far beyond the activities of IRC's immediate family. In many countries, including the United States, volunteers devote their energies to IRC in many ways. Some are directly involved in our refugee work as caseworkers. A family in New York recently created a youth center for Vietnamese newcomers. In many cities, volunteers help the refugees to integrate into the mainstream of American life. Doctors and dentists contribute their services; sponsors find housing for new refugees and jobs for the breadwinners; teachers give English-language lessons; clothing is collected, children are enrolled in school, lonely refugees are invited to American homes.

IRC depends on contributions from the public. Fund raising projects are carried out by scores of community, cultural, school, religious, professional, business and union groups. And the boy in Alaska who was moved to collect food and band-aids is just one of the many spontaneous efforts in IRC's behalf.

About 30 years ago, the man who preceded me as Chairman of

IRC wrote about another element of our humanitarian work made possible by the American spirit of voluntarism. The words of Reinhold Niebuhr, the great American theologian, are as true today as they were then:

"There never was a time when America could so significantly stimulate her own culture through proper utilization of the talents which these human beings offer. These men and women are survivors of those who are responsible for the best their nations have produced. If we fail to seize this unique and pressing opportunity, we collaborate in the most grievous waste of creative talent in human history."

Leo Cherne
Chairman



The Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees, a group of American volunteer leaders organized by IRC, visited nine Southeast Asian countries during 1978. William J. Casey (right), Co-Chairman of the Commission, and Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, National Director of Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee, are shown here with Indochinese refugee children at a transit camp.



The Citizens Commission inspected Pulau Bidong, an island off the Malaysian coast where 30,000 Vietnamese boat people have landed. The refugees work constantly to make their existence bearable on the island's 85 habitable acres.

Indochinese Refugees: The Exodus Grows

The flow of Indochinese refugees rose steadily throughout 1978, reaching a peak in November and December with 59,000 successful escapes from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. For every refugee who made it to safety, it is believed that at least one was captured, killed or drowned. Altogether in 1978, a total of 154,000 who fled by land and sea reached other countries (three times more than in 1977) not counting Cambodians who went to Vietnam, or Vietnamese who fled to China. About two thirds of the refugees were boat people.

The exodus and the ordeal of the boat people continued into 1979. An Associated Press correspondent in Manila opened a dispatch about a boat that had been stranded on a coral island off the Philippines as follows: "A teenage girl watched helplessly for 140 days as the 49 persons who fled Communist Vietnam with her starved to death in the rotting hull of an abandoned ship. She survived on seagulls, oysters and a little rainwater." The girl was rescued by a fishing boat.

In April 1979, a New York Times article written in Kuala Lumpur reported:

"More than 100 Vietnamese refugees drowned off Malaysia's east coast when their boat capsized while being towed out to sea. It was carrying 227 refugees and the bodies of ten others who had died on the trip from Vietnam. The refugees had sought permission to land at Mersing in Malaysia's southernmost state of Johore, but authorities refused to let them come ashore and towed the boat to sea."

The drama of the boat people tended to overshadow the plight of refugees escaping from Laos and Cambodia by land and across the Mekong River. In 1978, more than 60,000 crossed into Thailand. Their numbers increased sharply during the early months of 1979; in February alone, 7,200 Laotians and Cambodians fled to Thailand. About 6,000 Cambodians entered Thailand during the four months following the Vietnamese invasion in December 1978. One of the Cambodian refugees was a 15-year-old boy who was brought to the United States by the International Rescue Committee. He had seen 78 of his townspeople slaughtered, including his parents, six brothers and sisters. Among the refugees in the Thailand camps are tens of thousands of Hmong hilltribe people from Laos. There is

convincing evidence that they had been driven from their historic lands in the highlands by methods aimed at decimating this proud minority group.

The Thailand Medical Program

A medical program started by the International Rescue Committee in January 1976 in Thailand was steadily expanded as the Indochinese refugee population increased. Close to 150,000 refugees were crowded into the camps during 1978. IRC doctors, nurses and paramedics (scores of them refugees trained by IRC) provided medical, public health and special nutritional assistance at the Nong Khai, Sikiew and Aranyaprathet camps.

IRC operates two hospitals in Nong Khai, which has a population of 37,000 refugees from Laos. One has 45 wooden beds (without springs or mattresses) and facilities for examinations, obstetrics, dentistry, pharmacy, laboratory and other medical functions. Maternal and child health services are provided and family planning counseling is available. In January 1979, a typical month, 1,960 patients were examined and treated, and 163 were admitted to the hospital. There were 21 births and two deaths.

The second facility—for Hmong refugees—consists of a large clinic and an attached 54-bed hospital unit. In December 1978, a total of 4,217 patients were seen and 252 were admitted to the hospital. There were 1,748 visits to the out-patient department for wound-cleaning and treatment, and 18 deaths. The difficult problems experienced in the Hmong facility stem from the special hardships of this refugee group. The New York Times published an eyewitness report in November 1978 by IRC's Dr. Dominica P. Garcia which included the following passages:

"Reports from Hmong newcomers are truly distressing. With their little crops destroyed by poison gas, they leave their villages with no food provisions. For weeks they hide in mountain jungles avoiding Vietnamese and Pathet Lao patrols. They eat roots and leaves, sometimes poisonous mushrooms. Nobody dares beg for rice from Lao settlements. Many contract malaria; whiplashes from brambles and bushes get infected and become festering ulcers; their feet are terribly swollen. When enemy troops sight them, they are fired upon

and a number sustain gunshot wounds which, too, get readily infected.

"Out of the thousands who leave the villages only a few hundred reach the Mekong River where more are decimated by drowning. Women with babies traditionally strapped to their backs are so faint with hunger, pain and fear that they lose consciousness while being towed by the stronger members of the family. When they regain consciousness, the babies at their backs have died by drowning.

