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LONDON, July 3 - (CNR) - In its issue of June 29 THE ECONOMIST
carries an article entitled REFUGEE HOPES AND FEARS. H-F-78
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Typical refugee camps do not exist, but there are similarities which one learns to recognise. In the camps for Hungarians it is mainly the smell, compounded of communal cooking, stone walls, overcrowded dormitories, and the indefinable atmosphere of an institution. In the camps of the "old" refugees, where people have been living for twelve years, the common factor is a persistent effort to make individual homes of the single square rooms in the long wooden huts. Despite the overcrowding, these rooms are bright and well kept, often with pot plants, a wireless and some religious pictures, and perhaps, if their tenants are in regular work, a suite of walnut veneer furniture, looking oddly incongruous in its surroundings. The children are the same in all the camps, lively, giggling, curious, and anxious to show off.

In Austria most of the "old" refugees in the two camps which your correspondent saw are able to get work, and have kept some of their initiative and hope. Many are frightened by the prospect of leaving the camps, which are scheduled for dissolution, and of living in an ordinary community where they will have to pay an economic rent; others are totally apathetic about the future. But most seem capable, with a little help, of recovering their independence and settling down. Less fortunate refugees who do not live near enough to an industrial center to find work, or who cannot do the work available, have been living on public charity for so long that they have lost the capacity and the will to concentrate on anything. In Germany many have come to believe that because the Germans were responsible for their original plight it is the duty of the Germans to support them until they die. The visible effect of this "camp sickness" is terrifying. In one camp, a former barracks, near Ingolstadt in Bavaria, the passage walls were scrawled over and filthy, the washrooms were still swimming from a suspiciously recent flood of disinfectant which could not drown the smell, and the rooms, although large and not overcrowded, were dark and depressing. The women at least had some occupation in cooking and washing, but the men were squatting in groups along the walls and on the steps; they seemed content to do nothing for the rest of their lives.

For the old and the chronically sick, there are homes and institutions for those who will go to them, but they are not popular. An old peoples' home in Bavaria, in a building originally intended as a holiday center for Hitler youth, is equipped more lavishly than most hotels and run by a large staff of maids, nurses and nursing sisters. Yet there are a number of vacant beds. Even after years in camps the yearning for some privacy and independence is so strong that some refugees simply lose the will to live after they are transferred to an institution.

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The Hungarians are quite distinct from the "old" refugees, both in their characteristics and their problems. There are now about 15,000 still in camps in Austria and 14,000 in Yugoslavia. The Yugoslavs have done their best to cope with them and for a people with such poor resources have been generous in supplying the needs of their unwanted guests, who physically are better off than many Yugoslav peasants. The 600 unaccompanied children between 14 and 18 years old are especially well treated and have been quartered in an attractive, if primitive, building which has served before as a hospital and barracks. There they can live a decent and ordered, though not, because of the shortage of teachers, very constructive life, while they wait for emigration.

At the other end of the scale is a camp at Gerovo in northern Yugoslavia, where refugees sleep, eat and live, two to a bunk, in rooms holding 70 people, where there is a dark and stinking prison and where stories are told, which may or may not be true, of beating and bullying by the camp police. These conditions are horrible, as the Yugoslavs admit, but they say it is not their fault, that the overcrowding in Gerovo is inevitable because the Adriatic hotels, where many refugees were quartered, have to be given up for the tourist season, because in a country of appalling roads and little transport it is impossible to shift refugees rapidly from place to place, and because refugees who want to emigrate to the same country have to be concentrated at the same camps so that they can be interviewed by the selection teams. The Yugoslavs feel that the Hungarians are outrageously ungrateful for what has been done for them and they make little effort to understand the Hungarians' psychological problems.

Part of the trouble arises because the voluntary agencies, which

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do much to reassure refugees in Austria by giving help, comfort and advice to individuals, are not allowed to work in Yugoslavia, and in consequence there is in the camps a tension that is always on the edge of hysteria. The refugees are terrified that they will be left behind and forgotten and that the Hungarians in Austria will be allowed to emigrate while those in Yugoslavia will be penalised for having been forced to escape into a Communist country.

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Like the Hungarians in Austria they are a very mixed lot. Some are freedom fighters or ex-political prisoners who held on until all hope of success was lost; some are women who hope to join husbands or fiancés from whom they got separated in the struggle; some are former farmers who were deprived of their lands and had been living as fugitives in the hills; some are under eighteen and came over without their parents' consent, looking for a better academic or technical education than they could get at home, or afraid of being deported to the Soviet Union. Some, it can be admitted, have come solely in order to better themselves economically. But they are all alike in their almost total ignorance of the outside world, their naivety and their pride -- a pride perplexing to a west European, but genuine.

In Austria there was no atmosphere of hysterical depression in the camps which your correspondent was shown, and conditions were on the whole good, although there were some odd anomalies. At Traiskirchen, a large center near Vienna which had once been an officer cadet school, immense trouble had been taken by the Swedish Red Cross, which was running the place, to set up a superbly well equipped and clean sick wing, a pleasantly decorated center, including occupational therapy for the mentally sick, and a kindergarten for the children. Yet several families were sleeping in each room, with not even a blanket to give an illusion of privacy.

A great effort is being made in Austria to get the unaccompanied Hungarian children out of the camps and into technical or high schools according to their tastes. Many of the boys do not take kindly to renewed discipline after throwing Molotov cocktails in the streets of Budapest and living for months as adults in the camps; to persuade them, particularly those with hopes of emigrating to go back to school is a task that needs some tact. But there are now nearly 2,000 unaccompanied Hungarian children at some kind of boarding school and they seem to be settling down reasonably well.