

# Offer at Work for Vietnamese Turns Sour

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POUGHKEEPSIE, N.Y.—Two months ago, eight Vietnamese refugee families came to this community under the sponsorship of the manager of Candy Lane, a local candy cane factory.

The sponsor, Raymond Ducorsky, agreed to provide the 42 refugees with rent for the first month, some food and other essentials for the first couple of weeks, and jobs for the adults.

But what Mr. Ducorsky saw as a fine opportunity for the refugees has become an unwieldy social problem for Poughkeepsie. At least eight of the original 23 workers have left Mr. Ducorsky and say they will not work in his factory. Another was dismissed.

Of the unemployed, four who are Chinese-speaking have left their families here and gone to New York City's Chinatown in search of work. Still others—some of them with medical and dental problems—say they want to leave but they do not know what they could do if they did quit.

## Epithets Are Alleged

"I cannot go back to Vietnam because all in my family were soldiers," one refugee said. "But I cannot work in the candy factory, either, because one of my supervisors called my cousin an animal. It is not kindly to call a man an animal."

"My brother was pushed by a supervisor," another refugee added.

Mr. Ducorsky denies any abuse of his

employees and emphasizes that all Candy Lane wants is a day's work for a day's pay.

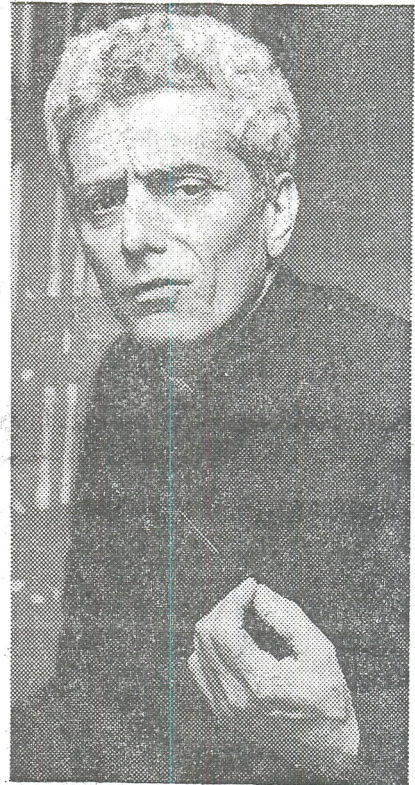
As the Vietnamese have left, Mr. Ducorsky deducted from their wages the rent money he put up for them. The apartments in which they live cost around \$200 a month. The average take-home pay for them was \$71.08 a week.

The relocation camp from which they came, the Edward Martin Military Reservation in Indiantown Gap, Pa., will not take them back, and the voluntary agencies that processed their papers, the American Friends of Czechoslovakian Refugees and the International Rescue Committee, have no local representatives in Poughkeepsie.

The agencies have the legal responsibility for the refugees, and received \$500 from the Federal Government for each refugee processed. Some of the money is supposed to be used to help those who get into difficulty, but it remains unclear just how much will be spent or how it will be allocated.

Mr. Ducorsky has no legal responsibility for them, and he says he is not equipped to deal with their social problems.

"I figured they would need jobs, and I had jobs," said Mr. Ducorsky, who is lean, wiry and seemingly in perpe-



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The Rev. Mario Zicarelli of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church is one of the clergymen aiding the refugees.

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tual motion as he oversees the daily production and shipment of 1.5 million candy canes that are shipped all over the United States. "But I am not a social worker. I come to work at 4 o'clock in the morning and I go home around 6 o'clock at night. It is a terribly busy time for me."

## Owner Did Recruiting

The other day, Mr. Ducorsky tried to explain what had happened, amid buzzing intercoms and telephones, and he was firing off shipment orders that would take his candy canes to such places as Hoover, Ala.; Sharon, Pa., and Hagerstown, Md., in time for Christmas.

"I went down to Indiantown Gap myself," Mr. Ducorsky said, "and I interviewed 200 Vietnamese in one day. After I made my selections, I reserved apartments for them in the Rip Van Winkle [an 18-story

apartment building near the Hudson River] and we got them pots, pans and some bedding. My wife bought them some clothes. They started making demands almost immediately and I was very disillusioned."