"The horror and misery of their flight to safety is etched in their blank, tearstained faces. Men and women weep readily at the nightmarish memory of their ordeal. Husbands, wives, children, parents have been lost in the process. Gone is the familiar look of initial elation found among newcomers. One is ready to assume that they know very little the difference between communism and freedom. Their main concern is to escape oppression and annihilation of their tribes.

"The IRC medical team is almost always on the spot to render first aid to the new arrivals. Antibiotics, vitamins, fever pills are literally dropped into the mouths of semi-conscious patients. Abscesses are incised, drained and dressed, ulcers debrided, gunshot wounds cleaned and stitched, recent abrasions painted with disinfectant. Bandage, gauze, cotton and plaster are used by the kilograms. Cleaning salves and tinctures flow. God, they deserve every little help we can give them!"

Resettling the Indochinese

In 1978, the International Rescue Committee resettled more than 4,000 Vietnamese, Cambodians and Laotians in the United States. In 1979, with greater numbers of newcomers being admitted, the IRC will assume the resettlement responsibility for 7,000 to 8,000 of the refugees. The work is carried out at IRC's eleven offices in areas of the highest refugee concentrations. The goal is to absorb the newcomers into the social and economic fabric of American life by providing jobs, housing, educational support, child care, language and vocational training. The Paris office of IRC provided

relief, reunion and resettlement services for many of the Indochinese being admitted to France at the rate of 1,000 a month. In Thailand, an IRC team working out of Bangkok handled the resettlement processing of the refugees for all involved voluntary agencies.

In March 1979, a New York Times article based on national studies included the following facts: the Vietnamese refugees in the United States are scattered in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico; fully 94% of the employable refugees have jobs; more than 90% of their income is from wages and salaries, not public assistance, and fewer than one-third of the households were receiving public assistance of any kind. The article concluded: "It appears likely that with increasing familiarity with the English language and an expanding job market that can allow them to take advantage of their educational and occupational backgrounds, the Vietnamese face a bright future."

An editorial in *The Economist*, the distinguished British publication, had this to say about acceptances of Indochinese refugees:

"Shares have been conspicuously unequal up to now. Some countries with wide open spaces and mixed populations have refused to take a single refugee. The worst examples include Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina and Uruguay. Canada and New Zealand have helped, but not enough. Germany's contribution is out of line with its resources. Sweden and Japan have given money, but closed their doors. As judges even of their own self-interest, these countries are foolish to be so uncharitable; most people enterprising and determined enough to risk their lives on the high seas are likely to make good citizens. Britain can testify that refugees from tyrannies tend to enrich, not impoverish, their host societies. The argument that Vietnam is America's problem or China's or Russia's will not wash. It is every decent human's problem, and it will not be wished away."

In the four years since the communist take-over of Saigon in April 1975, more than 500,000 Indochinese have escaped to countries of the free world. The rate of escapes reached new heights during the early months of 1979: From January through April, more than 75,000 Vietnamese, Laotians and Cambodians became refugees in Malaysia and Thailand. About two-thirds of them were boat people.

The Citizens Commission

In February 1978, an independent Citizens Commission on Indochinese Refugees, organized with the assistance of IRC, conducted a fact-finding survey in eight Southeast Asian nations where the refugees had fled. The Commission was under the leadership of IRC Chairman Leo Cherne and former Undersecretary of State William J. Casey.

The Commission returned with recommendations which were adopted as government policy virtually in their entirety. The admission of 25,000 additional refugees, a special resettlement program for the Cambodians, steps to ensure the rescue of boats in distress by American ships, and the formulation of a long-term refugee policy were among the accepted recommendations. The Assistant to President Carter for Domestic Affairs and Policy, in a letter to Leo Cherne, said: "The recommendations of the Citizens Commission played an important part in the development of our advice to the President. I commend you and your Commission on the fine work that was done on this matter, and am confident that the final Administration policy will meet many of your concerns."

In December 1978, the Commission made a second trip to Southeast Asia. The surge of new refugees and the appalling conditions in refugee camps made it clear that concerted international action was needed to prevent a human disaster. It also became clear that the governments of Thailand and Malaysia—the two major countries of first asylum where 200,000 of the Indochinese were massed—might close their doors to all escapees unless other countries accepted larger numbers of them for resettlement.

On its return, the Commission presented its second report and recommendations to the Executive and Congressional branches of the government. The Attorney General, after consultation with the Congress, authorized parole for 40,000 additional Indochinese refugees through September 1979. Other governments besides France and Australia increased their quotas, and the government of Taiwan offered permanent resettlement to one thousand additional Indochinese.

During its December visit to Malaysia, the Commission had inspected the refugee camps, including the island of Pulau Bidong where 26,000 boat people lived on the edge of disaster on 85 habit-

able acres. The New York Times published an article by Leo Cherne which included the following passage:

"We examined their food 'stocks.' Their skimpy rations would last about a day, with no assurance that more would get through the choppy seas tomorrow. Medicines and drugs in short supply. A meager and polluted water supply, with the dry season a month or so away. Sanitation? Imagine 16 toilets for 26,000 people. In one week, the number of infectious hepatitis cases, 108 of them, had almost doubled. New arrivals sleep on the beaches under heavy monsoon rains."

In April 1979, an IRC medical team went to Malaysia to examine the refugees' plight and to formulate an IRC health and medical program. It was hoped that an IRC presence in Malaysia would pave the way for additional help from other voluntary agencies.

