INTERGOVERNMENTAL ADVOCATES OF REFUGEES
The Refugee Policy of the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization in the 1920s and 1930s

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ABSTRACT

Frontiers remained closed after the First World War and nobody was able to cross them without a passport and a visa on the passport from the representative of the country to which the traveller wished to go. As the refugee problem became an international subject requiring measures after the War, the international community was forced to take the issue on the agenda which previously was labeled by political items concerning war and peace. The world had to study the matters concerning refugees and also take action accordingly.

The failure of the League of Nations in its central task, maintaining peace, has influenced the evaluation of other operations of the intergovernmental machinery during the Inter-war period. The achievements and the importance of the refugee work undertaken during the 1920s and 1930s have been shadowed by the mainstream of assessments.

The background and real impetus for the creation of refugee protection system were constituted by the refugee problems. In this respect, the 1920s was a unique era in the history of Europe with the mass movements of homeless people. It all begun from worries about the huge amounts of Russians crossing the borders, and soon it was realized that there were even millions more, representing a variety on nationalities.

Despite all shortcomings of the League, refugee work was conducted during the two decades under examination in this study. There was continuation throughout the whole period in the efforts of international bodies. There was an international refugee regime consisting of various actors of intergovernmental and non-governmental nature. The existence of a regime refers to some kind of strategy. The references give us a reason to believe that this regime had to be directed by the League of Nations, which, in turn, leads us to find traces of consistency referring to a policy.

This study is a description and analysis of the evolution of the policy. It is evident that scrutiny has to be divided in two separate periods: the 1920s as well as the 1930s. It turns out that the first period was the time of reactive and ad hoc responses to the emerging crises. During the following decade there was more organized, proactive, and human rights based policy formulation. This project shows how the refugee work was justified, initiated, formulated, developed, implemented, and financed. All this is policy, if conducted in a consistent manner. There seems to exist enough continuation and
consistency in the activities during the whole period in order to justify the use of the term policy.

The refugee policy of the world organizations was formulated, planned and implemented by the Member States through the different Bodies of the League and the ILO. This was done in close cooperation with Non-governmental organizations, private sector and societies on the whole. The substance of the policy was guided by a number of prominent personalities who were able to draw the attention of the international community to the matters that otherwise would have been forgotten and left to be handled by national governments alone.

Refugee agencies were able to play a successful leadership role for several reasons. Unlike private organizations, their association with the League of Nations gave them the authority to negotiate with governments directly. Because their proposals were generally perceived as non-partisan, they were also more likely than those from Great Powers to win a consensus. The most visible example of this was definitely the achievement of creating a successful passport system.

It is fair to conclude that all the elements for a consistent policy were in place; the purpose statements, applicability, scope, effective dates, responsibilities, and policy statements. They were established in a form or another. They were not in a single covering document, but, in retrospective, a policy document could be drawn up on the basis of the compilation of the various documents and the practical work.

The refugee policy of the League of Nations was formulated and adopted in the top organs of the world organization. It was planned and implemented in close cooperation with other intergovernmental organization, non-governmental organizations, State Members’ governments, as well as private sector and representatives of refugees.

The substance of the policy was guided by the refugee situations. The League faced challenges throughout the whole period of time it conducted its refugee work. The League was, however, able to respond and develop new solutions to the growing challenges. The organization was capable of showing some creativeness in its reactions to the refugee situations. Although the principles of the policies remained somewhat unchanged, new techniques were applied in combating the destitution of refugees.

Favorable economic development was the best tool against the destitution of homeless people. That, in turn, made any excessive special arrangements for the refugees unnecessary. In that sense we may conclude that the actual results of the improvement in the position of the refugees were not exclusively achievements of the
refugee organizations. However, the organizations and the policy backing up their work were most needed, when times were economically bad.

Although Fridtjof Nansen’s personal prestige was sometimes considered higher than the appreciation of the League in some parts of the world and by some evaluators, it can be concluded as a result of all deliberations conducted in this work, that the refugee policy of the League and the ILO was consistent and a pertinent part of the essence of the Organizations despite seeming inconsistencies.
ACRONYMS

ACPO = Advisory Committee of Private Organizations

ARC = American Red Cross

BRSC = Bulgarian Refugees Settlement Commission

CIAR = Committee on International Assistance to Refugees

CIRC = Comité International de la Croix-Rouge

CSO = Civil Society Organization

EK = Eduskunta (Parliament of Finland)

EKP = Etsivä Keskuspoliisi (Secret Police/Security Service of Finland in 1920s)

FRC = Finnish Red Cross

GB = Governing Body (of the ILO)

GRSC = Greek Refugees Settlement Commission

HC = High Commissioner

IGAC = Inter-Governmental Advisory Commission

IGCR = Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees

IGO = Inter-Governmental Organization

ILC = International Labour Conference

ILO = International Labour Organization

ILR = International Labour Review

INGO = International Non-Governmental Organization

LON = League of Nations

MFA = Ministry for Foreign Affairs (of Finland)

NGO = Non-Governmental Organization

NMF = Nansen Memorial Fund
NO = Nansen Office; Nansen International Office for Refugees

NSA = Non-State Actor

OB = Official Bulletin (ILO)

OFPRA = French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons

OJ = Official Journal (LON)

PMC = Permanent Mandates Commission (LON)

POW = Prisoner of War

RRC = Russian Red Cross

SCC = Special Council Committee

SPR = Suomen Punainen Risti (Finnish Red Cross)

SRAR = Subcommittee for the Resettlement of Assyrian Refugees

SRK = Svenska Röda Korset (Swedish Red Cross)

UM = Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

VPAK(A) = State Refugee Assistance Centre (the Archives); Finland

VPR = Venäjän Punainen Risti/Russian Red Cross

YMCA = Young Men’s Christian Association
KEY CONCEPTS
as they appear in this presentation

**Assimilation:** Integration to the society of the host country, with assuming the citizenship as the final stage

**Assimilated refugees:** Used in some legal connections to express the meaning ‘refugees who can be considered comparable with…’

**Asylum:** Place where people are safe from their persecutors

**Citizenship:** Status granting an individual his/her basic rights which are political and legal protection, right for a legal residence, legal identity including documentation to prove it in a need

**Emergency Relief/Humanitarian Aid:** Immediate (material) help for refugees

**Host Country:** Country receiving and accommodating refugees

**Inter-war period:** Time between the end of the First World War and 1939

**Legal Status:** Circumstances in which a refugee can identify him/herself as being a refugee in order to receive protection and assistance as well as to be able to travel

**Policy/Strategy:** Principles and rules to guide decisions and actions

**Refugee:** Person staying abroad after losing the possibility to live in his/her home country, person who was defined to be a refugee

**Refugee Policy:** Consistency and continuation in the principles and rules of the LON and the ILO for helping refugees during the Inter-war period

**Refugee Regime:** International, non-governmental and intergovernmental network of actors doing refugee work

**Refugee Work:** All measures taken on behalf of refugees, including policies and field work

**Repatriation:** Help to bring refugees back to their original home country if they are willing to return.

**(Re)settlement:** Help to find a place where refugees can live (permanently) safe supporting themselves

**Transnational History:** Modern way of looking at history, using less categorizing things like national borders in the explanation and analysis. Tries to see interaction and interdependency regardless of traditional categorizing.
1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

1.1. The Refugee Problems after the First World War

Serious treatment of refugee questions can hardly be found from most presentations of general history of the Inter-war period. It is therefore not easy to understand what role these issues had in the larger picture of the flow of events. It is the task of this historiographical intervention to try to put this part to the right scale. This presentation will try to give the refugee question the role that it really had in forming of the political events before the Second World War. The Inter-war Period has been chosen and defined by “natural” causes: the League of Nations was the first serious attempt to regulate international behavior by gathering nations and states together at the same table. It is not the purpose of this research to try to analyze again, or further, the reasons for the failure of the League. That has been done already in sufficiently many connections. Refugee questions were in the center of the political events during the 1920s and 1930s, although they were addressed publicly as a side effect of the mainstream of political developments.

As the refugee problem became an international subject requiring measures after the First World War, the international community was forced to take the issue on its agenda which previously was labeled by political items concerning war and peace. The world had to study the matters concerning refugees and also take action accordingly. This enlargement of agendas was a significant point in the course of historical events, and deserves to be emphasized by the research more than has been done so far.

The history of forced migration is long. No internationally coordinated action was available in the past to deal with the refugees. There were always places to go to. There were physical and intellectual spaces to be filled. States welcomed new groups as an addition to their population. These were considered as enterprising elements
from abroad. No passports were required to cross borders before the events of the international politics and especially the First World War changed everything. Indeed, possibility to move from a place to another has been one of the most important contributors in the development of Europe during the past few centuries. Before the real effects of improvements in farming output and the industrial revolution only overseas emigration to colonies rich in land and resources and countries where labour-force was needed permitted Europe to escape starvation and deprivation which Thomas Robert Malthus had predicted in 1798.

The refugee problem did not exist in the same sense as we know it before the modern states with borders. Nevertheless, there were refugees, since people were staying on a foreign soil, with or without formal borders. The research literature has presented few arrangements among earlier solutions in Western World. Of those, worth mentioning are at least the Edict of Potsdam (1685) by which the King of Prussia invited the Huguenots from France to move and settle in the Prussian state. The British government issued acts in 18th century in the colonies in America concerning the naturalization of “Foreign Protestants”. French law concerning foreign refugees residing in France 1832 was also a remarkable step of its time. Extradition treaties adopted since 1830 were the first in the field of international cooperation. Resolutions of the International Institute of International Law have also been mentioned in this connection.

The emergence of new nation-states in place of lands which were formerly parts of Habsburg, Hohenzollern and Romanov empires was the most striking post-war change in Europe. The world was still Eurocentered, but in an artificial way. Simultaneously, one of the most crucial facts contributing to the escalation of the refugee problem in Europe specifically was that Europe’s traditional strategy for its displaced populations no longer performed. Transatlantic export of people was not possible since America had closed its doors.

The 20th century changed the history of forced migration. There was a saying among Russian refugees in the beginning of the century that describes the situation and status of refugees: “Man consists of a body, soul and a passport”7. There are a number of synonyms used in connection of describing people who are considered refugees. Most of them are used to depict political refugees; political refugee, asylum case, bona fide refugee, political exile, political persecutee, expatriate, unprotected person. All these are used parallel in the same meaning, making distinction to refugees from famine or natural disaster, economic migrants, alleged criminals etc.8 The word ‘refugee’ is defined differently for different purposes. The most common nominator for the definitions is that refugees from famine or natural disaster, migrants for economic reasons, and fugitives from justice are excluded from these considerations.9 By modern definitions, a refugee is a person seeking asylum in a foreign country in order to escape persecution. The most common asylum claims are based upon political and religious grounds. Asylum, in turn, normally means a place or territory where one is not subject to seizure by one’s pursuers, or it may mean protection or freedom from such seizure.10

A refugee is a person who is looking for protection. A refugee is not able to stay in his/her own country without his/her human rights being threatened or violated. A refugee is someone who seeks refuge in a foreign country out of fear of other people. In many connections, the distinction between refugees and other emigrants is indeed economic. According to this distinction, emigrants can take their possessions with them. Refugees are therefore described as immigrants with no capital.11 An essential matter in that the economic attractions of other countries cannot be criteria for getting a refugee status.12 A further distinction has been made between refugees proper who have crossed a national border, and what we call internal refugees, displaced persons, who remain inside the borders of their own country.13

7 Stoessinger, John George: The Refugees and the World Community. Minneapolis MN 1956, 3
11 Although there are exceptions, notably among the Russian aristocrats in 1920s as well as among Jewish refugees from Germany in the beginning of the Nazi regime in 1930s
12 Riila, 17
The practical determination whether a person is a refugee or not, is most often made by governmental agencies of the host country. As a logical result, this can lead to abuse in a country with a very restrictive official immigration policy. The danger is that a country will neither recognize the refugee status of the asylum seekers nor see them as legitimate migrants and treat them as legal aliens.\textsuperscript{14} There are also de facto refugees who are not recognized as refugees (for example migrant workers, students, foreigners in general), but are in the same situation as any refugee. They are unable to return to their countries of origin for reasons outside their control. People who are not recognized as refugees are in the same unfortunate position as asylum seekers whose applications have been rejected.\textsuperscript{15} Taking all this into consideration, there are only very few scholars or politicians who dare to take a position to think of single covering definition.

In order to come to an understanding it is necessary to look into another approach to the concept of refugee, which is the relation to the authorities. An emigrant has a “normal” relation to the officials of the home country as well as to the authorities of the receiving country. This includes the possibility to return back home. The political refugee cannot return when he/she likes, as the return depends on conditions controlled by others.\textsuperscript{16} In some connections the intensity of the danger has been described as a dominant factor when deciding who is a refugee. This is also an essential factor in modern considerations on the need of an asylum in individual cases. Paradoxically, we may observe that the development of the system of sovereign and independent states is connected to the existence of refugees. These cannot even be separated from each other.\textsuperscript{17} Stateless people were individuals who did not have a legal bond of nationality with any state and included people who had never acquired citizenship of their birth country or who had lost their citizenship. Children of stateless people were often born into statelessness.\textsuperscript{18} It was not until 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserted that "Everyone has the right to a nationality".

\textsuperscript{14} For these definitions, see eg. Waris, Heikki: Aikamme maailman pakolaisongelma. Porvoo 1976, 12-13
\textsuperscript{15} Asylum. With a contribution by Guy S. Goodwin-Gill on the principles of international refugee law. Strasbourg; Council of Europe Publications 1995, 98
\textsuperscript{16} Riila, 18
\textsuperscript{18} About this see Kuikka, Maisa (ed.): Réfugiés. Pakolaisten ääniä Suomessa. (Ahmad Khasib,p 19-23 and Zahra Abdulla, p 69-73). Keuruu 2002, 72-73
The word “asylum” comes from the Greek language and has been used to denote a place of refuge. Later on the term came to mean not only the place itself but also and primarily the protection which the place afforded.\textsuperscript{19} With the French revolution, the power of the Church was broken, and with it, the right of an individual to asylum. The stronger the state became, the less important religious asylum was bound to be.\textsuperscript{20} Another important term used in modern research and in political deliberations is persecution. It is not legally defined but it generally refers to consistent patterns of abuse, intervention, harassment, and intolerance.\textsuperscript{21} In this presentation, “a refugee” means a person who found himself abroad and was called and categorized as a refugee in international connections.

Before the First World War, it was mostly possible to travel without a passport. Since the War, the frontiers remained closed and nobody was able to cross them without a valid passport and a visa on the passport from the representative of the country to which the traveller wished to go. Thus movements of population became controlled.\textsuperscript{22} Foreigners were supervised strictly in the 19th Century’s Europe. In the extreme cases, they were suspected to be spies and criminals. There were also some other, merely economic motivations for supervision: protection of domestic labour force and merchants. The 19th Century saw the creation of passports as travel documents in most of the European countries.\textsuperscript{23} There has always been a fear for the connections between refugees and terrorism. This was the case even during the 1920's and 1930's.

Only few people were worried about the particular economic burdens refugees might impose because there was no general obligation to protect and assist strangers who arrived from other areas. It was not possible for large numbers of people to survive for long without a permanent place to stay. If the people had sufficient economic means, it was possible to seek refuge. Many didn’t, and therefore many simply perished before getting any attention of anyone who could care. All this makes it understandable, why there were not more refugees in Europe before the nineteenth century and why the existing refugees were not considered to be a particular problem. The uprooted simply

\textsuperscript{20} Plaut, 79; Asylum. With a contribution by Guy S. Goodwin-Gill on the principles of international refugee law. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publications 1995, 95-120
\textsuperscript{21} Whittaker, David J.: Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the Contemporary World. New York, NY 2006, 8
\textsuperscript{22} Simpson 1938, 607
suffered as they had always done. There was no such explicit concept or category as "a refugee" until the nineteenth century. The consciousness of this whole phenomenon started to emerge only in the 1880's.\(^{24}\)

In most cases, the refugees did not have a legal existing and valid nationality or citizenship. It was noted in the 1930s, however, that not all refugees were stateless. This was the situation especially in the cases of the refugees coming from Germany and Italy. These people were nevertheless in a need of help\(^{25}\). As a matter of fact, those who fled immediately after the First World War were in a better position than those taking refuge later. After the war there was plenty of work available when nations were rebuilding their countries. Foreign labour force was then welcome. At least the Russians and the Armenians were able to obtain this benefit in the middle of their misadventure.\(^{26}\) When the recession hit the national economies, it led into discriminating restrictions against foreign labour. Some of these restrictions were still prevailing after the Second World War. Research has also pointed out that the massive problem of Russian refugees was dealt with some efficiency in these favourable economic conditions. Since those actions the world has not seen such effectiveness in refugee work.\(^{27}\)

It has been difficult to assemble comprehensive and reliable statistics on refugees, even in modern day's Europe. Different countries have had different ways of categorizing and recognizing refugees. There are various ways to make statistics unreliable or inaccurate even today, and the same concerns the 1920s and 1930s. On those days, one of the most common ways of making mistakes was that sometimes only the head of a family was counted, sometimes people could be counted twice.\(^{28}\) It is also not surprising, that sometimes it is politically and financially expedient to exaggerate the numbers of refugees.

\(^{26}\) Thompson, Dorothy: Refugees - Anarchy or Organization? New York NY 1938, 16
\(^{27}\) Vernant, Jacques: The Refugee in the Post-War World. London 1953, 19
\(^{28}\) See Joly, Daniele: Refugees: asylum in Europe. London 1992, 23
Figure 1. Estimated numbers of Refugees in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s.²⁹

1. Russians
2. Greeks
3. Turkish
4. Armenians
5. Spanish
6. Germans
7. Bulgarians
8. Italians

It is also interesting to note that groups of people that were first classified as prisoners of war, turned into refugees, as they were defined so. After the First World

²⁹ Not exact figures; this is based on several sets of sources, an approximation of the magnitude of the problems compiled by the author of this. Basis for the figures can be found: Thompson, Dorothy: Refugees – Anarchy or Organization? New York NY 1938, 15; Frings Paul: Das Internationale Flüchtlingsproblem 1919-1950. Frankfurt a/M 1951, back cover
War, there were large numbers of men who had been soldiers of some army at some point of time, scattered in many places of the world, waiting for to be evacuated and send back home. In many cases, especially as far as Russians were concerned, the evacuation never came. In 1921 the League was informed by the newly nominated High Commissioner for Refugees Fridtjof Nansen as he wrote in his report in connection to the efforts of repatriation of the prisoners of war: “... Europe is suffering not only from the absence of these men from their homes...... the prisoners living as refugees in countries foreign to them...”.\(^{30}\) Even in case of former soldiers, it is necessary to emphasize again, that characteristic to refugees before and during our times has been their poverty and need for help compared to voluntary immigrants.

Stateless people were individuals who did not have a legal bond of nationality with any state, and included persons who had never acquired citizenship of their birth country, or who had lost their citizenship, and had no claim to citizenship of another state. Children of stateless people often were born into statelessness and only few managed to escape that status. Even today, one of the biggest problems in the life of a refugee is, that by the observers, he or she will be seen as a refugee through the entire lifespan regardless of the own experience of assimilation and adaptation to the present home country and its culture.\(^{31}\)

Today, the world refugee problem is very much a problem of developing countries, bothering mainly areas in Asia, Africa and Latin America\(^{32}\). In the 1920s and 1930s, Europe was in the focus of the refugee issues. As an overall observation, it seems that the scientific research and other reporting in this respect was quite intensive just before the Second World War. The authors were Europeans and Americans, often people with connections to international organizations. The time was Europe-centred. Although there definitely were refugee problems in other parts of the world as well, the attention was entirely on Europe.

The intergovernmental as well as the non-governmental agencies have traditionally taken initiatives only after a situation has reached the point where it raises international attention. This has been the “post-event” approach, which has been questioned as a method of intervening the situations only recently.\(^{33}\) The expulsion of refugees is, and was in the 1920s and 1930s the darkest and most frustrating feature of the refugee

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30 OJ, Vol 2, September 1921, 747  
32 Hakovirta 1991, 8  
problem. A large number of fugitives were thrown back from countries of their refuge. The result was that these people were often arrested when they went back because it was illegal to return after the expulsion order. There were countries, however, where refugees were able to move back to their country of origin without consequences. In some cases, however, the process led to severe prison sentences.34

Handling a refugee crisis can be seen as a process. Once the emergency phase of the refugee crisis was over, it was time to start to think about the possible sustainable solutions. In the second phase of the basic assessment, it was necessary to consider whether the relief should have been continued or whether there were possibilities to find more permanent solutions. On a general level, regardless whether in the past or today, certain variables can influence the solution of the refugee problem: the attitude of the refugees themselves, the attitude and policy of the country of first asylum, the attitude and policy of resettlement countries, the attitude and policy of the country of origin, as well as the "hidden forces".35 Ultimately, the decision concerning the protection of refugees in any of these cases was, and today still is, a matter of host-country policy.36 The political key to create such a protection is also a question of domestic consensus in the receiving country.

The practical problems faced by refugees and the solutions to them have been divided into two main categories. As a consequence, we would then logically see a duality in responsibilities while trying to solve the problems of the refugees: 1. Legal problems, with legal and political protection, and 2. material problems, with material assistance.37 These are mostly connected to each other and it is not theoretically possible to follow this distinction in a study like this. In many connections, there is a parallel drawn between the material problems and humanitarian assistance. One factor in common for all possible solutions is how to approach the country of first asylum. Intergovernmental authorities must always be careful to maintain low profile. There is a danger that assistance programmes may result in local resistance, if it becomes obvious that the schemes are ostentatious.38

37 Vernant, 14
38 see Cuénod, 241
This research will not scrutinize deeply the flows of refugees. It is however, important to condense and simplify the possible destinations of the refugee movements in order to use it as a framework for the perusal. The refugees can either a) go back home b) get temporary settlement in the first country of refuge c) get permanent settlement in the first country of refuge d) find resettlement in third countries. These were also roughly the remedies that the international community was able to offer in the 1920s and 1930s.

Today, there is a rather wide consensus over the fact that the state has duties to its subjects. If a state cannot, or will not, fulfill its obligations to people, a question can be raised whether another state should then take charge of those duties. The international refugee policy and the refugee work recognize the importance of political will of states to address the root causes of the problems. It is primarily the community of states which must take initiatives in the matter. Violent conflicts, serious internal disorders, and human rights violations can be tackled by a collective approach. This idea was not very crystallized when the early steps towards global intergovernmental administration were taken after the First World War. The solution-oriented approach can be successful only if it is able to touch upon the concerns and interests of all stakeholders: the host states, the donor states, as well as other important states in the region. There are always links between the issue of refugees and the broader range of state interest. It was necessary to build on motivation among states in resolving refugee situations in order to get political support for such an international approach. After the First World War, democracy and human rights were not standardized items as they are now. Therefore, the treatment of refugees can give us a useful insight into the political thinking of the time.

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39 Background for this presentation Hakovirta, Harto: Valtioiden konfliktit, pakolaisvirrat ja pakolaisongelmat. Eräs lähestymistapa ja empiirinen analyysi. Tamp. yliopston politiikan tutk. laitos. Tutkimuksia 67/1981, 49
1.2. **Previous Research**

The historical research during the first decades of the United Nations took the standpoint of “why the League failed”. Only after applying larger variety of sources and facing a new era of international situation with the end of bipolar system historiography turned back to the Inter-war period with new view of transnational history. The more properly historical question of what the League really did and meant over its existence was then brought into scrutiny. And indeed, the footprints of the League leading to modern international and intergovernmental establishments were more visible than earlier assumed. The narrative of the League is found to be concerning the shifting boundaries between state power and international authority. This takes form especially in the fields like managing epidemic disease, drug trafficking, sex trafficking and refugees.43

Much has been written about the refugee problems of the 20th century and the solutions to them. It is possible to identify three different lines of research that may give guidance to the handling of the task of this project. There are studies on the subjects themself, the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization, bringing about the different aspects of the work during the life span of these organizations. Secondly, the refugee problem as such has been widely studied both from international and national perspective. There are also studies on the organizations, governmental as well as non-governmental, which have been dealing with the refugee questions. All these lines give their own valuable support to this research project, and it has been deemed necessary to use as many pieces of each category as possible in order to avoid unbalanced perspective.

The standard works on the histories of the League and the ILO are silent in respect of refugee policies of these World organizations. The picture must be produced using various sources available. There are, however, studies and research material that can

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give both hints and impetus to this project. It was not until the mid-1930s when the first analytical studies on refugees and their helpers emerged. A number of research projects have been conducted during the past 60 years. None of them, however, has concentrated on the historical evolution of the refugee work of the League or the ILO. The following is to explain how this research project will complement and improve the historical picture regarding the international refugee work during the Inter-war period.

A sight to an analysis of the problem is offered by an example from 1939: “An analysis of the problem of the Refugee or the Man without a Country requires a thorough understanding of the sociological and psychological factors which crated this problem, together with authentic factual data which deal with its historical and present aspect”.44 Most of the analyses have been made with the solution of the problem in mind and sight. This was a predominant feature in the studies of the Inter-war period. The international community was searching for a solution to the refugee problem. Previous research has also pointed out that the 20th century has been characterized as century of the refugees, whereas the previous century was branded as the century of (voluntary) migration.45 This is to emphasize the coercive nature of the refugeeism.46 We have no reason to challenge these findings. It doesn’t, however, tell us much about how the historical development of this phenomenon manifested itself after the First World War.

The research on refugees was somewhat sporadic and non-theoretical47 until the past two decades. It concentrated mainly on sociological, psychological, and legal aspects. Some works from the viewpoint of international politics have also been introduced during the recent decades. The last mentioned aims at giving answers to the question how modern governmental and international conflicts are connected to refugee problems. Much of the literature belonging to this category is descriptive, with scholars generally concentrating on refugee situations and the policies of individual countries.48

Researchers have produced detailed examinations of refugee movements and the role of international organizations during and after both World Wars. Some of these studies were sponsored or commissioned by the post-war refugee institutions thus having the shortcoming of being insufficiently critical on either the states or the

46 Hakovirta1981, 40-41
47 Hakovirta1981, 8-9
48 Loescher, 4
intergovernmental agencies which formed the international refugee regime during that period. They do, none the less, provide detailed information both about refugee movements and about the international agencies established to protect and assist the refugees. Some of the earlier interpretations of past refugee problems have also been challenged by the modern examination just lately.49

In refugee work there are the refugees and the helpers. Looking into the vast amount of research material it is easy to see that most effort has been put on the first element. This research project pursues to concentrate to the latter, not forgetting the refugees themselves. However, some references to the organized refugee regime in the aftermath of the First World War have been made very creditably. As the collapse of old empires and creation of new states produced huge refugee problems, it was imperative to the new world order to respond. Although it is clear, that the inter-war refugee regime was relatively informal and highly dependent on the ad hoc contributions of individual states, it has been shown by the academic studies that it, nevertheless, set out structured international rules to ensure the protection of refugees.50 This research project has been inspired by this particular clue.

A distinguished category of studies concerned with the refugee problem has been written by researchers concentrating mainly or exclusively to the Jewish refugees from Nazism. This category of literature has not much to say about the general development of international refugee assistance policy. These studies, concentrating to their specific target group, are also in general quite critical towards the organizations and their alleged failure to provide real help for Jewish refugees.51 Previous research has noticed that throughout the Inter-war period there was more emphasis on the need to find solutions to their plight than on why people had sought refuge.52 This has been considered a weakness, and thus, lots of emphasis has been put on the causes of refugee problems during the recent decades.

The classic survey conducted by Sir John Hope Simpson in the late 1930s is especially important because so many later researchers have been using the material produced by the survey process, as well as the results presented in the reports. Its

49 Loescher, 5-6
multiplicative effect has been enormous. It was the only comprehensive refugee study made during the interwar period. The reports came at the end of the decade; the preliminary report was published in 1938 and the major report in 1939. The survey covers thus practically the whole interwar period, which was also the lifespan of the League’s refugee work. The results of the survey have been cited for over seventy years now. The survey and its findings have also been among the momentums leading to the scope and the perspective of this study, because the writings cover almost all possible aspects of the refugee situation of the time. This is to say, all, with the exception of the refugee policy of the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization.

The major report of the survey contains well over six hundred pages of results found by the team of people conducting the work. The report is not a study pursuing to scientific presentation. It is rather a compilation of facts organized from parts to entities. It does not follow any analytical formulation or a chronological order. The presentation reflects the fact that there had been a large number of people working as independent teams involved in the research process.

The survey headed by Simpson was performed under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. It received financial assistance from the Rockefeller Foundation as well as from two other sources. The survey was conducted in 1937 – 1939. A preliminary report was published in July 1938. The final report was produced on material collected up to October 1938. The project was carried out in the middle of the actual events. This was manifested also in the preface of the final report, where Simpson stated: “Recent events have altered the situation in various ways” (since end of survey project itself). The biggest change during those months was the reshuffle of the whole international organization working with refugee questions. It concerned the League’s organization; the High Commissioner and the Nansen Office, as well as the new player in the field, Intergovernmental Committee established in Evian, which was undergoing changes already few months after its birth.

The best contemporary research available on the topic at hand is definitely the one written by Claudena Skran. The work, “Refugees in Inter-war Europe” describes and analyses the emergence of the refugee regime. The book examines the origins of refugee movements of the time as well as the international responses to them. The research of Skran sees the efforts of various parties; the League, the NGOs and the governments, as forming a combined and coherent system.

The method of Skran is to use a multidisciplinary approach on explaining international responses to refugee movements. This is done by applying a theoretical concept of international regime. The theory is used to explain why international co-operative efforts began. Regimes were inspired by principles and they, in turn, were often centered on formal institutions like the League of Nations. Skran attempts to contribute to the field of refugee studies by understanding of contemporary refugee problems. The regime theory allows contemplations how regimes matter and which are stronger; national interests or international norms and rules? The problem of this work from the historical point of view is, that it talks about the emergence of the system as a one sudden and simple phenomenon, thus leaving the evolution of the policy of the intergovernmental world organizations untouched. It is not very clear, what the concrete appearance or the phenotype of the regime was. League of Nations was part of it, but the role of it is not defined. The ILO is not present in that picture, although it seems to have played a very central role, especially in the 1920s.

The book of Skran gives a valuable perspective to the problem itself. It describes the magnitude and the significance of the refugee problem, as well as analyses the different political and other forces forming the driving factors in the international arena. Written in 1995, it has the necessary distance to the times and actors of the project. It goes deep into the background and possible reasons, but ends up with no analysis on the evolution of the strategies and consistencies of the work of the intergovernmental world organizations. It very much reflects similar thinking with Simpson’s work, conducted sixty years earlier, in a sense that according to it, the various actors formed an invisible network with its rules and guidelines. Nevertheless, the work of Skran is the only comprehensive study on the subject after the Second World War, and therefore has an indispensable value to this research project helping to put many pieces in their right places.

Norwegian Atle Grahl-Madsen has studied refugee questions from the legal point of view while working himself with refugees in the UN regime. His studies cover the developments during the League era as well as the creation of the modern refugee work apparatus. This material gives a valuable view to the development of the legal system, and of course, pays a tribute to the work of the author’s countryman Fridtjof Nansen.

54 Skran, C. M.: Refugees in Inter-War Europe. The Emergence of a Regime. Oxford; Clarendon Press 1995, 7-8
55 Skran, 8-9
One of the most prominent contemporary refugee researchers is Gil Loescher, a visiting Professor at refugee Studies Centre and Senior Research Associate at Centre for International Studies at the University of Oxford, and Emeritus professor of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame. Professor Loescher is an author and co-author as well as a leading editor of several books on refugee questions and international relations. He is also a Co-Director of larger research projects on refugee situations and solutions. The books produced by the projects in which Professor Loescher has been the leading character, have helped especially in forming mental structures in researches mind when it comes down to basic facts; who the refugees are, how they become refugees, and most specifically, what can and should be done in order to help them. These structures are necessary to be kept in mind when looking into the multiplicity of source material.

In general, the researchers have never failed to point out that where migration takes place, there are push-factors and pull-factors. As the push-factors in the case of refugees are more essential than other causes, classical refugee research has come to the following classification of the reasons for taking refuge in foreign countries: 1) ethnic problems, 2) religious and racial problems 3) ideological and political confrontations. These motives often occur mixed with each other.\(^{56}\)

Refugee questions and forced migration have also offered opportunities to engage in normative analysis to examine how states’ responses to refugees should look like. This is clearly an addition to analytical attempts to understand and explain responses to refugees.\(^{57}\) There are different roles for the science. “To be practically useful, academic research of the world refugee problem should contribute to the accumulation of such generalizations from the historical past which would help governments and refugee aid organizations put each new refugee situation and the whole world refugee problem into their proper contexts and thus improve the possibilities for effective management and solution projects….academic research can only play an auxiliary role ….. It should do what it can.”\(^ {58}\)

Refugees have been used as a vehicle to promote disciplinary ideas and theories. This has especially taken place in fields like sociology, international law, and international relations. The reason has probably been the fact that refugees represent

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\(^{56}\) Europa und die Deutschen Fluchtlinge. Wissenschaftliche Schriftenreihe des Instituts zur Förderung öffentlicher Angelegenheiten E V. Band II. Frankfurt am Main 1952, 10

\(^{57}\) Betts and Loescher 2011, 20

an object which can be approached from several directions. Therefore, refugees have also been even in a scope of scientific discussions where prominent researchers have been trying to influence each others’ assumptions. This type of approach can be useful only in a limited sense for a project attempting to promote understanding with the methods and the sources typical to history research.

The key findings of the previous research seem to support the conception that the range of activities must be considered as parts of a comprehensive solution. The success of such an approach, however, depends on the level of commitment of state actors. Only sufficient amount of cooperation will make it successful. Statelessness was considered as one of the most severe problems during the inter-war period. In general, the solutions offered as remedies were: reducing the number of stateless people, and alleviation of the consequences of statelessness. This research project cannot go into deep considerations on the theoretical grounds on any of these possibilities. The League of Nation tried to do what could be done to alleviate the situations within the limitations described later throughout this study. Thus, the scope of this project is clearly on the alleviation side.

It has been mentioned in many connections that the present legal regime and organizational framework for the provision of protection and assistance to refugees has its background in the 1920s, as it was initiated and instituted under the auspices of the League of Nations after the First World War. This has been considered a given fact, but no previous research has explained how, when, and why all this was done. The approach to refugee questions before the United Nations framework, and the measures taken on behalf of refugees, have been considered typically ad hoc measures. It is, however, important to see that there was a pattern towards a policy.

In modern days’ language the word “policy” would be often replaced by the word “strategy”. As we are looking into this particular period of time, the word policy in this connection fits in better. In this context, policy on refugees means broader guidelines aiming at the solving of the refugee problem. This policy can be intentional or unintentional. It can also be coherent or incoherent. The guidelines form the frames for

59 See e.g. Brown, Chris: The Only Thinkable Figure? Ethical and Normative Approaches to Refugees in International Relations. (In Refugees and International Relations. Ed. by Alexander Betts and Gil Loescher. Oxford University Press. New York, NY 2011), 152
60 Loescher, Gil and Milner, James, II, 368
61 Francois, 339
the assistance of the refugees in its various forms. It means agenda and procedures for
the refugee help. In order to form a picture of the refugee policy of the world
organizations, it is necessary to scrutinize the practical measures taken by or on behalf
of the organizations, funding, target groups, as well as the results.

