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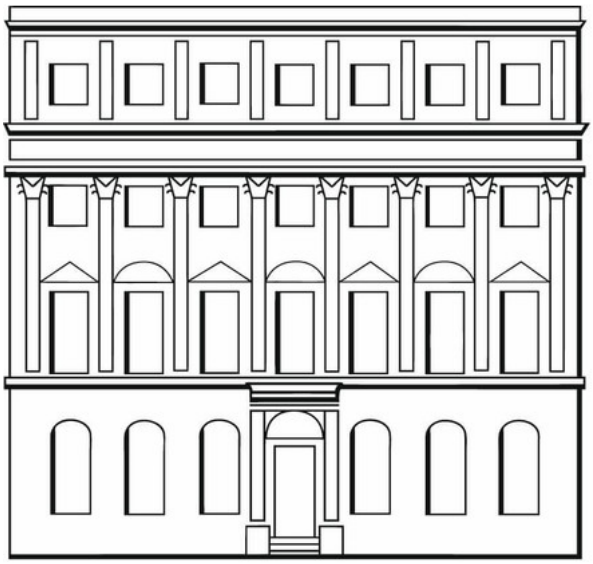

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Heide Fehrenbach

One morning in May 2008, the front page of my *New York Times* featured the photograph of a married couple from Michigan with downcast faces, seated on their living room sofa and holding up to the camera snapshots of 'Jamyson', a Guatemalan baby boy they had planned, but failed, to adopt. 'I'd honestly rather get stabbed in the stomach than have to go through that again,' the husband remarked. 'I considered Jamyson my son.'[1]

This was, in fact, just one of many similar images of disappointed couples that appeared in the American news media that spring. The United States had finally signed the 1993 Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption, joining more than seventy countries already party to the accord. The Convention aims to discourage child trafficking through increased oversight of the global adoption business, the creation of legally binding professional standards and ethical norms, and improved co-operation and communication between sending and receiving states. At its centre are the governing principles that intercountry adoption be pursued in the 'best interests of the child' and only after in-country placement has failed.[2]

Once the Convention came into effect in the USA, there was

[1] Dan Frosch, 'New Rules and Economy Strain Adoption Agencies', *New York Times*, 11 May 2008 ⟨http://www.nytimes.hskip 1sp com/2008/05/11/us/11adopt.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all⟩ [accessed 7 Aug. 2012].

[2] The drafting committee included representatives from West Germany, Venezuela, the Philippines, Finland, Lebanon, Uruguay, Ireland, China, Belgium, and the USA. Thirty-three member states, twenty non-member states, and numerous NGO and intergovernmental organizations participated. For a list of participants see G. Parra-Aranguren, *Explanatory Report on the Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption* ⟨www.hcch.net/upload/expl33e.pdf⟩ [accessed 23 Aug. 2012], 5 n. 16. For full text of the Convention see ⟨www.hcch.net/index_en.php?act=text.display&tid=45⟩ [accessed 30 Oct. 2013].

a procedural tightening that threatened to cut off adoptions from abroad—in particular, from the most dependable recent sources, China and Guatemala. While American press reports generally lauded the spirit of the Convention and the increased protection it affords children and birth parents, media coverage also highlighted the domestic drama the Convention unleashed, namely, the confusion, anxiety, and heartbreak among prospective American parents who had already chosen their desired foreign child for adoption and completed applications, preparations, and payments, only to be told that they would never be able to welcome the child into their home, family, and country.[3]

This sense of loss, made palpable by sympathetic media coverage, was dwarfed by the almost simultaneous news of a major earthquake in China that claimed over 70,000 lives, including an estimated 10,000 schoolchildren. Over the next few weeks, US press coverage turned away from the disappointed hopes of American couples to focus on the losses and public protests of thousands of Chinese parents, whose only children had died in the collapse of shoddily built schools in Sichuan province.[4] Both sets of parents—American and Chinese, prospective and actual—mourned children and families, future and past: those that might have been, and those that had been, but were now forever and irretrievably gone. While the triggering events, political contexts, and experience of mourning of the American and Chinese couples were distinct, media images nonetheless suggested a comparability of form and emotional address. Both sets of photographs sought to elicit viewer identification with, and empathy for, the parents; both were structured around the child's absence.

Viewed comparatively, the grief of the Chinese parents may strike the viewer as more profound and authentic than that of the American couple because of their biological and affective

[3] Mireya Navarro, 'To Adopt, Please Press Hold', *New York Times*, 5 June 2008, 1; see also Kirk Semple, 'An Adoption Overseas, Now on Hold', *New York Times*, 17 June 2008, A21; 'International Adoption Becomes Difficult amid Treaties, Regulation', online transcript of PBS Newshour, broadcast of 1 July 2008 ⟨www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/social_issues/july-dec08/adoptionabroad_07-01.html⟩ [accessed 18 Sept. 2008]; Jane Gross and Will Connors, 'In Ethiopia, Open Door for Foreign Adoptions', *New York Times*, 4 June 2007, 1; Jane Gross, 'A Taste of Family Life in U.S., but Adoption is in Limbo', *New York Times*, 13 Jan. 2007, 1, 12.

[4] For death counts and the political fallout regarding the shoddily constructed schools see Edward Wang, 'China Concedes Possible Flaws in Schools that Collapsed in May Earthquake', *New York Times*, 5 Sept. 2008, A6.

ties to the children, their life experiences with them, and the violence, suddenness, and finality of their loss. Their situation is unambiguously tragic. The Chinese parents' personal anguish is etched on their faces: they directly confront the camera, displaying their children's photographs, which conjure up the dead children and serve as a memento mori. Their collective stance within the frame, set against the backdrop of rubble, indicates the broader social dimension of their suffering as they protest against the man-made, rather than natural, causes of their loss. In contrast, the grief of the American couple, contained within the privacy of their living room, strikes us as individualized and perhaps less authentic or, at least, less traumatic. This is because of their anticipatory, rather than actual, ties with the child; their consumerist (and fertility-free) rather than biological (and therefore 'natural') strategies of reproduction; and the unequal economic and power relations involved in the transaction.[5] Indeed, this assessment of international adoption as boutique-style family construction by privileged white Westerners conforms to the main interpretative trends in the growing critical scholarship on international adoption.[6]

My point in raising this contrast is not to ridicule or denounce the emotional display of these prospective adoptive parents, but to historicize it. Although too many of the world's children are still subjected to violence, poverty, and abuse, one striking feature of the twentieth century has been the global emergence of the 'priceless child' in social conception, media representation, and emotional response.[7] Here I explore the confluence of historical circumstances that produced the innovation of intercountry adoption. At a basic level, the story revolves round the ideological construction of 'the

[5] Laura Briggs and Diana Marre describe intercountry adoption as a 'stratified form of assisted reproduction', invoking anthropologist Shellee Cholen's notion of 'stratified reproduction' (Laura Briggs and Diana Marre, 'Introduction: The Circulation of Children', in eaed. (eds.), *International Adoption: Global Inequities and the Circulation of Children* (New York, 2009), 15, 17).

[6] e.g. Laura Briggs, 'Mother, Child, Race, Nation: The Visual Iconography of Rescue and the Politics of Transnational and Transracial Adoption', *Gender and History*, 15/2 (2003), 179–200; Rita J. Simon and Howard Altstein, *Adoption across Borders: Serving the Children in Transracial and Intercountry Adoptions* (Lanham, Md., 2000); Jane Jeong Trenka, Julia Chinyere Oparah, and Sun Yung Shin, *Outsiders Within: Writing on Transracial Adoption* (Cambridge, Mass., 2006); Sara Dorow, *Transnational Adoption: A Cultural Economy of Race, Gender, and Kinship* (New York, 2006); Briggs and Marre (eds.), *International Adoption*; Karen Dubinsky, *Babies without Borders* (New York, 2010).