Hong Kong

More than 8,000 Chinese refugees escaping to Hong Kong during 1978 were captured and returned to China, in accordance with the government's deportation policy announced in November 1974. But escapees who manage to elude police authorities are allowed to stay, and it was estimated by Hong Kong authorities that during 1978 between 25,000 and 30,000 people fitted into this category. The massive flow was far greater than the estimated 5,000 successful escapes during 1977.

The exodus accelerated during the early months of 1979. From January through March, more than 7,000 Chinese refugees were captured. A report by the Hong Kong correspondent of the Washington Post quoted Hong Kong authorities as stating that at least 28,000 eluded capture and remained. A large number of the refugees are young, single men and women who risk their lives to swim from China to Hong Kong across Deep Bay or Mirs Bay. Many drown in the attempt. Others escape across the land border or in fishing boats and junks. Commenting on the combined exodus of refugees and legal immigrants from China, a British official in Hong Kong said: "It's bloody frightening."

The tragedy of refugees who are captured and returned to China was described in the following passage from the Washington Post:

"Shum Mei-ying, 22, had gone through a seven-day hike during a typhoon and a one-mile swim across shark-infested waters to escape China and join her husband in Hong Kong. She was semi-conscious, paddling desperately with the help of fellow female-escapees when, just in sight of Hong Kong's shore, all hope vanished. The marine police, under orders to send all refugees back to China, chugged up in a launch and picked the two women out of the water."

IRC continued to carry out its program of refugee assistance started in 1961 in Hong Kong, including the operation of five day nurseries for children of pre-school age, and two hostels to accommodate new refugees until they find jobs. Cash assistance for the refugees, clothing and other forms of emergency aid were provided, as well as counseling services, job and emigration aid.

During 1978, more than 6,000 refugees from Vietnam managed to reach Hong Kong—a thousand miles away—in their frail craft or on rescue boats. The number escalated in 1979, with 14,535 boat people landing in Hong Kong from January through March. Among them were 3,318 Vietnamese aboard the Huey Fong which had not been permitted to dock for a full month.

As larger numbers of boat people entered Hong Kong, and the need for adequate housing intensified, IRC was asked to set up a transit center that would provide temporary quarters for Indo-chinese refugees until they are resettled in other countries. The Center opened in early April, 1979, and within a week was occupied by 578 refugees. When completed, it will have the capacity to house between 4,100 and 4,500 people. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is providing the operating funds.

The European Refugee Program

The major activity of IRC's offices in Europe during 1978 stemmed from the increased flow of refugees from the Soviet Union. A total of 28,864 Russians arrived in Vienna, compared with 16,737 in 1977. From Vienna, their first stop en route to homes elsewhere, about half of the refugees proceeded to Israel, and the rest to other countries, mainly the United States. They included prominent dissidents—scientists, scholars, artists, musicians and writers—many of whom had been harshly persecuted for their human rights activities, applying for emigration, or for being Jews. The Rome, Vienna, Paris



A small boat crowded with Vietnamese refugees was photographed by a passing vessel in the South China Sea. It is not known if the refugees were rescued.



This sad Cambodian girl is a patient at an IRC clinic in a Thailand refugee camp.



At a clinic in Zaire, an IRC doctor holds an Angolan refugee child.



Thousands of Ethiopian refugees, including this man and his grandchild, have fled to other lands to escape persecution and violence.



Among hundreds of Russian refugees helped by IRC is this happy mother and two children at a resettlement office.

and Munich offices, under the direction of IRC European headquarters in Geneva, provided maintenance as well as counseling and resettlement services for 700 Russians, Armenian and Ukrainian refugees during 1978.

During the first-quarter of 1979, the refugee flow from the Soviet Union reached 12,000 and there were forecasts of a yearly total of 50,000. However, six Soviet scientists who had been denied permission to leave criticized the tendency to interpret increased emigration as a general "liberalization" in Soviet policy. They cited an intensification of official anti-Semitic propaganda and government accusations that Jewish dissidents were spies.

More than a thousand other East European refugees were also helped at IRC's European offices in 1978. They came from Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Rumania and Yugoslavia. Several hundred were assisted to resettle in the United States. This work of IRC, in both Europe and the United States, was generously supported by the American Council for Judaism Philanthropic Fund.

Of particular concern to IRC was the plight of the "Charter 77" group in Czechoslovakia, set up three years ago to monitor human rights in their country. In May 1978, the London Times published excerpts of the latest Charter document to reach the West. It stated that in recent years 20,000 to 30,000 human rights advocates have been jailed for an average period of three months. Conditions are harsh and wardens frequently assault prisoners. New arrests continued through 1978. Among the arrested were three young Czechs who had committed crimes of "incitement"—supporting the human rights movement and possessing tapes of a banned Prague pop group.

Nevertheless, some Czechoslovak dissidents were allowed to enter Vienna, where 43 of them requested IRC assistance during 1978.

Latin American Refugees

Refugees from Cuba accounted for the bulk of the relief and resettlement assistance provided for Latin American refugees during 1978. The number of Cubans entering Spain had decreased to a trickle early in 1978 but started rising sharply in July. During the last half of the year, 795 Cubans entered Spain, compared to only 267 from the period of January through June.

The IRC office in Madrid was active in helping the refugees. More than 1,000 applications for admission to the United States were processed (for those in Spain prior to 1978 as well as the newcomers) and a total of 326 were resettled by IRC. Altogether, with support from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and from the Cuban community in the United States, the IRC office in Madrid provided resettlement, counseling, relief services and child care for more than 3,000 of the exiles.