A policy is typically described as a principle or rule to guide decisions and achieve
rational outcomes. The term is not normally used to denote what is actually done.
Policies are generally adopted by boards or governance bodies within organizations
whereas procedures and protocols would be developed and adopted by executive
levels. Policies have usually both intended effects as well as unintended effects. Policy
addresses the intent of the organization. It is intended to affect the real world by
guiding the decisions that are made.

A further question is, whether the work was mostly reactive or proactive. Preliminary
assumption on the basis of the previous research is that it must have been reactive,
since the refugee situations mostly were sudden and unpredictable. A certain pattern in
the reactions throughout the time between the wars would again refer to consistency
and thus to a policy thinking.

Implementation is the realization or execution of a plan or a policy. Very often this is
done through the guidelines. In political science, implementation refers to the carrying
out of public policy. Factors impacting implementation include the intent, the
administrative capacity, interest group activity and opposition, as well as executive
support.

Research on refugee problems and its solutions must be carried out also because
refugees constitute a significant problem. Michael Hansson said in his Nobel lecture
1938 that "The refugee problem has, all in all, become the greatest social problem of
our time. This problem can be solved, but only by energetic cooperation with the
League of Nations by Governments aware of their responsibility to mankind."63

Over the past six decades a transnational response to the world refugee
phenomenon has been institutionalized in the countries hosting refugees. This
development has resulted in an extensive structure of private and public international
organizations, sufficiently equipped to provide refugee assistance and promote
resettlement. This international refugee regime was created by the leading western
powers as they bore the responsibility of the activities. It has been shown, however,
that it was considered appropriate only in so far as the system served their particular

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63 Hansson II
interests or needs\textsuperscript{64}, which in many cases were political. But all this has its roots in the League era, with its principles and shortcomings. In the 1920s, all this was created from almost nothing. Therefore, because the historical picture of the evolution of the intergovernmental respond to refugee questions is still incomplete, this work aims to add to that side of general understanding using the principles and methods described below. “We have much to learn by going back to the League of Nations”.\textsuperscript{65}

The activities of the prominent individuals as well as the variety of organizations and autonomous bodies connected to the League and the ILO have received sufficient attention by historians. The biggest gap in research concerning the LON has been the lack of synthetic studies on particular sectors. Only recently some reassessments on various branches of League’s work have been published. This continuation provides the position also for this study.

1.3. Scope, Task, Methodology, and Presentation

The word ‘policy’ can have various meanings. Normally it refers to principles and rules to guide decisions and actions. In this work, ‘policy’ means continuity in these principles. It means will and consistency that was shown by the people who were in the position to promote things and to advocate the cause of refugees. It also means interest expressed and plans which were supposed to systemize the approach. It means spending public funds and making decisions how this money should be used. It means decisions made by the people who had the capacity to make them. It means showing responsibility. Moreover, it means a vision held by individuals who dedicated their strength and skills to the work on behalf of the destitute people.

The basic task of this study is to try to verify whether the refugee work of intergovernmental organizations had enough consistency and continuation, which would justify the use of the word ‘policy’. This study will concentrate on the policy of the League. It doesn't pretend to be a comprehensive account of the refugee work of the Inter-war period. The approach of this project will include a slight touch upon the

\textsuperscript{64} Loescher 1989, 9.
\textsuperscript{65} Pedersen 2007, 1116
strategies and programs of the individual organizations. The scope of this research project does not allow the researcher to go deep into the implementation and the consequences of the policies of these organs. In this respect, the project provides possibilities for further studies.

The presupposition is that all the above mentioned elements existed throughout the Inter-war time, although historiography so far has not been able to articulate this distinctly. The intention of this intervention is to show how certain norms and administrative practices existed and developed in connection to the refugee assistance during those two decades. This study will demonstrate how the abovementioned emerged and manifested itself in the intergovernmental forum. Presenting the lines of evolution of the refugee work will perform as a general account of the refugee policy as well as a tool to analyze and provide evidence for the consistence and continuity.

In the 1920s the world was still far away from the present thinking in which “internationalism is generally presented as something positive, and globalization is depicted as the current of modern history”.66 The post World War system was dominated by national thinking, and the fuel for that, as well as the power behind the LON, was a kind of an utopianism, which gave the few activists “energy, support and in certain circumstances valuable political capital" in their transnational approach.67 International cooperation was determined largely by imperial internationalism which is one of the descriptive definitions attached to the dominance of the Great Powers during the Inter-war period.68 In these circumstances one would not necessarily expect effective refugee policy. There are facts, however, which suggest the contrary.

Most of the academic studies on the LON have primarily been concerned with the fate of the peace activities of the League. The work of the League has been described and judged as inefficient and finally leading to a complete failure. However, the measures taken in connection with refugees have even been praised in those few presentations that have considered this work important enough to be mentioned. Refugees were sometimes even seen as the biggest threat to the world peace. There is an apparent disharmony between different statements evaluating the efforts of the world organizations. Even on the often praised work of Fridtjof Nansen, the semi-official history of the League written by F.P. Walters concludes that the results were small. According to Walters, Nansen convoked a number of conferences in the hope of

67 Mazower 2009, 6
68 See e.g. Mazower 2009, 19-23
securing a common policy on refugee matters. The only that really received some kind of consensus, was the general introduction of the Nansen passports.69

The inspiration and starting point for the scope derives from previous studies. According to the well-known work of Simpson (1939), there were three fairly defined periods in the history of the work provided by “the Nansen organization” for the Russian, Armenian and other refugees.

1. 1921-1924. These years were covered by the work of Dr. Nansen himself, concentrating on Russian and Armenian refugees, but also intervening in the early stages of Greek and Bulgarian movements.

2. 1925-1929. Division of functions between Dr. Nansen as High Commissioner directly responsible to the Council and the Refugee Service incorporated in the International Labour Office.

3. 1930-1938. The Refugee Service was temporarily incorporated in the Secretary for a year, then the creation of the Nansen International Office for Refugees which then worked fairly autonomously. During that period, a High Commissioner for refugees coming from Germany was established. The HC was responsible to the League, but with an autonomous office.70

The works accomplished after the Second World War show the periodization in a somewhat different light. According to Atle Grahl-Madsen the refugee work of the League of Nations can be categorized in three distinct phases of about equal length as follows71:

The first was the formative phase. Nansen worked as the High Commissioner (1921-1930 and the Refugee Service was established within the ILO (1925-1929). The period saw ad hoc solutions, but there was also optimism and hope that the refugee problem could be solved. The second period covered by the Nansen International Office for Refugees (1931-1938) and the High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany (1933-1938). The leaders of the League wanted to keep distance to the question of refugees which seems to have been considered somewhat embarrassing. There were timeframes for the work. The third phase started with the creation of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (1938-1947) and the establishment of the single High Commissioner for Refugees under the protection of the League of Nations.

70 Simpson 1939, 197-198, 214-215
71 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 365-366
(1939-1946). The period experienced the decline of the League, and finally the war. New organizations were formed as a result of the reasoning that the previous measures had not been successful, and there were new serious problems in sight.

The divisions described above give some tools for this research project for making a proper disposition. 1921 is a self-evident starting point. The first decade marked a start for the intergovernmental refugee work as such, and despite the formal changes in the structure of the apparatus, it seems to form a relatively solid entity from a historical point of view. The 1930s, after the death of the Fridtjof Nansen, seems to be a quite different era for the refugees. There was also a quite different playing field for the organizations dealing with the problems of refugees during the latter decade.

There were no Inter-Governmental Organizations before the First World War in the same sense as the LON existed. Therefore, what was done internationally for the refugees, was almost exclusively conducted by International Non-Governmental Organizations. There simply was no forum for international political deliberations and actions. The extension of the reference period has been done in several connections by some researchers already, especially by Tommie Sjöberg in his doctoral dissertation on the Intergovernmental Committee of Refugees. The scope of that project has been to try to find the trends manifesting how the modern refugee service was first developed and conducted as well as how it survived the Second World War.

Although modern transnational history has a tendency to blur chronological boundaries it has been deemed necessary to refrain from innovative solutions in timeframes. Since Europe is in the focus of the project and the Inter-war period in Europe means the years from the First World War to 1939, it is the frame in this work. The judgment for choosing the particular period from 1920 to 1939 is guided also by other “natural causes”. This was the actual and effective life span of the League of Nations and the organizations attached to it. It is also advisable to divide the period into two naturally distinctive sections, since the preliminary supposition is that the two decades were somewhat different, due the nature of the problems to be responded to. The same applies to the actors dealing with the questions.

In general terms, the needs and the reasons for the more coherent attention to refugee matters can be identified in a situation where the structure of the populations is

72 See Sjöberg 1991; the time span over the research is until 1947
73 E.g. the beginning of the Japanese hostilities in China in 1937 as the beginning of the Second World War; see Clavin, Patricia: Time, Manner, Place: Writing European History in Global, Transnational and International Contexts. European History Quarterly 40(4) 2010, 627
naturally changing.\textsuperscript{74} That was happening beneath the political processes in Europe after the First World War. There was a predicted lack of working force in some countries. The refugees were welcome when they were capable of working. Today we talk about the ratio of certain age group to another. This correlates to the need of comers. During the Inter-war period this discussion did not take place openly. Nevertheless, the fact is that there was a need to handle the refugees who were able and willing to move somewhere else and to take care of those who were not able and willing to do so.

Politics is a process primarily concerned with the allocation of values and resources. The behavior of states is often presumed to be motivated and driven by the pursuit of national interests.\textsuperscript{75} Nobody would normally challenge the assumption that all states have their interests. At least a part of the interests is assumed to be legitimate.

The refugee problems of the Inter-war time had many features which made them also politically significant. The cases of Russia and Nazi-Germany were self-evident. The Armenian genocide has in some connections been compared to the holocaust.\textsuperscript{76} Armenian refugees had been “on the list” of the LON more than a decade before the Jewish problem emerged. There were many competent analyses carried out by the LON, as well as other institutions, on the causes as well as the consequences of the Armenian genocide. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has made efforts to identify, copy, and store every possible document from the archives of the world concerning the holocaust.

There have been some attempts to fill the gap between the studies of international relations and political history. Although international political history has looked at refugees, it has not taken full advantage of the concepts that have been developed within International Relations theory. Only selective works have emerged. It seems that these have not been sufficiently integrated with one another.\textsuperscript{77} Although this individual project has been conducted independently and separately from any coherently integrated research project, it aims from its small part to bridge the disintegration between the disciplines in so far as it concerns refugees.

Policies are typically promulgated through official written documents which can be named in various ways. Policies are followed by guidelines. Normally, a guideline is a

\textsuperscript{76} There is a section designated to Armenians in the Museum of Tolerance, LA, CA; see e.g. Rautkallio, Hannu: Holokaustilla pelastetut. Juva 2004, 21
\textsuperscript{77} Betts and Loescher 2011, 21
document or a set of statements that aim to streamline particular processes according
to a set routine. Refugee policy is something bigger. It covers all "normal" measures
concerning refugees. That includes the refugee administration, which is normally
supported by governmental authorities in the states. Moreover, it covers guidelines for
assistance.

The President of the Nansen Office Michael Hansson wrote in 1937 that the criticism
towards the refugee work of the League was derogatory. In his words, this criticism
was produced by those who knew least about the work of the League, and were least
interested. He pointed out that the world organization had existed only for a short time
and the dimensions of its work had never been tested before. This testimony as such
can well be used as one of the further justifications for the attempt to reconstruct the
refugee policy, as sufficient number of years have now passed since those days.

The inter-war efforts have been described as efforts to help the refugees on a
temporary basis. Refugee problems were considered separate and non-continual
events. When a new refugee situation suddenly developed, a temporary organization
was established to deal with that particular problem. This is a justified perception
made by several scholars. It doesn’t, however, change the fact that the organization
existed in a form or another through the entire period of the 1920s and 1930s. Beneath
the visible agenda the refugee problems were constantly existent, regardless whether
or not they were widely recognized and internationally addressed.

Refugees are usually created as the direct result of political decisions taken by
sovereign states, with consequences that extend beyond national borders. The
existence of refugees makes things worse in many connections. It affects foreign
policy, intensifies inter-state conflicts, and influences international attitudes. Today
the international refugee policy and the refugee work coordinated by the UN recognize
the importance of political will of states to address the root causes of the problems. By
this optimistic view, it is primarily the community of states which must take initiatives in
the matter. Further to this thinking, the collective approach can alleviate the
consequences of armed conflicts, serious internal disturbances, and all kinds of human
rights violations. This idea was not very crystallized when the early steps towards
global intergovernmental administration were taken after the First World War.

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78 Hansson, Michael: Flyktningsproblemet og Folkeforbundet. Foredrag i Nobelinstuttet, Oslo 7.1.1937. Oslo
1938, 5
79 Sjöberg 1991, 14
80 Loescher 1989, 8
81 Hocké, 45.
The best solution to all refugee crises would be the prevention of conflicts producing refugee flows. Since this has not been a realistic viable solution so far, the international community has been compelled to resort to the second best, which is working properly with the existing refugee population. This basis alone speaks for the demand for a proper coherence in approach and action.

Recent research on the history of the Inter-war period has had a gradually increasing tendency to combine and integrate political, domestic, and international history, instead of keeping the political developments separate from economic and social evolution as it has been done traditionally. This research project doesn’t try to bring about sociological or political explanations explicitly. Nevertheless, those factors are used in the analysis as a platform for argumentation. In the network of science, this presentation may produce material for scholars representing other fields in order to find models for solutions to the modern refugee questions. It describes the earlier attempts, thus providing an example how the work was sometimes successful and sometimes led to disasters. This research utilizes contemporary archive material as the primary source for building the outline of the story. Research literature as well as other printed material is used in analyzing the bulk of information rising from the primary material.

The work itself is assembling pictures from fragments as well as disassembling large disorganized entities to be reassembled again in an appropriate and functional way. The preliminary hypothesis provides guidance. Here the assumption is that there was more consistency and continuation in the intergovernmental refugee work than previously ascertained. In order to verify this, only the most relevant sources have been used to collect the facts and observations. Previous studies on the subject by the author of this, as well as the works of other writers have given the impetus to the view being used as the basis for this research. This project is not source oriented in a sense that the preliminary hypothesis guides to choose only those primary sources that are deemed necessary.

Inasmuch as we can presume that there was no well-defined and orderly formulated “official” policy document, we need to look into the possible guidelines as well as the procedures of implementation to the extent which is necessary in order to be able to verify that a strategy existed. In the absence of an official “doctrine” and a formal policy declaration, it is obligatory to follow how the refugee regime worked in different sectors in order to draw conclusions whether a policy really existed. There is a need to make a

chronological analysis through the whole Inter-war period, using the sectors as cross-cutting issues or themes. This will reveal the consistency or alternatively the inconsistency in the work. The basic assumption is, that coherence in the action will speak for the existence of a policy. A lack of coherence would, in turn, indicate something else, even a panic in reactions.

Transnational approach has been used above all to find patterns in such phenomena as international migration and ethnic diasporas.\textsuperscript{83} International refugee work can also be understood as a chain of authorizations. Since it is known, that the non-governmental organizations (Red Cross and others) were involved in the refugee work on the spot at a national level as soon as the problems emerged, it is interesting to follow how these agencies turned to intergovernmental organization through their own international bodies. Then the authorization to take uniform measures travelled back to the national level through the coordinating role of the intergovernmental refugee agencies. And again, in most cases at the end of this circle, there were the same voluntary organizations taking care of the field work. It could be noted, that by combining transnational and comparative approaches, even more fruitful explanations can be found and more plausible trends discovered. The overall picture of the treatment of refugees requires parallel studies of nations and societies during the time between the wars.

The essential perspective of the project is chronological. The chronology running through the work supplies links between the pieces and records significant developments. The focus is to concentrate to the cross-cutting themes. Within these systematic items, one must scrutinize the evolution and change in order to verify the existence or alternatively the absence of coherence in the action. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to follow whether the aims and measures were consistent through the two decades which are in the focus of this project. Funding is the most essential indicator when assessing the seriousness of the intervention. We must appraise how the principles of the action were articulated, if they were in place. Also the structure of the organization and its permanence must be scrutinized. This practical approach is reflected in the disposition of the work.

Transnational history is rather a state of motivation than a unique methodology. The meaning of the term is broad. Its roots lie partly in the study of migrations.\textsuperscript{84} Quite naturally, this particularly wide and liberal approach can be applied to study of

\textsuperscript{83} Tyrrel, Ian: http://iantyrrel.wordpress.com/what-is-transnational-history/ 11.6.2013, 1

\textsuperscript{84} Clavin 2010, 625
refugees, as a background picture in order to put tide of events to the right scale and in order to avoid jamming into corners at the multiplicity of the individual deliberations. Transnational approach does not bring much new as such. All history has always been border crossing, in a way or another. But in the flow of larger entities of historiography all this eventually contributes to the tendency by which we gradually build a picture helping us to understand where the modern ideas on humanitarianism derive from. It seems to offer means to avoid fragmentation caused by nationalism and national history. This approach can bring cohesion to the argumentation, simply because of not being a theory, but an attitude.

Norway had a special role in supporting international cooperation during the time between the wars. The claim to moral power in international relations translated into engagement in the humanitarian agenda of the LON. All this was personified in Fridtjof Nansen and later created the “Norwegian peace tradition”.

Finland, on the other hand, offers an example of another development. Finland was a receiving country, and through different experiences from Norway, also inherited divergent views on international and intergovernmental cooperation.

Inasmuch it is necessary to demonstrate how the national and international levels worked in interaction, Finland has been used as a case study example. This has been possible and desirable for several reasons. The refugee situation in Finland in the beginning of the 1920s was one of the gravest in whole Europe, when measured by numbers. Although Finland was a newly independent state, there was a rather well functioning public administration which was able to produce documents on the refugee administration. Finland was a typical recipient country in the sense that it was a democratic state, receiving refugees from a war zone under dictatorial chaos. The laws were in place, and the authorities were trying to implement them as they could in the rapidly changing situations. The look into the Finnish case gives a fresh reminder that the refugee work was not just politics and policies, but also struggling in the field with the hungry and homeless people.

Regime theory, applied for example by Claudena Skran, explains defectively how institutionalized ideas and even instructions were adapted to Finnish circumstances. Transnational history aims to put national developments in context, and to explain the situations in terms of cross-national influences. Finland can be used as an example in order to demonstrate the interdependence in more concrete terms.

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85  Clavin 2010, 634
86  Tyrrel, 1
Another way to describe transnational history is to understand it not as a theory or a method but as an angle, a perspective in order to reveal links and flows. \(^{87}\) It has been documented that “In the Great Depression European countries faced very similar problems and dilemmas, but opted to tackle them on their own. There was much talk of the need for international cooperation … … but very little action.” \(^{88}\) From the perspective of transnational history, it appears only natural that an individual country is used as a sample in order to demonstrate the flows and links mentioned above. This reflects the “onion model” as a construction between local, regional and national history on the one hand, and the international as well as the global on the other. \(^{89}\) With this logic of layers, the local can be directly connected to the international and definitely to the intergovernmental level. For this project, the most natural sample would be Finland, because of its proximity and availability of the source material. The visible advantage of this approach is that interactions spanning borders can make the policy actions tangible and understandable. Finland has been chosen as an example also because it has been evaluated by researchers of the League, notably by Paul Kennedy, that Finland was one of the few countries that especially rejoiced at the promise the League offered and “felt that at least they had some place at high table”. \(^{90}\)

A few strong personalities have a central role in this study. According to our understanding, historical persons have causal powers to affect intentionally or unintentionally their own actions, and bring about changes in the world. Only people, in groups and as individuals, are the moving forces of history, so we must look into the behavior of historical personalities to discover the “causes” of historical developments. We need a viewpoint from both individualism and holism; a historical process in its various dimensions.

Observation and theory interact in a selective sense. Theories determine to certain extent what we choose to observe and study and how we understand it. Observations, in turn, have influence to the content of our theories. \(^{91}\) History as a science looks into social change. In this context we also include politics in this entity. We must, however, bear in mind that there are no necessities in history. In practical terms this is to say that

\(^{87}\) Patel, Klaus Kiran: Transnational History, in : European History Online (EGO), Leibniz Institute of European History (IEG), Mainz 2010-12-03. URL: http://www.ieg-ego.eu/patelk-2010-en URN: urn:nbn:de:0159-20100921314 (2013-06-11), 2

\(^{88}\) Clavin 2000, 5

\(^{89}\) Patel, 2


the international refugee policy in modern times is not necessarily any better than it was during the Inter-war period.

Whereas the work of Skran concentrates on describing and analyzing the ideological background, the emergence and the effects of the regime through a designated theory, this work is trying to find consistent features in the behavior of an essential part of that regime over the years through a historical analysis. The work of Skran tries to understand refugees. Skran has described in her study the emergence of the regime. This project goes further: It shows that the actions of the LON formed a continuation that can be called a policy. This study also shows and describes the evolution of the work in a historical perspective. One should always be cautious in using terminology crossing the limits of different scientific disciplines. However, since the term “evolution” has been used in modern history writing, it has also been applied to this project, merely because of the specific formulation of the research rationale requiring mental tools which allow handling of development of the two decades under scrutiny.

The structure and the presentation of this work is constructed in a way that gives the reader a possibility to follow the evolution in a chronological order. Chapter 2 contains the discourse on the establishment of the international refugee regime and the beginning of the refugee work of the intergovernmental organizations by presenting the situation at large, the requirements posed to the organizations, as well as the responses to those demands. It provides the background for the description and analyze of the interventions which are then discussed in the chapters 3 and 4. This background includes the projection of the essential principles applied in the work.

In order to answer the central question the two main working chapters (3 and 4) are devoted to the examination of the evolution of cross-cutting issues. They follow the development mainly chronologically, as it is necessary to draw an outline of a perspective throughout the whole reference period. The aim is to understand why the work was done in the first place and what led to a strategic behavior that we would call a policy. The analysis deals first with the enormous challenges faced by the organizations, and then discusses the possibilities the actors could imagine and see for themselves. It analyses the principal justifications which were found for the interventions and then for the formal authorizations expressed publicly. Chapter 3 brings about the initial circumstances. Chapter 4 discusses the essential change in the

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92 Kennedy 2006, 51-239
international political climate, which inevitably had an influence to the evolution of the policy.

These chapters also discuss the refugees, inasmuch it is necessary for the context to know, who they were and why they were selected to be assisted. A central question in following the evolution of the refugee policy is to make an examination of the administrative arrangements, organizations as well as funding of the activities. The organizations confronted obstacles and difficulties, and it is necessary to bring those forward in order to understand how all this effected the work. After this discourse the presentation leads the reader into the work enabled by the principles and premises. This is to say, what could be really done?

The practical field work must be discussed in order to provide hard evidence for the existence of a policy at a concrete level. These practical measures are often connected to each other. The distinction in the presentation has not been made according to the division of official measures derived from policies. These measures can be singled out from the mass of deliberations carried out in the 1920s and 1930s. The division is made in this way in order to enable a better analysis. In political discourse many terms and categories are also often used to cover the real facts; i.e. to cover or justify inefficiency and reluctance. In Munslow’s words, historical narrative has a duty. Its key concern is to denote or reference what actually was, and then connote or suggest what it meant.93

The summaries at the end of the chapters 3 and 4 offer analytical accounts on the respective decades in order to make it easier for the reader to follow the narrative. The immediate message of those summaries is “what has been found now”. These analyses are summarized in chapter 6, which represents the final conclusion and synthesis on the policy formulation in the refugee work of the intergovernmental community during the Inter-war period.

A short general assessment offered by chapter 5. is required in order to provide a platform for the evaluation of the policy, which is done in chapter 6. The necessity of this analysis can be validated in an inverse manner: if no achievements can be shown, it is rather difficult to prove that there was a consistent policy in place. According to Paul Kennedy’s testimony historians have big problems in discovering general theories because the evidence of the past is almost always too varied to allow for “hard” scientific conclusions. Some clear and valid assumptions, however, can be made while

admitting that there may be exceptions.\textsuperscript{94} Those assumptions will be presented in the concluding part.

1.4. Sources

A study of this kind is a formidable scholastic challenge, not less because there are masses of material which touch upon the subject of this project. The quantity of preliminary material is definitely more than one researcher can go through. A tremendous amount of published source material has to be collected and scrutinized. The selection has no self evident guidelines. It must also be emphasized that the scope of the questions in this project is not source-oriented.

Because the Inter-war period is already distant past, we cannot get support from today’s contemporary political discussion. We can only rely on sources produced during those decades. The period between the Wars is well covered in the studies of political history, which means that it is not difficult to find explanations for phenomena and facts emerging from source material. This is an advantage as well as a burden. Refugee as an issue was mostly neglected and forgotten as “the big events” were rolling to the scene in the 1930s.

International organizations produce a huge amount of material. It is impossible to go through all what was marked down and printed during the reference period. The most essential question then is to decide how to predefine and decide what is really relevant for the research project. The language of the documents, like always in the case in multi-diplomacy, is lavish. This means that in most connections little is said in many words. What was really meant is still another question.

The biggest problem is that if the researcher doesn’t know when to stop looking for new facts from new material, the project will never be finished. The logical guideline here is to remember that the research project must be a logical entity. We must stop when we evaluate that new sets of material do not change the conclusions anymore.

All in all, the basic method for the selection of relevant sources is: 1) asking the question 2) considering where the answer may be 3) selecting the best sources from the viewpoint of the work economy 4) going for the answers in the selected material.

\textsuperscript{94} Kennedy 1989, xxi-xxii
Caution is necessary in the process in order to avoid being carried away with the abundance of the sources.

Similar inadequacy applies to both the LON’s and the ILO’s primary materials: They don’t reveal much about the efficiency or effectiveness of the practical work conducted in the field. Meanwhile the policy guidelines can be outlined and constructed quite clearly. Most of the material used as primary sources consists of published documents. The League of Nations and the International Labour Organization have been in a position to make all sources relevant to this research project published.

The most active and timely accurate discussion of the League on these issues took place in the Council. Therefore the material connected to those deliberations and decisions is the most essential for this project. Being the principal executive body of the League, the Council was always the first to know about new matters. The Council prepared the matters to the Assembly’s agenda. It also seconded all relevant decisions and resolutions of the Assembly before the actual implementation.

The Official Journal of the League (OJ) provides a good practical solution for seeking information on League deliberations. It has excellent indexes which makes it easy to handle as a source of information for refugee questions. The OJ contains reports and other corresponding material. They summarize the projects concerning e.g. the organizational arrangements. They also contain information on replies of the member states to different questionnaires. The most important entity is, however, the records of all meetings of the Council of the League. These records contain the official minutes of the meetings with their annexes.

The arrangement of the Official Journal is by year, counting from the establishment of the League. There are annual volumes, approximately one per month, numbered each year separately by a running number. Each issue is easy to distinguish. A substantial part of the material of the Official Journal is designated to the meetings of the Council of the League. In those cases the whole numbered issue consists of the Minutes of the Sessions of the Council.

The Minutes are copies of the official minutes in a printed form. They contain the documented proceedings of every meeting of the sessions in chronological order. It seems that different sessions had very distinguished lengths and weights. Some sessions lasted for several weeks, some only a couple of days. The chronological setting provides a possibility to follow the progress of items on the agenda. All speeches and proposals are documented, which would give the possibility to draw conclusions on matters which are not in the scope of this research project. This project is more interested in the general picture of the refugee agenda, trying to draw
conclusions on the matters considered most important, which, in turn, forms the basis for the policy of the League.

There seem to be no thematic issues of the Official Journal as such. The issues which are not designated to the Council meetings, have content of varying items. Typically, items under heading “refugee questions” contain circular letters from the Secretary General to the member states of the League as well as replies from the governments to these numerous inquiries. All documents are presented in their original or their translated (in English) form. Dates are there, and so are the signatures. This represents a very clear example of pure power of evidence of the sources on the attitudes of the members to various issues connected to refugee questions. Some of the replies are almost illegible. Not because of the condition of the material, nor the quality of the translation, but purely because the author of the document has been trying to hide his real position on the matter. It is evident that the weight the governments were putting on these issues varied a lot. Some replies were signed by Prime Ministers, whereas some others by unknown civil servants.

The “undesignated” issues of the Official Journal contain all kinds of reports produced by the International refugee regime. Most of the reports were established by the intergovernmental organizations, typically the High Commissioner or the various mixed commissions and committees. Some others, produced by e.g. non-governmental organizations are to be found as well.

A selected portion of the same reports can be found in connection with the sessions of the Council. In those cases there are references to them in the descriptions of the proceedings and the documents are annexed to the issues of the Journal. In some cases, the discussions taking place during the meetings can be understood only by having the annexes at hand parallel with the text concerning proceedings. The proposals for resolutions and recommendations are clearly distinguished and itemized. At the end of each meeting it is stated whether the resolutions have been adopted. Opposing statements are also recorded; it is difficult, however, to draw conclusions on required support to proposals. There is no evidence on any votes taking place.

The system of the documentation as described above is clear and makes it easy to follow. It is necessary to examine all the issues chronologically through in order to draw conclusions and make assumptions on the basis of the material. The explicit and systematic indexes in case of the Minutes of the Council as well as the simple and clear contents of the undesignated issues makes it rather unproblematic, although labour intensive, for the researcher to find what is necessary in testing the ideas of the task of this project.
Another justification for the selection of the source material comes by the “official” History of the League of Nations. The author of the book, former Deputy Secretary General of the LON, F.P. Walters, confirms that the official publications of the League form the most important set of sources needed in order to reconstruct the work and intentions of the League. Walters writes in 1952: “This immense mass of material covers practically all the direct work of the League, whose business was carried on to a very large extent in public. Even when meetings were held in private, the minutes and the reports were usually published in full. .. The archives of the Secretariat contain little that was secret at the time, and nothing that need any longer be so considered. The records. . [Archives]. . are not complete.”

The Assembly was not much involved with the refugee questions, since the issues often required quick decisions. Within the Assembly, committees generally performed the substantive work during the annual session, which usually occurred for three weeks in September. In fact, the Council had here a great advantage over the Assembly: it met four times a year, while the Assembly only once. Consequently, the Council was better positioned to follow refugee issues and had much more accuracy through the year.

The most important set of the ILO’s material is the Minutes of the Governing Body of the ILO. They contain the proceedings of the meetings including the entries of the delegates. They also contain the report material issued for the meetings. Most reports in the 1920s have been prepared by the Director General Albert Thomas who was known to be very active in working with the refugee questions.

Another entity is the Reports and Records of Proceedings of the International Labour Conferences. There are proposals for resolutions and drafts of agreements attached to this material. It sheds light on the overall attitude as well as on the relationship of the organization to the refugee question on the whole.

Official Bulletin gives the researcher a possibility to get a compact picture of the processes, which otherwise would be laborious to form into a logical package because of the long proceedings. International Labour Review has very much similar value as a source, although its nature seems to be aiming the messages inside the organization.

The reports presented to the Governing Body as well as to the International Labour Conference were quite much the same as were presented to the League Bodies. The reports are often lengthy and very detailed.

96 Skran, 77
One specific character in the ILO's material is that some of the content which could have fallen into the category of refugees, has been placed under the headline “migration”. The overall impression is, that many materials categorized as refugee material in the League’s context, were classified in a different way in the ILO. Clear reason for this is challenging to find, but some reference could be absorbed from the discussion in general; in the ILO there was a constant prejudice against politicizing the matters on the agenda of the ILO organs. This, in turn, is a reflection of initial nature of the Labour Organization. It was established to walk aside the League, and take care of the social and economic matters, leaving the political side of international diplomacy to its big brother.

The material on the sessions of the Governing Body is very detailed. It includes all possible discussions. This is of the utmost importance in the process of tracking the initiatives in order to transfer the main responsibility of the refugee aid from the League to the ILO just before the mid-twenties. The weight of this material as evidence is manifesting. It becomes clear that there was indeed an opposition inside the Labour Organization not willing to undertake the “dangerous” responsibilities brought about by the refugee regime.

What the material doesn’t tell us about is the background work outside session chambers. It becomes evident from the material that some procedures and undertakings were very carefully prepared by those who were actively propagating the greater role of the ILO in the international refugee regime.

Besides the material produced by the LON and the ILO, it has been necessary to take into account some other printed sources in order to reveal the special features of Finland as a case study. This has been done to see whether the policy principles had any correspondence in the field, i.e. the refugee work conducted in the Member States of the League. The historical archives of the Finnish Red Cross (FRC) contain references to the work conducted by the American Red Cross (ARC), which was the most covering refugee work operation in Europe after the First World War.

The annual reports of the ARC are to be found in the historical archive of the FRC, as well as the minutes of a special conference of ARC commissioners held in Venice in 1920. The material produced by the FRC consists of the annual reports of the FRC connected to the minutes of the meetings of the Central Board of the FRC. There are also a considerable amount of different documents on various international meetings of the international bodies of the Red Cross.

The only entities of unpublished material useful to this research project consists of the archive material on East Carelian refugees in Finland, which is a part of the
archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, as well as the archives of the State Refugee Relief Centre (Valtion Pakolaisavustuskeskuksen arkisto; VPAKA) located in the National Archives of Finland.

Some of the most important examples of the source literature were produced just before the Second World War, which makes them authentic evidence. The Royal Institute for International Affairs in London was able to establish financial cooperation with the Rockefeller Foundation in the 1930s and as a result of that, a creditable survey was carried out concentrating on the statistical side of the refugee problem. The survey became known by its infamous report edited by Sir John Hope Simpson.97

"The Refugee Problem", the survey report prepared by Simpson, is definitely the most quoted book among the researchers who have studied refugee matters of the Inter-war period. The project was made possible under surveillance of The Royal Institute of International Affairs and with financial support of The Rockefeller Foundation. Simpson was a member of the Council of the League for the most of the Inter-war time. This makes him an expert on decision making procedures as well as a prominent authority in mastering the complicity of the source material produced by the LON and other organizations. Simpson also was close to the field operations in his capacity as Vice-Chairman of the Greek Refugees Settlement Commission starting from 1926. His original one year appointment was renewed in 1927 by the Council as well as for another one year assignment from 16.1.1928.98 All this makes him a competent rapporteur of international refugee work. On the other hand this close distance to the actions made on behalf of the refugees makes it obligatory for the modern day’s researcher to reassess the results of the writer of the celebrated survey report. The historical distance for this task is now right.

It is notable that so many later researchers have been using the material produced by the survey process led by Simpson as well as the results presented in the reports. It was the only comprehensive refugee study made during the period under examination. The reports of the survey came at the end of the decade. The preliminary report was published in 1938 and the major report in 1939. The survey covers thus practically the whole Inter-war time which was also the lifespan of the League’s refugee work and refugee regime. The results of the survey have been cited for over seventy years by a large number of scholars bringing the author of this at the end of that line.