Mr. Ducorsky said that on one occasion he had asked a refugee to pick up a 30-pound box of candy canes, and the refugee had refused, saying, "Let the Americans do this."

"He said that to the wrong person," said Mr. Ducorsky. "They have to learn that in this country, you do not get anything unless you work. Americans work hard and are proud of it. The Vietnamese must learn this."

Mr. Ducorsky estimates he spent about \$5,500 to get the Vietnamese relocated in Poughkeepsie. "It is not a lot of money, but it is not an amount I can ignore, either," he said.

The Vietnamese are only a small part of his plant force which numbers between 115 and 120 people.

The Rip Van Winkle, which

is at the edge of Poughkeepsie's urban-renewal area and which has been plagued by a high vacancy rate, has apparently not been a happy home for the refugees.

The refugees said they had found the mattresses and bedding, but no bed frames or dressers and very little furniture. They keep their clothing, most of it light in weight, in little shopping bags. They lack chairs and a variety of utensils, although the Dutchess County chapter of the American Red Cross has brought in some things in the last few days.

Few residents or officials of Poughkeepsie have been aware of the plight of the Vietnamese, although the Orange County Department of Welfare reports that some of them have applied for Medicaid, food stamps and public assistance.

#### Sponsorship Is Questioned

The Rev. Mario Zicarelli, pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Church, spent \$240 of his own money to buy shoes for the children, and has asked the Holy Name Society to emphasize the need for warm clothing when the society conducts its Thanksgiving drive.

"It is such a mess, I got very upset and started running around," Father Zicarelli said. "First we level their country and then we do this

to them over here."

A Jesuit priest, the Rev. Fred Rothlauf of the Union Street Community Center, saw to it that some of the children got clothes. But much more is needed.

Two other clergymen, the Rev. Lawrence Snow, minister of the Community Methodist Church, and the Rev. George Chiorazzo, associate pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, are raising questions about the property of a businessman's being permitted to sponsor large groups of refugees to be his employees, but for whom he has neither the legal responsibility nor the expertise to deal with problems.

Both churches have sponsored Vietnamese families, and have taken the responsibility for getting them jobs and subsidizing them.

In a memorandum to various church and Federal officials concerned with the relocation of Vietnamese refugees, Dr. Snow, who is chairman of the Dutchess Interfaith Resettlement Consultation, wrote: "There are hazards of exploitation and discrimination endemic to the employer sponsorship; and without effective 'outside' recourse for grievances."

Dr. Snow also warned that "security of housing and jobs are co-terminal" and cautioned against the "difficulty, if not impossibility, of providing daily, personalized support of structure in initial and early phase of resettlement."

Although both Dr. Snow and Mr. Chiorazzo raised their objections before the refugees arrived to work for

Mr. Ducorsky, Robert Gilson, a Federal representative who coordinates refugee placement for the voluntary agencies at Indiantown Gap, said there had been several referrals such as those to Poughkeepsie's candy cane factory.

"You must remember we are on a time schedule," Mr. Gilson said. "We hope to close out our operations here in mid-December and we have 3,000 refugees to place."

#### Decisions by Voluntaries

He said the facility was now placing 50 to 100 refugees each day, and he noted that it was the voluntary agencies—not the Federal Government—that made the determination of what was a proper refugee referral.

A somewhat different perspective was provided by Klement Simonic, field director for the American Friends for Czechoslovakian Refugees, in Indiantown Gap.

For one thing, he said that although the refugees got medical checkups in Indiantown Gap, no records of them had been sent to his agency, with the result that he might have referred for work people who were physically incapable of doing that work.

"It is the pious hope that either the sponsor will find employment or give it," Mr. Simonic said. The crux of the matter, he said, is that the sponsor's responsibility is only moral; he cannot be taken to court if he does not do what we thought he was going to do.

"Now the voluntary agencies get it from all sides—the press, the public, the refugees and the sponsors."



One of the refugee families that went to Poughkeepsie by arrangement with a candy maker is that of Wöong A. Rat and his wife, left, shown with their children and the wife's sister, right, looking over Red Cross provisions.