In the fall of 1978, the Cuban government started releasing limited numbers of political prisoners whose cause IRC has long espoused. The first group consisted of a number of women who were permitted to go to Venezuela. In October, Castro admitted to the existence of 3,400 political prisoners, though the number may safely be assumed to be far greater. Among those still in jail is Huber Matos, the Cuban teacher who was imprisoned in 1959 for expressing criticism of Castro's policies. In November, disturbed by reports that the U.S. government might act slowly to admit Cuban prisoners, the IRC Board of Directors sent a telegram to President Carter and Attorney General Bell which included the following passage:

"It was with deep concern that we read newspaper reports to the effect that the United States will admit about 50 prisoners and 100 family members a month. We cannot believe that this is your position. At that rate the release of Cuba's prisoners will take many years, and Castro will be able to blame our lack of compassion for an utterly unnecessary extension of the suffering of thousands of his opponents. Moreover, unwarranted delays on our part harbor the danger of Castro's reneging on his offer. Let it not be said that we were niggardly and callous, in disregard of promises made and never revoked. Let it not be said that we were unmoved by the plight of suffering people, many of whom have languished in Cuban jails for close to 20 years. If there ever has been a need for speedy and effective action, it is now."

On November 28, the Attorney General announced that the United States would admit 3,500 Cuban political prisoners (including family members) at a rate of 400 a month. But in the months that followed, only a small number of Cuban prisoners and ex-prisoners were admitted: 297 of them made it, accompanied by 413

members of their families. The Miami office of IRC provides resettlement and counseling services for those who seek help.

Of the South American refugees assisted during 1978 by the IRC, Chileans were the largest group. An IRC representative had been sent to Buenos Aires in 1977 to facilitate the emigration of refugees from Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay and other countries who found themselves in Argentina and had applied for admission to the United States. Some had undergone torture. But even though a "parole" program for South American political refugees and detainees was announced, the movement was slow; during all of 1978 only about one hundred of the refugees were able to come. The movement of detainees — people arrested in Argentina and held on the basis of administrative decisions—was even slower. By the end of the year only two such detainees had been permitted by the Argentinian government to leave for the United States. Both were sponsored by the IRC.

IRC also continued to assist political refugees from Haiti by providing emergency aid, job placement, family reunion services and assistance in deportation and adjustment-of-status proceedings. Although the harsh oppression practiced by the late Papa Doc Duvalier has lessened, Haiti continued to function as a police state, allowing no open voices of dissent.

Refugees from Angola

A prolonged and disastrous drought during the normal rainy season of 1977-1978 aggravated the plight of the several hundred thousand Angolan refugees in Zaire. The rains finally came in October 1978 but were so heavy that the plantings were washed away, resulting in a virtual famine. IRC was therefore compelled to expand its feeding program in cooperation with its Catholic agency partners, importing large quantities of food from the United States. Of particular concern to IRC were the 15,000 refugees from the Angolan enclave of Cabinda.

At the same time, IRC expanded its medical work for the Angolans in close cooperation with the French volunteer group, Médecins sans Frontières. One doctor was assigned to the region of Cataracts, where 90,000 new refugees arrived between December 1977 and the summer of 1978. Another doctor worked out of the

hospital in Tshela where he serves 300 refugees a month and provides outreach services for more than 10,000 of them.

A third IRC doctor established a medical post including three dispensaries at Lukula, in the Bas-Zaire region, an area with a refugee population of 20,000. Each dispensary treated about 1,000 patients a month, and provided a high protein diet for undernourished children, many of whom are close to death from starvation. A pre-natal clinic is maintained by refugee nurses trained by IRC, and plans for sanitation and health education classes were implemented in early 1979.

The Ugandan Tragedy

By the end of 1978, more than 100,000 people had escaped from the reign of terror conducted by Uganda's Idi Amin. Had they not fled, they would in all probability have been among the reported 300,000 Ugandans murdered by Amin's cohorts since 1971.

Thousands of the Ugandan refugees are in Kenya, and it is there that the International Rescue Committee has established a program of medical care and educational support. An IRC clinic opened in 1977 in Nairobi. It received a monthly average of 1,110 patient visits during 1978 and early 1979. The majority of the patients were Ugandans, but many were Ethiopians who had fled the violence and persecution in their country. The clinic is staffed by refugee doctors, nurses and aides, in keeping with IRC's traditional self-help policy of utilizing the skills of refugees to assist their countrymen. In western Kenya, IRC employs Ugandan exiles at local clinics and hospitals.

During 1978, IRC made it possible for many Ugandan students to continue their education in Kenya by employing teachers for the schools. A generous grant from the Ford Foundation enabled IRC to expand its work substantially. Graduate fellowships were established for Ugandan refugees at African universities and placement services provided for refugee professionals. Primary school reception centers were set up and more refugee teachers and students were placed in secondary schools. IRC also employed Ugandan social workers to counsel refugees.

The fall of Idi Amin and his government in April 1979 opened up the the prospect of at least one refugee group being able to go

home. However, the economy of Uganda was in such pitiful shape that no thought could be given to an immediate return of the refugees in Kenya.

Other IRC Activities

Thousands of Ethiopians have fled to other countries to escape the violence and persecution raging in their country. Next to the Ugandans, they represented in Kenya the major caseload of the IRC operation. At the same time, IRC European offices assisted Ethiopian refugees who had fled to Italy and France, and each month about 20 of them have been admitted to the United States under IRC auspices.

The take-over of Afghanistan by dictatorial forces sympathetic to the Soviet Union led many Afghans to flee their country. Several families were assisted by IRC to come to the United States, and more were assisted at the European offices.

More than 100 refugees from North Africa were helped in Europe by the Paris and Munich offices. Scholarships were provided for exiled African students.

During 1978, refugees from the following countries were helped by IRC: Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Bulgaria, Burma, Cambodia, Chile, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, Hungary, Iran, Iraq (Armenians and Kurds), Laos, Lebanon, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Poland, Rhodesia-Zimbabwe, Rumania, Somalia, Soviet Union (Russians, Ukrainians, Armenians), South Africa, Syria, Tunis, Uganda, Uruguay, Vietnam and Yugoslavia.