97 See e.g. Hansson, Michael: Flyktningsproblemet og Folkeforbundet. Foredrag i Nobelinstituttet, Oslo 7.1.1937. Oslo 1938, 13
A great number of prominent academics as well as various authorities took part in the investigation during the Simpson’s survey. The teams travelled in all parts of the world gathering material. It was impossible to print in full the reports of these investigations. The detailed, voluminous, and invaluable reports have been deposited in the archives of Chatham House, and they are available for study or for reference. The survey got much assistance from various governments as well as from personalities such as Neil Malcolm (High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany) and Michael Hansson (President of the Nansen International Office).

The survey was conducted in 1937 – 1939 in the middle of the events it describes. This was reflected also in the preface of the final report, where Simpson stated: “Recent events have altered the situation in various ways.”99 The report of Simpson is much more useful for this research project than the “official” history writing of the League of Nations. The most prominent of the books written from this formal point of view is the covering issue by the former Deputy Secretary General of the LON, F.P. Walters. The History of the League of Nations was published in 1952. Again, this was made under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and again, the project was financially supported by the Rockefeller Foundation. The value of the massive 2-volume work is that it helps the researcher form a mental framework or a rack where the facts discovered during the research process can be hanged. The proportion and importance given to the refugee matters in this work reflects the overall perception of the lack of a proper analysis as the justification of this project: only less than three pages of the total of over 800 pages are dedicated to refugee work of the League.

The composition of some of the studies may refer to the importance of the matter under scrutiny. The basic work on the ILO is the “History of the ILO” by Anthony Alcock (1971). It provides the best possible background for the deliberations of the organization and the author has had all possible first hand sources available during the processing of the book. Refugees are mentioned only after Second World War, which may refer to the fact that these questions were not very highly ranked on the agenda of ILO after all, despite the diligent work of some individuals in top positions in the organization.

The research literature on refugee matters produced after the Second World War gives us more theoretical possibilities than pure facts. There are, however, some exceptions. One of those is Tommie Sjöberg’s dissertation. Sjöberg’s book does not

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99 See Chapter 1.2. and Simpson 1939, preface
concentrate directly to the League’s work, but it gives helpful hints when attempting to understand organizatorial jungle.

There are a few good examples of short and clear-cut analyses made either during the Inter-war period or some time after it. The writings of Atle Grahl-Madsen and Norman Bentwich deserve to be mentioned. Professor Bentwich wrote in 1935 a summary of the League activities in 16 pages. It is a concise analysis and evaluation of refugee work done in 1921-1935. It forms a valuable description of the situation as it was seen during that time. As such, it is not a source of new information or facts, but can work as an organizer of thoughts. It is a mirror through which a researcher can control whether the situation unravels itself in a same manner when studying the abundant sources. It can either reconfirm or contradict the various ideas and formulations constructed in researchers mind.

Remarkable help at the last stages of this project has come from a number of scholars\textsuperscript{100} who have researched and written about Inter-war history in general as well as about the LON and the ILO specifically during the time between the wars. Many of the scholars have applied views of transnational history, which seem to fit to this particular period of time in history as it has been distinguished as the time when development towards intergovernmental and transnational cooperation was accelerated. Most of these studies don’t bring new facts to the picture, but rather help to particularize some of the initial research questions as well as itemize assumptions which could serve as solutions to the questions.

The resignation letter of James McDonald is a very exceptional document. McDonald held the post of the High Commissioner Refugees coming from Germany only for two years until he saw that it was impossible for him to continue in that high office without a proper political authorization. The text of the letter is very political and it must have been clear that it was not possible for him to continue the work after the letter was published. The letter contains political comments reflecting the deep dismay Mr. McDonald must have been feeling while writing it. The text is very straight forward which was unusual in those circumstances and on those days. He also appended to the letter a comprehensive analysis of the German legislation, administrative decrees and jurisprudence, as well as of their effects on the problem of refugees. The analysis is one of the best in its own category.

In most refugee studies and in migration studies in general, the approach of the explanations has been mostly descriptive. Where displacement has been analyzed,

\textsuperscript{100} Sandrine Kott, Patricia Clavin, Susan Pedersen, Mark Mazower, Paul Kennedy; Ian Tyrrel, Klaus Kiran Patel
this has been made largely in isolation from the broader and deeper context. The consequence is that the causes and dynamics of forced migration seem to have been left mostly unaddressed and unanswered. The same applies to historical explanations and the studies concerning the political attempts to find solution to the refugee situations in historical perspective.

Despite all theoretical and analytical innovations, a limitation in migration and refugee studies is the tendency to isolate migration or displacement as a distinct phenomenon. This is perhaps a clearer way towards analysis, but it fails to understand the phenomenon within its social, political, and economic relationships. A fundamental observation is that during the Inter-war period, academic studies concerning refugees and refugee work did not exist until the late 1930s. This was perhaps one of the things that contributed to the fact that the League of Nations as well as other bodies presumed that the refugee problems would always be temporary. As a result of this the League’s refugee policy was dominated by the view that refugee problems were merely outcomes of acute crises.

There is a cluster of research projects seeking to translate normative wishes into policy recommendations and prescriptions for comprehensive actions. An example of modern refugee research literature contains a chapter dedicated to “policy conclusions and recommendations”. It reflects the purpose of the study, which is to try to find models for solutions for the decision makers and administrators. It reflects the challenges brought about by refugee situations and presents elements of a framework for resolving them. The main value of these projects is that they help us to understand the origin, evolution, and diverse nature of refugee situations as well as the impacts and implications of international interventions.

This type of research material is completely based on the experience gathered after the Second World War, and mostly during the past couple of decades. As such, it does not shed much light to the situations and conditions prevailing during the time of the League of Nations. It can be used as a reference material inasmuch there are certainly some universal principles concerning humanity and treatment of human beings. However, the difference is that during the Inter-war period those principles were not articulated as clearly as they are today. The studies produced in the 1920s and 1930s were of the opinion that help should be available for destitute people. The motivations,


102 Collinson, 309.
however, were not as politically and skillfully formulated as they are nowadays, and they were not scientifically substantiated either.

International Labour Review announces that it doesn’t take responsibility on the views of the writers. This is only natural since there are a number of independent writers on whom the Review depends as a specialized professional issue. Even in the 1930s it was recognized that it was impossible to get fully reliable statistics on refugee matters. All statistical work was done in cooperation by the High Commissioner’s Office, the Nansen Office and their representatives, as well as national authorities and various kinds of organizations in numerous countries.103

The LON’s policy is an entity which is not completely reducible to its parts. However, the sources reveal the course of discussions which is important for the forming of the whole picture. This project does not try to construct the viewpoints and opinions of the individual countries, unless it is absolutely crucial in order to understand the outcome of the strategic discussions. It is important to note that the deliberations can be divided into two: there are the political deliberations on one hand, and the technical discussions on the other. Both are important in the sense that the representatives of the Member States conducting the political discourse form the basic motivation for the forming of the policy. The technical discussions bring out the framework for the practical work, making the establishment of final policy feasible. Without financial means and the necessary competent personnel the strategy would have been merely empty words.

The focus of this research project is in the policies. It does not particularly focus on the execution of the programs. It is therefore not necessary to review the designated archives of the special agencies working under auspices of the LON and ILO. The consequences of the deliberations are most essential when they form a background for a policy. The guidelines for the implementation were created on lower platforms, i.e. in the agencies. It is a general understanding that the agencies never during their existence exercised their own agendas. At least there are no indications to that end, and it would have been quite clear that regrettable developments such as these would have been discussed in the LON’s sources used here.

The relevant sources for this project have been published. They are available for the researchers in the Library of the Parliament of Finland. There has been thus no need to travel to Geneva to see the League of Nations Archives which are located in the United Nations Office at Geneva. Nansen’s personal input to the humanitarian work between the world wars is the best known part of the activities of the intergovernmental refugee

103 Hansson I, 13
regime. Much has been written about Nansen and his personal track record. It is known that the Nansen Fonds in UNOG Archives in Geneva are available and contain material which certainly would be valuable if one would like to go into more detailed questions which must have taken place in a form of deliberations between Nansen and his “employers”. However, the scope of this research rationale doesn’t allow for increasing the asymmetry which already exists between the Nansen time in the 1920s and rest of the Inter-war period. The same applies definitely to the Nansen’s personal Archives in Oslo.

Nevertheless, it has been deemed necessary to conduct an e-mail exchange with the UNOG Archives in order to ensure that the scope is on the right track. The exchange confirms that the published material used in this work seem to cover the need of material as the scope is in the policy questions. The additional material would not change the scope or the results and thus the conclusions of this work.

The LON archives system provides possibilities for further studies on remaining questions as well as those produced by this research project. At the conclusions of this presentation there will be references to opportunities for additional questions discovered and to be scrutinized by scholars. It should be noted that despite all possibilities provided by the internet, it seems that all these further studies should be conducted in the archives in Geneva.

The activities of Nansen and his followers are well known. There are definitely lots of details and interesting incidents that should be analyzed and documented by researchers. That is, however, not the scope of this project. This research is concerned with the evolution of the policy exercised by the League. The Nansen Fonds would certainly give answers to important questions on modalities of the refugee work. But those questions are not asked by this project. The researcher, who asks those questions, will also go equally for the Files of the Greek and Bulgarian Settlement Commissions as well as other bodies. When consulting the Guide to League of Nations Publications, it seems that almost all relevant documents concerning the refugee organizations of the League, as much as they can be considered policy documents, can be found printed in the Official Journal.  

104 Copies of the e-mail exchange are in the possession of the author of this work.  
1.5. The League of Nations and the International Labour Organization

The First World War created the modern age with its ideas of universal association of humankind inasmuch as it stimulated the revival of the old principle that people simply had to bring their nations together before they destroyed the world.\footnote{Kennedy 2006, 8} Diplomacy was the traditional way of handling international issues. Nevertheless, it was insufficient. The necessity of organizing new procedures better adapted to the demands of emerging situations was apparent. The League of Nations and the International Labour Organization were established to fill a straightforward need: the need for completing the traditional system of diplomacy and of performing certain tasks which diplomacy was unable to handle.\footnote{Bourquin, Maurice: Dynamism and the Machinery of International Institutions. A Critical Study of a Twenty Years’ Experiment. Geneva Studies, Vol XI. No 5. Geneva Research Center. September 1940, 13-14} The division of responsibilities was in some domains clearer and in some others less explicit. The two organizations had responsibilities on the field of social order which required close cooperation. The functions and the division of work of the two world bodies took somewhat different forms during the time of the strong ILO-Director General Albert Thomas compared to the times of his successors.\footnote{More about this: Tortora, Manuela: Institution spécialisée et organisation mondiale: étude des relations de L’OIT avec la SDN et l’ONU. Bruxelles 1980, 75-114}

The League's primary goals were stated in its Covenant. They included preventing war through collective security, disarmament, and settling international disputes through negotiation and arbitration. The prevention of the war was seen as the primary purpose of the League from the beginning of its subsistence. Therefore, the Articles concentrating on the maintenance of peace as well as the Articles concerning protection and security to the small countries against the ambitions of the great may be described as the hard core of the Covenant of the League.\footnote{Walters, F. P.: A History of the League of Nations. London 1952, 52}

All states, great or small, had equal rights in this mindset. All Members were represented on a footing of complete equality in the Assembly, since they each had only one vote. This was direct participation by the Members, and made the Assembly
the constitutional organ of the League of Nations, which defined its general policy by resolutions.\textsuperscript{110}

Other goals in this and related treaties included labour conditions, just treatment of native inhabitants, trafficking in persons, and drugs, arms trade, global health, prisoners of war, and protection of minorities in Europe. The diplomatic philosophy behind the League represented a fundamental shift in thought from the preceding hundred years. The League lacked its own armed force and so depended on the Great Powers to enforce its resolutions and decisions.

The League held its first Council meeting in Paris on 16 January 1920, six days after the Versailles Treaty came into force. In November, the headquarters of the League moved to Geneva, where the first General Assembly was held on 15 November 1920 with representatives from 41 nations in attendance. At its greatest extent from September 1934 to February 1935, it had 58 members.

International political system was very much or almost exclusively European before the First World War. Europeans, white, Christians, generally male, and for the most part aristocratic or upper-middle class had been in charge of it.\textsuperscript{111} The War did not change this situation much. The League was founded and established on these premises after the War. Some European powers had lost their influence to certain extent, but the only dramatic change was the growth of the political weight of the United States.

Super-state idea was never in the design while establishing the League. The new organization was based on national sovereignty and all its implications. The League existed merely to help states do together what they could not so easily do alone. It seems that it never wanted to do more. States were free to join the League if they wished and free to leave. The decisions of the League bodies were recommendations only and carried no binding force.\textsuperscript{112} While judging the achievements of the League as an organization, it has to be noted that this was the closest the world had ever come to creating a “parliament of man”, and its exercises created much excitement and hopefulness throughout the Inter-war period. It has been only the evaluation of later days which brought about the idea that the League experiment was worthless.\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{110} The Aims, Methods and Activity of the League of Nations. Secretariat of the League of Nations. Geneva 1935, 32
\textsuperscript{111} Northedge, F. S.: The League of Nations. Its life and times 1920-1946. Leicester University Press 1986, 4
\textsuperscript{112} Northedge, 52
\textsuperscript{113} Kennedy 2006, 9
The rules for the League which the Covenant comprised were more than just rules; they also were hopes as to how this apparatus would work. The system was something that the world had never seen before. The Covenant was a result of bargaining and compromising, and that process continued for two decades as the League existed and worked. It was not, however, aiming to a formation of a world state.\textsuperscript{114} The decision making in the League organs was based on the rule of unanimity in general, with some exceptions described in the Articles 1, 4, 5, 6 and 15 of the Covenant.\textsuperscript{115}

When the League came into existence in 1920, it faced a skeptical world and even the very existence of it was not universally accepted. Up to the countries where the support for the League was strongest (Britain, Scandinavia), powerful sections of opinion were indifferent, sometimes even arrogant. France and new East European states trusted more on their armed forces in preventing new German aggressions. Germany was left out in the early arrangements. The Bolsheviks in Russia were using their own typical rhetoric and spoke of the League as a “band of robber nations”.\textsuperscript{116} This was the playground when the world organization started to deal with refugee questions.

The Assembly was the place where political and ceremonious discussions took place. The Council, in turn, was the organ that had to take action. The Council and the Assembly were both organs of political direction. The Secretariat was not placed under same footing. The permanent element of the League, represented by the Secretariat, had little influence as far as politics was concerned. It seems that institutionally there was no suitable means of filling the gap between the sessions of the Council and the Assembly.\textsuperscript{117}

The Assembly consisted of representatives of all Members of the League. Each state was allowed up to three representatives and one vote. The Assembly met in Geneva and, after its initial sessions in 1920, sessions were held once a year in September. A special session of the Assembly might be summoned at the request of a Member, provided that a majority of the Members concurred. The special functions of the Assembly included the admission of new Members, the periodical election on non-permanent Members of the Council, the election with the Council of the judges of the

\textsuperscript{114} Northedge, 68
\textsuperscript{115} Erich, Rafael: Kansainliiton oikeusjärjestys. Otava, Helsinki 1926, 59-60; Northedge, 53
\textsuperscript{116} Northedge, 70
\textsuperscript{117} Bourquin, 43
Permanent Court, and the control of the budget. In practice the Assembly was considered to be the general directing force of League activities.

The League Council acted as a type of executive body directing the Assembly's mission. The Council began with four permanent members (Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan) and four non-permanent members which were elected by the Assembly for a three year period. The first four non-permanent members were Belgium, Brazil, Greece and Spain. The United States was meant to be the fifth permanent member, but the US Senate voted on 19th of March 1920 against the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, thus preventing American participation in the League.

The composition of the Council was subsequently changed several times. The number of non-permanent members was first increased to six in 1922, and then to nine in 1926. Germany became the fifth permanent member of the Council in 1926, giving the Council a total of fourteen members. Later, after Germany and Japan both left the League, the number of non-permanent seats was increased from nine to eleven. The Council met, on average, five times a year and in extraordinary sessions when required. In total, 107 public sessions were held between 1920 and 1939. The papers of the Council form the main bulk of the League material used in this project.

The Permanent Secretariat, established at the seat of the League at Geneva, comprised a body of experts in various spheres under the direction of the General Secretary. The principal Sections of the Secretariat were: Political; Financial and Economics; Transit; Minorities and Administration (Saar and Danzig); Mandates; Disarmament; Health; Social (Opium and Traffic in Women and Children); Intellectual Cooperation and International Bureaux; Legal; and Information. Each Section was responsible for all official secretarial work related to its particular subject preparing and organizing all meetings and conferences held in that connection. The staff of the League's secretariat also carried the responsibility for preparing the agenda for the Council and Assembly as well as publishing reports of the meetings and other routine matters, effectively acting as the civil service for the League.118

The League oversaw the Permanent Court of International Justice and several other agencies and commissions created to deal with imminent international problems. These included the Disarmament Commission, the Health Organization, the

118 See Appendix I; “General Structure of the LON” and Appendix IIIA, IIIB on memberships
International Labour Organization, the Mandates Commission, the International
Commission on Intellectual Cooperation (precursor to UNESCO), the Permanent
Central Opium Board, the Commission for Refugees, and the Slavery Commission.
The ILO had a working system which was in many respects autonomous and self-
sufficient. The ILO may therefore be defined as a branch of the League, but possessing
a greater degree of autonomy than any other similar organization. On the one hand it
was under the League administratively. On the other, it was independent in respect of
its external action.119

International labour legislation was built on development of national regulations.120
The first attempts were made in considering working hours and salaries. Later also
questions like position of alien labour force came to the picture. As a result of series of
international meetings during the 19th century, two organizations were established.
These were the International Labour Protection Union as well as the International
Federation of Trade Unions, which could be considered as the predecessors of the
ILO.121 While building the peace after the First World War it was recognized that the
reasons for the war were partly social and economic by their nature. It was also
recognized that the working population had been rather loyal to the governments of
Allied Powers.122

During the peace talks a special work legislation committee was constituted. This
committee finally made a proposition for the establishment of the ILO. The proposition
was adopted in the peace conference and the constitution was attached to the Treaty
of Versailles.123 In the broader League of Nations system the task of the ILO was the
enhancing of the social justice. The members of the LON were also automatically
members of the ILO. One of the handicaps of the LON and the ILO was that the US

119 Walters, 194-195
120 Mahaim, Ernest: The Historical and Social Importance of International Labour Legislation. In: The Origins of
ILO (ed. by James Shottwell). New York NY 1934, 5
121 Alcock, Anthony: History of the ILO. New York NY 1971, 10-17
122 Suomi ja Kansainväliset järjestöt. Turun yliopiston pol. hist. laitoksen julkaisuja C 4. (toim. Juhani Mylly)).
Turku 1970, 84-85
Landelius, Torsten: Parter och Politik i ILO. Stockholm 1968, 19-21
was not a member. The same concerned another significant power, the Soviet Russia, which was very reluctant to participate in any official international dealings.124

The ILO, although having the same Members as the League and subjected to the budget control of the Assembly, was an autonomous organization with its own Governing Body, its own General Conference and its own Secretariat. Its constitution was different from that of the League: representation had been accorded not only to Governments but also to representatives of employers and workers’ organizations.

The Governing Body is the executive organ of the International Labour Organization. It meets three times a year, in March, June and November. It takes decisions on ILO policy, decides the agenda of the International Labour Conference, adopts the draft programme and budget of the organization for submission to the conference, and elects the Director-General. During the Inter-war period the Governing Body had in the beginning 12 members (then later in the 1920s 16) who were government representatives, 6 (later 8) employer’s representatives and 6 (later 8) worker’s group representatives.

From the beginning the ILO organized every year the International Labour Conference in Geneva, where conventions and recommendations were crafted and adopted. The conference also made decisions on the ILO's general policy, work programme and budget. Each member state was represented at the conference by four people: two government delegates, an employer delegate and a worker delegate. All of them had individual voting rights, and all votes were equal, regardless of the population of the delegate’s country. The employer and worker delegates were normally chosen in agreement with the "most representative" national organizations of employers and workers. Usually, the workers' delegates coordinate their voting, and the same applies to the employers' delegates.

The third permanent body was the International Labour Office, which represents the executive element of the organization. During the Inter-war period there were 400 members or employees in the Office representing 35 different countries. The agency worked as a secretariat preparing the issues to be handled by the Governing Body and the Conference. It also had research capacity and was responsible for the publishing.

The Labour Office was the permanent secretariat of the International Labour Organization and focal point for the overall activities that it prepared under the scrutiny of the Governing Body and under the leadership of the Director-General.125

The ILO was in fact able to develop norms and administrative practices during the Inter-war period, although its actions were rather invisible.126 The activities and achievements of the ILO extended beyond national policies in a form of promoting bilateral state agreements concerning social standards as well as migrant workers. The organization had a special transnational dimension through its tripartite system, representing forces that were sometimes able to counterbalance narrow state interests.127

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125 See Appendix II “Structure of the ILO”
127 Kott, 194-195
2. REFUGEE SITUATIONS AND THE EARLY EVOLUTION OF REFUGEE WORK

2.1. Refugee Situations requiring Measures

The circumstances before the First World War allowed the exiles to stay fairly invisible. The troublesome legal status of refugees did not present major problems before the Inter-war period. Since the number of people concerned was moderate, states could easily absorb the refugees and incorporate them into their own legal systems. The traditional legal framework proved to be inadequate when the number of refugees, for various reasons, reached the millions in the early twentieth century.\textsuperscript{1} The challenges were recognized both on national and international level.

The beginning of the 20th century saw some radical changes in the character of refugee movements: The size of the waves of displaced persons became greater than the world had ever seen before. There was a new form of homelessness; the refugees found themselves entirely outside the web of national community, partly because borders collapsed and partly because new ones were drawn. Also the duration of the displacement became longer than before, and some were stuck to the refugee status permanently.\textsuperscript{2}

For the first time in the history, migration and refugees were at the heart of the political debate in Europe during the Inter-war period. Europe was still at that time a region of emigration but started also become one of the main destinations for international migrations. One explaining matter is the emerging of rich, democratic and stable European states, where asylum could be sought, and, on the other hand, non-democratic, poorer, less stable states with young and fast growing populations as well as ethnic and political imbalance. This particular theme also plays a central role in this research project.

The refugee problem in Europe became known initially as the problem of Russia. It was the Russian emigrants explicitly that alerted the relief organizations to recognize

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{1} Skran, 101 \\
\textsuperscript{2} Marrus, 3-5
\end{footnotesize}
and tackle the problem. The neighboring countries to Russia were the ones that had to absorb most of the shock. Russian emigrants were fleeing to Europe already long before the First World War. Before the War it was the opponents of the Czarist regime who were moving. The Russians were the most remarkable group of immigrants for a long period of time.³ When the Russian Revolution escalated to its full scale, the number of movers increased radically. Russia was plunged into a fierce civil war. The real mass emigration from Russia took place in 1918-22. People had various reasons for fleeing, but the concern about security and even life was the most important. When the Bolshevik regime got the upper hand in the struggle in Russia, the soldiers of the white armies and the civilians attached to them formed the main part of the streams of people struggling their way towards the borders and other countries.⁴

Some Russians came with their passports issued by the Czarist Government. Most of the people, however, had no papers or any proof of identity. A large number of comers crossed borders without any permission. Some of them had money and valuables, some of them had nothing but the clothes on themselves.⁵ Most of the refugees came randomly, in small groups or alone, many of them on foot. In some instances there were also mass transportations of people wanting to leave the country.

First it was thought that all movements were only an indication of a temporary situation, and the immigrants will go home as soon as the conditions in Russia have settled down. It soon became clear, however, that the Bolsheviks would take over the whole country. This meant that a large majority of the people seeking for a temporary asylum in Europe became permanently refugees. For the people, who had openly opposed the Bolshevik regime, it was practically impossible to go back safely.

The number of the refugees who came from Russia is not known. Some were registered while some went hiding. Some were naturalized in their new home countries whilst some went back to Russia even after a considerably long sojourn in another country. Latest research estimates that the total number of comers from Russia must have been over a million.⁶ In some Eastern Europe countries the Russian refugees joined the existing Russian populations and quickly formed the largest minority group.

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⁴ Simpson 1939, 65-85
⁶ Nevalainen, 34
This development was even considered to be threatening the homogeneity of the newly independent nation-states neighboring Russia.\textsuperscript{7}

In Balkans, as a result of several border arrangements before, during and after the First World War, masses of Greeks, Bulgarians and Turks were moving across new jurisdictions, some of them trying to avoid losing their lives. The first intergovernmental treaties on the exchange of populations in modern history took place in this context. The refugees of the Balkans and Anatolia had a different situation from other refugees; they all had new homelands. However, there were millions of these refugees, and an international or rather an intergovernmental guarantor was required since the bitter tensions were there, underneath despite the letters on the agreements.

The Armenian refugee problem had its roots in the time before the World War. The killings and expulsion of Armenians were carried out by Turkish authorities during the War in an extent that has brought about the concept Armenian Genocide. The Armenian refugee problem became the most mystified and politically important of all refugee movements during the Inter-war period. What is known is that large numbers of Armenians were massacred throughout the Ottoman Empire. The Genocide was widely condemned by the international community in 1915.\textsuperscript{8} It is impossible to say anything affirmative about the numbers of the people who got killed or even the numbers of refugees who had the opportunity to escape the atrocities. The estimates for the people who perished during the Genocide vary between 150,000 and one and half million. The most common estimate on the number of refugees settles between 100,000 and 350,000 people, scattered mostly in Europe and in the Middle-East.\textsuperscript{9}

Some earlier experiences of forced population movements in Europe help to put the twentieth century refugee movements into perspective. Although it is impossible to generalize or say anything definite about the reception of the groups of migrants in earlier times, it can be stated that they moved within a Europe in which the central organs of governments usually considered that adding to working population was rather an asset than a liability. Governments mostly favoured controlled movement of people into their jurisdiction. New inhabitants were most often considered potential contributors to the strength of the society.\textsuperscript{10} People didn't carry any passports on those days anyhow.

\textsuperscript{7} Skran, 39
\textsuperscript{8} Later the events have been defined as a crime against humanity; during the Inter-war period this terminology was not well established
\textsuperscript{9} Simpson 1939, 26 and 43; Vernant, 57
\textsuperscript{10} Marrus, 5-6
Immigration policy was motivated and justified by economic terms even before our modern days. Generally speaking, in the beginning the admission of refugees leads to costs and trouble. However, experience has shown that immigration, especially when it takes place gradually, provides for new source of wealth and energy. Many countries, with the USA as the most evident illustration, provides us with an example how the capacity to absorb foreign elements leads to remarkable development and progress, both intellectually and economically.\(^\text{11}\) Central governments pursued their own interests by facilitating immigration as well as discouraging or even forbidding emigration. When the times were good, it was naturally easier to accept comers. Foreigners were welcomed to work and pay taxes. They were wanted to contribute to the economic growth and commerce, to offer specialized knowledge and skills, or even to join the military.\(^\text{12}\)

In 1924 an article in the International Labour Review touched upon the matter of asylum and also reflected importantly the views of contemporary thinkers on the issue. According to the article there were two alternative approaches. One claims that sovereign states have no obligation whatsoever to the asylum seekers. States can supervise their borders as they please. The consequence of this is that the refugees have no legal status according to the international law. Another, individualistic view states that people must have the right to move from a country to another in reasonable manner and measure, and no state should limit this right unnecessarily.\(^\text{13}\)

The difficulties in responses of countries and international authorities reflected the political considerations which closely link refugee incidents and the conduct of international relations. Foreign policy and economic considerations were involved in both the international responses to refugees and in the root causes of refugee flows. The relationships between nations could easily be affected by sudden massive movements of refugees. Tensions between countries could influence the way refugees are treated. Refugees may also have been used by governments and rulers in pursuit of geopolitical ambitions and ideological objectives.\(^\text{14}\) All these considerations can help to explain the positive response shown towards refugees. This generosity has been less obtainable in cases where no gain is at stake.

\(^{11}\) Hansson II

\(^{12}\) Marrus, 6-7

\(^{13}\) Fauchille,P: The Rights of Emigration and Immigration I.L.R. Vol IX, No 3, 1924, p.317, The author is an expert on international law and assumes the latter view

\(^{14}\) See Loescher, 11
The acceptance of the refugees in certain countries was dependant on many things. Different groups and nationalities got different reception by different circles of the recipient country. Jews confronted racism and opposition by right wing thinkers and ultra-nationalists in certain countries. In the same countries some groups of refugees coming from Russia were met with biased attitudes by the socialists and communists some years earlier. Both right wing supporters and left wing supporters had their own motivations and political mythology.\textsuperscript{15} It is therefore fair to say that no recipient country was completely benevolent, but there were no totally unfriendly states either. In the 1920s and 1930, it was considered normal to show political attitudes within democratic system in more open ways than in the democratic host countries of today. In this sense, neutrality and political correctness, including consensus, was shown in a different manner during the Inter-war period than it is today.

Refugee camps undoubtedly existed in the 1920s in many receiving countries. A common phenomenon was that asylum seekers were being detained in significant numbers around the world. In research literature, this has also been called “administrative detention”, since it occurred without specific criminal allegations (other than perhaps unlawful border crossing). The length of the detention varied a lot. The principal motivation was often deterrence. States could use detention in order to make the existing aliens to leave their territories or to discourage others from ever even attempting to come in the first place.\textsuperscript{16} Remarkable thing is, that there are very few references to refugee camps of the 1920s or 1930s in the primary sources. The literature of that time recognizes few facts, and later research has been able to discover some incidents connected to this phenomenon.

In the beginning of the 1920s, most of the countries receiving large amounts of Russian refugees were newly independent politically more or less unstable countries struggling with economic problems. Non-Governmental entities had to take responsibility on the humanitarian aspect. The reception of the refugees depended on the prevailing political convenience. Foreign-policy considerations can heavily influence decisions, especially concerning the determination of which persons should be granted and which denied refugee status. A generous admission and benefits to be obtained can also even encourage people to flee. All these elements can be used in propaganda, sometimes to demonstrate how people are voting with their feet or

\textsuperscript{15} E.g. Finland, see Leitzinger II, 536-537
\textsuperscript{16} Helton, 135-136
choosing side in an ideological conflict. In modern thinking, a decision not to accord refugee status will often imply support for the sending government.\textsuperscript{17}

There have been situations in democratic countries where immigration and questions concerning foreigners in general have been decisive in national elections. The political leaders could not underestimate their voters, even if the opinions of the people were uncomfortable for them. It has been reported that some countries neighbouring the Soviet Union didn’t want to grant entry to refugees coming from east at all. Latvia, Poland, Roumania and Estonia have been mentioned in this connection.\textsuperscript{18} Furthermore, the international governmental and non-governmental organizations were powerless in this respect. Decisions on asylum and the quality of care for refugees remain the domain of sovereignty of individual states. The intergovernmental authorities or other agencies simply didn’t have the mandate to intervene or even protest.\textsuperscript{19}

The previous refugee research has characterized the period between the two world wars as “era of democratic solutions”. This refers to the fact that democratic states were receiving refugees from undemocratic countries, and the recipients tried to solve the problems in a democratic manner.\textsuperscript{20} Sometimes, however, the extensive flows of refugees directed the decision making to more rigid practice than otherwise in a democratic and open system would have been required.\textsuperscript{21} Despite the problems created by the number of people, the receiving countries could not close their eyes before this huge humanitarian problem.\textsuperscript{22}

One of the fresh features of the refugee problem in the post World War world was the economic crisis which was the aftermath of the destruction of the war. This was one of the driving factors when the international cooperation was called for to deal with the movements as well as the settlement of the masses that quite suddenly had become homeless. As a consequence, the League of Nations came to help national and international philanthropic bodies.\textsuperscript{23} States were considered to have a legal obligation to support refugees on their own territory, but this thinking excluded the obligation to

\textsuperscript{17} Loescher, 15
\textsuperscript{18} Nevalainen, 81
\textsuperscript{19} See Loescher, 19
\textsuperscript{20} Nathan-Chapotot, Roger: Les Nations Unies et les Refugies. Paris 1949, 46
\textsuperscript{21} Thompson I, 7
\textsuperscript{22} Thompson I, 11
\textsuperscript{23} Bentwich 1935, 115
support refugees on the territory of other states. In theoretical terms, if a person had a right to live in the country of his citizenship, then, as a logic consequence, he had the right to live somewhere. From this follows that a state should not impose penalties for illegal entry on those misfortunate individuals who seek refuge. Moreover, this was supposed to prohibit the state from sending refugees back to the oppressors. These considerations were parts of the substance of the international refugee aid networking during the Inter-war period.

In some cases, countries which just before were origin and transit countries became host countries. However, these countries were not always sufficiently resourced. Their infrastructure and staff in charge of managing migrations were inadequate for coping with the situations. Destination countries were trying to develop specific policies to manage the refugee problems and to promote its social and economic dimensions. However, it was obvious that to be effective and efficient, these policies require wider international cooperation, including the countries of (origin and) transit. The emigration of high-skilled workers can be a loss of human resources for the countries of origin. At the same time, in some destination countries (e.g. France), it was recognized that immigrants can be an asset and even contribute to the general development of the society.

Basically, there was a motivation to accept immigration when done in a coordinated manner. Receiving people from abroad may be considered an asset and this may encourage and motivate the long-term work towards assimilation and resettlement of refugees which always requires planning and patience. One of the principal characteristics, and in fact, the original meaning of the refugee organization of the League, was to combine the philanthropic action of private bodies with the international governmental action which could be seen as the real back bone of the philosophy. The League Offices formed the bridge between the various existing elements.

How serious the refugee situation in Europe really was after the First World War? The seriousness of an individual refugee situation is traditionally measured in terms of total numbers of refugees. Seriousness is considered to increase in direct proportion to the number of refugees, especially their number relative to the population of the host country. In addition to that there are other relevant criteria: the urgency of the situation,

24 Betts and Loescher, 19
25 Dummet, 28
26 Dummet, 32
27 Hansson II
28 Bentwich 1935, 120
its duration, and its solution.\textsuperscript{29} Then, while processing the contemplation on this basis, it is easy to say that in the 1920s the numbers of the refugees in Europe were huge. The situation can be considered serious also with any other possible measurement. The anxiety of the people responsible for the refugee work seems to have been justified. In the 1930s the situation can be considered serious by the political nature of the refugee problem and with all implications deriving from that.

The urgency of the situation is often measured by the speed of developments. The more suddenly a refugee crisis developed, the less prepared were the recipient countries and the international aid organizations to provide for the refugees.\textsuperscript{30} At least when estimated by the preparedness of the recipient communities, the situation was grave: nobody expected those amounts of excess populations to be handled by the war-torn economies and societies.

One more relevant criterion, when estimating the seriousness of the Inter-war refugee situations, was their duration. The longer the situations lasted, the more prolonged were the refugees’ difficulties and the more they created pressures on the resources of host countries, aid organizations, and even the international community in general.\textsuperscript{31} Here we can search for a reference from the situation of the Russians and the Armenians. The refugee problems were created during and immediately after the First World War. At the end of the 1930s there were still hundreds of thousands of these refugees waiting for a permanent solution to their position.

