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A Humanitarian Lens: The World War II-Era Photo Books of Thérèse Bonney and David Seymour

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A Humanitarian Lens:
The World War II-Era Photo Books of Thérèse Bonney and David Seymour

by

Jane Pierce

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines two World War II-Era photography books, one by American-born photographer Thérèse Bonney, and the other by Polish-born photographer David Seymour, also known as “Chim.” Thérèse Bonney’s book, *Europe’s Children, 1939-1943* (fig 0.1), initially self-published, was printed in 1943 for a predominantly American audience. Chim’s *Children of Europe* was commissioned by UNICEF in 1948 (United Nations Children’s International Emergency Fund) and published by UNESCO in 1949 (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) (fig 0.2). It was printed in three languages and distributed around the world.

Bonney’s book is comprised of sixty-eight photographs and 144 pages, typically a full-bleed photograph is on the right-side page and a small amount of text, written by Bonney, is on the bottom of the left-side page. Chim’s book includes fifty-one photographs over sixty-two pages, with spreads comprising multiple photographs in various sizes. Chim’s captions vary in placement around the photographs. Each photographer employed creative license with their text, which are in both cases emotional narratives rather than objective, factual descriptions. The captions contain no details regarding the name, age, sex, or individual stories of the subjects. The text in *Europe’s Children* reads as though Bonney’s personal commentary; in Chim’s case, the text is written in first-person, from the point of view of a child affected by the war.

As the titles of the books reflect, both photographers made a conscious decision to focus on children. Children of Europe is technically a postwar era book since all of the photographs were taken in 1948, yet it shares the same subjects as Bonney’s wartime *Europe’s Children*: or-

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1 Adults are rarely visible in any of the photographs, which increases the children’s vulnerability. Children are typically dependent on adults for their survival, so a reader would naturally be concerned by this absence. Each photographer recognized that severed families and abandoned children were consequences of war, and they wanted to portray this to their readers.
phaned, injured, and starving children living in dire situations throughout Europe. Ruined landscapes seem unchanged from one book to the other, and so does dire poverty and an overall sense of helplessness. Both photographers focused on themes such as loss, vulnerability, and yet hope for the future (if there was to be sufficient humanitarian intervention). They rendered the urgent need for schools and bare necessities such as milk, blankets and shoes. By making emotional appeals to viewers through their text and imagery, they told a humanitarian story that promoted child welfare and peace.

This thesis analyzes the two photo books through the lens of humanitarianism. Though the books share documentary and social documentary qualities, I argue that their function as humanitarian objects is paramount and coherent with the photographers’ personal engagements. This introduction will explore the differences between these genres. It is known that Bonney dedicated much of her life to humanitarian ventures, and it is logical that her photographs would serve similar goals. Chim was a photojournalist known for his ethics and empathy towards his subjects. His involvement with Magnum Photos since its founding in 1947 testifies to this. Not surprisingly, the newly founded United Nations agencies recognized that his images of civilians, especially children, would be instrumental towards their humanitarian goals. Though these books grappled with representations of suffering, they were instrumental in informing readers, and urging them to take action.

These two visual examples of humanitarianism shed light on the times in which they were made. When one looks at the sequence of the two books, one perceives Bonney’s narrative to be one of decline, and Chim’s one of hope. The reasons for this are bound to the fact that Bonney’s book was produced while the war was still raging and human sacrifices were increasing, and Chim’s book was published in the postwar era years of reconstruction. The books also
highlight the cultural and political changes that occurred between the six years that separate the publications. Nationality crucially defined the wartime period, while internationalization was emphasized in the postwar era, as individual citizens and the international community, not the nation-state, were to be the arbiter of human rights crimes. As cultural historian Tom Allbeson has stated, “The internationalized youth of tomorrow was a reaction to a moment of increasing tension between polarized nations.”

Tellingly, Bonney’s wartime book has location captions that often identify the country where the photograph was taken, and this presumably reflects the place of origin of the photographed child. Chim’s captions, on the contrary, reflect the postwar turn to universalism, making no reference to individual countries.

Bonney and Chim each photographed in five countries for their respective projects, though there was no geographical overlap between them (see figures 0.3 and 0.4). Bonney worked in Western Europe (France, Spain and England), and she also took photographs in Northern Europe (Sweden and Finland). Chim worked mainly in Central Europe (Poland, Austria and Hungary), and also covered Southern Europe (Italy and Greece in particular). There are various reasons why each photographer covered these geographies. Bonney happened to be in Finland in 1939, at the outbreak of the Russo-Finnish war. Her presence in England (Allied) and Spain (neutral) was probably due to the fact that she would have had easier access to these countries, owing to their proximity to her home base in France (Allied). Moreover, these countries would have been considerably safer than Axis or Axis-occupied territories. Chim was photographing after the war and he was drawn to return to his birthplace in Poland to confront the

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3 Allbeson, “Photographic Diplomacy,” 411.
tragedies that affected his family firsthand. Additionally, his UNICEF commission requested that he visit “Eastern European countries.”

These photographs can be perceived as social documentary, however, my critical focus is based on their humanitarian functions. The genre of “social documentary” is typically defined as a socially critical genre of photography dedicated to showing the life of underprivileged or disadvantaged people, often with the hope of influencing politics and encouraging social reform. As William Stott, author of *Documentary Expression and Thirties America*, explains, these images have an impact on society because of the emotion they trigger. As he wrote,

> Some documents inform the intellect, some the emotions. Both sorts are too simple to analyze further. They are extreme tendencies within the documentary genre and share just one characteristic, the one they must to belong to the genre at all: both report actual fact. Documents at the extremes – timetables, hard-news, dispatches, almanacs, encyclopedias, industrial films, legal paper, on the one hand, and human-interest journalism, on the other – are most often rhetorically dull and, in the case of the human documents, philosophically puerile. There are, however, intermediate documents that try to combine the virtues of the extremes. These intermediate documents increase our knowledge of public facts, but sharpen it with feeling; put us in touch with the perennial human spirit, but show it struggling in a particular social context as a specific historical moment. They sensitize our intellect (or educate our emotions) about actual life. They are social documents, their use is social documentary…

These considerations pertain to the emotional and influential effects that Bonney’s and Chim’s images might have had on postwar viewers, but my emphasis will move the discussion further. To situate these issues, I will refer to the social documentary works by photographers such as Jacob Riis, Margaret Bourke-White, and the large group of photographers working for the Farm Security Administration during the American Depression, such as Dorothea Lange. These photographs marked significant moments of crises in American history. They have been greatly ana-

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lyzed and are often read against the grain of Marxist interpretation, hence criticized as instrumental images driven by a conservative middle-class.

As art historian Abigail Solomon-Godeau explains, “The retrospective construction of the documentary mode traditionally begins with [Jacob Riis].”6 This dates back to January 1888, when Riis made his first reform-advocating magic lantern presentation at the Society of Amateur Photographers of New York.7 Titled “The Other Half: How It Lives and Dies in New York,” this lecture depicted the horrible living conditions in New York City slums. Two years later, Riis’ groundbreaking book, How the Other Half Lives (1890), was published. Though his photographs raised public awareness and spurred significant reform in housing and education, the chapters in How the Other Half Lives prioritized documentation instead of direct, emotional pleas of readers.8 Nonetheless, as Solomon-Godeau and others have observed, in condemning the slums, Riis was also promoting a conservative society and preserving the privilege of the ruling class.9 Recently, critics have disparaged his “stern morality, middle-class values and social defense.”10

There is a fundamental difference between the issues raised about Riis’ photography and the two photo books examined here. While Riis addressed the moral failures of the poor (alcoholism, prostitution, parent’s abandonment of their children), Bonney and Chim challenged the morality of the readers themselves, urging them to do the right thing. Furthermore, it would be

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7 Bonney followed in Riis’ footsteps and also presented illustrated lectures before publishing her book.
8 Riis was a strong supporter of the King’s Daughters’ Tenement House Committee, a Lower East Side social service organization. In 1901, the organization was renamed the Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement House. It maintains a lasting legacy of advocacy, education, and programs for the poor.
incorrect to see a similar kind of exploitation and voyeurism as the one observed with Riis. Art historian Sally Stein critiqued Riis for only selecting photographs in which the subject does not return the gaze of the photographer. She argues that this gives the subjects the appearance of unconsciousness or stupefaction. By concealing any acknowledgement from the subject, these photographs are more voyeuristic than Bonney’s and Chim’s. Bonney and Chim included many photographs of children making direct eye contact with the camera, perhaps because they knew it would seem more confrontational to readers.

Margaret Bourke-White’s 1937 publication, Have You Seen Their Faces, depicted the Southern tenant farming system, or “sharecroppers.” The text-image relation was a creation between the photographer and her future husband, Erskine Caldwell. Caldwell was criticized for creating a narrative that was “self-aggrandizing.” Caldwell is criticized for putting words into the mouths of Bourke-White’s subjects, and this is one of the reasons the book blurs lines between journalism and artistic license. These strategies provoke an interesting parallel with Chim’s photo book as he also put words into the mouths of children he photographed. As I will describe later in more detail, Chim wrote his introduction from the point of view of a child, and this first-person voice continued throughout the book, with captions in first person singular and plural. A group of children (“us” and “we”) seemingly speaks to the adult reader (“you”). Both Bourke-White’s and Chim’s books take artistic license with their captions, but Have You Seen Their Faces does not include any text addressing the reader, and how he or she can help. Similar considerations apply to Dorothea Lange’s collaboration with her husband, the sociologist Paul Taylor, in the creation of An American Exodus, published in 1939. Considered one of the mas-

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11 Sally Stein, “Making Connections with the Camera: Photography and Social Mobility in the Career of Jacob Riis,” Afterimage 10 (May 1983), 14.
terpieces of the documentary genre, this book serves more of a documentary purpose than humanitarian, as it does not make pleas for aid on behalf of the subjects.

Martha Rosler, contemporary artist and cultural theorist, wrote about Florence Owens Thompson, the subject of Dorothea Lange’s iconic “Migrant Mother” photograph. Thompson felt exploited by the frequent use and dissemination of her portrait, especially because she initially saw no personal gain. In response to issues like this, Rosler notes that every type of photograph carries with it a power dynamic between photographer and subject, and this is especially notable in documentary photographs. Accordingly, Rosler’s 1974-1975 photography installation “The Bowery in two inadequate descriptive systems,” addresses the question of representation of marginalized groups while refusing the visual and verbal tropes of homelessness and poverty. In this project, Rosler is critical of the tendency of photography to generalize and victimize. Both social documentary and humanitarian photographs are criticized for this. By focusing on the evidence of absence (empty liquor bottles and detritus in otherwise empty street scenes) in a neighborhood known for its proliferation of vagrants, Rosler avoids personifying poverty via a degraded human subject. She avoids this system of representation and comments on the “inadequate” ability of photographs and text to relay the complexities of the subject. Rosler’s points are all valid, but there is a reason humanitarian campaigns continue to represent human suffering and avoid complex explanations. The photographs and text developed for humanitarian uses produce the desired effects of an emotive, and therefore generous, response.

A brief analysis of the genre of humanitarian photography demonstrates the qualities of Bonney’s and Chim’s photographs. A recent anthology edited by political historians Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogno, *Humanitarian Photography: A History*, has defined the genre of

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humanitarian photography as “the mobilization of photography in the service of humanitarian initiatives across state boundaries.”[^14] The term “humanitarian photography” only came into the lexicon in the 1990s[^15] but Bonney’s and Chim’s photographs certainly fit into this newly named genre, and Fehrenbach even briefly mentions both photographers in this context. As Fehrenbach explains, such photographs are meant “To fuel political pressure on governments for reform or humanitarian intervention, to raise funds for ‘good causes’ and to establish the legitimacy of specific humanitarian campaigns, organizations and actors, and to convince targeted publics of their duty to act.”[^16] This thesis outlines how Bonney’s and Chim’s books addressed these issues to different extents.

In both cases fundraising played an important part, and research can attest to the importance of the political context in which these images were edited, narrated and circulated. For example, in the case of Bonney’s book, her photographs were used concurrently in an advertisement for the United War Fund (see fig 0.5). First instituted during World War I, the United War Fund campaign preceded the massive campaign for the National War Fund. The urgency of this Fund was explained by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in a 1943 radio address. As he said, this was “a philanthropic federation with three simple aims; first, to determine the nature and the extent of the war-related needs; second, to see that everybody has a chance to contribute to the funds required; and third, to channel the sums raised for its member agencies wherever American help is currently most needed -- to raise enough and on time.”[^17] Bonney’s photograph selected

for the United War Fund advertisement was circulated in newspapers nationwide. It shows an exhausted little boy slumped over what are presumably his and/or his family’s belongings in sacks. The large text overlay above the image makes it seem like the boy is pleading for help. It reads, “PLEASE…” The second largest text in the advertisement is the United War Fund logo, which immediately orients the reader to the fundraising message of the advertisement. Additionally, the text in Bonney’s book called for her readers to “save” and “feed” the children. She was urging readers to make donations and get involved in the relief effort.

The agency behind Chim’s book reflected similar aims. UNICEF, is a United Nations branch that was initially formed to provide food and healthcare to children in countries that had been devastated by World War II. UNICEF and UNESCO, who commissioned and published Chim’s book, were the epitome of humanitarian agencies. They used Chim’s book for fundraising. As described in Impetus, UNESCO’s monthly newsletter, proceeds from Chim’s book were to go directly to UNESCO’s Educational Reconstruction Fund\(^\text{18}\) (fig 0.6). Publicity for the book calls upon readers with words like “Attention,” and statements like, “One book raises funds twice!,” and “Order your copies now!”

As Bonney’s and Chim’s case studies attest, documentary images can be used for humanitarian aims. As the examples above show, it is typically the caption (emotive versus factual) and overall context (how it is used, and by whom) that divide the two genres contextually. Clive Scott, a scholar who studies the relationships between literature and the visual arts, states in his book *The Spoken Image: Photography and Language*, “Language…assigns the photograph to a genre.”\(^\text{19}\) The documentary genre aims to chronicle in a factual way, while the humanitarian gen-

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\(^{18}\) Advertisement in *Impetus*, vol. IV. no. 11-12, November-December 1950, 22.

re has an agenda that often values emotion and charity over objectivity. Though the imagery can be binary, Bonney’s and Chim’s books do not serve the same documentary and narrative function as a photograph accompanying a news article, because the humanitarian functions are prioritized over facts and objectivity. Humanitarian photography may well not be a separate category of production, but it can be recognized as an attempt to redescribe the efficacy of photographs.

To situate these books historically, it is important to address how humanitarian imagery developed. It is no coincidence that photography emerged around the same time that humanitarianism came to the fore, in the mid-1800s. The term “humanitarian” was first coined in 1844, only five years after the invention of photography. Not surprisingly, humanitarian organizations were swift in their appointment of photography as they recognized that photographic representations of suffering people could reach a wide audience. The organizations using these photographs hoped that by teaching their audiences the truth, they would in turn make donations to help the cause at hand.

In the 19th century, images began to travel across the globe at a much faster speed, and other new technologies such as the telegraph, the railroad, and the steamship were increasing interconnectivity worldwide. Concurrently, the responsibility for distant human suffering became more pressing. As Susan Sontag remarked in her celebrated book, Regarding the Pain of Others, “Being a spectator of calamities taking place in another country is a quintessential modern experience.” The history of humanitarianism in the 19th century was intertwined with the growing issues of imperialism and colonialism. It is understood that many humanitarians carry the

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20 The world's oldest international human rights organization, Anti-Slavery International, was founded by British abolitionists the same year that photography was invented, in 1839.
21 Fehrenbach, Humanitarian Photography, 7.
22 Ibid., 2.
controversial belief that they should “enlighten” and “elevate” the ignorant, needy, or less civilized.24

These fraught considerations that see photography as a vehicle of imperialistic domination and objectification are resonant, for example, in Willoughby Wallace Hooper’s photographs from India’s Great Famine in 1876. Hooper was an English military officer. His horrific photographs (not officially sanctioned by the British government) of arranged skeletal figures have been frequently discussed as a crucial case of aestheticization of suffering and a conventional ethnographic representation of “others.”25 However, these images were appropriated by the Indian Famine Relief Committees and used for fundraising purposes.26 Nothing suggests that Hooper’s photographs were made with the relief effort in mind, but they were circulated as cartes de visite, sold as fundraising devices (figure 0.5), and displayed on walls during famine relief meetings. Though Hooper’s images were used for humanitarian fundraising, they remain horrific photographs because of their staging and ingrained colonial history.