[7] The term is from Vivian Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York, 1985).

child' as a vulnerable figure and a focus of humanitarian activism.[8] It concerns the questions of how, when, and why children of various ethnicities and nationalities became highly valued and were transformed into kin by unrelated adults abroad.

This essay is organized around two interpretative strands. The first is grounded in institutional and social history and considers the historical emergence of international humanitarian aid, via international social welfare work, on behalf of children and families. The second raises the question of the role that visual representation has played in advocacy on their behalf. The discussion will not explore the use and classification of 'head shots' of adoptive children, something that has been investigated for the contemporary international adoption business.[9] Rather, it considers some larger shifts in visual and media culture during and after the Second World War that helped prepare the way for international adoption. In particular, I am interested in how photographic representation works to establish and reinforce particular narratives and the potential of these narratives to affect social practice and policy.[10] How, historically, did humanitarian aid for children turn into something more intimate, namely, an intensely empathetic, emotionally charged commitment to transnational child adoption and even transracial parenting by American couples? What accounts for this shift from aid to intimacy and imagined consanguinity? When and why did certain children, who were initially considered vulnerable and in need of humanitarian assistance, come to be seen as adoptable, assimilable, and in need of personal nurture and parenting? And what role did photography and photojournalism play in the process? This last question is one I have only begun to explore, so the discussion here is speculative and focused on identifying areas requiring further research.[11]

[8] See the discussion by Laura Suski, 'Children, Suffering, and the Humanitarian Appeal', in Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown (eds.), *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy* (New York, 2009), 202–19. Also Heide Fehrenbach, 'Children and Other Civilians: Photography and the Politics of Humanitarian Image-Making', in ead. and Davide Rodogno (eds.), *Humanitarian Photography: A History* (New York, 2015), 165–99.

[9] Lisa Cartwright, 'Photographs of "Waiting Children": The Transnational Adoption Market', *Social Text 74*, 21/1 (2003), 83–109.

[10] Arthur Kleinman and Joan Kleinman, 'The Appeal of Experience: The Dismay of Images: Cultural Appropriations of Suffering in our Times', *Daedalus*, 125/1 (1996), 1–23.

[11] On the role of photography in humanitarian campaigns see Fehrenbach and Rodogno (eds.), *Humanitarian Photography*.

International Child Welfare Work after the First World War

The ethical and emotional resonance of intercountry adoption can be understood only if we rethink its historical origins and genealogy. Over the past decade or so, the scholarly trend has been to identify the Korean War as the triggering event for intercountry adoption and to highlight the adoption of Korean orphans by American citizens. Sociologist Sara Dorow has argued, for example, that Americans are deceiving themselves if they think that intercountry adoption originated in expressions of compassionate humanitarianism, when it was so clearly the symptomatic expression of a 'globalizing white humanism' stimulated by American Cold War ambitions in Third World countries in general, and Asia in particular.[12] In contrast, this essay argues that the origins of intercountry adoption are more properly found in international social work and humanitarian initiatives directed at European and Middle Eastern refugee and migrant families after the First World War. It emphasizes the historical connection between international humanitarian assistance provided to refugees and migrants on the one hand, and the emergence of international adoption on the other. While the histories of humanitarianism, refugees, migration, and international adoption are typically treated in isolation from each other, they should not be, as they are intimately related in terms of personnel, policy, and practice.

The four decades between the 1920s and 1960s witnessed a shift in international social work from a commitment to the principle of 'inviolable families', via the practice of family reunion across national borders, to the legal innovation of intercountry adoption and the creation of new transnational families. Evidence for this shift comes from the work of the International Social Service (ISS, formerly the International Migration Service, 1924–46) and the progressive international activity of its staff of female social workers in Britain, Europe, and the United States, who began working collaboratively across national borders to address the destructive consequences of war, displacement, and migration for children and families after 1919. Initially affiliated with the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), these women claimed to be motivated by a 'new

[12] Dorow, *Transnational Adoption*, 37; Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination* (Berkeley, 2003); Briggs, 'Mother, Child, Race, Nation'.

insight': that migration, whether forced or free, produced a 'newly recognized form of human suffering: namely, family ties broken by distance'.[13]

During the early 1920s, ISS social workers targeted the 'emergency situations' developing in Europe, and particularly in France.[14] Thousands of destitute refugees poured in monthly, seeking relief and international passage to Canada, the United States, Mexico, and increasingly to South America once the USA passed restrictive immigration laws. For example, the ISS assisted a Greek refugee in England attempting to locate and reunite with his young daughter still in Greece; an elderly Armenian woman stranded in Athens, trying to reach her grown-up son in Abyssinia; and a refugee Russian aristocrat living in poverty in Crete seeking physical custody of her 10-year-old orphaned grandchild who remained in Russia.[15] The ISS repeatedly confronted difficult cases involving children, such as that of a 10-year-old Syrian boy who made two transatlantic crossings from France to New York, only to be turned back both times by the authorities at Ellis Island since the American quota for Syrian immigration (only 81 per year) had been filled just before his arrival. As a result, the ISS began arranging temporary care in France for refugee and migrant children from Syria, Persia, and Armenia.[16]

In 1924 the ISS broke with the YWCA to become an 'independent,

[13] While affiliated with the YWCA, the international migration committee has offices in Antwerp, Athens, Constantinople, Cherbourg, Le Havre, Marseille, Paris, Prague, and Warsaw. This discussion is based on the Papers of the International Social Service, American Branch (hereafter SW109) deposited at the University of Minnesota Libraries, Social Welfare History Archives, Minneapolis, USA. It draws upon Ruth Larned, 'International Social Service: A History, 1924–1955' (unpublished typescript), with a foreword by Mary E. Hurlbutt, from that collection. Ruth Larned published a more schematic history of the ISS entitled *The Story of the International Social Service* (New York, 1960); see Larned, 'International Social Service' (typescript), pp. iii, 12.

[14] By 1922 the French ISS Branch was processing refugees of 'twenty-three known nationalities' who were assembling in several French cities. Most prevalent were Syrians and Armenians in Marseille; Czechs, Yugoslavs, and Austrians in Le Havre; and Polish Jews in Cherbourg (Larned, 'International Social Service', 40).

[15] Larned, 'International Social Service', 9, 12, 42–3.

[16] Ibid. 42–3. They also arranged care for sick refugees and migrants, whether children or adults. For recent discussions of post-war internationalist humanitarianism and the focus on children see Dominique Marshall, 'The Construction of Children as an Object of International Relations: The Declaration of Children's Rights and the Child Welfare Committee of the League of Nations, 1900–1924', *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 7 (1999), 103–47; Keith David Watenpaugh, 'The League of Nations' Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism, 1920–1927', *American Historical Review*, 115/5 (2010), 1315–39; and

non-denominational, non-political' organization serving those in need 'without discrimination' as to nationality, race, religion, or political affiliation. Its charter called for the 'subordination of purely national interests' in favour of the 'practice of thinking internationally'. Its personnel were to be 'selected not alone on the basis of appropriate experience, nationality and requisite languages but [also] a disposition to appreciate and respect—and not merely tolerate—cultural and religious differences'.[17]

During the 1920s the ISS established its headquarters in Geneva, the seat of inter-war internationalism, and branch offices staffed with local workers, in Britain, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Greece, Poland, Switzerland, and the United States. Its aim was to create a 'new type of social work', grounded in intense international collaboration, to address the serious family-related problems arising among growing numbers of refugees, stateless persons, and labour migrants who were trying to negotiate conflicting laws of two or more countries in order to locate loved ones, reunite families, or transport dependants across national borders, resolve ambiguities in citizenship, or send or claim child support at a time when there was no protective international law.[18]

Given its international scope, ISS founders asserted the need for 'common ground' to unite the efforts of its international staff. This would take the form of 'modern casework method', a 'technique' developed by professionalized social workers in the USA which rigorously documented and investigated individuals on the basis of social and familial circumstances, psychological and emotional considerations, and the like. Adapted for international application, it would come to constitute the common professional practice of ISS workers worldwide. The founding American members informally dubbed themselves 'the Committee on the Universe'. Although used in a jocular way, this appellation nonetheless indicated both their global ambitions for the organization and the centrality of American contributions. The ISS's initial start-up funds, in fact, came from US philanthropic sources.[19]

Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918–1924* (New York, 2014).