Altogether some 3-4 million refugees were to be handled in Europe after the First World War.\textsuperscript{32} Refugees encountered high level of unemployment, had poor health and housing, and achieved limited access to welfare services. In addition, many suffered from social isolation, discrimination, and marginalisation. The remedy for this would normally be a granted permission to stay and integration to the surrounding society. This would, in turn, promote to a transition from dependency to self-support and sufficiency.\textsuperscript{33} Being a refugee is an experience that people carry through their life, and even from a generation to another. Those who were born in exile, were rootless since the traces of the past end at the border of the old homeland.

A sight to an analysis of the problem is offered by an example from 1939: “An analysis of the problem of the Refugee or the Man without a Country requires a

\textsuperscript{29} Hakovirta 1991, 20
\textsuperscript{30} Hakovirta 1991, 36-37
\textsuperscript{31} Hakovirta 1991, 38
\textsuperscript{32} Cf. Chapter 1.1.
\textsuperscript{33} Dummet, 42
thorough understanding of the sociological and psychological factors which created this problem, together with authentic factual data which deal with its historical and present aspect.\textsuperscript{34} This formulation itself constitutes a major problem and obstacle for understanding, which, in turn, should form a basis for reasonable action towards a solution of the problem. This kind of analyses, however, were not used extensively when motivating international relief actions after the First World War. A proper motivation for refugee help was simple; people were homeless and hungry. They needed help. No sociology or psychology was then involved. The problem itself was not philosophical or scientific. It was mostly political and practical.

Many of the asylum seekers were desolate individuals with no means of making a decent existence. This could easily drive them to unlawful actions, which, in turn, did cost the hosting society more than modest assistance to the needy people on foreign soil. This fact was realized by those who conducted the refugee work, although it is impossible to evaluate whether this had any practical consequences.\textsuperscript{35} The masses of people staying abroad were numerous. New and old states after the World War were involved equally. The economies of the countries were more or less devastated by the War. This meant that in many instances, the refugees were staying in poor or even miserable conditions.\textsuperscript{36} It was in this situation that the Red Cross appealed to the newly established League.

The declining birth rates formed a topic of discussion already during the Inter-war time in Western Europe. This was one kind of an argument in order to motivate the acceptance of immigration.\textsuperscript{37} The demographic effects of immigration are generally positive. Countries like France and Czechoslovakia realized as early as in the 1920s that without immigration there will be a drop in populations. The worries about aging populations were also there and all together these factors were considered a menace to the success of nations.\textsuperscript{38} In a longer run immigration could bring economic benefits to the receiving country. Before this acceptance of the foreigners, many legal, political, and practical matters had to be solved. The League was needed for that. The governments wanted to use the refugee problems for their own political ambitions.\textsuperscript{39}

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  \item \textsuperscript{34} Schaufuss, 45
  \item \textsuperscript{35} Hansson II
  \item \textsuperscript{36} Grahl-Madsen 1983, 358
  \item \textsuperscript{37} Hansson II
  \item \textsuperscript{38} See Dummet, 64 and Hansson II
  \item \textsuperscript{39} In case of Finland see Nygård, Toivo: Suur-Suomi vai lähimeiolaisten auttaminen: aatteellinen heimotyö itsenäisessä Suomessa. Helsinki. Otava 1978, 102-158; generally Nathan-Chapotot, 46
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The League and the ILO consisted of those states. All this was inevitably manifested in the policies of the world organizations.

Political and humanitarian situations generated by refugee movements may get international attention in different ways. They tend to build up political and military activities in conflicts from which they arise. In some instances, they may induce wider attention in the international media, intergovernmental debates, negotiations between states etc. These two processes tend to reinforce each other. Firstly, even a sizeable refugee situation may pass relatively unnoticed until it becomes a major object of dispute between the parties of the conflict. Secondly, the wider international attention may, in turn, favor one party and disfavor the other and thus turn into an extra element of the conflict.40 During the Inter-war period, the Armenian refugee situation with its silent and non-transparent genocide was an example of the first type, the Russian refugee situation, with the wide foreign support to the White Armies, of the second.

The use of political power and justifying political action are based on requirements rising from normative claims. Refugees and their treatment in Inter-war world provide a very clear example of this.41 Sometimes refugee issues could be used as a justification for military action. Military action as a response to violation of human rights and humanitarian norms, including situations leading to refugee flows, has a long history. Military intervention was used by the French and the British governments against Ottoman rule as a consequence of reported Turkish atrocities already in the 1820s during the independence war of the Greeks.42 The same kind of intervention to protect Armenians was discussed in the 1920s, but the political ambience and the timing after the sufferings of the First World War were not favorable for such undertakings.

The countries that had to face the refugee problem most severely created different strategies for the management of the question. The sources and the research suggest that there was a kind of distinction between two categories of states in this respect. Some countries were more favourable towards the comers than others. Although it is difficult to categorize states by their national policies, it is necessary to shed some light to the various cases.

France has always been mentioned as an example, both in good when the country was receiving refugees in large amounts, as well as in evil, when it was deemed necessary to impose restrictions. France has been described as the promised land of

40 Hakovirta 1986, 137
41 Hurrel, 88
asylum in many connections. During the Inter-war period the actions and the policy of
the Government and authorities of France were admirable compared to many other
countries. After France had recognized the Soviet Government in Russia (1924), a
special agency designated to the matters of the Russian refugees was established in
France in 1925. The officials of that agency were recruited among the Russians, who
previously had been working with the diplomatic missions of the imperial Russia. The
agency issued documents; refugee certificates to the Russian emigrants. The
international refugee relief organizations have recognized that particular “national”
document since that, even after the Second World War. Similar arrangement was
made in case of Armenian refugees. France and Belgium signed an agreement on
harmonizing refugee policies and practices in 1930.43 During the Inter-war period,
France was mentioned in international connections as having the most liberal
immigration policies.44 It has been revealed in studies, however, that towards the end
of the period, some laws in France practically prevented refugees from getting
employment.45 It was reckoned that a quarter of all the Russian refugees entering
France were naturalized by the end of the 1930s. In 1938, France started to admit all
factual political refugees to the country.46 The refugees were reported to be entitled to
all social services, including unemployment benefits.47

Britain seemed to believe in intergovernmental solutions. Many prominent British
politicians and diplomats held important positions in the League system. The
Government was supportive to the cooperation with the League and other
organizations attached to it after the First World War. The country was also the largest
single contributor to League.48 It has been written, however, that the negative attitudes
of the people in Britain to asylum seekers have been “deeply rooted in the history of
British racism”.49 Considering the worldwide or even European situation, the latter
must be seen as a national statement, and should be proportioned. Most of the
countries having less heterogeneous populations do not compare to Britain in this
respect. On the other hand, John Hope Simpson has found that his home country and
the British Government cannot be counted among those which were liberal to

43 Vernant, 266-267
44 See e.g. Records of Proceedings of the 17th Sessions of the I L C 1933, 427
45 Thompson I, 39
46 Simpson 1938, 611
47 Simpson 1938, 613
48 Northedge, 71
49 Dommet, preface, xii
refugees.\textsuperscript{50} It clearly depends on who is making the judgment; Ernst Toller considered that in England the situation of the German emigrés was by no means as desperate as it was in France. \textsuperscript{51}

The United States had the tradition of strong self-sufficiency and it wanted to limit international influence over national migration and refugee policies. It generally favored institutions with specifically designed functions based on international negotiations\textsuperscript{52}, and this must have been the underlying motivation in its dealings with the League’s refugee organs. The US was the biggest recipient of migrants and refugees at one stage but there was a national policy to take the wanted and reject the unwanted. The US wanted elements that would easily become “Americans”. The US had a tradition of deep distrust on the force and effectiveness and just of the international law. This was mixed with another tradition, namely the principle that the duty of a country is not merely to accept the immigrants, but also to settle them.\textsuperscript{53} In the US this was sometimes interpreted in a reverse manner; unless we are able to settle them, we won’t accept them.

The Czecko-Slovak Government presented a Memorandum to the Secretary General in January 1922 on the work of the Czecko-Slovak Republic for the benefit of the Russian Refugees and the starving population of Russia. The Government didn’t regard the present famine in Russia as an unexpected and transient evil, but a direct consequence of the disastrous economic conditions in Russia.\textsuperscript{54} The Czecko-Slovak Republic was recognized internationally for its magnificent work on behalf of the refugees in the country, as well as for the assistance delivered directly to Russia.

During the time of President Masaryk, Czeckoslovakia had an organization which was called Action Russe. The Government invited large numbers of Russian professors and thousands of Russian students to come to Czeckoslovakia. The country invited also other professionals, trained them and maintained them at the expense of the government. That was done, because President Masaryk thought, as everybody else on those days, that the Bolshevik Government was not going to last.\textsuperscript{55} The efforts

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{50} Simpson 1938, 611
\bibitem{53} Dummet, 71
\bibitem{54} OJ, 3\textsuperscript{rd} year, No3, March1922, 274-275
\bibitem{55} Simpson 1938, 611
\end{thebibliography}
of the Czeckoslovak Government were used by Nansen as an example of justification
for the hope that these ideas would be favorably received by the governments. 56

After Fridtjof Nansen started in his position as the High Commissioner for Russian
Refugees, he mentioned Bulgaria several times in the beginning of the 1920s. It was
then estimated that Bulgaria treated Russian refugees extraordinary well. 57 Nansen
wanted to record the particularly generous action of the Bulgarian Government in
connection with the reception of the invalid Russian refugees from Constantinople in
the summer 1922. This arrangement involved payment of a certain sum per head as
entry money to the Bulgarian Government. Same kind of arrangement was in place for
the Russian refugee children. The source of the money was defined in the report more
precisely. 58

The Netherlands gave an asylum to German Emperor Wilhelm II after the First
World War and refused to extradite him to the winning powers of the war for a war
tribunal as they wanted. Poland and Serb-Croate-Slovene State were also mentioned
by Fridtjof Nansen. They had generously endeavored, each with its own manifold
problems, to solve the issues and to absorb tens of thousands of refugees. 59 Later in
Yugoslavia 60 the Russian refugees were treated generously. They obtained all civil
rights as ordinary citizens. They got work, and even pensions were granted for the
wounded officers and soldiers. Refugees were absorbed by Yugoslavia also because
of another promoting factor; according to the national legislation, every child born on
Yugoslav soil became automatically a citizen of the country. 61

Most of the Russian refugees, who fled to China, finally ended up to Shanghai. They
were reportedly doing very well in their new environment. Shanghai was an
international megacity on those days and there were areas where Russian small
enterprises were dominant. The situation in Harbin was described in very similar way. 62
It was reportedly easy to see the Russian distinctive character in the city. However,
these circumstances changed considerably when the Japanese made their military
intervention.

Norway did much in various ways to alleviate the suffering of the refugees. The
number of asylum seekers in Norway was not extremely high in comparison with some

56 OJ, 3rd year, No 4, April 1922, 339
57 Simpson 1938, 611
58 See e.g. Minutes of the 22. Session of the Council of the LON, OJ, Vol 3, November 1922, 1226
59 E.g. OJ, 34rd year, No11 (part I), November 1922, 1137
60 The country assumed the name Yugoslavia in 1929
61 Simpson 1938, 611-612
62 Simpson 1938, 613
bigger countries. However, it is fair to say that Norway was one of the superpowers of refugee work after the First World War because of the activities of certain individuals. The Government of Norway made an initiative proposing that the League should form a single organization with responsibility for all refugees. The proposal was not particularly well received in the Assembly of 1935.63

Relief committees were established already in 1918 to take responsibility of the refugees in Finland. In the beginning of the 1920s there were several separate official organizations and committees for assisting the non-Russian refugees coming from Russia, operated under the Ministry of Interior.64 In some connections, Finland has been considered as a traditional safe haven for individuals persecuted in neighboring areas. Finnish people were known to keep it as matter of honor to receive and accommodate those who couldn’t stay in their home territory.65 Indeed, in the beginning of its independence after the First World War, Finland received, and supported for, large amounts of needy aliens which could be thus held as an example for other countries.66 It was necessary for the Finnish government to have the country being compared to liberal western states and belonging to the western juridical traditions.67

Simpson wrote on Finland in his report: “Social assistance to the Russian refugees in Finland is on a remarkably generous scale. Those who are employed are insured, as the Finnish nationals, against accident, industrial disease, and incapacity. There is no unemployment insurance, but unemployed refugees in need are entitled to relief from the communes under a law of 1 January 1922. As late as in 1933 assistance was still provided for 1120 refugees, in 1934 for 1087 refugees. The State refunds these relief payments to the communes.” The data was based on the report of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to the Nansen Office in 1936.68

Russian refugees attempted to form “refugee governments” while in exile. The refugee community was not indeed very united in this respect and activities lead to competitive attempts. When European states gradually started to recognize the Soviet regime in Russia also officially, these committees and communities fell into insignificance. In some countries the government cooperated with these political

63 See Hansson II; Grahl-Madsen 1983, 364
64 Leitzinger II, 413
68 Simpson 1939, 287
activists. In Finland, the government even submitted a monetary allowance for the operation of the organization.69

Other groups of refugees coming from Russia got even more generous political reception in Finland. Those who were classified as Finnish-related refugees could rely on the help of some enthusiastic political circles whose goal was to unify the people across the Russian border with the “Finnish kindred nation” under a single regime in a greater state. A number of different organizations were established, some with a narrow sectoral goal, some under more extensive political aims. Public funds were used with a variable success.70

In the middle of these contemplations it must be understood that in question of Finland, a small state received and accommodated a number of refugees that corresponded about one percent of the total population of the country. That was a huge effort for a state that had just recently got its independence and was only beginning to practice the duties of a responsible government. The people were only starting to feel their way as citizens of an independent nation.

The importance of the legitimate control of the borders of a country can never be denied, and in the post-war situation it was even more pronounced. That was considered as a duty of the newly independent states in order to maintain the security for the inhabitants. The presence of illegal immigration was also on those days considered as one of the biggest problems.71 The Finnish Government, along with others affected by the mass emigration, had put lots of hope and effort to the cooperation with the new intergovernmental organizations. The new state had become a member in 1920.72 There was reportedly high optimism in Finland concerning the possibilities of the LON. The problems between Finland and Soviet-Russia on border arrangements were touched upon in the LON at the same time as the refugee organization was created.73 It was clearly understood also in Finland, that any country had the right to limit immigration if its indigenous people were in serious danger of being rapidly overwhelmed. A common observation was that the gradual influx of people poses little threat to the native culture, since the immigrants in large part

69 Nevalainen, 212-213
70 See Nevalainen, 214-218
71 Considerations on this subject, see Dummet, 71
acquire the manners of their new home. In case of Finland, comers did not wholly assimilate into the indigenous culture, but rather contributed new elements to it.\textsuperscript{74}

It was widely recognized that “by giving up the problem would explode”.\textsuperscript{75} It was predicted that if the strong currents of migration continued to push anarchically upon the states open to immigrants, there would be a catastrophe ahead. It should have been regarded as a problem of international politics rather than one of international charity. A strong organization was definitely required.\textsuperscript{76}

All things considered it can be concluded that there were more than enough reasons for the international community to try to find solutions to the refugee problems during the Inter-war period. The political, economic, and social impacts of the mass movements of people were visibly endangering the delicate balance of the network of nations.

\section*{2.2. Non-Governmental Multilateral Attempts to find Solutions}

The post-world war situation was marked by the rise in the absolute numbers of migrants and refugees, including the number of women and children. The growth of diasporas meant, in turn, integration challenges for the refugees and the host countries, the diversification of destinations and origins of refugees, as well as the multiplication of refuge routes. Today it is recognized that the reasons for refugee problems can be abolished by enhancing good governance, democracy, and human rights. During the Inter-war period the discussion was somewhat different, yet some elements to this were similar. It was emphasised that the refugee problems were created by non-democratic governments and regimes.\textsuperscript{77}

Immediately after the First World War, the arrangements for solutions lay on the shoulders of the non-governmental organizations (NGO). Typically, a non-
governmental organization is a legally constituted, non-governmental entity created by
natural or legal persons with no participation or representation of any government. In
the cases in which NGOs are funded totally or partially by governments, the NGO
maintains its non-governmental status by excluding government representatives from
membership in the organization. Unlike the term "intergovernmental organization",
"non-governmental organization" is a term in general use but is not a legal definition. In
many jurisdictions, these organization are defined as "civil society organizations" or
referred to by other names. International NGOs typically are non-profit organizations
that operate politically and administratively independent of governments. They have
members (national NGOs or individuals) from more than two countries. An INGO
operates locally, regionally, or globally in several countries.

The roots of the work of the most NGOs were in the humanitarian thinking and
activities. This brought them to warzones and other similar places where people were
suffering in need of assistance. These organizations developed quickly in nineteenth
century as they built capability to and proficiency in bringing large quantities of material
and qualified help in difficult conditions to places where it was needed. All kinds of
different reasons and motivations for humanitarian activities can be expressed.
However, many people engage themselves in humanitarian activities together with
NGOs with a less clearly formulated set of reasons. Simple desire to help or "common
decency" is a good and prevalent motivation.78

The range of work of the NGOs has varied tremendously. It extends from advocacy
work to field activities. It can be encouraging governments to adopt more liberal
admission policies, providing material assistance in refugee settlements around the
world, and facilitating resettlement of refugees in third countries. In the 1920s the
NGOs had many human and material resources which they could bring to this work.
They frequently had access to information which was difficult to obtain by authorities,
governments, and international organizations. Moreover, food and clothes make a
powerful tool; NGOs had constituencies which could be mobilized to affect public
opinion and government policies.79

78 See Knudsen, Anne: The Humanitarian Imperative. (In: NGOs and Refugees. Reflections at the Turn of the
Copenhagen 1993, 44

79 Ferris, Elizabeth G.: The Churches, Refugees, and Politics. Refugees and International Relations. (ed.by Gil
After the First World War the NGOs did what they had been doing for decades. Red Cross was already channeling help when governments were still negotiating. The history of charitable international organizations was not long on those days. The Red Cross had been active only for less than hundred years. The NGOs have sometimes been called the “third system” referring to their nature between the official quarters. During their existence, they have been able to prove their abilities in developing low-cost, flexible responses to emergency situations.\textsuperscript{80} The NGOs were often in the best position when there was a need to alert authorities and assistance networks national and worldwide to refugee situations that needed attention.\textsuperscript{81} In addition to the ones already existing, some of the organizations active during the Inter-war time were established on ad-hoc basis, as the refugee problems emerged.

Researchers have emphasized that voluntary organizations and generous (private) donors of many nations played a great role. The League of Nation’s bodies could only assume a planning and coordinating role in material assistance. The others implemented the effective work in the field.\textsuperscript{82} Their idea was to conduct their work on a neutral ground, without governments’ involvement. The organizations soon realized, however, that the challenge of the refugee problem was too immense. In the 1920s, it became obvious that the task was far beyond the capabilities of charitable organizations unless there was help from governments.\textsuperscript{83}

Nevertheless, charitable and voluntary organizations made a huge effort in servicing the needy refugees after the First World War all over Europe. There were large numbers of voluntary helpers involved in the refugee work in Finland. Some of them were private individuals, but most of the help activities had been organized within different domestic or international non-governmental organizations. Most of the domestic organizations had their example in the corresponding international movements. The Russian Red Cross in Finland (the Finnish Branch) was involved. The American Red Cross donated its funds to the Finnish Government in 1921. International Save the Children (kv. Lasten Apu) Finnish Branch took care of the refugee children. Duodecim (Doctor’s Association) was responsible for the medical

\textsuperscript{80} Ruppesinghe, Kumar: The Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in Early Warning and Conflict Resolution. (In: NGOs and Refugees. Reflections at the Turn of the Century. Ed. by Morten Kjaerum, Klaus Slavensky and Finn Slumpstrup). Danish Center for Human Rights. Copenhagen 1993, 133
\textsuperscript{82} Grahl-Madsen 1983, 367
\textsuperscript{83} Grahl-Madsen 1983, 358
attention given to the refugees. The Central Union of Agricultural Societies made efforts to facilitate employment services. Finnish Red Cross and some Christian voluntary charity organization had their hands on delivering clothing for the refugees.84

Churches and parishes have also assisted refugees and other destitute people as long as we know. But it was only during and after the Second World War that churches organized specific agencies to help refugees. Thus these organizations didn’t have the same relevance in the 1920s and 1930s as other NGOs. The churches and church-related agencies have consciously emphasized their humanitarian and non-political nature. This development, working in the field, has also stimulated the ecumenical movement.85 On the whole, in the aftermath of the First World War the churches seem to have had only a sporadic role in the international refugee work.

The biggest and the most important general-purpose organization was the Red Cross. The International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) had been founded already in 1863. The principles of the duties and work of the organization laid down then obliged the ICRC to join the refugee work later when the problems occurred.86 It was explicitly the ICRC, that gave the impetus to the League’s responsibilities on refugee relief. The tenth International Conference of the Red Cross adopted a resolution in 1921 taking the refugees to the official agenda of the organization. Every (national) association of the Red Cross was bound to pay attention to people who could be categorized as refugees.87

The Red Cross emphasized the temporary character of its work and concentration to purely relief activities. In this consideration, the definitive solution of the problems was supposed to be left to the League of Nations.88 Many national associations took part in international refugee relief, of which, the campaigns of the American Red Cross (ARC) form the best-known examples. The ARC was in the field in Europe already during the First World War. The refugee programs were at their largest during the beginning of the 1920s. The ARC assisted Russians, Armenians, and refugees in the Balkans. It started to withdraw from Europe in 1924, yet some limited activities continued still after that.89 The responsibility in relief work was transferred from International Committee to national associations during the 1920s. The actions of the

84 Leitzinger II, 414
85 Ferris, 162
86 Frings, Paul: Das Internationale Flüchtlingsproblem 1919-1950. Frankfurt a/M 1951, 122
87 Simpson 1939, 173
88 Frings, 126
89 Frings, 127-128; Simpson 1939, 173-175
Red Cross formed also an example how NGOs are needed when gathering general acceptance for the refugee operations. In some cases the local population may be reluctant to accept the new people, and this can even lead to hostilities. International cooperation between the NGOs was particularly important when forces had to be gathered to support the attitudes and activities. Although there are known examples of rivalry situations between organizations, it may be safe to state that private organizations stood out firmly as counterparts to internationally developed cooperation between governments.90

Save the Children organization was established just after the First World War. It cooperated with the Red Cross organizations on refugee relief. Later the International Union of the Save the Children worked also together with the ILO in Greece. There were several other American organizations in the field, especially in the Near East and Asia Minor. One of the most prominent was the Near East Relief which was in fact a limited liability company formed by a decree of the US Congress. Its duties consisted of deliveries of material goods and medicines for the refugees in its operating territory. It managed in the difficult task of establishing working relations with the governments of Turkey and Soviet-Russia.91

There were several others, religious-based organizations conducting relief work. Many Christian sections had their own agendas. The common nominator was the deliveries of humanitarian assistance.92 It has also been remarkable in many instances, how the NGOs can provide protection to refugees simply by rendering their presence. They represent a believable reporting constituency with a credibility which potentially abusive authorities can never ignore.93

Most of the NGOs were formed and operated by others than the refugees themselves. These organizations were not selective on their target groups. There were, however, organizations established for certain groups of refugees. Some attention should be given to the organizations of the Russians and the Armenians. The Russian refugees were active in their own organizations, and so were the Armenians. In addition, the Armenians got a lot of sympathy by other nationalities. Associations and foundations were established to help the refugees. Probably the best known was the

[Page 79]

91 Simpson 1939, 177-178
92 For this see Frings, 88-121
93 Winter, 108
Union Générale Arménienne de Bienfaisance in Paris. The Russians had numerous sectorally, politically, and professionally defined organizations. Some of those organizations were focused particularly on preserving the Russian culture abroad.

It has often been considered that non-governmental organizations need strong and visible individuals in their leadership. Otherwise they would be left without support and funding. This is how the official politics of governments and the guidelines of the NGOs can be merged, in most cases without major public attention. The leaders of the Red Cross were politically close to the Governmental circles in Finland. In the Finnish civil war the Red Cross was acting on the side of the “Whites”. The Red Cross was approached by the Army in 1919 when the medicinal corps made an inquiry whether the RC could operate in medical service tasks at the border should there be a war. In the beginning of the 1920s, the organization focused its attention on General C.G.E. Mannerheim, who had stepped down as the provisional Head of State of Finland. Shortly after his political retreat, he was asked to start as the president of the Finnish Red Cross. General Mannerheim accepted the offer. He supported the development of international activities which would bring the organization up to “international standards”.

Governments and INGOs have created partnerships in certain fields. Today the INGOs form a supplementary channel for governments’ official development aid. The main motivation for this cooperation is that NGOs can reach the needy people in a grass root level better than governments. Moreover, it is easier for them to form successful link-up with the recipients of the aid. Therefore, the INGOs frequently become the actual deliverers of supplies and services to refugees. The INGOs are often the element of the refugee assistance network most in touch with refugees and their needs, since they have their delivery role in the field. In the eyes of the public, voluntary international organizations are the most visible links in the assistance chain, even in cases where the funding for the activities may come from intergovernmental agencies or from governments.

The ICRC made an appeal to all national associations when the Committee was working to assist the prisoners of war. Assigned by the League of Nations, Nansen was responsible for those actions. Some 15,000 POWs were repatriated via Ino lager in

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94 Simpson 1939, 184-185
95 See Chapter 3.1.1.
98 Winter, 107
Finland. Red Cross organized an exchange where Finnish citizens from Russia returned to Finland, in exchange for Russians in Finland. Also Russian former POWs residing in Denmark were attached to the deal. The Russians used the Red Cross organization to send clothes and other relief material to their countrymen in other places of Europe.

The American Red Cross and the Finnish RC began their cooperation in 1921 when the Kronstadt incident materialized, bringing fugitives from Russian military to Finland. The ARC had started a massive program to assist needy people in Europe during the war and continued it in the early 1920s. The ARC had motivation to strengthen the moral and the courage of the nations and new states especially in Eastern Europe. A so called Commission for Western Russia and Baltics was formed in 1919 in Berlin with its headquarters in Riga and Colonel Edward W. Ryan as the head of the office. The Commission was to continue the work of the POW committees. It had offices and representatives in several countries bordering Russia.

The refugees coming from Russia were famine striven at the end of the 1920. The ARC originally had schemes to take the stocks in Finland to inner Russia when the situation would allow it. It seems that ARC Commissioners were unified in opinion that the ARC should not cooperate with the Bolsheviks. With this background it is understandable that the supplies of the ARC were finally used in Finland, instead of taking them to Russia.

The ARC ceased its operations in Europe in the spring of 1921. The stations were closed and the supplies were transferred to local authorities and organizations. In some cases it has been reported that the local Red Cross and the ARC did not have any cooperation, but the ARC was working together with the local authorities. In Finland the ACR was in relationship with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

It was evident that the ARC had close contacts with the White Armies of Russia. There are things suggesting that the stocks of supplies were supposed to be used in

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99 Rosen, 245-247
100 SPR:n Joulu 1919, 11
101 SPR:n Joulu 1921, 3
102 Rosen, 249
103 Rosen, 254-256
104 ARC, Annual Report 1920, 120
105 Minutes of the Conference of ARC Commissioners. Venice 18.-22.6.1920, 78-81
106 In fact, this was assistance to the potential enemies of the Bolsheviks.
107 Description of this in Finland, see Rosen, 254-256
108 Letter of ARC's Capt. Hopkins to Aarne Wuorimaa of the MFA of Finland 7.6.1920, UM 11.C.19
operations of military takeover of the City of Sankt Petersburg. It was defined that the transfer of the stocks could be done only with the consent of General Yudenitsh.\(^{109}\) ICRC and the new League of Red Cross Associations held a joined international Conference in 1921 for the first time. The refugee matters were publicly and essentially addressed during the meeting.\(^{110}\)

The national associations had their own forms of mutual cooperation. The Finnish RC formed its relations to other Scandinavian RCs through General Mannerheim. The Swedish Red Cross donated funds to the FRC for the assistance of refugees.\(^{111}\) The biggest individual donation was remarkable 121,000 Finnish marks with an explicit condition that it should be used for helping Russian refugees. A committee formed by the RC allocated the funds mainly to “white Russians”.\(^{112}\) The members of the committee reportedly had traditional connections to former Russian aristocracy who could have been considered counter-revolutionaries.\(^{113}\)

Red Cross movement had difficulties with the Russian Red Cross occasionally. The Soviet Red Cross was established already in 1918 by Lenin. The Council of National Comissars had decided to recognize all Geneva and Hague Conventions and to take responsibility on all commitments previously made by the Russian Red Cross. The old Russian Red Cross therefore changed into an organization in exile. These two were competing for recognitions.\(^{114}\)

The situation in Finland was special, since the Finnish Red Cross was previously subordinated to the RRC, and the leaders of those organizations were old colleagues. This certainly helped the RRC personnel to obtain asylum and sojourn permits in Finland. The existing relationship was in some connections problematic, since many organizations, notably the ARC, expressed their support to the new Soviet Red Cross.\(^{115}\) There are clear signs that the RRC had influence to some extend when it comes down to the allocation of relief work conducted in western countries. In some

\(^{109}\) Minutes of the Conference of the ARC Commissioners 1920, 71-72

\(^{110}\) X Red Cross Conference 30.3.1921

\(^{111}\) Rosen, 265-270; SPR:n keskushallituksen kokouksen pöytäkirja17.5.1922, 783

\(^{112}\) SPR:n vuosikertomus 1922, 844; SPR:n Joulu 1923, 1

\(^{113}\) Rosen, 253-254

\(^{114}\) Rosen, 251-253

\(^{115}\) Rosen, 251-253
cases, however, their actions were prohibited when it became obvious that recruitment of men to White troops was among their services.\textsuperscript{116}

The old RRC had its headquarters in Paris. In the same city, there were several other organizations, having activities in many countries. One of the most notable was The Federation of Russian War Invalids and Wounded Abroad. It had local “unions” in several European countries. It was reported that many governments supported these unions financially.\textsuperscript{117} There are indications that the cooperation between the RRC and local authorities as well as national association was not completely unproblematic.\textsuperscript{118}

National associations occasionally received some private donations from other countries, which they supplied further to refugees.\textsuperscript{119} They also organized campaigns to collect funds for refugees in other countries.\textsuperscript{120} The Red Cross had an International Relief Committee, with Gustave Ador as its chairman, to coordinate the humanitarian work.\textsuperscript{121} In Finland the FRC had colonel Schwindt as its representative in the relief project in helping the famine striven people of Russia. The same person represented the High Commissioner in Helsinki. Colonel Schwindt acted as the Minister of Defense of Finland for a short period, and he had acquaintances at the highest political leadership of the country.\textsuperscript{122}

The Red Cross had broad cooperation with the League in several other fields besides refugees.\textsuperscript{123} The specific nature of the refugee problem compared to others was that the people were crossing borders of sovereign states. Therefore, interventions by an intergovernmental body were needed. And yet, for the first time in modern world history, there was the proper body, the League of Nations.

The work of NGOs was very different from the work of IGOs. The NGOs concentrated on humanitarian activities and relief work. Many recipient countries had similar policies, especially in case of Russian refugees. Nothing permanent was considered in this respect. One of the reasons was that no one in the west seemed to

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[116]{Rosen, 253-254; The “Ryska Röda Korset I Finland”, a Swedish language old Russian Red Cross association was still existing in Helsinki in 1980s/ an interview of Mr. Gunnar Rosen, the Deputy Secretary General of the FRC in February 1987}
\footnotetext[117]{Simpson 1939, 183}
\footnotetext[118]{SPR:n keskushallituksen kokouksen pöytäkirja 27.10.1920, 673}
\footnotetext[119]{SPR:n vuosikertomus 1922, 875}
\footnotetext[120]{Rosen, 306}
\footnotetext[121]{Rosen, 259}
\footnotetext[123]{For this see e.g. XI. conference international de la croix rouge. Geneve 28.8.1923, rapport general, 64}
\end{footnotes}
believe in the final victory of the communist revolution in Russia.\textsuperscript{124} The Advisory Committee of Private Organizations discussed a number of matters connected to the refugee problem in its meeting in May 1922. Several resolutions were passed in order to advise the High Commissioner.\textsuperscript{125} In the name of honesty it must be noted that none of those seem to have had much importance from the practical point of view.

After the large scale emigration of the Russian refugees emerged in Europe, only very few governments were in a position to offer necessary amount of help to those destitute people, who came suddenly and in big masses. Private organizations were in the key role. The financial burden was borne this way for some time after the War. This changed only after governments stepped forward to share the responsibility. It is fair to say, that a major part of the material assistance was provided by private organizations, some of which were set up ad hoc after problem emerged. This applies especially to the countries neighboring Russia, where the philanthropic institutions took on the responsibility before the governmental and international help was mobilized.\textsuperscript{126}

As far as both two decades are concerned, great numbers of NGOs were involved in the refugee work. Some studies on that work have been carried out over the years. It is possible to categorize the organizations according to their orientation for target groups, as well as according to their willingness and ability to cooperate with the Intergovernmental organs.\textsuperscript{127}

There were different arrangements in different countries. Several ministries and administrative branches were involved. After the war, especially in the new states, it was somewhat unclear who should be responsible for the matter. In Finland the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Interior had their discussions and exchanges about refugees. The responsibilities were sometimes defined by other criteria than purely constitutional.\textsuperscript{128}

Also matters of entry were often separated from other duties concerning refugees. In Finland, in the very beginning of the independence, the armed forces took care of the supervision of those issues. They were already in 1919 transferred to the Secret Police

\textsuperscript{124} Stoessinger 1956, 13
\textsuperscript{125} Minutes of the 19. Session of the Council of the LON (17.-24.7.1922)/OJ, 3\textsuperscript{rd} year, No 8 (part B), August 1922, 925
\textsuperscript{126} Simpson 1939, 172-173
\textsuperscript{127} See Appendix X; ref. Simpson 1939,172-190 and Les Réfugiés. Le activités de la société des nations, 9. Section d'information. Geneve 1938, 51-52
(EKP) which was a subordinate to the Ministry of Interior.129 This illustrates the variety of the national authorities in the field which the officials and representatives of the International and Intergovernmental Organizations would face.

