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STATEMENT BY LEO CHERNE, CHAIRMAN  
INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE  
MADE AT PRESS CONFERENCE AT  
CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT INTERNATIONAL CENTER

The initial purpose of my mission to Vietnam for the International Rescue Committee was to survey the refugee situation in Central Vietnam, where more than 350,000 peasants and villagers had fled to the coastal towns as a result of Viet Cong harassment and the stepped-up hostilities since February. During the course of my visit, which lasted some ten days, and following extensive discussions with high-ranking Vietnamese and U.S. officials in Saigon, as well as helicopter visits to heavily-besieged areas between Saigon and the Cambodian border, it became clear that the refugee problem in Central Vietnam is only one facet of a much larger and more critical problem. Wherever the Viet Cong have struck or threaten to strike--and this covers most of the countryside right up to the edge of Saigon--the Vietnamese people are uprooted, homeless, hungry, ill or wounded. Indeed, the truth of Vietnam today is that the Vietnamese are a nation of refugees. Some have been displaced but a few hundred yards from their original homes, others a few miles, still others several hundred miles to new and different environments. But all are in desperate need of the essentials of life--food, clothing, shelter, medicine, medical care, skilled help. Not since the Berlin Airlift of 1949 and those brief but memorable hours of liberty in Budapest in October, 1956, have we in the IRC faced such a total, massive challenge as that before us in Vietnam today. Accordingly, we have set the highest emergency fund goal in our history--\$2 1/2 million--and even if this is to be attained, it would not adequately meet today's needs.

(more)

Two facts became apparent to me in my visit to Vietnam. The first is that we are confronted with tens of thousands of men, women and children who are refugees for the second or third time in their lives. This is not a new experience to the IRC. Twenty-five years ago last Wednesday, when Paris fell to the Nazis, thousands of democratic leaders from all of Europe who had fled to the sanctuary of France were forced to flee again from the Gestapo's tentacles. At that time, we successfully provided the escape routes for almost 2,000 of Europe's democratic elite--the intellectuals, businessmen, labor leaders, artists, teachers. They included illustrious names like Marc Chagall, Jacques Lipchitz, and Franz Werfel.

Today in Vietnam we are faced with refugees who earlier fled from the French and from the Communist North--many of the 880,000 who escaped to South Vietnam following the Geneva Agreements of July, 1954. Now they are fleeing again. But for the most part, they are neither intellectuals nor the middle-class. They are the peasants and villagers of Vietnam, the very persons whom the Viet Cong have allegedly won to their side. My own observations, both first-hand and as a result of conversations with Vietnamese and Americans, impose the very opposite conclusion. The peasantry of Vietnam has not been converted to the side of the Viet Cong. On the contrary, having been savagely victimized by the Viet Cong, they view them as their enemies. These tragic victims of the struggle are in desperate need of material help. This is where the American people can join in the fight for freedom, buttressing the efforts of our fighting men and the equally courageous Aid officials in the field. A number of American voluntary agencies are valiantly trying to meet these needs in Vietnam and they have each cooperatively undertaken separate parts of the vast challenge. Regrettably the sum total remains short of the mark.

(more)

Another vital humanitarian task is in the villages themselves, where medicines are urgently required to treat disease and wounds. IRC is undertaking to collect the needed drugs--initially \$500,000 worth--to distribute to the villages. As is so often the case, a few cents worth of medication can cure what would otherwise be a permanent disability.

The second fact which impressed me is the heart-rending need among the children. In Vietnam today there are about 100,000 orphans as a result of the war. Many of them are torn, brutalized and ravaged. The children's hospitals in Saigon and Cholon are jammed with youngsters, two or three to a bed, with the most terrible wounds, some permanently maimed, broken or blinded. They too need help desperately. Many of them have yet to learn the worst news of all--that their parents are dead. If we, as Americans, fail to alleviate their pain and suffering, then no matter what the outcome of the war in Vietnam, we will have failed in our purpose as Americans and as human beings.

AP  
PHOTO  
SYNTHESIS

# VICTIM OF A VIET CONG ATTACK



Dong Xoai, Vietnam, June 6 (AP Radiophoto)—Vietnamese child limps from a Dong Xoai post after the battle in which her parents were killed during last night's Viet Cong attack. The young girl was wounded in a bunker by Viet Cong mortar fire. Vietnamese army soldiers dressed her wounds and evacuated her by U.S. Army helicopter to a provincial hospital.

