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# THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION IN MIGRATION

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INTERGOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION in migration or planned migration may be said to have had its conceptual beginnings and initial activities in the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees in 1939. The Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees resulted from the Conference on Refugees convened on the initiative of President Roosevelt in July 1938 at Evian-les-Bains, France, following the German Anschluss with Austria earlier that year. As a result of the Anschluss, the numbers of potential refugees from Nazi terror in Germany, Czechoslovakia and Austria had grown to over 900,000. Many thousands had already sought asylum in Switzerland, France and other Western European countries which were no longer in a position to afford hospitality to larger numbers unless they could be relieved of earlier arrivals by emigration to overseas countries.

The final resolution of the Evian Conference not only anticipated the organization of the Intergovernmental Committee of thirty-two governments but also envisaged assistance in finding new homes to not only those refugees who had already fled from Germany and Czechoslovakia but also to those who would find themselves under the necessity of fleeing in the future from these two countries and Austria. The expectation was confidently held at Evian that it would be possible to negotiate a more orderly departure of the refugees with the Nazi authorities and even that the refugees would be permitted to transfer at least some of their assets to other countries to assist them in re-establishing their lives and becoming self-reliant. Refugees with at least some capital and technical equipment would be far more acceptable as immigrants in receiving countries than penniless suppliants for asylum.

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It was also self-evident that the numbers of those affected by Nazi action could not be absorbed into the European countries, that emigration to overseas countries would be required to meet the problem on the scale presented and that time would be required to permit the Intergovernmental Committee to make arrangements with the countries of immigration for the admission of the refugees.

With these prospects in mind, membership in the Intergovernmental Committee was restricted to countries of immigration which would receive the refugees. In the preceding ten years action by the League of Nations on behalf of refugees had always been handicapped by the restraining votes of refugee-producing countries on the Council of the League of Nations, which sought through vigorous propaganda to picture the refugees as traitors to their countries of origin, and to characterize the measures taken by other governments on behalf of refugees as interferences with the sovereignties of the objecting states. It was hoped that the Intergovernmental Committee could avoid these political conflicts by excluding refugee-producing states from the membership, which would consist solely of states interested in the humanitarian task of assisting the refugees to resettle as quickly as possible.

After the organization of the Intergovernmental Committee early in 1939, negotiations for a more orderly and planned emigration from Central Europe were attempted with the Nazi authorities by George Rublee (United States), Director of the Committee. Months were spent in establishing contact with the Nazi authorities but when initial conversations finally took place it became apparent that the negotiations would not prove fruitful. The invasion of

Poland followed soon after — in September 1939 — and the initial intergovernmental effort to plan an orderly emigration of refugees from Europe came to naught.

Nonetheless, the concept of planned migration had taken root in an intergovernmental body composed of thirty-two governments to find practical expression later in intergovernmental actions. The Intergovernmental Committee was severely handicapped by the war in its efforts to assist refugees to leave Europe for overseas countries. Apart from the restrictions imposed by the war, such as the lack of shipping, overseas countries of immigration were not only just recovering from the depression of the 1930 decade, but also were unwilling to admit refugees whose loyalties could not easily be determined in advance, and who might bring with them the disturbing political conflicts of a war-torn Europe.

After the war, however, in 1945-1946, the Intergovernmental Committee succeeded in making agreements with a number of Latin American governments for the admission of limited numbers of refugees selected on the basis of skills. By a working agreement concluded with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), the Intergovernmental Committee accepted the task of resettling refugees and displaced persons from Europe, while UNRRA assumed the responsibility for securing the return to their countries of origin of those who were willing to accept repatriation.

During the years 1945-1947, the Intergovernmental Committee established another precedent in intergovernmental collaboration on behalf of refugees, namely, the application of public funds to their relief in Europe and particularly to their

transportation overseas as the first emigrants from Europe in the postwar period. In the twenty years preceding the war, the League of Nations had restricted its activities on behalf of refugees to organizing political protection for them and to the coordination of the relief activities of the voluntary agencies. Only the United Kingdom and the United States, as members, contributed to the relief activities of the Intergovernmental Committee, sharing these expenditures equally. But, even so, the groundwork for future developments in this direction had been laid and the first transports of refugees to South America had been successfully accomplished before the activities of the Intergovernmental Committee were terminated in July 1947.

