

Patriot Activists Fight Off Refugee Invasion In Hagerstown, Maryland

By THOMAS ALLEN

Add Hagerstown, Maryland to the list of American communities that have mounted enough resistance to stop the Refugee Industry from imposing refugees on their towns.

U.S. refugee law requires that refugee resettlement agencies—the money-making refugee “contractors” consult with local governments before moving in. But the “contractors” continue to set up their operations in an expanding number of towns without informing them.

As a National Governors’ Association report from Spring 2007 noted:

The Governors continue to be concerned about the lack of adequate consultation on the part of the voluntary agencies [VOLAGs] and their local affiliates in the initial placement of refugees and on the part of the federal government in the equitable distribution of refugees and entrants.

States have continually urged the federal government to establish a mechanism to ensure appropriate coordination and consultation. However, significant progress has not been made.

Thomas Allen describes himself as a recovering refugee worker. Fluent in Russian, he is currently translating Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s Two Hundred Years Together.

There should be a requirement in the State Department/VOLAG contract to limit placement to areas conducive to resettlement. In addition, VOLAGs and their local affiliates should be required to have a letter of agreement that specifies that there has been consultation and planning for the initial placement of refugees and sets forth the continuing process of consultation. The requirement in the State Department/VOLAG contract to limit placement to areas conducive to resettlement should include concurrence by the state.



A group of Meskhetian Turks in Amish country, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Thus in Hagerstown a refugee “contractor,” the Virginia Council of Churches (VCC), which subcontracts to Church World Services, quietly opened an office there in 2004 and began moving Meskhetian Turks and other refugees into the community without discussion.

The Meskhetian Turks have unquestionably had a hard history. Muslim inhabitants of Georgia and victims of Stalin’s

resettlement policies towards the end of World War II, they fled from Central Asia to Russia when the USSR fell apart. Most recently, they were being resettled from southern Russia to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, among other cities.

For reasons as yet unclear, the resettlement to Amish country was halted. The Meskhetian Turks were moved to Maryland by the US government and by VCC. (Also unclear: why VCC didn’t import them into its Virginia home base.)

VCC, which gets paid by U.S. taxpayers to conduct “cultural orientation” for the new arrivals, in turn palmed the new arrivals off on the Hag-

erstown mosque known as The Islamic Society of Western Maryland. Reportedly, the mosque was teaching the new arrivals Arabic in addition to the English lessons they were receiving.

Even the Meskhetian Turks, who generally speak Russian and Uzbek, knew there was something not quite right about coming to America to learn Arabic. They parted ways with their “sponsoring” mosque.

Most Hagerstown only found out there were refugees living in town when a team of “first responders” descended upon an apartment building in October, 2006.

Apparently, a refugee from Africa with “morning sickness” had sent family members who could not speak English to seek medical help. Attempts to explain the situation and summon help quickly turned into a scare about a dangerous infectious outbreak in town.

Immigrants do bring disease. However, in this case, it all turned out to be a giant misunderstanding—but not before local news cameras were broadcasting pictures of HazMat-suited emergency crews quarantining an apartment house where the refugees lived. Citizens were concerned that VCC obviously had no procedures in place for handling emergencies among the refugees. [“Quarantine of Downtown Hagerstown Building Ends,” by Erin Cunningham, *Herald-Mail*, October 11, 2006]

Then VCC, which like all refugee “contractors” is in the business of extracting money from any government program in sight, went before the County Commission to ask for \$15,000. The Commission said “No.” An AP reporter happened to be there covering another story, and the event accidentally became national news.

The head of the VCC office in Hagerstown lost his job, likely not because he asked the town for money, but because his attempt to find more money brought unwanted attention to the secretive program.

Citizen outrage was so great it forced a showdown between the citizens on one side and the local media, federal and state officials, and profiteering “contractors” on the other.

The State Department sent two officials along

with state bureaucrats and “contractors” to meet the citizens of Hagerstown and get the program back on track. At a September 19 meeting, which they insisted was a welcome chance to explain the program, officials spent three hours dodging questions and avoiding mention of some obvious issues. [“Masses huddle here,” by Heather Keels, *Herald-Mail*, September 20, 2007]

The audience seemed most focused on the actual cost of the program and on lack of any taxpayer representation in decisions about how the program is funded and administered.



