REFUGEE SERVICES OF THE
AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE:
AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

by
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Reasons for AFSC Concern

A generally accepted definition of an international refugee is a person who is outside his country of origin or usual residence for reasons beyond his control and is unable or unwilling, for fear of persecution, to return. By and large, activities here described refer to this group, though victims of war and of natural disaster within their own countries have been included in some instances. It was inevitable that Friends should be concerned about such people. Aside from the basic humanitarian consideration, refugees are the result of conflict situations, always a major Quaker concern, and neglect of their problems leads to greater future conflict. Thus they present an issue inextricably bound up with the quest for a just and peaceful world. Their needs, moreover, are likely to be uniquely pressing because of their being without the protection of a country and cut off from home, relatives, and friends. Even greater than their need for practical aid, which Friends are wont to supply on the basis of greatest need without regard to nationality, creed or politics, is their need for spiritual reassurance. Refugees have suffered violation of that human dignity which Friends consider the basic right of all mankind.

Beginning of AFSC Refugee Program in the 1930s

Two streams of suffering humanity, one fleeing from northern Europe, the other from the south, brought about the beginnings of AFSC services for refugees. As early as 1931 the Quaker Center in Berlin was being approached for help by people suffering under anti-Semitism and hoping that Quakers, whose post-war relief work was well remembered, could help them to escape. In 1932 funds began to be sent from AFSC headquarters in Philadelphia for their aid. As the Nazi government took over and persecution mounted through the years, other centers began to feel the pressure of refugees in the various surrounding countries, and they, too, turned to "Philadelphia" for help. During this same period of the thirties the AFSC program that had been established in 1937 to give relief and services on both sides of the Spanish Civil War developed into a refugee program, as the Nationalist victory sent hundreds of thousands of Loyalist refugees north across the Pyrenees into France. AFSC workers followed to help in the refugee camps established there.

Centers abroad requested help not only for refugee programs there but also for bringing migrants to the United States. Various members of the headquarters staff were drawn into this work and in April, 1937, a Friend on the faculty of Bryn Mawr College, who for years had been maintaining personally an informal refugee service, was appointed adviser on refugee and immigration cases. This marked the beginning of an official refugee service, but it was not until the fall of 1938 that a Refugee Service Committee was formed to set up a staff and regular program. By 1939 the work of the Committee on Spain, which had come to focus largely on refugee problems, was amalgamated with that of the Refugee Service Committee. From that time to the present day the AFSC has continued to be deeply involved with services to ever-changing streams of refugees, whether known as refugees, displaced persons, or expellees.

Late in 1938 occurred one of the first instances of direct approaches to governments on behalf of refugees. Three Quaker delegates, Rufus Jones, Robert Yarnall and George Walton visited the Gestapo in Berlin on a seemingly hopeless mission which
nevertheless resulted in permission for relief work that saved the lives of thousands of Jews. These representatives were followed by a series of "commissioners" seeking to keep channels open for solutions of the refugee problem.

Expansion of the Program

Before long a network of activity connected the London and Philadelphia home offices with centers (some brought into being by the need for refugee services) in Paris, Geneva, Berlin, Frankfurt, Vienna, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and Shanghai. At the same time, AFSC representatives in France continued working to help ameliorate the conditions of the Spanish refugees in the camps hurriedly established by the French Government. In Philadelphia, and in a liaison office in New York, services were rapidly developed to supplement those of the larger sectarian agencies, all in an atmosphere of utmost urgency. The AFSC helped mainly those refugees referred by centers abroad for special reasons, or those not falling within the categories of other agencies, besides providing special services open to any.

The Effects of World War II

Drastic as was the plight of refugees during the thirties, the outbreak of World War II spelled the end of all hope of escape for tens of thousands. The lot of those already in countries of refuge became incomparably harder, and the task of helping them was a truly Herculean one. Yet AFSC services at home and abroad continued throughout the war, expanding where possible, contracting or terminating where conditions made further work impossible, and developing in new areas where needs arose and could be served.

Abroad, European and American workers in Friends programs and centers continued to serve as liaison officers between refugees and consular offices, steamship offices, and the U.S. staff seeking to aid their immigration. At the same time they provided services in French internment camps or among "free living" refugees in the form of supplemental food, clothing and medicines, and tried to offset the corrosion of camp life with libraries, workshops, and other activities expressive of the deep personal concern that motivated them. Sums of money sent by relatives and friends through a transfer service maintained in Philadelphia were delivered personally to the recipients and proved a godsend in meeting special needs. In 1942 the amount transmitted averaged $18,000 per month.

In addition to these services, colonies and homes were set up in southern France for the care of refugee children, and every effort was made to arrange their immigration. As orders deporting all foreign Jews in unoccupied France began to be put into effect, offices cabled tragic messages for relatives in the United States that father, husband, son, or mother "had departed for destination unknown." Quaker workers were permitted to go to the stations to serve coffee to the deportees and offer such sympathy as was possible in these desperate circumstances. It was a heartbreaking project that later proved deeply satisfying. In camps or at the stations many people begged them to take custody of their last possessions or cash in the hope that these could be turned over to their heirs if they never returned. Although technically illegal, this final request was impossible to refuse. Buried in a cellar in Toulouse and transferred after the war to a safe deposit box in Paris, these objects -- some pitifully humble, some of considerable value -- were a real problem to French and American staff. Instructions for their disposition, which had been hastily scribbled on any available scrap of paper, were hardly decipherable; addresses were inadequate. But the joint efforts of the two staffs resulted, in an amazing number of cases, in finding a legitimate heir and turning over to him what often proved to be the only memento of a lost loved one.
By the end of 1942 diplomatic relations with France were broken, American workers had to leave, and remaining funds and supplies for services to refugees and French war victims were turned over to a French Committee, Secours Quaker, which continued to carry on heroically, even as the resources dwindled.

With AFSC services in France cut off, a new relief office was opened in Switzerland, where thousands of refugees were coming over the borders. An office that had opened in Rome in 1940 had to be closed in 1941 because of blocking of U.S. funds. That same year an office was established in Lisbon, the last open neutral port on the Atlantic and a way station for refugees desperately trying to leave Europe. By 1942 it was possible to set up services for refugees in internment camps in Morocco and Algeria similar to those previously performed in France. Financial aid and clothing were sent to Sweden for distribution by Swedish Friends. Funds to be distributed to European refugees through local committees were sent to Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Santo Domingo, and services for Spanish refugees were set up in Mexico, under the auspices of the Mexico City Friends Center, which continued well beyond the end of the war.

