

PREFATORY MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION

I have the honour to transmit hereunder a report on the efforts that have been made by the staff of the Preparatory Commission for the International Refugee Organization to solve one of the most pressing human problems left by the war—the problem of refugees and displaced persons.

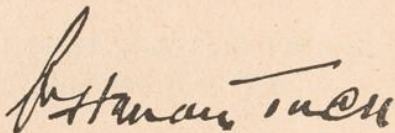
Wars have always made refugees. The greatest war—the Second World War—left in its wake more than eight million persons homeless, uprooted, destitute, the survivors of uncounted millions of others who perished.

In the immediate post-war period, millions of these people returned to their homes aided by the armies of the United Nations, UNRRA and other agencies. But there remained at the end of 1946 hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons throughout the world who at that time had been unable or unwilling to return to their homelands.

This mass of unassimilated human beings—men, women and children from all countries of Europe and all walks of life—presents grave social, economic and political problems bearing upon the reconstruction of a stable, peaceful world. As part of the price of victory, the United Nations assumed responsibility for solving those problems. The International Refugee Organization is the expression of the will of the peoples of the United Nations to discharge this obligation.

This report seeks to present the record of what has been done by the Organization in its preparatory period to meet the responsibilities placed upon it. Much has been accomplished. More remains to be done. The fates of more than eight hundred thousand human beings remain on the

conscience of the victors three and a half years after the victory. It must be the task of the IRO to keep that conscience alive and awake, to prevent it from becoming numbed and indifferent, lost in the flood of complexities which have beset us all in this period of difficult post-war adjustment.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "William Hallam Tuck". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

WILLIAM HALLAM TUCK
*Executive Secretary
of the Preparatory Commission*