# VIETNAM:

THE CRUEL WAR  
HAS UPROOTED MILLIONS OF VILLAGERS



CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE—THE CHILDREN



# MORE THAN 100,000 WAR ORPHANS

In Vietnam today there are about 100,000 orphans as a result of the war. Many of them are torn, brutalized and ravaged. The children's hospitals in Saigon and Cholon are jammed with youngsters, two or three to a bed, with the most terrible wounds, some permanently maimed, broken or blinded. They too need help desperately. Many of them have yet to learn the worst news of all—that their parents are dead.



These South Vietnamese children were among those orphaned on March 8, 1965, when 33 tribesmen were killed while successfully defending Kannak against an attack by some 800 Viet Cong. Kannak is a highland settlement 260 miles northeast of Saigon. As shown here, the children were preparing to be evacuated to orphanages in the urban areas.

These youngsters are truly the innocent victims of the Vietnamese war. To cope with their suffering, the International Rescue Committee has joined with Vietnam's most distinguished medical doctors — headed by former Prime Minister Phan Huy Quat—to launch a massive program for Vietnam's war orphans. This program will cope with the totality of the orphan's needs—food, clothing, shelter and education. It will attempt to provide advanced surgery and medical treatment to the children with broken and wounded bodies. While we can never do enough to replace the tragic loss of their parents, we will try to the maximum extent possible to restore to them both hope and dignity. In this humane mission, IRC is limited only by the extent of your generosity and that of our fellow Americans. IF WE FAIL TO ALLEVIATE THE PAIN AND SUFFERING OF THESE CHILDREN, WE WILL HAVE FAILED AS AMERICANS AND AS HUMAN BEINGS.



This youngster, dressed in the traditional white clothes for mourning, is grieving over the coffin of his father, who was killed when the Viet Cong attacked his village of Binh Nghia on December 30, 1964. More than 100,000 Vietnamese children have been orphaned by the war.



Gun fire shattered her sleep, mortar blasts took the lives of her parents, then the fighting clatter of tanks drove the Viet Cong away from Phu My, this little girl's village. A Vietnamese government soldier let her wear his beret, but she is still an orphan, one of the thousands created by the Vietnamese conflict.



Following a Viet Cong ambush, which killed 24 and captured 40 others at Ap Tan Long, the family of one of the Viet Cong victims weeps over the loss of their husband / father. Throughout the length of Vietnam are tens of thousands of similar families with no visible means of support. They are in desperate need of help.

# THE GRIM SHADOW OF WAR IN VIETNAM IS EVERYWHERE

GRIEF...



MISERY...



HUNGER



## WHAT YOU CAN DO: A CALL TO ARMS IN THE WAR AGAINST SUFFERING!

"Disease and epidemic brood over every Vietnamese village. In a country of more than 16 million people with a life expectancy of only 35 years, there are only 200 civilian doctors. If the Vietnamese had doctors in the same ratio as the United States has doctors, they would have not the 200 that they do have but they would have more than 5,000 doctors. . . .

"Communist terrorists have made aid programs that we administer a very special target of their attack. They fear them,

because agricultural stations are being destroyed and medical centers are being burned. More than 100 Vietnamese malaria fighters are dead. Our own AID officials have been wounded and kidnapped. These are not just the accidents of war. They are a part of a deliberate campaign, in the words of the Communists, 'to cut the fingers off the hands of the government.' We intend to continue, and we intend to increase our help to Vietnam. . . .

"What a difference it would make if we could only call upon

a small fraction of our unmatched private resources—businesses and unions, agricultural groups and builders—if we could call them to the task of peaceful progress in Vietnam. With such a spirit of patriotic sacrifice we might well strike an irresistible blow for freedom there and for freedom throughout the world. I therefore hope that every person within the sound of my voice in this country this morning will look for ways . . . to help progress in South Vietnam."

PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON — MAY 13, 1965

## CRISIS FUND FOR VIETNAMESE CHILDREN



# CRISIS FUND FOR VIETNAMESE CHILDREN

of the *INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE*

460 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016/OREGON 9-6010

July 28, 1965

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Dear Friend:

I have just returned from war-torn Vietnam where I surveyed the heart-rending needs of the Vietnamese people. One of the most significant facts I learned is that Vietnam today is a nation of refugees. Wherever the Viet Cong have struck -- or threaten to strike -- the people of Vietnam have been uprooted from their ancestral homes and lands. They are homeless, hungry, in desperate need of medical care.

By far the most urgent need is among the children -- the tragically innocent victims of this cruel war. Today there are more than 100,000 orphans in that small beleaguered nation. Many of these orphans (as well as those whose parents still live) have been maimed or blinded by the savage Viet Cong attacks. Some of these pitiful orphans have yet to learn the cruelest fact of all -- that their parents are dead.

In two decades of work for the IRC, I have never seen so many war-ravaged children. To describe their needs as "desperate" or "urgent" is the height of understatement. They require so many forms of help, including advanced surgery and physical rehabilitation, that no simple statement here can possibly be adequate. In the children's hospitals of Saigon and Cholon, where I saw the most recent victims of Viet Cong terror, more than one thousand children were jammed into inadequate facilities, two and three to a bed. Countless others are hungry, ill and homeless in the rural areas, where the fighting is the heaviest.

The International Rescue Committee has launched the largest emergency fund goal in its 32-year history -- \$2½ million -- to aid the orphans and other victims in Vietnam suffering from this terrible war.

As Americans, we are all deeply involved in the struggle in Vietnam. What we need now is a massive act of grace for Vietnam's unfortunate children. I implore you to contribute as much as you can to the Crisis Fund for Vietnamese Children. Ten dollars will cover the needs of one child for one month. If we fail to alleviate the pain and suffering of Vietnam's children, we will have failed in our purpose as Americans and human beings.

Sincerely,

Leo Cherne  
Chairman

LC:bb  
Encl.

## TIME MAGAZINE

9-3-65

### A Problem to Rival the War

Through miring monsoon rains and along dusty sun-seared roads they file, the wretched refugees from Viet Nam's awful war. Behind them lie their hamlets, shattered by recent battle or terrorized by the Viet Cong. Ahead are crowded refugee camps in their district and provincial capitals. Since May, when the pace of the fighting suddenly increased, the population of the camps has doubled and the total number of refugees has swelled to 600,000. By the end of the year, the figure is expected to rise to 1,000,000—the greatest uprooting of people since the country was cut in two in 1954.

Coping with this vast horde is the duty of South Viet Nam's undermanned, underfinanced Ministry of Social Welfare, backed by a 20-man group of AID officials in the U.S. Operations Mission, and an assortment of private American charity organizations. None is adequate for the task, for the refugee problem has grown so big so fast that it all but rivals the war itself.

Roadblocks. The government has managed to throw up 120 reception centers and camps this year, now operates 190, but can send supplies to many

of them only by helicopters, which must pass over V.C. territory. Communication is unreliable, records hopelessly snarled, and Saigon never knows what to expect next. Driven from their homes by everything from full-scale battles to the threat of government bombardment or V.C. reprisal, new waves of refugees are liable to turn up in any province at any time. Indeed, so confused is the situation that the USOM last week dispatched three teams of American specialists on a tour of the camps to count noses.

So far, the heaviest exodus has come from the central highlands, where most of the year's major battles have been fought. More than 100,000 homeless peasants and villagers have flooded Binh Dinh province alone, transforming Qui Nhon, the provincial capital, into the refugee capital of the country. There are now 95 reception centers and camps in Binh Dinh, but only ten trained Vietnamese social service workers to run them. In Danang, when the camps filled to capacity, the authorities had to put up roadblocks to prevent thousands more from streaming in.

Dime a Day. The Viet Cong take advantage of the confusion to infiltrate their own agents into the centers. To head them off, each incoming villager is required to fill out detailed entrance papers and is then interviewed by a panel of refugees from his home area before being granted final admittance. Once inside, he is given rudimentary housing and a mere 10¢ a day to buy food and clothing from local merchants. "It's the best we can do at present. It's just enough for living," says a Vietnamese official.