Resumption of Services in France in 1944

The liberation of France in 1944 enabled British, French, and American Friends to resume joint services for the stricken French and the many refugees still in France. Services as described above continued in other countries, while two delegates were assigned to work with the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees in Italy; an office serving international refugees in Spain was set up jointly with five other agencies "for the arduous task of restoring freedom and a sense of personal dignity to those who are without a country"; and ten persons were appointed to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) Balkan Mission, serving Balkan refugees in camps in North Africa awaiting return to their homelands. Thus, even before the end of the war the log-jam was starting to break, new intergovernmental organizations were developing, and the beginnings of postwar services could be seen.

Services in the United States during the War Years

Throughout these war years services in the United States continued and expanded, involving not only a growing staff in Philadelphia but also a large number of volunteers, regional offices across the country, Friends Meetings, and a great number of individual Friends and "Friends of Friends." While the AFSC in special circumstances -- as in cases of Friends or those especially referred by offices abroad -- provided some of the same basic services as did the sectarian agencies (immigration arrangements, ocean transportation, and resettlement plans), this wide outreach to Friends provided a special resource for services that most other agencies did not have at that time. A government requirement for all immigrants was a so-called "affidavit," which guaranteed that the newcomer would not become a public charge, and which could be given by an individual but not by an agency. By and large the major agencies had to rely on relatives and friends of the would-be immigrant for such affidavits, whereas the AFSC was able to secure from hundreds of Friends affidavits for people who were total strangers to them but had been recommended by Quaker workers abroad. Likewise individual gifts of passage money amounting to as much as $100,000 in a single year made possible the escape of hundreds of people not only to this country but also to other parts of the world. Correspondence from the European Centers concerning migration plans for refugees was channeled by Philadelphia to Friends, church groups, and other interested persons throughout the world. Through these contacts it was possible to assist persons to find refuge in many countries.
The AFSC did not have a relief fund in this country, beyond that designated for emergency help, and refugees who had been sponsored by the AFSC were generally referred upon arrival to the appropriate national or denominational agency for material aid and counselling. The AFSC often contributed supplementary services and in some cases did assume full responsibility for resettlement plans. Hospitality for a few days after arrival or for longer periods was frequently arranged in families, and placement opportunities were found through Friends' contacts. Starting in 1941, Quarterly Meetings in the Philadelphia area cooperated with the AFSC by arranging regular "Friendship parties" to help newcomers to become acquainted with "old" Americans. Until quite recently these gatherings continued to serve succeeding refugee arrivals, previous refugees sharing in the responsibility.

Beginnings of a Placement Service and Special Group Projects

One of the first special programs developed by the AFSC was a placement service to find openings for former professional people, especially teachers and scholars. The initial resource used to seek college positions, internships or apprenticeships, as well as scholarships for young people, was the contact with colleges that had already been established by the Peace Section. General and vocational counseling and placement in nonprofessional fields was also carried on from the start, and many people, professional or not, had to accept as a beginning whatever job could be found, however menial.

Although great numbers benefited by these services, the unique and outstandingly "Friendly" contribution of the AFSC was without doubt the establishment of various group projects, most of them residential, providing a place for relaxation, spiritual refreshment, and orientation to life in America. During the very first year of official refugee services, these projects included a small hostel in Bryn Mawr for persons needing to be in touch with the Philadelphia office for a time; a vacation "camp" on the Hudson; the Finca Paso Seco in Cuba, which was a training center for younger men among the refugees in transit awaiting visas to the United States; and Scattergood Hostel in West Branch, Iowa.

The first annual report on Scattergood began as follows: "Since social, psychological, and spiritual adjustments come slowly, and often more easily in a group, the Refugee Section has been experimenting with a pattern for retraining which takes cognizance of these two points." This statement, and the general pattern of life at Scattergood, were equally applicable to all future projects. Iowa Friends made available the buildings of the old Scattergood School, where a staff of eight to ten Americans, mostly volunteers, lived and worked cooperatively with a changing group of some thirty refugees -- "the refugees learning American ways and the American idiom, the Americans learning appreciation for these newcomers, and for the pains and heroisms of the human spirit under stress." Selfhelp was the guiding principle, as in most Friends' projects, and the newcomers had the novel experience of sharing in household and gardening tasks in addition to attending classes in English, civics, American social usage, and certain work skills. Meetings for worship held by the staff here, as in other projects, often attracted the attendance of members and proved a source of solace and inspiration. Contacts with Americans of like backgrounds and excursions and visits to various institutions were arranged, and social and cultural activities were developed by Americans and refugees together. A placement worker placed as many as possible of the "graduates."

Along similar lines were developed Quaker Hill Hostel in Richmond, Indiana; Sky Island Hostel on the Hudson for summer recuperation; and a number of projects designed especially for teachers, scholars, writers, artists, musicians, and other professionals, the first being the American Seminar for Foreign Scholars held in
Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, in the summer of 1940. A follow-up and expansion of this was the Cooperative College Workshop held in Haverford, Pennsylvania, for the school years 1940-41 and 1941-42, in cooperation with several Main Line colleges and schools. Other seminars followed in the summers of 1941 and 1942, and a Cooperative Arts Workshop, nonresidential, was held in New York in 1940-41. Besides giving the newcomers relaxation after terrific emotional strain, training in language and other skills, and orientation to American ways, all these projects gave them the chance -- sometimes the first in years -- to be accepted on their merits as individuals and to make contributions of their own often outstanding talents and accomplishments.

Something of the significance of the projects for the refugees served may be sensed from a poem written by one of them at the close of one of the American seminars:

"Mouth, heart and soul were sealed for year and year,
I had no word for humans any more,
And what of darkness with myself I bore
Was not designed for other people's ear.
But I am saved. The Hell of want and fear,
The nightmare of suspicion, treason wore
Entirely off. The world is new. I score
A human life for me. All that is dear
To mind and soul and spirit, is now geared
Again, in Durham's friendly atmosphere."

As the war progressed and migration was more curtailed, the processes of immigration became more and more complicated, and workers were also busy helping people secure local "travel permits" and meet other requirements placed on the foreign-born. With greater demand for manpower, placement emphasis shifted more and more from "any" job to jobs using previous skills and experience, and a "Man-marketing Clinic" in New York provided group counseling and preparation for making direct business and professional job applications. Openings in government agencies became available, although they required very special referrals and clearances. The reduction in new arrivals meant a gradual closing of orientation projects, but Sky Island continued until well after the war. Also, in 1943, a new project was established in New York to meet the pressing need of refugees, often isolated in cramped apartments, to have a place for social and educational programs and to meet "old stock" Americans. This was Powell House, a large, charming family home made available to the AFSC for a nominal fee. Here classes, music hours, teas, and discussions were planned by the staff with the help of New York and suburban Meetings. This program, with some modifications, continued through 1950.