An important side of refugee work was the exchange of information and funds, which is a two-way traffic. Normally the refugee problems exist in one part of the global scene, whereas the funds necessary to solve them are found in another part. Information must be delivered from countries producing and hosting refugees to donating countries, whereas funds should move in the opposite direction.130 This was also valid during the Inter-war period. Financial issues were crucial to the effectiveness of the refugee mechanism. In order to establish a credible refugee regime, the international community had to take some financial considerations into account. The big and powerful countries carried the biggest responsibility, as always. For the first time, however, it seems that smaller states were contributing to the activities through the League in a manner never seen before. The system could not have worked without sufficient backing by the governments of all the contributing states.131

In the prevailing political situation after the First World War, when old and new nation-states were competing in all possible fields, this approach was definitely challenging. Countries were exhausted by the War, many states had new political structures, and materially there was lack of everything. The most crucial innovative aspect in cooperation between projects is the direct transnational exchange of experiences by the individual projects and the transfer of methods both within and outside the overall programmes. The activities of the international refugee regime can be seen as an Inter-war example of this development. The transnational approach has proven very cost-effective compared to purely national programmes. These activities deliver large amounts of important knowledge in relation to work with the aliens and the results of such innovative approaches may be identified.132

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130 Gammeltoft-Hansen, 69
The intergovernmental organizations were incapable without the political and publicly funded support. States responded to forced migration not only by offering financial assistance. They also contributed to durable solutions for refugees in terms of supporting resettlement, local integration, or repatriation during the Inter-war period. In our modern days, however, states within the UN system have been increasingly reluctant to provide resettlement and local integration to refugees, and have instead promoted repatriation as “the preferred durable solution”.133

There was the possibility available for the Russians to establish their own relief organizations, since there were some rich families as well as political and cultural activists among the refugees abroad.134 It was specifically the problem of the Russian refugees, being the biggest one, which started the chain reaction from governments and private organizations towards the involvement of the League and ILO.135

While refugees often constituted a substantial share of the political community of a post-conflict territory especially in countries neighboring Russia, they were rarely participants in the negotiations taking place between the international political actors. The possible talks leading to a political settlement were most often conducted without the representatives of refugees. The refugees were represented in the institutions implementing the aid neither.136 During the 1920s and 1930s, it was considered important in many instances that the refugees should not be represented in the international organs deciding and channeling refugee aid.137

Voluntary organizations held many valuable functions, but lack of authority was their problem. Significant shortcoming was the insufficient ability of private organizations to provide leadership for the international refugee regime. The most important constraint was that they lacked the mandate necessary to deal with governments holding the political power which was needed in the work.138 When the first international conference on refugee matters was convened in the summer of 1921, the participants were various: the LON, the ILO, International Red Cross, Save the Children Organization, as well the representatives of the following states: Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Greece, Poland, Rumania, Serbia, Croatia and

133 Betts and Loescher, 18
134 more about this Simpson 1939, 180-183
135 Best summary on this: Hansson I, 5-8
137 See e.g. Chapters 3.3. and 4.3.
138 Skran, 281-282
Switzerland. The agenda of the conference contained the start of new relief projects as well as forming of the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees.

2.3. New Initiatives

The first quarter of the twentieth century was affected by a wide process of growing interdependence throughout the globe. Countries were no longer isolated. This was shown in the developments around the intergovernmental cooperation centered in the League of Nations. Governing arrangements were created by a group of countries to deal with particular issues in world politics. These arrangements reflected shared principles and norms, and aimed to established rules and decision making procedures. The regimes formed in this manner are not as strong or comprehensive as a world government would be, but they indicate a pattern of international cooperation.\textsuperscript{139}

Peace was declared to be at the focus of the League. Refugee work was seen to be contributing to this end. The Assembly paid tribute to Nansen after his death for his efforts “to unite the nations in work for the cause of peace”.\textsuperscript{140} The importance of the publicity in the international diplomacy and cooperation should not be forgotten. The procedure of conferences is also characterized by the atmosphere which necessarily surrounds it. The traditional diplomacy made it a rule to act with discretion and really important proceedings were done secure from the public. Nevertheless, in the 1920s the press became more active and public opinion in general began to explore the international social questions critically.\textsuperscript{141} This was necessarily reflected in the handlings concerning such a grave issue as the refugee problem. It was not possible to leave the issue behind and pretend it was not topical.

There seems to be essential differences in the shares of the attention received by different refugee situations in the international media. The attention focuses clearly on a few cases interesting to the public for some reason. Most cases receive, however, only minimal attention or no attention at all.\textsuperscript{142} This goes for the global scale of refugee

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{139} Skran, 65-66 \\
\textsuperscript{140} Hansson II \\
\textsuperscript{141} Bourquin, 45 \\
\textsuperscript{142} Hakovirta 1986, 139
\end{flushright}
situations. In the 1920s international politics, as well as international news media, was very much Eurocentric. The big masses of refugees located in European countries could not go without attention. This attention created pressures and something had to be done.

The international media might significantly improve the prospects for the successful management and solution of the refugee problems. Widespread and more objective international attention to refugee situations may help them by attracting sympathy as a form of public opinion.\textsuperscript{143} In the present source material, however, there are no references to any direct pressure to take action from the media’s side. This would undoubtedly be an interesting question and offer new possibilities for history researchers.

Small nations seem to have an incentive to trust Intergovernmental Organizations provided that the benefits can be clearly identified. After the First World War they had the possibility to do so for the first time.\textsuperscript{144} Countries like Finland and Norway being newly independent states can be displayed as examples of this attitude. Especially Norway showed extraordinary activism in many fields, but especially in humanitarian work in general, and by trying to solve the refugee problems explicitly.

On February 16-17, 1921 the Red Cross organized a meeting summoning together the most prominent relief organizations dealing with the problem of Russians abroad. The meeting gathered at the same table the ILO, the Save the Children Fund, the League of Red Cross Societies, as well as the Russian Relief Associations (Lwow Committee, former Russian Red Cross). They all recognized the urgency of the measures to take intergovernmental action in order to help the Russians. As the League of Nations had already been working on the question of the prisoners of the war, “it should not abandon the refugees who likewise were victims of the scourge of war”.\textsuperscript{145}

On 20th February 1921, the President of the ICRC, Gustave Ador, appealed to the Council of the League of Nations. The principal argument in his letter was that the League was “the only supranational political authority capable of solving a problem which is beyond the power of exclusively humanitarian organizations”.\textsuperscript{146} The letter was accompanied by a Memorandum which drew the attention of the Council to the

\textsuperscript{143} Hakovirta 1986, 152
\textsuperscript{144} Jonkari, Lauri: Kansainliitto Suomen turvallisuuspolitiikassa ja kansainvälisten suhteissa. Vastaanotto ja vaikutus julkisessa sanassa ja yhteiskunnassa vuosina 1919-1936. Turun yliopiston julkaisuja, sarja C, osa 265, Turun yliopisto 2008 (Yliopistopaino, Helsinki 2008), 17 and 375-390
\textsuperscript{145} OJ, Vol 1, March-April 1921, 228-229
\textsuperscript{146} Grahl-Madsen 1983, 358
situation of the Russian Refugees dispersed in different countries of Europe. The Council was requested to attempt to find some kind of solution to the problem and to appoint a “general commissioner” whose task would be: a) definition of the legal position of the refugees b) repatriation of these refugees to Russia, or their employment outside Russia c) coordination of the efforts already undertaken for the assistance of the refugees.147

The letter presented a proposal that the League should appoint a Commissioner for Russian Refugees. The Commissioner should provide ways to consolidate the measures already undertaken by the voluntary organizations.148 On 26 February 1921, the Council passed its first resolution on refugees. In June 1921 the Council decided to summon a Conference on the Question of Russian Refugees. The real concrete first step was the fact that the President of the Council was authorized to appoint a High Commissioner for Russian Refugees.149

The Council sent a letter including a resolution concerning the establishment of the High Commissioner to all members of the League as well as “to various countries which do not belong to the League”. A number of replies were received, including those from members and members to become. These all were considered official replies. It was noted that, apart from these, the Secretary General of the League often received letters and appeals from various Russian organizations and associations. The request for statements on the matter of appointing the High Commissioner resulted in e.g. a letter from Lwow Committee acting on behalf of Russian citizens abroad asking for money.150

In 1921, when there already was a decision in principle to establish the High Commissioner, there were some deliberations whether the Commissioner needs funds for carrying out its far-reaching and costly operations. It was concluded that in the beginning the Council authorizes the Secretary General to charge all the expenditure incurred in connection with the Russian refugees to Article 27 of the second chapter of the Budget (Unforeseen Expenditure). The League relied on the Governments’ financial support, but it was also mentioned that it might be of interest to check whether

147 OJ, Vol 1, March-April 1921, 225
148 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 359; OJ, Vol 1, March-April 1921, 228
149 See Grahl-Madsen 1983, 359; discussions and developments can be followed in OJ, Vol 2-3, June-October 1921
150 OJ, Vol 2, July-August 1921, 485-509
any funds belonging to former Russian Governments at that time deposited in various countries could be devoted to use of the Russian refugees.151

The ILO got involved with the refugee matters already in 1921 before the nomination of the High Commissioner. When the League called an international meeting on refugee matters, the Labour Office was among those invited.152 It was the first time, when the two world organizations sat together because of the theme of refugees. The employment situation of Russian refugees in receiving countries was among the first tasks of the newly appointed High Commissioner.153 It was therefore not surprising that Nansen shortly after his appointment turned to the ILO for the technical assistance to the projects. In the deliberations of the Governing Body it was emphasized that the Labour Office had undertaken the duties by the explicit request of the High Commissioner.154

The ILO took distance from the actions taken by relief organizations in the field right from the beginning of the refugee work. The role of the Labour Office in practice was to coordinate the field work done by others. The Labour Office was usually represented by the Director General Albert Thomas.155 The Migration Commission established by the first International Labour Conference delivered data to the Director General on the basis of their surveys in different countries.156

Ten Member states were represented in the Refugee Conference which took place in August 1921 in Geneva. Those were Bulgaria, China, Czecko-Slovakia, Finland, France, Greece, Poland, Romania, Serb-Croat-Slovene State and Switzerland. In addition, the Conference was assisted by the representatives of the International Labour Office, the International Committee of the Red Cross, The League of Red Cross Societies as well as the International Save the Children. The Conference adopted a memorandum with several recommendations. These concerned the legal status of refugees (including passports), the relief work, employment, as well as cooperation of the coming High Commissioner with different States and religious communities.157

151 OJ, Vol 2, September 1921, 757-758
152 OB, Vol 4, 1921, 198-199
153 ILR, Vol 6, No 1, 1922, 101
154 Minutes of the 12. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1922, 179
155 See e.g. OB, Vol 3, 1921, 103 and 547-548
156 OB, Vol 3, 1921, 547-548
157 OJ, Vol 3, October 1921, 899-902
In connection to this “Conference of Enquiry”\(^{158}\), states and other actors were asked to submit information concerning the numbers and conditions of the Russian refugees in their respective territories. 13 responds were received. These included ten Governments of Member States, but also reply from Russian, Armenian, and Georgian Delegations to the League. It was noted that the British Government which was unable to participate to the Conference had sent a very detailed Memorandum on the subject to the Secretary General.\(^{159}\)

This phase was closed at the beginning of September 1921 when Fridtjof Nansen sent a letter to Secretary General Eric Drummond acknowledging the invitation of the Council to act as a High Commissioner on behalf of the League in connection with Russian Refugees. Nansen replied simply: “I have much pleasure in accepting this invitation”.\(^{160}\) As a term and title, High Commissioner refers to various high-ranking, special executive positions. Nansen held the position for almost nine years until his death in 1930.

By the title it was emphasized that the work was directed explicitly to Russian refugees. It was his other duties in Russia, which took Nansen closer to the refugee problems in the first place. The agenda of the High Commissioner was to issue passports and other id-certificates, to secure asylum and employment for the refugees, as well as to coordinate and harmonize the work of the NGOs.\(^{161}\)

The League took responsibility by these decisions and actions. In a way, this was a deliberate rearrangement of the division of responsibility, because nothing in the Covenant or in the general work scheme of the League obliged its Members to undertake any such liabilities. But the Council had already shown its readiness to listen to appeals made to it. The attitudes can be seen symbolically, reflecting the willingness to be in a position to enhance international unity.\(^{162}\)

The League, together with the ILO, was considered to be the best to tackle the problems of employment, settlement, and migration, which were the most essential questions connected to the refugees.\(^{163}\) The role of the new international refugee regime was to encourage governments to grow positive attitude, as well as to accept and take responsibility for refugees. In question of Russian refugees, it was obvious

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158 OJ, Vol3, November 1921, 1006
159 OJ, Vol 3, November 1921, 1006-1027
160 OJ, Vol3, November 1921, 1027
161 Frings, 21
162 Walters, 187
163 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 362
that the League and especially the ILO could use the refugees as an example to convince the working class in western countries that the consequences and the outcomes of the Russian socialist revolution were not entirely positive. Assumptions on the success of the Soviet Union with its socialist economy were very much based on mystification and lack of real knowledge in the West. The overall notion was, that communism was turning the war-torn Czarist Empire into a major industrial power within a short time. People of Europe had to ask whether communism began to emerge as an alternative to the international capitalism. On the other hand, reported famine and millions of refugees were telling another story.

According to Skran “The most obvious explanation for the formation of the international refugee regime is that a consensus on humanitarian principles inspired the international community to deal with the pressing refugee problem”. The Council of the League formulated its responses to the appeal of the ICRC from this basis. Another usable explanation that could be adopted by a historian is that governments built the international refugee system because they expected to benefit from it.

The developments discussed above show indisputably that the LON rather quickly after its establishment assumed a leading role in finding solutions to refugee problems, despite the fact that this was not specifically a part of its design. At that point, no explicit hesitation was shown, partly because no one could predict how difficult and prolonged the situations can be. The initial optimism of the founders of the League was still prevailing and certainly this was a magnificent vehicle for the few individuals who already had dedicated themselves to work on behalf of homeless refugees.

165 Mazower 1999, 115-116
166 Skran, 85
167 Skran, 88
2.4. Fridtjof Nansen as a Project Leader

The biographies of Fridtjof Nansen reveal that he regarded himself a scientist and explorer. However, probably the most far-reaching of his activities was the international political career. He became initially known from his ski-treks in northern parts of the globe. Nansen was famous of his courage and strength, but it was his diplomatic achievements that made him world famous. His physical stamina and mental character were definitely needed when he was working with minimal funds and means in attempt to help the masses of destitute people. On the grounds of his qualities of leadership as described by the authors the step from scientist to diplomat and statesman was not too long.

Nansen didn’t only talk loudly, he also took concrete action. He was a frequent visitor in Geneva and he spoke on behalf of the refugees who were suffering around Europe. According to his character, he also went to the people and worked with his own hands for their relief. He was an impertinent advocate of the homeless and had the talent to lash the consciences of those who expressed sympathy but gave nothing. Nansen also took part in the work on legal questions concerning the constitutional matters in League procedures. This was seen in the 1920s when Nansen, like the Norwegian Government in general, was defending the rights of the smaller nations in the League system. In 1919 Nansen became the President of the Norwegian Union for the League of Nations. Already in the Peace Conference in Paris he was lobbying for the adoption of the League Covenant and for recognition of the rights of small nations. Nansen was a delegate of his country from 1920 until his death.

Nansen was a scientist and diplomat and representative of Norway in the League. He organized repatriation of POWs and on the mitigation of famine in Russia before he was assigned to his tasks on refugees. The influence of Nansen to the refugee work of the League can be divided in three different periods. 1. 1921-1924 when Nansen

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168 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 359-360
169 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 359. Norway gained its independence in 1905. According to widespread rumors, Nansen was requested to become either president or king of Norway, but he declined both offers
171 Scott, 152-153
took personal responsibility of the whole refugee organization, 2. 1925-1929 when Nansen still was responsible to the LON, but there was a parallel organization Refugee Service operated by the ILO, 3. Post-Nansen period, when the independent Nansen Office, established by the League Assembly, was again parallel to the High Commission of the LON.

The international career also brought the Nobel Peace Prize to Nansen in 1922 “in recognition of his work for refugees and famine-stricken”. He donated the money to international relief efforts and continued his work with the League. It goes well into the same category of interests, as Nansen played a role in securing the adoption of a convention against forced labour in colonial territories.

Nansen’s first real diplomatic task took place at end of First World War when he arranged shipments of food and other essential supplies from the USA to blockaded Norway. Nansen was approached by several institutions, mainly because of his visibility. First, in the spring of 1920 the League asked Nansen to undertake the task of repatriating prisoners of war. The refugee work came into picture in the summer 1921. Nansen was also asked in 1921 to take a task of directing relief for millions of people suffering from famine in Russia.

In his role as the League’s High Commissioner for the repatriation of the prisoners of war, Nansen could state in early 1921 that the bulk of his task had been performed. By the completion of his work in autumn 1922, Nansen could report that 430.000 POWs had been repatriated.173 In this, as well as in his later assignments, Nansen hesitated, but finally could not say no. After assuming the task, he would put all his heart and strength to it. It must be kept in mind that in the beginning of the work of the League of Nations it was understood that also the refugee problem was a temporary one and the High Commissioner should be able to finalize his work in few years.

On 15.-16. August 1921 delegates of 48 voluntary agencies and 12 governments met in Geneva to organize the food operation for the starving in Russia. U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover was at the conference with his friend Nansen, but did finally not involve himself in the actions. However, Nansen was appointed by the Conference as the High Commissioner for Aid to Russia. Nansen concluded agreements with the Soviet Russia and thus managed to undertake the huge task of bringing food to the starving. Reportedly, Mr. Herbert Hoover was asked to accept the assignment as the High Commissioner for the Relief actions in Russia, but he declined. His fresh posting as the Secretary of Commerce in USA was probably the final

173 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 359
Nansen might never have become High Commissioner at all if the search for a candidate had taken another course. Beside the American candidates (e.g. Hoover) there were suggestions for the appointment of a High Commissioner from one of the Great Powers. All these projects failed for a reason or another.175

In 1920-21, Nansen arranged repatriation for 450,000 prisoners of war. In 1921-22 he gathered and distributed supplies to save several million starving people in Russia. Yet, the most far-reaching of the projects was the work on the refugee problem, which was only discontinued by his death in 1930. Nansen personally was especially involved with the most serious and visible refugee questions in the 1920’s. The first was the Russian refugee question; someone was needed to coordinate the negotiations that concerned many different countries and governments close to the USSR. The second was the problem of the Greek refugees who poured to Greece from their previous homes in Asia Minor. The third was to save the remnants of the Armenian people from extinction.

The Conference on the Question of Russian Refugees was convened at Geneva in August 1921. Few days after the Conference, Nansen accepted the appointment as the High Commissioner.176 By choosing Nansen to these operations, the League wanted to emphasize the humanitarian and non-political character of its operations.177 The Norwegians were naturally proud of Nansen’s reputation, and Norwegian authorities believed that their country had a special duty to speak on behalf of refugees. Nansen himself saw his work as a real contribution to peace in addition to its humanitarian aspects.178

Nansen seems to have been personally very concerned about the fate of the Armenian people. The question was his major preoccupations for the last few years of his life, and moved him to travel to sites where the Armenian question was tackled. The hesitation in taking measures shown by politicians was one of his great disappointments. For that, he also expressed his bitterness openly.179 Nansen’s thinking was labeled by the basic principle that there are some things that are everybody’s due. All people should have the right to live a fully human life just in virtue

174 ibid.
175 Skran, 289-290
176 OJ, Vol 3, November 1921, 1027
177 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 360; see e.g. OJ, Vol3, December 1921, 1247-1248
178 Hansson II
179 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 362
of existing as a human being. Nansen held the High Commissioner’s post until he died in May 1930 at the age of 68 years.

During the initial exercise in 1921 Nansen and the Director General of the ILO Albert Thomas became partners with a mutual trust and respect. Thomas was a useful companion for Nansen with his relations to political circles and representatives of economic life. Thomas had acted as the Cabinet Minister of War in France during the First World War. Their cooperation has been evaluated to be the most important driving force for the international refugee work in the 1920s. The other personalities that deserve to be mentioned are listed by Atle Grahl-Madsen.

Many manifestations on the role and significance of Fridtjof Nansen have been published over the decades. As a contemporary reaction, the President of the Council put the situation in words in his Tribute to the Memory of Nansen stating: “one of the greatest figures of the League of Nations during the ten years of its existence has just passed away”. In the same occasion the President didn’t hesitate to confess: “…Dr. Nansen often felt it his duty to criticize the policy adopted by the League – although the decisions of the Council and the Assembly often seemed to him not to go far enough or fast enough – yet his criticism in such cases was never bitter”.

Nansen began his work after his nomination by gathering a small group of trusted colleagues to make a function as his cabinet. He appointed delegates in asylum countries with the job of keeping headquarters informed on all developments and to keep in touch with the host government officials and the refugees. Nansen was given “a rather free hand” (as it has been described). He took an expansive view of his role as High Commissioner and broke new ground for what we would call an international civil servant by receiving representatives of governments as if he were

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180 On the definition see Dummet, 26
181 Soessinger 1956, 16
183 Thompson I, 30-33; Stoessinger 1956, 16; Simpson 1939, 194-207; Frings, 23-26
184 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 366: These persons all had significant role in the refugee organizations during the reference period and they appear in various parts of this presentation: Gustave Ador, Max Huber, Georges Werner (all Swiss), Michael Hansson (Norwegian), Lord Robert Cecil, Gilbert Murray, Sir Philip Noel-Baker, Sir Samuel Hoare, Thomas Frank Johnson, Sir Neill Malcolm, Sir Herbert Emerson (all British), Paul Hymans (Belgian), James G. McDonald, Myron Taylor, George Rublee, Franklin D. Roosevelt (all US). In addition to this, Sir John Hope Simpson should be mentioned. He was a member of the Council of the League, and had a position to follow closely the policies as well as the practical work of the world organization. Thus he prepared and wrote the monumental Report of a Survey “The Refugee Problem” (1939) which has inspired many and served as a reference for generations of history researchers.
185 Minutes of the 59. Session of the Council of the LON (12.-15.5.1930)/OJ, 11th year, No 6, June 1930, 518-519
186 Skran, 75
plenipotentiary, and by sending his own representatives to be received in various world capitals.\textsuperscript{187} Nansen himself established the basic institutions of the refugee system. It is especially remarkable that the host governments were all accepting the delegates he appointed. By his actions, Nansen also “helped to translate the regime’s norms into concrete rules”.\textsuperscript{188} He also simply showed leadership.\textsuperscript{189}

Nansen recognized in the beginning of his duties that charitable organizations had been carrying out admirable work. He invited these organizations to form a special joint committee to advise him on all matters in connection with the refugees in which they had special knowledge and competence. The organizations represented in this Committee were the following: Near East Relief, Comité International de la Croix-Rouge, League of Red Cross Societies, European Student Relief, Comité des Zemstvos et villes russes, Russian Red Cross (old), Jewish Colonisation Association, Conférence universelle juive de Secours, “Save the Children” Fund, Armenian Refugees Fund, Union international de Secours aux Enfants, Russian Famine Relief Fund, Imperial War Relief Fund, Russian Relief and Reconstruction Fund, International Committee of American Y.M.C.A., The World’s Committee of Y.M.C.A.\textsuperscript{190} In addition to that Nansen expressed his deep gratitude to women’s organization of Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland for their financial contributions in helping Russian refugee women.\textsuperscript{191}

Refugee strategies emphasize the importance of dialogue between different sectors and segments. It is fair to say, that contrast to single-sector management, this kind of interaction on technical level also during the Inter-war period lead to a variety of advantageous developments. These formed a basis for an appropriate response and were also cost-effective in the situation where Nansen did not have abundant funds. Multi-disciplinary social action has always matched with the idea of good value of money.\textsuperscript{192} The refugee regime in the 1920s and 1930s automatically was applying these principles to certain extent, without knowing anything about the modern strategy concepts. This was manifested in many committees and task forces, where the seats

\begin{flushleft} \textsuperscript{187} Sieverts, Frank Arne: The refugee definition and vulnerable groups. (In The Living Law of Nations: Essays on refugees, minorities, indigenous peoples and the human rights of other vulnerable groups: in memory of Atle Grahl-Madsen. Ed. by Gudmundur Alfredsson and Peter Macalister-Smith.) Kehl 1996, 84 \\
\textsuperscript{188} Skran, 290 \\
\textsuperscript{189} Skran, 95 \\
\textsuperscript{190} OJ, 3rd year, No 4, April 1922, 343 \\
\textsuperscript{191} OJ, 3rd year, No 4, April 1922, 344 \\
\textsuperscript{192} von Bethlenfalvy, 14 \end{flushleft}
were occupied by diplomats, soldiers, as well as aid professionals equally, and as a response to the expertise needed.

The most far-reaching obligations of the League of Nations were prevention of violent conflicts and mitigation of the consequences of those which take place. It was considered that when the countries, even smaller, get their voice raised in a forum like that, it would be easier to control the global problems. The Members of the League considered the refugee problem very serious, peace-threatening phenomenon. Many of the Member countries suffered from the consequences of the refugee flows. These exiles, in turn, were considered the severe result of the World War.

When the ICRC appealed to the League of Nations to undertake the tasks connected to the international political protection, the incentive was that the League was the only possible and most suitable organization for the task. The foundation of the League was to handle political matters, which were beyond the capacity of the NGOs. Certainly there were plans and good will to create international cooperation under the leadership of a single international organization. Fridtjof Nansen had his role in the initiatives which led to the communications between the Red Cross and the League.

It became obvious that the representatives of the Red Cross and the Save the Children were experienced people needed by the High Commissioner. Nansen also expressed his gratitude to these organizations for the help of their personnel. The HC of the LON would try to maintain as close relations to governments as possible, but the governments were not always so enthusiastic. Nansen suggested that governments should establish national committees to take on some responsibilities of the High Commission on a national level. A model committee had been established in the Kingdom of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. Very few governments even sent a reply to the appeal, and all of those who did, didn’t consider it necessary or possible to have such a committee.

The High Commissioner needed professional assistance in different fields of his work from the beginning. The Labour Office was a natural companion in this respect. Although the ILO wanted explicitly to keep distance to the field work among the refugees, its services were required in the coordination of the activities which was the

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193 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 358
194 Karatani, summary
195 OJ, 3rd year, No 4, April 1922, 343
196 Minutes of the 29. Session of the LON, Annex 635, Nansen’s report to the Council 12.6.192/ OJ, No 7, 1927, 954
main duty of the High Commissioner. ILO rendered technical assistance to the projects connected to employment and related matters. The concrete outcome of the work was to be the data gathered by the Labour Office on the basis of the studies in various countries.197

Moreover, Albert Thomas made visits to the member states of the ILO frequently. He used to arrange meetings at a very high political level during his visits and thus make a follow-up of situations concerning ratification of certain agreements.198 There were, however, only few agreements on refugees which would have required formal ratification. Recommendations were normally not ratified, but governments had to provide evidence to the ILO on the actions taken to execute the arrangements.199

The contacts were reinforced at various levels and instances. The representative of Finland in Governing Body of the ILO presented the gratitude of his government for the work done by the HC and to the organization of Nansen when the transfer of the duties from the LON Council to the ILO was discussed.200 When the Refugee Service was established to continue High Commissioner’s work, many of Nansen’s representatives continued at their post, just assuming new duties as the contact point and as the representative of the Refugee Service as well.201

Successful opening of the refugee work required contacts to the countries where the problem of Russian Refugees had emerged. The contacts were seen to be essential for the coordination of the efforts. The problem was international, so had to be the solutions. After Nansen was assigned to his office, he quickly requested the governments involved to nominate a representative, who would act as a middleman between the High Commission and the Government.202 Mr. Esko Heilimo from the Ministry of Interior was assigned by the Finnish Government in autumn 1921. By April 1922, altogether 12 governments had their representatives in place.203

The descriptions above tell something about the connections between the national governmental organs and the international organizations.204 As said, the representatives of Nansen and the Red Cross were in many cases same persons. As an illustration of this, Colonel Schwindt took on the role in Finland. He was nominated

197 See e.g. OB, Vol 3, 1921, 103 and 547-548
198 Mannio, Niilo: Sosiaalipoliitikon kokemuksia 50 itsenäisyysvuoden ajalta. Porvoo 1967, 200-201
199 See Suomi ja kansainväliset järjestöt, 89
200 Minutes of the 22. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 34
201 E.g. Col Schwindt in Finland, see Records of the Proceedings of the 8. Session of the ILC, 1926, 46
202 OJ, Vol 4, 1922, 342
203 OJ, Vol 4, 1922, 330
204 The relation can be depicted from OJ, Vol 4, 1922, 343
already in mid-October 1921, which was right after the assignment of the HC.  Schwindt himself had his background in Ingermanland (born there), and thus presumably nurtured some sympathy towards this refugee group.

### 2.5. The Making of an Intergovernmental Establishment

The launch of the refugee assistance was followed by consecutive stages of organizational developments. The League had several different arrangements for the refugee work during the Inter-war period, as later documented in this dissertation work. The attitudes and reactions also changed. There are, however, some characters that can be followed throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Three main principles have been identified and recognized by several authors of studies concerning the refugee work of the Inter-war period. Those principles were: 1. only selected groups could be helped; there was never an attempt to start a universal coverage. 2. The LON intervention was provisional. The same principle was followed by the ILO and later the Nansen Office. There was no attempt to create a permanent organization for refugee work during the Inter-war period. 3. The funds provided by the LON were to be used for administrative purposes only, not for field operations.

An interesting aspect is that the collective institutions like the League were also notable centers of information. Only the specialists who used the services of the League and the ILO in this capacity could realize the extent and practical benefits to be derived from the activity. These two institutions gathered together immense quantities of data. It was collected and concentrated in one place, and held at the disposal of the public. This was definitely an incomparable amount and variety of documentation which no other institution could compile. All this was necessary in the refugee work, and in fact, an essential precondition for the solution of the problem. Without this feature, it would be almost impossible to conduct any assessments on the effectiveness of the work either.

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205 SPR:n keskushallituksen kokouksen pöytäkirja 16.10.1921, 736
206 E.g. Sonntag, 311-415; Frings, 31 and 39; Simpson 1938, 195
207 Bourquin, 20
The two international institutions also promoted mutual understanding on each other, as well as between them and “outsiders”. The same applies to the promotion of understanding between nations and states. This was invaluable for common action, since normally the nations found it difficult to sympathize with one another, even when powerful interests should logically bring them together. The collective institutions were able to contribute to creation of consensus, especially in the social and economic sector208, which is essential in finding solutions to refugee problems.

The expertise of the League and the ILO became obvious when people were considering the aspects connected to the need and supply of the personnel. The procedures of social and economic cooperation require a personnel differing considerably from that employed by diplomacy. The need for technical experts in refugee work is evident, and the collective institutions were responding to that demand.209

Simpson makes a division of the League’s organizations which were accredited by the League for the protection of refugees in three categories: the autonomous Nansen International Office for Refugees ‘under the authority of the League of Nations’, the High Commissioner for Refugees, and ad hoc organizations formed from time to time to deal with urgent problems, such as the Greek, Bulgarian and Assyrian settlement schemes.210

Although the forms of League protection and assistance differed, the main principles laid down expressly on Nansen’s appointment in 1921 did not change much during the two decades of the League. In the very beginning it was decided that the League took responsibility only on certain categories of refugees, not all. The work was considered temporary, and it was supposed to be ceased whenever considered finalized or politically suitable. The League organs for refugees could use funds only for their administrative expenses. Relief and settlement of refugees had to be left to the hands of the NGOs, but these activities were supposed to be coordinated by the League officials without spending money for those purposes.211

It was considered that the intervention of the world organizations should be provisional, but the conflicts and the new flows of refugees kept coming. The mandate of the refugee organs had to be renewed time after another. The same situation prevailed for the entire Inter-war period. The problem turned out to be all but

208 Bourquin, 21
209 See Bourquin, 23
210 Simpson 1939, 191
211 Simpson 1939, 192
temporary. Provisional became in practice permanent. The League and the ILO were required to act accordingly.

The principal international actors were eager to create a legal framework which would define the status of refugees in international law. On the other hand, the refugee organs of the League attempted to protect chosen groups of refugees through provisional interventions. This was conducted in two-fold manner: with host governments, as well as on their behalf. The organizations were connected and disconnected. They merged and were separated. All was due to the current political situation and atmosphere. The changes were, of course, in an attempt to respond to the challenges and requirements. There were huge numbers of Commissions and Committees. It is very challenging to try to conclude the real roles and the capacities of the organizations from their nominal qualities.

As an illustration of this development, the intergovernmental bodies were still working on these same questions of organizing the work as late as at the end of the 1930s. The latest mandates of the refugee organs were due in the late 1930s, and the Assembly as well as the Council examined the possibilities to extend the assignments through the work of a designated Committee. The conclusion was that the refugee problem was anything but solved. Therefore, the role of the designated League organs coordinating the work was seen crucial in connection with the trustworthiness of the activities. Centralized coordinating work was at the aim of the establishment. In time, new demands for the refugee organizations were addressed, but one thing remained, presumably deriving from the example given by Fridtjof Nansen. The direction and coordination of the work was supposed to be placed in the hands of persons with international reputation and reliability. This development represented continuity in the course of changes. As later in this work documented, the evolution of the organizations provides an example of the consistency that was apparent in the work of the League and the ILO throughout the Inter-war period.

When the Inter-governmental Committee on Refugees was formed at a later stage, it

212 Skran, 102
213 See Chapters 4.2. and 4.3.
214 Minutes of the 100. Session of the Council of the LON (26.1.-2.2.1938), 4th meeting 29.1.1938/ OJ, 19th year, No 2, Feb 1938, 110-111
215 Minutes of the 101. Session of the Council of the LON (9.-14.5.1938), 8th meeting 14.5.1938/ OJ, 19th year, No 5-6, May-June 1938, 365; see also Appendix IV, “Implementation of Intergovernmental Refugee Work”
216 Thompson II, 380
217 See Chapters 3.3. and 4.3.
was still considered necessary to have the League and the Labour Office close to the developments of the new universal body.\textsuperscript{218}

\textsuperscript{218} Simpson 1939, 226; Les Réfugiés. Le activités de la société des nations, 9. Section d’information. Geneva 1938, 32-39
3. THE REACTIVE PHASE 1921-1930; NANSEN’s TIME

3.1. Competence and Principles fitted into the Impartiality of the League System

3.1.1. The LON’s Authority and Guidelines

The 1920s saw creation of the international refugee regime and formation of the policies of the intergovernmental community, which the League and the ILO represented. The masses of refugees were enormous, and this was reflected in handlings of the world organizations. The system was developed from almost zero. This is the reason why this decade deserves major attention when studying the topic at hand.

At first sight, it seems natural that the League was involved with the refugee questions. However, in order to understand the basis for the competence and legitimacy of the League’s refugee work, it is important to set the context first. The basic premise is that the refugee problem was a worldwide phenomenon, and it was inseparably linked with other major international problems of the time. Because it could not be seen as a problem particular to a country or a region, there was a need for global approach. The refugee problem was not only about individuals or groups in their relations with states and governments, but it also concerned states in their relations with each another.\(^1\) This is why there was a compulsive need for initiatives and approaches aiming to international comprehensive solutions.