Similarly, Fehrenbach discusses the case of Alice Seeley Harris, an English missionary in the Congo Free State who took photographs of the violations of the Congolese local population living under Belgian colonial rule. Harris went to the Congo Free State on a religious mission to teach the Protestant religion, but she ended up encountering and exposing oppression. These photographs from the early 1900s were shown in hundreds of cities via magic lantern presentations given by the Congo Reform Association (CRA), which Harris joined. The CRA was part of a transnational humanitarian movement that sought to end King Leopold II’s hold on the Congo

24 Fehrenbach cites the work of Alice Conklin, A Mission to Civilize, Kevin Grant, Civilized Savagery, and J. P. Daughton, An Empire Divided. Fehrenbach, Humanitarian Photography, 10.
25 Hooper arranged his skeletal subjects in very planned ways (it can be interpreted that he was treating them as objects, not people in extreme distress).
26 These committees were established throughout cities in England, Scotland, and Australia.
Free State. In 1904 Harris took a photograph depicting the tragic situation of Nsala, a Congolese man. The man stares in disbelief at the severed hand and foot of his five-year-old daughter. This unbearable scene was the result of the killing and mutilation of Nsala’s wife and daughter by sentries of the Anglo-Belgian India Rubber Company. The crime was committed as a way of punishing the whole village where Nsala lived for failure to meet the rubber quotas demanded by the imperial regime (figure 0.8). This horrific photograph was published alongside others by Harris in a CRA brochure entitled, “Camera and the Congo Crime,” which sold over 10,000 copies and helped to create the largest popular British protest against imperialism in the decades before World War I.27

It is clear from these examples that humanitarian photography has roots in colonial, ethnographic and missionary imagery, reflecting a double-edge of voyeurism and social rescue towards the people represented. Humanitarian photography evolved after the turn of the century and began to focus on the most vulnerable social bodies -- women and children. Emily Hobhouse, English humanitarian, published her 1902 book entitled, The Brunt of the War and Where It Fell, which focused on women and children affected by the Second Boer War in South Africa.28 She investigated and protested British treatment of Afrikaner women and children interned in British concentration camps. The poor conditions promptly led her to help create the South African Women and Children Distress Fund. Her book is highly critical of the British conduct of war, and Hobhouse received much criticism for targeting her own government. However, her campaign did help improve camp conditions. Interestingly, Hobhouse’s London-based publishers

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27 Fehrenbach, Humanitarian Photography, 70-76.
blocked at least one photo of an emaciated girl because they considered it “too painful for publication” (figure 0.9). Bonney faced similar publishing challenges, over forty years later.

Many humanitarian photographs are the object of various criticisms due to their emotional renderings of pain and trauma. A friction, and often a cause of contention, that arises with photographs such as these is whether the subjects are being depicted as “archetypal figures rather than individuals.” Do the subjects stand for symbols rather than citizens? Are the subjects presented as stereotypes? Are they being objectified and/or exploited? Or do the photographs show respect for an individual’s identity, culture and dignity? These questions do not always have a clear answer. Many photographs walk a thin line between exploiting suffering and raising awareness, and between voyeurism and compassion. Fehrenbach explains, “Historically, [humanitarian photography] has mobilized images of suffering, including extreme suffering, to enhance sympathy, empathy and a sense of responsibility or guilt in its viewers.” These emotive tropes, regardless of controversy over their representations of suffering, have proven to be effective means of fundraising for humanitarian campaigns.

A paradigmatic case in this history, and a recent one, is that of the heartbreaking 2015 photograph of Aylan Kurdi, a drowned Syrian boy on a Turkish beach (figure 0.10). The photograph circulated with remarkable speed and scope via social media, and many viewers were disturbed by it becoming a type of “viral currency,” thus exploiting his death. However, refugee aid agencies saw dramatic increases in donations. These agencies also noted how quickly interest faded after this image was initially circulated. In this regard, the comments of Sontag contribute

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31 Ibid, 1126.
to an understanding of the underpinnings of emotional reactions: “Compassion is an unstable emotion,” she writes. “It needs to be translated into action, or it withers. The question is what to do with the feelings that have been aroused, the knowledge that has been communicated. If one feels that there is nothing ‘we’ can do – but who is that ‘we’? – and nothing ‘they’ can do either – and who are ‘they’? – then one starts to get bored, cynical, apathetic.”33

I argue that both Bonney’s and Chim’s humanitarian books, in their construction and message, urged their audiences to take action, and inspired ways to do so. Neither book caused readers to feel helpless, on the contrary, they gave them a sense of empowerment through compassion. The humanitarian scope is also reflected in the caption text and introductory texts, where historical reference and mention of Hitler and the totalitarian regimes that were the root of the problem is completely missing. An explanation for this can be found in the utilitarian scope of emotionally charged works, which alert viewers at the sacrifice of detailed explanations. Indeed, many humanitarian agencies know that an emotional image with simple, poignant text will create the desired charitable response. Janice Nathanson, advertising and fundraising consultant to public and charitable institutions, stated quite bluntly that, “Complex explanations of why people are suffering,” do not attract money.34 This idea is corroborated by Fehrenbach when she writes, “The effectiveness of humanitarian rhetoric appears to depend on its apparent simplicity and directness of emotional address.”35 One can argue that Bonney and Chim decontextualized the children’s individual experiences if only to put their humanitarian message first. The universal experience of Europe’s children was a simple story to tell, and each photographer drew attention to a universal experience instead of the diversity and specificity of individual experiences.

33 Susan Sontag, Regarding the Pain of Others, 101.
35 Fehrenbach, Humanitarian Photography, 6.
The child is often recognized as a universal symbol, an icon of humanity, one that transcends language. Almost anyone can relate to an image of a child and inevitably feel any combination of guilt, pity, indignation, and/or compassion. Earlier humanitarian campaigns for children in need, such as the following example from 1921 by the Save the Children Fund, made the connection very clearly, stating, “Any one of these children might be your very own”36 (figure 0.11). In this respect, scholar of humanitarianism Denis Kennedy asserts that, “Humanitarian images focus on universal symbols—women and children, suffering and destruction—to cut across boundaries of comprehension.”37 There was no better way for humanitarian agencies to share these symbols than with photography, which was recognized as the universal language for its capability to overcome barriers of nation, language and illiteracy in a postwar context.38

Furthermore, imagery of innocent and vulnerable children often showed ties to religious iconography and the theme of religious suffering. References to biblical imagery became a trend in humanitarian photographic coverage of World War I, and Bonney would have been familiar with this type of coverage because she was involved with the National Catholic War Council and the Junior Red Cross. In some of the photographs from Bonney’s *Europe’s Children*, Madonna and child references are visible, as well as Pieta imagery. Karin Priem, a historian who specializes in the social and cultural history of education, states, “It seems that photographs of children...enhance photography’s immediate presence and social power to involve audiences and

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38 Allbeson, “Photographic Diplomacy,” 413.
viewers.”39 The power of these images naturally put children “at the symbolic heart of efforts to reconstruct Europe in the aftermath of World War II.”40

The perceived status of a child as innocent and the fight for joyful childhoods precedes these considerations. It developed during the Romantic period according to philosophers, artists and poets such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, William Blake, and William Wordsworth. In the 1830s, societies began to pass laws aimed to protect children at work, school, and home, and a child-centered approach began to flourish in the 20th century. In 1924, following World War I, “The Declaration of the Rights of the Child” (also known as “The Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child”) was adopted by the League of Nations. This document specifically promoted child rights. It stated that mankind owes children the best that it has to give and it referred to the right to food, housing and protections from exploitation. “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights” was issued in December of 1948, just months before Chim’s post-World War II images were published in Children of Europe. Significantly, a 1949 edition of the UNESCO Courier reproduced text from the new declaration right above a selection of Chim’s photographs (figure 0.12).41 The Human Rights declaration addressed children’s rights to special care and assistance, education, social security, and the full development of his or her personality through “national effort and international cooperation.” Bonney’s and Chim’s books emphasize the destruction of “the patterns and protections of normal childhood,”42 by drawing attention to fractured family lives, ruined homes and schools, and lack of food. Each photographer clearly knew that the rights of the children they depicted were being violated by war.

40 Tara Zahra, quoted in Allbeson, “Photographic Diplomacy,” 402.
42 Fehrenbach, Humanitarian Photography, 187.
This thesis analyzes the key similarities and differences between the two photographers’ approaches and final products, raising attention to the role and agency working within the genre of “humanitarian photography.” Biographical information, publishing circumstances, the relationship of photographs and texts are discussed in a close analysis of each photo book. Chapter one focuses on Thérèse Bonney’s *Europe’s Children, 1939-1943*, chapter two concentrates on Chim’s *Children of Europe*, and chapter three compares images and strategies from the two books, drawing upon relevant theoretical texts. To provide a frame of reference for the research compiled here, it is instructive to note that Chim’s legacy is better represented in contemporary scholarship (one reason likely being his involvement with the well-respected and well-studied Magnum Photos cooperative). Bonney, on the other hand, is not a name that even many photography scholars know today. She does not have an official biographer and her archive is scattered at various institutions, which means that the research compiled in this thesis is the most comprehensive study of her war photographs thus far.
CHAPTER ONE

Thérèse Bonney, Europe’s Children, 1939-1943 (1943)

This chapter begins with biographical background on Thérèse Bonney, and details her humanitarian involvement. Her photography is examined across its channels of circulation, including her 1940 exhibitions at the Library of Congress and The Museum of Modern Art, and her illustrated lectures (delivered in early 1943). These lectures are informative in an examination of her book, Europe’s Children, 1939-1943 as they share many elements and a history of origins. The book is analyzed in great detail: the publishing challenges, its reception, the introductory text and narrative/location captions, the layout, and specific photographs will all be considered.

Bonney’s publication tells a narrative of decline. Her story begins with images of happy and serene children, and ends with tragic scenes of starvation. This narrative speaks to the history of World War II, which Bonney experienced firsthand. The book came onto the scene at a point in time when much of her American audience was unaware of the extent of the horrors in Europe, and perhaps unwilling to see any evidence. Her timing and the poignant demands she raised make this publication an essential humanitarian record.

1.1 – Bonney’s Biography

Thérèse Bonney was born Mabel Thérèse Bonney in 1894 in Syracuse, New York. Her mother, Addie Elmina Robey, was a bookkeeper and her father, Anthony Leroy Bonney, was an electrician. Bonney had an older sister, Louise Emily Bonney, with whom she co-authored sev-
eral guidebooks with before World War II.\textsuperscript{43} Thérèse was well-educated, attending the University of California, Berkeley (Bachelor of Arts Degree), Harvard University (Master’s in Romance Languages), Columbia University (where she began her Ph.D.), and the Sorbonne (Doctorate of Letters). At the time of her graduation from the Sorbonne in 1921, she was the youngest person to ever receive a Ph.D. from this institution. She was the fourth woman to receive a degree there, and was only the 10th American to achieve this goal.\textsuperscript{44} After completing her Ph.D., Bonney settled in Paris and founded the first American illustrated press service in Europe, which she called “The Bonney Service.” Bonney and her small staff distributed articles and illustrations to newspapers and magazines in thirty-three countries, with the United States as the main focus. Their subject was French design and architecture.\textsuperscript{45} In the 1920s, Paris experienced a huge post-World War I publishing boom. Newspapers and magazines were rampant, and increasingly illustrated.\textsuperscript{46} This made for a particularly lively (and timely) period for Bonney to start her press service.

Bonney began photographing in 1938 at the age of 44, when she became frustrated with the quality of the images photographers were submitting to her press service. As she was quoted by an interviewer in \textit{Vogue}, “So I got me a camera and got to it.”\textsuperscript{47} In 1939, she went to Finland intending to photograph the preparations for the Olympics but ended up being the first foreign

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{43} The guidebooks were mainly for American audiences, on topics such as \textit{Buying Antique and Modern Furniture in Paris} (1929), \textit{A Shopping Guide to Paris} (1929), \textit{Guide to The Restaurants of Paris} (1929), and \textit{French Cooking for American Kitchens} (1929).
\bibitem{44} The Museum of Modern Art, “Thérèse Bonney on Eve of Exhibition at Museum of Modern Art Honored by Carnegie Grant To Continue Recording War History with Camera in Europe.” December 5, 1940. 3.
\bibitem{46} Ten years later, in 1934, Maria Eisner, a young Milanese woman, founded Alliance Photo in Paris, a picture agency. Eisner is one of the unrecognized founders of Magnum, and she was close with Chim.
\end{thebibliography}
correspondent at the outbreak of the Russo-Finnish War.\textsuperscript{48} She assisted with the evacuation of refugees on the Franco-Belgian border in 1940, and was the only photographer with carte blanche at the Battle of France.\textsuperscript{49}

In 1940, when France surrendered to Germany, she returned to the United States. She hung two major exhibitions of her photographs, and received a grant that allowed her to go back to Europe to continue photographing. In 1941, she witnessed the aftereffects of the Spanish Civil War in Portugal and Spain, and courageously went to a Vichy prisoner of war camp. She reportedly had to smuggle her negatives out of occupied France by hiding the spools underneath her car.\textsuperscript{50} She also recorded the Blitz in London and, later on, she photographed liberated concentration camps such as Dachau, Buchenwald and Vaihingen. Her images from the liberated concentration camps were only recently digitized by archivists at the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. These photographs are not known to have been published in any post-war-era press, and no written mentions of her experiences in the camps have been found.\textsuperscript{51} However, many of her wartime images (including those published in her book), were used in publications such as \textit{Colliers} magazine, \textit{The Washington Post}, and \textit{The New York Times}.

Bonney reportedly spoke five languages.\textsuperscript{52} This is likely part of the reason why she was recruited by the Office of Strategic Services, known as the OSS (the predecessor to the modern-

\textsuperscript{48} Her efforts gained the respect of the Finnish people and she was decorated with Finland’s highest honor, The White Rose.
\textsuperscript{49} In May of 1941, Bonney received the Croix de Guerre from the French Ministry of War for her evacuation efforts.
\textsuperscript{50} “To Picture Clydeside in War Dress,” \textit{Daily Record}, September 20 1941, 3.
\textsuperscript{51} At least two other female photojournalists were documenting the recently liberated concentration camps in April of 1945: Margaret Bourke-White (covering for \textit{LIFE} magazine), and Lee Miller (shooting for \textit{Vogue}). Margaret Bourke-White said of her experience, “Using the camera was almost a relief; it interposed a slight barrier between myself and the white horror in front of me,” and it is believed Lee Miller suffered from PTSD after her coverage of the war and the liberation of the camps. She spiraled into depression and struggled with alcoholism for the rest of her life.
\textsuperscript{52} Bonney’s French-Canadian grandmother reportedly taught her French.
day CIA), shortly after Pearl Harbor in 1942. She went on at least one mission in Finland for the OSS and had some close calls with the Gestapo along the way.\(^{53}\) Her knowledge of so many languages undoubtedly helped her make connections with her photographic subjects all over Europe.

Bonney continued living in Paris after the war. She translated French plays for production on Broadway, and was a columnist for the French daily newspaper *Le Figaro*. At the age of 73 she lobbied in Washington, D.C. to get Medicare benefits extended to Americans living outside the United States and, at the age of 80, Bonney re-enrolled at the Sorbonne to work on a doctorate in gerontology. She died in Paris at the age of 83, before she could complete the degree. She never married or had children of her own. A *Vogue* write-up from 1943 described her as a “remarkable woman [who] belongs to a definite, but rare type: the intellectual, individual creature; a strong-featured, chunked-out hunk of character, who might be harsh were she not also full of those qualities of humanity, wide culture, and emotional sensitivity.”\(^{54}\)

### 1.2 - Bonney’s Humanitarian Involvement

In order to gain a fuller understanding of the reasons why Bonney was so dedicated to helping victims of war, it is salient to discuss her relationship with religion, which likely served as her introduction to the war effort. As a teenager, Bonney was educated in a Roman Catholic school, and she later mentioned the “R.C. [Roman Catholic] experience” on a list entitled, “Un-

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\(^{53}\) In 1942, Bonney was sent to Finland by the OSS with instructions to persuade the Finns to abandon their role as a co-belligerent of Nazi Germany. She met with Finnish military leader Carl von Mannerheim, but was unable to convince him to break with Hitler. However, she did obtain helpful intelligence. William B. Breuer, *War and American Women: Heroism, Deeds, and Controversy*, (Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Company, 1997), 29.

forgettable People, Places, Things, Happenings” that she was compiling for an autobiography that never came to fruition.\textsuperscript{55}

During World War I, Bonney worked for the National Catholic War Council,\textsuperscript{56} which had been formed in 1917 to coordinate American Catholic activities during the war. She worked for the Junior Red Cross at the same time (the auxiliary body for children of the American Red Cross\textsuperscript{57}) and she travelled throughout Europe for their Bureau of School Correspondence.\textsuperscript{58} Sometime between 1919 and 1923, she founded the European branch of the American Red Cross Correspondence Exchange, which fostered communication between the children of Europe and the United States. From 1924 to 1928, Bonney travelled throughout Europe again to give lectures and organize Red Cross groups in other nations. Her involvement and dedication to the Red Cross continued in World War II. In 1940 she worked with the American Red Cross in France, and closely collaborated with Anne Morgan’s (daughter of the powerful financier, J.P. Morgan) section of the American Friends of France.\textsuperscript{59} Importantly, it is Anne Morgan who introduced Bonney in 1940 to Frederick Paul Keppel, president of the Carnegie Corporation. This key connection will be addressed in the next chapter section, 1.3.