Establishment of a Central Location Index

During 1944 a new agency, looking toward the end of the war and the reopening of communications, was established by the AFSC and six other cooperating refugee agencies. This was the Central Location Index, a clearinghouse for requests for help in locating lost relatives and friends. Requests from Europe to locate people in the United States were routed through the Index to the cooperating agencies, and vice versa. When the service closed in 1949 the AFSC had succeeded in locating in the United States 54% of the cases it handled -- one of the highest percentages reached by any cooperating agency. In many cases the location of the relatives in the United States led not only to financial aid but also to sponsorship for immigration. One woman located in California, upon learning that she was being sought by her only surviving relative, a niece in a displaced persons camp in Austria, immediately put in a trans-Atlantic telephone call to her to set the immigration process in motion.
Postwar Problems

Nineteen forty-five was a transitional year, seeing the reduction of some wartime programs and the beginnings of postwar ones. Transfer services began to phase out as banking channels reopened. It was decided not to accept new migration cases in view of other available resources, but work for earlier applicants was resumed as they began to come to light again and still wished to immigrate. Counseling, placement, location, orientation, and hospitality services continued. At the same time, the renewed presence of American workers in a number of European countries meant a cooperative program between them and the Philadelphia office on welfare inquiries, requests for locating relatives, and calls for help of all kinds that poured into Philadelphia from various countries -- these latter often having to be channeled back to Europe. War victims and people displaced within European countries, as well as refugees, were included in these services.

Abroad also, by 1945, work for the refugees of the Hitler era could be gradually reduced as migration possibilities reopened, as the large-scale problem was taken over by intergovernmental organizations, and as Jewish agencies were able to function again on a broader basis. Although programs in Holland, France, Switzerland, and Spain continued, the offices in North Africa and Portugal were closed. At the same time it was realized on both sides of the Atlantic that a new and vast challenge lay ahead in the care of the so-called displaced persons. These were concentration camp victims and people from the various countries overrun by Hitler who had been brought to Austria and Germany for forced labor. Millions were quickly returned to their home countries by the victorious allied military authorities, but a million remained, unwilling or afraid to return to Eastern countries with Communist regimes. The United Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) established camps for their care, and late in 1945 six AFSC workers were seconded to UNRRA to serve in these camps and a home for "unaccompanied" children.

Changes in AFSC's Role

The presence of a large international agency having responsibility for the basic needs of the displaced persons -- first UNRRA, later the International Refugee Organization (IRO), and finally the United Nations Office for the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) meant a somewhat different postwar role for voluntary agencies. The AFSC's first efforts consisted of seconding workers to UNRRA and later of conducting independent projects, sometimes under the umbrella of succeeding international agencies. In the main, since the national and religious agencies were now handling emigration on a large scale, AFSC activities developed more in the line of supplementary camp projects and those leading toward satisfactory integration in the place of asylum. Such projects were often carried on in cooperation with the British Friends Service Council, other organizations, and local government units. At the same time Friends international centers, neighborhood centers and general relief programs, wherever they may be, have always given special attention to the needs of refugees.

Recurring Refugee Services

It is interesting, in looking back, to see how the same general patterns of service, with local variations, developed in different countries and with vastly different groups of refugees concentrated in camps or temporary settlements. First would come emergency material aids -- food, clothing, medical supplies, and sewing materials. These would continue to the extent needed throughout the program, and sometimes beyond. Occasionally, depending on circumstances, such aid was the only kind given. This was the case for the refugees moving between the new states of
India and Pakistan in 1947; for Arab refugees in the Canal Zone and Jewish emigrants from Egypt during the Suez Crisis of 1957; for Tibetan refugees in India starting in 1959; and for African refugees from Angola and the Sudan, at a later date.

Usually, emergency material aids were the prelude to programs in the camps or refugee settlements, emphasizing self-help principles, to provide health services, to make life more tolerable and constructive, to strengthen family life, to provide educational and recreational activities, and to prepare for the life and jobs on the outside. Then would often follow actual employment programs and help in securing housing, together with help in bridging differences between local residents and refugees and expediting smooth integration. Always, too, there was conscious planning toward devolving a project when it should be no longer needed, or turning it over to other auspices when appropriate. The refugee program in Switzerland was terminated in 1946, the one in Holland after a migration counselor sent to help Dutch Friends in 1946 had completed his work and that in Spain in 1950. In 1948 the AFSC turned over to the YMCA the final phases of the program for Spanish refugees in France, which had progressed from a camp program to a series of community centers assisting integration into French life through study groups, recreation, and apprenticeship training.

Continuing Needs in France

As far as programs for other refugees in France were concerned, it was at first hoped that these would not be necessary after the war. However, France, a traditional country of asylum, had considerable numbers of earlier refugees remaining and was continually receiving new ones from Central Europe. It soon became evident that Friends were still needed, and in 1948 the AFSC and the Friends Service Council of London resumed service at the Paris Friends Center, supplementing that of the French "Service Sociale d'Aide aux Emigrants," to which the AFSC also made small annual contributions toward staff salaries. Services consisted of material aid, including clothing, temporary maintenance, food parcels, and travel money to reach jobs; assistance with legal formalities of all kinds; counseling and referral; and job placement. The program, though small, proved of unique importance in filling gaps otherwise left uncovered. Those served were either ineligible for other services, needing temporary help until eligibility could be proved, or having needs that other agencies were not equipped to meet. A 1954 report mentions, among those helped, a young girl enabled to return to work after treatment in a tuberculosis sanitorium; a Spanish refugee, recently come from Yugoslavia, who with his little daughter was provided with temporary shelter until placed in a job; a Hungarian photographer given help until he was able to resume work after a severe illness; and a newly arrived Polish refugee referred by another agency for care until his papers could be cleared. Such services continued until the latter 1950's. Their impact may be suggested by a letter from one of the many who received not only practical help but also spiritual sustenance. He wrote: "You see, when one is proscribed from his own country, it is very human and comforting to find a fraternal help -- as you did for me so many times. I will remember it very often in the solitude which will be mine until the end of my days."

Orientation Projects in Europe

As already indicated, it was in Germany that the most urgent postwar refugee problem was met. Displaced persons were hurriedly gathered by the Allied authorities into camps -- usually former army barracks -- where their basic necessities could be provided, first by the army and later by UNRRA. Many voluntary agencies supplemented these services in numerous ways. The program undertaken by Friends to fill an important unmet need, was the establishment in 1947 of orientation projects in three emigration staging centers, to help prepare those hoping to emigrate to the United
States. Instructors were recruited from among the DP's themselves to teach English under the direction of the AFSC Team members, who presented lectures and discussions on American history, geography, civics and customs, augmented by visual aids and small libraries. This project was able to help a great many prospective immigrants, before it was terminated in 1949 for budgetary reasons and because IRO was itself developing a broader program, building on the AFSC experience. Library services, discussion groups, movies and social programs were continued, largely with DP staff, in three IRO camps.