REFUGEE CAMP OUTSIDE SAIGON  
Snarled records—and keep-busy programs.

TIME, SEPTEMBER 3, 1965

Refugee file 1965 9/2  
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Food and shelter, of course, are not enough. "Above all," says Colonel Sam Wilson, 41, the onetime Merrill's Marauders officer who is on loan from the Army to head the USOM refugee relief program, "the refugees must be kept busy." They elect their own councils to run the camps. Handicraft programs have begun in some places. If land is available, they are encouraged to plant short-term crops. The government is considering training some of them as social welfare workers. Some may end up as teachers to provide elementary education to other refugees' children.

The New Fishermen. These are short-term measures at best, and wherever possible, the refugees are sent home or to new resettlement villages after two months in the camps. Those willing to resettle are given a piece of land, housing material, a six-month ration of rice and 3,500 piasters (\$47) to help them get started. So far this year, 208,000 refugees have left the camps for new homes. One group of farmers even decided to take up fishing, founded its own fishing village on the shore of the South China Sea.

To some Saigon officials, the refugees are little more than a massive nuisance that is siphoning off energy and funds from the war effort. To others, however, they could play a vital role in the outcome of the war. "This war is about people more than about real estate," says one American diplomat. "The side that has the loyalty of the people ought to win it. This is a good opportunity to add a few thousand friends to our side." The U.S. has already allocated \$1,000,000 to the refugee camps in stopgap relief, is now considering a major aid program. Most of the work, however, must be done by the Saigon government. "It's no use if we do it," says a USOM officer. "The Vietnamese have to help their own people."

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# The Des Moines Register

Founded in 1849

An Independent Newspaper

## The Plight Of Refugee In Viet Nam

By Leo Cherne

(North American Newspaper Alliance)  
SAIGON, SOUTH VIET NAM—Viet Nam has become a nation of refugees. Some 380,000 peasants and villagers have crowded into the coastal towns as a result of Viet Cong harassment.

Wherever the Viet Cong have struck or threaten to strike—and this covers much of the countryside right up to the edge of Saigon—the Vietnamese people are often uprooted, homeless, ill or wounded, hungry. They are in desperate need of the essentials of life—food, clothing, shelter, medical care.

### Voting With Their Feet

The refugee problem is nothing new for Viet Nam. In the summer of 1954, shortly after the defeat of the French and the signing of the Geneva agreement which partitioned the country along the 17th parallel, a massive flow of refugees from the Communist North had already begun.

The International Rescue Committee (I. R. C.) set up an emergency program to aid these people who were voting for freedom in the only way they could, with their feet. Eventually almost 900,000 Vietnamese cast their lot with freedom by making the trip from the North.

The direction of the refugee flow clearly contradicts the claim that the Vietnamese do not understand the nature of the struggle against Communism or are indifferent to the rule by the Communist north. Only about 10,000 Vietnamese crossed the 17th parallel heading north and many of those were Viet Cong cadre returning home for more training.

### They Must Flee Again

Many who escaped south 10 years ago, now must flee again. They are the peasants and the villagers of Viet Nam, the very people the Viet Cong are supposed to have won to their side. My observations and conversations with Vietnamese and Americans here, have convinced me that the Viet Cong have so savagely terrorized the peasantry that they have made them their mortal enemies.

I helicoptered from Saigon to Dong Xoai shortly after the siege which resulted in 33 American and 650 Vietnamese casualties. The Viet Cong had burned out a large portion of the town. For a brief time they had occupied the village. They entered every household and stripped it of every scrap of food and every piastre which could be used to buy food.

When the Viet Cong retreated they left Dong Xoai a smoldering ruin and streets filled with broken, smashed bodies (many of them women and children)—some dead, others dying, still other condemned to live the rest of their lives horribly maimed.

### U. S. Rescue Mission

The dust of battle had hardly settled when personnel from the United States Operations Mission (USOM) (our civilian aid program) and the United States Army Civil Affairs officers entered the town to take an inventory of needs.

It was arranged to fly in 5,000 kilos of rice. On behalf of the IRC I undertook to obtain 500 kilos of protein-rich fish and 50 pounds of salt, also to be flown in by U. S. Army helicopter.