In 1943, a full-page spread of Bonney’s images gained public attention through their publication in New York in the \textit{Olean Times-Herald}, along with an interview (figure 1.1). Here Bonney is quoted as being a supporter of the National War Fund: “The National War Fund,” she

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{55} Kolosek, \textit{The Invention of Chic}, 23.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 25.
\textsuperscript{57} World War I inspired an official organization for young people: the American Junior Red Cross. Students knit scarves, rolled bandages and built furniture for hospitals and convalescent homes. They prepared and sent “Friendship Boxes” containing school and personal items to students overseas.
\textsuperscript{58} Kolosek, \textit{The Invention of Chic}, 26.
\textsuperscript{59} The American Friends of France was started by Anne Morgan in 1917. They helped noncombatants, organized a health service that still exists today, organized workshop to provide basic furniture to bombed-out families, and much more.
\end{flushleft}
wrote, “Offers an opportunity to the people of this country to give aid to the people of stricken Europe – the families of men who fight side by side with our own men on land, on the sea and in the air.” This decidedly American appeal defines her main audience, and an analysis of the text she wrote for her book reiterates this. As observed in the introduction, a powerful photograph of Bonney’s was selected for a United War Fund advertisement that ran in *The Indianapolis News* in 1942 (see figure 0.5). The photo (which was also included in her book) is of a blonde-haired boy, vulnerable and downcast, hunched over in a pile of knapsacks. Credited to Bonney, this photograph takes up more than ¾ of the full page advertisement, and its plea for help is overt, even without the “fine print” below. Bonney tries to make the viewer see the child as if he was their very own. As noted earlier (see figure 0.11), this was a common method used by humanitarian agencies. The text below the photo read:

> Can you ignore the plea of this weary little fellow whom war has reached...isn’t that tired, tousled little head much like the one you rumpled as he brushed your cheek in ‘off to school’ goo’bye this morning. If this little one were yours you’d turn your pockets inside out to lift that head and put hope in his eyes. And that’s what some of your War Fund dollars do for thousands like this one.

Bonney’s humanitarian engagement is also confirmed by her presence with other influential individuals, one being the Italian fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli, on the Program Committee for a musical benefit performance held at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York on April 9th, 1943. The event was organized by the American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker organization, to “create a fund for the starving children of the world.” Two of her photographs were

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61 The National War Fund was, in large measure, an outgrowth of the United War Fund campaign.
63 The text is above the photo on the right side (“Photograph of refugee child, taken ‘somewhere in Europe’ by Thérèse Bonney”).
64 Program for American Friends Service Committee benefit concert, Metropolitan Opera House, April 9, 1943.
featured in the program for the event, and Bonney included text below those photos that would later be used in her book.

Lastly, it is obvious that Bonney knew the persuasive power of her images because she brought them to the United States Senate as a record that would support the statement she made to the Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations in November of 1943. The session was for a resolution “favoring action looking to relief for starving peoples of Europe.”65 On this occasion, Bonney spoke about her multiple trips to Europe since the war had started, and she explained the widespread need for food. She went into specifics about dairy production and the decrease in transportation, partially due to unreplaceable car parts and lack of axle grease. “The Germans have taken hundreds if not tens of thousands of railroad cars up into Germany,” she recalled, “Taking loot or goodness knows what and not bringing the cars back.”66 Though she knew more than most Americans about how Germans were fighting the war, it is eerie to think that at this time she was not aware that those railroad cars were used to transport millions of Jewish people to concentration camps. Her testimonial is, nonetheless, telling of her commitment to tell and observe.

1.3 – Bonney’s 1940 Exhibitions: Library of Congress and MoMA

When France surrendered in June of 1940, Bonney fled back to the United States. Soon after, in November of 1940, the Library of Congress mounted an exhibition of her photographs entitled To Whom the Wars are Done (November 15 - December 15, 1940). The exhibition’s location in the nation’s capital was an ideal site for Bonney’s desire to enact change. The Museum

66 Ibid., 156.
of Modern Art in New York City followed suit and mounted an exhibition of her photographs entitled, *War Comes to the People* (December 10, 1940 - January 5th, 1941). Installation photographs show that the exhibitions were almost exactly the same. Though the surviving installation photographs from the Library of Congress iteration are not as extensive as those from MoMA, multiple layout comparisons were still possible, and the wall texts appear to have remained unchanged in the second iteration.

Bonney was one of the first female artists to have a solo show at MoMA.67 Her exhibition was only the fourth photography show at the Museum.68 Beaumont Newhall helped to found MoMA’s photography department in 1940, making MoMA the first museum in the country to establish a department devoted to photography (the Museum itself had been founded a little over ten years prior, in 1929).69 Newhall was the first photography curator at the Museum, but all press releases state that the exhibition was organized by Bonney herself: “The layout of *War Comes to the People*, as well as the words and pictures, is entirely the work of Miss Bonney.”70

The exhibition design for Bonney’s show is also noteworthy, and the press at the time picked up on its originality. For example, a review noted that, “One element in the present technique is the use of the progressive display, now rapidly revolutionizing certain types of museum exhibits.”71 When compared to the previous photo exhibitions at MoMA, Bonney’s exhibition

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67 The first was Dahlov Zorach Ipcar. Her show, “Creative Growth, Childhood to Maturity,” opened in 1939 in a gallery focused on education.
68 The three photography exhibitions that preceded hers were: *Walker Evans: Photographs of 19th Century Houses* (1933), the survey exhibition *Photographs: 1839-1937* (1937), and *Walker Evans: American Photographs* (1938). Other exhibitions included photography, but these focused specifically on the medium.
69 The press release announcing the creation of the department actually went out while Bonney’s show was on view at MoMA. The Museum of Modern Art, “Museum of Modern Art Establishes New Department of Photography” December 31, 1940, i.
70 The Museum of Modern Art, “Museum of Modern Art Opens Exhibition of Thérèse Bonney’s War History Written with the Lens,” December 11, 1940, i.
71 John LaFarge, Arts section of unknown publication, December 21, 1940, n.p.
design was certainly very different: it was arguably more focused on the message than on individual prints. She used large, contrasting panels to group multiple photographs together (figure 1.2), and text played a central, didactic, and visual role in the exhibition. She defined the titles of each group as “episodes” and she clearly mapped out how visitors were to walk through the exhibition with graphic arrows and text labels that read, “TURN LEFT” or “TURN RIGHT” (figure 1.3).

Bonney’s exhibition was the first of many wartime exhibitions that came to MoMA, such as Image of Freedom from 1941 (months before the United States officially joined the war), and Steichen’s infamously propagandistic Road to Victory (1942), which came soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Road to Victory was designed by the émigré Herbert Bayer, previously at the Bauhaus. Bayer also utilized a clear path for visitors, and Edward Steichen was heavily influenced by Bayer’s exhibition design. Bonney had no formal training in exhibition design, but she seems to have paved the way for a more dynamic style of photography exhibit.

In 1942 MoMA produced a bulletin entitled, “The Museum and the War.” In this bulletin, MoMA laid out all of the ways in which the Museum was working for the war government. It listed staff who had gone into the armed services and “government agencies and officials for whom contracts have been executed, services performed or advice given.” The bulletin outlined how the museum was specifically helping soldiers by providing art materials to “soldier artists in camps throughout the country,” and entertaining the enlisted with dances held in the museum galleries. The bulletin also listed wartime exhibitions that were displayed and circulated to 93 other cities, and it listed films that were shown for “instructional and propaganda purpos-

72 Steichen acted as “guest director” for Road to Victory (1942) and he compiled Power in the Pacific (1945).
73 Newhall was director of the Photography Department until 1946, when Steichen succeeded him.
es.” These exhibitions and films were meant to show Americans “what the war looks like.” Bonney’s exhibition was the first listed chronologically, and was followed by:

- *Britain at War* (1941)
- *Two Years of War in England* (1942)
- *Art in War: OEM Purchases from a National Competition* (1942)
- *The Road to Victory* (1942)
- *Image of Freedom* (1941)
- *Camouflage for Civilian Defense* (1942)
- *Wartime Housing* (1942)
- *The Dymaxion Deployment Unit* (1941)
- *Power for Defense: T.V.A. Architecture* (1941)
- *National Defense Posters* (1941)
- *The United Hemisphere Poster Competition* (1942)

Bonney’s exhibition was one of only two solo-shows mentioned. The other was *Two Years of War in England*, which presented photographs taken by William Vandivert, one of the cofounders of Magnum Photos in 1947. Sadly, no installation shots survive of that display.

A letter from Bonney on her Paris letterhead, dated November 1st, 1940, and addressed to Alfred Barr, then director of MoMA, sheds light on how she made her way onto MoMA’s exhibition roster. “I was glad to have the opportunity of showing to you and Miss Barr the maquette of *How War Comes To The People,*” she wrote. “I hope that the schedule of the Museum will make it possible to show it there.” When she wrote this letter, the Library of Congress exhibition was fifteen days away from opening, and it seems remarkable that Barr still hadn’t made a final decision on November 1st, only a little over a month before the MoMA show opened. Bonney persuasively wrote, “I think you will agree with me that the timely note of the exhibition and its message, as well as the advantage of showing it in New York soon after the opening in Wash-

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ington, make an early showing here desirable….if possible before the end of the year.” Bonney’s letter also discloses that Barr had told her about an exhibition that was likely going to bump hers (British War Painters), but history shows that Bonney kept her place and time on the Museum’s exhibition schedule. The only other letter discovered between Bonney and MoMA’s fabled Barr was a quick 1934 note from Barr, congratulating Bonney on her Legion of Honor medal from the French Government. This note predates the MoMA exhibition by six years but any friendship or professional connection between the two is, unfortunately, ill-defined.

Text was a key component of Bonney’s MoMA exhibition. An introductory wall panel listed the “episodes” within the exhibition as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EPISODES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prologue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was peace in a land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suddenly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soon after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From day to day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then came Christmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The length and breadth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of the land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was a peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And in another country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And another</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These episode titles were hung throughout the exhibition in large, raised letters above groupings of images that fell within the episode category (figure 1.4). The photographs themselves were all unframed and borderless. Some were mounted on large boards, (see figure 1.2), but most were sandwiched between two horizontal planks that were mounted to the museum walls (see figure 1.3).

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1.4). In addition to the episode titles, all of the images had corresponding caption text (fairly large and in all caps) that was either directly above or below the image (see figures 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4). The caption text read as a running commentary from Bonney’s point of view, though she only used the first-person in the caption for the second photograph in the exhibition: “I stood beside a woman of the people…” The rest of the captions described what she was seeing, but without the clear insertion of the word “I.”

After the “episodes” wall panel, the other wall panel featuring only text was the “prologue.” The prologue was a short passage written by Archibald MacLeish, distinguished poet, playwright, and statesman. MacLeish had authored a book illustrated by FSA photographers, titled Land of the Free, just two years earlier in 1938. His prologue for War Comes to the People read thus:

This is an exhibition of photographs of war – the war of our time – the total war made by those to whom totality in life or totality in death is the end and meaning of all human history...They were taken in Finland, Belgium, France, but they could have been taken in a dozen different countries. They are exhibited to a democratic people not only because they are eloquent and moving photographs, but because they speak for the anonymous human beings to whom the wars are done. The propagandists for the special causes have all been heard – the apologists also – the appeasers. In these quiet and un-arguing photographs the people’s cause – the one eternal cause which neither force of arms nor fraud of lies can conquer – finds its words.

In his prologue, MacLeish refers to totalitarian powers in Europe and describes what it means for these photographs to be shown to an audience who lives in a democratic country. He states that the exhibition gives a voice to the people “to whom the wars are done” and he emphasizes the power of the “people’s cause,” which cannot be conquered. MacLeish was a fierce defender of American democracy and his pro-American stance is clear, and arguably paramount, in his writ-
ing from this time. Called "the poet laureate of the New Deal," in 1939 MacLeish was appointed by President Roosevelt as the Librarian of Congress. He wrote several speeches for Roosevelt and acted as an adviser. In 1941, MacLeish also directed an information-turned-propaganda agency for the War Department called the Office of Facts and Figures. He then became assistant director of the Office of War Information (1942-1943), which specialized in propaganda.

His work reflects this official engagement with US war efforts. He promoted an interventionist message in his 1938 *Air Raid: A Verse Play for Radio*, and in 1940 he published the essay *The Irresponsibles*, which was considered to stray “dangerously close” to propaganda. In this text he criticizes intellectuals who do not openly oppose fascism. Significantly, the date of *The Irresponsibles* coincides with his text accompanying Bonney’s exhibition. This is all crucial to consider when reading the prologue to Bonney’s exhibition, as both MacLeish and Bonney had extremely strong agendas.

MacLeish’s text was followed by four photographs, all on the same dark colored panel, that effectively defined them as part of the same group. These four images are the only ones with white lettering (to contrast against the dark panel). The remaining captions are all in black lettering. The way Bonney curated her exhibition was inspired by book layouts, with the prologue and different chapters, but it also referenced newsreel films. The display of the photographs runs like a film-strip, and the captions can be interpreted as a narrator’s running commentary. The MoMA press release for the exhibition referred to this, “Her own captions...tie picture to picture with a running commentary almost like a motion picture soundtrack.”

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80 The Museum of Modern Art, “Museum of Modern Art Opens Exhibition of Thérèse Bonney’s War History Written with the Lens,” December 11, 1940. 2.
The headline of one 1940 exhibition review in *The New York World-Telegram* proclaimed, “Captions Make Show Vivid,” and it stated, “The pictures run in sequence – you follow them along the wall. Groups have headlines – nice big letters. Under each picture is a caption, sometimes also a red line which carries the eye down to a contrasting picture” (figure 1.5). Bonney had asked a Stanford University history professor, Mr. Ralph Lutz, to write to Barr about his opinions on her exhibition, which he had actually seen in both locations. Lutz dutifully wrote to Barr, “In her captions she has developed a new technique which should be studied by all interested in the recording of contemporary history.”

The exhibition travelled to at least seven other cities in the United States, with venues at various wartime organizations, art galleries and art museums. Elodie Courter, then MoMA’s Director of Circulating Exhibitions, declared, “We feel that these photos should be shown in every American city.” Between 1941 and 1942, the exhibition was seen in Buffalo, NY, Palm Beach, FL, New Britain, CT, Stockton, CA, Seattle, WA, Syracuse, NY, and New Orleans, LA. The reviews of the exhibition were overall very positive. Among these, *The New York Times* called her show “Eloquent and moving...a tragic, heroic saga of the people” and in another article they referred to it as one of the most exceptional “one-man” shows of the year. In contrast, the Director of the Syracuse Museum of Art stated in a 1941 letter, “I am sorry to say, it did not draw a

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83 Bonney claimed the exhibition also travelled to Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen and Brussels before the invasion of France in May of 1940. Unfortunately, almost nothing is known about these possible iterations of her exhibition.
84 Letter from Elodie Courter to unknown recipient, January 27 1941, Department of Circulating Exhibition Records, II.1.117.5. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.
large attendance. Here there is actually a sort of reaction against war subjects of any kind."

This reaction to war subjects in post-Depression America also spurned resistance in the publishing of Bonney’s book.

There were important similarities and differences between Bonney’s exhibition and the book, which shared some of her captions. Only twenty photographs from over two hundred photographs on display were selected for the publication. The book had a much tighter focus on children, while the exhibition presented photographs with broader subject matters, ranging from political figures, cultural figures, architectural features, landscapes, to a few soldiers. The message of the exhibition is decidedly more documentary than the humanitarian message Bonney later spreads in her book. The exhibition tells the horrible story of war and it does not make any direct pleas of visitors. This might be part of the reason MacLeish called Bonney’s photographs “quiet and unarguing” in his prologue. The message in Bonney’s book is decidedly more forceful and confrontational.

1.4 – Bonney’s Carnegie Grant

Due to the emotional impact the pictures had on the American people, and their value as historical documents, the Carnegie Corporation of New York awarded Bonney a grant. This was the first one ever given for journalistic work.88 The Carnegie award was in line with the Corporation, founded in 1911 by the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, “to promote the advancement and

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diffusion of knowledge and understanding.”89 Conversation about this grant seems to have begun in 1940, after Anne Morgan told the president of the Carnegie Corporation about Bonney. The president, Frederick Paul Keppel, had an interview with Bonney on October 2nd, 1940, in which she requested three to five thousand dollars to return to Europe to “make a current history of Europe in pictures.”90 In a follow up letter from October 16th of the same year, Bonney wrote to Keppel: “I do want then to return to the European scene and go on writing with the camera, this, if possible without editorial limitations of specific assignments and economic worries of a free lance. I hope you may find the way.”91 She attached her resume and proposal to this letter, to base her “plea for an opportunity to go on.”92 In the proposal, she wrote that she wanted to produce in “book form...a visual tale with a tangible and real message.”93 Her wish was to, “Get the story over to a larger public and perhaps help to clarify, form and guide public opinion, through the medium of the press, exhibitions, book and perhaps lectures.”94

After receiving the proposal, Keppel sought advice from artists, scholars and journalists to gather their opinions on the value of Bonney’s photographs. The Dean of the University of Pennsylvania, William E. Lingelbach, inquired if the photographs would be available to scholars, and Keppel’s assistant contacted Archibald MacLeish at the Library of Congress to make sure that these photographs could be kept in the Library. MacLeish was willing, and it was discussed that the grant would go through the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS). Dr. Waldo

90 Record of interview notes from Frederick Keppel, October 2 1940, Carnegie Corporation of New York Records, Series III.A. Grants, Box 60, Folder 4 -Bonney, Thérèse, 1935-1967, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York, NY, U.S.A.
91 Letter with attached proposal from Bonney to Frederick Keppel, October 16 1940, Carnegie Corporation of New York Records, Series III.A. Grants, Box 60, Folder 4 -Bonney, Thérèse, 1935-1967, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York, NY, U.S.A.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
G. Leland, director of the ACLS, was initially skeptical of the value of Bonney’s photographs, in view of “the fact that the Army and Navy were now completely organized to photograph virtually everything.”95 However, Leland went to go see Bonney’s exhibition at the Library of Congress and was “bowled over.” He conceded its “aesthetic and scholarly value” and was prepared to accept the grant on Bonney’s behalf. As part of the agreement, copies of the photographs had to be deposited at the Library. On November 20th, 1940, Keppel’s assistant wrote to Leland, “the Grants-in-aid Committee of the [Carnegie] Corporation has approved a grant of $3,000 to the American Council of Learned Societies to enable Miss Thérèse Bonney to return to Europe for the purpose of continuing her photographic work.”96

Bonney received the news about the $3,000 grant and in January of 1941 she supplied Leland with a $3,040 budget for three months of lodging, transportation, a new camera, film, flash bulbs and other photographic supplies. It seems that in July of 1941, while in Lisbon, Portugal, Bonney may have requested additional funds, as Keppel sent her a telegram stating, “Regret current Corporation Program closed, additional funds unavailable.” In a July 28th letter to Keppel, Bonney confirms that her grant was exhausted “several weeks ago” and that she was drawing on her own capital.97 In this letter, she also claims to have financed the MoMA and Library of Congress exhibitions (letters in MoMA’s archives corroborate this). Due to her year be-

95 Record of interview notes from C.D., November 18 1940, Carnegie Corporation of New York Records, Series III.A. Grants, Box 60, Folder 4 -Bonney, Thérèse, 1935-1967, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York, NY, U.S.A.  
97 Bonney claimed to have spent $45,000 out of her own pocket to document the children of Europe. Thérèse Bonney’s statement from “Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations,” in the United States Senate, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1944), 153.
ing “heavily mortgaged,” she requested another $500 to $1,000 dollars, which does not seem to have been provided.