Even more significant, perhaps, was the work for children: short-term recreation and occupational therapy projects in two IRO institutions for pre-tubercular children, and the so-called "Home Life Program" in the two IRO homes for orphans and children whose parents had not yet been located. Several AFSC workers lived in the dormitories with the children, counseling them and the houseparents, coordinating the religious programs, and directing recreation. The program's significance may be judged by comments from IRO officials at a conference in 1950: "The work the Quakers are doing in the blocks with the children and with the houseparents is the basic structure underlying all other work we may do in Aibling"..."Quakers are the link between administration and houseparents in developing any home life for the children"..."Quakers not only provide coordination; they are the voice that speaks to us for the children"..."Friends provide the only stable element in the life of the community." Recognizing the importance of this stability, AFSC staff remained with the children as the IRO home was transferred from one location to another. Finally, when the number of children had been reduced by repatriation or emigration, and IRO in 1952 turned the rest over for care in a German institution, an AFSC worker went with them and remained to help with the final phases of their resettlement.

A third aspect of the DP Program was a student center set up at the University of Munich in 1949 to provide services and activities for DP and German students alike, with the added objective of reducing tensions that existed between them. By 1954 the center could be turned over to German auspices.

Integration Phase of Refugee Program in Europe

The integration phase of the Refugee Program was added in 1950, as emigration was gradually emptying camps and the DP's who for various reasons were unable to emigrate were shifted from IRO to German responsibility, some being resettled as groups in newly built apartments. Programs developed both in and out of camp to help with the transition, including job training and placement, kindergartens bringing DP and German children and parents together, and libraries and other activities for both groups.

At the same time, similar integration projects were set up for "Expellees" (also called Volksdeutsche), another and far larger refugee group consisting of persons of German ethnic origin who had been expelled into Germany from Eastern countries at the end of the war. This included Germans from the area placed under Polish administration and from the Russian zone of Germany. These were estimated to number some 12,000,000 people and were the sole responsibility of the German Government, no international aid being available. They, too, were housed mainly in camps and old barracks, and the AFSC had been carrying on camp programs for some of them since 1949 and had published a pamphlet, "The Problem of 12,000,000 German Refugees in Today's Germany," to stimulate almost nonexistent public and official awareness of their plight. Camp programs had included selfhelp projects, workshops, sewing rooms, kindergartens, and recreational activities. Now, added as employment was picking up in Germany, was a program of finding jobs and housing to enable families to leave the dismal camps. Outside the camps, new youth programs were developed in the form of grants to agencies providing home life, vocational training,
and jobs for "wandering" refugee youth and stipends to refugee and DP students who in turn gave services in understaffed social agencies. The integration projects for both DP's and expellees continued on a gradually diminishing level until about 1959.

Refugee Loan Program in Austria

Austria, too, on a relatively small scale, was a country of refugee asylum and resettlement which also received a goodly number of expellees, either en route to Germany or as permanent settlers when German borders were finally closed to them by Allied authorities. AFSC refugee work began there as early as 1946 with material aids and soon expanded into special services in DP camps and such integration projects as the establishment of small glass factories to employ skilled expellees, language classes and other activities at the Quaker Center, employment for refugee students similar to that in Germany, and a revolving loan fund to help refugee farmers. Farm land was available at a reasonable rent, but refugees had no money for tools, animals or building repairs. Low-interest loans made to these thrifty and industrious people enabled them to establish themselves and at the same time helped lagging Austrian agriculture. The amazingly prompt and regular repayments replenished the revolving fund, making new loans possible.*

Hungarian Refugees of 1956

In November, 1956, careful negotiations looking toward transfer of the loan program to local auspices were completely disrupted by the sudden influx of refugees from the Hungarian revolution. As tens of thousands streamed across the border, camps, old army barracks and other emergency accommodations were soon overflowing and in the first few days all the food and clothing stored in Quaker warehouses for normally expected winter needs had been used up. The Material Aids staff in Philadelphia immediately started airlifting additional supplies, with free transport given by numerous U.S. and foreign airlines. The Quaker Team and the Friends Ambulance Unit, augmented by workers rushed from Germany or recruited locally, threw themselves into the cooperative emergency work shared by the Austrian Government, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and the other voluntary agencies. The acute emergency period ended with the setting up of large camps to provide complete care and maintenance prior to emigration and before other voluntary agencies assumed the responsibility for helping migrants. The AFSC then turned its attention to those unable to emigrate or choosing to remain, the help paralleling the earlier program in providing counseling, job placement, household equipment or loans, and farm and business loans. This program is only now in the final stages of phasing out.

Starting in 1952, the expansion of certain projects in Germany and Austria and the initiation of new ones had been made possible by participation, along with five other agencies, in a Ford Foundation grant for a program "to facilitate the finding of permanent solutions for the social and economic problems of these refugees." In 1954 the High Commissioner was authorized to set up a much larger "Permanent Solution Program," for which funds were to be contributed by governments and individuals. The AFSC, however, decided not to participate in this new program, feeling that, successful as the Ford Foundation projects were, the experience with them indicated that

*These projects -- the first of their kind -- proved one of the most successful methods of refugee integration and their development was watched closely by the representative of the High Commissioner for Refugees and other agencies, which later developed similar projects in other refugee situations. In the meantime, a companion project was started, providing similar loans for professional and business enterprises. Both projects included counseling by staff to help the undertakings succeed.
the inherent need for precise advance planning and continued external controls reduced the flexibility that was needed for the experimental and demonstration work on which the Committee was increasingly concentrating. Some of the AFSC programs, however, formed the basis for continued work under the UNHCR program.

Yugoslavia, although itself a Communist country, received and cared for large numbers of Hungarian refugees and permitted voluntary agencies to enter early in 1957, under the "umbrella" of the UNHCR, to perform emigration and welfare services. With the other agencies devoting themselves to the former, the AFSC assumed responsibility for the latter. These services, aimed at raising morale and relieving tensions inherent in sudden uprooting, idleness and an uncertain future, were carried on in some twenty isolated and widely scattered camps, old castles, barracks, and other buildings. They included liaison with the UNHCR, Yugoslav officials and the Yugoslav Red Cross; health and counseling services; handling emergency situations; providing selfhelp, educational and recreational materials (trucked in by the FAU); and developing creative camp activities. As the camps were gradually emptied by repatriation or emigration, termination of the project was possible early in 1958.

The Palestine Refugee Situation

In 1948, just at the time when the AFSC was developing its DP services in Germany, another area of urgent need emerged in the Middle East with the partition of Palestine, the ensuing war, and the flight of thousands of Arab refugees from Israel to the Arab-controlled parts of Palestine. AFSC work in this area started on a modest scale, with a small team sent to cooperate with a United Nations plan for meeting the immediate needs of some 50,000 uprooted Arabs still in Israel. Soon, however, the U.N. asked the Committee to undertake the direction of the program it was establishing in Gaza for 200,000 refugees in that Arab-controlled area.