These supplies, together with some powdered milk which the Viet Cong somehow missed, kept the people of Dong Xoai from starving in a country in which starvation is rare.

Emergency medical treatment was begun immediately.

I have read much about our military involvement in Viet Nam. But at Dong Xoai I could not help thinking that much of our work in Viet Nam is not military in the strict sense, that much of our efforts are constructive, even life-sustaining.

The children are a very special part of the tragedy of Viet Nam. I have seen more horribly injured, broken, maimed children in a week in Viet Nam than in my lifetime. There are perhaps 100,000 war-orphaned children in Viet Nam.

### Emergency Fund Drive

We in the I. R. C. have set an emergency fund goal of \$2.5 million—the highest in our 33-year history. The majority of these funds will go to aid the orphans. We also have undertaken a program to provide an initial \$500,000 in medicines to aid the Vietnamese. We hope to get a large measure of support from the American people.

The task of raising this kind of fund is herculean, but it is only a small part of what must be done to aid this nation of refugees. If we fail to alleviate the pain and suffering of these people, no matter what the outcome of the war in Viet Nam, we will have failed in our purpose as Americans and as human beings.

By Geoffrey A. Wolff  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Vietnamese roads are clogged with a desperate assortment of ragged, weary and hungry orphans, and other victims of a terrifying war, too exhausted or torn to remain in their native villages. This is the account of Leo

Cherne, Chairman of the Board of the International Rescue Mission, who was in Washington last week to report on his two-week evaluation of the refugee problem in South Viet Nam. He returned June 24 after two weeks travel in the country and was invited to testify before a Senate Judiciary subcommittee hearing on refugee problems conducted last week by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D—Mass.).

Cherne, who is an accomplished sculptor, is also executive director of the Research Institute of America, a private business advisory organization.

He had a grisly tale to tell of indiscriminate terror tactics by the Viet Cong, of disease and fear and families cut to shreds by war and forced evacuations.

He said in an interview at the Hay-Adams Hotel, after speaking at the Senate and giving an informal report on his findings at the White House, that the Viet Cong has embarked now on a course whose target is "the total destruction of the fabric of society" in South Viet Nam.

Cherne was at Dong Xoai between battles that killed, maimed or left homeless more than half of the civilian population of 300,000. He said that the Viet Cong, for the first time, has given up any intention of wooing the villagers.

### Re-Opens Rescue Mission

There are now a total of 400,000 registered refugees clustered in the coastal towns of the country, Cherne said. And this is only a part of the total, for many have been absorbed in Saigon and others are isolated by the enemy.

Cherne was in Viet Nam to re-open the rescue mission he closed in 1960 because of the policies of President Diem.

Cherne referred to a telegram he had just received from his Saigon office saying that more than 70,000 refugees had registered during the last month. There is inadequate food and little or no room left

in the already bursting dirt-floored shacks and hospitals where they often sleep two or three to a bed.

If the present rate of emigration to coastal towns continues, Cherne said, nearly a million people will have fled their farming villages within a year.

Cherne said the Vietnamese government is doing a splendid job with the resources at its disposal and that most of the refugees get enough to eat once they reach government sanctuaries.

### Active Around World

The International Rescue Mission, founded in 1933 just after Hitler came to power, was active in refugee work after World War II in Europe. In this hemisphere it has assisted in the relocation of refugees from Castro's Cuba.

The Mission is about to embark on a drive to raise \$2.5 million for an orphan relief fund in South Viet Nam to be administered and organized by the Vietnamese.

Cherne said this will be the largest fund drive since 1956, when the group sought to raise \$1 million for the relief of Hungarian refugees and got twice that goal.

But even \$2.5 million will just be enough to assist one-fifth of the estimated 100,000 who have been left orphans by the war against the Viet Cong, Cherne said.

Asked about a statement Tuesday by Sen. Edward Kennedy that Communist forces were "deliberately creating refugee movements to foster confusion and instability in the countryside," Cherne agreed that the Viet Cong would stop at nothing to win the war there. But he disagreed with the idea that there is any special proliferation of infiltrators in refugee groups in South Viet Nam.

"There has never been a refugee flow that has not included some infiltrators—Viet Nam is no different either in kind or degree than other countries with refugees."