During the 1920s, it was understood in some deliberations of international justice that the League had authorized itself to conduct certain measures connected to general obligations that could be compared to modern concept of human rights.\(^2\) It was quite obvious that purely national interests and exclusively domestic considerations would only direct the problem from one country to another. These may have served short-term national goals but could never have contributed to a more permanent solution to

\(^1\) Hocke, 41
\(^2\) See Erich, Rafael: Kansainliiton oikeusjärjestys. Otava, Helsinki 1926, 176
the underlying humanitarian problem. A comprehensive policy meant that states consulted with each other on existing intergovernmental platforms, which in turn prepared the way for a coordinated action.³

When the League of Nations was established, there was a profound international discussion on which questions are “political”, and which, in turn, “non-political”. These discussions were soon converted into political debates. However, despite this partly unintentional development of the situation, there was in the background the assumption that political questions should be separated from legal ones.⁴ It was considered that the real task of protecting refugees lay with the League of Nations although there was no explicit obligation. The Covenant of the League contained nothing dealing directly with the assistance of refugee.⁵

According to Skran, the structure of an international regime consists of four major elements: principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures. Principles are core beliefs held by the members of a regime. Norms are standards which define the rights and obligations of the actors in the regime. Rules are derived from the principles and norms and are often more easily identified since they are usually codified and their implementation and enforcement can be observed. Decision-making procedures involve the members of the regime, primarily states.⁶

The motivations for the humanitarian action of the League can be excavated from the text of the Covenant. The reasoning for the humanitarian work for the homeless and stateless was then found in the Preamble to the Covenant: “To promote international cooperation by the maintenance of justice.” In the Article 23 (a) of the Covenant formulated that “Members of the League will endeavour to secure and maintain fair and humane conditions of labour for men, women and children both in their own countries and in all countries to which their commercial and industrial relations extend, and for that purpose will establish and maintain necessary international organizations”. Assistance of refugees was contemplated as a definite part of the new intergovernmental thinking. Keeping this philosophy in the background, that action became one of the most important social undertakings of the League.⁷

There was an opposition to the refugee work coming forward with its own agenda. A

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³ Hocke, 42; Skran, 264-267
⁵ Toller, 397
⁶ Skran, 66-67
⁷ Bentwich 1935, 114; see also Toller, 397
commonly held assumption was that ‘charity’ should not be on the agenda of the intergovernmental organizations, and should be held exclusively as the domain of private agencies and national governments. Any international initiatives in the humanitarian field had to be clearly justified because funds were needed.8

The first authorization for the League as an organization represented by the High Commissioner to act internationally on behalf of refugees was acquired through the Refugee Conference arranged by the League in August 1921. Ten Member States as well as a number of non members and organizations were summoned together in Geneva. Most of the States were those that were burdened by large numbers of Russian Refugees. Unanimous resolutions were adopted in the Conference, and the general outcome was that the problem could be best helped by League through nominating a High Commissioner to act on behalf of the international community.9 The competence of the League of Nations was questioned many times during refugee operations of the 1920s and 1930s. This was inevitably reflected to the status of the High Commissioner in different times during its existence.10

The founders of the League of Nations entrusted the powers and tasks to it. Those who drafted the Covenant had a supranational institution in mind on the one hand, a platform and level playing field for negotiations on the other. The ultimate purpose of the institution was to create favorable conditions for cooperation in order to maintain peace and security. The importance of social and economic conditions was recognized as an essential building block for that goal. The idea was that the League will be entrusted general supervision powers over certain international arrangements concerning just and decent treatment of people. However, protection and assistance of refugees were not included in the Versailles package of 1919.11

The Article 25 of the Covenant of the League was the paragraph used in order to make the member states cooperate with the Red Cross organizations for the alleviation of destitution throughout the world. This Article provided the opening which the Red Cross used when appealing to the League for measures to help the refugees.12 It was clear that also the refugee work of the League suffered from the fact that the US was not a Member.13 In the beginning of the work of the League, however, the working

8 Skran, 86-87
9 E.g. OJ, Vol 3, Dec 1921, 1114-1115
10 E.g. Grahl-Madsen 1983, 364
11 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 358
12 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 358
13 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 364
relations to the Americans were close and routinely. This was to be seen especially in dealing with the question of Armenia.\textsuperscript{14} Under the authorization by the Article 23, its b-, c- and f- items, the League was able to undertake certain tasks which were categorized as “interests on humanity”. By broad interpretation these tasks on humanity could also include the work on behalf of refugees.\textsuperscript{15}

In general, countries wanted to take part in the intergovernmental activities of the LON and thus strengthen international justice. The League was part of the strategy of their foreign policy. It was understood that the care for refugees was an element of that international responsibility.\textsuperscript{16} With whom the League was supposed to negotiate? The answer was: mostly with legitimate governments. The League faced this difficult dilemma already in the very beginning of its existence. In 1920-1921 the League took measures to provide support to the newly independent Armenian state. In the beginning of 1921, the Council had to face the fact that the State and the Government did not exist anymore. What could be done in order to help the Armenian nation under these circumstances? The scope was turned into the Armenian refugees.\textsuperscript{17} This is how the international political machinery adjusted to changing circumstances.

Nansen reportedly believed that the High Commissioner for Refugees should carry out the responsibilities in a non-political and humanitarian way. He was not a politician, and behaved accordingly.\textsuperscript{18} Based on the information obtained from the League documents the different roles and duties of Nansen were mixed to certain extend in the beginning of the 1920s. It must be remembered, that Nansen had been working on the prisoners of war and Russian famine for some time before he was appointed as the High Commissioner for Refugees. In his report in the capacity of the High Commissioner for Russian Refugees he reported on facts and plans that would easily fall into a category of “political interference in Russia”. It could be estimated that his reports went sometimes far beyond normal relief work. Nansen saw the children and young people among the refugees “as soldiers in the economic army designed for the work of reconstruction” of Russia. The young people should be cared for and educated. When the time was right, they should be helped to return to Russia.\textsuperscript{19} When Nansen was dealing with the masses of Russian refugees at Constantinople, he probably

\textsuperscript{14} See e.g. OJ, Vol 1, March-April 1921, 152-153
\textsuperscript{15} Erich 1926, 176
\textsuperscript{16} Leitzinger II, 172
\textsuperscript{17} OJ, Vol 1, March-April 1921, 152
\textsuperscript{18} Skran, 288
\textsuperscript{19} OJ, 3rd year, No 4, April 1922, 338-339
exceeded his mandate. He had been appointed to deal with the legal protection, repatriation, and employment of Russian refugees which sounded nonsense to his ears when people were actually starving.\textsuperscript{20}

As shown, there were certain gaps between the jurisdiction and the timing of the political organs of the League.\textsuperscript{21} The consequences were obvious. The collective action which took place under such circumstances showed the weaknesses of improvisation. There was the evident risk of making serious mistakes. The personnel had to be appointed in hasty situations. Sometimes the people in the field or in the headquarters were simply not able to accomplish what was expected.\textsuperscript{22} Nansen, Thomas, and their staffs provided policy-makers with options that became the fuel for political debates and bureaucratic actions within governments. In doing so, they deviously combined national interests with their own humanitarian goals and convinced the Great Powers to do something that they otherwise would not have done.\textsuperscript{23}

Policy guidelines are, in general, developed by a community to clarify principles and describe best practices. Policies and guidelines are intended to reflect the consensus of the community. Policies have wide acceptance among editors and describe standards that all users should normally follow. Research literature has even seen the refugee situation and the remedy to it in simplified terms, familiar to us from the medical science: first there is a diagnosis, followed by a prescription, and the work is finalized by a policy formulation.\textsuperscript{24} This will be followed by the guidelines and the management phase.\textsuperscript{25}

There was a constant debate on the widely supported best practices for the refugee work throughout the Inter-war period. The biggest difficulty in setting guidelines for refugee work at any given moment is that no two refugees and no two refugee situations will ever be the same. Some principles may be available, but these will not necessarily support useful conclusions resulting in solutions.\textsuperscript{26} The Secretariat of the

\textsuperscript{20} Skran, 186
\textsuperscript{21} See Chapter 1.3.
\textsuperscript{22} Bourquin, 43
\textsuperscript{23} Skran, 183
\textsuperscript{25} see Appendix III; “Implementation of Integovernmental Refugee Work”
League provided leadership by developing some innovations leading to proposals that would be acceptable to governments. In practice, that meant watering down the solutions. The proposals asking for limited commitment were easier to adopt.\textsuperscript{27} Nevertheless, diligent and regular work was carried out to establish the guidelines during the entire decade.

One of the most comprehensive principles of the work was that there is always a distinction between a) political and legal protection of the refugees on the one hand and, b) humanitarian work on the other. This distinction could not always be maintained, especially during the period of Nansen Office, which had to intervene in capitals through its representatives, the resource that the League was lacking.\textsuperscript{28}

As a demonstration of the initiative of the League, the Council requested the Secretariat to transmit the recommendations of the first Conference on Refugee matters in August 1921 to all Members of the LON, and recommended that each of the Members should consider whether it was possible to adopt the proposals, especially those concerning passports. These recommendations were supposed to be communicated also to the States which were not Members of the League of Nations.\textsuperscript{29}

The Council was active from the beginning. The League’s Assembly did not concern itself much with the refugee questions. It took, however, some actions in a form of annual resolutions e.g. concerning the question of states punishing refugees for illegal entry and residence, which forced them to move again towards neighboring countries\textsuperscript{30}. There are some indications that even the Assembly occasionally gave instructions to the High Commissioner. An example of this was the precaution stating that the High Commissioner should not embark on any initiation with regard to any scheme for establishment or colonization without the agreement of the Government concerned. Further, the High Commissioner should only carry on negotiations with the Governments of the countries of refuge.\textsuperscript{31} Sounds self-evident, but it must be kept in mind that the construction and the working methods of the Assembly made the processing of the resolutions very cumbersome. After reaching a consensus, the unanimously adopted documents may sound even frustratingly non-informative and meaningless.

\textsuperscript{27} Skran, 99
\textsuperscript{28} Grahl-Madsen 1983, 363
\textsuperscript{29} OJ, Vol 3, Dec 1921, 1116
\textsuperscript{30} Grahl-Madsen 1983, 364
\textsuperscript{31} The League from year to year (1936). Information Section. League of Nations, Geneva, 234
Three norms were prevailing in the international refugee regime during the Inter-war period: asylum, assistance, and burden-sharing. The asylum norm was the most ancient of these and had already a long history in both state practice and international law. The assistance norm gave states an obligation to help refugees because of their desperate position. The burden-sharing norm posed guidelines on the financial obligations towards refugees. The deliberations in the League stressed the importance of burden-sharing, maintaining that the solution to the refugee problem required close cooperation between the members and non-members of the League.\(^\text{32}\)

John Hope Simpson has summarized the principles laid down directly or indirectly when Nansen was appointed High Commissioner in 1921. They were followed faithfully for the entire existence of the League. Four main principles can be identified and separated from the mass of resolutions and other declarations.

The principles were:

- The League took responsibility for protection of certain groups of refugees only. There was never serious official support for suggestions to extend the League protection to all categories of refugees.
- The obligations of the League were temporary and were due to be terminated at a given point.
- The funds commissioned by the League could be used only for administrative expenses of the Central Office (High Commissioner) and in some cases for local offices.
- The organizations attached to the League were expected to coordinate relief and settlement efforts, but League funds could not be spend for such purposes.\(^\text{33}\)

Support to Nansen was tentative, and so was his mandate. He was given only administrative capacity and support by the League; NGOs provided the personnel and material needed for assistance.\(^\text{34}\) This was the premise as well as the consequence in the same package. Nansen was an idealist. He was not chosen to his position by chance – he was known of his stamina and determination. Those who recommended him and persuaded him personally certainly nourished the hope that Nansen would be the one who could accomplish the job if it could be managed and accomplished at all.

Peace was always in mind when deliberations took place in the League. In 1926 the Council adopted a resolution concerning the assistance to Bulgarian Refugees. In that

\(^{32}\) Skran, 68-71
\(^{33}\) See Simpson 1939, 192-197 and Grahl-Madsen 1983, 366
\(^{34}\) Joly, 7
connection the Rapporteur added to the discussion after the adoption of the document that the successful solution to the refugee problem in Bulgaria would add one of the finest jewels that the LON could put into its crown and would certainly have a beneficial effect on the maintenance of the peace in the Balkans.\textsuperscript{35}

The refugee organs were constantly reminded of the cross cutting principles. The Advisory Commission to the High Commissioner for Refugees set up by the invitation of the Assembly stressed in its first report on 12.6.1929 the importance of the idea that the refugee work of the League should only be considered as temporary. It should not be prolonged indefinitely, and it should be brought to a final conclusion. The Commission’s report further made a certain number of recommendations with regard to the measures to be taken for the continuation and the liquidation of the refugee work under satisfactory conditions.\textsuperscript{36}

The Advisory Commission recognized in its report the impossibility of a radical solution. This expression referred to three models of final solution which had been contemplated by the League during its refugee work activities. The three had been the guiding principles for the whole work. They were: a) Naturalization of refugees. The Commission noted with satisfaction the generous reception afforded by various countries to the requests for naturalization of refugees. b) Recovery by refugees of the nationality of their country of origin. c) Return of refugees to their country of origin.\textsuperscript{37} It was softly admitted that none of these worked really effectively.

Refugee work was definitely seen as a process. An essential part of it was networking. Nansen was a champion in this respect. His activism was at least sometimes productive. That is merely the reason how he gained his success and reputation. The validity of these skills as powerful lobbying tools became demonstrated in case of the 1928 arrangement and recommendation.\textsuperscript{38} Yet the significance did not show itself until after a longer period of time. If the comments were not properly adopted and ratified in the member states and other parties of the agreement, they were without practical value. On the other hand, some countries may have followed the letter of recommendations without a formal ratification.

The recommendations of the Governing Body of the High Commissioner, which were made in 1930, were not enforced or implemented by any diplomatic instrument. They had no binding force either. They were simply recommendations of practice to the

\textsuperscript{35} Minutes of the 41. Session of the Council of the LON (2.-7-9-1926)/ OJ, 7th year, No 10, Oct 1926, 1246
\textsuperscript{36} Minutes of the 55. Session of the Council of the LON (10.-15.6.1929)/ OJ, 10th year, No 7, July 1929, 984
\textsuperscript{37} Minutes of the 55. Session of the Council of the LON (10.-15.6.1929)/ OJ, 10th year, No 7, July 1929, 1078
\textsuperscript{38} See Chapter 3.3.4. and Bentwich 1935, 117
state authorities concerned. That character applied equally to the most important features of the existence of the refugees. These were the proposals concerning permits of residence and permits of work which were required in several countries. A general remark is that through the existence of the intergovernmental refugee regime, agencies had to turn to the Council and Assembly of the League for money and political support, and to the Secretariat for proficiency. The Council was a great platform and an opportunity for involvement in refugee issues for the permanent members of it.

The practical recommendations also consisted of pleas urging e.g. that states should not expel refugees from their territory before it was ascertained that they have been permitted to enter another country. Intergovernmental bodies were seen as a platform of persuasion and consultation by many governments. One side of the value of the League organizations was merely that they could convey information and knowledge through government delegates to the government offices on specific matters.

### 3.1.2. The ILO’s Competence and Restrictions

It was self-evident that the League was intervening in the refugee problems, although some voices of opposition were also heard. Less clear is, how and why the ILO got involved. At first sight, the ILO doesn’t seem to be the international body that comes first in mind when we are talking about refugees. In order to understand this, a brief glance to the history and background of the organization is needed. By doing that, it is actually possible to find logical grounds for the work. The general principles of the organization also reveal something about the motivations of the ILO. The competence and the capacity can be derived indirectly from those foundations.

The initial motivation for the existence of the Labour Organization was humanitarian. The bad condition of workers was becoming less acceptable. The workers were more numerous and exploited with no consideration for their health, their family lives, and their advancement. This preoccupation appears clearly in the Preamble of the Constitution of the ILO, where it is stated: "conditions of labour exist involving ... injustice, hardship and privation to large numbers of people."

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39 Bentwich 1935, 127  
40 Skran, 76  
41 Bentwich 1935, 127
The second cornerstone was political. Without an improvement in their condition, the workers, whose numbers were ever increasing as a result of industrialization, would create social unrest, even revolution. The Preamble notes that injustice produces "unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperilled."

The third premise was economic. Because of its inevitable effect on the cost of production, any industry or country adopting social reform would find itself at a disadvantageous compared to its competitors. The Preamble states that "the failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labour is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve the conditions in their own countries."

A further reason for the creation of the International Labour Organization was added by the participants of the Peace Conference, linked to the war to which workers had contributed significantly both on the battlefield and in industry. This idea appears at the very beginning of the Constitution: "universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice."

In 1926, an important innovation was introduced when the International Labour Conference set up a supervisory system on the application of its standards. The ILO created a Committee of Experts composed of independent jurists responsible for examining government reports and presenting its own report each year to the Conference. This kind of mechanism was most definitely considered as an asset while estimating the competence of the ILO for the refugee work.\[42\]

As it became obvious that the tasks of assisting the refugees in Europe were beyond the resources of the Red Cross and other voluntary organizations, the League and the ILO were invited to participate. The League responded positively, and so did the ILO. The ICRC approached the ILO for the first time already at the end of 1920.\[43\] The Governing Body of the ILO had the matter on the agenda in its sixth meeting. The proposal made by the ICRC was well itemized and contained three parts. The first one was the competent help of the ILO in creating an Emigration Office which, in turn, should make surveys on which countries could be able and willing to receive refugees capable to work. Another item was the establishment of labour exchange services in Eastern Europe. The third one was the coordination of the work of the private

\[42\] All these principles are well described e.g. by Anthony Alcock in his book; they can also be found on any website presenting the principles of the ILO

\[43\] OB, Vol 3, 1921, 547
organizations in the field of international labour questions as far as refugees were concerned.\textsuperscript{44}

The initial discussion reflected the trends for the whole Inter-war period: Director General Albert Thomas pointed out that the organization did not have funds for the activities described in the proposal. The president of the GB Arthur Fontaine (also a Frenchman) reminded, however, that these activities would not require funds, since the purpose was only to coordinate and supervise the work of others. The representative of Poland was very much in favour of accepting the proposal, since Poland was suffering immensely from the huge emigration of Russian refugees. He pointed out that the proposal should have been more carefully defined.\textsuperscript{45} This address very well manifested the attitude of the entire discussion: favourable in principle, but hesitant.

The outcome of the initial deliberation was that the first and the third item could be adopted easily, but establishing a labour exchange service was beyond the (financial) capacity of the organization, because it would mean practical field work and require money.\textsuperscript{46} As a result of the proceedings, a resolution was adopted. According to that, the International Labour Office was called upon to provide informative aid for the alleviation of the unemployment among the refugees as well as technical assistance in establishing an Emigration Office. It was clearly defined that the executor of this operation was Director General Albert Thomas.\textsuperscript{47} It must be kept in mind, that the refugee organization of the League was then only at its planning phase.

The three items all got reservations; the ILO could not take the main responsibility of the establishment of the Emigration Office or the operations of it. The labour exchange was not realistic and the coordination activities could be continued only until the system was operational on its own.\textsuperscript{48}

Director General Albert Thomas, later recognized as a full-hearted advocate for refugees, appealed to the meeting by stating that according to the Constitution of the ILO incorporated to the Peace Treaty of the First World War, the organization was responsible for the protection of foreign labour force and thus must respond to the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{44} Minutes of the 6. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1921, 51
\item \textsuperscript{45} Minutes of the 6. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1921, 19-20
\item \textsuperscript{46} OB, Vol 3, 1921, 547; Minutes of the 6. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1921, 51
\item \textsuperscript{47} Minutes of the 6. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1921, 20
\item \textsuperscript{48} Minutes of the 6. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1921, 51; OB, Vol3, 1921, 103
\end{itemize}
appeal of the Red Cross.\textsuperscript{49} This was well in line with one of the basic tasks of the ILO which was to advocate sufficient income and decent living of workers, including foreigners.\textsuperscript{50} The international regulation of labour conditions and position of workers should be developed according to same principles as national legislations.\textsuperscript{51} It was obviously assumed that international regulation and agreements were the best ways to help the refugees in their new home countries.

In the beginning the talks within the ILO concerned only Russian refugees. The countries which had formed the ILO had their suspicions on the Bolshevik government and the feeling was definitely mutual.\textsuperscript{52} It was clear that western powers considered the Russian refugee problem a product of the Bolsheviks. At the end of 1921, Nansen made a proposal on cooperation to the Labour Organization. Nansen pointed out in his memorandum that many of the Russian refugees were not capable for physical labour, and therefore remained unemployed. Those who were able to work had previously been employed mostly in agriculture. International Labour Conference had the matter on the agenda of its 3\textsuperscript{rd} meeting. The Conference decided to make an appeal to Governments of the countries which could have agricultural jobs available.\textsuperscript{53}

The international refugee conference held in Geneva in August 1921 gathered up representatives of governments, NGOs as well as the ILO. The resolution of the conference called the High Commissioner together with the Labour Office to collect data on refugees, classify and process it into a useful form, as well as use it for alleviating the problematic employment situation of the refugees.\textsuperscript{54} The International Labour Office soon after this conducted some statistical operations among the refugees. Besides the above mentioned, the Office also listed facts on the treatment of the refugees in different countries.\textsuperscript{55} That can be considered a remarkable achievement from the organization which was just established and struggling with matters of principle of its work and existence.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{49} OB, Vol 3, 1921, 103; Reference to the principles and obligations, see Alcock, 34-35
\textsuperscript{50} See also de Lusignan, 67-75; Alcock, 35
\textsuperscript{51} Mahaim, 4-5
\textsuperscript{52} Osakwe, 67
\textsuperscript{53} Records of Proceedings of the 3. Session of the ILC, 1921, 830-831
\textsuperscript{54} OB, Vol 4, 1921, 198-199
\textsuperscript{55} Simpson 1939, 194; Stoessinger 1956, 16
\textsuperscript{56} For this see Alcock, 49-66
In 1921 when ILO still was without any merits, it was considered useful and profitable for the organization to participate in the international refugee work together with governments.\textsuperscript{57} Another internal motivation was that the ILO was the only international organization representing all possible levels and classes of societies.\textsuperscript{58}

Albert Thomas wished a designated paragraph concerning refugee work to be added into one of the Council’s resolutions in of 1925. That was necessary, according to Thomas, for the following reasons: Although the universal character of the ILO was well known and it was ready to deal with any questions entrusted to it, its competence was nevertheless limited. The Governing Body had again emphasized this position during the previous year. The ILO had been given the authority to deal with the questions of settling the Russian and Armenian Refugees. Nevertheless, certain political questions were outside its competence, and the Governing Body made it clear as their interpretation that such questions were outside the sphere of the Labour Office. In the final resolution it was stated, that as certain questions, especially the passports, had not been transferred to the ILO, the Council should authorize the High Commissioner to take necessary steps for summoning of an inter-governmental conference in order to improve the system of identity certificates for refugees, as well as to create and administrate a revolving fund (for resettlement of refugees).\textsuperscript{59}

When the ILO was carrying the main responsibility for the international refugee work through the Refugee Service, the motivation seemed to be dual. On the one hand, the ILO had special competence for successful handling of the problems connected to employment and settlement. On the other hand, the Organization also had a responsibility to protect the rights of national workers against unplanned and uncontrolled immigration of foreign workers.\textsuperscript{60} The background thinking obviously was that when the foreign workers satisfy themselves with lesser benefits, it inevitably affects the conditions of other workers.

It can be read in ILOs documents that there were worries about the refugees getting at the mercy of private employment exchanges and other even more suspicious entrepreneurship.\textsuperscript{61} The overall motivation must have been to encourage the refugees

\textsuperscript{57} Minutes of the 6. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1921, 51
\textsuperscript{58} Records of Proceedings of the 4. Session of the ILC, 1922, 420
\textsuperscript{59} Minutes of the 35. Session of the Council of the LON (2.-28.9.1925)/ OJ, 6\textsuperscript{th} year, No 10, Oct 1925, 1401-1402
\textsuperscript{60} Minutes of the 39. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1928, 342
\textsuperscript{61} Records of Proceedings of the 11. Session of the ILC, 1928, 201
to become valuable individuals rather than burdens in their new societies.\textsuperscript{62} Again, all this comes down to the basic principles of the ILO as outlined in the Constitution.

In the package of the League system the tasks and obligations for the ILO were much narrower than those of the League itself. The mission was to concentrate on social and economic questions. This could also be described as a division of duties between the two world organizations. The League undertook some projects concerning the countries of departure of the refugees, although these projects were motivated in various other ways as well. During the 1920s, the relationship to the Soviet-Russia was very problematic. The connections to the Nazi-Germany came to the picture in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{63}

The refugee problems of the time were connected to political and armed conflicts. The flows of refugees developed sometimes suddenly, and their management required high-grade international preparedness and considerable resources. The League was considered to be the right institution. There was automatically a connection to the ILO since it was an integral part of the system. The ILO was not supposed to participate in political deliberations according to its initial ideas and the constitution of it. In this respect, the position of the Labour Organization was a bit more complicated than the status of the League itself. The fact was, however, that these matters came inevitably to the attention of the ILO in any case.\textsuperscript{64}

The most prominent inconvenience for the ILO was the attitude of the workers of the recipient countries towards the refugees. Sometimes they were experienced as competitors in the labour market. Questions were asked in the ILO bodies whether it would create even antipathy against the ILO among the workers of the recipient countries, if the organization continues its resettlement activities.\textsuperscript{65} This materialized mostly in France, which had a tradition of strong labour movement and was the biggest recipient of refugees in the 1920s. The French workers representative Leon Jouhaux emphasized that it had always been necessary to negotiate with the trade unions before providing jobs for refugees.\textsuperscript{66} There is, however, no evidence according to the source material, that the workers’ groups inside the ILO would have opposed the resettlement and employment operations more than other groups. In fact, it was the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item\textsuperscript{62}E.g. Minutes of the 24. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 330
\item\textsuperscript{63}Here, see e.g. Walters, 255-260
\item\textsuperscript{64}Landelius, 104-120
\item\textsuperscript{65}Minutes of the 40. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1928, 416
\item\textsuperscript{66}Minutes of the 40. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1928, 417
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employers’ group that expressed some doubts when the responsibilities of the Refugee Service were discussed as a part of the transfer of duties of the High Commissioner to the ILO in 1924.67

In practical terms, the workers and the employers could best advocate their interests in the Governing Body, since the countries were not represented by complete tripartite delegations as they were in the Labour Conference. Thus the national interest was not so imminent. The employers’ group for example appeared unified when the discussions on shortening the working time was discussed.68 It must be said however, that the attitudes of the groups on refugee questions don’t reveal themselves easily on the basis of the source material available.

The internal disagreements came up sometimes in the Governing Body by taking a form of discussion on division of duties of different bodies of the ILO. The advocates of the refugee work referred to the constitution incorporated in the Peace Treaty. According to certain statutes, the International Labour Conference can define specific tasks for the Labour Office.69 The definition of duties was quite clear when it came down to the “ordinary” tasks of the ILO.70 Refugee work was obviously considered to be something out of that range, since it invoked feelings and intensive debates.

It was also argued that the work on behalf of refugees was executive work which was against the spirit of the Constitution of the ILO.71 Director General Albert Thomas counterargued that there was nothing in the Constitution that would forbid executive work. Besides, the refugee work was not executive work by its nature, but rather administrative and coordinating.72 There was no evidence, according to Thomas, that the League of Nations would have any more executive power than the ILO. Further to him, another wording should be used when talking about the practical refugee work.73 By these examples one can notice that the discussion sometimes took peculiar lines, which were perhaps out of proportion as well as difficult to follow.

Albert Thomas sometimes had to put all his prestige and authority on the table while advocating the continuation of the work on behalf of refugees. It seems that many individuals in the Governing Body, as well as in other institutions of the organization, had difficulties in living with these inaccuracies in the profile of the ILO.

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67 Minutes of the 24. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 331
68 Alcock, 51
69 Minutes of the 23. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 264
70 Landelius, 22-25
71 Minutes of the 23. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 258
72 Minutes of the 23. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 263
73 Minutes of the 22. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 145
When the Refugee Service was incorporated to the ILO, the funds of it were not integrated with organization’s normal budget.\textsuperscript{74} At the end of its existence, there were proposal to extend the budgetary periods of the Refugee Service, which is difficult to understand since the mandate was coming to its end.\textsuperscript{75} Great anxiety was experienced when the discussion turned into the division of labour between the High Commissioner and the Refugee Service of the ILO. It was strongly argued that the political and economic aspects of the work belonged exclusively to the High Commissioner.\textsuperscript{76} Some speakers warned the Labour Office to undertake “…responsibilities which might be of a dangerous character”.\textsuperscript{77}

Despite the prevailing hesitation, the advocates of the refugee work had their voice heard. In fact, it all came down to the conclusion that the ILO was after all the best and the most competent international body to tackle the problems. Albert Thomas was in the opinion that as the ILO was a part of the League system, it could not reject the cooperation on refugees.\textsuperscript{78} The competence of the Labour Office was evaluated not only by the ILO itself, but by the LON as well.

The selection of the target groups of the refugee work of the ILO was done in collaboration with the League organs. As the focus groups of the refugees (“nationalities”) of the Refugee Service were fixed, the Director General expressed as his opinion that selecting or including any new groups would be a political matter, and thus beyond the competence and capacity of the Governing Body of the ILO.\textsuperscript{79} At this point (1927) there was no imminent crisis in sight which would compel the organizations to take actions on behalf of any new refugee groups.

The ILO didn’t want to entangle the funds of the Refugee service with the regular budget of the organization. The underlying philosophy here was that the refugee activities were temporary, extraordinary, and additional. Also towards the end of the original mandate of the Refugee Service there were opinions that refugee work was always political by nature and thus unsuitable for the ILO.\textsuperscript{80} In the internal discussions of the ILO, the passport issue was considered a political activity which should be

\textsuperscript{74} Minutes of the 35. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1927, 175
\textsuperscript{75} Minutes of the 38. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1928, 66-67
\textsuperscript{76} ibid.
\textsuperscript{77} Minutes of the 38. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1928, 176
\textsuperscript{78} Minutes of the 23. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 259; Minutes of the 43. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 330
\textsuperscript{79} Minutes of the 36. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1927, 329
\textsuperscript{80} Minutes of the 35. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1927, 319
avoided.\textsuperscript{81} It was seen as the liability of the High Commissioner exclusively. In 1925 Nansen called an international refugee conference with passport matters on the agenda. In the Governing Body this provoked again a debate on the possible political nature of the work.\textsuperscript{82}

The British and the Canadian Governments seemed to have the most dubious attitudes on the refugee work conducted by the ILO. They sometimes were in confrontation with the Director General Thomas. In the Governing Body, the British Government even demanded the termination of the refugee work.\textsuperscript{83} For the British Government, Mr. Thomas sometimes appeared to be too anxious to continue and even expand the work. Sometimes these fears have probably been somewhat justified.\textsuperscript{84} The British Government argued that the work had lost its temporary nature, and that the Refugee Service had to be subordinated more closely to the Governing Body.\textsuperscript{85} This would have had, of course, secured a better supervision of the work.

There were scenarios in 1926 on the establishment of a permanent Migration Service, with refugees as one of the target groups. Mr. Thomas had his role on the background of the scheme. At least British and Canadian Governments were against the involvement of the ILO. The representative of Canadian Government, Mr. Riddell was upset because in his mind, Canada had been made a scapegoat for the unsuccessfulness of the attempt to establish the Service, although many others had resisted it as well.\textsuperscript{86}

The attitude of different nations and states can be followed better through the documents of Labour Conference, since the tripartite system formed by governments, employers and workers was less prevailing there than in the Governing Body. In 1925-1926 the German and Austrian delegations required actions by the refugee organizations. The requirement was rejected by coexistent procedure by the countries of the British Empire.\textsuperscript{87} The situation was indeed the opposite during the 1930s, when the organizations were acting for the benefit of the refugees coming from Germany.

The original idea of the ILO included the advocacy of the position of the working people at an international level. Therefore it was only natural that the matters connected to employment and working in general were close to the ILO’s competence.

\textsuperscript{81} ILR, Vol 3, No 1, 1928, 72
\textsuperscript{82} Minutes of the 29. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1925, 535
\textsuperscript{83} Minutes of the 34. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1927, 15-16
\textsuperscript{84} Reference to this, see Thompson I, 31
\textsuperscript{85} Minutes of the 35. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1927, 19-20
\textsuperscript{86} Minutes of the 33. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1926, 388-389
\textsuperscript{87} Records of the Proceedings of the 10. Session of the ILC, 1927, 149
Already in the beginning of 1921 Director General Albert Thomas was authorized to approach governments on behalf of the ILO in an attempt to contribute to the employment of Russian Refugees in Eastern Europe. Nansen needed the help of the Labour Office right from the beginning of his duties. In practice, the Labour Office provided the High Commissioner with reports and statistics concerning employment exchange services and employment in general. The services of the Labour Office also included contacts with the countries in Latin America to explore the possibilities there.

ILO conducted census and prepared different types of statistics during its first year of active existence. Refugees were classified by their professions and their present countries of residence. This was to help the Office and the High Commissioner to conduct proper planning for the future actions on employment. Thomas and Nansen had shared views and one of the schemes they were working on was the plan to resettle Armenians close to their original home. They formed a delegation to negotiate with the Soviet authorities on this. The consultations didn’t lead into any visible or permanent results. The biggest colonization schemes were made for Americas. That continent was receiving great numbers of emigrants during the period and it was thought that there was plenty of room for the refugees as well. The ILO had broad contacts which could be naturally utilized in resettlement plans for refugees.

The relation to the passport system created by the High Commissioner was problematic to the ILO. The organization was supposed to keep out of politics. The Polish Government threatened to expel all refugees without the Nansen Passport after 15.4.1923. Labour Office noticed the matter, but nothing could be done. The painful contradiction was that it was reportedly very difficult for the refugees to get employed without this precious and well recognized document.

Avoiding political deliberations led to situation where the non-political nature of the activities was knowingly emphasized. In those circumstances the ILO highlighted the technical nature of its work. The wording “technical assistance” was regularized in the deliberations of the ILO. Normally technical assistance means help provided by experts and special advisors to developing countries and systems. In case of ILO the specific

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88 Minutes of the 12. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1922, 179
89 E.g. Minutes of the 13. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1922, 347
90 Minutes of the 13. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1922, 347; Stoessinger 1956, 16-17
91 Minutes of the 26. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1925, 163
92 Thompson II, 33
93 See Chapter 3.3.5.; Minutes of the 27. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1925, 300-304
94 ILR, Vol. 3, 1923, 562
95 Thompson II, 28
meaning was also the assistance given to governments in their processing of national legislation on some of the sectors of the ILO competence. Many states created their social security system with the help of the ILO after the First World War.\textsuperscript{96}

The use of the term was not well established during the Inter-war period. The meaning and the significance of the term have been regularized only during later decades.\textsuperscript{97} The term also seems to have somewhat different connotations in different languages.\textsuperscript{98} While planning the structure of the Refugee Service before the mid-1920s, the technical nature of its duties was emphasized in several connections. In the terminology of the Labour Organization, “technical assistance” has an essential role. It describes the refugee work in practice. It reflects the possibilities and the tools that the ILO had, since the Labour Organization had a tradition of technical service from its creation, and assistance was rendered in many fields of the competence of the ILO.