When the AFSC arrived early in 1949, it found the refugees undernourished and living outdoors or crowded together in tents and abandoned buildings. The first task was the distribution of U.N. food, tents, clothing, and blankets. Next came provision of minimum health facilities, with the setting up of clinics, aid to local hospitals, sanitation measures, a midwifery training course, and the establishment of a medical laboratory -- the nearest one being in Cairo, a day's journey distant by train. Finally, it was possible to start basic education for some 20,000 children and selfhelp projects in the form of weaving, sewing, carpentry and basketry classes.

Feeling that the erosion of soul fostered among the refugees must be met by an immediate governmental solution, and fearing that the palliative effect of a program limited to relief would militate against such action, the AFSC wished to withdraw by the end of the year but was persuaded to remain until April 1950, when the entire program was taken over by the newly created United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Refugees in Palestine. Thereafter clothing and other material aids continued to be sent yearly for distribution there.

It was hoped that Friends could contribute to a constructive solution of the tragic problem with a supplementary project demonstrating the possibilities for resettlement of the refugees in Arab countries. A joint AFSC-FSC team sent in the fall of 1951 failed, however, to find an opening for such a project, owing largely to the political situation. Its recommendation, however, did lead to a village development project for settled Arabs living in five rural villages in Jordan. Programs had also been developed in Israel to help uprooted Arabs there, and to bring Israelis and Arabs together in activities of a community center.
Korean Refugees

Moving farther East, to another country divided by war, the AFSC felt impelled to undertake services in Korea in 1953. With some 3,000,000 refugees from North Korea huddled together in makeshift camps or colonies in South Korea, the AFSC, the FSC, and the Canadian Service Committee joined in setting up a Friends Service Unit. This proved one of the most international of projects, with additional support from Australian and Hawaiian Friends and staff from England, Ireland, Norway, and the United States, as well as Koreans recruited in the field, numbering as many as seventy at one point.

Although the refugees from the North were accepted as nationals by the South Korean Government and spoke the language, the problems and needs resulting from uprooting, destitution and family separation were the same as those of international refugees. First on the program came the immediately urgent material aids for the refugee settlement area selected for service in the somewhat isolated port city of Kunsan. Then came the rehabilitation of a hospital, intensive training courses for Korean medical technicians, and courses for practical nurses. Later, a brace-making shop was set up, and amputees were trained in that skill. Material aid distributions and other services also included the needy among Kunsan citizens.

Widows being among the most needy among the refugees, employment, vocational training, and welfare services were initiated for them. Small loans were made and guidance was given in setting up tailoring or dry cleaning businesses or bean curd shops. Goats, pigs, and poultry were provided to improve nutrition and income, with the understanding that each widow would pass on the first female offspring to another widow.

Later, a self-help housing project was started for "squatters." The simple buildings were built of earth blocks, with the local government donating the land, the Friends Unit the materials and direction, and the recipient families the skilled labor. Two hundred houses were completed by the end of the project, making a real impact on the housing shortage.

Educational aid began with supplies for refugee schools; then teachers institutes, literacy teachers' training courses, and the nucleus of the first public library in the city.

During 1957 there was, according to plan, a gradual turning over of programs to local auspices, and the Quaker team was able to withdraw by the end of that year.

Algerian Refugees

The year 1959 saw the start of two new major programs, the first being for Algerian refugees in Tunisia and Morocco who had fled from the colonial war in their own country. Their number was approximately 250,000 at the time the project started, most of them women and children, with an additional 7,500 arriving monthly. The program, a joint one with FSC, began as emergency relief with large shipments of material aids, including sewing machines. AFSC staff supervised the distribution and at the same time established selfhelp centers in some of the camps to repair and produce clothing. The centers provided not only clothing -- for which there seemed endless need in the cold mountain winter -- but also useful occupations and the development of new skills. To the sewing centers were gradually added classes in knitting, health principles, and basic literacy. For boys, workshops were set up teaching arithmetic and manual skills, especially carpentry, with an eye to later reconstruction work in Algeria. Workers discovered that some teenagers
seemingly unable to learn arithmetic were simply baffled by the fact that they had never yet learned how to use a pencil!

In all the long history of AFSC refugee services this was the first time that an entire refugee group was able to give up its exile and return to its homeland. In 1962, shortly after the cease-fire between France and Algeria, Quaker staff had the satisfaction of crossing the borders back to Algeria with the refugees to undertake the unprecedented job of going from an ordinary relief program for refugees to a resettlement and development program in the home country. And a formidable job it was, with the countryside ravaged, whole villages razed, and roads and bridges destroyed. Still worse, over 2,000,000 of the rural population who had been detained in "regroupment centers" were left, with the evacuation of the French soldiers, entirely to their own resources -- refugees within their own country.

Again, the immediate problem for government and concerned voluntary agencies, including the Quaker teams, was massive relief, especially food and medicine, but at the same time staff began to establish new training centers and to organize communities for rebuilding homes and clearing and planting fields. Later came an agricultural program to increase crops, develop improved poultry, and set out large plantings of olive and eucalyptus trees. Some of the persons trained while in exile now served as leaders and teachers in their home communities.

Courses in basic skills have continued, especially for women, as have maternal and child health clinics and nutrition courses. All were intended to be gradually taken over by Algerian agencies and this has already happened in some cases. A family planning expert has been sent to consult with field staff, local doctors, and government officials as to possibilities of introducing family planning into the program.

At the same time the general emphasis has been shifting toward basic community development projects, assisting villagers to develop the abilities to meet their own needs. In close collaboration with local administrative units, projects such as experimental gardens, bridge building, public latrines, school repairs, and renovation of village mosques have been developing in some 30 to 35 villages in the eastern part of Algeria, where the program is now concentrated.