Financial Report

The following is a summary of financial operations for the year 1978, prepared on the basis of an audit of IRC's accounts and records by Loeb & Troper, Certified Public Accountants, 270 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, completed on April 18, 1979. The form of the financial report, prepared on an accrual basis, is in compliance with the Uniform Standards of Accounting and Financial Reporting for Voluntary Health and Welfare Organizations as approved by the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid, Department of State.

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF INCOME AND OPERATING COSTS [Year Ended December 31, 1978]

INCOME	
Contributions	\$1,922,771
Bequests	9,001
Repayments from refugees	253,493
Capital funds campaign	None
Interest earned	79,022
Miscellaneous	11,772
Grants from governmental and intergovernmental agencies	4,478,177
TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT & REVENUE	\$6,754,236
EXPENDITURES	
Program Services	\$6,369,124
Management & General Expenses	\$303,983
Fund-raising	
(a) General Support	\$252,425
(b) Capital funds campaign	None
Total Fund-raising	\$252,425
Total Supporting Services	556,408
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$6,925,532

PROGRAM SERVICES [Year Ended December 31, 1978]

UNITED STATES, CANADA, LATIN AMERICA

(a) Cash Expenditures:	
Resettlement, Relief and Rehabilitation of Refugees	\$3,138,016
Public Education	134,611
TOTAL	\$3,272,627

OVERSEAS

(a) Cash Expenditures:	
Resettlement & Relief of Refugees — Europe	\$1,407,184
Refugee Programs — Thailand	806,635
Resettlement, Relief & Day Nurseries — Hong Kong	427,491
Kenya & Zaire (Ugandan and Angolan Refugees)	455,187
TOTAL — OVERSEAS	\$3,096,497
TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES	\$6,369,124

[The certified financial report is available on request from the International Rescue Committee.]

Acknowledgments

The extent of International Rescue Committee programs was greater in 1978 and the early part of 1979 than during any period since the founding of IRC 45 years ago. The work of IRC included emergency relief (food, clothing, shelter), medical assistance, resettlement services, child care, rehabilitation aid, training and self-help programs, job placement, educational support and counseling relating to emigration and asylum problems.

Important to IRC's worldwide refugee effort was the cooperation and support of many governmental and intergovernmental agencies. Among these groups were the Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs of the State Department; the newly-founded Office of the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs; the Department of Health, Education and Welfare; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration.

IRC programs were coordinated with many private groups, including the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service and its Subcommittee for Refugee and Migration Affairs. In the United States and many other countries, citizens groups and private voluntary agencies assisted and participated in IRC's refugee work. The dedicated services and skills of individual volunteers, in particular the members of the IRC Board of Directors, were vital to the success of the relief and resettlement programs.

The existence of IRC as an independent voluntary agency would not be possible, however, without essential financial support provided by foundations, corporations, unions, community groups and especially by thousands of concerned individuals in the United States and other parts of the world. To all of these generous and public-spirited people, the International Rescue Committee and the refugees who were helped are deeply grateful.

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INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE
386 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016

Interim Draft of a study by The International Rescue Committee Commission
on Indochinese Refugees, Feb 18, 1978 Bangkok, Thailand.

The IRC assembled a group of independent and experienced citizens
representing
expressive of a wide diversity of American religious, political, profes-
sional and economic life. Their conclusions do not necessarily reflect
the views of the IRC or any on the various associations *organizations* of which they are
a part. They were moved to join in these efforts by *these basic* ~~a~~ simple consideration.

Within the last two years more than a hundred thousand men, women
and children have fled Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, leaving *everything* ~~all~~ behind,
risking their lives for the possibility of freedom in an uncertain future.

This Commission has undertaken to learn as much as possible about this
human tragedy, including the desperate effort of people who flee by boat
from Vietnam and of whom it is estimated only 40 percent live to complete
their heroic effort.

To perform our responsibility we have talked to officials, refugees,
and average citizens in Washington, New York, Seattle, Hong Kong, Manila,
Singapore, Indonesia, Bangkok and in many locations in Thailand.

Our purpose is to bring our findings and recommendation to the at-
tention of the U.S. Department of State, the White House, the Attorney

General of the United States, the National Security Advisor to the President,
the two important committees of the U.S. Congress most involved in these
matters, and most importantly to the American people. ^{international community}

There are a number of commanding facts which govern the flight of the
refugees from the three Indochinese countries.

No understanding of the appropriate role for the US in assisting these
people is possible without clarifying these facts. There is little con-
troversy or subjectivity about them.

There was great division among the American people about our role in
Indochina and among the members of this Commission some gave essential
support to the US involvement, others differed in part and others altogether
opposed American military participation.

However, there is no difference among us about our particular respon-
sibility to the refugees who have fled Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. Some
of these refugees assisted the US effort in a civilian or military capacity,
Still others served military and civilian instruments of their own country.
In addition, many Vietnamese nationalists abstained from any association
with the US government or their own governments while actively seeking to
promote the independence and freedom of their nations. Their efforts were

expressed through a variety of cultural, religious and political organizations which were deeply committed to the protection of the free, diverse and national character of their societies. Some of these, like the An Quang Buddhists, actively opposed particular regimes in South Vietnam while tenaciously resisting the Communist efforts.

Nation
Our Commission ~~of independent and diverse citizens~~ (*expressive of a*
wide diversity of American religious, political and economic life) shares a particular concern for scholars, students, religious leaders and others whose previous independence of thought marks them as dangerously independent ~~treats~~ *h* to the new order. They face the most severe penalties and repression and, on occasion, lengthy imprisonment and death.