The mosque of the Islamic Society of Western Maryland in Hagerstown, Maryland.

Asked why smaller towns are now being used for resettlement instead of traditional gateway cities, the State Department official explained: “Certain locations were being impacted because social service networks couldn’t deal with them [the refugees].”

Are refugees 65 and over or disabled going straight into lifetime SSI/Medicaid? Yes, but “relatively few.” (Oh yeah? Go to this government report Annual ORR Reports to Congress 2005 to see percentages of refugee usage of welfare programs. For example, SSI dependence among recent refugees is a significant 14 percent.)

Are refugees admitted with HIV? “Yes, but only a small number.”

And, yes, the taxpayer starts picking up the medical bill for the best care the West has to offer as soon as the refugee arrives.

Not reassuring.

The State Department official explained that some refugees are admitted because of “domestic political interests”, not because they meet the definition of a refugee. (In other words, the Lautenberg/Specter amendment.)

She did not add that any of the dozen or so groups in the refugee pipeline today could one day also become a “domestic political interest” group. All have the potential to set off large-scale self-propagating flows of immigration in all forms.

In a comical moment, one of the church representatives said the local churches were donating \$60 for each refugee they “sponsored.” Meanwhile, of course, the contracting arm of the national church pulls in millions.

Panelists estimated the annual cost of the refugee program at about \$750 million, but failed to mention that this figure does not include the cost of ongoing welfare and other public services for the refugees. Including all costs associated with resettlement would result in a dollar amount at least 10 times greater than the officially quoted cost.

The audience was well informed, thanks in part to knowledge transfer over the Internet. A thoughtful and informative citizen website, Refugee Resettlement Watch, was set up to chronicle the Hagerstown saga and has developed into a general clearing house for information about the entire refugee program. A DVD of the meeting can be obtained at this site for the cost of handling and shipping.

Two days after the meeting, VCC announced it will close its Hagerstown office and halt further resettlement there because of an “unwelcoming” atmosphere. What is the moral of this story?

Except for the occasional fact-challenged sob story, the Mainstream Media (MSM) will not report on the refugee resettlement program. Even the patriotic immigration reform groups keep away from the Refugee Industry for fear of being demagogued in the MSM.

So the refugee resettlement program has been able to work behind a curtain of secrecy.

Five years ago, as the program shifted to accept ever more diverse groups, I predicted on VDARE.COM that “the refugee program is bringing in ever more real refugees, from ever more unassimilable

backgrounds. Officials are forced to spread them over ever more American communities. The program will lose what is left of its apple pie appeal and finally become a political issue.”

The refugee racket may not be a national political issue yet. But, exactly as with illegal immigration, local community activism is breaking out all over. Federal politicians are hearing and learning about the program from their constituents.

Thanks to the internet and outlets like VDARE.COM, local civic groups that earlier could have been ignored and intimidated are finding strength in numbers and in the experience of others who challenged the Refugee Industry and won.

So far, citizen protests have stopped planned resettlements in Cayce, South Carolina; Holyoke, Massachusetts; the entire state of Kansas; and Manchester, New Hampshire.

Of course, the refugee racketeers won’t admit this. The State Department claimed the program was halted in Manchester because lead was found in the public school playground where the refugees were resettled.

But, according to the New Hampshire state refugee coordinator, “Manchester just got overwhelmed.”

(Also, an embarrassing cottage industry of lawyers was growing up around lucrative lawsuits on behalf of refugees who arrived from their home countries with elevated lead levels, but then hit the jackpot by blaming the problem on their new surroundings. Welcome to the land of opportunity!)

The Refugee Industry is pushing against doors and finding they don’t swing open so easily any more.

I suspect the State Department will not be attending any more Hagerstown-style town meetings. But I predict such town meetings will be ever more frequent and ever harder to ignore.

In effect, the Internet is reviving the collective civic ethic which De Tocqueville so admired and upon which he felt democracy in America depended. ■

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http://www.vdare.com/allen/071120_hagerstown.htm