

U.S. Unsettling to Many Refugees

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WINTER PARK, Fla., May 25—Many of the Vietnamese now resettling here in central Florida and elsewhere in the United States have been refugees before, but nothing in their past prepared them for the trauma of the present.

Dang Van Quac fears there are tigers in the tall green grass beneath the orange groves.

Le Diep is afraid to drink the water that gushes so freely from chrome plated taps.

Le Thi Nhu Ngan does not understand the growling machine in the kitchen that gobbles garbage.

Dang Thi Thu Van cannot determine how much food to buy now that she shops once a week in a single supermarket instead of once a day at half a dozen open-air street stalls.

Vu Trong Thu wonders how his broken English and degree in Vietnam literature will help him in the depressed American job market.

Nguyen Thuc Binh is puzzled that a highly trained urologist can find no work in what the United States G.I.'s called "the land of the big PX."

Pham Huu Phuoc worries about the relatives he left in Saigon and fears that the Americans may send him back there some day.

Fearful and Confused

These are but random examples of the adjustment problems now facing the 19,000 or so Vietnamese who have left the refugee staging centers in California, Arkansas and Florida to make new homes in places as diverse as Seattle, Omaha, Boston and Winter Park.

Though volunteer "spon-

sors" are guaranteeing the refugees room and board, many remain apprehensive and confused.

"Tell me," asked Tham Huu Phuoc, leaning across the bare table in the sparsely furnished apartment provided by his sponsor, "if the United States re-establishes relations with the new Vietnamese regime, what will happen to me? Must I leave America? I think I do not feel very secure."

He is not alone among the 100 other Vietnamese who have settled in this area thus far, many of whom got out of Saigon because of a "friend" who "knew" or worked for Americans.

"It's a reaction I've noted in all of them," said Dr. E. Michael Gutman, a Winter Park psychiatrist who has set up a volunteer organization that has helped resettle a dozen families. "But the change in status is hard and some of them are just beginning to realize that this is a truly different country that will require different things of them."

The night two weeks ago when the Le Diep family arrived to take up residence in Alex and Effie Ornberg's spare bedroom in nearby Casselberry a neighbor who once had served in the United States Army in Vietnam came over to take part in the welcoming.

During the introductions, the Dieps, who speak little English became confused. They thought their neighbor was still in the service and had come to take them away, perhaps to prison.

"They huddled in the corner of our living room like so many pitiful puppies before we got it straightened out," Mrs. Ornberg recalled.

"They simply didn't understand where the military stands in the American way of things."

The day after the Dieps arrived, the Ornbergs took Mrs. Diep on a shopping trip. When they returned from the shopping trip, they found all the doors to their home locked and all the shades drawn.

The knocked and knocked. Finally, Mr. Diep and his 14-year-old son, Huy, appeared.

"We did not know what might happen while you were gone," explained Mr. Diep, a 53-year-old telecommunications specialist who was born in Hanoi but fled south to Saigon in 1954 when the Communists took over in the North.

A day or so later, the Ornbergs bought bathing suits for their visitors so that they could swim in the backyard pool.

Avoiding Tanner Skin

Mrs. Diep always dips in quickly, then retires to a shady spot so that she can avoid the tan that Floridians relish but some Vietnamese see as the mark of a peasant or upland aboriginal.

The Diep's worst moment came near the end of the first week in Casselberry when, unable to maintain their composure any longer, they collapsed in tears. They were worried about the whereabouts of a daughter.

In between sobs, Mr. Ornberg, a retired electrical contractor, was able to determine what she might be in Paris: He placed a phone call—and located her.

"Now," Mr. Diep says, "my one big problem is a job."

He holds out a resumé laboriously written by hand in stilted English. The last

line reads: "I can do anything to live and supply to my family."

Vu Trong Thu, whose degree in Vietnamese literature is probably worth little in the United States job market, already is considering "anything," specifically a dish-washing job.

"I might have to," he said.

Menial Jobs Offered

Many refugees have been offered such work, a situation that disturbs refugee officials and sponsors because so many of the exiles are middle-class professionals.

"I think we ought to hold off a bit before we put them in the kitchen scrubbing plates," says Jay Schenck, a Winter Park beer distributor who is sponsoring Mr. Thu.

"You know, the Federal Government is being dumb about this one, all the red tape and lack of organization and the like. Washington hasn't even made sponsorship a tax write-off, which—let's face it—is the way you draw in the people who can really offer good jobs and get things done."

But what about Dang Van Quac, the man who wonders about the tigers in the orange groves?

Mr. Quac knows tigers, having run a rubber plantation in tiger country. But he knows no English.