The Buddhist abbots, monks and followers who protested the actions *h* of the US and their own governments remain religious voices *h* expressing compassion and a meritorious life in which each individual must devote his *h* *rather than give ultimate loyalty to the role of an authoritarian state.* efforts in the service of God's goodness, They are inherently a danger to the new order and, therefore, face special hazards.

Certain sects and ethnic tribes bore the heaviest cost in casualties inflicted by the Viet Cong in Vietnam and by the forces of Hanoi in Laos simply because of their tenacious wish to preserve their ethnic identity,

living on the soil to which they and their ancestors are part; they seek to preserve the religious beliefs and practices to which they have adhered for centuries. Among these, The Montagnards in the hills of Vietnam, the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao in southern Vietnam, and the Hmong hill people of Laos are among those whose survival is endangered less for any association with the US or any regime in Vietnam than for the tenacity of their own enduring devotion to their religion and culture. In passing, it must be noted that the Hmong hill people of Laos did indeed suffer the highest casualties of any single community in any of the three countries of Indochina and nearly a quarter of their small surviving population are now refugees in Thailand.

Another fact central to our understanding the difficulties these refugees encounter requires us to recall that there are long standing suspicions, enmities and occasional armed hostilities among the Lao, the Cambodians and the Vietnamese and these long standing passions make return to their own countries as well as resettlement among neighbouring countries difficult. For example, the present serious military operations between Vietnam and Cambodian is itself an expression of ancient hostility despite the measure of ideology they share.

There is, regrettably, a pervasive fear and antagonism in all levels of Thai life against virtually all Vietnamese, including those who have most recently arrived in Thailand after a hazardous effort to escape Vietnam by boat.

The establishment of diplomatic relations between Thailand and Vietnam holds no promise of an altered attitude toward those Vietnamese who now seek sanctuary in Thailand. We have encountered unanimous expressions among the Thai officials and private citizens of that country that no prospect for resettlement exists in Thailand for the boat people now or in the future.

reluctant
There is the marginal willingness among the Thai authorities to offer temporary refuge providing the UNHCR contributes the necessary costs involved in that process and on condition that rapid movement of these people to third countries can be assured to Thailand.

The fact that boats are occasionally pushed back to sea reflects episodes of uninhibited hostility moved by a fear Thais have about their security. More importantly, we believe there is a double-pronged political purpose which this hostility serves.

The sharp limits, even to temporary sanctuary, are counted on to vividly discourage other boat people from attempting a landing in Thailand. The

recent short term drop in such boat landings in Thailand and an apparent increase in the numbers who travel the longer distance to Malaysia ^{and elsewhere} provides at least temporary evidence of the effectiveness of the Thai policy.

We believe that the greater purpose of the Thai attitude toward the boat people is aimed in particular at the U.S. The Thai doubt that there exists an intention in the US to accept a continuing number of the boat cases and are greatly disturbed by the length of time involved in processing even those boat cases which are destined for US resettlement. The result of this is simply to leave the Thai uncertain of how durable and reliable the US resettlement effort will be. They see themselves compelled to endure the presence of the disliked and ancient enemy for longer periods than appear fair or reasonable to the Thai. Communism is now too close and uncomfortable a fact to Thailand to dissipate their fear that these boat people are not simply masquerading invaders.

That we and others have found no credible basis for the anxiety the

- Thai genuinely feel is quite irrelevant to them. We did after all depart

and we are not permitted the luxury of believing that change or ameliorating attitudes in Thailand will soften the outlook for those who risk their lives to escape by the only available route, the sea.

Finally there is the single all-pervasive fact which dominates this human tragedy.

The end of the war in Vietnam solidified the control of three communist governments, which are determined to assure their control beyond any possibility of challenge, expunging all who might conceivably oppose their power or purposes. The three governments are in different degree remorseless in their efforts to remove all influences of the previous period if they are to exercise total control of the minds and bodies of their citizens. Vestiges of a colonial past, remnants of capitalist motivations, "wrong", stubborn and independent thought are mercilessly hunted down, rooted out and punished in the ubiquitous reeducation centers.

The three communist governments have each introduced draconian measures to assure these objectives. There has been a continuous escalation of these punitive ~~these~~ measures in Vietnam and Laos during the last three years.

However, the purposes and practices of the Cambodian Communist, the Khmer Rouge, were not gradually introduced. At the moment of their victory, and in one incredible step, the Khmer Rouge in April 1975 took a series of

actions which for brutality and inhumanity have only one parallel in the last fifty years.

The Khmer Rouge in one day set into motion a genocidal program which has cost the lives of a greater proportion of the total population of Cambodia (now Democratic Kampuchea) than any disaster visited on any other

national population in this century. Only of the Nazi "Final Solution" *directed against the Jewish people* between 1939 and 1945 can it be said that the holocaust inflicted a greater cost upon a particular people.

To even vaguely understand the flight of refugees from Cambodia to Thailand, as well as to understand why so few can in fact successfully survive that crossing, an inadequate repetition of the Cambodian horror must be summarized.

On April 17, 1975 the leaders of the Khmer Rouge ordered all residents of every town or city in that country of 8 million to leave their homes and possessions and to evacuate those cities within a twenty-four hour period.

Any remaining would be shot summarily. Phnom Penh alone had a 3-1/2 million population swollen by hordes of Cambodians who had fled before the advancing Khmer Rouge toward the hoped for relative safety of the city. The total number of people in all the cities obligated to leave instantly on a forced

march on foot a minimum of 50 miles into the interior is conservatively estimated at half of the total population of Cambodia.

A handful of western journalists held under forced detention in Phnom Penh reported the events which took place after they were freed and evacuated by truck to Thailand a month later. There were no significant differences in their reports to the press of their respective countries.