Regardless, the Carnegie grant allowed her to return to Europe to photograph the civilian population and illustrate the effects of the war on the innocent. She compiled all of the photos she took in Europe between 1939 and 1943 and made a child-centered selection for her book. She appealed to the Carnegie Corporation in July of 1943 for another grant to fund her book (she brought in a dummy of the book that was “to be published within a few days”) but she was told that another grant would be impossible due to the discontinued grant program.

1.5 – Bonney’s “Tale”

In February of 1943, Bonney presented her images to several thousand people at Carnegie Hall in New York. The “illustrated lecture” format followed in the same tradition of Jacob Riis’ magic lantern presentations, which helped circulate his images and message to the public.

Bonney’s presentation (defined by Bonney as “my tale”) was part of an event organized by the Temporary Committee on Food for Europe’s Children and called “Europe’s Children – Must They Starve?” In April 1943, she repeated this lecture for the same committee in Baltimore.

Bonney gave these illustrated lectures so frequently that she claimed to have given the presentation six times in one city within 24 hours. She lists the State Department and the White House as having seen the presentation, too.

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98 Record of Interview from the Office of the President, EG and Bonney, July 16 1943, Carnegie Corporation of New York Records, Series III.A. Grants, Box 60, Folder 4 -Bonney, Thérèse, 1935-1967, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York, NY, U.S.A.

The transcript of the Carnegie Hall lecture, titled “The Tale of Europe’s Children,” describes the presentation as “synchronized text accompanying photographic documentary evidence.” The text from the presentation is almost identical to the text in her book, with just a few minor edits. Hence it can be deduced that Bonney had the sequence of her book completed before the Carnegie presentation in February of 1943. The transcript includes an introduction that is marked to be read out loud before showing the slides. This introduction is very similar to the prologue in the book. Bonney’s conclusion for the speech (to be read while the last slide was still on the screen) is not used in the book, but it is a poignant plea about the Carnegie Hall program’s main question: “Europe’s children – must they starve?”

Bonney’s book was not published until later in 1943, but she had been thinking about producing it since at least 1940. As indicated earlier, the project was part of her initial proposal for the Carnegie grant. An April 1943 letter from Bonney to Monroe Wheeler, then MoMA’s head of the Department of Exhibitions and Publications, reads, “I am enclosing copies of the synchronized text which goes with the photographs, together with the speech I gave at Carnegie Hall which has been modified since. The text has undergone slight modifications and some thirty or forty pictures have been added since the first showing. I am now preparing with the help of friends and those interested, a private autographed edition.” It seems very likely that this autographed edition was the self-published first edition of Europe’s Children.

Bonney said of her initial Carnegie Hall meeting, “The results of the initial meeting are to my mind to be considered as an expression of the will of this country to write their own histo-

ry and take responsibility in forming the human decency policy in the United States.” She is also quoted as having said, “These people must be given aid and hope if they are to be of use when the day of victory comes and a new and better world is to be built…” Bonney was very clear about her humanitarian intentions, and it is obvious that she hoped her book would influence Americans to take action. Her goal was to bring the photographs of European children back to America to inspire the aid effort, and the opportunity to present the images in the form of an illustrated lecture seems to have cemented her drive to publish a book. This is iterated on the inside front flap of the dust-jacket to the second edition of the book, which reads: “On her return last spring from a fourth Truth Raid on the continent, Thérèse Bonney told the heart-breaking tale of Europe’s Children at Carnegie Hall. Then she knew that this story, conceived at the fronts, in war-torn countries, had to become a book.”

1.6 – Bonney’s Book, Europe’s Children, 1939-1943

Even after the success of her exhibitions at the Library of Congress and MoMA, Bonney’s book was rejected by ten publishers. Hence she resorted to self-publishing and funding the first edition of her book. There are many reasons why Bonney’s book could have been rejected so many times. Among these, sexism likely came into play, and possibly paper shortages, but a primary reason is that the images, especially those at the end of the book, were considered to be too painful and shocking for an American audience in 1943. The Great Depression (which

102 “Europe’s Children,” The Palm Beach Post, (West Palm Beach, Florida), March 22, 1944, 12.
produced similar imagery) had only just ended, and publishers were wary of publishing a book they thought Americans weren’t ready for, or willing to look at. At this time, the American “defense period” aimed to show the strength of the American people, and the government and media were going to great lengths to promote that type of imagery, not the vulnerable victims in Europe.\textsuperscript{106} Dorothea Lange and Paul Taylor faced similar challenges in late 1939 and early 1940, when they were trying to release \textit{An American Exodus}, which ended up being remaindered, even though it is now considered to be a masterpiece. Taylor later recalled about the beginning of World War II, “People began very quickly turning their eyes away from the Depression into what we called the Defense Period.”\textsuperscript{107}

It is also crucial to note that when Bonney’s book was published in 1943, most Americans did not know the full extent of the atrocities Germans were committing in concentration camps. This unfortunate lack of information made Bonney’s 1943 publication especially significant. When the Holocaust was happening, many average Americans did not understand the scope of the atrocities. This was caused by a multitude of circumstances, including strict Nazi censorship and American news coverage.\textsuperscript{108}

The photographs selected for the end of the book are mainly of emaciated children. Significantly, these were not included in either of the exhibitions, as they were likely taken on her

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[\textsuperscript{106}] For example, in December of 1941 the massive Defense Bonds photography mural was installed in Grand Central Station in New York City. The 85-foot tall mural featured photographs by FSA photographers, and celebrated the following valuable traits of the United States: “The fertile U.S. land, the productiveness of U.S. industry, the future welfare of U.S. children.”
\item[\textsuperscript{107}] Anne Whiston Spirn, \textit{Daring to Look: Dorothea Lange’s Photographs and Reports from the Field} (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 38.
\item[\textsuperscript{108}] The \textit{New York Times} has been widely criticized for their poor coverage of the atrocities during the war, and since many American news outlets followed their lead coverage-wise, there were not enough Holocaust facts making front pages of newspapers while the atrocities were happening. Laurel Leff, a veteran journalist and professor of journalism, noted that from the start of the war to its end nearly six years later, only 26 out of 24,000 Holocaust stories made the front page of the \textit{New York Times}. Laurel Leff, “How the NYT Missed the Story of the Holocaust While it was Happening,” History News Network, https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/10903 (April 4, 2005).
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grant-funded return trip to Europe post-1940. At this time, Americans had not yet seen the images from 1945 of starved Jews in the liberated concentration camps, and Bonney’s photographic representation of multiple starving children would have been especially jarring. In a review of Bonney’s book published in *The Oakland Tribune* in 1944, the reviewer wrote about the publisher’s reactions to the photographs: “The American people, they [the publishers] said, would shrink from them [the photographs] as too painful – or perhaps too straight a thrust at conscience to do something direct and immediate in the way of salvage.” Another 1944 book review from *The Cincinnati Enquirer* reads, “Publishers said it was too real and too devastating for the public to accept.” Bonney herself described what publishers were saying: “We cannot publish this book, because the American people cannot and will not take it. It is too hard for them. They do not want the truth. They want entertainment, music and distraction.”

In reply Bonney said, “I don’t believe it. Let’s see!” The popularity of her book proved these publishers wrong, and Bonney stated further, “We do not have an I.Q. of 12 year old, and we do want reality. I am convinced that the people of this country want nothing more than to know what the truth is, to face it, and to do something about it.” Bonney’s self-published edition was a huge success and all 2,000 copies sold within months. A pamphlet that seems to have been distributed before the self-published edition was printed states, “A FEW COPIES

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111 Edna Black, book review in the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, April 1, 1944, 7.
113 Ibid.
114 Ibid.
116 The pamphlet states the private, autographed edition would be published on June 30th, though other sources cite it as being published in September. It states, “Please mail Subscription Blank and Check in enclosed addressed enve-
ARE AVAILABLE AT THREE DOLLARS EACH. IT IS A COLLECTOR’S ITEM. In subscribing to one or several copies, you are helping to spread the knowledge of the plight of Europe’s Children and to render public opinion articulate. Six hundred copies have already been subscribed to. Five hundred of these will be sent to the leaders of the United Nations and others to whom this question is of vital concern.”

Bonney boasts further in a 1944 letter, “Without benefit of advertising or publicity fanfare, from 37 states, from more than 250 cities, towns and communities, from Army camps, from privates, corporals, sergeants, and commissioned officers, have come requests for the book. All this happened to the book which 20 publishers rejected, convinced it would make the American public ‘suffer too much.’ The publishers were wrong!” Most sources note that ten publishers shot her down, so it is possible that Bonney increased the number in this letter for hyperbole. Regardless, the success of Bonney’s self-published edition gave publishing companies a change of heart. Just a few months after her self-published edition was released, Rhode Publishing Company picked up the project and had the second edition distributed by Duell, Sloan & Pearce in December of 1943, or early 1944.

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119 This publishing company, founded in 1939 and no longer active, also published works by Archibald MacLeish and Erskine Caldwell.
120 In 1944, Pendock Press of London published a book by Bonney entitled, War Comes to the People. This book did not focus specifically on children, but it did include many of the same captions and photographs from Europe’s Children, 1939-1943. Out of the 92 photographs in War Comes to the People, 24 were also in Europe’s Children. War Comes to the People featured photographs of the refugee experience. It included many photos of elderly people fleeing their towns, and it also had a section of photos of destroyed homes.
Bonney’s photos were also published in the December 1943 edition of *Popular Photography* magazine, an American publication that catered to professional and amateur photographers. Significantly, a following edition of the magazine contained a letter to the editor from a Reverend C. S. Urban of Kent City, Michigan, stating, “Dear Editor: For goodness sake, please stop torturing the readers with pictures of war and the unfortunates of the war-torn foreign countries (“Europe's Children” by Thérèse Bonney). We want POPULAR PHOTOGRAPHY to be clean, educational and entertaining, and serve the photographers as a medium of research and improvement of their work. As such, it cannot be polluted with pictures of diseased people and the war-torn world.”121 This letter shows just how powerful Bonney’s images could be to an American audience, since the Reverend used strong wording such as “tortured” when referring to his reaction to her images. The editor responded to the Reverend with: “Not everything in the world can be clean and pretty and if something strong is done with the camera, the pictures should be published. When Christ said, ‘Suffer the little children to come unto me,’ he did not add ‘but not the hungry or dirty ones.’”122 Reverend Urban’s letter to the editor was a harsh reaction to Bonney’s photographs. Other reviews of Bonney’s book describe a lack of enjoyment in viewing the photos, or having them break your heart, but they recognize that the photos must be seen to better understand the effects of war: “You will not enjoy *Europe’s Children*, but it will give you a new idea of what war means and of what we are fighting for.”123 “It will break your heart to see these pictures. But you’ll never ask again ‘Why must we be rationed to feed Europe?’”124

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122 Response from the Editor, *Popular Photography*, February 1944, 72.
Bonney’s book features sixty-eight photographs from the 25,000\textsuperscript{125} negatives she brought back from Europe. Each photograph (all full-bleed per page, and all printed on the right side) faces a white page on the left, with a small amount of “caption” text in the bottom right or left corner (figure 1.6). There are 144 pages in the book and 653 words (not including the short prologue or epigraphic Bible verse). This means that, on average, there are only 10 words per photo. Even though American readers typically read pages from left to right, the way Bonney’s book is laid out causes a reader’s eye to naturally look at the large photograph on the right, and then read the small amount of text at the bottom of the left-side page.\textsuperscript{126} The images are so large and arresting that they dominate the text. By making her captions short, straightforward, and infused with drama, Bonney ensured that most readers would not “just” look at the pictures. The book layout is consistent and formulaic. The choice to print all of the photographs full-bleed and leave out any “design” of multiple photographs on the page is an effective way to ensure that readers/viewers look at each individual image, without being distracted by other photographs, their arrangement, or extensive text.

The photographs are all black and white, and many interior shots are taken with a flash. Bonney was shooting with an Automatic Rolleiflex, a twin-lens reflex camera (TLR). The Rolleiflex was notable for its quality, durability, reliability, compact size, modest weight, and simplicity. This type of camera utilizes two lenses: the top lens is what reflects the image into the viewfinder, and the bottom lens captures the photograph by transmitting the image to the film inside the camera. This type of viewfinder did not require the photographer to have the camera at eye-level. The photographer would typically hold the camera close to their abdomen, and then


\textsuperscript{126} This was a common technique used in photo books of the 1930s, such as Walker Evans’ \textit{American Photographs} (1938), though this publication omits text on the left-side page and instead leaves it almost entirely blank (except for the page number).
look down through the viewfinder, allowing them to potentially be less conspicuous than with an eye-level camera. Additionally, Bonney would have been using the newly introduced high-speed Super-XX film. The speed of this film added grain, but it gave Bonney more flexibility with fast motion and low-light situations. Most of the photographs have a visible grain, but none of them are out of focus. Many of the scenes Bonney captured would have been in constant motion (which creates an increased likelihood of blurriness), but their focus makes it obvious she had a thorough understanding of the technical capabilities of her camera. With a combination of fast film, fast shutter speed and good exposures, her photographs are clearly legible and have no obvious flaws (this goes for the prints, too). She likely garnered her knack for composition from her years with the press service. She knew when to get close, and when to set up establishing shots from a greater distance.

Bonney’s first self-published edition, issued sometime between June and September of 1943, is paperback and has a photo-illustrated cover (on both the dust-jacket and underneath). The photo is a full-bleed black and white image of a mother carrying a sleeping toddler over her shoulder (see 0.1). “EUROPE’S CHILDREN” is written in red, in all caps, over the photograph in the top right corner. Bonney’s name is written in white in smaller text (still all caps) at the bottom left hand corner of the cover. The back of the book is white with a spine of white linen, and the back of the dust-jacket features over a dozen press comments about her war photographs. The front flap of the dust-jacket includes a photograph of Bonney, wearing a helmet on her head and her Rolleiflex around her neck. Below this portrait is a brief biography listing her degrees, honors, war record, and contributions.127 The book featured some marketing and fundraising strategies. On the rear flap of the dust-jacket, in the bottom corner, was an offer for an autographed

127 The front flap says, “continued on back flap,” but unfortunately no available copies of the first edition have a fully intact back flap.
limited edition for $3.00, with instructions to send a check to a specific New York bank account. Additionally, some copies of the first edition came with an inserted mailing card that could be easily filled out to order additional copies. The bottom of this card stated, “Please send check to ‘Children in Peril’, 117 East 30th St, New York 16, NY.” Interestingly, this publishing company was fabricated by Bonney herself, as “Children in Peril” produced no other books and the address corresponded to Bonney’s home. Other first editions have been known to say “Published by Children in Peril.”

The second edition was published just months after the first edition, likely in December of 1943, or early 1944. It was hardcover, with a navy cloth cover, and red lettering centered at the top that read, “EUROPE’S CHILDREN.” (figure 1.7). Bonney’s name was centered directly below the title, also in red and all caps, but in smaller font. The dust-jacket for the second edition was mostly the same as the first, but instead of Bonney’s self portrait and resume, the front inside flap detailed the story behind Bonney’s self-published edition, and how it led to the second edition. The size of both editions was very similar, about 9”x11”. The sequencing, captions, and photographic selection remained mostly unchanged, but there were six additional photographs in the second edition (totaling sixty-eight, versus sixty-two in the first edition) which caused some minor changes in image and caption sequencing. The slight changes in the text were generally made to accommodate the new photographs, but the most noticeable text sequence changes occurred at the end of each edition. For clarity, unless noted otherwise, this thesis refers to the second edition’s page numbers and sequencing. The reasoning behind this decision is that the second edition was likely the edition the majority of Americans were familiar with, since it had a professional distributor and legitimate publishing company.
In both editions, the first page with text is the epigraph, which is a Bible verse from the twenty-fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. Bonney selected verses 32 through 40 from the chapter about the Final Judgement, also known as “the judgement of nations.”128 It reads:

> And all the nations shall be gathered together before him:  
> And he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd  
> Separateth the sheep from the goats ----  
> Then shall the king say to them that shall be on his right  
> Hand: Come, ye blessed of my father, possess you the kingdom  
> Prepared for you from the foundation of the world.  
> For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat: I was thirsty, and  
> You gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in:  
> Naked, and you covered me; sick and you visited me: ----  
> As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you  
> Did it to me.