**AFSC Work in Hong Kong**

The second new program, serving Chinese refugees in Hong Kong, was not a response to an immediate emergency, since the refugees had been crossing from China ever since the end of the Revolution and in 1959 were estimated to number between 700,000 and 1,000,000. At first, the Crown Colony of Hong Kong had attempted to handle the problem itself and little publicity was given to it. Friends were aware of it and concerned about possible action but did not see an opening, especially since no over-all study had been made as a basis either for international or voluntary agency action. This finally took place in 1955, under the auspices of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. However, it was not until 1957 that the matter was brought before the United Nations, which then appealed to governments and non-governmental organizations to give all possible assistance to this group (by then characterized by many as constituting the greatest concentration of human misery in the world) and authorized the High Commissioner to encourage contributions. The termination of the AFSC Korean program just at this time, and the reduction of some other programs, made a new project seem more feasible than formerly, and the Committee was particularly concerned to continue to give service in the Far East. An intensive study of service possibilities was initiated in 1958 and the project was set up in 1959.
Overcrowding and underemployment were the major problems. A serious housing shortage existing even before the influx of refugees meant that hundreds of thousands of them, together with non-refugee immigrants and destitute Hong Kong residents, became squatters on any open spot of land, with close-packed huts made from flattened sheets of tin, old boards, or even sacking slung from frames. Starting in 1954, the Hong Kong Government had been putting up multistoried resettlement blocks in which by 1959 some 100,000 persons were housed in crowded but weatherproof and sanitary conditions, with other buildings going up as fast as possible. In such circumstances the development of a sense of community and cooperation is a vital need, and the first AFSC project with this objective was a cooperative day nursery, for which space had been provided on the rooftop of one of the resettlement blocks. With children cared for and receiving a daily meal in the nursery, mothers could accept work to add to their meager income. They also took turns working in the nursery half a day weekly under staff direction, thereby learning new ways of child care. Soon monthly meetings of mothers were organized, and clubs where sewing and knitting were taught. A library was started, which by now is reaching out to serve other areas in the community. Youth activities were developed, again with rooftop facilities, including job counseling, classes and recreational activities. Such cooperative group activities are relatively new in the Orient, but soon the fathers, pleased with the results in their families, were asking for their own programs, which developed along the lines of music and other cultural pursuits.

Out in the villages, too, community development programs were started, which included helping families living on the water in leaky sampans to work out cooperative plans for establishing themselves on land.

A third phase of the program, already showing far-reaching effects, has been the development of a social group work training program. A group work specialist on the AFSC staff helps local staff improve their work, supervises field work students from schools of social work, conducts workshops and seminars for staff members of other agencies, and teaches courses in group work. By the time this program is terminated it is hoped that there will be a sufficient number of trained group workers in Hong Kong to assume responsibility for the continuation of these activities, and for the future of professional group work in the Colony.

Starting in 1964, the AFSC has contributed substantially in cooperation and funds to the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong, enabling it to quadruple its staff. It has accordingly expanded its program, including the addition of a new clinic to demonstrate the effect of an intensive program in a specific refugee resettlement area.

The Tragedy of Vietnam

Few world tragedies have more deeply stirred the AFSC, and Friends in general, than has the present anguish in Vietnam. Its total impact and the reactions to it are not a subject for this report, but it was inevitable that the AFSC, among other responses, should seek some way to minister to the sufferings of the Vietnamese people. The exploratory missions in 1965 brought back recommendations for several service projects. As a start, financial assistance was immediately given to three Vietnamese institutions that had been found to be attacking fundamental problems in ways in accordance with the spirit and approach of the AFSC.

In the spring of 1966, the first field directors arrived to set up an AFSC program in Quang Ngai, a province with a refugee population approaching 100,000. The choice of project, in accordance with AFSC findings and the wish of the
government Social Welfare Department, was a child day care center. Overcoming incredible obstacles of transportation and communication difficulties, lack of materials, construction delays, and the problem of securing adequate local staff, the center, accommodating up to 100 children, was opened in October. Its full-day program includes a noonday meal and two snack periods, preschool training, a rest period, baths and free play. Its operation is on the same cooperative basis as in Hong Kong, with mothers sharing the work and having monthly discussions and study meetings. Brothers and sisters of the children also come for the meals served.

Two additional projects in the medical field are planned. One is a public health education program to try to improve the basic general health of the people of the area, starting with the families that come to the day care center and growing to include those in nearby refugee camps. The second is a recuperative center, accessible to most of the Quang Ngai refugee population, offering follow-up care for patients whose early discharge from the overcrowded hospital often means improper healing and relapse.

Changing Patterns Within the United States

To review the programs going on back in the United States during these postwar years one must return to the year 1946. Obviously such a wide network of overseas programs means a considerable staff for exploration, planning and over-all administration, providing supplies and materials, negotiating with government, and meeting the various needs of workers and programs, as well as making periodic visits to the field for consultation. In addition to this administrative side of the overseas programs, numerous direct service programs were also being carried on in the United States.

Services for individuals, such as hospitality, counseling, orientation, job placement, search for missing relatives, migration information and referrals to specialized agencies, welfare inquiries to and from offices abroad and the handling of a great variety of informational inquiries, domestic and foreign, continued for some years after the war. Various services were closed out as needs decreased or other resources became available, but requests for individual service or information have never entirely ceased, and in recent years have been handled by referral or supplying of available information.

Powell House, as previously mentioned, continued until 1950, and Sky Island for several years after the end of the war. The latter's function changed, however. In addition to providing a vacation place for earlier refugees, it served for several summers, starting in 1946, as a reception center for Displaced Persons arriving from DP camps in Germany under the sponsorship of Church World Service.

This marked the beginning, in the United States, of AFSC services for a long succession of "new" refugees, many of whom have been described in connection with overseas services. Not only did the make-up of the refugee group change, but the handling of the problem was on an entirely new basis. Instead of having individual "affidavits," as previously, the refugees had the over-all sponsorship of one of the refugee agencies whose staff overseas had accepted them for service and helped them with the immigration technicalities. One of the requirements, under the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, and others which followed, was an "assurance" provided by an individual or organization to the effect that a job and housing would be available on arrival and that the family would not become a "public charge." The program became an enormous, highly successful sponsorship effort on the part of religious organizations throughout the nation. They provided assurances and worked through their denominational service agencies -- which, in the case of most Protestant denominations, worked in turn through the national Church World Service.
Friends Assurance Program for Refugees

For the AFSC, this became the first opportunity for the agency, Friends Meetings throughout the country, and individual members to carry out a closeknit cooperative program of direct service to individuals. How often lay supporters of social agencies feel the wish to somehow help more directly persons the agency serves! Here was the perfect opportunity for it was, in fact, the Meeting members who provided sponsorship, met the refugees at train or bus as they arrived from New York, provided hospitality or temporary housing while helping them find permanent quarters, found work for the breadwinner, helped register the children in school, advanced temporary funds, and stood by with friendliness, counsel, and help as needed. The Service Committee served as liaison with Church World Service, receiving dossiers on families to send out to Meetings for selection, giving help if needed on filling out the complicated assurances and supplying the agency's endorsement before filing them with CWS, keeping Meetings informed of progress on the case and developments in the program, counseling on problems as they arose, and providing a contingency fund (very seldom called on), in case a Meeting should be faced with unusual financial outlay.

This, in essence, has been the setup of the Friends Assurance Program for Refugees, which started in 1949 and -- under various succeeding refugee laws and their amendments -- has continued to the present time. A word should be said about the legislation that provided for these programs. It was necessitated by the fact that the basic U.S. immigration law contained the so-called "quota system," limiting to very small quotas the number of people who could immigrate in a given year from any European country except Great Britain and Germany, and, until relatively recently, barring immigration from the Orient entirely. Efforts to secure special legislation started before the end of the war, but it was not until 1948 that the first bill was passed, after prodigious efforts on the part of concerned agencies and citizens.