The aged, the babies in arms, the crippled and infirm, together with the healthy, swarmed on foot in an indescribably slow panicked march into the jungle toward an unknown future. Neither food nor water, except as one could hastily gather and hand carry these provisions, were provided anywhere along the march. Surgeons in the hospital in Phnom Penh in the midst of internal surgery were compelled to leave their unfinished work and join the evacuation of the city. The seriously sick and the hospitalized were either carried out on litters, thrown from the windows or simply left to die.

Women in the final phase of their pregnancies gave birth along the jungle roadside. The weaker among the millions fleeing fell by the wayside and were left to die. Each passing day added to the toll of the dead, un-

buried along the roadside. The death of the newborn, the aged, the infirm, those whose thirst could not be slaked in what at any time is a steaming climate added to a total of death conservatively estimated at between 400,000 and 700,000 during this first phase of these peoples revolution. Several ~~diplomats recently permitted for the first time to visit Phnom Penh and~~ Siam Reap uniformly report that both cities in their entirety are utterly desolate and as utterly deserted as Ankor Wat. The decaying remnants of Phnom Penh, which once had a bustling three million people, are now briefly populated during the daylight hours by several thousand who are trucked in and out daily to perform functions required by the state.

There was a design to this madness. It was and remains the intention, unique to the Cambodia revolutionaries, to create a "new socialist man".

Had there been only this first phase in the Cambodian plan, a chapter in the annals of man's inhumanity of nearly unequalled savagery would long ring down the corridors of history.

However, the creation of the "new socialist man" next involved the most wanton disregard of family ties, simple decency, the minimal needs to sustain life and finally life itself. Families are torn from each other,

children from parents, husbands from wives. Work of the most exhausting character involving hours beyond endurance is required of all. Food, always meager, is in proportion to output. The slightest protest or even question often is answered summarily with the gun. When the dark makes further work in the fields impossible, reeducation drills are designed to imprint the only acceptable answers to the new society's permissible questions. The slightest real or imagined infactions are publicly used to select a group of victims for summary execution-by rifle, knife or axe. Entire work crews often do not return from their jungle clearing, rice planting, village building or other assignments. Money of any character has been totally abolished and, indeed, the neutral diplomats who recently visited Phnom Penh and Siem Reap reported paper currency still blowing casually among the gathering debris in the deserted streets. The shops and stalls of the evacuated towns were in the very ^First days looted by the soldiers of the Khmer Rouge.

These details, gruesome as they are, are woefully incomplete to describe a society which may literally have no previous historic equal - a society shaping its survivors to accept the unyielding necessity and unflinching reality

of omnipresent fear, absolute authority, truth beyond question or challenge,
and remorseless discipline. The object is man as a machine functioning in
the solitary interest of a state without culture, religion, or civilized
restraint.



VIETNAM News

THE VOICE OF
NON-COMMUNIST VIETNAMESE

VIETNAMESE INFORMATION BUREAU
3105 CREST AVENUE CHEVERLY, MARYLAND 20785
TELEPHONE: (301) 773-5435

A PIECE OF LAND FOR THE REFUGEES

AMERICAN JEWISH

The refugee situation in Southeast Asia is desperate and cries out for a new approach. The old approach is based upon the assumption that the exodus of "misfits" would subside with time and soon come to an end. Therefore, no long range planning would be necessary.

Today, nearly four years after the "end" of the war, the outflow of refugees has not diminished, it has instead increased many fold in the past months despite a particularly stormy monsoon season. And it is increasing even more sharply with the end of the monsoon season, despite the thousands who died at sea from thirst, hunger or drowning when their boats sank, or from Thai pirates and communist patrol boats. It is likely to increase because a/ Communist officials are openly selling "escape visas" to refugees who can afford the price; b/ widespread hunger, harsher political repression, regimentation and suppression of human rights, inefficient control and corruption; c/ universal conscription of young men and women for the war against Cambodia and the threat of war against China.

The result of this is that during certain weeks in December 1978, refugees were arriving in Malaysia at the rate of 1,000 per day. Some 500 "boat people" perished off the coast of Malaysia when their leaky boats capsized after having been refused landing by Malaysian police. One must recall that the Malaysians have been hospitable at first, but waves after waves of refugees turned them hostile.

Indochinese refugees are not a Malaysian, a Thai or a U.S. problem. The responsibility to bring assistance to people in distress rests on the shoulders of the human community and not on any particular nation or organization. Because of past involvement and a hospitable tradition, the U.S.A. should take the initiative in efforts to help rescue and find homes for the homeless. It is also the responsibility of men and women of good will and compassion around the world to bring assistance to

fellowmen in grave danger for their lives.

In this respect, the French set out a good example. A project called "Un Bateau pour le Vietnam" (A Ship for Vietnam) sponsored by hundreds of prominent Frenchmen, among those are philosopher Jean Paul Sartre, actress Brigitte Bardot, Socialist Party Gen. Secretary Leonel Jospin. American sponsors of the project include AFL-CIO President George Meany, CRIA President Homer Jack and Dr. Howard Schomer from the National Council of Churches. British Labor Party Senator Alex Lyon and Russian poetess Natalya Gorbunovskaya are among the sponsors.

That "Ship for Vietnam" is reportedly on its way to the South China Sea to pick up refugees. But once loaded with refugees, the French compassionate ship will not know where to unload them in order to come back to sea to pick up more. Two earlier projects, one undertaken by the CRIA in conjunction with a Paris based Vietnamese Buddhist group and another by World Vision encountered the same problem, which stymies any effort to rescue refugees at sea.

A piece of land for refugees is urgently needed.