# The New York Times. JULY 11, 1965

## Aid to South Vietnam Technical Assistance Is Believed Key To Winning War Against Communism

By HOWARD A. RUSK, M.D.

Within the last week South Vietnam and United States troops have increased their bombardment of North Vietnam with propaganda leaflets. There are a growing number of observers who are convinced that neither bullets nor leaflets will be the deciding factor in this conflict.

If South Vietnam, the United States, and their allies are to contain Communism, they, as observers contend, it will be done only through technical assistance to improve the lot of the common man in South Vietnam. This must be done not only by government but also by people-to-people basis.

This is the view of Leo Cherne, chairman of the International Rescue Committee, who returned last month from a short survey trip of war-torn South Vietnam. There are now 380,000 refugees from the Vietcong in the

national development officials in the aid. In an address in May, President Johnson pointed out that since 1954, when the Vietnamese became independent, the United States had spent more than \$2 billion in economic aid for the 16 million people of South Vietnam.

Despite the war, the results of this effort have been impressive. Rice production has been doubled, corn output increased by four times, and pork production doubled.

But "this is not enough." The Medical Situation South Vietnam has only 200 physicians for 16 million people. Life expectancy is but 55.

World Health Organization reports issued last week cite Viet Nam as the chief cause of worldwide increases in cholera and plague in 1964. Compared with 10 cholera cases and 115 human plague cases in 1963, there were 23,186 known cholera and 306 plague cases in 1964.

Realizing that the war in South Vietnam could not be won by military means alone, the Department of Defense and State the American people can join the fight for freedom, health and the efforts of our fighting men and the equally courageous AID Agency for interna-

One team member, Dr. Robert Norton from Grinnell, Iowa, and Johnson has returned. The Vietnam Government must demonstrate that they can offer conditions beyond what the Communist can deliver. The United States Health Service teams in Vietnam have been augmented by teams from New Zealand, Australia, the Philippines, Italy, the Netherlands and South Korea and groups sent by United States voluntary agencies such as MEDICO, a service of CARE. In addition, many United States missionary groups are sponsoring projects in Vietnam.

100,000 War Orphans Mr. Cherne has reported that in Vietnam today there are about 100,000 orphans as a result of the war. Many of them are severely disabled. The children's hospitals in Saigon and Cholon are jammed with youngsters, two or three to a bed.

Most of them have yet to learn the worst news of all—that their parents are dead. What is desperately needed in Vietnam is a large-scale expansion of assistance both from United States official and voluntary agencies. The situation there is similar to that of war-torn Korea in 1953.

Then at the request of President Dwight D. Eisenhower a group of American business and civic leaders created a new organization known as the American-Korean Foundation. Although numerous other voluntary groups had, and still have, outstanding projects in Korea, the American Korean Foundation has become a unique symbol in the minds and hearts of the South Koreans. The foundation has spent approximately \$10 million in Ko-

rea in addition to sending goods through the United States valued at \$10 million. Its projects in housing, agriculture, health, education, and welfare have directly affected the lives of almost every individual in Korea.

### Getting to Know Us

The Koreans now know through this program, the values we in a democracy place on human life and dignity. They are proud of our staunch alliance against Communism.

Unfortunately, the peasants in Vietnam have never had any real contact with democracy and the values it places on human worth. A dispatch in The New York Times last Wednesday reported that at year ago the United States mission had turned the phrase "winning the hearts and minds of the people" into a cliché through repetition. It said the phrase was seldom heard now. Through direct action, rather than words, this phrase must be given real meaning.

President Johnson had said there are three faces to the war in Vietnam: the first is the face of armed conflict; the second is the face of a political solution; the third is the face of human need. The unintended, the hungry family, men and women without shelter, the orphaned children. As the President said, the third face is the most important. It is the one that we are in the war and keep the peace.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

# Viet Nam: Nation of Refugees

By HARRY ALTSHULER  
Of the World-Telegram Staff

**L**EO CHERNE, went to Viet Nam to look for refugees—and found a nation of them. He saw wounded youngsters crowding hospitals two or three to a bed; mothers trudging endless roads carrying their children; villagers with nowhere to flee, camped in the open beside the ruins of their homes.

