

Refugees and human rights

by Karl L. Stumpf

GERMAN NOVELIST Heinrich Boll, commenting on the estimated 16 million refugees in the world, calls our era "the century of refugees and prisoners." The 1981 Nobel Peace Prize, awarded to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, underscores what has been described as an "unfortunate reality" of our time. This is the second Peace Prize awarded to the UNHCR, appropriate notice of the Commission's work, yet a sombre recognition that the refugee problem is more serious now than in the years following World War II. (In 1954, the Commission received the Peace Prize for its work in resettling the refugees of postwar Europe.)

In the following article, adapted from a speech to the Rotary Club of Kowloon, Hong Kong, Karl L. Stumpf discusses the global refugee problem, but focuses on the particular situation in Hong Kong, site of many refugee camps. Rotarian Stumpf, a past president of the Rotary Club of Kowloon and 1980 recipient of the Hong Kong Citizen of the Year Award, encourages individual Rotarians to do more to alleviate the suffering of the boat people and to help them end their "agony of waiting" for new homes.

—THE EDITORS

THE BEGINNING of the last decade was marked by one of the worst refugee crises in modern times—the exodus to India in 1971 of over nine million inhabitants of East Pakistan, which was later to become Bangladesh. The decade ended with another tragedy: the influx of about one million refugees from Kampuchea (Cambodia), Laos, and Vietnam.

There are more refugees in the world today than ever before. This sobering fact is better understood when it is recalled that 20 years have passed since World Refugee Year—a year which marked an international crusade of goodwill to tackle what was then already a problem of worldwide significance. It is a sad reality that by far the majority of today's refugees are from Third World countries, and there seems little likelihood their numbers will diminish in the near future.



Despair, anxiety, fear, and a modicum of hope are reflected in the faces of these Indo-Chinese refugees, wrenched from their homes and awaiting resettlement in a strange new environment.

For many people, the 1979 refugee scene will best be remembered by the emotive words "boat people" and "Kampuchea." It was the plight of the Vietnamese leaving Vietnam in perilously small, unseaworthy vessels and the thousands of fleeing Kampuchians both within the country and in Thailand that caught the world's headlines. The fact remains, however, that the Indochina refugees form only a fraction of the total world refugee population which now stands at the frightening figure of 16 million homeless, uprooted people:

Africa	4 million refugees
Asia	7 million
Europe	0.2 million
Latin America	1 million
Middle East	3 million

The international community struggles for solutions but finds it harder to do more than respond on an ad hoc basis to the most immediate needs. At the same time, the long-term implications of the worldwide refugee movements are becoming increasingly complex.

The influx of refugees is a serious threat and a source of instability to already unstable Third World governments. The rich Western world, contending with its own economic stress, is less and less welcoming to refugees who need work, shelter, schooling for their children, and rightful consideration of their ethnic differences.

Various international conferences have stressed the need for "burden-sharing" between countries. This plea applies especially to finding a fair "distribution" pattern for placement of refugees in countries of settlement. Countries are now more aware that the problem of refugees is a global



concern and can only be resolved at the international level. Anything less, however important and useful, will be inadequate to bring about a lasting solution.

The great increase in the number of refugees since December 1978 was caused by the conflict between China and Vietnam, the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea, and the subsequent increase by Vietnam of its level of persecution and exploitation of its ethnic Chinese.

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher proposed that the United Nations convene a special meeting on the Indochinese refugee problem. This was held in July 1979 in Geneva and resulted in the doubling of pledges for international resettlement. It increased the financial support to the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees, and UNHCR received an offer from the Philippine Government for a site to establish a refugee processing centre. Also, the Vietnamese Government announced its intention to stem "illegal departures" from Vietnam. [*Past R.I. President Rolf J. Klärlich, then president-elect, was an observer at this special conference.—EDS.*]

Some 38 countries have accepted Indochinese refugees for permanent resettlement. Among them is the People's Republic of China, which has accepted well over 250,000 ethnic Chinese expelled from Vietnam. By the end of March 1980, France had accepted over 62,000; Canada over 50,000; Australia 37,000; Germany 20,000; Hong Kong 14,000; and the United Kingdom 11,000. In absolute numbers, the United States is the leading resettlement country. By the end of 1980, there were more than 300,000 Indochinese in the U.S.

Hong Kong, from the very start, viewed the exodus and temporary asylum of the Vietnamese refugees as a humanitarian problem. The ever-growing volume of boat refugees in 1979 and the special needs of these people prompted the creation of a strengthened governmental structure to provide the needed extra efforts. It also required concerted efforts from the public and voluntary agencies to provide a temporary home to the Vietnamese boat refugees. The aim

was to provide for equitable programs of assistance and services for all refugees accepted temporarily by Hong Kong.