The Intergovernmental Committee must also be credited with resourcefulness in securing shipping for the movement of refugees overseas during the early postwar period when commercial shipping was highly disorganized and unavailable for such movements. By arrangements with the United States government, arrangements which had no precedent in previous intergovernmental experience, transports of the Military Sea Transport Service of the United States Department of Defense were made available to the Intergovernmental Committee on a flat cost reimbursable basis for the overseas movement of refugees. The costs of converting the ships for passenger movement were borne by the Committee. This collaboration between an intergovernmental body and a member government was unique in character and remains suggestive of the type of collaboration among governments which is possible in dealing with problems of international concern to governments and voluntary agencies. Although the number of refugees served by the In-

tergovernmental Committee was not impressive for a complexity of reasons, the beginnings of effective intergovernmental collaboration in the field of migration were established in the short post-war (1945-1947) experience of the Committee.

The procedures and methods in migration, explored initially by the Intergovernmental Committee, were carried forward on a much larger scale and improved and developed by the International Refugee Organization, a temporary specialized agency of the United Nations which, in the period July 1947-January 1952, moved over 1,000,000 refugees and displaced persons from Europe to Australia, Canada, the Latin American countries and the United States. Organized within the framework of the United Nations system on the initiative of the United Kingdom and the United States, the International Refugee Organization consisted of eighteen governments which shared, in contrast with two governments in the Intergovernmental Committee, the burden of contributing approximately \$400,000,000 to the care, housing and feeding of 1,500,000 refugees and displaced persons in Europe and the transportation of over 1,000,000 to countries of immigration overseas. The total expenditures for overseas transportation were on the order of \$195,000,000. Of this total over \$61,200,000 were devoted to the movement of 424,000 persons in United States military transports.

Previous migrations of those who sought new lands because of political oppression, economic stress or religious persecution, had taken place for the most part unplanned and at the risk and expense of the migrants themselves, assisted by voluntary private effort. The movement under the auspices of the International Refugee Organization

was a planned migration financed by the contributions of eighteen governments. The migrants were without resources of their own. The movements took place, in large part, on the basis of definite agreements made among the intergovernmental body and the governments which agreed to accept the migrants in specific numbers and under certain conditions. Fortunately for the IRO, its efforts in this stupendous task were made during a period in which the levels of the economies of the receiving countries were rising and there was a need for manpower which the migrants could alleviate. Although this was an important factor in the success which IRO achieved, the motivations of the member governments had a broader base than the mere need of immigrants. They desired among other things to assist the victims of the war, and of the political conflicts that arose out of the war, to re-establish themselves and to become once again self-respecting citizens who would make their contribution to the strength of the free world. They also wished to restore peace and order in Europe and to assist the countries which had been devastated by the war to recover economic viability. This would have been impossible had these allied countries been forced to carry the burden of over 1,000,000 refugees who could not be absorbed in the disturbed state of Europe after the war. These were largely the motives behind President Truman's Executive Order of December 22, 1945, under which 41,379 refugees and displaced persons were admitted to the United States, and of Congress in passing the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 and its amendments, which resulted in the admission of over 400,000 immigrants between 1948 and 1952.

Apart from the record of moving substantial numbers of migrants overseas, IRO

changed the pre-war pattern of overseas migration by establishing the policy and the practice of moving the entire family as a unit. Before the war the breadwinner of the immigrant family, unfamiliar with the prospects of employment in the country of immigration, proceeded alone in the expectation of establishing a home in the new country and sending for his family later. All too frequently the migration of the breadwinner resulted, in fact, in permanent separation from his family left behind in the country of emigration. The problem of securing support for the family left behind has engaged the attention of international bodies for many years. International agreements for the enforcement of court orders of family support abroad have raised such difficult questions of law and public policy that little progress has been made in dealing with the plight of families separated by the migration of the breadwinner. By appealing constantly to the conscience of governments, IRO succeeded in advancing general acceptance of the standard in intergovernmental action that the entire family should be moved as a unit. As a result of these efforts countries of immigration are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that the presence of the family is a stabilizing influence on the immigrant after arrival, that he faces a challenge to greater effort to succeed in the new country, and that he is less likely to become discouraged in his first difficult years of adjustment or to return too readily frustrated to his home country.

In this effort, as in many other aspects of its operations, IRO had the full support of the voluntary agencies interested in refugees and migration. The voluntary agencies have always played a significant role in establishing patterns and techniques of serv-

ice in dealing with social problems. Guided predominantly by moral and humanitarian principles in their work, their mission is to plead the cause of the oppressed and particularly to bring to the attention of governments and intergovernmental bodies the effects of government policies and actions in the lives of families caught in the process of migration. Generally speaking, the voluntary agencies have more freedom of action than governmental bodies in applying their resources and in experimenting with new methods and techniques. They are in a position to demonstrate on a smaller scale the value of methods which governments and intergovernmental bodies can apply effectively to larger numbers through the use of public funds.