When the Refugee Service was established, it was agreed that its main tasks would be investigation, coordination, and information on a) employment offers made to refugees b) conditions where the refugees could benefit from those and c) estimating how large amount of refugees can be employed. It was clearly noted that the expenses of travelling of the refugees cannot be paid and immediate humanitarian help cannot be provided.\textsuperscript{99}

Technical assistance was in most cases channeled through, or in connection with, other organizations providing refugee relief. The working field was diverse, but when it comes down to the basics, the activities can be divided in two main categories: The first one is statistical services and support services for measures aiming at employment of refugees. The second one is more far reaching international arrangements and projects aiming at the resettlement of the refugees. These two targets were most often overlapping and interdependent.

In the modern refugee aid contexts technical assistance is specifically connected to practical humanitarian help. In this sense, the expression has totally changed its meaning. In the handlings of the ILO the term “technical assistance” was particularly used in a sense which would explicitly exclude all emergency relief and humanitarian work. In modern development cooperation the term is used very much in the same manner as it was used by the ILO during the Inter-war period. It is used to express the idea that a partnership should exist between donors and recipients, rather than the

\textsuperscript{96} Alcock, 134-150
\textsuperscript{97} Alcock, 209-234
\textsuperscript{98} Engl. technical assistance or technical services; French Tache technique, swed. Teknisk Bistånd
\textsuperscript{99} OB, Vol. 9, 1924, 201-202
traditional situation in which the relationship was dominated by the wealth and specialized knowledge of one side.

The ILO has provided technical assistance in the field of migration questions throughout its existence. The Labour Office has conducted remarkable work in this sector and it can be assumed that parts of the benefits of the work have directed themselves to the refugees as well. This form of technical assistance was especially substantial during the period of the Refugee Service of the ILO. The ILO also provided technical assistance for the preparations of international agreements.

According to some interpretations within the ILO itself, contributing to the employment of refugees was technical by nature as such. In some connections, however, this concept seems to have been split; there were also discussions about the technical components in these activities. It is obvious that this terminology was not well established during the reference period as it is today. Although it is almost impossible to separate politics and technicalities, emphasizing the technical nature of the work in the public discussions was considered to provide justification for the refugee activities of the Labour Organization.

The research has in many connections expressed that it was Nansen in his capacity as the High Commissioner, who approached the ILO and gave impetus to the refugee work of the organization. It is evident, however, that the refugee problem was recognized in the ILO even before the assignment of the High Commissioner. The representative of the Polish Government brought forward his concerns in the Governing Body on the situation in the countries neighbouring Russia in 1921. Poland suffered from the problem immensely, and it had just been in an armed conflict with the Soviet-Russia. The Polish Government took also later part in the discussion in connection with the Jewish populations. At that time, the attempts to establish a migration service in Eastern Europe were on the agenda. In 1922 the Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia appealed to the ILO, claiming that the members of the

100 Alcock, 209-234
101 Simpson 1939, 204-205
102 Records of the Proceedings of the 12. Session of the ILC, 1929, 219
103 Alcock, 209-234
104 E.g. Stoessinger 1956, 14-16
105 Minutes of the 6. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1921,19
106 The Polish government was talking about “excess population”; see Thompson II, 68-73; Minutes of the 6 Session of the GB of the ILO, 1921,51
Labour Organization were under an obligation to share the responsibility of the burden caused by the large numbers of refugees.\footnote{Minutes of the 12. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1922, 190-191}

The role of Albert Thomas has been emphasized by many. He had indeed travelled in Russia, as well as in the neighbouring countries. He reportedly wanted the Soviet Government to join the work of the ILO.\footnote{Alcock, 126-130} This ambition didn't, however, materialize in the case of the Labour Organization, as it later did in the case on LON. Thomas was a trade union man, characterized as a reformist socialist.\footnote{Fine, 545-558} He shared the opinion of many other ILO's leaders that the working class in Western countries had unrealistic impressions on the Russian revolution and its results and thus the conditions of the workers in the Soviet State. This was seen to have a negative impact to the sentiments of the working class in the West. Thomas himself reportedly didn't have any illusions on the real state of affairs.\footnote{ILO and the First Year of its Work. Geneva 1921, 22}

The flows of refugees from Russia were an excellent opportunity for the critics of the socialism to start to demonstrate that the result of the revolution were not exclusively positive. The Labour Office made constant surveys on the conditions in Russia. A designated Russian Service was established for collecting and analyzing material as well as for communication. The material produced by this Body was often quite hostile towards the Soviet Government. The material was partly gathered from refugees.\footnote{Varis, 62-66} The refugee work conducted by the ILO had also reportedly some very concrete consequences. It has been calculated that some 60,000 refugees were able to find employment during the period of 1924-28 as a result of the efforts of the Labour Office.\footnote{Tortora, 84}
3.2. Organizing and Funding according to arising Challenges

3.2.1. Millions of Refugees; Different Premises but similar Problems

The background and real impetus for the creation of refugee protection system were constituted by the refugee problems. In this respect, the 1920s was a unique era in the history of Europe with the mass movements of homeless people. It all begun from worries about the huge amounts of Russians crossing the borders, and soon it was realized that there were even millions more, representing a variety on nationalities.

There were Russian refugee movements even long before the First World War and the revolution. Before the war, it was the opponents of the czarist regime who were fleeing. After the war, the situation went upside down. Being a member of the old regime or a supporter of the Czar could be life dangerous after the revolution. In Russia, travelling and travel arrangements has traditionally been complicated, both for Russians and for foreigners. During the era of the Imperial Russia, it was almost impossible to travel completely legally to the country or from it. Heavy corruption was always involved. And yet, the Russian refugees formed the most remarkable international immigration problem politically as well as quantitatively.

The mass emigration from Russia took place during several years in 1918-22. The movement started already during the war. The revolution and the separate peace caused the most important impetus for the big refugee movements. It could be summarized that the Russians were driven out of the country by the revolution as well as by the counter-revolution. The motives for the movements were various, concern about personal security being the common nominator. Three main causes for the White Russian refugee movement have been presented by the researchers of this migration movement. The process started with the overthrow of the Czarist regime and the establishment of the Bolshevist rule in 1918. It continued when the White armies collapsed in European Russia in 1919-20 and in Siberia in 1920-22. The gravest single catastrophe was the famine in 1921.

After the movements which overthrew the Romanov Dynasty in 1917, Russia was plunged into civil war. As a result, the Russians started to flow to neighboring countries.

113 Nevalainen, 16
114 Leitzinger I, 17
115 Schaufuss, 45
soon after that. By that time, the Finnish Government also started issuing visas for the people who came. One third of the comers crossed the border without any permission. In 1919 there were already over 15,000 Russian refugees in Finland. In the beginning, the comers obviously didn’t have to leave in a rush. They had assets with them, since it was reported that the refugees were filling all hotels in the big cities.

There were also mass transportations of people wanting to leave Russia. Best known is the one carried out in 1920 when General Wrangel and his supporters left Crimea and were transported to Turkey. Most of the refugees wanted to go west. For some people this was not possible, and in China the were 200,000 Russians by the end of 1922, most of them in Harbin and Shanghai.

The refugees came from all ranks of the society. Politicians and civil servants fled because they felt that they have their own reasons to do so. Land owners and other people with economic wealth had other reasons. Representatives of the military had probably the most life threatening circumstances. Many poor people left Russia with no other specific reason than a hope for better. The people who were living in other countries formed a cross-section of the Russian society, although the educated were over-represented in this respect. The only unifying thing was their personal history in the Russian Empire. Most of the refugees were russians by their internal nationality. Many descendants of germans, polish, baltic, and others who had moved to Russia during the previous centuries, were now fleeing to west. There were large numbers of ukrainians, caucasians, cossacks, as well as jewish. In some cases a “Russian refugee” could be a moslem who spoke no word of the russian language.

The lives of Czar’s family and their court were also in danger as it became clear that the Bolsheviks would eventually take over the whole country. Aristocracy and land owners were targeted by the Bolshevist terror. However, peasant class formed at the end of the day the majority of the Russian refugees, since they formed the bulk of the soldiers in the White armies. Therefore, all ranks of the society were represented in the masses of refugees that crossed the Russian borders. The upper classes attracted the most of the attention of public opinion in Europe because of their qualities and abilities.

116 Leitzinger II, 162
117 Leitzinger II, 163
118 Nevalainen, 14
119 ... personal history as a representative of unwelcome circles for the Bolsheviks. See Nevalainen, 36-37
120 Nevalainen, 37
The famous Russian intelligentsia was more visible than could have been expected by their numbers.\textsuperscript{121}

It seems that the remaining prisoners of war, Russian troops captured in Europe, were classified as refugees at the point when it became obvious that there was no returning to their ancient homeland after the revolution took place. An Arrangement of May 1926 laid down a definition of Russian refugees which was also adopted by the LON and the ILO.\textsuperscript{122}

When the establishment of the High Commission for Refugees was under preparation in the League, the Council received letters from member state governments as statements on the proposal concerning the intended Commissioner. It was not surprising that the member states neighboring Russia were the most eager ones to send replies. They also were in favor of the suggestion that something must be done quickly and that an intergovernmental intervention was the best option. Same applied to the countries like France which had received Russian refugees in large quantities.\textsuperscript{123} The most remarkable geographical channels for fleeing were the regions of Crimea and Odessa as well as the Baltic district.

It is unclear how many refugees came from Russia during the period between the world wars. The estimates have been moving between one million and three millions. Registration and census were impossible in most of the countries receiving refugees. Some returned, some traveled on rather quickly. People got naturalized and a few went hiding.\textsuperscript{124} The number of people who were classified as “Russian refugees” was declining over the years. There were some natural reasons for that: Soviet Russia had more or less closed its borders which made it impossible for any new groups of people to become refugees. Also the mortality among the Russians staying abroad was high on relation to the birth rate.\textsuperscript{125}

There is no exact truth on the amounts of the refugees even after decades of research. The numbers depend on which people were classified as refugees and also on the schedule and volumes of the returning. The most common estimate presented has been around 1.5 million.\textsuperscript{126} According to the latest research, the best approximation

\textsuperscript{121} Simpson 1939, 85 \hfill \\
\textsuperscript{122} See Chapter 3.3.4. \hfill \\
\textsuperscript{123} OJ, Vol. 2, July-August 1921, 485-509 \hfill \\
\textsuperscript{124} Nevalainen, 34 \hfill \\
\textsuperscript{125} Hansson II \hfill \\
\textsuperscript{126} Salomon, Robert: Les Réfugiés. Paris 1963, 17; Thompson I, 20; Stoessinger 1956, 13-23; Simpson 1939, 80
could be a little over one million.\textsuperscript{127} The earliest estimate made by a researcher in 1922 resulted to a somewhat greater number, which was almost three million. This contains also the refugees in China.\textsuperscript{128} According to compilation based on different works of researchers the most credible estimate was between 800,000 and 900,000 refugees in 1922. By 1930 the figure was still as big as around 600,000 people.\textsuperscript{129}

The Soviet Russian Government gave a statute in December 1921 which ordered a loss of the Soviet citizenship for those who had been staying abroad without a passport for five years, unless they register themselves at a Soviet Embassy 1\textsuperscript{st} July 1922 at the latest.\textsuperscript{130} Soviet Government granted several amnesties for those who had fled abroad as a result of the conflict with the Bolsheviks. Some of the amnesties were more general, some of them specific, e.g. covering rebel soldiers from Kronstadt. It is not very clearly known, how many refugees took the chance and went back. From Finland, the number was probably over 10,000, including the Eastcarelians and Ingrians.\textsuperscript{131}

Not many believed in the stability of the Bolshevik regime in the beginning. As it started to seem more evident that the Soviet state was a permanent fact, the recipient countries of the refugees had to face the (for them partly unpleasant) burden of new comers. The attitudes became harsher. Most of the comers were lacking identity papers, some had old papers issued by the Czarist regime. It was not an easy duty to accommodate large numbers of unknown individuals. Many host countries were torn apart by the war. The best the states could do was to provide humanitarian assistance, in order to avoid famine among the comers.\textsuperscript{132}

It is very clear that foreign powers wanted to utilize the help and possibilities provided by the Russian refugees abroad. The goals and purposes were various. Few refugees were recruited to carry out intelligence missions to Soviet Russia. These activities caused constant headache to the leaders of the Kremlin. However, none of these attempts was well organized or seriously carried out. The Soviet system survived all these ambitions. These developments increased the distrust between the Soviet regime and the neighbours. Russian refugees had a number of newspapers and magazines issued all over Europe. It was calculated that there were 142 publishing

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{127} See Nevalainen, 34
\item \textsuperscript{128} von Rimscha, H.: Der russische Bürgerkrieg und die russische Emigration 1917-21. Jena 1924, 50-51
\item \textsuperscript{129} Basis for this estimation: Raeff, Marc: Russia Abroad. A Cultural History of the Russian Emigration 1919-1939. New York 1990, 202-203; Simpson 1939, 559 and 561; Compilation conducted by Nevalainen, 307
\item \textsuperscript{130} Leitzinger II, 173
\item \textsuperscript{131} Leitzinger II, 238
\item \textsuperscript{132} Stoessinger 1956, 14
\end{itemize}
enterprises abroad concentrating in Russian language products. Many of them reflected the narrow purpose of the publishers, but some were concentrated in preserving Russian culture in general. Not many of the papers were able to survive long.

The terms used were “refugees (coming) from Russia” or “Russian Refugees” in cases where it was necessary to emphasize the origin of the refugees. When classification by their language or ethnicity was needed, other terms were used. An example of this is the classification made by ARC in Finland in 1920: there were separately named groups as “Ingermanlanders, Carelians and Russians”. Apparently, this kind of distinction wasn’t made in many other countries but at least in Rumania the Ukrainians were classified separately. It can be concluded that the international statistics were compiled according to the information provided by national authorities. For example in case of Finland, when the source is identified in Simpson’s survey, it normally is the Finnish Tilastokeskus (Governmental Statistics Centre of Finland).

The Finnish government sent a note in the summer of 1921 to the representatives of the Bolshevik government with a notion that promised amnesty for the returning refugees has not been implemented. On the contrary, refugees returning from Finland had been detained in large numbers. In 1921 there was a de facto uprising in the Eastern Carelia. The fighting between the guerilla groups and the army of the Bolsheviks turned finally to the point where the Carelian fighters had to retreat. The whole warzone was evacuated, and masses of refugees poured to Finland. In 1922 there were already some 33,000 aliens in Finland, half of which were Russians and another half Carelians and Ingrians.

The situation was very different when thousands of refugees from Kronstadt fortress started to flee suddenly to Finland in March 1921. Those refugees consisted of soldiers and their families. They had to leave practically with empty hands and the Government had to take bigger responsibility of servicing them. There were reportedly great

133 Nevalainen, 253
134 Minutes of the Conference of ARC Commissioners 1920, 72; ARC Annual Report 1920, 120
135 Simpson 1939, 84 and 559-560
136 Simpson 1939, 559-560
138 Nygård 1978, 95
difficulties in settling these exiles. Only some 1600 people of the 8000 who came, settled in Finland permanently. Others went back or continued to third countries.139

The specific feature of the emigration to Finland was presented by the people who spoke languages which could be classified as dialects of the Finnish language. There were several thousands of Eastcarelian and Ingrian refugees in Finland in the early 1920s. These people came from Russia 1917-1922. For national and cultural reasons, these comers were registered separately from (ethnic) Russian refugees.140 Altogether, Finland seems to have received some 44,000 exiles from Russia during 1917-1939.141 The biggest individual incident producing refugees was the uprising of Kronstadt in 1921.142

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Refugees</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>no exact data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>33 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>22 000</td>
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<td>1927</td>
<td>18 000</td>
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<td>1928</td>
<td>18 000</td>
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</table>

It was calculated that in early spring 1922, there were 33,500 refugees from Russia staying in Finland. 15,000 of them were Russians and 18,500 other nationalities (mostly Eastcarelians and Ingrians). Also after that, the flow of refugees from east was continuous, but there were no mass movements in the late 1920s and the 1930s anymore.144 The situation was somewhat awkward. Tens of thousands of Russians were enjoying the hospitality of the neighboring country in Finland. However, it has been reported that the leaders of the White Russian in exile were not prepared to recognize the independence of Finland.145 In the 1930s, most of the comers were those who couldn’t, for a reason or another, settle to the collective agricultural

139 Leitzinger II, 166-167
140 Leitzinger II, 168-169
141 Nevalainen, 34-35; Leitzinger II, 171
142 Rosen, 248-250
143 Basis for the Table: Nygård, Toivo: Itä-Karjalan pakolaiset 1917-1922. Jyväskylä 1980, 72
144 Nevalainen, 27-28
production system that was established in Russia during those years. These refusals led normally to a conflict with the Stalin’s regime. After 1935 the flow of refugees was almost non-existent, due to the intensified border supervision at the Soviet side. Also most of the “enemies of the nation” had been “taken care of.”

From 1922 many refugees returned to Russia. Among them the Viena-Carelians formed a significant group. About 4000 of them were repatriated. In the mid-1920s the amount of refugees were settled at a certain level. The situation in the Russian side of the border was stabilized and this was well known among the refugees. Those who were determined to stay didn’t make any attempts to return. Eastcarelians were more important for Finland when they were fighting against the Soviet regime, and less important when they were trying to adjust themselves to the life in Finland as immigrants. The authorities tried to handle the refugee situation with least possible political and social adverse effects, as well as with minimized amount of publicity. It was reported in some cases, that Russian refugees took advantage of the asylum granted by the neighbors, and planned, or even tried to carry out armed interventions to Russia against the Soviet Regime from the foreign soil. This had also consequences to the official proceedings between the countries.

The remains of the Turkish Empire were in focus of the world politics even before the First World War. The shrinking Ottoman State and the Turkish control over broad areas was accompanied by uprooting of local populations. During the Greek war of independence, several incidents led into massive displacement of people. In the 19th Century Bulgarian revolutionaries as well as peasants from Bosnia and Herzegovina fled from their domiciles to neighbouring areas. As a result of several border arrangements, refugees tramped across new jurisdictions in a desperate effort to avoid random violence. There were, in theory, two separate main lines among the arrangements: the voluntary moving and the coercive moving. In practice, it is almost impossible to keep these two lines separated on a researcher’s desk.

The Convention of Adrianople between Turkey and Bulgaria in 1913 has been named as the first intergovernmental treaty on exchange of populations in modern history. The objective was to settle the consequences of the refuge of the 50,000 Turks who left the Bulgarian territory as well as the same number of Bulgarians who moved to

146 Nevalainen, 31-32
147 Nygård 1978, 95; Nygård 1980, 73
148 Nygård 1980, 122-123
149 In case of Finland, see Korhonen, Keijo: Suomi neuvostodiplomatiassa Tartosta Talvisotaan I; Naapurit vastin tahtoan 1920-1932. Helsinki. Tammi 1966, 167-169
the opposite direction. The Convention confirmed the situation and provided rules and procedures to regulate the consequences of what had happened. A Mixed Commission was established to settle outstanding property claims as well as many other things of the people who were forced to move.\textsuperscript{150} A similar treaty was negotiated with the help of European Powers between Turkey and Greece. The outbreak of the First World War postponed the implementation these plans.\textsuperscript{151}

The Greeks and the other refugees in the Balkans had a special and different situation compared to the other categories of refugees. They had new homelands. They came as refugees, but they came home where they were supposed to be resettled without having to roam from a country to another country without documents. They were not in a need for international alien’s documentation. They came to be assimilated, politically protected, and documented by their new home countries. They received, however, humanitarian aid for their needs from their home governments, with the help of the League and the international community.

In the Balkans the First World War finally completed the long disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, which indeed had represented multiplicity of ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups in an unusual manner. In that situation, conflicts were inevitable and extremely violent. As a result, people fled.\textsuperscript{152} A Convention between Greece and Bulgaria concerning reciprocal emigration was signed at Neuilly-sur-Seine on November 27, 1919. On the basis of that, a mixed Greco-Bulgarian Emigration Commission was established under the supervision of the League of Nations to deliberate and facilitate the reciprocal emigration between the countries. The original mandate of the Commission was prolonged (for the first time) in July 1922 until October 1923.\textsuperscript{153}

Populations were more or less forcibly resettled in Greece and Turkey under the Lausanne treaty. Some of these refugee situations have remained as politically open wounds for decades. The refugee problems described in this chapter offer an example of post-conflict statebuilding and its connections to forced migration. The disintegration of the Ottoman Empire forms one of the best examples of the statebuilding and state formation processes, and, in particular, the creation of nation-states in twentieth-century Europe. These processes have complicated and often tragic associations with

\begin{footnotes}
\item[150] Marrus, 47
\item[151] Marrus, 48
\item[152] Joly, 6
\item[153] OJ, 3rd year, No 9, September 1922, 1034
\end{footnotes}
forced migration. Through the past hundred years, the creation and consolidation of states has been closely associated with large numbers of refugees.154  

The League received statements of the progress made in the application of the conventions. Detailed regulations for implementation were required especially as regards the “former refugees”, whose right to recover their properties was recognized by the mixed Commission. It was considered necessary to follow specifically the legislative measures taken by the respective Governments. Confiscation had taken place earlier, and compensations were difficult to arrange. The results that were anticipated from the application of the Convention were diverse: emigration of racial minorities still remaining, permanent settlement to places where people were “connected by race”, and to recover lost property or its equivalent value. It was estimated by the Greco-Bulgarian Commission that the numbers of persons included in this particular arrangement amounted to 30.000 Greeks and 150.000-200.000 Bulgarians.155  

Nansen undertook personally some responsibilities concerning the reciprocal exchange of ethnic minorities between Greece and Turkey. He had personal correspondence with the leaders and the governments of both countries, including the “Commander-in-Chief” Mustapha Kemal in Turkey. Nansen listed questions to be discussed between the two governments. In the same connection a draft of an Agreement between the Government of the Turkish Grand National Assembly and the Greek Government was also introduced. The essential idea of the Arrangement was written in the first paragraph of the Draft: “The High Contracting Parties accord to their nationals belonging to racial, religious or linguistic minorities the right to emigrate freely into their respective territories”.156  

The Mixed Greco-Bulgarian Emigration Commission designated by the League Council was a manifestation of the special nature of the refugee question of the Balkans. The President of the Commission was Colonel de Reynier.157  In 1925 a Conciliation Commission for the Greco-Bulgarian frontier was set up under the authorization of the Council of the League. The Commission consisted of Greek and Bulgarian military officers as well as others. Two Swedish officers were acting as neutral partners of the Commission for the years 1925-1927.158  

154 Zaum,286  
155 OJ, 3rd year, No 12, Dec 1922, 1502-1504  
156 OJ, 4th year, No 1 (part II), Jan 1923, 126-130  
157 Minutes of the 45 session of the Council of the LON, 6.meeting 15.9.1927/OJ, No 10, Oct 1927, 1135  
158 Minutes of the 47. Session of the Council of the LON, 5. meeting 22.9.1927/OJ, No 10, Oct 1927, 1417
Commission for Greco-Bulgarian Emigration had some 45,000 cases on its desk. In the 51st Session of the Council it was reported that 34,000 of the cases had been dealt with. The compensations were based on an Agreement between the Governments, reached on 31.12.1927. 159

Some parallel exercises took place. The Mixed Commission for the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations was in some cases unable to find a solution to the most difficult problems concerning the interpretation of the 1923 Lausanne Treaty. Therefore, the Council was needed to act as a mediator. What the Council could do in practice, was to obtain an advisory opinion on the dispute regarding the interpretations from the Permanent Court of International Justice. 160

The Mixed Commission for the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations gave periodical reports to the League Council starting in December 1924 as desired by the Council in October 1924. The reports contained descriptions of internal work of the Commission, achievements according to the several Articles of the treaties and conventions, as well as the numerical results of the evacuation activities. 161 The Greek-Turkish Commission continued its work throughout the 1920s. The Council handled the nomination of a new member to the Commission to fill the post vacant due to the death of previous member still at the end of 1929. 162

By the Council’s resolution in September 1926, the League noted with satisfaction the progress being made in the execution of the recommendations which it had given in December 1925. There was also a wish that the Greek and Bulgarian Governments will continue to keep the League informed of the progress achieved in this work. 163

It was defined that the mandate of the Mixed Commission for the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations covered the compulsory exchange of Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory, and of Greek nationals of the Moslem religion established in Greek territory. The practical work of the Mixed Commission consisted of the supervising and facilitating the emigration, as well as carrying out the liquidation of certain movable and immovable property. The

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159 Minutes of the 51. Session of the Council of the LON, 5. (30.8.-8.9.1928)/OJ, 9th year, No 10, Oct 1928, 1651
160 Minutes of the 32. Session of the Council of the LON (8.-13.12.1925)/OJ, 6th year, No 2, Feb 1925, 155
161 OJ, 6th year, No 3, March 1925, 336-337
162 OJ, 11th year, No 1, Jan 1930, 8
163 Minutes of the 41. Session of the Council of the LON 2.-7.9.1926)/OJ, 7th year, No 10, Oct 1926, 1247
Commission closed its proceedings in October 1934. The Commission prepared its final report to the League, which was presented to the 84th session of the Council.\textsuperscript{164}

Later, in the 1930s, it was estimated that the machinery of the League worked helpfully, effectively, and constructively in the populations exchange processes of the Near East. The governing principle of these migrations was to unify and homogenize the populations of each country of the Near East, which would tend to promote the pacification of the region.\textsuperscript{165} One of the key aspects of post-conflict statebuilding is the creation and strengthening of political and administrative institutions. In order to legitimize them locally, statebuilding operations have engaged in constitutional and institutional design, which sometimes also includes creating political parties. The capacity building of administration and the holding of elections are similarly sometimes required.\textsuperscript{166} This was exactly how things unraveled in supporting the states of Bulgaria and Greece in the 1920s. Both operations had also huge undertakings with new populations that were called “refugees”. Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria similarly naturalized the refugees of same ethnic origin rather quickly. Only the task of resettlement could not be accomplished overnight.\textsuperscript{167}

The problem of the Greek refugees has been best covered among the refugee movements in the Balkans, both in the field as well as in the research. The Greeks had formed an upper class among the minorities of Turkey. The position of the Greeks in Anatolia started to change in the 19th century because of the immodest irredentism of the newly formed Greek State.\textsuperscript{168} The final change to the status of the Greeks in Turkey emerged in 1912-23, when Greece was constantly belligerent. As a result, the territory of the Greek State was increased. The first exchanges of people took place at the same time.

In the beginning of the 1920s the Greek State had reached the upper limits of its strength. Previous sympathy of Western Powers emerged during the fight for the independence was also fading out. Defeated by the Turkish army, the Greeks had to face oppression and violence in Anatolia. The Greek population had to flee to Aegean islands and to continental Greece with all possible means of transportation. The truce

\textsuperscript{164} Minutes of the 84. Session of the Council of the LON (11.-21.1.1935), 3rd meeting 14.1.1935/OJ, 16th year, No 2, Feb 1935, item. 3524
\textsuperscript{165} Bentwich 1935, 124-125
\textsuperscript{166} Zaum, 290
\textsuperscript{167} Skran, 46
\textsuperscript{168} See e.g. Jelawich, Barbara: History of the Balkans I. New York NY 1983, 39-97; Simpson 1939, 12
was concluded in October 1922 and the final peace negotiations were conducted in Lausanne in 1923.

Between the years 1912 and 1923 Greek State received several waves of refugees form Anatolia, Macedonia and Thrace. The moving was partly controlled, and partly uncontrolled.\(^{169}\) In addition to that, Greece received some 55,000 individuals from Russia during 1919-20, mainly from Caucasia.\(^{170}\) Agreements on population exchange were established already 1913-1914 between Greece and Turkey. The Treaty of Neuilly laid down the terms for the exchange of people between Greece and Bulgaria. In the Lausanne treaty, signed in January 1923, Greece waived the right to return the orthodox population to their origin zone in Asia-Minor and Thrace. At the same time Greece became obliged to receive rest of the Greek-orthodox people from the Turkish side. Turkey, in turn, was committed to receive the Turkish-Moslem people from Greece (except from Western Thrace).\(^{171}\) It could be stated with a reason that the religions seemed to play an important role while defining the status of people in these arrangements.

The magnitude of the Problems becomes illustrated by scrutinizing the demographic development of the Greek State. In 1912 there were about 2.5 million inhabitants in Greece. The warfare in the Balkans increased the number up to 4.5 million. The massive population exchanges in the beginning of the 1920s brought about 1.2 million additional people to the Greek State. As a result of the process, a demographically more homogenous Greece was formed.\(^{172}\)

The “Greek question” was addressed by the League in February 1921 when the Council had to take supervisory responsibilities as the exchanges of Greek children and Bulgarian prisoners took place. Nansen took personal responsibility in order to safeguard satisfactory arrangements. It had become obvious that the partly hostile situation would not unravel without the involvement of intergovernmental authority.\(^{173}\) In that connection there was no mentioning of Greek or other “refugees”.

The Greek refugees came to the agenda of the League Assembly and the International Labour Conference in 1922. The Assembly submitted funds for the High Commissioner for actions in Greece. The International Save the Children and the ICRC

\(^{169}\) The were some rumours of feroicities by the Turkish troops that put people on the move. It was also a question of unifying families; Interview of Thanassos Andreanakis 15.7.1985

\(^{170}\) Simpson 1939, 14

\(^{171}\) Simpson 1939, 15

\(^{172}\) Simpson 1939, 12 and 21; Waris, 17-18

\(^{173}\) OJ, Vol 1, March-April 1921, 119-123
approached Director General Thomas at the end of 1922. They appealed to the difficult unemployment problem in Greece and invited the Governing Body to advice the Labour Office to take actions.\textsuperscript{174}

Albert Thomas worked energetically in order to have the Greek Refugees on the agenda in the same way as the Russians. He was in the opinion that the funds for the operations should come from the High Commissioner’s budget.\textsuperscript{175} The Governing Body decided to start actions anyhow according to the decision of the ILC.\textsuperscript{176} The Labour Office started its activities in Greece in April 1923.\textsuperscript{177}

It has been reported that the Greek Government under the leadership of the Prime Minister Venizelos did not like the coercive nature of the population exchange connected to the Lausanne Treaty. Voluntary movement was their baseline. The Big Powers, however, seem to have wanted to put an end to the settling of the First World War. The Convention on the population exchange was published already before the final Treaty. Nansen was personally strongly involved in the population exchange attempts between Greece and Turkey in 1922. Since the complicated deliberations did not produce much outcome, the political matters were transferred to the Lausanne Conference.\textsuperscript{178}

It was not possible for the LON to sit idle and see the Greco-Turkish armed conflict to come to the point where hundreds of thousands of Greek inhabitants had to leave their homes in Asia Minor. The LON was compelled to intervene. According to the report of the Secretary General, Greek Refugees were collected in camps and finally transported to Greece with the assistance of Nansen in his capacity as the High Commissioner of the LON. That marked the beginning of the Greek Refugees settlement scheme. This programme included the establishment of an independent settlement commission supervised by the League as well as large scale loan arrangements to the Greek Government.\textsuperscript{179}

The Council appointed in July 1923 a small committee composed by Nansen, with one representative of the American relief organizations, and one representative of the Greek Government. The duty of this Committee was to consider what measures the

\textsuperscript{174} Records of Proceedings of the 4. Session of the ILC, 1922, 402-421 and 490; Minutes of the 17. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1923, 152-154
\textsuperscript{175} Minutes of the 17. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1923, 69-70
\textsuperscript{176} OB, Vol 7, 1923, 69
\textsuperscript{177} Records of Proceedings of the 6 Session of the ILC, 1924, 737-738
\textsuperscript{178} Simpson 1939, 15
\textsuperscript{179} OJ, 4th year, No 10, Oct 1923, 1138-1148
Greek Government might take for the temporary relief of refugees until funds become available for this purpose from the yield of the proposed loan.180

Similarly with the Greeks, the work for Bulgarian refugees was also attached under a League Commissioner.181 In the materials of the League and the ILO the Bulgarians did not receive quite same amount of attention as the Greeks did. The same concerns contemporary research. The reason for this is not easy to discover. What we know, however, is that there was a great enthusiasm among the European nations to help the Greeks already during their war of independence in the 19th century.

Bulgarians were mentioned for the first time on the League agenda in connection to the exchange of prisoners and children in 1921. The Bulgarian Government seemed to have done anything in order to comply with the arrangements safeguarded by the League and its representative Nansen: the local authorities took “away from their Bulgarian husbands Greek wives who were under age”, to be returned to Greece.182

The Greek Government reported to the League in December 1923 that it had been necessary to deport Bulgarian families from Western Thrace for “military reasons”. The Greek Government reported having placed a sum of 5 million drachmas for the purpose of assisting those inhabitants financially. According to the report the refugees were at that moment being repatriated.183 In question of Bulgaria, the refugees were included into a larger package of official assistance that was extended to the Bulgarian State in the 1920s and 1930s. At some point, the whole country was under some kind of supervision of the international organizations.

Turkish refugees were not on the agenda of the League. However, according to Nansen’s report in 1927 there were 150 Turkish refugees referred to as “Friends of the Allies”. Those people were located in Greece and in the Near East. The report says that these refugees “state that they have been proscribed by the Turkish Government”.184 Later these families obtained a legal refugee status as a result of international political deliberations.

The League did not, however, make particular efforts to help the people who were moving to Turkey from the European side. The reason for this was simple. Turkey did not ask for help. These people could have easily been categorized as refugees in the same manner as Greek and Bulgarian movers. The Turkish Government had ways and

180 Minutes of the 25. Session of the Council of the LON 2.-7.7.1923)/OJ,4th year, No 8, Aug 1923, 903
181 See Grahl-Madsen, 362
182 OJ, Vol 1, March-April 1921, 122
183 OJ, 5th year, No 5, May 1924, 755
184 Minutes of the 47. Session of the Council of the LON, Annex 990/OJ, No 10, Oct 1927, 1337
means as well as political will to handle the situation. A large part of these people were assigned to the lands and properties left by the Greeks in Anatolia while moving to the Hellenic State.

The question of Albanians was not specified as refugee questions in the League handlings. Albanians were mentioned in several documents connected to the treaties on the Protection of Minorities and the Convention on the Exchange of Populations.\(^\text{185}\) It seems that the Albanians were not really properly included in any of the treaties or protocols. In League documents they become known as “the Moslems of Albanian origin in Greece”. The interpretation was, that this population was exempted from the exchange of the Greek and Turkish populations.

Since the Moslems of Albanian origin were excluded from the regular programme of populations exchanges arranged between Greece and Turkey, the League had to return several times during the 1920s to the question of the protection of the Albanian minority in Greece. The League assigned “mandatories” to supervise the execution of the protection statutes. The duties of these mandatories included informing the Greek Authorities of the persons whose exemption from exchange they have secured and to advice the Greek Government that such persons should consequently enjoy the same rights as other Greek citizens.\(^\text{186}\)

The Albanian Government presented a request for assistance on the refugee problem in their country. According to the Albanian authorities, there were 7,500 emigrants in Albania in 1925, and some 30,000 were waiting for a favourable opportunity to enter the country. The Albanian Government didn’t have the necessary means for the settlement of these persons. Albania therefore asked for a loan of 3 million gold francs under the guarantee of the League of Nations, “on the analogy of the loan issued by the Greek Government”. The Council decided to forward the request to the experts whose duty was to examine the question.\(^\text{187}\) This did, however, never lead to any larger programmes in order to assist movers to settle themselves in Albania.