The selection of this specific text from the Bible makes it clear that Bonney intended a moral charge from the very start. Christ is the shepherd, and the sheep are his apostles and followers. In the Bible, goats are damned because they represent those who show no charity. Bonney wanted to urge viewers to stay on the “right hand” of Christ, and provide assistance to the young children of Europe who needed food, water, shelter, clothes and medicine, just like Christ and his brethren. Furthermore, the biblical reference to “nations” attests to Bonney’s emotional participation in discussions on national divisions that constituted the wartime era.

The next page with text is the title page (on the right, again facing a white page on the left), which states the title, Bonney’s name, and the names of the publisher and distributor. The next spread has copyright information in small text at the bottom of the left page, and the page on the right has the short prologue where Bonney introduces the project. This reads:

> This is the tale, not of one, but of too many European  
> countries, the story of an eye witness...visual testimo-

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128 The version Bonney selected is, fittingly, from the Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible.
It is curious that Bonney selected the word “tale” to describe her project. A tale is defined as “a fictitious or true narrative or story, especially one that is imaginatively recounted.” The word “tale” is somewhat contradictory with other words used by Bonney in the prologue, like “reality” and “truth.” The text creates a narrative that connects photographs from many countries, and it quickly becomes apparent that Bonney valued universal connections over factual representations of varying situations that many of her subjects were in. This artistic decision gave Bonney control over the narrative. Though she claimed that there were no staged pictures, Bonney’s “staging” of caption and photograph certainly manipulated the reader’s interpretations of the photographs, constructing a deliberately humanitarian narrative. Though she did not make a clear plea for aid in the prologue, the “caption” text that is placed beside the photographs throughout the book does.

1.7 – The “Caption” Text and the Photographs

The text in Bonney’s book does not look like a traditional newspaper or magazine caption, which usually falls directly below a photograph and contains factual information to help a viewer understand the context in which it was made. However, this thesis refers to Bonney’s book text as “caption” text because of her strong ties to the press, and because of the text’s simi-

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129 In Bonney’s self-published edition she left out two sentences that were added in the second edition. The second paragraph of the prologue read like this in the self-published edition: “With my camera I have made this record in France, Spain, England, Sweden and Finland. This is the truth for which I vouch.”
larities to Bonney’s exhibition installation text, which was laid out directly below her photographs. Her captions may not inform readers of many specific details behind each photograph, but they tell a longer narrative as the reader progresses through the book.

One decade later, in 1952, Nancy Newhall, wife of Beaumont Newhall, curator and editor of photo books in her own right, wrote an important essay titled, “The Caption: The Mutual Relation of Words/Photographs,” in which she explained four main forms of the caption and the relationship of words and photographs. She defined the 1.) Enigmatic caption as “A catchphrase torn from the text and placed under a single photograph;”130 2.) Caption as miniature essay, which “Usually accompanies a single photograph and comprises with it a complete and independent unit;”131 3.) Narrative caption that “Directs attention into the photograph, usually beginning with a colorful phrase in boldface type, then narrating what goes on in the photograph, and ending with the commentary;”132 4.) Lastly, the Additive caption, which “Does not state or narrate some aspect of the photograph; it leaps over facts and adds a new dimension. It combines its own connotations with those in the photograph to produce a new image in the mind of the spectator – sometimes an image totally unexpected and unforeseen, which exists in neither words nor photographs but only in their juxtaposition...The words do not parrot what the photographs say, the photographs are not illustrations.”133 In this chapter and the following, the in-depth analysis of Bonney’s and Chim’s caption text and photographs shows that both photographers utilized what Newhall later coined “the Additive caption.”

131 Ibid., 68.
132 Ibid.
133 Ibid.
The caption text in Bonney’s book is written in an emboldened serif font, mostly lower case. Additionally, most photographs have a location caption written right beside the main caption, which defines the geographical location of the photograph. Fifty-one out of sixty-two in the first edition have these captions, and so do fifty-five out of the sixty-eight photos in the second edition. These location captions are in a smaller font and not emboldened, but are in all caps (figure 1.8). For example, “ENGLAND,” “FRANCE,” “SPAIN,” “CONCENTRATION CAMP” or “EVERYWHERE.” Though the “EVERYWHERE” captions are certainly meant to show how widespread the struggles for Europe’s children were, the captions for specific countries do point to nationalism and how it defined the wartime period. Bonney had used similar country designations via wall text in her exhibition, and she used the word “everywhere” twice in the exhibition.

The line breaks in her captions are also notable, as they play a large part in why her captions are so poetic and dramatic. The breaks are used so often that her captions look more like haikus than a traditional sentence.\textsuperscript{134} For example, if you were to read the following caption in her book as a traditional sentence, with normal punctuation, it would read something like this: “Suddenly, their little voices were silenced. Communications were severed, and then we knew no more.” Instead, with Bonney’s frequent line breaks, it reads this way:

\begin{verbatim}
  suddenly - - -
  their little voices were silenced - -
  communications
  were severed
  and then - -
  we knew no more
\end{verbatim}

The frequent line breaks add drama and create tension, and this is a remarkably successful effect considering just how little is written on each page. In the back of the book (both editions), credit

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\textsuperscript{134} Fehrenbach outlines how NGOs utilized poetry to heighten emotions. See figure 0.6. Fehrenbach, “A Horrific Photo,” 1138-1139.
is given to Paul Lester Wiener for the “typographic arrangement.”\textsuperscript{135} This means that Wiener laid out the text in this way, but it is likely that Bonney worked with him to make sure that her message was clear. They both knew the essence of typography as communication. Modernist master El Lissitzky, once said, “Typographic arrangement should achieve for the reader what voice tone conveys for the listener.”\textsuperscript{136}

The book sequence begins with images of happy childhood life in the pre-war years, and the tone and images change dramatically when war is declared. Bonney simplifies and condenses the refugee experience into her evocative and shocking images and, all in very simple language, she tells of the lack of food, children missing their parents, and of concentration camps. She only asks one question of her readers, but it is one that would potentially make them feel ashamed of their complacency. Near the end, she begins making clear and direct demands of her readers.

It would not be reasonable to discuss all sixty-eight photographs in Bonney’s book. The following description presents a selection of photographs and captions, following their order of appearance. The book does not list page numbers, but for the sake of the clarity of my analyses I have numbered these.

Bonney starts off her narrative by referring to how things used to be for children in Europe. As she describes, they went to school, they had homes and played, they led “happy, normal lives.” In the photographs on pages 4 and 6, a boy smiles at the camera while holding a pen to paper (figure 1.9), and a group of three children smile while looking down at a book (figure

\textsuperscript{135} Wiener was an American architect and urban planner, and he seems to have only been credited for typography in one other book, which was about the Brazilian pavilion at the New York World Fair in 1939. This book mentions that Wiener designed a font he hoped would be the exclusive font of the Brazilian government, which he had patented.

Then, on page 7, Bonney states, “War was declared.” By describing their happy lives before the war, and then introducing the drastic change of war, she sets up the narrative drama. This is a strategy that she also used in her exhibition, when she moves from the episode titled, “There was peace in a land,” to the following episode dramatically titled, “Suddenly,” when war was declared. Subsequently the mood of the exhibition’s text and imagery was shifted to be more solemn.

Bonney did not define chapters in her book, but the next section of text is about refugees fleeing their war-torn homes. She depicts a sense of urgency by writing on page 15, “When the day came, there was only an hour to leave.” This text is juxtaposed with a photo of a fireplace with its fire still burning, but no one around it except for a skinny, meek-looking dog (figure 1.11). After reading the caption, a reader might naturally worry, “Did they have to leave their family pet behind?” Bonney pulls at reader’s heartstrings with her combination of photograph and text. If this photograph did not have Bonney’s text beside it, it could be read as a family pet simply warming itself by the fire. This juxtaposition exemplifies what Newhall explained regarding “The caption [which] can call our attention to one detail and cause us to ignore others. It can be so slanted that different captions can cause us to feel rage, tenderness, amusement, or disgust towards one and the same photograph.”

Another image from this refugee section is the photograph that Bonney chose for the cover of her book. A woman carries a sleeping toddler over her shoulder, along with a pack of some sort (figure 1.12). The caption reads metaphorically: “Heavy burdens for weary mothers.” This image was also used in a 1943 Vogue feature on Bonney as “War Photographer” (figure

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137 See the introduction for a more in-depth analysis of smiling in humanitarian imagery.
1.13), and the caption in that article establishes that the photograph was taken on May 13th, 1940 in France. The *Vogue* caption states, “Refugee peasants on the roads of Northern France, during the retreat of the shattered Ninth Army. It is three days after the German invasion, and Panzer divisions are only a half an hour behind.”\(^\text{139}\) Bonney made a conscious decision to leave such details out of her book, and instead she told a more emotional story.

In the book, this image is followed by a series of images of children sleeping, with the caption on page 29 reading, “anywhere, everywhere.” Children are pictured sleeping on stone steps, in the dirt, and on bales of hay in a barn. These images reflect the rhetoric examined by Fehrenbach, who explains that humanitarian photography visualizes the human body as “vulnerable, under threat, in pain, or in recovery.”\(^\text{140}\)

The next photograph, on page 34, is of a young child with a large white bandage wrapped around their head, who makes direct eye contact with Bonney’s camera (figure 1.14). The caption reads, “Like grownups, they too were wounded.” With this caption, Bonney approaches the topic of war being started by adults and fought by adults, but affecting innocent children. This image recalls Fehrenbach’s comment on the notion of “the civilian” as imagined through the figure of the innocent endangered child. She says that this “doubly depoliticized category” of civilian and child is a moral construct.

The next two spreads (pages 37-38 and 39-40) are of a woman holding a child, alluding in their composition to biblical scenes of Madonna and Child.\(^\text{141}\) The same woman and child, but in different moments, are marked by temporal captions. The first caption reads, “Planes overhead, they understood so little.” “They” clearly refers to the children of Europe, protected by the

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\(^{139}\) Blanch, “History in the Taking,” *Vogue*.


\(^{141}\) See the introduction for background on Bonney’s relationship with religious imagery.
mother from a menacing plane (figure 1.15). The caption for the next image reads, “Between air raids, a moment’s respite.” The mother cradles her child a little less tightly now, though her face looks anxious (figure 1.16). In the MoMA exhibition three years earlier, Bonney used the same two images beside one another with the captions, “Planes overhead” and “the bomb fell.” In the installation, the captions enhanced the narrative in ways that seemed cinematic. In the book, they become more lyrical and suggestive.

The next two images present children in moments of physical exhaustion. The caption simply states, “So exhausted.” One is a young, light-haired boy, asleep with his head tilted back, in what could be a wagon (figure 1.17). The other image, used in the United War Fund advertisement, shows a young boy sitting with his head at his knees atop sacks of what could be his or his family’s belongings (figure 1.18). He could be sleeping, he could be crying, but the caption imbues a noticeable amount of hopelessness into the image: “At times it seemed almost impossible to trudge on.” This image was also included in the 1940 exhibition, with an image beside it that hinted to a dialogue between two generations. Beside the young boy was a photograph of a seated elderly woman, which had the caption “And the old gave the example...” Accordingly, the caption for the image of the boy was, “…To the young to trudge on.”

The next photographs feature images from “concentration camps” (pages 45 - 54). It is unclear exactly which camps Bonney was photographing in, but archival documents do leave some clues. It would have been nearly impossible to get access to photograph in a Nazi-run concentration camp, so it is more likely that these images were taken at Rivesaltes, an internment camp run by the Vichy government. To support this, Bonney would have likely been in France at this time, during her return trip (1941-1942) made possible by the Carnegie grant. Additionally,
the Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine (BDIC) in Nanterre, France, has identified some of Bonney’s images in their collection as having been taken at Rivesaltes.

Rivesaltes was used for “undesirables” such as Jewish people, foreigners, communists, freemasons, and Roma. In 1942 one of the darkest events occurred there: 2,251 Jewish people, including 110 children, were transferred from the camp to Auschwitz. The majority of the children staying at Rivesaltes escaped deportation, primarily thanks to a Quaker aid organization called the American Friends Service Committee. This organization had been providing much-needed aid to Rivesaltes and, on page 49, Bonney even mentions, “There, the Quakers gave them paper and pencil, and they tried to learn.” The most shocking image from the concentration camp section is on page 46. It is a photograph of two girls standing on the opposite side of a barbed wire fence, with their hands at their sides (figure 1.19). One girl seems to be looking at Bonney, though the sunlight casts dark shadows on her face, obscuring half of it. The other girl has a furrowed brow and casts her eyes down. Another version of this photograph exists in the collection of the BDIC. In this version, the girls hold onto the barbed wire and smile at Bonney (figure 1.20). It is clear from this comparison that Bonney made a conscious decision to select the photograph that appears less happy, presumably to reflect strife and conjure aid. It is conceivable that Bonney knew that smiling children could reflect that aid had already been received, and she knew that more aid was still desperately needed.

Pages 74 through 86 either mention food in the caption or depict food in the photographs. Bonney shows that bakeries were out of bread by photographing a bakery door that had been inscribed with chalk: “No bread, useless to insist” (figure 1.21) (Translated from French). She

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143 “There” in this case refers to concentration camps generally. Bonney did not specifically mention Rivesaltes.
shows a long line of children who are mostly looking directly at the camera with the caption, “No food at home, long lines in school, one meal a day.” (figure 1.22) She depicts a young child with hands clasped in front of an empty bowl and captions it, “They fold their hands in prayer and thank God for that little.” (figure 1.23) The photograph on page 82 shows a French nun leaning over a table helping to spoon a bite of food into a child’s mouth (figure 1.24). The caption reads, “So few have understood...the Quakers, Red Crosses, Nuns,” and the following spread finishes the statement with, “that bread becomes not only the staff of life – but the staff of resistance and opposition.” The accompanying photo is of another bakery, this one with a large bag of flour in the window that reads, “From the people of the United States of America to the people of France” (figure 1.25) (translated from French). There is a cross on the bag, so it is presumably aid from the American Red Cross. Chim’s book makes more references to aid that had already been delivered, surely because his project was commissioned by UNICEF, but Bonney’s subtle references to the Red Cross (visually and verbally), are a nod to her own humanitarian involvement and perhaps a discreet suggestion as to where her readers could donate.

The next photograph, on page 86, shows three adult women standing behind a table with a large pot and many bowls. A little girl stands on the other side of the table and sips from one of the bowls (figure 1.26). The location caption tells viewers that the image was taken in France, and the text reads, “They – not the Germans, get the little sent – and they try so hard to say thank you ‘merci.’” The typography further emphasizes her explication by emboldening “Not the Germans” and increasing the font size of those three words. It can be implied that this photo was taken while France was under occupation. Bonney reassures readers who may have been considering the following question: If they were to send supplies or monetary donations to the occupied territories, would Germans get their hands on the aid instead of the victims of their regime? A
**New York Times** article from 1944 called Bonney, “but another reputable voice insisting that the International Red Cross be permitted to feed the children of the Nazi-occupied territories.”

Bonney herself confirmed this in her statement at the U.S. Senate, to the Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations (described in section 1.2): “I can assure you that not one drop of milk got to the Germans. I saw mayors and bank presidents guarding flour in safety vaults, to be sure that not a pound of it reached any destination but the one intended.” At the end of her statement the senators were able to ask questions of Bonney, and the line of questioning mostly pertained to Germans taking supplies meant for the Allies. The skepticism of the senators relayed a common anxiety of the time in regards to sending aid to occupied territories. This hesitation about giving aid that might fall into German hands was not a moral judgement concerning the Germans’ actions, but rather it was a strategic judgement concerning how to prosecute the war militarily and administratively, and how to avoid strengthening Hitler’s army.

It is important to note that this caption from page 85 (“They – not the Germans, get the little sent…”) is the only occurrence for Bonney to hint to political causation. Of course almost any American would know that Germans were the enemy in World War II, but what is the effect of not clearly naming the perpetrators? Here, same as throughout the book, Bonney uses a simple, uncomplicated language to support her images and get her humanitarian message across.

The following photo, on page 88, depicts a French schoolgirl practicing her spelling (figure 1.27). On a board she significantly spells out, “Vive l’Amerique.” This sentence translates to “Long live America,” which Bonney was likely very excited to stumble upon. She knew this pat-

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145 Winston Churchill had been concerned that any aid delivered to occupied territories might be “appropriated by the German War Machine.” Churchill initially did not let the Red Cross send even small amounts of milk to the children of occupied France, despite Franklin D. Roosevelt’s requests to do so. Churchill thought it was Germany’s responsibility to feed their occupied territories, though he did begin sending some aid to occupied territories in 1941. Alexander Gillespie, *A History of the Laws of War: Volume 3*, (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2011), 77.
riotic statement would help ensure Americans that most French people were supportive of the United States and dependent on them for their survival. This statement harkens back to World War I, when many French were relieved and grateful that the United States had entered the war (the U.S. entered the war in 1917, but France had been at war since the beginning in 1914).

