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Carol Shellenbarger
Iowa State University

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People without a Country

by Carol Shellenbarger, H. Ec. 3

Ladislav is 10 years old. He is a promising and intelligent boy who ordinarily would have a bright future. Yet Ladislav's future doesn't look very bright, for he was born and lives in a refugee camp.

Ladislav, his two sisters, three brothers and parents live in a small hut with two rooms. The father is an invalid, work is insufficient, education limited and their very existence is cut off from the world around them.

Uprooted From Home

More than two million human beings throughout the world are living the shadowy half-existence of refugees. These people have been uprooted from their homes and traditional societies.

Most of them left their homelands in fear — fear of the horrors of war, revolution and persecution.

They possess neither home nor country, some owning only a worn suitcase, a few blankets and a shred of self respect.

In hopes of improving conditions for refugees, the United Nations has declared from June 1959 to June 1960 World Refugee Year. Fifty-nine nations, including the United States, agreed to support the United Nations' program. The aims of the program are:

- To focus interest on the refugee problem and encourage financial contributions

Encourage Opportunities

- To encourage additional opportunities for refugees on a purely humanitarian basis

One of the main goals of the plan is to integrate into Europe the refugees living in camps more than ten years.

There are 120 refugee camps in Europe, located in Greece, Austria, West Germany and Italy. More than 28,000 refugees live in these camps, the majority having spent at least ten years there.

Most are refugees from Communist countries, but some older ones were taken from their homes in the days of Hitler's mass deportations.

Under 14-Years

One fourth of the refugees are under 14 years old.

Most of the camps in Germany and Austria are crowded but well run. The refugees live in clean, but dreary, rebuilt barracks. Only five to ten per cent have found employment, but most manage to live relatively well with help coming from welfare groups.

In Greece and Italy, however, the situation is not as good. Many refugees live in cramped and squalid quarters, former factories or even war-damaged abandoned buildings which provide little privacy or comfort. There is little chance for work.

The refugees who live in these European camps need housing, vocational training, loans, counseling and medical aid.

A less hopeful condition is found in the British colony of Hong Kong where over a million Chinese sought refuge from Communist China. One out of three persons in Hong Kong is a refugee!

Thousands live in poverty, forming communities of hillside shacks patched together from old pieces of tin, bamboo and bits of wood. Many sleep on top of buildings or set up housekeeping beneath stairways.

One third of the children die from some form of tuberculosis. Some help reaches the refugees from the United States, which sends $5,000,000 annually in food from surplus stocks.

Algerian refugees study under crowded, unhygienic conditions in a Tunis dormitory. W. U. S. supports a program of aid to these students.

Algerian refugees, numbering 180,000, in North Africa are living under extremely primitive conditions. About 80 per cent of these refugees are women, nursing mothers, aged and children.

Housing is hard to find. Some find shelter in tents; others build temporary mud huts, but a great many sleep in the open. Many of the refugees get less than 1,600
calories daily, although they receive some emergency food from the United States and other nations.

There are few employment prospects for these refugees, and under-nourishment and lack of housing are their most pressing problems.

One visitor offered a few pieces of rock candy to some Algerian youngsters in Tunisia. Children crowded around by the scores, shouting, with frantic outstretched hands. This was no casual request for candy; this was hunger.

Price tags on some of the services your financial contributions can provide:

- $36.00 — provides trade training for a Hong Kong refugee.
- 65.00 — supplies medical assistance to a physically handicapped refugee in Austria.
- 120.00 — provides carpentry tools and materials for an Algerian refugee.
- 200.00 — installation grant to buy household furnishings for a refugee family.
- 260.00 — will reestablish a skilled refugee as a watchmaker.

Housing and food are the greatest problems for these people. Successful attempts have been made to make these refugees self-supporting through training and small grants.

One refugee problem almost solved is that of Hungarians who fled after the 1956 uprising. Public feeling was so sympathetic that money and goods were donated in great quantities.

Many refugees have been fortunate in finding a place to live in freedom, to work and to have enough food in the United States.

Some who immigrate to America run into economic recession, lose jobs and hear discriminatory remarks. But in general, with hard work, they find this country lives up to its reputation as a land of opportunity.

A few “lucky” refugees still living in camps have not had their spirit and faith broken by many years of refugee-camp living. They have not yet lost their optimism or their desire to leave the camp and build a real home.

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**Foster Parent Plan Aids Needy Children**

*By Marcena Christian, H. Ec. 3*

Min Choong Sun and Chung Kab Jo, two South Korean children caught in the strife and struggle left from war have had their “eyes opened wide” by the kindness and support of their foster parents — all 100 of them! Min Choong Sun’s “parents” are the members of Beacons, the service honorary recognizing the outstanding independent sophomore women in scholarship and leadership.

**Sorority Adopted**

Chi Omega sorority on campus adopted Chung Kab Jo several years ago, through the Foster Parent Plan. Chung Kab Jo eagerly looks forward to news from her American parents — and the Chi O’s cherish the pictures and letters that “their little girl” sends.

The Foster Parent Plan selects children who are homeless or from needy families in both Europe and Asia for interested families or groups. The parents’ contributions — average donation is $150 per year — provide finances for the child’s education plus food and little extras.

**Min Received**

For instance, through the plan, Min Choong Sun received one month five pencils, one box of crayons, a jacket, a sweater, and a pair of rubber shoes and a small amount of money.

Min Choong Sun, his mother, one brother, and one sister live in one room. In their fight for survival, it has been necessary to rent the other two rooms of the house. The rental rate is $4.50 per month — a far cry from being sufficient support for five people!

**Mother Ill**

His mother is very ill, but cannot seek medical aid because she would be unable to pay for it. Despite her sickness, she manages to run a small business, selling candies to the children in the streets. She makes less than 25¢ per day.

Min Choong Sun’s letters to his parents are translated in New York City and forwarded to Ames. In a recent letter he told about being racing champion of his sixth grade athletic club, and his shivers from recalling the ninth anniversary of the Korean War. “We had a lot of activities to recollect this day in our country” wrote the boy whose father was killed in that same war.