"The truth of Viet Nam today is that the Vietnamese are a nation of refugees," he said, describing a recent 10-day visit to the war-ravaged country.

Cherne, a lean, graying man of 53, went as chairman of the International Rescue Committee, which for more than 30 years has been helping refugees from despotism and war.

### Into Dense Jungle

The IRC now is mounting the biggest emergency effort in its history to provide some of the medicine, food and shelter so desperately needed by the Vietnamese.

Cherne went to the town of Dong Xoai, in dense jungle 60 miles northwest of Saigon, by Army helicopter along with a United States Army civil affairs team.

Their purpose was to find out what was left of the town after it had been overrun by Viet Cong Communist forces, what the emergency needs were and how they could be met.

They learned these things; and more, for there recently has been a major shift in Viet Cong tactics, the villagers said.

### Murder, Plunder

Now it has become an all-out effort to scorch the earth, to kill indiscriminately and to leave no means of livelihood, no grain or rice, behind.

The war was never easy on the villagers. For years it has been the policy of Viet Cong raiders to seize most of whatever food they found under guise of "taxation"; to conscript whatever 14, 15, or 16-year-old lads fell into their hands, and to kill or kidnap village officials, teachers or nurses.

Now it is worse.

"The Viet Cong entered every home and hut," Cherne said. "They took every grain of rice, every bit of dried fish or meat. Every penny of money. In a town of 3000 inhabitants, they killed or injured more than 1000—and these victims were civilians, not troops. Hundreds of children were maimed, blinded or killed.

They left behind not one single day's food. Within 24 hours the U.S. Army provided a week's supply of rice, and I undertook to buy 2000 pounds of dried fish in



LEO CHERNE: Mercy mission.

Saigon. Army helicopters flew it in, and flew out the wounded."

Why the new policy of total terror?

Cherne said it is "a short-term effort . . . but the Communists are putting all their chips on it." He said: "They cannot carry food with them; they must live off the land, so they are deliberately risking their future, sacrificing the long-term continuity of food supplies, in the effort to create maximum paralysis and panic right now.

### Officials Flee

"They hope they can leave Saigon isolated and produce the collapse of the whole structure," he said, stabbing at the air with his cigarette.

So far, no major provincial capital has fallen. "But there is no reason to believe that will continue," said Cherne.

"Village government, he said has become 'tenuous' in nature.

In Dong Xoai, there was no village chief and no assistant chief. The chief had suffered a flesh wound and left in a 'copter for hospital treatment. The assistant simply fled. Nobody was ready to blame him; they knew the finger was on him. If he had stayed he would have been killed or kidnaped in the next Viet



TERROR'S CHILDREN: Homeless Vietnamese huddle in a primitive refugee center.

Cong raid. Nobody wanted the job.

Local government simply "evaporated," Cherne found.

"It is hard to be critical; local authorities are certain to die if they remain," he explained. "Already, more than 10,000 chiefs have been murdered or kidnaped."

A few Americans are working with the Ministry of Social Welfare, which attempts to care for the floodtide of refugees.

Cherne recalled one of them, a young Negro nurse who had volunteered for a Viet Nam job after serving a two-year tour in the Peace Corps in Africa.

### Shrugs Off Danger

"How do you feel about doing war work—after devoting two years to the cause of peace?" Cherne asked her.

"It is the same effort for the same purposes," she told him proudly.

As for the danger, the nurse said she felt it, but shrugged it off: "You get used to it."

That was the attitude of the Vietnamese, too, who have been living with war for 20 years. They get used to war. But they

are not used in the new-type of total terror, Cherne said.

In Quinhom, a major coastal city, the biggest city in Binh Dinh province, he learned there were 91,696 registered refugees in the province as of July 1. Since the total population of the province is 804,000, more than 10 percent of its inhabitants were refugees.

### Tin-Rooted Shacks

They were camped in hastily built shacks off the main highway through the town. Some were in refugee centers built by the refugees themselves, with material provided by the Vietnamese government. Living conditions were primitive.

"It is clear the problem is not going to disappear," Cherne said, "so now there are efforts to build more durable facilities."

These—according to pictures that fluttered in a sheaf from his hands to the desk—will be tin-rooted shacks along a dirt path, hardly equalling the Waldorf-Astoria in elegance, but still an improvement over present living conditions for the refugees.