[17] Larned, 'International Social Service', respectively pp. 7, iii, 7.

[18] All but Germany had representatives on the original executive council.

[19] Initial funding came from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Foundation, which was under the new leadership of Beardsley Ruml. Ruml transformed the

From its beginnings the ISS generated important empirical research on the conditions and legal situation of refugees and migrants in Europe, the United States, and Brazil. In the early 1920s the organization conducted studies on refugees in Turkey and French port cities, as well as on the 'welfare of migrants' and the migration process in various Western and Central European countries; it also monitored conditions for refugees and migrants in Italy, Yugoslavia, Syria, and the Baltic and Scandinavian states. By the mid-1920s ISS staff increasingly focused on child welfare issues, producing studies on 'Social Problems of Migrating Children' (1925), 'Children in Transit' (1926), 'Separated Families' (1926), 'The Desertion and Repatriation of Children' (1926), and 'Maintenance Support for Dependents in a Foreign Country' (1930). All were submitted to the League of Nations with an eye towards reforming national policies, administrative procedures, and laws governing migration since, the ISS maintained, these had been drafted at bird's-eye level, 'without adequate knowledge of their effects on individual and family life'.[20]

The ISS has not been the subject of thorough-going historical study. For our purposes, three points regarding its impact and reach will suffice. First, since the 1920s the ISS, through individual casework, empirical studies, and policy recommendations, pioneered national and international policy to protect refugee, migrating, and abandoned women and children whose legal status, material support, and/or nationality were ambiguous, contested, or nullified when they, or their male breadwinners, crossed national borders. From the start the ISS lobbied and liaised with national lawmakers and international bodies such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the League of Nations, and later the United Nations, to make the 'inviolability of the family' a 'basic consideration in framing migration policies'. The goal was to protect the most vulnerable in war and in peacetime and to get policymakers to think

Foundation from an 'almsgiving' organization into a 'major social science founding agency' and poured tens of millions of Rockefeller dollars into cultivating 'objective' scientific research, methods, professional standards, and experts at American universities and social and child welfare organizations. See Oliver Zunz, *Why the American Century?* (Chicago, 2000), 37; Martin and Joan Bulmer, 'Philanthropy and Social Science', *Minerva*, 19 (1981), 347–407.

[20] Larned, 'International Social Service', Appendix I-2, and 66. In addition, the ILO requested that the ISS open branches in Brazil and Argentina once the USA had severely restricted immigration. On developments in the UN see UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 'UN Programme for Family and Child Welfare', *International Social Science Review*, 1 (Jan. 1956), 1–14.

in terms of the individual and the family as interdependent social units.[21] In this sense, ISS goals ninety years ago anticipated our contemporary critical analysis of human rights discourse. For in addition to 'the individual', which has been the privileged subject of two centuries' worth of political and social theorizing, the women of the ISS insisted that governments and legal codes attend to what is now called 'social embeddedness', that is, the social context in which the individual is created, nurtured, nationalized, and, one might add, gendered. In political terms, this meant establishing a basis on which to extend legal and material protection and aid to the female and minor dependants of male refugees and migrants.[22]

Second, from the 1920s to the 1940s the involvement of ISS staff in child relief and rescue work established their credentials as experts in both international child welfare and the civil law codes and legal procedures of numerous European, American, and (by the 1950s) Asian countries. During the 1930s the ISS helped to professionalize international social work by convening special 'institutes' designed to devise, standardize, and train social workers in modern casework methods and their intercountry application. Held in Paris in the 1930s, these were seminars sponsored by the Red Cross and attended by students from Brazil and across Europe, including Yugoslavia, Romania, Lithuania, Norway, and Denmark.[23]

Third, the eugenic and genocidal policies of the Nazi regime in wartime Europe gave an important impetus to the expansion of international child welfare work and, ultimately, the emergence of intercountry adoption.[24] A growing historical literature now indi-

[21] Larned, 'International Social Service', 17. These problems were exacerbated by US immigration law, which became increasingly restrictive after the two world wars: first in 1924, and again in 1952 with the passage of the McCarran–Walter Act, which repealed the ban on Asians but permitted only low annual quotas of 100 each for Far Eastern nations. In addition, the US government and military, along with the other victorious Allies of 1945, initially blocked, and a little later made merely difficult, the immigration of the foreign wives and children of soldiers serving abroad in Europe and Asia. As a result, official immigration and hence 'family reunion' policy after 1945 was fluid.

[22] For a discussion of the individualist versus 'social embeddedness' approach to human rights see Barbara Bennett Woodhouse, *Hidden in Plain Sight: The Tragedy of Children's Rights from Ben Franklin to Lionel Tate* (Princeton, 2008).

[23] Larned, 'International Social Service', 71–5. Funding was provided by the Paris headquarters of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in the form of scholarships for attendees.

[24] The rise of the Nazi state caused the ISS officially to sever its relations with the German branch since it could no longer comply with the mandate to provide service

cates how fundamentally the Nazi war of aggression in Europe was also a 'war against children'. Nazi aggression laid bare the glaring inability of fathers, families, and nations to protect their members, especially the most vulnerable among them.[25] Nazi violence was met by international wartime efforts on the part of sectarian organizations and Allied nations to rescue specific groups of European children, either by transporting them abroad (via Kindertransports, Youth Aliyah, or US Care for European Children) or by hiding them 'on site' with Gentile families or in Christian orphanages and convents. Although not sufficiently comprehensive or effective—in 1939, for example, the American branch of the ISS was involved in a failed mission to Germany to remove Jewish children to foster care in the United States[26]—such activism did save tens of thousands of European children. It represented a crucial step in intensifying international commitment to, and co-operation in, child welfare, child protection, and children's rights. Child rescue efforts gave practical content to the League of Nations' 1924 Declaration of the Right of the Child. In fact, they modified it by suggesting that if states could not or would not protect their own children, non-state actors would strive to do so.

Wartime child rescue work had a profound effect: it reinvigorated, intensified, and ultimately transformed the co-operative international humanitarian work in child welfare begun after the First World War. What is more, it exposed a pressing need for the creation of international law in order to negotiate the conflicting jumble of national legislation governing the migration of minors from one country to another. Intercountry adoption as a legal and social practice was a direct descendant of inter-war and wartime

on a non-political, non-discriminatory basis. Informal contacts apparently continued between some members of the inter-war German, American, and French ISS staff.

[25] Heide Fehrenbach, 'War Orphans and Postfascist Families: Kinship and Belonging after 1945', in Frank Biess and Robert G. Moeller (eds.), *Histories of the Aftermath: The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe* (New York, 2010), 175–95; also Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Family after World War II* (Cambridge, Mass., 2011). On German orphans see Michelle Mouton, 'Missing, Lost, and Displaced Children in Postwar Germany: The Great Struggle to Provide for the War's Youngest Victims', *Central European History*, 48 (2015), 53–78.

