

CARE'S Aid to War Refugees in Vietnam

By LEE W. MINTON

THE mounting crisis in South Vietnam is calling for the renewed attention of organized labor to one of the thorniest and most difficult problems of the war: Providing adequate relief to the innocent victims of the conflict—the refugees.

More than 610,000 people have been made homeless when infiltrating Vietcong guerrillas drove them from their villages, when bombs and fires destroyed their farmsteads. Before the end of the year, their number is expected by the South Vietnam Public Welfare Ministry to reach more than a million.

By the thousands, the human jetsam of modern war is floating up and down the narrow land which once was regarded as "The Rice Bowl of the East." Most of them escaped from the terror of invasion with no more earthly goods than the clothes on their backs, leaving their crops unharvested, their acres devastated, the implements of their trades lost.

Struggle for Survival

Engaged in a merciless struggle for survival, the government of South Vietnam can do little more than gather these fleeing masses into the temporary shelter of refugee camps and provide them with meager rations.

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CARE building tools and construction equipment, frequently airlifted by U.S. Army helicopters to isolated settlements, aided in the building of new homes, schools and community centers. CARE well-digging rigs foured the country to provide the new villages with fresh, uncontaminated water. Frequently these new settlements were sustained by CARE with rice and other food until the people were able to raise a crop of their own.

Provide Education

CARE classroom supplies and individual school kits have enabled some 100,000 refugee children to lay the groundwork of their formal education.

Fishermen of the Gam Bahn Bay area, which recently became a battlefield, were supplied by CARE with nets and other gear to replace equipment lost at sea or destroyed by the Vietcong invaders.

Elsewhere, CARE replaced the tools lost by carpenters, masons and other tradesmen with new tool kits, enabling them to follow their chosen trades and make a living for

led the refugee-crowded Vinh Hoi section of the city, destroying 3,000 dwellings and leaving more than 14,000 people homeless, CARE was again the first private agency to come to the aid of the victims with rice and other food, with blankets, tents and reconstruction tools. Similar emergency aid was brought by CARE to flood victims along the Dong Tien Canal and in the highlands of Darlac Province.

CARE's aid efforts have won full recognition not only from the Vietnam government, but also from U.S. military advisers and civilian personnel. Special services and civil affairs detachments of our armed forces have frequently expressed their appreciation to CARE, without whose timely support their own work of assisting the people of Vietnam would have been severely hampered. This close cooperation between U.S. forces and CARE has enabled CARE frequently to bring aid to isolated spots which even Vietnam government agencies were unable to reach.

Labor Backs CARE

U.S. organized labor supports South Vietnam's fight for national independence and freedom against Communist aggression. CARE's new Refugee Aid Program for the war-ridden country was developed and determined with the full consent of the AFL-CIO representatives on the CAPR. Received 9/7/65

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deterized by President Johnson as "the third face of the war," ranking together with the military and political faces. It is a problem that has to be solved by us, as a nation, with the same determination with which we approached the military assistance in South Vietnam's fight against Communism.

CARE (Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere, Inc.) of which the AFL-CIO is a founding and member agency, is currently engaged in raising a special \$3 million aid fund for refugees in Vietnam.

First Agency to Aid

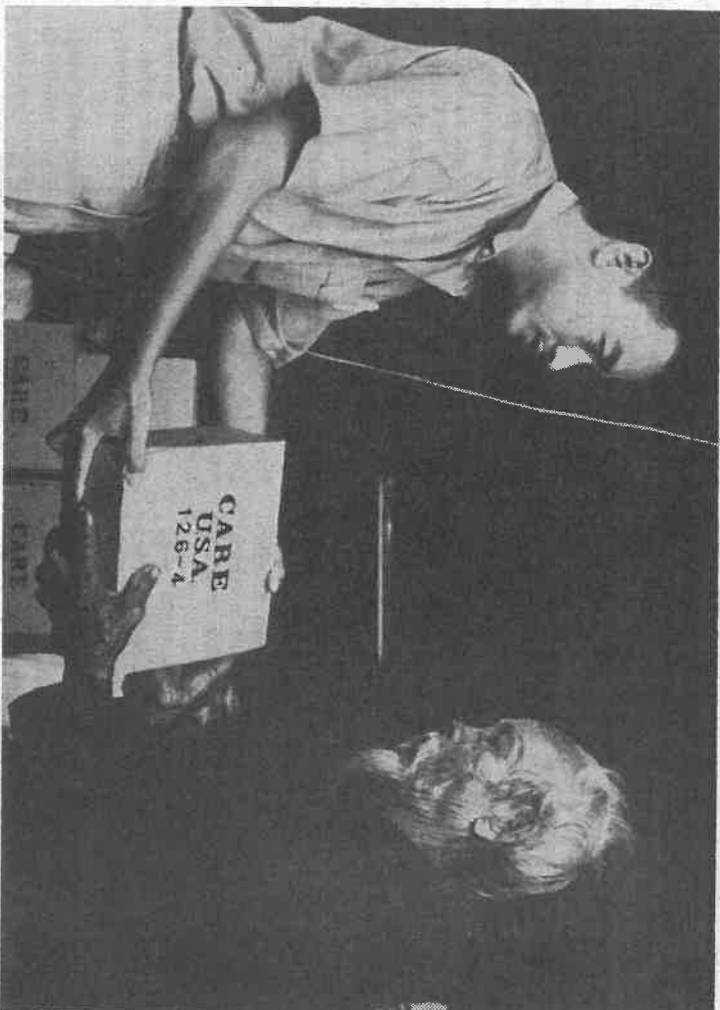
CARE was the first—and for a long time the only—American aid agency in South Vietnam. Even before the cease-fire of July 1954, CARE brought emergency aid and medical assistance to the most needy of the refugees, who were then descending in great masses upon Saigon from the Communist-controlled part of the country.

Penicillin and other drugs were air-freighted by CARE from the U.S. to help local and French physicians in fighting wounds and diseases. CARE distributed blankets, tents, mosquito netting, cotton clothing material and food among the refugees, some of the latter donated by the U.S. government, the rest of it purchases on the open market by CARE. In its first 18 months of its operations in Vietnam, CARE brought more than a million dollars worth of American aid to the country.

Since then, and until the recent influx of new refugees, CARE's efforts have been directed largely towards the resettlement and rehabilitation of the earlier homeless masses. More than 40,000 hand-tool sets and agricultural implement packages were distributed among newly established Montagnard settlements and other land development centers.

Incense and other incense, simultaneous. ly, CARE fostered cottage industries in newly established villages by distributing sewing machines, looms and other equipment. In addition, CARE has always stood ready with emergency aid when disaster struck. When the worst fire in Saigon's history level-

So, as always in the past, the American trade union movement, will respond with sympathy and generosity to the needs of the hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese men, women and children who desperately need food, textiles and medical supplies.



Because it is geared for instant emergency assistance, CARE was the first agency to come to the aid of the many thousands of Vietnamese recently made homeless by the inundation of the entire Mekong River delta. CARE Mission personnel distributed not only food, but also reconstruction tools and badly needed special cotton clothing material packages.