A series of acts followed, with gaps between when programs had to lapse. Provisions of the acts were so restrictive that further efforts had to be made to get amendments, and regulations set up by government departments were often unworkable until prolonged efforts of the concerned voluntary agencies finally secured modifications. For instance, the Refugee Relief Act was passed on August 3, 1953, but it was only after six months of negotiation on the part of the operating agencies that the government administrators agreed on an assurance form that the agencies could accept and thus get the program started. Throughout the years an inordinate amount of staff time of all agencies, including the AFSC, had to be diverted into efforts to get laws and regulations that would make a successful program possible, and to cope with complexities and built-in difficulties that they were unable to forestall or remove. Heartbreaking delays caused programs, which had limped from the beginning, to close with visas left over and eligible applicants still languishing in desolate camps.

The refugees served during these years ran the gamut from the still-uprooted prewar victims of Nazism to displaced persons, expellees, escapees, neo-refugees, Dutch and Dutch-Indonesians expelled from Indonesia, Arabs, Chinese and other Asians, Greeks made homeless by a disastrous earthquake, refugees from the Hungarian revolution, and, finally, Cubans fleeing the Cuban revolution.

In the beginning, AFSC headquarters usually dealt directly with Meetings throughout the country in handling the Assurance Program, although in some cases regional offices acted as intermediaries, a pattern which has expanded through the years. Also some regional offices, notably Pasadena and San Francisco, developed imaginative programs of their own, serving refugees in their areas.
Up to the termination of the Refugee Relief Act in 1957, the Friends Assurance Program had resettled in this country over 400 families, including 1,200 individuals. Almost an equal number had been sponsored but did not get here, owing to the termination of acts or other causes. (Comparable figures for the remainder of this program, which continued from this date under various refugee acts up to the present time, have not yet been compiled.)

The number resettled may seem small in relation to the over-all number of refugees, but it was large relative to the number of Friends, proportionately the highest among the denominations. One of the special values that CWS placed on the Friends Program was the relatively large number of "hard to resettle" cases accepted. These included cases of "mixed marriages," hard-to-place professionals, non-Protestants, Indonesians, and handicapped persons. One Meeting sponsored a double amputee, who made an excellent adjustment. Another took a four-generation family, which included a 99-year-old great-grandmother. The Meeting had to post a special bond for her because the Government feared that she might become a "public charge"!

Cuban Refugees

The situation of Cuban refugees was unique in that this group was the first in all the AFSC's years of refugee work for whom the United States was the country of first asylum. Others had come to us after sojourns of months or years in one or several previous countries. The Cubans came directly to Florida, often making the perilous crossing in small boats, and arrived destitute in Miami, a city already suffering a housing shortage and having few employment possibilities. The United States Government stepped in to take initial responsibility for them in the form of shelter, counseling, emergency aid and regular public relief grants if necessary. However, it was important that as many as possible be resettled outside Florida to relieve the pressure there. Over 200,000 had arrived by the end of 1962, and others have continued to come, up to the present. The voluntary agencies, accordingly, have provided sponsorships for local resettlement, which were similar to those of previous programs, though with less financial risk. Again, AFSC has afforded a relatively high number of sponsorships and has concerned itself with resources needed in Miami.

Disappointments and Satisfactions

Obviously, a complex program sponsoring hundreds of families over nearly twenty years has had its share of difficulties and disappointments. The wonder, though, is that those have been so few and that the successes and satisfactions have been so very great for both the sponsors and the AFSC. An outstanding satisfaction has been the happy and fruitful working relationship between Meetings and AFSC staff, who have had the highest praise for the splendid job done by the Meetings through all these years. The greatest, of course, has been that of witnessing the excellent adjustment made by most of the refugees, as evidenced by a few of the most typical Meeting comments:

"F. and J. are adjusting quite well to their new home. F. has been promoted in his work and is considered a valued employee. They are a delightful family. We have thoroughly enjoyed knowing them..." "Reports on Mr. and Mrs. S. are very good. His employer is very much pleased, and it looks as if they would have very little trouble fitting in. We can take care of another refugee unit if you have one to spare..." "We wish to sponsor the B's and do every thing we can to help them join the wife's parents, who have made such an excellent adjustment with us and are so highly regarded in the neighborhood..." "The O. family is getting along fine and have done very well. The daughter is at the head of her fifth grade class, which
is the grade she would be in if she had been born here..." "You will be interested to know that our Chinese who came here about two months before asked to be allowed to go to meet our Dutch couple when they arrived, and the families seem to be on a very friendly basis..." "What impressed us was how quickly C. wanted to begin giving back some of his welcome he had received, and to help the next person..."

Sponsoring, as they did from the prewar beginnings, refugees from all kinds of Protestant denominations, Catholics, Jews, or Moslems, Friends were careful to put them in touch with the church of their choice if one was available. Of course, the newcomers were also welcomed to Meetings if they cared to attend; and quite a number did, and subsequently became members, making a valued addition, indicated by such comments as: "H.S. and his family have been such a source of happiness and strength to the Meeting that we would like to indulge in another family..." "C. and M. are in our pastor's class for membership in the Meeting and have really settled down to be one of us. They are thoroughly fine young people and we are fortunate to have them among us..." "Although the G's live five miles away and must travel on three buses, they attend Meeting regularly. We feel that they are happy and well adjusted to their new life, and we certainly feel that for us this has been a very satisfying experience."

The contribution to Friends made by refugees would be impossible to gauge, but that it may have been considerable was inadvertently indicated in an issue of the Friends Journal of some years back. There, on facing pages, were the accounts of the retirement of a loved professor at a leading Quaker college, the appointment of a young Friend as a member of a Quaker group making a friendship visit to Russia, and the fine work of a Quaker International Affairs Representative in a European city. No mention was made of any of these people as former refugees, but readers who knew their history recognized all three as having at one time been sponsored in exile by Friends.

Cooperation with Other Organizations

So far our account has dealt almost entirely with operational programs serving refugees. It will be quickly recognized, however, that this is only one side of the coin. Friends' interest in refugees, as in other world problems, has always been twofold. Important as they are in relieving suffering and helping to build a new life, service programs serve a double purpose when they provide experience that can be used to solve basic problems. Programs generally involve activities in relation to governments, on local, national, and international levels. They also include a range of informational activities, from providing a clearing house of information for Friends to wide-range projects for informing the public and enlisting its concern. Only a few examples of these activities are included here, since to describe them in any detail is beyond the scope of this summary, but they should be regarded as equal in importance to the operational programs.