[26] Larned, 'International Social Service', 47. The declaration of war doomed the ISS's rescue attempt. Three years earlier, in 1936, when consulting with the League's Social Section Special Committee regarding a convention for 'assistance to Indigent Aliens', the ISS 'pressed unsuccessfully' to have a clause guaranteeing physical and legal protection for transplanted children all the way to their final destination, and not just to the border of the country they were departing (ibid. 81).

experience. Its successes and failures represent the globalization of child welfare and migration work forged during world war, decolonization, and the Cold War.[27]

The ISS was deeply involved in this wartime and early post-war work. The organization helped administer the US Committee for the Care of European Children programme, which placed children from war-torn Britain into American foster homes. After the Second World War, ISS staff worked with all of the leading international relief and refugee organizations—the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), the International Refugee Organization (IRO), the International Committee for European Migration (ICEM), and the UN Office of High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)—and consulted on national and international refugee migration policy, including, for example, the 1953 US Refugee Relief Act.[28] In the early 1950s, when in relatively rapid succession the US Displaced Persons Commission, the US Committee on the Care of European Children, and the IRO terminated their operations, the ISS, in each case, took on the unresolved casework of children who had not yet been permanently placed or repatriated.[29]

Following the mass death and population displacements of the Second World War, the ISS articulated its primary goals as 're-kindling' kinship ties, 'preserving' and 'reuniting families', or, if this proved impossible, reconstituting them among surviving refugees

[27] Susan T. Pettiss, 'Effect of Adoption of Foreign Children on U.S. Adoption Standards and Practices', *Child Welfare*, 37 (1958), 27–32, offprint found in SW109, Box 11, folder 9; also Larned, 'International Social Service', 84–100.

[28] At the war's end, ISS staff from the USA, Greece, France, and Switzerland worked for the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees, UNRRA, and its successor organization, IRO. In 1949 the ISS also ran training seminars for IRO workers posted to Germany. The Swiss director of the ISS worked for the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees before joining the IRO programme in Germany. The American Director of the ISS served as consultant to the US State Department's Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation, UNRRA, and the IRO. Reciprocally, Susan Pettiss, an American social worker who worked in Europe for UNRRA and later the IRO on refugee relief and the problem of 'unaccompanied children', became the assistant director of the ISS American Branch. ISS workers in France, Greece, and Switzerland all for a time worked for the IRO. Pettiss published a memoir of her time in Europe with UNRRA and the IRO shortly before her death: Susan T. Pettiss and Lynne Taylor, *After the Shooting Stopped: The Story of an UNRRA Welfare Worker in Germany, 1945–1947* (Victoria, BC, 2004); see also Larned, 'International Social Service', 54–64.

[29] Larned, 'International Social Service', 90–3; also Mrs William Burns [*sic*], 'Four Thousand Orphans: A Paper Prepared for . . . the Saturday Morning Club, New Haven, Conn., March 1954', SW109, Box 3, folder 3. In September 1954 Allied officials handed authority over these non-German children in Germany to the West German federal government.

and displaced persons.[30] Re-establishing and reconstituting families was a prominent focus of international humanitarian activities after 1945. It emerged as one of the most uniformly endorsed answers to the central problem of post-war reconstruction, namely, how to build stability, not just economically and politically, but also socially, psychologically, and emotionally.

Intercountry adoption emerged as one innovative means of fostering post-war stability by providing war orphans with permanent membership in families. Born of the Second World War, its post-war practice was marked by this traumatic birth. It grew out of sympathy for suffering European children and the earlier relief work done on their behalf. It began, that is to say, as an intra-First World practice. Until the 1960s, adoptions from Europe to the United States far outpaced those from Asia, accounting for nearly 70 per cent of intercountry adoptions between 1946 and 1958; the top sending countries were Germany, Greece, Italy, and Austria.[31]

Intercountry adoption was a response to the exigencies of the immediate post-war period and initially took the form of the legal adoption of 'known' war orphans from Europe in the United States by related family members. A legal precondition for such adoptions was the US Displaced Persons Act, special legislation passed by the US Congress in 1948 that permitted for the first time the non-quota immigration of European children to the United States.

An early case handled by the ISS involved two orphaned sisters, Ellen, aged 17, born in Romania, and Nelly, aged 12, born in France, who were living in a convent in Versailles at the end of the war. Their father, an expatriate American and long-time

[30] 'War Emergency Project', SW109, Box 15, file 21 (30 Aug. 1945). On post-war humanitarian work for DPs see G. Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (New York, 2012).

[31] A total of 10,288 'orphans' of foreign birth entered the USA between 1946 and 1958 on special non-quota visas. Of these, 68 per cent were of European, 16 per cent of Japanese, and 17 per cent of Korean birth. These numbers do not include orphans who entered the USA under the quota system, which inflated the number of European children but did little to increase the number of Asian children, since quotas were set at 100 individuals per Asian country annually after the 1952 McCarran–Walter Act. Non-quota special legislation for immigrant orphans began with the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 and continued until the Act of 29 July 1953 (which allowed the entry of Japanese orphans for the first time), the Refugee Relief Act of 1953, the Emergency Parole Protocol of 30 Oct. 1956, and the Act of 11 Sept. 1957; Gertrude D. Krichefsky, 'Immigrant Orphans', *J&M Reporter* (1958), 19–21, SW109, Box 13, folder 2. Not until 1965–76 did Korean adoptions constitute a majority (estimated at 65 per cent for the entire period): Simon and Altstein, *Adoption across Borders*, 6.

resident in Europe, had returned to the United States in 1937 in a futile attempt to secure visas for his family and treatment for his tuberculosis. He died in Chicago within weeks of arrival. His wife, a Romanian citizen of Jewish origin, remained stranded in Paris with their two young daughters. In 1941 mother and daughters converted to Catholicism, and the mother placed Ellen and Nelly in a Catholic children's home for their protection. In 1944 the mother was transported to an unidentified death camp, where she was killed. After the war the mother's aunt, who lived in New York, contacted a Jewish agency to enquire about the girls' fates and whereabouts. The Jewish agency found Ellen and Nelly and attempted to place them in a Jewish children's home to prepare them for emigration to Palestine. When the girls declined, the ISS got involved and undertook extensive casework—interviewing and counselling, conducting home studies and psychological assessments—to ascertain whether the aunt could offer a good home and whether she could be understanding of the girls' traumatic experience and open-minded about their fervent Catholicism. After about eighteen months of painstaking technical, legal, and psychological preparations, the girls joined the great aunt, her husband, and her grown daughter in New York. Follow-up interviews suggested the placement was a good one: the girls were continuing their education, acquiring English and friends at a rapid pace, and had developed a close relationship with their great aunt, uncle, and cousin. The case was deemed a success by the ISS, and their bulky file on the girls became a teaching tool at Columbia University's School of Social Work to train social workers in casework methods for international child welfare work.[32]

As the case of Ellen and Nelly suggests, intercountry adoption initially privileged the principle of 'blood ties'. In fact, ISS workers considered intercountry adoption a temporary response to the wartime destruction of families—a kind of social triage—and expected it to fade away as normal conditions returned.[33] Instead, intercountry adoption persisted and spread beyond the professionalized circles of the ISS as the humanitarian crisis expanded beyond surviving 'war orphans', narrowly defined, to include an unexpectedly large and

[32] 'Casework Record Restricted', SW109, ISS, Box 11, file 20, no. 5-51-1.

[33] Larned, 'International Social Service'; Eugenie Hochfeld, 'Across National Boundaries: Problems in the Handling of International Adoptions, Dependency, and Custody Cases', *Juvenile Court Judges Journal*, 4/3 (1963), 3–7.

growing population of abandoned or unwanted children in Europe and East Asia fathered by Allied soldiers of the post-war military occupations.