With the growing seriousness of the refugee situation in Hong Kong and the increasing number of boat refugees expected to arrive in Hong Kong, it became apparent that the relatively informal coordination that had existed among government departments, voluntary agencies, and the UNHCR representative in Hong Kong would be inadequate to perform the new task.

As the year 1979 ended, a number of committees had been established, again reflecting Hong Kong's determination to treat the boat refugees primarily as people, as neighbours, and as human beings with the same problems, hopes, and frustrations that we all experience from time to time.

With the population of the various transit centres reaching proportions not unlike those of small cities, it was clear that certain basic amenities had to be established. Since the opening of the various centres the agencies have implemented numerous projects which have improved the quality of life and have given inspiration and hope for the future to their temporary residents.

The Hong Kong government, voluntary agencies, and the community at large, in recognition of the "human right of asylum," made every possible effort to provide a reasonable, basic standard of living for the Vietnamese refugees.

Yet, resettlement from Hong Kong has remained at a disappointingly low level. (In other countries, refugee boats have sometimes been pushed back into the sea and refugees have been treated harshly.) The people of Hong Kong finally came to the conclusion that by taking the Charter of Human Rights seriously, by caring for the refugees and sharing with them the little space available, Hong Kong was being penalised. While Hong Kong has carried out its humanitarian obligations to the full, a close look at the situation reveals that the way of life in the makeshift, terribly congested camps—where people are crammed into triple-tier bunks—can be tolerated only for a limited period. But if the slow rate of resettlement continues, many of the men, women and children who crowded into Hong Kong refugee camps in 1981 will still be on the waiting list in 1982.

Are we ungrateful? We are not. We are thankful to those countries which took refugees from Hong Kong. But we ask them to alleviate the misery of those waiting in deprived conditions, and to bring to a halt the ordeal of thousands of innocent children who are missing everything that a child needs to grow up in normal and healthy conditions.

The children—as is so often the case—are the particular victims of man's inhumanity to man.

The problems of refugees can be solved, and have been solved. Yesterday's refugees are not today's refugees. The wretched homeless thousands scattered across Europe at the end of World War II are no longer wretched or homeless; the masses of Zimbabweans who fled their country have resettled. Durable solutions—whether through voluntary repatriation, local integration, or resettlement—have enabled refugees to cease to be refugees.

It is true that Hong Kong in recent years has been

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Refugees [from page 41]

confronted with a large number of new refugee situations, in fact refugee emergencies, often succeeding each other at an incredibly quick pace and affecting thousands of people. This has created the need to provide immediate emergency assistance of all kinds.

However vital and necessary such emergency assistance is, we should not forget that these are provisional measures and not the actual objective. In refugee matters the objective is resettlement, finding a new home, a new nationality. Resettlement and only resettlement puts an end to the moral and physical distress of the refugee and provides him with the basis for a new life.

Obviously, the problems of resettlement are considerable and vary greatly according to the geographic, cultural, sociological, and psychological dislocations between the refugee and the country where he is being integrated. I should like, however, to stress that, apart from the economic, structure and sociological factors, there is the human element. The most challenging task is to integrate human beings into a new human environment.

I devoutly agree with a sentiment expressed several years ago, on the occasion of the awarding of the Nansen Medal for outstanding service to refugees to the International Council of Voluntary Agencies: "All the state subsidies in the world will never be able to replace the warmth of assistance rendered by one individual, one human being to another. Help given by the state is usually anonymous and lacking in human compassion. It is man alone by his personal sacrifice, his personal charity, who can really bring succour to his neighbour in need. Without the individual who offers bread to the hungry, who cares for the sick, who

brings help to the refugee, all assistance is devoid of soul."

May I close this essay by asking members of my club and Rotary International to participate actively in this great humanitarian task by accepting responsibility for even the most helpless refugee, and to move the boat refugees from Hong Kong in numbers that will replace the agony of waiting with a spirit of hope.

By the way [from page 16]

activities of District 699 (southeastern Florida) in whatever way I can best serve," he says, "and I look forward to seeing Rotary friends at conventions."

Doug also expressed his regret at leaving the Foundation "at a time when it is opening up additional areas of service and embarking in new directions—a very exciting time in every respect.

"I envision a brilliant future for The Rotary Foundation. It is constantly challenged to realize its objective: furthering understanding and friendly relations between peoples of different nations.

"Through its worldwide linkage, the Foundation devotes its resources to bringing together people of diverse backgrounds. As long as Rotarians remain willing and eager to perpetuate these goals, it can only continue to gain in strength and stature."

THIS MONTH'S *Inside Rotary* column (page 46) is an account of a district conference, told by a young Rotarian experiencing a conference for the first time. In one of those rare cases of perfect timing, a letter from Rotarian C.L. "Duke" Duquaine of Madison, Wisconsin, U.S.A., arrived as this issue was in production.

