

N.Y. Foundation is Rescuing Oakland's Viet Refugees

By Marcy Kates

The 90 Vietnam refugees stranded in Oakland after their privately financed job training program ran out of money will begin moving to new homes either today or tomorrow.

"So far, we have found sponsors for at least 20 of the refugees," said Thomas Sisul of the Tolstoy Foundation, one of eight agencies that have contracted with the federal government to resettle Indochinese refugees.

"Most of the sponsors are from northern California," said Sisul, who directs the New York based Foundation foundation's Camp Pendleton office, "but a few are from Utah, Nevada and Texas."

Sisul said the Tolstoy Foundation would provide financial assistance to the stranded refugees until they are resettled.

The refugees left Camp Pendleton six weeks ago, after the Tolstoy Foundation awarded \$40,000 to the Bay Area Mainte-

nance Service Council, a San Francisco nonprofit corporation, for training the refugees and finding them jobs.

"The Bay Area Maintenance Service Council told us it could train and place 200 security guards," said Sisul. "But the program was a complete flop. It fell apart."

The Tolstoy Foundation expected the service council to provide 72 hours of security guard training and English lessons for the refugees, in addition to job placement.

But the council's attorney, John Whelan, said the refugees were expected to know English before their training had begun.

In any event, six weeks later only five refugees had been placed and the service council had only \$700 left, according to Whelan.

"Several government agencies are investigating this problem," said Bill Stubbs, spokesman for the State Department at Camp Pendleton. "But so far, there is no

indication of fraud."

Still, many questions remain about the Bay Area Maintenance Service Council. For example, the corporation's attorney, Whelan, said yesterday that the council was "a defunct corporation" when it made its agreement with Tolstoy "and I had to revive it."

When a representative of the foundation, Tim Ceperley, was contacted at 1757 E. 26th street, the Oakland apartment complex where the refugees are staying, he admitted the Tolstoy Foundation "had made a mistake" in dealing with a defunct corporation. "We're doing our best to correct our mistake," Ceperley added, "and we hope to place the refugees in new homes as soon as possible."