In the immediate post-1945 period, child adoption was one response to national problems of war orphans, illegitimacy, and fatherlessness. As a British commentator observed at the time, 'adoption as we know it is something new . . . it is the product of a new kind of consciousness'.[34] In much of Europe and Asia, moreover, child adoption and intercountry adoption appeared simultaneously.[35] Initially, in many affected war-torn countries (with the notable exceptions of Britain and France), there was more enthusiasm and support for intercountry adoption than for in-country adoption.

After 1945, there was a perceptible push (as well as a pull) in the international flow of children from Europe, and later Asia, to the United States. For children to be adopted by families abroad, those who were not stateless refugees had to be 'produced and released as adoptable' by their state of origin, as anthropologist Barbara Yngvesson has noted.[36] Intercountry adoption cannot be explained without reference to the role and interests of the sending states and the perceived or actual benefits they received. The historical emergence of intercountry adoption after 1945 must be understood in the context of the reproductive and population policies of the sending states on the one hand, and of their quest for post-war recovery and reconstruction on the other. Intercountry adoption was used by sending states (such as Germany, Austria, Italy, Greece, and only later Japan and South Korea) to get children off the streets or out of state-run orphanages and underfunded child welfare systems, to the extent that there were any. In this sense, intercountry adoption was a form of economic assistance to the ailing economies of defeated or weakened war-torn states.[37]

[34] Margaret Kornitzer, *Child Adoption in the Modern World* (New York, 1952), 345.

[35] Child adoption appeared first in mid-nineteenth-century Massachusetts and was popularized in the 1920s and 1930s in the USA. Its legal appearance elsewhere was comparatively late: after the First World War in Britain, France, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland, and after the Second World War in Southern and Eastern Europe, Ireland, and Asia.

[36] Barbara Yngvesson, 'Placing the "Gift Child" in Transnational Adoption', *Law and Society Review*, Special Issue on Nonbiological Parenting, 36/2 (2002), 227–56, at 236.

[37] ISS papers; Heide Fehrenbach, *Race after Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America* (Princeton, 2005); Roger Goodman, *Children of the Japanese State: The Changing Role of Child Protection Institutions in Contemporary Japan* (New York, 2000);

The ISS became the primary non-sectarian organization for handling intercountry adoptions in the United States, much of Western Europe, and by mid- to late decade, East Asia as well (as the ISS expanded into Japan, Hong Kong, and South Korea). This was because of its unsurpassed international experience in intercountry family and child welfare issues in inter-war, wartime, and post-war Europe; its vast institutional knowledge of the international implications of national civil and family law and kinship practices; the careful training it provided in casework methods; and a rapidly globalizing network of social workers working to solve transnational problems.[38] It is worth emphasizing that international adoption emerged from international social work networks and not from the already popular child sponsorship programmes launched in the inter-war period by the Save the Children Fund.

ISS staff had to find ways to reconcile the sometimes divergent laws of the sending and receiving states, all the while ensuring that the migrating child was protected and constantly under an adequate form of legal guardianship, that the adoption would be formally recognized by the sending and the receiving states, and that the child would obtain a secure home, legal name, and nationality when the process was complete. This was a highly complex set of legal, social, and psychological processes, some of which took place beyond or between state jurisdictions. International communication and oversight was essential, and it was provided by the ISS.

During the late 1940s and 1950s, as the ISS strove to develop and refine protocol, a more unruly development of unregulated and under-regulated international adoptions emerged. These sprang

Lloyd B. Graham, 'The Adoption of Children from Japan by American Families, 1952–1955' (Ph.D. thesis, School of Social Work, University of Toronto, 1958).

[38] In the 1950s the US government recognized only two major national agencies for international adoption in the USA: the Catholic Committee for Refugees of the National Catholic Welfare Conference and the ISS. Under the terms of an agreement with the Protestant agency Church World Service, the ISS handled Protestant intercountry adoptions. The United Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society provided a service for Jewish children, but according to ISS leaders, 'the almost complete unavailability of Jewish children for adoption makes the need for this service practically non-existent' (Pettiss, 'Effect of Adoption of Foreign Children', offprint (as in n. 27), 2); see also Larned, 'International Social Service', 84–100; separate 'country files' in SW109. On Catholic international social welfare work see Martha Rose Norris, 'Adoption of Children from Overseas: A Study of the Process Involved in Intercountry Adoption Placement of 145 Children Conducted under the Auspices of the Catholic Committee for Refugees, National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1961–1964' (Ph.D. thesis in social work, Catholic University, Washington, DC, 1967).

from three interrelated strands in the post-war media, military occupations, and Christian missions. All three employed photography to construct compelling narratives about the Second World War and its destructive consequences around the figure of the innocent, endangered, and putatively orphaned child. They also produced more hopeful narratives of post-war recovery and reconstruction focused on the recovery and rehabilitation of victimized children and their integration into secure and loving families (or, failing that, well-run institutions or group homes).[39] Such narratives were fundamentally mass-mediated and visual, and played an important role in advocacy on behalf of foreign children in former war zones. In the USA after 1945, such advocacy increasingly encouraged and attracted couples—white, black, and Asian American—to adopt foreign children for a variety of reasons.

From Humanitarianism to Intimacy: Envisioned Problems and Solutions

During and after the Second World War, photographic images and their narrative framing offered a general analysis of the social impact of the war as well as more specific, even targeted, claims regarding the ethics of social parenting. This section will suggest, in broad, schematic strokes, how an emotional 'pull' towards international adoption was mediated through developments in the national and international press as well as subnational and sectarian media outlets, resulting in a shift from aid to intimacy.

The war years coincided with the 'golden age' of photojournalism (1930s to the late 1950s), the genre of the photo-essay, and the professionalization of photographers. The names of Robert Capa, David Seymour (Chim), and Werner Bischof—male photographers of Central and Eastern European origin who built their reputations during the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War before establishing Magnum, a highly successful photographers' collective in post-war New York City—are well known. The name and work of Thérèse Bonney are less so. Bonney was a female photographer from Syracuse, New York, who studied at the University of California, Berkeley, before becoming an American expat in Paris in the 1920s and founding her own photographic agency there. In the 1920s and 1930s she made her name in fashion photography and with

[39] For a discussion of group homes as a post-war model see Zahra, *The Lost Children*; Fehrenbach, 'War Orphans and Postfascist Families'.

a well-received book on the Vatican. With the outbreak of war in 1939, she began to document civilian wartime experience through the lens of children's suffering. Her wartime work appeared in prominent newspapers and magazines in the United States and Europe; it was also featured in one of the first exhibits devoted to photography at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In 1943 Bonney's self-published book, *Europe's Children: 1939 to 1943*, became an overnight success and media sensation. The first print run sold out immediately, the book was reprinted by a commercial press, and its photographs were turned into an exhibit that toured forty American cities.[40]

Bonney's book disseminated a shockingly intimate view of the ravages of war, capturing how it broke the bonds of family and destroyed the reassuring predictabilities of daily life.[41] The full-page photographs were offered with minimal commentary, yet had a distinct narrative sweep, chronicling the destruction of the patterns and protections of 'normal' childhood—school, home, family life, mealtime, bedtime. Terrified and exhausted children cling to traumatized mothers on the road during the invasion of France or are separated from parents by death, illness, or flight. A young boy with bare legs on a chilly day, slumped over from fatigue at the side of a road; two young, solemn girls, probably sisters, peering through the barbed wire of an unnamed concentration camp; Finnish toddlers on a child transport to Sweden in search of safety; a premature newborn wrapped in paper rather than blankets; starving children and infants with bony limbs and distended stomachs, staring blankly at the camera. All vulnerable, some on the verge of extinction, each an iconic child-in-need, silently pleading for care, nurture, rescue, and a compassionate maternal or paternal response.[42]

Bonney disavowed the distancing lens of ethnic or national distinctiveness. Her photographs are intimate, mostly individual, portraits of suffering that encouraged viewers to respond to these

[40] Bonney took the photographs in England, Finland, France, Spain, and Sweden between 1939 and 1943. The book was republished by Rhode Publishing (New York) and Plantin Press (Los Angeles) over the course of the next year and distributed in Europe; letter from Bonney to Jane Lawson at Alfred A. Knopf, 28 Oct. 1943 (in my possession); excerpt from *Publisher's Weekly*, 23 Oct. 1943, 1594–5.