The administration of IRO welcomed the participation of the voluntary agencies and developed a higher degree of joint participation with them than had ever previously been achieved between an intergovernmental body and private effort. The resources and effectiveness of both partners were substantially enhanced by this close collaboration. The sharing of the experience and "know-how" of the voluntary agencies with IRO was particularly evident in IRO operations in the care and placement of children separated from parents after the war, in the tracing of missing relatives and the reunion of families, and in the provisions made for the permanent care of refugees and displaced persons who for reasons of age, illness and other handicaps required institutional care. The pattern and acceptance of collaboration developed by IRO and the voluntary agencies were continued with necessary adaptations by the international and intergovernmental bodies which succeeded IRO, namely the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration.

In 1951, the last year of IRO operations, it became evident that the refugees and displaced persons remaining in Europe — some 500,000 — could not supply from their ranks the requirements of the receiving countries for immigrants, particularly in terms of skills. Immigration countries were turning increasingly in their recruiting activities to the supply of potential migrants available among the indigenous populations of overcrowded countries such as Austria, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Greece. On the other hand, commercial shipping was not available for the movement of normal migrants on many of the migrant routes, particularly from Northern Europe to Australia and even to an extent in the North Atlantic. In 1951, in fact, IRO was requested by governments to move over 30,000 indigenous nationals of European countries, as distinguished from refugees, to overseas countries of immigration on a cost reimbursable basis. This development established the practice of direct payment by governments to an international body for the movement of normal migrants. On the termination of operations in 1951, IRO had under charter ten ships which had been converted to passenger movements at an approximate expense to IRO of some \$5,000,000. Unless these ships should continue in the migrant traffic there was every likelihood that they would be reconverted to freight or other commercial purposes.

The Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) was organized largely on the initiative of the United States government at the Brussels Conference on Migration in November-December 1951. The objective was to facilitate and increase the movement of migrants and

refugees who would not otherwise be moved from overpopulated countries in Europe to overseas countries whose developing economies could supply opportunities for employment and re-establishment. In effect ICEM constituted a new intergovernmental effort better adapted to serve the immediate needs of Europe and the immigration countries overseas in the field of migration than was IRO which had been restricted in its operations to the movement of refugees. In the creation of ICEM the lessons and procedures developed in the migration of refugees were to be applied to the movement of normal migrants while at the same time the movement of refugees would be continued.

Starting in 1951 with fifteen member governments, ICEM has a present membership of twenty-seven governments: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Italy, Israel, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States, the Union of South Africa, and Venezuela.

Between February 1952 and December 1957, ICEM moved 724,031 migrants from Europe, of whom over one-third were refugees. While utilizing commercial shipping to the maximum extent possible, ICEM continues to supply transport on those migrant routes where commercial shipping is not available or inadequate in tonnage. By pooling the contributions of governments with payments by the migrant and the expenditures for transportation of the voluntary agencies, many thousands of migrants have been moved to new opportunities overseas who could not have

emigrated on their own resources. This is planned and assisted migration supported substantially by the contributions of governments to an international body and by the collaboration of the voluntary agencies. Again, as in IRO, practices developed originally by the voluntary agencies have been incorporated in ICEM's operations. ICEM and the voluntary agencies jointly contribute, for instance, to revolving funds out of which the movement of migrants and refugees are financed on the basis of loans to the migrants, repayable over a period of three years after the migrant's arrival in the country of immigration.

Movements under ICEM auspices account for between thirty-five and forty per cent of the total current annual migration from Europe. The annual budget of expenditures presently approximates \$40,000,000. During late 1956 and 1957 ICEM moved over 94,000 Hungarian refugees from Austria and Yugoslavia and organized the departure of an additional 53,000 whose transportation was provided directly by the governments which received them. Whatever the future course or pattern of migration from Europe may be, the successive contributions of IGCR, IRO and ICEM have already made their impact in an area of international activity in which organized intergovernmental action is comparatively recent and still in an experimental stage of development.

It is perhaps too early to appraise the full significance of the foregoing developments in the field of migration. Many economic and demographic changes have taken place in both the countries of emigration and immigration since 1952 when ICEM began operations. How these changes

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