The next three spreads (pages 89 - 94), relate to children longing for their parents. The first caption text reads, “Motherless – they run farms for fathers, prisoners.” The image facing this caption is of a girl carrying two metal pails (figure 1.28), and the next is of a young boy writing a letter to his father, with the caption, “Write to him...cher papa je suis bien sage” (figure 1.29). This translates to, “Dear Dad, I’m being well-behaved.” He writes to his dad who may have been at war, or in a prisoner of war camp. Alternatively, the child could have been writing from a safer location that he was sent away to. The third photo in this thematic grouping is of three children holding flowers before a memorial. The caption reads, “Lay wreaths on the tombs of those who have fought and fallen as the enemy advanced.” The children stand before the memorial respectfully, and it seems like something they have become accustomed to doing (figure 1.30). Death was all too frequent in the lives of the children of Europe.

The following three spreads (pages 95 - 100) were all taken in England (the location captions relay this information), likely in early 1941. The first image in this grouping of photos (page 95) depicts children at their school desks reading books while wearing gas masks (figure 1.31). The corresponding caption reads, “All this goes on while – in the country of one of our allies children live a Wellsian existence...have gas mask drills after morning prayer.” Bonney refers to H. G. Wells here, the prominent science fiction writer. Many Americans would have heard his infamous “War of the Worlds” broadcast in 1938, which distilled nationwide panic over a fictional alien invasion. Bonney’s image would have likely seemed especially dystopian to
an American audience. Since the war was mainly being fought far from home, it was not as common for American schoolchildren to have gas mask drills. The photograph on page 98 is of a child sleeping in a cot (figure 1.32), with the caption, “Blitzed out – they sleep in the subways,” and on page 100 is a photograph of a young boy working in a factory with metal scrap and large machinery (likely used for war productions) all around him (figure 1.33).

I will categorize the remaining spreads (pages 101 to 136) as Bonney’s final plea. Bonney makes some of the clearest requests of her American audience in this section, and she includes some of her most tragic photographs. For the sake of brevity and clarity, the remaining image captions have been compiled here as one block text, and the key photographs will be analyzed below it:

It is quite evident the coming generation is in peril, in dire distress. Taken away from their own countries where war rages. Saved from starvation and then sent back to starve again. Lone mothers, hearts aching, feel they have to have them home. And then too, room must be made for others, so tagged about Europe they travel. Torn from country or parents, then torn again from kind foster parents. Their little hearts break and so they cry on their way back home. A handful of the millions despaired of have been saved. It is so tragic. They are so helpless. Nothing left, the men gone. Even in countries where wood abounds, there are only cardboard cradles. Nothing left, even the curtains used. New born babies, mostly premature, because mothers starving, are wrapped in paper. Not just in one country, one child. Whole families, millions, like these. The danger so near, how can we ignore it? The mothers of Europe (this woman only forty), like pelicans, have given all to feed their little one. Her outstretched hand is the message. Save them, in their own countries, at home, in camps, feed them before it is too late. Or else the children will roam the streets in gangs, the foundations of the postwar world.

The first part of this text (pages 105-112) refers to Finnish children in Sweden, which is determined by the location captions Bonney included. Altogether around 70,000-80,000 Finnish children were sent away (by the Finnish government and/or their parents) from the conflict to Swe-
den during World War II, and many were placed in temporary foster care. This transport was traumatic for many children, and Bonney captured the scared and/or tired faces of the children being transported on trains. They are shown wearing prominent identification tags around their necks (figure 1.34), which were used to keep track of who was who and where they were being sent.

The next spreads (pages 120-124) contain the images that are likely the reason American publishers initially declined to publish Bonney’s book. However, Jacques Maritain, the French philosopher who was influential in the development and drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, saw the book and observed that, “The 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th pictures before the end I consider necessary. Perhaps their restrained objectiveness may help awaken some people to the realities we are living through.”\(^{146}\) The photographs he referred to are the images of starving babies, children, and a thin breastfeeding mother with two emaciated babies on her lap. This quote certainly illustrates the divide between a European’s experience looking at these images and the initial American reaction.

There are no location captions that identify the country in the remainder of the photographs in the book, beginning on page 119. Instead, on page 123 and 129, the word “EVERYWHERE” replaces any specific topography, invoking a sense of universal struggle.

On page 120, a naked, emaciated boy is shown standing on a chair, with his collarbone and ribs protruding, and swollen stomach distended (figure 1.35). He looks in the direction of a light source to the right of where Bonney’s camera was placed. Though Bonney’s prologue states that all of the photos were unstaged, this is one of the photos that seems to contradict that statement. Why else would this malnourished boy be standing still on a chair? Did he climb up to

\(^{146}\) Miscellaneous paper, undated, Thérèse Bonney Collection, George C. Marshall Foundation Library and Archives, Lexington, Virginia, U.S.A.
look out a window? There is no way to prove this, but it seems more likely that Bonney directed him to stand in this exceptionally well-lit place to document his deteriorated state. Perhaps she knew that this straightforward, almost ethnographic representation would be the clearest way to portray the realities of starving children in Europe to an American audience.

The next spread (pages 121 - 122) clarifies that it was not just one child starving, but “whole families.” The image facing this caption is of a bare breasted woman with two malnourished babies on her lap (figure 1.36). The woman stares down towards the ground. It is likely she had been breastfeeding both of the babies before the photo was taken. The mother wears a prominent cross necklace over her bare chest. The pose mimics Pieta imagery, but with two starving babies instead of one Christ.

Bonney adds one more image that looks like it may have been posed. On page 124 she depicts three malnourished children standing on a bed (figure 1.37). They are lined up from shortest to tallest as if on display, and Bonney’s full-body framing captures the contrast between their round, distended bellies and their thin legs and bony knees. The caption reads, “Millions --- like these.” Fehrenbach states, “Bonney disavowed the distancing lens of ethnic or national distinctiveness. Her photos favored intimate, individual portraits of suffering that encouraged white American viewers to respond to these children in need viscerally and on the basis of shared humanity, even kinship.”

The next image is an outlier in Bonney’s book. It is one of the few images that does not include a child (another example is the dog in front of the fireplace, discussed earlier in this section). The photograph on page 126 is of a spotted cow in a field (figure 1.38). The cow has its head down, grazing in the grass, and five large tanks are surreally recorded behind it. The cap-

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tion reads, “The danger so near – how can we ignore it?” This is the most prominent use of the word “we” in Bonney’s book, and I argue that Bonney’s use of this word serves to group together a distinctively American (and adult) audience. Since it is considered to be an American “we” that Bonney is questioning, the cow (oblivious/uncaring about the tanks directly beside it) in this image could refer symbolically to all those Americans who had their heads in the sand while danger was “so near.” Bonney refers to this American complacency again in a 1943 article from the *Los Angeles Times*: “...I came home. And I found people saying, ‘Oh well, the war is as good as over.’ Slacking up after each victory. Taking a day off. Cancelling an appointment with the blood bank. Taking the car out of the garage for a ‘pleasant little spin.’ Oh, no, my fellow countrymen, the war is not over. Ask those children.”

Earlier in the article Bonney described her encounters with European children in need, and she even added a text overlay to the photograph selected for the article (one of Bonney’s photos of a scared-looking young girl sitting by herself on a train), with a text that read, “SHE’S LOOKING AT YOU!” (figure 1.39). In the article, this clear plea for American aid encouraged readers to take action, shaming them for complacency. In the book, Bonney is more subtle with her language.

On page 128 is a photograph of a woman with her hand outstretched (figure 1.40). The woman could have simply been making a gesture while talking, but Bonney’s caption on page 127 frames it as a symbolic message for aid. She likens the woman to a pelican, since it was Bonney’s impression that those birds give their young all the food they have. That applied simile would presumably leave this mother with nothing, so “her outstretched hand is the message.”

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149 This text, “SHE’S LOOKING AT YOU!” seems to harken back to the traditional “I WANT YOU!” Uncle Sam draft posters made famous by James Montgomery Flagg during World War I.
Bonney’s plea becomes even more direct in the captions for the final spreads in the book (pages 129 - 136). She instructs her to readers, “Save them,” and “Feed them before it is too late.” She increases the level of urgency by making it clear that there would come a point in time in which it would be too late to deliver aid. She concludes with the following consequence, “Or else the children will roam the streets in gangs, the foundations of the postwar world.” This dark consequence is the last text in her book. The image represents the “foundations of the postwar world” is a shadowy photograph of three malnourished babies, all lying very close to one another (figure 1.41). One has an expression that could be read as shock, one looks to be mid-wail (with mouth wide open and fists clenched), and the other is turned inwards so that its face is obscured by darkness. This is an extremely bleak photo and message for the conclusion of her book, and Bonney seems to have taken her last opportunity to instruct her readers about the grave consequences of not helping Europe’s children. Bonney used more positive words earlier in the book, like “gallant” and “courageous,” but in the end she turns to words like “helpless,” “peril,” and “distress” to emphasize the gravity of the situation.

The endings of each edition of Bonney’s book are where the most noticeable changes in image and text sequencing occur. Interestingly, the first self-published edition of her book did not include this “or else” consequence at the end. The self-published edition ended after: “To Save them – in their own countries, at home, in camps” and “To feed them before it is too late.” The final photo in the self-published edition was decidedly more optimistic: a photograph of a tow-headed young child being spooned a mouthful of food by an off-camera adult (figure 1.42). It is unknown if it was Bonney’s or the publisher’s decision to tack on the final consequence in the second edition but, when combined with the final photograph of the three starving babies, the ending of the second edition is decidedly more dramatic.
Though Bonney’s book makes no clear distinction of which organizations her audience should give aid to, Sally Harrison, Bonney’s agent and editor for the book, stated in a letter, “Because this book is the universal and long-time truth...I believe it is capable of several results, according to what publisher and/or reader think they ought to do about it.”

It is impossible to know just how much aid (and in what forms) was delivered to Europe because of Bonney’s photographs, but she certainly reached a large audience between her press coverage, travelling exhibition, slide presentations, and the book. Many reviews reflect the readers’ emotional reactions, and Bonney’s powerful text would have driven home to viewers that she wanted them to take action.

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CHAPTER TWO

David Seymour, “Chim,” Children of Europe (1949)

In this chapter, Chim’s Children of Europe will be analyzed in-depth. The chapter begins with biographical background on Chim, and then introduces his book. The UNESCO commission, the layout, and fundraising aspects are all discussed. The introductory text and captions are analyzed, along with the photographs themselves. This postwar publication addresses education and independence, it asks direct, and at times accusatory, questions of its readers, and it outlines specific needs. The narrative starts off bleak, but turns hopeful towards the end. Both Chim and UNESCO could only hope that the publication would urge readers to take action, as the children of Europe were in dire need of help.

2.1 – Chim’s Biography

Dawid Szymin was born in 1911 in Warsaw, Poland. He went by his pseudonym “Chim” because many people had difficulty pronouncing his last name, and he later changed his name to David Seymour when he became a naturalized American citizen in 1943. Chim was born into the family of a prominent publisher of Hebrew and Yiddish books. His family fled Poland for Odessa (in modern-day Ukraine) at the outbreak of World War I, and returned in 1919 after the war. At the age of 18, Chim started to study printing at the Academy of Graphic and Book Arts in Leipzig, Germany, as his father wanted him to work in the family business. Chim was introduced to photography at the Academy in Leipzig, where Laszlo Moholy-Nagy frequently taught. His classes included typography, etching and photo-reproduction, as well as color re-

151 Any unattributed biographical details in this essay were drawn from Carole Naggar, Chim: Children of War, (New York: Umbrage Editions, 2013).
production.\textsuperscript{152} He completed his studies in Leipzig in 1931 and in 1932, he briefly attended the Sorbonne (over ten years after Bonney). Unfortunately, the political and economic upheavals in Europe prevented him from completing his science degree there (he was majoring in advanced chemistry and physics).

Fortuitously, a family friend lent Chim his first camera at the age of 21. His earliest work was inspired by Brassai, and he quickly became in demand as a freelance photographer. Chim’s coverage as a photojournalist included the French Popular Front, the Spanish Civil War, and the birth of Israel. His images were disseminated around the world in publications such as \textit{Life}, \textit{Look}, \textit{Regards}, \textit{Picture Post} and \textit{Paris-Match}. In 1947, he famously co-founded the Magnum Photos cooperative with Robert Capa, Henri Cartier-Bresson, George Rodger and William Vandivert.

Chim was influenced by his fellow Magnum members, especially Robert Capa. The two met in Paris sometime between 1933 and 1935, and they covered much of the Spanish Civil War together. Capa was drawn to the action on the front lines, and Chim tended to focus on civilians. Considering the proximity of these two photographers, it is almost certain that Chim would have been familiar with Capa’s 1938 publication \textit{Death in the Making}.\textsuperscript{153} This book was notably partisan in its support of the Spanish Loyalist cause. Over ten years later, Chim produced his postwar book \textit{Children of Europe}, which featured similarities to Capa’s in its layouts and persuasive texts.

\textsuperscript{152} Carole Naggar, “Chim’s Children,” Brandeis University, Working Papers Series.
https://www.brandeis.edu/hbi/childrenholocaust/workingpapers/naggar.pdf

\textsuperscript{153} Today it is thought that some of the photos included in Capa’s book were actually taken by Chim, though Capa didn’t credit him. He did credit the photojournalist Gerda Taro, who was also his girlfriend. Capa didn’t distinguish which specific photographs she took, but he also dedicated the book to her because she died while photographing the conflict.
At the outbreak of World War II, likely fearing persecution, Chim emigrated to New York. From 1942-1945 he interpreted reconnaissance pictures for the United States Army. After the war, he went back to Europe to search for family and friends. In 1948 he visited his hometown of Warsaw and confirmed that his parents were tragically killed at the hands of the Nazis. His family’s summer home in Otwock, Poland, had been turned into an orphanage for Jewish children.\textsuperscript{154} He took some of his most famous photographs during this return trip, many of which were published in \textit{Children of Europe}. The horrible ways in which the Holocaust affected Chim’s life undoubtedly influenced his postwar photography of child refugees throughout Europe, connecting him on a deeper and personal level with the children he photographed, most of whom also suffered from any number of losses during the war. Henri Cartier-Bresson, Chim’s colleague and close friend, said that Chim was, “A man who, though not religious at all, carried the burden of being Jewish within him as a kind of sadness.”\textsuperscript{155}

Chim spoke six languages fluently, and reportedly could have been a concert pianist, a chemist, or a physicist. Tragically, he was killed at the age of 44 by Egyptian machine gun fire while documenting the Suez crisis in 1956. He never married or had children. On the tenth anniversary of Chim’s death, Henri Cartier-Bresson said,

CHIM...had the intelligence of a chess player; with the air of a math teacher. He applied his vast curiosity and culture to a great number of subjects...The precision of his critical spirit had rapidly become indispensable to those around him. Photography to him was a pawn that he moved all over the chessboard of his intelligence....His perspicacity, his very delicacy, often gave him a sad, even disabused smile, which brightened if one humored him. He gave and demanded much human warmth. He had so many friends everywhere; he was a born godfather...CHIM picked up his camera the way a doctor takes his stethoscope out of his bag, applying his diagnosis to the condition of the heart. His own was vulnerable.


\textsuperscript{155} Ibid.
Chim is perhaps best known for his photographs of non-combatants, specifically children. Reviewing hundreds of contact sheets from his *Children of Europe* project,156 I noticed just how often he bent down to the same level of a child, either crouching or kneeling so that his camera lens would be at their eye level. He made connections with children in every country he visited, which other fast-moving war photographers did not leave time for (Chim’s knowledge of six languages undoubtedly helped him make these connections). Even before Chim took on his first major book project, it is obvious that he respected children, empathized with them, and wanted to help draw attention to their plight so that more people would see, and hopefully take action.

2.2 – Chim’s Book, *Children of Europe*

In March of 1948, Chim received a photographic assignment from the United Nations Children’s International Emergency Fund (UNICEF). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was also involved, as they published his photo book. The two United Nations agencies, both still active today, work together towards some of their shared goals. UNESCO promotes peace and education for all, and UNICEF’s role after World War II was to provide milk, food, shoes and vaccinations specifically to children. UNESCO was founded in 1945, and UNICEF followed shortly after, in 1946.157 Perhaps foreshadowing Chim’s commission, Article I of the UNESCO constitution stated that UNESCO would “collaborate in the work of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples, through all means of mass communication and to that end recommend such international agreements as may be neces-

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156 I am indebted to Matthew Murphy at the Magnum offices in New York for making these binders of contact sheets and negative descriptions available to me.

157 Though it is difficult to prove the level of truth behind this belief, multiple sources have said the creation of UNICEF was due in part to Thérèse Bonney’s photographs of children.
sary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image." In their first decade, UNESCO endorsed and utilized photography (via photo books, exhibitions, and magazines) as a universal language to help meet their goals.

On March 10th, 1948, John Grierson, then Deputy Director of UNICEF, sent Chim a telegram that read: “When are you returning Paris? Most anxious discuss immediate photographic journey to Eastern European countries.” This “photographic journey” was to take Chim through five European countries to capture the condition of European children who had survived World War II. A 1949 edition of The UNESCO Courier stated that Chim “undertook for UNESCO an extensive photographic documentation of the needs and problem of Europe’s children, with special reference to the activities of the various UN agencies engaged in helping to solve these problems.”