[41] This section draws on the analysis in Fehrenbach, 'War Orphans and Postfascist Families'.

[42] Thérèse Bonney's book can be viewed online through the Hathi Trust Digital Library: ⟨http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002619092⟩ [accessed 25 Oct. 2015].

children-in-need viscerally and on the basis of shared humanity, even kinship.[43] Bonney drew upon the visual vocabulary of social documentary photography that had been developed in the United States by photographers such as Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine around the turn of the twentieth century in an effort to expose and reform domestic problems such as immigrant and urban poverty and child labour. Like Riis and Hine, she focused on individual children to clarify and interpret social experience. Unlike those photographers, however, Bonney visually narrated the dissolution of community and family. She depicted children released into a wartime world: she showed them as vulnerable, dislocated, disconnected from family, orphaned, in jeopardy. Through its narrative progression, her book constitutes a form of 'moral witnessing', an ethical and emotional appeal for humanitarian action abroad. Her book helped to develop, and popularize, a particular moral vision. That moral vision, when fixed on a foreign subject and articulated through the figure of the vulnerable child, created an interpretative lens through which Western viewers could both apprehend social problems 'out there' and begin to conceive of involving themselves in the solution to those problems. Bonney's photo story was self-consciously humanitarian in its narrative ethos. It was a visual strategy aimed at spurring humanitarian response. Only decades later would the ubiquity of this visual strategy lead to the onset of 'empathy fatigue'. In the 1940s and 1950s it was seen as fresh and even shocking.[44]

[43] The children depicted were European and white; this was also true of other books. The popular press published more books on war orphans and, in some cases, their adoption by US citizens between 1950 and the early 1960s. See, in particular, Otto Zoff, *They Shall Inherit the Earth* (New York, 1943); Anne Barley, *Patrick Calls Me Mother* (New York, 1948); Irena Wasilewska, *Suffer Little Children* (New York, 1946); John P. Carroll-Abbing, *A Chance to Live: The Story of the Lost Children of the War* (New York, 1952); Robert Colis, *The Lost and Found: The Story of Eva and Laszlo, Two Children of War-Torn Europe*, intro. by Margaret Mead (New York, 1953); and Donald Lowrie, *The Hunted Children* (New York, 1963). On the absence of US press interest in Jewish 'child refugees' after 1940 see Edith J. T. Baumel, 'The Rescue and Resettlement of the Jewish Refugee Children from Europe in the United States, 1938–1945' (Ph.D. thesis, Bar-Ilan University, Israel, 1985), esp. 176–206.

[44] Bonney Collection, Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley, published reviews. This visual strategy did not guarantee humanitarian action. More research needs to be done on the demographics and psychology of affect and effect: how, why, when, and among whom visual appeal elicited action. For a discussion of this problematic in relation to photography see Fehrenbach and Rodogno (eds.), *Humanitarian Photography*. For an attempt to survey the emergence of 'the child' as quintessential innocent civilian in the photographic culture of humanitarianism see Fehrenbach, 'Children and Other Civilians'.

After 1945, such social documentary internationalism was taken up and more widely disseminated by celebrated male photographers Robert Capa, Chim, and Werner Bischof, among others, in commercial publications such as the prestigious pictorial magazines *Life*, *Picture Post*, and the Swiss monthly *Du*, and became the basis of explicit humanitarian appeals by UNESCO and other international organizations.[45] Their photography also appeared in trade books on the wartime and post-war suffering of European children through the 1960s.[46] Together, these photographs helped to internationalize 'the morality of vision' that informed the social documentary approach embodied in Bonney's war children.

The photographs were powerful, and for a number of reasons the United States was fertile ground for the reception of images of suffering children and activism on their behalf.[47] First, the US mainland had escaped the widespread destruction and destitution of the war zones and therefore had the economic and emotional wherewithal to raise foreign children. Second, child adoption had existed in parts of the USA for nearly a century, and by the 1930s had become increasingly accepted as a social practice. Third, the United States had a multi-ethnic population, a growing evangelical Christian movement, and a globalizing military with occupation forces in Europe and East Asia.

Some of the political and ethical features of the shift from aid to intimacy via intercountry adoption are suggested by media representations of and about three groups of Americans: African Americans, evangelical Christians, and American overseas military personnel. All three took up and interpreted Bonney's 'social problem of suffering children abroad'. In essence, they used their

[45] See e.g. the UNESCO publication *Children of Europe* (Paris, 1949), with photographs by David Seymour, which is available on the UNESCO website: ⟨http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001332/133216eb.pdf⟩ [accessed 25 Oct. 2015].

[46] See Peter Gattrell, *Free World? The Campaign to Save the World's Refugees, 1956–1963* (New York, 2011); Reuel Golden, *Photojournalism: 1855 to the Present* (New York, 2006), 8–9.

[47] This was not just an expression of the form or content of the photographs, but the meanings imputed to them. Julia Thomas's work on post-war Japan suggests that social documentary photography was not a recognized genre in post-1945 Japan. Although Japanese photographers took and published pictures of street children which appear similar to portraits of children-in-need by Bonney (and others), the photographers' intentions in creating the photographs were different from those of European and American photojournalists, as was the contemporary critical reception. See Julia Thomas, 'Power Made Visible: Photography and Postwar Japan's Elusive Reality', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 67/2 (2008), 365–94.

experience to challenge the humanitarian universalism of Bonney's photographs of suffering children by asking 'which children'? In doing so, they exposed and called into question the formal and informal exclusions—in particular, against Asian children and children of colour—contained in the 1948 US Refugee Relief Act, which authorized the immigration only of 'eligible' war orphans to the United States.

Although their analysis of the humanitarian problem differed, all three groups ultimately responded in similar fashion to find a solution for suffering children abroad: they moved from advocating economic aid (via specialized subscription 'adoptions' *à la* Save the Children or the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) to embracing legal international adoptions into American families and homes. In the process they produced and disseminated a new visual and narrative trope in response to the 'problem' photographs created by Thérèse Bonney and her more famous male counterparts: the celebratory 'nurturing parent' and family 'reunion'. Three brief illustrations follow.

African Americans and Occupied Germany

As early as 1947, the African American press began to publicize the 'plight' of black occupation children of American paternity, the so-called 'brown babies', in post-Fascist Germany (and later, Japan) and to urge action. One early report in the *Pittsburgh Courier* alleged that 'brown babies' were being turned into sideshow attractions in local German circuses and that some had been killed. At the turn of the 1950s, a correspondent for the *Baltimore Afro-American*, Mabel Grammer, arrived in Mannheim as the wife of a US warrant officer. Noting the children's miserable social circumstances and lowly status, she threw her energies into solving the 'brown baby problem' in Germany. She worked through the African American press and churches to awaken interest in the children. At first she published the names and addresses of 'brown babies' and their German mothers, requesting that black American families commit to supporting them with monthly CARE packages or payments. Then she began to work closely with local West German youth offices and orphanages to locate children and match them with African American military couples in Germany and civilian couples in the USA. She and her husband adopted twelve of these children themselves.