In 12 coastal cities, there is a total of about a half a million

refugees. Some 70,000 of them turned up in the last month alone. It is believed that another 300,000 unregistered refugees are in Saigon, where they drift in to live with relatives or friends.

Another million are like those in Dong Xoai—refugees who cannot flee, surrounded by the Viet Cong. Their homes have been destroyed, but they cannot leave the area.

This is the group Cherne sees as in the most serious trouble. The Vietnamese army and civilian organizations try to give emergency rations to the villages, but in many villages the helicopters cannot land. His story then must remain untold, though it can be imagined.

### Untold Story

What he saw with his own eyes and what he was told by the villagers and officials has convinced Cherne that there is no love among the people of Viet Nam for the Viet Cong.

Are the peasants supporting and sheltering the guerrillas?

"On the contrary," he asserted, "having been savagely victimized by the Viet Cong, they view them as their enemies."

FLIGHT: Their homes ravaged by Viet Cong, villagers take to the road.



VICTIMS: The young and the old.



BEST AVAILABLE COPY

1965

# INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

460 PARK AVENUE SOUTH

NEW YORK 16, N. Y.

ORegon 9-0010

To: Messrs. Sternberg, Cherne, Jonas,  
vanden Heuvel, Learnman, and  
Wechsler

Date: July 1, 1965

From: Mr. McGuire

Subject: Vietnam Refugee Program

Here is a brief summary of publicity for the Vietnamese refugee program:

Following his return from Vietnam, Mr. Cherne held a press conference on Tuesday, June 22nd.

The conference was reported by the New York Times, the New York Daily News and the New York Post. It was also covered by Associated Press and other wire services. Because of the time lag in our clipping service, it is difficult to estimate the amount of national coverage we received.

There was also radio coverage of the conference. WINS, NBC, and "Flair Reports" (the ABC Radio Network show) recorded all or part of Mr. Cherne's comments.

The following day, Wednesday, June 23rd, Mr. Cherne appeared on WOR's "Martha Deane Show" and on WCBS's "Ed Joyce Show." He also taped an interview for WMCA's "Barry Gray Show." The appearance on the Gray show was broadcast Sunday, the evening of June 27th. As most of you know, the response from the radio programs, particularly the "Martha Deane Show," was very gratifying.

Wednesday evening, June 23rd, Mr. Cherne appeared on the "Merv Griffin Show" on television to discuss his trip and the situation in Vietnam. The following evening, June 24th, the Griffin show ran an appeal for funds for the IRC's Vietnam program. The Griffin show was broadcast in New York on June 23rd, and it was shown about a week later on other stations across the country. Still other stations will carry this show at a later date.

The North American Newspaper Alliance accepted a 1500-word article by Mr. Cherne on the Vietnamese refugee situation, the new Viet Cong tactics being employed against the peasants, Mr. Cherne's observations and conclusions about what he saw in Dong Xoai and elsewhere in Vietnam. The article will be distributed to the papers in the Alliance for release Sunday, July 4th. (There are about 150 papers in the NANA.)

Victor Lasky is doing a column on Mr. Cherne's trip and the refugee situation in Vietnam. The column is syndicated nationally and will begin to appear this Sunday in papers across the country.

Dr. Howard Rusk will write a column on the Vietnamese refugees program for Sunday, July 11th.

Other columnists have also expressed interest in doing columns on the Vietnamese refugee situation.

Next week (the week of July 4th) Mr. Cherne will appear on the WCBS radio program, "Up to the Minute," which is carried from 5:00 to 6:45 P.M. The interview with him will probably be carried on Wednesday.

He will also be interviewed on the NBC Radio Network's weekend show, "Monitor." The interview will be taped Wednesday, and as soon as I find out what time it will be carried I will let you know.

Possibilities being explored include: a by-lined article by Mr. Cherne in the New York Times Sunday Supplement or a similar outlet; appearances on other radio and television interview shows, preferably network shows; the distribution of suggested editorials on Vietnam and the refugee situation; various magazine articles on the same subject; and letters to the Editor.

If any of you have any further suggestions I would certainly appreciate them.

EM:jc