Chim accepted the assignment and, as a special consultant to UNICEF, immediately started to photograph. Instead of his usual $100 a day, he accepted $2,600 for the job, which ended up taking him over six months. It was his desire to paint a fuller picture of the condition of Europe’s children, and he shot a staggering 257 rolls of film to help tell their stories.

Chim brought along a TLR by the same maker as Bonney’s (a Rollei), and he also shot with a 35mm Leica. The Leica revolutionized photojournalism due to its small size, silence and lightness. When combined with high-speed films, the Leica truly changed the way photographers worked. Chim’s contact sheets show how he harnessed the flexibility of having two cameras.

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161 Naggar, Chim: Children of War, 8.
The Rollei shot square film and the Leica shot rectangular (either vertical or horizontal), allowing him to choose which was best depending on the composition he envisioned.

In the sixty-two-page book published by UNESCO in 1949, a selection of fifty-one of Chim’s photographs tell the visual stories of Europe’s children. They are full of destruction and hope. Many of the images show UNICEF’s efforts to help children in need (he records milk and food distributions, and the administration of tuberculosis vaccines), and though it would have been part of his job to showcase UNICEF’s efforts, he also showed and explained in his text that UNICEF’s work alone was nowhere near enough to meet the needs of Europe’s children.

Though Chim’s book has about the same number of photographs as Bonney’s, *Children of Europe*’s page count is half that of *Europe’s Children*. This could have been because of a publishing budget from UNESCO, but it is also possible that Chim desired a more concise viewing/reading experience for his audience. At the same time, his introduction is far longer than Bonney’s brief prologue and epilogue. The eight-page introduction is about 2,800 words long. Not including the introduction, Chim’s book has 419 words, which averages to about eight words per photo (Bonney’s averaged to ten). Each caption was written in three languages, adding textual and visual substance.

Additionally, most spreads in Chim’s book have more than one photograph, and the layouts vary. Multiple photos on the page generate a visual conversation that is absent in Bonney’s book. These varying layouts are reminiscent of those used in magazines like Regards, which Chim had worked with during the interwar years. With these kinds of layouts, Chim was able to emphasize images that were aesthetically strong, and include smaller images that were functional to the overall narrative.
The book was published in English, French and Spanish, and widely distributed around the world. The cover of each edition was the same, other than the language of the title (Children of Europe, Enfants d’Europe, and Ninos de Europa) (figures 0.2, 2.1, and 2.2). The cover features a full-bleed photograph of two children that Chim took in a Greek refugee camp, and the title, “CHILDREN OF EUROPE,” is printed in yellow at the bottom of the photograph in a bold, sans-serif font. A translucent yellow band of color is behind this text. The spine is spiral-bound, and the book measures 8 ¾” x 7”.

A 1950 edition of Impetus, a monthly UNESCO newsletter on reconstruction, sheds more light on the distribution and fundraising purposes of this book. The cover and introduction to Chim’s book, entitled “Letter to a Grown Up,” are reproduced in the newsletter, and information is provided on how to order it at UNESCO sales agencies in 27 countries (fig 2.3). In addition to this advertisement, another ad in another edition of Impetus promoted a new “special edition” and explained how “One book raises funds twice!” (see fig 0.6) This advertisement urged organizations (presumably humanitarian organizations) to buy 25 copies or more, as that would entitle them to a special price of 80 cents per book. All of the proceeds were to go directly to UNESCO’s Educational Reconstruction Fund. The advertisement then explains that if “your organization SELLS single copies at $1 each, you realize $5 of each lot of 25 books – yours to use for child-help projects in which your group is interested.” This compelling fundraising language made it exceptionally clear that this photo book functioned as a humanitarian tool, and UNESCO knew it would be a successful one: “Organizations cooperating with UNESCO will find its sale effective in fundraising for educational assistance.”

163 Advertisement in Impetus, vol. IV. no. 11-12, November-December 1950, 22.
2.3 – Chim’s Introduction: “Letter to a Grown Up”

Chim’s eight-page introduction was written in first-person singular and plural---I, we, and us—from the point of view of a child who was seven years old when the war began. The unnamed child speaks on behalf of European children affected by World War II. The child writes to “a grown-up,” but it is clear that the letter is meant for many grown-ups. The pronouns seem intended to command “the viewers’ attention by suggesting relationships of responsibility between the children (‘we’) and the viewer (‘you’).” Tom Allbeson discusses this effect as a “one-to-one” encounter with the needy children, which, due to the nature of the images and the pleas in the text, would naturally create a sense of urgency in the viewer.

In the letter, the child provides a compelling combination of staggering statistics and anecdotal examples of his/her peers suffering from World War II. The letter speaks of a series of losses: of childhood, of parents, of homes and schools, and of a moral code. It chronicles inflicted injuries and disabilities and the complicity of adults. Still, the child also addresses more hopeful topics such as the rebuilding of schools, the deliveries of aid, and the independence of children. Two full pages are spent describing the children’s villages that were established and run by children, which UNESCO supported. The author emphasizes the importance of these villages and sees them as a model that should be followed and replicated, to help orphans make up for lost schooling and to teach them trades. The last sentences of the letter shares a similar foreboding tone to Bonney’s last caption text, which relayed the potential consequences of readers’ inaction.

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164 Allbeson, “Photographic Diplomacy,” 403.
165 Ibid.
The first paragraph begins on page 5, “I am not writing to you today out of resentment, although I could easily detest you – indeed I have done so more than once. There are excuses for my doing so, and I am sure you would agree with me if you knew what my life had been for ten years and the lives of millions of others who were children yesterday and who will be men and women tomorrow without ever having been ‘young.’” These statements make for an emotionally charged beginning.

The theme of lost childhood is quickly addressed; the letter writer imagines the happy memories the adult reader must have from their own childhood, and contrasts them with the experience of children who were born into war. Homes, schools, gardens, playgrounds, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, teachers, dolls, dogs and cats are juxtaposed with death, destruction, underground shelters, bombed streets, ghettos on fire, refugee trains and concentration camps.

These powerful and stark comparisons lead to a statement about children’s fear of “men who kill.” The child states, “We know that those who forced us to flee were soldiers; those who bombed our houses were airmen; those who killed our parents, our brothers and sisters were called an ‘elite’ corps, meaning that they were the best; and those who fought and massacred on the battle-fields were human beings.” The child is undoubtedly blaming adults for the war, and this makes the adult reader complicit by proxy.

In the next few paragraphs on page 6, the child discusses the loss of morals: “The day-to-day struggle for individual survival was our book of morals. Do not be surprised, then, by what we are today...Thus, in our idea of the world, it was necessary to lie, to cheat, to steal and to be cruel, just to live!” War taught these children to fight for survival, which often necessitated a disregard of morals. The child explains, “Because of this harsh schooling, some of us older ones acquired the habit of protecting our comrades; but most had no thought other than self-
preservation.” Later on page 8, the child brings up morals yet again: “The girls frequently had no other choice then to sell cigarettes or turn to prostitution. They naturally preferred that for which you, the ‘grown-up,’ paid them most.” This again brings in the issue of complicity; the child blames the adults for young girls having to turn to prostitution to survive.

The author of the letter only refers to specific names of children three times throughout the letter (Jacob, Martha and Joseph). It is impossible to know if these are real children Chim met during his travels, but the short anecdotes about each child’s experience during the war encourage the reader picture the situations of these specific children instead of the more general “us” and “we” the author otherwise references throughout the letter. Depending on the reader, these anecdotes about individuals may have hit home more than the staggering statistics that follow.

Before jumping into statistics, the child asks two pointed questions of the reader on page 7: “Do you know what this means? Have you ever thought of the extent of the disaster?” The child then encourages the readers (now plural) to, “Open your eyes and your hearts; learn to see and understand.” Here the child implies that many adults are complacent. Additionally, when the child writes, “open your eyes and your hearts,” it is easy to imagine adults opening their wallets, too.

The following sentence reads, “Come to Greece, Poland, France, Italy, Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia or Germany – everywhere you will see the same poverty and the same needs; – roofs for houses, milk for feeding-bottles, meat for plates and teachers for schools.” All of these needs were things that UNESCO and UNICEF aimed to provide, and since UNESCO was prominently listed as publisher of Chim’s book, and UNRRA (the United Nation Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) and UNICEF were mentioned by name in the “Letter to a Grown Up,” it
would have made sense for an adult reader to seek out those organizations to make a donation. Also, by providing a long list of countries and then summarizing with “everywhere,” the letter draws on the exact same wording Bonney used in her book, to demonstrate how widespread the struggle for children was. On page 7, after the list of countries and needs, the letter provides a considerable amount of statistics on how many orphans were in different countries and cities. Statistics are also provided for the amount of injured and crippled children in specific European countries and cities. These staggering numbers help to quantify just how many children were suffering, but images of suffering children tend to bring in more sympathy and donations than statistics.\footnote{Campbell, “The Iconography of Famine,” 14.}

On page 8, the letter takes a decidedly more optimistic tone: “Certainly, things are now getting better.” The child explains that international organizations have helped, and UNRRA and UNICEF are specifically mentioned, though “their means are limited.” The child states how few calories UNICEF can provide, and to how few people.\footnote{Chim stated UNICEF could only give 200 to 300 calories per day to “less than six percent of children, expectant mothers and mothers feeding their babies in European countries.” David Seymour, \textit{Children of Europe}, (Paris: UNESCO, 1949), 8.} The child gives statistics about how many abandoned children have been placed in state institutions, private institutions, governments, municipalities, and other organizations. The child mentions the efforts, but emphasizes just how much help is still needed: “Each has done his bit and every country has made great efforts, but there is still a long way to go.” Later on page 9, the child admits that “superhuman efforts” will have to be made to save all of the remaining abandoned children.

Then the child lays out the real challenge: “Even if you succeed in saving our lives, you will not yet have achieved the main thing. You still have to make men of us, human beings capable of living in society – not the society which we have known, but another and better society, in
which children no longer will be killed by men.” This direct demand reads more like an anti-war appeal than a request for supplies. The lofty request certainly would have resonated with adults then, as it still resonates now.

The next section (pages 8-12) focuses on education. The child starts, “You must help us make up for lost time.” Since many children were not able to go to school, there were countless who could not read or write. The child blames Nazis in Poland for shutting down schools, and faults the destruction of schools in Italy and Greece for keeping students from their studies. The child states, “Five years without schooling, five dark years, will perhaps leave deeper traces upon us than even the physical privations.” The dire need for teachers is then outlined, again using statistics. The child explains just how few school supplies are available to them, and concludes, “We need a complete re-education...”

This statement segues into the discussion of children’s villages. “These villages have sprung up almost everywhere in the war-devastated countries,” observes the child. “They will remain in our minds as the finest adventure of our childhood. What children have not dreamed of such a model republic!” Back on page 6 the child had referenced dreams, and the presumed childhood dreams of the adult reader (“dreams of Christmas turkeys, fancy dresses, or dolls dressed in satin and embroidery”) are contrasted with “killed” dreams of children affected by war. With the typical childhood dreams as a comparison, the idea of “a model republic” could pull at an adult reader’s heartstrings. The child describes one such republic: the village of Civita Vecchia, which was established by Don Antonio Rivolta for the abandoned children of Rome. The child describes how self-sufficient the children of this village can be, and its utopian qualities, with no need for police, laws or rules. They vote, and they have a merit-based currency. The child gives examples of other children’s villages in other countries, and credits the villages in
preparing children for a social community, making up for lost schooling, and teaching them trades.

On the final page of the letter (page 12), the child laments how sad it is to see how few children get the opportunity to utilize the children’s villages, “…whereas so many more could be saved from misery and ignorance if we could only take them.” In the next sentence the child thanks UNESCO for starting the International Federation of Children’s Communities, which is a further encouragement for the adult reader. The child not only calls upon adults, but “all countries,” as “the task will be beyond our strength and beyond the strength and devotion of those who are working so generously for us.” Without the help of all countries, the child worries, UNESCO will not have enough power to continue helping. The child then describes how the most basic wants (text books, colored pencils, etc.) threaten to “upset our budget.” It is likely the child is referring to the budget of the children’s village, but it could also be understood as the budget of UNESCO, giving once again a direction for the donations of adult readers.

The last paragraph of the letter reads,

Believe me, all of us war handicapped children can still forget what we have witnessed, what you made us witness. You can help us a lot. We homeless children have our neighbors for a family and you “grown-ups” are our country. We ourselves shall be “grown-ups” in a few years and, if we then see that millions of us have been abandoned a second time, we certainly shall lose faith in that ideal for which you fought.

Would it really be possible for any child to forget the horrors of war? The last sentence in the letter serves a similar purpose as the last statement in Bonney’s book. It is an ominous risk, outlining the consequences if children are abandoned yet again. Here the child voices their belief that adults can help to avoid this.
2.4 – The “Caption” Text and the Photographs

This subchapter will follow the same formula as subchapter 1.7. It will explore the key photographs within Chim’s book, and the “captions” he wrote to accompany them. Chim was highly proficient in writing traditional captions for the myriad news agencies he served as a freelancer, and his detailed, type-written captions for each negative of the Children of Europe project are archived in the Magnum offices. The captions in the Magnum negative binders vary significantly from the captions he wrote for his UNESCO book. The captions he wrote for Magnum are laden with facts about each photograph, including cities where the photograph was taken, what the subjects are doing, and other detailed information about the specific situations.

Like Bonney, Chim’s use of text in the book only vaguely referred to specific photographs, and it rarely revealed the characters, places or specific situations as a traditional press caption would. Chim’s captions do not always fall below the photographs (as they would in a traditional newspaper or magazine). They intersect the visual narrative of the page, above and between photographs, at times making reference to more than one image. In a few instances a photograph stands alone, without text. Chim’s captions are surely influenced by his experience as a freelance journalist for news agencies, but this assignment led him to write captions that lean more towards UNESCO’s humanitarian aim than factual, objective reporting.

The font in the body of the book is a traditional serif, and the captions are all in italics. The captions in each edition of the book are written in all three languages so, even though the cover title language changes for each edition, the captions remain international. And in each edition, the captions appear in the same order: French first, English second, and Spanish third (figure 2.4). This was likely a way for UNESCO to save money on the publication, as they could use the same body pages for each edition and simply change the cover, colophon and the introducto-
ry text. It makes sense that French would have been the first language listed, as each edition was copyrighted by UNESCO Paris and printed in France. These trilingual captions follow UNESCO’s aim of communicating their ideals with mass audiences.

The captions continue to utilize the voice of the child that Chim invoked in his introductory “Letter to a Grown Up.” The child speaks in first person plural as “us” and “we,” representing all of the children of Europe, and still addresses the adult “you.” There is a continued emphasis on education and independence. The issue of loss of morals is raised again, and so is the dire need for more aid. The caption text ends with a dangerous consequence similar to what Bonney had posed at the end of her book.

The very first photograph in the book, on page 13, faces the last page of the introduction. It is a distant shot of three children walking down a dirt road, with destroyed buildings behind them. They casually walk along barefoot, but their small size contrasts with the looming remains of buildings (figure 2.5). The caption below the image reads, “Millions of children first knew life amid death and destruction.” Here, Chim takes a decidedly different approach from Bonney’s text in her book, which begins by talking about how normal and happy life was before the war. Chim begins with imagery and text reflecting “death and destruction,” and in the following two spreads he continues to refer to tragic words such as “orphans,” “abandoned,” “bombed out,” “struggle,” “wreckage,” “ruins,” and “shell-cases and bombs.” The photos in these spreads depict scenes of children amongst the rubble, some living in makeshift shelters in caves. This imagery is remarkably similar to what Roberto Rossellini used in his 1948 neorealist film Germany Year Zero (fig 2.6). The backdrop of the film is a destroyed Allied-occupied Berlin, and a young German boy played the lead role. He wanders through the destroyed city, vulnerable and

168 The pages with photographs are not numbered in Chim’s book, but for the sake of the clarity of this visual analysis I have numbered them.
alone, resembling many of Chim’s subjects. In the film, the child is a reflection of the horror surrounding him and he capitulates to this sense of loss, committing suicide. Chim’s book flips this message around, searching for hope amidst the ruins.

The child’s recurring reproach of the adult reader is meant to incriminate and awaken. “We struggle to live in the wreckage you have left us,” writes the child in the second caption. Accompanying three chilling photographs of young, barefoot boys standing around piles of bombs, the children’s voices remark, “Our playground: ruins. Our toys: shell-cases and bombs.” (figure 2.7).

The next six spreads (pages 18-29) deal with discipline and the loss of morals in a time of dire poverty. The images depict kids grabbing onto the outside of a trolley (presumably without paying their fare), adolescent boys smoking cigarettes, and a young girl selling a product to a well-dressed man at a cafe (figure 2.8). The caption reads, “We sneak free rides, we smoke stolen cigarettes, we buy and sell on the black-market. Who has taught us any better?” Two additional photos accompany this text and depict what are presumably female police officers scolding young children for trying to sell goods on the street, and for hopping on the back of the trolley (figure 2.9). The caption reads, “The police do their job – but who will give us a home and a school?” Here the child gives credit to the police for trying to enforce order, but seems to critique them for not doing more.