Mabel Grammer decried the exclusive focus of the mainstream American media on the suffering of white European children. Her activism on behalf of international adoption was cast in explicitly humanitarian and political terms. It was based on a perception of racial and national kinship with the children (through their black American paternity), and on a shared experience of subjection to institutional and informal racism in Germany and the USA. Following her lead, black American advocates, including the US National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), emphasized that the illegitimate children of German mothers were suffering abroad because US military policy had abandoned them there as the result of officially sanctioned anti-miscegenist commitments in America that kept black soldiers from marrying their German girlfriends and bringing them home to the USA. From their perspective, intercountry adoption was an impassioned collectivist call for race rescue and civil rights, and was played out in the black American media. In 1951, for example, the *Chicago Defender* newspaper and *Ebony* magazine featured articles on Chicago schoolteacher Mrs Ethel Butler, who travelled to West Germany to adopt two young children after reading about the plight of black German children. One photograph showed a smiling Mrs Butler, arms extended, as she reached to embrace her prospective 4-year-old daughter in a German orphanage. Other photographs, depicting bathtime and bedtime under Mrs Butler's watchful eye, focused on the children's happy integration into their new home in the USA.[48]

American Evangelicals in Asia

During and immediately after the war, moral witnessing trained its lens on Europe and, by the late 1940s, had increasingly spread to Asia. In 1947 an evangelical Christian named Bob Pierce began to work in China with the organization Youth for Christ (which had ties with Billy Graham). Pierce rapidly threw his energies into international relief work for Chinese children, building orphanages and fund-raising on their behalf; within a few years he had expanded

[48] 'German War Babies: Red Tape Balks Adoption of Orphans by Teacher', *Ebony*, Jan. 1951, 35–8; '"Hansel" and "Gretel" Find New Home in America: Teacher Adopts Two War Orphans', *Chicago Defender*, 20 Oct. 1951, 12; also 'International Red Tape Ties up Woman Who Wants War Babies', *Chicago Defender*, 9 Sept. 1950, 1. For a detailed discussion of this history, see Fehrenbach, *Race after Hitler*, 132–68.

his efforts to South Korea. Pierce publicly credited his work on behalf of suffering and destitute children to an emotional encounter with a Chinese orphan and an orphanage director who had challenged him by asking: 'What will you do?'

In 1950 Pierce founded World Vision, which is today 'the largest U.S.-based international relief and development organization'.[49] Following the Second World War, Pierce pioneered Christian documentary film-making, developing the genre of 'evangelical social action film' that showcased social problems abroad. Starting in China in 1947–8, on a trip with Youth for Christ International, and moving on to Korea as a correspondent, he produced photographs and films that preached Christian responsibility and urged a hands-on internationalist Christian humanitarian activism. On his return to the United States after each trip abroad, he toured the country, giving popular slide-show lectures to Protestant congregations. By the early 1950s he was screening his film *Other Sheep* on South Korean orphanages, raising tens of thousands of dollars. At first, in the late 1940s, his fund-raising efforts focused on raising subscriptions to sponsor individual children. In the early 1950s he began advocating the legal adoption of children, and his film lecture inspired an Oregon rancher and businessman, Harry Holt, and his wife Bertha to travel to South Korea and adopt eight Korean children. They established orphanages there as well as their own Holt Adoption Agency, which worked through Protestant congregations and newsletters and, increasingly, the local and national press, to advertise the problem of endangered Korean orphans, locate prospective Christian parents, and facilitate mass proxy adoptions of Korean children in the USA, starting in the mid-1950s.[50]

During the 1950s celebrities also took up the cause and, around the same time, Pulitzer Prize-winning author and Nobel Laureate Pearl Buck founded her own organization, Welcome Home, to aid the adoption of Korean and Japanese children in the USA. She sought, and received, press attention, gave numerous interviews, and disseminated photographs of her visits to Asian orphanages, as well as personal family photographs of her and her own mixed-

[49] Nicholas D. Kristof, 'Learning from the Sin of Sodom', *New York Times*, 28 Feb. 2010, op-ed page.

[50] John R. Hamilton, 'A Historical Study of Bob Pierce and World Vision's Development of the Evangelical Social Action Film' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Southern California, 1980); *World Vision's History* ⟨www.worldvison.org⟩ [accessed 25 Mar. 2011].

race adoptive children from Germany, Japan, and India. Unlike the evangelicals, Buck explicitly promoted a secular version of colour-blind racial liberalism. She co-operated with Miki Sawada, Mitsubishi heiress and a practising Methodist, who established orphanages for 'children of Japanese and American parentage' in a former family villa in Oiso in 1948 and undertook a fund-raising tour to the USA in 1952.[51]

The American Military Media

Photographs and feature stories on war and occupation children also appeared in the *Stars and Stripes*, the newspaper of the US armed forces. Shortly after the end of the Second World War, American military units sponsored orphanages, threw holiday parties, and launched 'subscription adoptions' (financial support for orphans) in Europe, Japan, and South Korea. In East Asia, beginning in 1948, the *Stars and Stripes* Pacific edition warned American servicemen and their families not to become too attached to orphans in Japan, as restrictive US immigration law did not permit them to be brought home. By 1951 similar warnings were issued for Korean orphans who had been unofficially cared for by American troops in Korea. *Stars and Stripes* reported the official warnings, but also the servicemen's determination and courage in fighting red tape, obtaining legal counsel, and finding ways to skirt restrictive US laws barring Asian immigration in order to bring home the orphans they had become attached to. In December 1952, for example, the Pacific edition of *Stars and Stripes* ran a medium close-up shot of a smiling young couple, Mr and Mrs Raymond Hill of Missouri, flanking their two young children in a snug family embrace. Raymond is on the left, cuddling his 7-year-old son So Young Chong (soon to be renamed Jimmy Hill), whom he befriended while serving in Korea. The boy gazes at his father, arm flung around his neck. Leaning in, to the right, is his new 4-year-old sister Vickie, holding tight to her brother and mother, bringing her head into line with theirs. Vickie's shiny blond hair is styled similarly to that of her mother, who bends in, touching her head to Vickie's, to complete the intimate grouping.[52]

[51] Elizabeth Anne Hemphill, *The Least of These: Miki Sawada and Her Children* (New York, 1980); Yukiko Koshiro, *Trans-Pacific Racisms and the American Occupation of Japan* (New York, 1999); Graham, 'The Adoption of Children'.

[52] This discussion is based on a sampling of *Stars and Stripes* (Pacific) issues published

Initially such media reports focused on native Japanese and Korean orphans; within a year or two coverage turned to occupation children of American paternity. By the mid-1950s more and more attention was devoted to biracial children of American paternity. In addition, American military personnel lobbied on behalf of the 1953 US Refugee Relief Act, which broadened the definition of 'orphan' and further liberalized US immigration, although only temporarily.

All three groups of activists—African Americans, American missionaries, and the American military—employed their own media outlets to craft and disseminate a 'solution' to the social problem of war children, whose images had circulated in increasing numbers in American magazines and newspapers since the late years of the war. In essence, the visual trope of homeless, orphaned, suffering, or vulnerable children popularized during the war by Thérèse Bonney (and others) had articulated the problem. This problem was visually 'answered' by the pictorial solution of loving American families of various ethnicities, convictions, and political and religious stripes. Joyous 'reunion photographs', depicting orphans embraced by beaming couples or perched snugly on their laps, became a common visual trope, first in the sectarian media and then in the national press. Such media representation cast international adoption in the visual language of humanitarian aid and rescue. It cultivated a sense of common humanity or ethnicity, as well as a social stance of similarity, intimacy, and a mandate for social parenting across national and, in some cases, racial lines.

