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150 countries offices in the following countries

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

More than three years have elapsed since the victorious forces of the Allied Nations found the refugees and displaced persons amid the ruins of Hitler's "New Order".

Since that time, much has been written and spoken about refugees. In the confusion of the immediate post-war period, much of this was inaccurate. Many misconceptions about the refugees and displaced persons took root and persist to this day. Some of these false beliefs concern the ethnic, political and religious composition of the refugee populations. These victims of totalitarianism sometimes are painted as supporters of it.

To many citizens of the United Nations, perhaps, the word "refugee" still conjures up a picture of a gaunt face, shaved head, staring eyes, cadaverous body clothed in the shapeless striped garb of the concentration camp.

Such a false picture of the people the IRO is trying to help can inspire only a mixture of pity and revulsion; it cannot promote the kind of intelligent, realistic thinking about refugees which alone can solve their problem.

This booklet, as its title implies, attempts to provide the facts upon which such thinking can be based. It shows that the refugees and displaced persons have come a long way back from Belsen, Auschwitz, Dachau. Stand in a refugee camp today and you see about you men, women and children who are normal in all ways save one—they have no homes. The generosity of the United Nations, expressed through IRO's predecessor agency, UNRRA, the Allied Armies and voluntary societies, provided the material means to restore them to health and vigour. All that remains is to restore them to hope, to provide them with the opportunity to become again productive citizens.

That is the task given to IRO by the peoples of the United Nations. This booklet describes how, with their help, it is being discharged.

William Hallam Tuck

WILLIAM HALLAM TUCK
Director-General.

30 September 1948.