In the United States and abroad the AFSC has always worked cooperatively on national and international levels with the many other voluntary agencies in the service field. Much has been accomplished through joint efforts, frequently using the method of ongoing or ad hoc committees devoted to special purposes. Even to list cooperating agencies that have functioned with the AFSC through the years would be bewildering and occupy too much space, but a few should be mentioned by way of illustration.

The American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service has served as a clearing house for consultation and cooperative action among agencies with overseas programs. It has always had a major concern for refugees and has been a
central medium for activities on their behalf, especially in relation to the assurance programs, to refugee and immigration legislation and regulations, and to international refugee agencies. The AFSC has taken an active part in this work, contributing a certain strength in the fact that it has had no special constituency, whereas most refugee agencies have a religious or nationality basis for service. The Service Committee has also had a part in initiating similar coordinating committees in other countries.

The Committee on the Foreign Born of the Philadelphia Health and Welfare Council had a similar local function. The AFSC, the only national agency member, could contribute knowledge on national and international situations while receiving help from local agencies' discussions on technical questions.

The Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe was set up immediately after the war by five of the leading refugee agencies, including the AFSC, to prepare a report on the adjustment of refugees in America. Its purpose was to provide facts to minimize anti-alien and anti-refugee prejudices, and to pave the way for immigration legislation to admit a fair share of the postwar refugees. Studies made by the AFSC and other cooperating agencies and additional researches formed the basis for a definitive book, Refugees in America, by Dr. Maurice R. Davie of Yale University.

The National Committee on Immigration Policy, with which the AFSC has cooperated, served a similar purpose in undertaking a scientific and historical study of the entire immigration issue, which resulted in the publication, in 1950, of American Immigration Policy, by Dr. William S. Bernard.

The Survey Committee on Displaced Persons was set up in 1946 to study the problem of displaced persons and to make recommendations for action on their behalf by the U.S. Government, intergovernmental agencies, and voluntary agencies. An AFSC representative served on the Committee and chaired its follow-up committee to plan for implementation of its recommendations.

The Citizens' Committee on Displaced Persons was established partly as a result of this follow-up. For a number of years it spearheaded the efforts that finally resulted in the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 and the Refugee Relief Act of 1953. The AFSC worked with this committee in many ways.

The American Council on Immigration and Citizenship, another agency with which the AFSC has also worked closely, is a long-term organization concerned with basic immigration and naturalization policy and the integration of immigrants.

The AFSC was active in the development of the Greater Philadelphia Conference on American Immigration Policy, Citizenship and Refugee Matters which held two all-day conferences, in 1962 and 1963 respectively, as part of an educational program on these subjects, and helped in setting up similar conferences in several other cities.

Information and Education

In addition to the joint efforts suggested above, the Service Committee has been directly concerned with refugee and immigration policy and legislation for almost thirty years, carrying on programs of information and education, testifying in Congress on the basis of its refugee experience, and providing information to Friends, to the general public, and to members of Congress. The first bill in the long series supported through the years was the Wagner-Rogers bill, which
sought nonquota immigration during 1939 and 1940 for 10,000 child victims of Nazism 14 years of age and younger, to be placed here in foster homes available for them. Clarence Pickett chaired a national committee supporting this bill, also endorsed by all major religious bodies, labor groups, and leading citizens. The bill never even got out of committee, which foreshadowed the many difficult legislative struggles ahead. The AFSC supported with educational programs and testimony in Congress all of the succeeding refugee bills previously discussed under the Assurance Program. Its testimony, however, always emphasized the fact that a liberalization of the basic immigration law, including elimination of the quota provisions, was the real need, and would make unnecessary the emergency bills. It also testified against the restrictive measures in the McCarran-Walter Bill when it was introduced to revise the basic law. Efforts at liberalization failed, however, with the passage, in 1952, of this Act, which made a few improvements but retained the quota system and added numerous new restrictions. The President's Commission on Immigration and Naturalization, set up by President Truman that same year, including the AFSC's Clarence Pickett as a member, held hearings throughout the country, resulting in recommendations for drastic revisions. Continuous efforts for such revision were supported by an AFSC educational program in close cooperation with the Friends Committee on National Legislation. Finally, in 1965, success came with the passage of a bill that provided for a phased elimination of the quota system.

Governmental and Intergovernmental Conferences and Consultations

Throughout the refugee sponsorship program the AFSC was concerned with government regulations and procedures, and was constantly in conference with the Visa Division of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, either on problems involving individual cases or in seeking modifications in conjunction with other agencies.

From the time of the Quaker delegation to Germany in 1938, the Service Committee worked with governments abroad in trying to ameliorate conditions of refugees in the countries in which it served, and urged and supported intergovernmental provisions for meeting their needs. In 1944, having received a request for suggestions from the War Refugee Board, it presented a historic document, now probably all but forgotten, offering a comprehensive proposal for the evacuation of Jewish minorities from Axis countries and their care "for the duration" in neutral European countries and the Western hemisphere, with major costs to be met by the United States. The feeling was here expressed that unless the United States was willing to make such a proposal its indignant protests against German extermination policy were vulnerable.

The Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, the International Refugee Organization, and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees received active AFSC support at the time of their organization. Also, representations were made to the State Department and to Congress when, as intermittently happened, there was danger that appropriations for these agencies would be cut off or reduced. The AFSC participated in the International Conference of Nongovernmental Organizations Interested in Migration, sponsored by the United Nations and the International Labor Office to help improve conditions for refugees and other migrants. In addition, the AFSC released a staff member part-time to serve on that agency's secretariat during the crucial period of its development.

The Quaker team at the United Nations, the Philadelphia staff and the Geneva Center staff maintained constant touch with each other and with the United Nations and its agencies concerned with refugees, often working jointly on representations
to be made to them. The refugee problem was also one of the subjects chosen for the "Linked Centers Program" started in 1950 to provide for concerted action by centers on special areas of Quaker concern.

The Present Situation (1966-67)

It would be gratifying if one could conclude this account with a statement that the enormous efforts -- governmental, intergovernmental, and voluntary -- on behalf of refugees, in which the AFSC played its relatively small but surely significant part, had resulted in approaching the end of the problem. Alas, no such statement can be made. The 1966-67 report of the United States Committee for Refugees lists an estimated 11,000,000 refugees from some forty countries, now receiving asylum in over fifty countries. This still seems to be the "Century of the Uprooted Man."

These numbers, vast as they are, do, however, represent a tremendous improvement over estimates of a decade or so ago, which ranged from 30,000,000 to 60,000,000, depending on definition. This means that many millions have been resettled or integrated in countries of first asylum. All who had a hand in this task can feel deep satisfaction while recognizing that the task is not yet finished -- especially as regards the newer refugees now concentrated in the East and throughout Africa. In spite of the increased responsibility and continuity of governmental and intergovernmental efforts, the dedication, imagination, and flexibility voluntary agencies can provide are still needed.
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