Activism around intercountry adoption that emerged in the immediate post-1945 period was motivated, in part, by angry recognition that certain children were tragically undervalued by comparison with others. America's expanding military presence abroad during and after the Second World War aided this comparison because of the thousands of illegitimate children left behind, and produced self-conscious demands for transvaluation. Voices were raised to insist on the vulnerability, and therefore the value, of children who were not afforded the protection and privileges of their white European counterparts. Activism around intercountry adoption had a significant liberalizing impact on American immigration policy. It was a post-war plea for, and test of, American democratic values and civil and human rights in a period of globalizing American

between 1948 and 1956 ⟨starsandstripesnewspaperarchive.com⟩ [accessed 7 July 2015]. The photograph of the Hill family appears in the Dec. 1952 issue.

power, decolonization, and the Cold War contest to win hearts and minds abroad.[53]

Such political, religious, and racial activism around intercountry adoption proved to be highly effective, to the great consternation of organizations such as the ISS. In particular, American ISS leaders bemoaned media coverage of intercountry adoption in the national press since it tended to misrepresent the nature of foreign children's need and the numbers available for adoption, while often centring on the dramatic 'rescue' efforts of 'heroic' individuals such as Harry Holt, Mabel Grammar, and Pearl Buck. Afterwards, ISS offices were inundated with letters from the public clamouring to help by becoming adoptive parents. Each time Pearl Buck appeared in a newspaper or magazine article giving her assessment of Asian children's suffering abroad, one ISS staff member complained, 'it sets our work back months'.[54]

* * *

By the mid-1950s the ISS was working through the UN to reduce the number of intercountry adoptions and allow birth parents to preserve their rights and retain their children. In two international summits, the ISS led a concerted effort to clamp down on renegade, unregulated, and proxy adoptions.[55] They condemned the 'hasty placements' and 'unwarranted adoptions' that resulted

[53] The 1948 US Displaced Persons Act offered non-quota immigration to eligible European orphans but left the racial exclusion of Asians untouched. The American Joint Committee for Japanese-American orphans sought to gain the support of influential Americans in addressing this legal barrier. Within six months Eleanor Roosevelt, James Michener, Pearl Buck, and the Rockefeller Foundation had signed up. By 1953, public pressure and lobbying by a diverse group of Jewish Americans, African Americans, military families, businessmen, political figures, writers, and entertainers (including Jane Russell and Josephine Baker) had led Congress, in consultation with the ISS, to pass the Refugee Relief Act, which authorized, for the first time, the entry of eligible Asian children into the USA. It also broadened the definition of 'war orphans' so that occupation children of American paternity, regardless of race, would be included in its purview. See Graham, 'The Adoption of Children'; Kathryn Close, *Transplanted Children: A History* (New York, 1953).

[54] SW109, Box 23, file 34, on Pearl Buck and Welcome House.

[55] The UN statement endorsed permanent membership of a family as the desired goal for parentless children: 'Adoption is the best substitute for the natural family . . . Although [it] does not replace the biological relation which exists between the child and its natural parents, it does reconstitute a stable family through the enduring ties it creates' (UN Technical Assistance Office, Special European Social Welfare Programme, European Seminar on Inter-Country Adoption, Leysin, Switzerland, 22–31 May 1960, typescript, 65, 1).

'especially . . . in periods of great stress and times of emergency, when the importance of individuals is apt to be lost sight of'. Poverty and social considerations, they asserted, were not valid grounds for intercountry adoption.[56] What emerged were UN-sponsored agreements (1956, 1960) that laid down an internationally endorsed set of 'fundamental principles' and standardized procedures to govern intercountry adoption.[57] Beginning with the assertion that the 'welfare of the child must be paramount', the international summit advocated that intercountry adoption be seen as a last resort: to be pursued, and then very carefully, with much counselling, oversight, and individual casework only if an adequate situation could not be made to exist for the child with its own parent(s), in its extended family, or in a family situation in its own country.[58] Efforts should be made to develop and strengthen child welfare services in sending countries and to foster in-country adoption of parentless children.[59]

These global principles and prescriptions were directed against unregulated and proxy intercountry adoptions and sought to banish them. Those who adopted outside professionalized channels did so because they abhorred the 'bureaucratic red tape' and 'over-psychologized' approach that they felt characterized the professional practice advocated by the ISS. This professionalization, they argued, slowed adoptions, even those that were authorized, to a glacial pace. Adoptive parents who opted for proxy adoption or went through adoption mediators such as Mabel Grammar felt a sense of urgency to 'rescue' a child, and were often responding to heart-rending

[56] Ibid. 18, 19–20.

[57] The agreement sought to standardize procedures and safeguards in carrying out intercountry adoptions, such as home studies, medical and psychological tests, matching of adoptive child and parents, trial periods for living together, guardianship of the child, securing the child's legal status in the sending and receiving country, and the like: European Seminar on Inter-Country Adoption, typescript, 65, 1; also Pettiss, 'Effect of Adoption of Foreign Children on U.S. Adoption Standards and Practices', offprint (as in n. 27); Eugenie Hochfeld, 'Across National Boundaries: Problems in the Handling of International Adoptions, Dependency, and Custody Cases', *Juvenile Court Judges Journal*, 4/3 (1963), 3–7; Lauren Hyde and Virginia P. Hyde, *A Study of Proxy Adoptions*, Child Welfare League of America, ISS, American Branch (1958). There is a large correspondence on this issue in the ISS papers, SW109.

[58] The principles established that the child's birth parent(s) 'regardless of social and legal status, should have the opportunity for full consideration of what is involved, including legal and psychological consequences, before a decision is made that adoption is the best plan for the child; that concepts of modern child and family welfare should prevail over economic and social factors' (European Seminar on Inter-Country Adoption, typescript, 77–94, at 78).

[59] Ibid. 34–5.

appeals by religious and missionary groups, or mass-mediated coverage of the need for 'race rescue', race blindness (*à la* Pearl Buck), or appeals to reverse restrictive and racist US immigration law.

The first decade of intercountry adoption after 1945 thus produced two distinctive cultures: an emotionally charged media-saturated one on the one hand, and a self-consciously professionalized one on the other, which belatedly tried, but could never quite manage, to attract sustained media coverage. The former claimed to be 'rescuing' or 'saving' children; the latter to be 'protecting' them and forging global norms, most recently in the 1993 Hague Convention on ICA, in an attempt to do so.

The press photograph of the Michigan couple with which this essay opened needs to be understood in relation to the social and institutional history of intercountry adoption as well as its cultural, media, and representational history. In a sense, the couple's vision of their happy future was scripted historically by two visual tropes: the 'problem' photographs initiated by Bonney during the Second World War and taken up in the humanitarian campaigns by UNESCO and other international organizations after the war, and the 'solution' photographs of family unions prevalent in the sectarian and national media of the 1950s, 1960s, and beyond.

In his book *Empire of Humanity* Michael Barnett challenges us to reflect on 'how the global moment shapes what humanitarianism is' at any given time. This essay has explored how the extended 'global moment' of the two world wars produced humanitarian initiatives focused on displaced families and children, mostly of European origin, and ultimately gave rise to the legal innovation of international adoption. International adoption retains the aura of its humanitarian roots for prospective parents, if not scholars: couples in the USA and Europe continue to consider international adoption an ethical and personal choice. Little critical attention has been devoted to asking how the media and photographic imagery shape the humanitarian impulse: 'what is imaginable, desirable, and possible'.[60] I have tried to suggest that this, too, is a crucial object of scholarly concern if we hope to understand the links between emotional appeal and social action.

[60] Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, NY, 2011), 7, 9.