The next spread (pages 22 and 23) refers to “the Police Court” and to “The Reformatory.” The image on page 23 stands alone, it shows a young boy at trial. He sits alone on one side of a table, possibly biting his nails due to nerves, while a group of adult men surround him (figure 2.10). The caption reads, “The Reformatory – This is not the home we dreamed of!” Here the
child author addresses dreams again, but the implication is that the reformatory is actually the opposite of a dream, and was likely a nightmare to many of the children who ended up there.

Pages 24-27, the next two spreads, refer to prostitution and sexually transmitted diseases. The caption for the first spread reads, “Girls of fifteen...even as young as thirteen...have bitter memories of man’s inhumanity. How are they to live from now on?” On page 25, a girl looks up from embroidery work and glares severely at Chim’s camera, and seemingly the reader (figure 2.11). Having read the caption, her expression convincingly shows her “bitter memories of man’s inhumanity.” The following spread features a rather abstract juxtaposition of a young woman sitting at a sunlit desk on the left, and on the right, is a hand-painted sign nailed to a door (figure 2.12). The window above the girl’s desk is barred up, adding an ominous component to the otherwise meditative picture. The sign is written in German, and it designates that whoever is behind the door has a sexually transmitted disease, a “Geschlechtskrank.” The caption for this sequence is on the right-side page, and poses a question referring to these hopeless scenes: “Is it to be in prison – or in wards for the ugliest of diseases?”

The following spread on pages 30-31 is the only full-bleed spread with no text in the book, presenting a striking and confrontational portrait of a large group of young boys, all with shaved heads (figure 2.13). The cropping is so tight that there is no end in sight to the group; it is chock-full of faces that seem to jostle for a view at Chim’s camera. The three figures in the foreground are the most prominent. Of these three, the boy on the left furrows his brows and looks off in the distance. He has scars all over his forehead. The boy on the right looks into Chim’s lens with a melancholy expression, and he has a prominent scar across his cheek. The boy in the middle makes direct eye contact with the camera, and he has a stern expression on his face. Though some of the boys in the background smile, smirk, or look curious, the boys in the front
depict the emotions and struggles that Chim would have most wanted to relay to his readers. The utilization of a full-bleed spread for this image makes it seem like a direct confrontation between the figures in the photograph and the readers of the publication.

The next three spreads (pages 32-37) relate to homeless children, and they echo Bonney’s concluding images. This is a whole series of groups of children, looking sad, dejected and hungry. Some seem to live in a tent, while others sleep on the “bare earth” and have to share one blanket between many. Six photos in three spreads pull at a reader’s heartstrings.

A skinny-legged baby with wide eyes looks directly into Chim’s camera lens, seemingly in disbelief, as he is being fed a spoonful of food (figure 2.14). He puts his tiny hands up to the spoon, as if to assure that the precious nutrients make it into his open mouth. Chim’s photo of five children all sleeping under the same blanket relays a vulnerability that is palpable (figure 2.15), and is reminiscent of Bonney’s photographs of exhausted children sleeping anywhere they could.

Chim uses a repetitive pattern of text over the next three spreads. The captions read, “Some of us are given shoes, but many others must go barefoot,” “Milk for the children sometimes, but they need it every day,” and “Our doctors never spare themselves, but they are so few and hospital beds are hard to find.” With each caption Chim starts with something positive (the distribution of shoes and milk, and access to doctors), but then quickly states that there is not enough of these things. The repetitive nature of these captions drives home Chim’s message to readers, and the accompanying photographs corroborate. Two beautiful young children look into Chim’s lens with pleading eyes, holding metal cups tilted so that his lens can capture their emptiness (figure 2.16). Because of the eye contact, the children seem to be pleading directly to the reader. Below the caption about doctors, a young girl in what is likely a brace for spinal tubercu-
losis smiles giddily (figure 2.17). She is one of the lucky children to be able to receive medical attention, and her smile relays to readers just how grateful she is.

The next two spreads contain four photographs depicting children with disabilities, presumably caused by war. In the first photograph, a small group of children gleefully play ball, but half of them are missing limbs (figure 2.18, left-side page). The caption for all four photographs, which falls below the first photograph, reads: “Some blind children, some cripples have been given help and can live.” The next spread has no text, just two full-bleed photos that show a striking juxtaposition of the sacrifice of young bodies. On the left-side page an adolescent boy is working with a handsaw. The right side of his body is bathed in sunlight from a window beside him, and the left side is in shadows. The pinned left sleeve of his shirt makes it apparent that he is missing his entire left arm, so he has to navigate the handsaw entirely with his right (figure 2.19, left-side page). The photograph facing this image is initially difficult to understand. It is an intimate portrait taken very close to the subject and, at first glance, it looks as if a young boy with his eyes closed might be kissing a flat white surface. At a closer look, tiny dots of braille can be deciphered on the surface, and a viewer slowly makes the connection that the young boy is blind and reading braille with his lips, presumably because he has lost both of his hands (figure 2.19, right-side page). Once the viewer has made these connections, the intimate portrait becomes an overwhelming symbol of the desire for children to learn, under even the most challenging of circumstances.

The next five spreads relate to education, which UNESCO knew to be a top priority in the recovery efforts. In a first-hand account of his trip, Chim stated, “Wherever I went, in any of the five countries, the first new buildings I saw, white and cheerful amidst the desolation of war-blinded cities, were schools. Everywhere I saw overworked teachers fighting with enthusiasm
and resource against shortages of school supplies – making old electric bulbs into chemistry retorts, corned beef cans into calorimeters, or building optical instruments with raw macaroni.”

Two photographs, one of children exercising outside of a bombed out building (figure 2.20, left-side page), and one of a group of children bravely walking through rubble (figure 2.20, right-side page), are accompanied by captions where the child credits the teachers for their hard work, and states that the reader can count on teachers and on children, but that “you must give us a fair chance.” In the next spread (pages 50-51), children are shown with creative substitutions for classroom supplies. The caption relays that children can make many things themselves, “with a little help…”. The next two spreads emphasize children’s independence by showing that they are learning to make clothes, shoes, and print books. A photo of a young girl passing a heavy cinder block to another is captioned, “We will even rebuild our own schools!” (figure 2.21, left-side page).

Towards the end of the book, the child dramatizes, “After all - we must learn to do all the work of the world.” With this statement the child emphasizes the weight that grown-ups have put on children’s shoulders. After this guilt-inducing statement, the child begins to explain how grown-ups can help. This is part of the conclusion section of the book, which consists of two spreads. The first caption in this section reads, “Give us the tools, and we will help to build the new world.” This caption serves on a photograph of four young women shoveling in a pile of rubble (figure 2.21, right-side page). Naturally and metaphorically, these girls have been given the “tools” and are ready to help build the “new world.”

The next spread features two photographs, one of a large group of children in an outdoor classroom, and another of a group of girls linking arms in a circle, with a ruined building behind

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them (figure 2.22). The caption reads, “With the love, understanding and help of grown-ups some of us have already begun to build a secure and happy life – to regain a part of our lost childhood – in classrooms under the trees, on playgrounds among the ruins – but still only some of us.” Here Chim lays out the general needs of children and draws attention to the many children who still need help. This caption especially seems to speak for UNESCO’s desires.

The last spread of the book (pages 60 and 61) has a photograph on the left-side page that faces a white right-side page with the final text (figure 2.23). The right-side page is the only page in the body of the book that has text but no photograph, which effectively makes the reader focus on the single photograph on the left. In the photo, a group of children link arms on a hill overlooking a town and a river. The open sky is above them. The last caption reads, “Share your world with us. We too shall be grown-up people in a few years. Do not abandon us a second time and make us lose forever our faith in the ideals for which you fought.” The child seems to threaten the adult reader, hinting to the fact that if adults were to allow this type of neglect to continue to happen, there would be the horrible repercussion of children losing faith in democracy.

The back cover of the book is a photograph that Chim took during his travels for the Children of Europe project. It is one of the only photographs that does not feature the image of a child; instead it shows six child-drawn artworks posted on a wall (figure 2.24). The children wrote descriptions (in Polish, and in cursive that varies in ability) above the drawings, most of which have recognizable houses and stick figures. These sweet drawings could be on any parent’s refrigerator or bulletin board, but the backstory behind the image is heartbreaking. The contact sheet of negatives Chim exposed before and after this image tells some of the story, and the detailed captions he typed for Magnum (decidedly not what he wrote for his book) describe the situation most clearly.
The contact sheet reveals the larger context and indicates that the photograph was taken in a classroom (figure 2.25). All of the other photographic images are of children in the act of drawing on a blackboard. A pinned notice (presumably an assignment from the teachers) on one of the blackboards reads, “To jest dom,” which translates to “This is home”. Most of the children have drawn recognizable houses with yards and families, but one little girl has scribbled so obsessively with the chalk that almost the entire blackboard is covered in layers of her frantic scrawls. Chim captured this little girl with her chalk to the board, but looking towards his camera with a disturbed facial expression (figure 2.26). This photograph became one of Chim’s most famous photographs, and it is often considered to be emblematic of World War II.

The Magnum caption binders, along with prominent newspapers and magazines from the time, revealed the details Chim knew about the girl and her situation. More recently, Carole Naggar’s research on this photograph has helped to unveil even more. Chim knew the little girl’s name was Tereska, and he knew he was photographing in a Warsaw school for children physically and psychologically handicapped by war. It was later discovered that Tereska’s home in Warsaw had been destroyed by German Luftwaffe bombs, and Tereska was struck by a piece of shrapnel that left her brain-damaged. She spent the majority of her life in an asylum.

It is quite telling that, in this instance, Chim chose the more pleasant photograph for his book, instead of the arresting image of Tereska he had taken just moments before. This back cover photo doesn’t have any textual information about the image, but even if it did it is likely it

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171 The Tereska photograph was seen by millions in a December 27, 1948 photo story in LIFE magazine.
172 This location was likely especially haunting for Chim because Warsaw was his birthplace and his parents had died nearby in the Otwock ghetto.
would have followed the same formula as the rest of the book: opting for an emotive narrative over one full of facts and particulars. Perhaps Chim knew that by ending the book with this relatable image of children’s artwork it would create a sense of shared humanity for its readers.
CHAPTER THREE
Bonney’s *Europe’s Children* and Chim’s *Children of Europe* Side-by-Side

The last two chapters addressed Bonney’s and Chim’s photo books separately, but this concluding chapter will draw a comparison of their creation and dissemination in order to define the key similarities and differences. The photographer’s biographies will be addressed, the publishing circumstances, the audiences, and the relationship of photographs and text in each book.

The experience of an American woman photographing in Europe during World War II was undoubtedly different from that of a Jewish Polish-born male photographer shooting less far from home. Bonney was bringing images of European children home to an American audience that was generally less attuned to the needs of these suffering children, while Chim was sharing images with an audience that, for the most part, knew the conditions of Europe’s children all too well. Both publications are undoubtedly overlaid with the photographers’ cultural understanding of the war. However, both photographers captured equally tender, sympathetic, and sometimes shocking photographs, and a gendered lens is not apparent in either book.

Bonney lived in France her entire adult life, but she was adamant about not being an expatriate.\(^{174}\) As an American war photographer in Europe, Bonney said, “I believe I represent the American people.”\(^{175}\) Her family was reportedly eighth-generation American on both sides,\(^ {176}\) but she was a Francophile. Bonney used this lens of an American Francophile to her advantage, as she was able to craft a personalized, emotional plea for her American audience.

On the other hand, Chim lived in Europe until he was forced to flee at the outbreak of World War II. His experience as a Jewish man photographing in postwar Europe was different in

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\(^ {176}\) Alison Lerrick, “Lawyer-to-be will assist elderly,” *Great Bend Tribune* (Great Bend, Kansas), March 1, 1974, 9.
many ways from Bonney’s experience. The pain he felt from losing loved ones to the Nazis was sharp and firsthand, and he showed great bravery and strength in going back to the destroyed cities and towns of his childhood. Chim’s personal experience adds to the concerned lens of UNESCO, and to a reader’s understanding of *Children of Europe*.

It is clear that both photographers had humanitarian intents with their projects. Long before publishing her book, Bonney was extremely involved in humanitarian causes, and when World War II unfolded she knew she could utilize her newly honed photographic skills to disseminate her pre-planned humanitarian message. Bonney said, “I photograph as though to illustrate a script. I do an editorial job. My pictures do not just happen.”\(^{177}\) Though the intent of a humanitarian agent does not necessarily guarantee success, the humanitarian “script” Bonney subscribed to was a successful one, and UNESCO later utilized many of the same conventions in their postwar publications.

In regard to the publishing circumstances for each book, it is unsurprising that Bonney faced far more challenges than Chim. Publishers were wary of publishing a book they thought Americans weren’t ready for, or willing to look at. Bonney’s determination to publish at a time when her images were especially shocking deserves great commendation. Arguably, by 1949 Chim’s images would not have been as shocking. However, the fact that conditions had changed so little for Europe’s children well into the postwar era was obviously cause for alarm, and the imagery of destruction, danger and disabilities was certainly jarring. Bonney did include shocking photographs of emaciated children in her publication, but (in contrast to images like Hooper’s, discussed in the introduction to this thesis) the photographs generally represent children who retain their individuality, and even demonstrate their independence, adaptability and resili-

ence. In some images children may seem helpless, but in many others they are strong and self-sufficient.

When comparing the actual photographs in each book, it is obvious that each photographer understood how images of vulnerable children would have an emotional impact on readers. It is also consequential that both photographers valued portraiture. As Fehrenbach stated in regard to Bonney’s photographs, their “intentional reference to that familiar (and familial) photographic form helped make the moral argument on the basis of recognition.” The photographers employed a persuasive tactic to make readers recognize children in Europe were worthy of the same rights and protections as their own children. This recognition leads to a sense of community, or kinship, and therefore imposes a relationship of responsibility. This responsibility, by and large, elicits support. Both books present this relationship of adult responsibility strongly in their texts. Sontag noted, “No one after a certain age has the right to this kind of innocence, of superficiality, to this degree of ignorance, or amnesia.” Chim does this most notably by utilizing the child’s voice, who addresses an adult audience (“us” and “we” versus the adult “you”). This simulates a one-to-one encounter, and creates a sense of urgency. Bonney employs a similar technique at the end of the book with her direct demands of the reader, such as, “Save them,” and “Feed them.” The direct eye contact of many of the subjects also created a sense of confrontation between subject and reader.

The first and last image in each book, as well as its accompanying caption, exemplify the approaches taken by Bonney and Chim. Bonney’s first photograph is of a group of well-groomed children walking up a set of stairs (see fig. 1.6). The caption relays the location of the image, and

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178 Fehrenbach, “A Horrific Photo,” 1146
179 Susan Sontag, Regarding the Pain of Others, 114.
helps place it within the timeline of the war: “It was not so long ago the children of Europe trooped to class.” Bonney’s narrative begins with the normalcy of prewar life for children, and by the end she emphasized just how horrible conditions were. The last photograph in her book is a very dark (aesthetically and content-wise) image of three malnourished babies (see fig. 1.41). The caption for this image reads, “The foundations of the postwar world.” This bleak image reiterates the narrative of wartime decline, and the text and imagery aimed to pressure her audience to take action before it was too late.

The first image in Chim’s book is of three children walking down a dusty road surrounded by destruction (see fig. 2.5). The children look so small in contrast with the scale of the destruction. The caption reads, “Millions of children first knew life amid death and destruction.” This caption relays to readers that “millions” of children were in similar situations, trying to carry on amidst overwhelming challenges. The last photo, on the other hand, shows children playing in an idyllic setting (see fig. 2.23). On a grassy hilltop with a backdrop of a river and town, they all hold hands in a circle. These children seemingly address the reader in the caption, which reads, “Share your world with us. We too shall be grown-up people in a few years. Do not abandon us a second time and make us lose forever our faith in the ideals for which you fought.”

So, though Chim’s final image is decidedly more pleasant than the first, the caption relays a request, and a warning to readers. Chim relays that if Europe’s children were not given the tools needed, and if they were abandoned a second time, they would surely lose faith in both adults and democracy. Each closing sentence leaves readers to ponder the potentially horrible effects if Europe’s children are not aided, and if another war were to break out in the future. This urges the adult readers to take responsibility and action.

Their shared purpose as humanitarian photo books led Bonney and Chim to utilize many of the same conventions in their publications. Their imagery is remarkably similar, and the texts value emotional over historical captions. They avoid “complicated” talk of political causation. They make readers “moral witnesses of war,”181 they hold readers responsible, shame them for complacency, and make demands for action. The methods of address and direct questions in each book are powerful means of connecting with, and affecting, their respective audiences.

Because imagery of children has demonstrated its power and success as a humanitarian convention, many humanitarian organizations still utilize photographs of children in their campaigns today, to establish a sense of urgency for reform and/or intervention. In the cases of Thé-rèse Bonney’s Europe’s Children and David Seymour’s Children of Europe, each photographer presents a determinedly humanitarian narrative, which aimed to help European children suffering from the effects of World War II. These photo books serve as historical documents that reflect the different times in which they were made, but they remain relevant today as innocent children continue to suffer from wars started by older generations. In the words of Bonney, “How can we ignore it?”182 After all, children embody our survival culturally, genetically and as a species, and they are our hope for the future.183

181 Fehrenbach, Humanitarian Photography, 188.
Bibliography


Illustrations

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