It will save thousands of lives, those who die dried up in their boats or "resettled" at the bottom of the sea. Humanity cannot simply watch it by. It is extremely urgent to set up a place, an island or a certain acreage of land somewhere in the Pacific or S.E.A. where refugees will be permitted to land.

It is suggested that the U.S.A. and the UN High Commission on Refugees and other governments, organizations and individuals now involved in assisting the refugees explore the possibility of setting up such a place. That place will receive refugees picked up by ships, or who have reached by boat the shores of a S.E.A. nation.

When such a receiving center will be established, Thai and Malaysian governments will no longer push refugee boats back to sea because they will know that the refugees will be quickly moved out of their countries. Passing ships will be more ready to pick up refugees in distress once they know where to unload them.

With such a receiving center, the U.S., France, Canada, Australia... will no longer be obligated to take refugees on an emergency basis, such was the case with the Hai-Hong passengers. After the Hai Hong, there is the Huey Fong off HongKong and the Tung An off Manila, each carrying from 2,000 to 2,500 refugees. No one would bet that the Tung An will be the last.

With such a receiving center, the sense of emergency and crisis will ease. The US Attorney General will not have to resort to his special parole authority every three months or so to meet emergency situations which may arise every month.

The alternative would be to let the refugees live indefinitely on their freighters.

US State Department officials reported at the Dec. 11/78

Geneva meeting on refugees that it takes \$1 million to resettle 280 refugees in the U.S.A. This \$1 million can resettle many more refugees in S.E.A. It was also learned from the Jan. 3/79 Washington Post that a congressional group led by Rep. Lester Wolff that the Asian Development Bank has agreed to provide funds to set up "self-sustaining" refugee resettlements in S.E.A.

Perhaps the Asian Bank can finance the piece of land for the refugees. Admittedly, it would not be easy to find such a piece of land. No nation or people will be willing to sell or donate land. But there is no easy solution to the refugee problem. There is not even a "good solution", only solutions that on balance, have less disadvantages than others -- or no solution at all.

The nation which will eventually agree to provide the refugees with a piece of its land deserves our deep gratitude and will be hailed as the savior of the "boat people". The money now used to buy food for the refugees will be better used to buy building materials and farm equipments for the refugees to start earning a living from the land.

The place will serve as a reception center, a half-way house and for some, a permanent home. Self-sustaining communities can be created in the new place. Those who qualify for other countries and who apply for it will be processed out of the landing center without the rush and hustle that characterized the Hai-Hong resettlement.

The piece of land will be placed under international trusteeship or the United Nations, so the burden will be more equally shared among the assisting nations. It will take the burden off some S.E.A. nations which, because of their proximity to Indochina, are being inundated with refugees. Refugees now languishing in refugee camps and living on UN handouts can be moved to the new location, where they can start earning a living.

The Refugee's voice

The above suggestion has been forwarded to me by the "boat people" themselves who asked me to convey it to the "competent authorities".

Another suggestion from the part of the refugees is to allow the refugee's voice to be heard at meetings on refugees. Strangely enough, the fate and future of hundreds of thousands of refugees are being discussed and decided without any input from the part of the refugees. Once again, it is assumed that the officials (UN, State Department, the Volags, Congressional staff etc...) know what is best for the refugees, what their needs are and are acting in the best interests of the refugees. To a certain extent, this is true. But the rescue and resettlement are likely to produce happier results if refugees will be consulted and their needs and aspirations taken into account.

President Ford's Advisory Committee on Refugees.

In June 1975, the White House set up an Advisory Committee on Refugees chaired by former Ambassador John Eisenhower. Twenty six Indochinese refugees, mostly Vietnamese, were invited to participate. It was just

that, an advisory body. Nevertheless, during the resettlement of the 1975 wave of refugees, it fulfilled its role of providing the refugees with a channel through which they could convey their views, needs, grievances and suggestions to the government and officials in charge of their resettlement. After a few meetings held at the White House, the refugees were told to elect three spokesmen. Two Vietnamese and one Cambodian were elected, this writer being one of the two Vietnamese. The committee was terminated toward the end of 1976 when the resettlement of the first wave of refugees was completed.

Today, under President Carter, no such advisory committee exists. Between the assisted and the assisting people there is a formidable wall that the refugees cannot pierce. When the Geneva convention on refugees was about to be convened, this writer complained about the lack of a refugee voice in the deliberations, a high ranking official of a voluntary agency (a very good one) reassured me "I'm going there. And all the voluntary agencies will be there", he said. My reply was "Voluntary agencies are voluntary agencies, not refugees."

One question will be asked: How the refugee representatives will be selected? There is a precedent. In 1975, the White House invited 26 refugees from various backgrounds and various refugee camps. They deliberated for several days, there were a number of meetings before the election of the spokesmen took place. The advisory committee had a large number of American members, among those were AFL-CIO Pres. George Meany, Washington Governor S. Evans, a number of doctors and business executives. President Ford was concerned about the mental health of the refugees and about finding employment for them. A high ranking White House aide, Mr. Walter Kallaur put together the Indochinese section of the committee, with great skill and understanding. Mr. Kallaur himself is the son of a Russian refugee. Significantly, no general, cabinet minister or ambassador of the former régime was invited. Mr Kallaur is now on President Carter's staff.

A new, enlarged refugee electorate can be formed, using the same method, or using computer to pick up refugee names at random from a roster. Boat people are arriving in the U.S.A. at the rate of several thousands a month, there will not be any difficulty in forming a refugee electorate.

Dear Editor, since there is no other channel available to us to convey our views to the President, we hope you will print this letter. Our letters to the President usually got nowhere. We received only general, serialized replies. It is not unusual for several refugees to receive identical replies, when they write, say, about human rights, or any other subjects.

Sincerely

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