The subject of Duke's timely letter was poetry—poetry with a purpose. Duke "took advantage" of his 1966-67 term as Madison club president and presented a poem to his fellow Rotarians each week. The poems were usually related to Rotary, a club activity, or a guest speaker. Duke provided a sample of his verse. By happy coincidence, it was titled "The Rotary District Conference." Duke writes that the poem was circulated to all clubs of District 625, read at many club meetings—and credited with improving attendance at the 1966-67 district conference.

As a complement to our *Inside Rotary* column, and in the hope that Duke's poem will inspire greater attendance at your district conference, we now present selected verses from:

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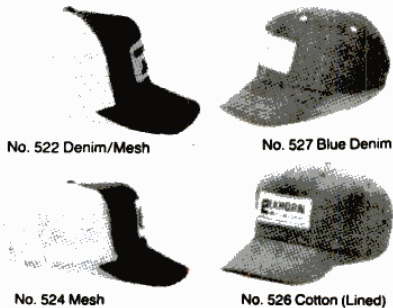
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About the Author 作者簡介

By Herbert K. Lau (劉敬恒) (Rotary China Historian) 1 June 2015



Reverend Karl Ludwig Stumpf (施同福牧師), MBE, (21 September 1913 - 1 May 1987), ethnic German, President 1964-1965 of the Rotary Club of Kowloon (九龍扶輪社), Hong Kong; a pastor of the Lutheran World Federation and leader of its Hong Kong Branch (世界信義宗香港社會服務處主任); Director of the Hong Kong Society for the Blind (香港盲人輔導會); was recipient of 1980 Hong Kong Citizen of the Year Award---an award recognizing his significant contribution to the welfare of Hong Kong. Karl actively began his refugee services as early as in the 1950s, by providing resettlement and adaptation supports for stateless Belarusians living in the Chinese mainland and the British Hong Kong, as well as those Chinese refugees that poured into Hong Kong. In the late 1970s, Karl travelled to many European countries seeking homes for Vietnamese displaced by the conflict of war. In 1985 the Hong Kong Christian Aid for Refugees (香港基督教難民服務處) registered as charity, providing feasible supports to those Vietnamese refugees that were loitered in Hong Kong. His concern for the aged, disabled, and the young had won him many honors, including Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (M.B.E.) appointed by Queen Elizabeth II, United Kingdom, in January 1981.

Other than Rotary, Karl had also served the public as Chairman of the Preventive Education and Publicity Sub-Committee of the Action Committee Against Narcotics, Hong Kong Government (香港政府禁毒常務委員會教育宣傳小組主席).

施同福牧師(Reverend Karl Ludwig Stumpf), MBE, (1913年9月21日-1987年5月1日)，九龍扶輪社(Rotary Club of Kowloon)1964-1965年度社長，德國裔，是一位在香港歷史上具有重要影響力的德國路德宗(Lutheran)牧師，被譽為「香港難民之父」。

以下是關於他的主要貢獻與背景：

- 身份與職位：他是德國信義宗(Lutheran)牧師，曾長期擔任路德會世界服務處(Lutheran World Service, LWS)的香港負責人。
- 關注難民權益：他在第二次世界大戰後的香港致力於難民服務，特別是針對1950年代湧入香港的無國籍的白俄羅斯人、中國難民。他成立了相關服務機構，並高舉社會公義，積極與香港政府周旋，批評當時政府忽視工人階級和難民的社會政策。

- 推動醫療服務：他積極籌募資源，例如曾帶領九龍扶輪社捐贈流動牙科診所給路德會，為超過 25,000 名患者提供服務。
- 建立教會社群：他不僅關注物質援助，也致力於建立教會，例如為受助者安排英語崇拜，並推動了信義宗社群的發展。
- 人道主義理念：他的理念被稱為「現實人道主義」(Realistic Humanism)，強調人性尊嚴與預防社會問題的重要性。

除上述外，施同福牧師還曾擔任香港政府禁毒常務委員會教育宣傳小組主席，宣揚毒品濫用的最惡劣禍害。他對老人、殘疾人和年輕人的關懷為他贏得了許多榮譽，包括英國女王伊麗莎白二世於 1981 年 1 月授予大英帝國最優秀員佐勳章 (Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire)。



