

## Bitterness Over the Orphans

# The Vietnamese Left

By Malcolm W. Browne  
New York Times

Saigon.

"It is nice to see you

Americans taking home souvenirs of our country as you leave — china elephants and orphans," a South Vietnamese army lieutenant remarked bitterly last week. "Too bad some of them broke today, but we have

plenty more."

The officer was alluding to the crash Friday of a U. S. C-5A transport plane carry-

ing 243 orphans and 46 accompanying adults, plus 18 crewmen. Many were killed.

"You got what you needed from our country, and now it is time for you to leave, letting us pay the final bill," he added, "Well, it's a good system, I must say."

The lieutenant was one of countless Vietnamese who feel a growing sense of desperation for their families and themselves in the belief that an erstwhile ally is rapidly reducing its links with their collapsing country. Like many others he has been trying without success to get his family and himself out.

For a handful, such as the director general of Air Vietnam, Nguyen Tan Trung, there is always an exit. Trung, related by marriage to president Nguyen Van Thieu, was scheduled to leave.

For others — unless they happen to be eligible orphans — it is different. The exits are barred, and no helping hand is being extended from abroad.

Although the U.S. embassy indicated that there would be no help in getting out Vietnamese in general, Americans who have been waiting to adopt a select group of orphans will be accommodated.

There are 25,000 orphans in institutions in South Vietnam — to say nothing of the

thousands cared for by Vietnamese families — but only 1500 are eligible to emigrate to the United States. To qualify a child must be under age 9 and in the care of one of seven American-licensed institutions: Heren-Holt Children's Services, International Social Services, Friends For All Children, Friends of the Children of Vietnam, Catholic Relief Services, the Pearl Buck Foundation and World Vision.

All or virtually all of 1500 have been spoken for by American families, who are claiming them as they are delivered.

The orphans will be issued immediate residence visas and will eventually hold citizenship.

Most Vietnamese, other than those with husbands or close relatives in the United States, do not have such privileges. Among the trapped are the Vietnamese employees and families of American companies even though the companies are ready to fly them out and provide for them.

"It is harder for a South Vietnamese to get out of this country, even in normal times, than for an East German to leave the Communist bloc," an expert on such matters commented.

"With the right contacts it is possible to buy a passport for \$1000 or so, but even with that there is no guarantee of getting out of the airport."

## Behind

A chartered Lufthansa DC-10 jet left Friday night jammed with Germans. Before the passengers boarded there were many tearful farewells between German men and Vietnamese women.

Americans were also leaving in large numbers. A chartered Pan American 707 jet left Friday night after curfew — apparently to make the flight as inconspicuous as possible loaded with men, women and children, among them officers of the three American banks doing business in Saigon — First National City, Chase

Manhattan and the Bank of America.

Other American companies were also evacuating their American employees and families.

The American companies had been asked to register with the embassy the names of all employees, American and non-American other than Vietnamese, for possible evacuation.

It was made clear that the embassy would not concern itself with the Vietnamese employees of these companies.

Some Americans and Vietnamese were in agreement that the sentimental interest that led to the evacuation of orphans at the expense of families and adults was unwise and perhaps harmful.

"The Communists have an excellent record in looking after children," an American said. "Orphans here under the Communists would probably be better off than under the present Saigon government. The real tragedy is the leaving behind of the adults who may face re-

prisals or death for having worked for the Americans."

A Vietnamese added: "It is awful, but somehow that crash of the orphan plane is symbolic of America's experience in Vietnam. It is your last hurrah."

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