

# Blacks Score Vietnam Adoptions

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 18—Three black social service agencies contended today that the international adoption agencies that were placing Vietnamese children in American homes were bypassing qualified black families who want to adopt the children of black American servicemen.

The Afro-American Family and Community Services of Chicago, the Black Child Development Institute of Washington, and Homes for Black Children, of Detroit, said they realized that many of the children brought over in "Operation Babylift" had been in the adoption process for some time and that black families had not been included in overseas adoptions until recently.

But representatives of the three organizations said that not all of the 1,763 children the State Department said were

brought here in recent weeks had been in the adoptive process for months. These children were matched with families on the agency's waiting lists, and most of the approved black families were bypassed, the representatives said.

"Since the airlift began, the vast majority of the Vietnamese orphans fathered by black Americans and evacuated to the U.S.A. have been placed with white families," said Alfred B. Herbert Jr., adoption project director of the Black Child Development Institute, at a news conference today.

"It is our belief, which some of the international and domestic adoption agencies have subscribed to, that the best placement for the black Vietnamese orphans is with black families," he continued. "We believe that these children can best survive the racism in America and achieve a healthy identity through adoption by black families."

## New Unit to Aid Blacks

Mr. Herbert and representatives from other organizations said that an international consortium of adoption agencies had been set up to allow more black families to adopt Vietnamese children. It is called the Interagency Vietnam Adoption Committee and is sponsored by a \$200,000 grant from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the Agency for International Development.

The money is used to pay the \$1,500 to \$3,000 fees and transportation cost to transport orphans to their new homes. While many black families can afford to care for the adopted children, they cannot afford the transportation costs, said a spokesman for Travelers Aid International of New York, Ado which houses the International

Vietnam Adoption Committee's program.

Forty black families were certified for adoption under the program, which began a few months ago. Only five were selected to be parents of black Vietnamese children, according to Evelyn Eggleston, secretary general of the International Vietnam Adoption Committee.

## Airlifting in Future

The remedy to the situation raised by the black social agencies is unclear. Yesterday, the Immigration and Naturalization Service ordered a temporary halt to "Operation Babylift." Today, the service told the State Department that it may proceed with the arrangements for airlifting about 300 orphans whose applications for adoption were already being processed as of April 10.

The two babies will bring to 2,000 the number of Vietnamese children sent here for adoption. Mrs. Eggleston said that as of last January, there were 325 black Vietnamese children available for adoption in Saigon, and as far as she knew, all had been sent here.

Since the groups involved say that they would prefer better social service support for children in Vietnam over wholesale airlifts, and since there is a temporary suspension of the controversial program, there is some question about how many new Vietnamese children, especially black ones, who will be coming to the

Also participating in the news United States.

conference were Sydney Duncan and Shirley Burnett of Homes for Children, and Benjamin F. Finley of the Afro-American Family and Community Services. Mr. Finley adopted a Vietnamese boy who arrived three weeks ago.