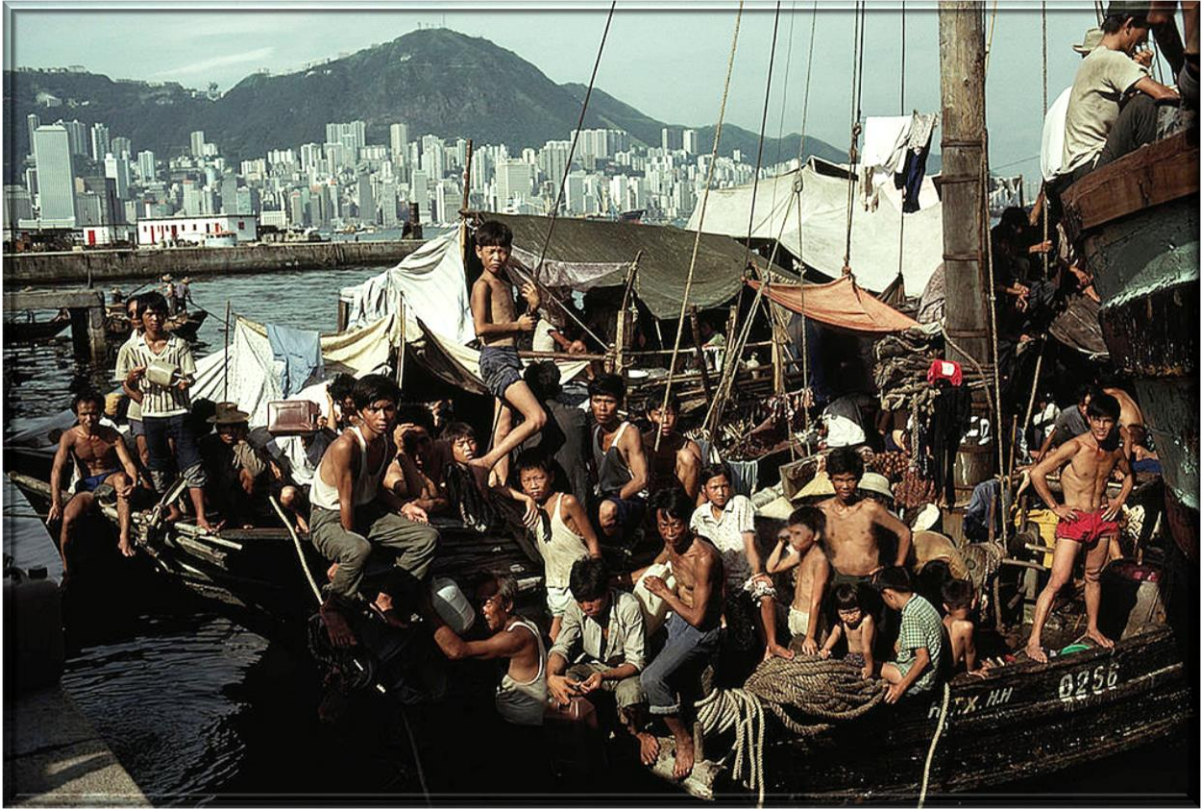
1979 年 3 月 2 日—英皇御准香港賽馬會董事馮秉芬爵士 (右) 將兩輛貨車的鑰匙交給香港盲人輔導會總幹事施同福牧師，這些貨車是賽馬會捐贈給盲人會的。施同福牧師是九龍扶輪社 1964-1965 年度社長；

馮秉芬爵士是香港扶輪社 1949-1950 年度社長、國際扶輪 345 地區 1961-1962 年度總監。

2 March 1979-- Sir Kenneth Fung Ping-Fan (right), a steward of the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club, hands over keys of two vans to Rev. Karl L. Stumpf, Director of the Hong Kong Society for the Blind. The vans are donated to the Society by the Jockey Club. Karl L. Stumpf was President 1964-1965 of Kowloon Rotary Club while Sir Kenneth was President 1949-1950 of Hong Kong Rotary Club; Rotary International District 345 Governor 1961-1962. (Getty Images)

香港基督教難民服務處(Hong Kong Christian Aid for Refugees)(1994 年易名基督教勵行會 Christian Action)的創立，由德國基督教信義會教士施同福牧師開始。早於 1950 年代，他便積極為流落中國大陸及香港地區的無國籍白俄羅斯人，以及湧入香港的中國難民，給予安置和適應服務。上世紀六七十年代越南戰爭(1961-1975)，有愈來愈多的越南難民湧入香港。香港基督教難民服務處開始支援越南難民的需要，為這群被迫離開家園的難民提供人道服務。基督教難民服務處是首個專為越南難民提供支援的志願團體，包括僱用計劃及手工藝班、社區服務(售賣日常生活必需品的商店、食堂、免費理髮、應節商品等)、職業訓練、牙科服務、兒童服務、懷孕婦女服務。

香港主權移交後，香港越南船民問題於 1998 年得到全面解決。大部分船民均獲遣返回越南，亦有少部分以難民身分定居海外或成為香港居民。基督教勵行會(基督教難民服務處)也為這項維持了逾 30 年的歷史任務，寫上句號。



1969 年，數以萬計越戰難民乘帆船逃往香港。
Hundreds of thousand Vietnamese War refugees fleeing into Hong Kong by junk in 1969



啟德難民營的外部與內部景象
External and inside views of the refugee camp at Kai Tak