The Armenian refugee problem was the most mystified and politically weighty of all the refugee situations during the Inter-war period. The atrocities committed against the

\(^{185}\) Minutes of the 32. Session of the Council of the LON (8.-13.12.1924), Annex 717/OJ, 6th year, No 2, Feb 1925, 234-236

\(^{186}\) OJ, 6th year, No 11 (part I), Nov 1925, 1682-1683 (The expression “mandatories” seems to refer to some sort of legal representatives)

Armenian people in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War have been referred to as the Armenian Genocide. Genocide normally means organized killing of people in order to put an end to their collective existence. Genocide requires central planning and a machinery to implement it. This makes genocide a state crime because normally only a government has the necessary resources to carry out such a scheme of destruction. The Armenian Genocide was said to be centrally planned and administered by the Turkish Government against the entire Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire. These matters are still disputed even today.

A massacre took place in 1909 at Adana, and 30,000 Armenians were killed. For a few years after that, the situation was reasonably calm, and the thought was that Armenians and Turks may even get along together. As the First World War broke out, it gave the Young Turks the opportunity to fulfil a Turkish desire that had continued for centuries: to wipe out all Armenians from the soil of Turkey.

The killings and expulsions were carried out during the First World War between the years 1915 and 1918 when the rest of the world was mainly occupied with incidents in the main war fields of Europe. Deportation, torture, murder, and starvation took place. The great bulk of the Armenian population was forcibly removed from their homes to Syria, where the vast majority was sent into the desert to die of thirst and hunger. Large numbers of Armenians were methodically massacred. Women and children were reportedly abducted and abused. The legal property of people was taken away from them. After only a little more than a year of calm at the end of the First World War, the atrocities were renewed between 1920 and 1923, and the remaining Armenians were subjected to further massacres and expulsions. The incidents have been condemned by the international community as a crime against humanity.

The formal reason to the Turkish campaign against the Armenians was alleged traitorousness and revolt against the Government. Turkey was allied with Germany and Austria in war against Russia during the First World War. There was a considerable amount of Armenians living in Russia. It was alleged in Turkey that the Christian Armenians were cooperating with the Russians against the Ottoman government and thus having a religious conspiracy. As a result of the pre-war movements to west, many Armenians fought and fell in the armies of the Allied powers. Despite that, it was impossible after the war for the western countries to protect the Armenians in their home land. The political leaders of the Great Powers simply didn’t have enough motivation or determination to form sufficiently strong military expedition. The

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188 Thompson I, 26-27
remarkable fact is that the events went on despite the reassurances by the Armenian community on their loyalty to the Turkish authorities, which seems to refer to strong resolution to get rid of all Armenians.\textsuperscript{189}

It was not until the end of the First World War that the peacemakers were faced by the Armenian Question. The American Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau Sr., had a role in this. The Armenian Genocide was well-reported by the international news media, especially in the American press, and the U.S. Senate even held hearing which affirmed its reality. Many Armenians, originally Gregorian Christians, converted to other churches in a hope for help.\textsuperscript{190} Some circles in the west considered the defeat of Turkey in the First World War justified, mainly because the atrocities became known right after they happened.\textsuperscript{191} There are still some 350,000 people with Armenian background living in France. Many of the Armenians living in France today are descendants of the refugees who came to the country through Syria and Lebanon to work in local textile factories in Southern France.

The Armenians had their own state when the Democratic Republic of Armenia (DRA) was established in Erevan on May 28, 1918. Since then, the political conditions were constantly changing in the area where Armenians were living. The Soviet Russian troops marched into Erevan already in 1920, but still some parts of the country were held by Turkey. The delegation of DRA was in the Peace negotiations in Paris after the World War. The Sevres Treaty was concluded in 1920, but not ratified. The League Council considered the matter to belong to the competence of the signatories of the Peace Treaty.\textsuperscript{192} After several Russo-Turkish arrangements, Armenia lost its independence in 1922 and became a part of the Soviet Union. It took however, more than a decade until Armenia became a Soviet Republic. Before that, Nansen and the League of Nations had some room for their maneuvers on refugee questions in the area.

It is difficult to say anything definite about the amounts of the Armenian refugees. The exodus was uncontrolled and happened during a long period of time. It was directed to several places. There are estimates from quarter of a million to half million refugees, when figures of the refugees after the World War are scrutinized. The most

\textsuperscript{189} Reynolds, 242  
\textsuperscript{190} Simpson 1939, 29  
\textsuperscript{191} Sonntag, 202  
\textsuperscript{192} Thompson I, 26; Salomon, 16-17; Simpson 1939, 30-32
common account is around 350,000.\textsuperscript{193} These figures don’t normally include the refugees who moved to Russia.

The Armenian question was brought to the attention of the League Council already in December 1920, when the acting US Secretary of State Norman Davis approached the President of the Council Paul Hymans with a request of support by the League to the American High Commissioner at Constantinople. The High Commissioner, Henry Morgenthau was conducting a mediation task in Anatolia on behalf of the Armenians. In the same connection also the Prime Minister of Great Britain commented the situation of Armenia. Some other Member state governments also regretted that they had no chance to render any help to the Armenians.\textsuperscript{194} As an example, the reason for the Polish government was that “…Poland…..needs all her strength to cure her own wounds and to begin the reconstruction of her own political and economic life.”\textsuperscript{195}

In his communication to the League, the US President Wilson considered that it was the Treaty of Sevres that appeared to be the immediate cause of trouble between Armenia and Turkey. Since the Allied Powers were responsible of the drafting of the treaty, they also should take responsibility of the consequences.\textsuperscript{196} The League took the Armenian question seriously. In 1920 the Assembly requested the Council to “safeguard the future of Armenia”. The League followed the political and military developments in Armenia with great interest and scrutiny. In this endeavour the Americans were the most significant source of information.\textsuperscript{197} Secretary General Eric Drummond sent a letter to the British, French, and Italian Governments concerning Armenia on February 25, 1921. In this letter the Secretary General asked for support to the Council’s efforts in trying to manage “the noble and humane task” of helping Armenia.\textsuperscript{198}

Since the representatives of the United States were actively following the Armenian question, it had been hoped that the US would take formal responsibility for the entire problem by accepting a mandate for Armenia. That became impossible after the League was rejected by the US Senate.\textsuperscript{199} As the League could do nothing for the events that made the Armenian state vanish, there was not much more left than to

\textsuperscript{193} E.g. Simpson 1939, 26
\textsuperscript{194} OJ, Vol 1, Jan-Feb 1921, 79-80
\textsuperscript{195} OJ, Vol 1, Jan-Feb 1921, 80
\textsuperscript{196} OJ, Vol 1, Jan - Feb 1921, 81
\textsuperscript{197} OJ, Vol 1, March-April 1921, 152-153
\textsuperscript{198} OJ, Vol 1, March-April 1921, 153
concentrate the efforts on the Armenian refugees. Several appeals were made on the subject of Armenia in 1921. Armenian authorities wrote to the Governments of the Principal Allied Powers in order to awake their attention. French Government took concrete measures to protect the Armenians in Near East. It appears that also some British professional soldiers served in the Armenian Army during the incoherent occasions that took place when Armenians were trying to establish their independent state.200

It became obvious to the international community that it was impossible to give the Armenians a national home. This was clearly recognized by the League. It became even more important to assist the Armenian Refugees scattered throughout the world.201 Bentwich makes an interpretation that the Armenians were made homeless and stateless by the action of the Turks in execution of the provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne.202 It may have been for this reason that the Council of the League decided in September 1923 to assimilate the Armenians to Russian refugees, and to place them under the care of the High Commissioner.203

The Armenians themselves were constantly active in the international platforms. The President of the Armenian National Delegation sent a letter to the League making an appeal to get help in executing a scheme for the settlement of 50.000 Armenians in the Caucasus.204 The Council was not able to recommend anything else but a request to Nansen to consider the possibility of issuing identity certificates to Armenian Refugees as requested by the Armenian National Delegation.205

The League paid attention to the Armenian problem, although it was not until 1924 it started in practice to extend the official passports and other programs to Armenians. The relief work was undertaken by private organizations. In 1923 the Council of the League made a decision on the legal protection of Armenian refugees. Nansen was assigned to extend the passport system to the Armenians. At the same time France, Belgium, and Italy formed national committees to undertake the Armenian relief work.206

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200 OJ, Vol 3, Oct 1921, 896
201 Minutes of the 23. Session of the Council of the LON 29.1.-3.2.1923)/OJ, 3rd year, No 3, March 1923, 234-235
202 Bentwich 1935, 115
203 Ibid.
205 Minutes of the 26. Session of the Council of the LON (31.8.-10.9.1923)/OJ, 4th year, No 11, Nov 1923, 1349
206 Stoessinger 1956, 24; Simpson 1939, 35-36
The Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees sent a letter to Albert Thomas in 1924 making an official request for help to Armenian refugees. That was the time of the making of the Refugee Service of the ILO, and due to that Albert Thomas made a suggestion to the Governing Body that also the Armenians should be included to the programme of the new organization. In the deliberations the problems of Greek refugees were considered to have been removed to the domain of domestic policy of Greece so there should have been enough room for actions on behalf of the Armenians. The ILO had internal debates on the funding of the activities. The Labour Conference of 1925 could, however, confirm the final decision to undertake measures for the Armenian refugees. At that point the League had already made its own decision to include Armenians refugees to its programmes.

In his report to the League Council in 1927, Nansen was still nominally talking about “Armenian Government” and “Republic of Erivan”. The British Government had established a considerable number of Armenian Refugees from Baghdad to Erevan with the money of the British Treasury. Nansen had his own plans, but he was extremely frustrated since not many of his proposals and plans were materializing because of the lack of support by the League and its Members. He therefore proposed that League should disengage itself from the Armenian campaign. Nansen was a humanist, not a politician. Even if he understood the facts of the political, economic, and military struggle going on in the Middle East between the Great Powers, he was not able to interpret the information in order to make the right conclusions.

An Inter-Governmental Conference was able to generate a definition for an Armenian refugee in 1926. The definition was adopted by the LON and the ILO. According to the definition an Armenian refugee was: “Any person of Armenian origin formerly a subject of the Ottoman Empire who does not enjoy or no longer enjoys the protection of the Government of the Turkish Republic and who has not acquired another nationality.”

The Assyrian and Assyro-Chaldean people (a.k.a Assyrians, Syrian Christians, Chaldeans, and other variants) are an ethnic group whose origins lie in the Fertile Crescent. Their ancient territory has been divided to several nations and states. The

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207 Minutes of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 169-170
208 Minutes of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 262
209 E.g. Minutes of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 259
210 Records of Proceedings of the 7. Session of the ILC, 1925, 932
211 Minutes of the 47. Session of the Council of the LON, 5th meeting 22.9.1927/OJ, No 10, Oct 1927, 1416
212 See Chapter 3.3.4.
Assyrian and Assyro-Chaldean people have been minorities under several different rules for centuries in many areas. They have traditionally lived in northern Iraq, Syria, northwest Iran, and Turkey’s Southeastern Anatolia. Many have migrated to the Caucasus, North America and Europe during the past century. A common nominator used in a connection of these refugees in the 1930s was “Eastern Christians”.  

Different religious groups in the Near East have traditionally tolerated each other and even respected each others’ beliefs. The balance has, however, always been very fragile. For that reason there has been an unwritten agreement between the fractions that no missionary work will be conducted. When Chaldeans have been forced to leave Iraq because of the atrocities committed by the extremist Moslems, the refugees coming to Jordania, Lebanon and Syria have not turned to the local or international officials to get help, but instead they have been accommodated and serviced by the local Churches.

Emigration of the Assyrians and Assyro-Chaldeans was triggered by very similar reasons as was the case with the Armenians: atrocities before and during the First World War and the breakup of the Ottoman Empire. On those days, the people who were classified Assyrians, spoke Aramean which was said to have been the native language of Jesus of Nazareth. Aram is also the ancient biblical name for Syria. Today the catholic Christian population of Iraq is called Chaldeans. The definitions of the Assyrian and Assyro-Chaldeans are somewhat difficult and non-specific. It can be compared to the definition of Carelians. Everyone who claims to be one, can be one.

A conclusive fact is that Assyrian and Assyro-Chaldean refugees were brought to the agenda of the world organizations in the 1920s. They remained there as an issue and an item of handlings although they never obtained the same attention as the bigger refugee groups. According to a High Commissioner’s report to the Council of LON in 1927, there were 150 Assyrians in Marseilles. Those were people who were forced to abandon their homes in 1922 and thus in need of passports. The same report recognized some 19.000 Assyro-Chaldeans in Caucasus and in Greece. These people came from regions south of Lake Van.

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213 Toller, 398
214 Helsingin Sanomat 24.12.2010/Kristiina Markkanen
215 Minutes of the 47. Session of the Council of the LON, Annex 990/OJ, No 10, Oct 1927, 1337
3.2.2. The High Commissioner for Refugees

The Red Cross had its role in launching of the refugee work of the League. Consequently, there were clear connections between the Red Cross and the High Commissioner at the international level through the whole Inter-war period. The President of the International Red Cross Committee, Gustav Ador sent a letter to the President of the Council of the League of Nations accompanied by a Memorandum in February 1921. Reference was made in the letter to the invaluable work of Dr. Nansen in connection to the prisoners of war. The Memorandum addressed the importance of an intergovernmental intervention on the difficult matter of Russian refugees. The Red Cross came out with a suggestion to establish a “General Commissioner” whose tasks would be: 1) definition of the legal position of the Russian Refugees, 2) organize employment for the refugees, or preferably, repatriation to Russia, 3) group up together all the efforts made by the various private organizations.216

The League considered it necessary to consult various institutions in addition to the Member states during the initial process. The Council sent a letter including a resolution concerning the establishment of the High Commissioner to all Members of the League as well as “to various countries which do not belong to the League”. A number of replies were received, including those from members and members to become. All these were considered as official replies. It was noted that apart from these responses the Secretary General of the League often received letters and appeals from various Russian organizations and associations.217

In its meeting in June 1921 the Council of the League concluded that the replies and statements of the member state governments support the initiative to appoint a High Commissioner to deal with the question of Russian Refugees. The Council also recognized that the appointment of a High Commissioner must be preceded by a practical study of the political, legal, and financial problems involved in any definite settlement of the refugee question. The Council called upon its President to take care of the practicalities of the appointment of a High Commissioner as well as the staff assisting him.218

The steps taken by the League were summarized in the report of M. Hanotaux on June 27th, 1921. According to the report, the reactions of member states would indicate

216 OJ, Vol 1, March-April 1921, 228-229
217 E.g. OJ, Vol 2, July-August 1921, 485-509
218 OJ, Vol 2, July-August 1921, 485-486
that the appointment of a High Commissioner was seen as one of the most promising methods of finding a solution to the prevailing difficulties. Although the appointment of a High Commissioner appeared to be “the solution most generally in favor”, it also offered some difficulties, especially as regards the selection of an individual who would possess the necessary qualifications for successful execution of the coming tasks.  

One of the first priorities for the High Commissioner was to appoint a network of representatives in capitals, to communicate with Governments as well as with the NGOs. Many governments designated also their own officials to keep in touch with the High Commissioner. Since Nansen was also appointed to organize the repatriation of the prisoners of war and famine relief in Russia, he had a permanent representative even in Moscow. The High Commissioner could look into the possibilities for repatriation of the Russian refugees and for the safety guarantees required for that end.

The network of the High Commissioner in the principal countries with a considerable amount of refugees to be dealt with was twofold. As Nansen invited all interested governments to designate representatives, they could communicate directly with him and he, in turn, could make proposals to governments for action. High Commissioner’s representatives were to keep in touch, not only with the Government officials, but also with refugees themselves. Many of the High Commissioners representatives were supplied by the missions of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Union Internationale de Secours aux Enfants. 16 States assigned a special officer. There was a High Commissioner’s representative in 14 countries.

Many countries took almost immediate action in their cooperation with the High Commissioner. The Finnish Government rather quickly assigned a liaison officer for the High Commissioner. In addition to that, there was also another person in Finland who was assigned by Nansen. The holder of that position was Colonel Viktor Schwindt, who at the same time was a member of the Council of the Finnish Red Cross. After his death 1929 the assignment was awarded to major Michael Gripenberg. It seems that also in national level the Red Cross organizations and the High Commissioner had close connections, which undoubdetly was a precondition when cooperation was needed in the field operations.

219 OJ, Vol 2, September 1921, 755-756
220 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 360
221 Simpson 1939, 200; Grahl-Madsen 1983, 360
222 OJ, 3rd year, No 4, April 1922, 342-343 and a list of these in same issue of OJ, 350-351
223 Nevalainen, 73
The High Commissioners local offices had a very visible role in the setting of the refugee work. In February 1923, Nansen reported that his office in Constantinople had become “by far the largest refugee institution” in that town. The office summoned together representatives of all important local relief organizations at its weekly meetings. It had gained the necessary confidence of the Allied Forces representatives, various Embassies and Legations as well as the refugees themselves. As a tangible result of the activity, the office had secured the evacuation of 17,000 refugees at the price of approximately £2 per head by February 1923.224

Although Nansen was assigned to work for the Russian refugees, he very soon got to notice that it was impossible to avoid tackling the problems of other refugee groups too. There was a clear demand for broadening the mandate of the High Commission. The plans and hopes for finding a permanent solution to the problem of Russian refugees through the repatriation schemes turned out to be unrealistic by 1924. The High Commissioner had to make a shift and put more weight to the following tasks which were considered to be more feasible: 1) to regulate the legal status of stateless persons and 2) to assist them to find permanent homes and work in their new domiciles.225

The Assembly of the League passed a resolution under the heading “Greek and Armenian Refugees” on September 19th, 1922, recommending the High Commissioner of the LON to be authorized to utilize the services of the Russian Refugee Organization to assist in the relief of refugees from the Near East. At the same recommendation it was noted that the League undertakes no final responsibility for these refugees and that this additional activity will be considered as temporary by its nature.226 As it became obvious that the Russian refugees could not all be successfully repatriated, Nansen deleted the word “Russian” from his title. From 1923 he was the High Commissioner for Refugees.227 The problems of Greek and Armenian Refugees were obviously the most burning and topical at that moment.

Nansen had established a Delegation in Moscow in order to maintain liaison with the Russian Government. He had to struggle in 1924 in order to continue the activities in Moscow, mainly for budgetary reasons. The costs of living had risen greatly in Moscow,

224 Minutes of the 23. Session of the Council of the LON (29.1.-3.2.1923), Annex 472/OJ, 4th year, No 3, March 1923, 388
225 Bentwich 1935, 115
226 Minutes of the 20./21. Session of the Council of the LON (31.8.-4.10.1922)/OJ, 3rd year, No 11,(part II), Nov 1922, 1195-1196 and 1415
227 The situation faced by the organization was illustrated by deleting the word “Russian” from the title, see also Grahl-Madsen 1983, 361
and it was impossible to continue without a special contribution by the League. The Council agreed in 1924 to issue additional 11,000 francs for these purposes. The funds were transferred to Item 25 of the budget ("High Commissariat for Refugees") from other Items (Item 16 - "Economic and Financial Organisation"; Item 15 – "Administrative Commissions and Minorities"; Item 17 – "Mandates").

Attempts to provide political guidance to the High Commissioner took place occasionally. The Council of the League adopted a resolution in December 1928 inviting the appointment of an Advisory Commission for the High Commissioner according to the Assembly's proposal. The Advisory Commission was to be composed of representatives of 14 Member States of the LON. This probably reflected the fact that the term of the Refugee Service of the ILO was coming to its end at that time. The composition of the Commission was as follows: the representatives of Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Switzerland and Yugoslavia. The Advisory Commission held its first meetings in the first half of 1929 and was able to produce an extensive report on its deliberations with some serious recommendations. The most important practical solution which led into recommendation to the League, was that the work of the High Commissioner could not be ceased in the immediate future. The Commission, however, laid stress on the necessity of fixing at once the maximum period within which the High Commissariat should be entirely liquidated.

The Advisory Commission provided guidance and produced advisory services to the League and the High Commissioner in almost all possible sectors of the activities. The maintenance and the duration of the High Commissariat was one of the foremost questions, recognizing that it was practically impossible to reach permanent radical solutions to the complicated problems. Although the liquidation of the activities was discussed, the administrative measures recommended told a different story. According to a report in 1929, the High Commissioner should still have a central service in order to place the international activity on a more regular basis. External agents should be...

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228 Minutes of the 30. Session of the Council of the LON (20.8.-3.10.1924)/OJ, 5th year, No 10, Oct 1924, 1376
229 Minutes of the 53. Session of the Council of the LON (10.-15.12.1928)/OJ, 10th year, No 1, Jan 1929, 47
230 See Chapter 3.2.3.
231 Minutes of the 56. Session of the Council of the LON (30.8.-6.9.1929)/OJ, 10th year, No 11, Nov 1929, 1458
232 Minutes of the 55. Session of the Council of the LON (10.-15.6.1929)/OJ, 10th year, No 7, July 1929, 984
hired, but refugees should not be employed in the services of the High Commissariat. The League had originally decided that the work for refugees by the High Commissioner shall be carried out for a certain number of years, not exceeding ten. In 1929 Nansen indicated to the Council that he is willing to continue as the High Commissioner, but a Deputy High Commissioner was needed in order to secure the successful termination of the duties. His notion was motivated by the fact that he had to carry all the responsibilities now that the ILO had decided to terminate its refugee Service. The Council noted that Nansen had decided on his own to associate Mr. T. Lodge with him to the work. There was no mentioning how the position would be funded.

After Nansen’s death, there was no immediate nomination for a new High Commissioner, but the position was considered to be “vacant” or “non-existing”. The Nansen Office was considered to be the successor of the High Commissariat for a couple of years. Some researchers have interpreted the situation as a sign of determination of the League of Nations to abolish Nansen’s post. New circumstances changed these considerations, and in 1933 it was necessary for the League to revoke its decision because of the new movement of refugees.

Funding of the High Commissioner was a constant topic of debates from the beginning. When preparing for the original appointment of the High Commissioner the Council of the League recommended that “should lack of financial support necessitate the consideration of general measures for obtaining funds for the High Commissioner, the latter should submit the question for examination to the Financial Committee of the League of Nations”. A month after his appointment in 1921 Nansen had to make an appeal to the Powers responsible for the provisional Government of Constantinople (Britain, Italy, and France) to render financial assistance for maintaining the remaining Russian Refugees and to save them from starvation. In that connection, it was made clear that one of the reasons for the appeal was the resolution by which the Council of

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233 Minutes of the 55. Session of the Council of the LON (10.-15.6.1929)/OJ, 10th year, No 7, July 1929, 1077-1080
234 Minutes of the 56. Session of the Council of the LON (30.8-6.9.1929)/ OJ, 10th year, No 11, Nov 1929, 1701-1702
235 Minutes of the 56. Session of the Council of the LON (30.8-6.9.1929)/ OJ, 10th year, No 11, Nov 1929, 1704
236 OJ, 12th year, No 11, Nov 1931, 2118, see also Chapters 4.2.2. and 4.2.3.
237 Toller, 398
238 OJ, Vol 3, Dec 1921, 1116
the League appointed him as the High Commissioner. The resolution made it impossible for the High Commissioner to use funds at his disposal for relief work.\textsuperscript{239}

The High Commissioner was quite dependant on ad hoc funding. The Secretary General of the LON in his Memorandum at the end of 1921 quoted Nansen by stating that with a small sum of money ("e.g., £ 30,000") he would be able to keep the refugees in Constantinople alive until such time as his plans for setting them elsewhere have been brought to maturity. Therefore it was necessary for the Council to invite all interested Governments to render the High Commissioner all the assistance in their power in connection with the solution of the refugee problem. This concerned in particular the transport of the refugees to other countries and finding of the means necessary to their maintenance.\textsuperscript{240} In its 16\textsuperscript{th} Session in January 1922 the Council was informed by the Secretary General that Nansen had been able to collect considerable sums of money for his work. It was noted that the League had not put any funds at his disposal. Nansen wanted to open an office in Constantinople whereby he hoped to expedite the supply of relief to refugees.\textsuperscript{241}

The obstacle for Nansen to conduct coherent planning for action was that the financial allocations were often made for highly selective purposes. In March 1922, Nansen was still begging to obtain a sum of £ 30,000 in order to be able to complete the evacuation of Russian Refugees from Constantinople and to maintain his office in that city as well as the representatives in the countries to which the refugees are sent and through which they pass.\textsuperscript{242} In May-June 1922 some governments (e.g. Brazil, Switzerland, Belgium) were able to inform Nansen and the League on their positive response to the High Commissioners appeal to render funds in varying amounts for the evacuation.\textsuperscript{243} Nansen reported to the Council in July 1922 that required £30,000 for the evacuation purposes was now collected.\textsuperscript{244} Half of the sum was guaranteed by the American Red Cross. The following Members of the LON had contributed: Great Britain, Belgium, China, Japan, Brazil, Czeckoslovakia and Switzerland.\textsuperscript{245} It must be understood that these contributions were merely pledging. In other remarks by Nansen

\textsuperscript{239} OJ, 3rd year, No 1, Jan 1922, 57-58
\textsuperscript{240} OJ, Vol 3, Dec 1921, 1217-1218
\textsuperscript{241} Minutes of the 16. Session of the Council of the LON, (Jan 1922)/OJ, 3rd year, No 2, Feb 1922, 103
\textsuperscript{242} Minutes of the 17. Session of the Council of the LON (24.-28.3.1922)/OJ, 3\textsuperscript{rd} tear, No 5, April 1922, 376
\textsuperscript{243} OJ, 3rd year, No 7, July 1922, 725-726
\textsuperscript{244} Or pledged?
\textsuperscript{245} Minutes of the 19. Session of the Council of the LON (17.-24.7.1922)/OJ, 3\textsuperscript{rd} year, No 8, (part B), August 1922, 807
it was further specified that only a small proportion of these pledged funds had actually been made available.246

The British Government offered the League £150,000 for taking charge of refugees in Malta, Cyprus, and Egypt in the spring of 1922. The British Government was very anxious to be assured that the organizations dealing with this money be effective and prompt and that there would be no further call on the Government for supplies after this money had been spent.247

The financing of the High Commissioner and its refugee operations remained a continuous problem throughout the Inter-war period. The League of Nations had promised to pay only for administrative expenses. For the ten years of 1921-30 the administrative budget totaled less than 2.8 million Swiss gold francs. Special arrangements were needed even to raise extra 100 francs for some purposes.248 Nansen got an allowance from the LON for expenses of the staff which was to be working in his own agency partly, as well as in other countries as his authorized representatives.249

A researcher must ask what these “administrative expenses” were; what did it constitute of? In his report to the Assembly in September 1922 Nansen listed them: great numbers of people were conducting their work in different countries; supporting delegates whose services were essential. There were charges for telegrams, for travelling, for office supplies, and other items.250 In September 1922, the Assembly passed a resolution recommending that the Council should consider whether it can place a sum sufficient to enable the necessary administrative measures to assist Greek and Armenian refugees in Asia Minor from the Item “Unforeseen Expenditure”.251 The Council decided “to put at the disposal of Dr. Nansen” the sum of 100,000 Swiss Francs to enable necessary administrative measures connected to these refugees for a period which would allow for adequate arrangements to be made from other sources.252

246 Minutes of the 19. Session of the Council of the LON (17.-24.7.1922)/OJ, 3rd year, No 8, (part B), August 1922, 923-924
247 Minutes of the 17. Session of the Council of the LON (24.-28.3.1922)/OJ, 3rd year, No 5, May 1922, 375
248 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 362
249 Frings, 21
250 OJ, 3rd year, No 11 (part I), Nov 1922, 1136
251 Minutes of the 20./21. Session of the Council of the LON (31.8.-4.10.1922)/OJ, 3rd year, No 11 (part II), Nov 1922, 1195-1196 and 1415
252 Minutes of the 20./21. Session of the Council of the LON (31.8.-4.10.1922)/OJ, 3rd year, No 11 (part II), Nov 1922, 1196
The Council decided in its 23rd Session to set aside from the item “Unforeseen Expenditure” a sum of 50,000 Swiss Francs in order to enable Nansen to liquidate the various administrative engagements which he had assumed in his dealings with the refugees in Near East. Nansen was worried about the disease situation among the refugees and had planned cooperation with the Epidemic Commission of the League in order to reply to the situation. It was feared that epidemics in large scale would soon appear unless something was done quickly.253 In comparison, in the same Council session the Greek Government, being unable to cope with the refugee situation with the financial resources at its disposal, considered that a loan was absolutely indispensable. The loan would have amounted to the sum of 10 million pounds sterling.254

In its 24th Session the Council voted the sum of 50,000 Gold francs from the amount set aside in the Budget for 1923 for “Unforeseen Expenditure” with the understanding that this sum would be considered as the first charge of the loan designated for the settlement of the Greek refugees. This sum was to be repaid out of the loan which was supposed to be issued by the League for the work on behalf of the Greek Refugees in Western Thrace.255 Nansen received the loan approved by the Council in 1923 for the establishment of the work. It was originally assumed that the loan will be repaid when the Greek Refugees Settlement Commission gets its own regular financing. As the Commission was formally founded and the loans for its work were floated, there was a mentioning on the obligation to repay the loan on behalf of the High Commissioner. Therefore, the Council concluded in June 1925, that it will not insist on the repayment of the loan.256

Norwegian researcher Atle Grahl-Madsen has interpreted the situation in a very blunt manner: the League assumed no responsibility for the funding of the concrete aid for refugees. Funds for those purposes were needed from individual Governments, voluntary organizations, and private individuals. The only real and normal source of revenue was coming from the Nansen stamps. The stamp was supposed to validate the Nansen passport and had to be renewed periodically. The price for the stamp was five gold francs and it was paid by the refugees themselves, although there was an exemption from the fee for the poorest. According to Grahl-Madsen “from 1926 up to

253 Minutes of the 23. Session of the Council of the LON (29.1.-3.2.1923)/OJ, 4th year, No 3, March 1923, 234-235
254 Ibid.
255 Minutes of the 24. Session of the Council of the LON (17.-23.4.1923)/OJ, 4th year, No 6, June 1923, 602-603
256 Minutes of the 34. Session of the Council of the LON (8.-11.6. 1925)/OJ, 6th year, No 7, 1925, 890-891
31 July 1930 the sale of Nansen stamps brought a total revenue of 406,775 gold francs.257

In the 1920s, the LON was officially responsible for the financing of the High Commission exclusively. In practice, however, some private organizations were subsidizing the activities, while being in cooperation with the High Commissioner. The same seems to apply to some Governments in their local joint activities.258

3.2.3. The Labour Office and its Refugee Service

The ILO got officially involved with the refugee work in the early 1920s when the High Commissioner was appointed, and the services of the Labour Office were needed to ascertain the professionalism of the activities. Not so well known fact is, that the ILO was among those organizations that prepared the appeal to the League Council in February 1921 for the establishment of the High Commission for Russian Refugees. ILO participated in the unofficial meeting preceding the appeal.259 Any further documentation on the role of the ILO in these events has, however, not been found. The authors of the history of the ILO are also silent about these episodes.

The Director General of the ILO was responsible for the relations with the Governments as well as information matters.260 It was specifically Albert Thomas, who received requests for help from governments and other bodies.261 The Labour Office was the executive arm of the organization. It took care of the daily work and handled the assignments given by the administrative bodies. Thus it was among the duties of the Labour Office to handle the refugee matters in practice.

The Governing Body was the most important decision making authority. It sometimes gave great liberties to the Labour Office in its assignments. During the first years the Labour Office had no specific organization or personnel for the refugee work. Thus, there was no designated budget for these activities. The funds required were

257 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 362; also Simpson, 1939
258 Simpson 1939, 201-203
259 OJ, Vol 1, March-April 1921, 228-229
260 A description of experience about these relations on a personal level can be obtained from: Mannio, Niilo: Sosialipoliitikon kokemukia 50 itsenäisyysvuoden ajalta. Porvoo 1967, 164-212
261 Minutes of the 17. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1923, 153
included in the “normal” administrative costs of the Labour Office. The High
Commission was struggling with the lack of funds, and it hardly could have been able
to finance the activities of Labour Office.

On the other hand, it seems\textsuperscript{262} that no one ever asked ILO’s help because of its
available funds. The reasons for turning to the ILO remained elsewhere. The Labour
Office was dealing with financial questions as far as it concerned arrangements for
creating revenues and developing lending systems. A representative of Labour Office
was with a delegation (“mission of inquiry”) already in 1922 when the organizations
responded to the request of the Greek Government. Their task was to explore
possibilities for financial and other solutions together with the Greek Authorities.\textsuperscript{263}

The LON seemed to have had three different scenarios in 1924 for the future of its
refugee work organization. The first was to close down the High Commission
completely, the second to continue the work as business as usual, and the third to
push the refugee work to the ILO.\textsuperscript{264} This was noticed in the Governing Body which
means that the members of it were aware of the options. Thus they knew what was
expected from them, as well as that there were options.\textsuperscript{265}

The year 1924 marked a new chapter in the international refugee policy. The first
shock of the masses of refugees was over. The work had been well established. The
High Commission had been working under the supervision of the League Council.
However, its administration was considered more or less improvised and thus
insufficient to tackle the continuation of the work on the serious problems in a
systematic way. In 1924 new refugee groups were included to the working programme.
The emphasis lay in the shifting from humanitarian aid towards solutions which could
be considered more permanent.\textsuperscript{266}

In the spring of 1924 Nansen suggested to the League Council that the ILO should
take responsibility for some tasks of the refugee work, because they were suitable for
the Labour Office. The idea of an improved efficiency was behind the deliberations.\textsuperscript{267}
A formal request was sent to the Labour Organization in April same year. The letter
addressed to the Director General of the ILO contained references to the improvement
of status of the Russian refugees due to the passport system introduced previously.

\textsuperscript{262} According to source material
\textsuperscript{263} ILR, Vol 8 No 4, 1923, 563
\textsuperscript{264} Minutes of the 23. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 283-284
\textsuperscript{265} Simpson claims that the ILO was pressed and made decision in an “fait accompli” –situation; Simpson1939,
203-204
\textsuperscript{266} Simpson 1939, 203
\textsuperscript{267} Minutes of the 22. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 169-170
However, the appeal to the ILO was based on the fact that the employment situation continued to be the biggest problem at hands. In order to solve that issue, a more permanent organizational basis was needed.268

Albert Thomas presented to the Governing Body, as his own view, that the challenge should be taken on since the League Council and its Secretariat were behind the appeal.269 According to Simpson’s view, the Council approved the principle of the transfer of duties without delay, but the Governing Body of the ILO was reluctant.270 Thomas encouraged the Governing Body to approve the arrangements during the summer 1924271, but the decision was further delayed because of the disagreements on some principal questions as well as the obscurity of the financing.272 After the decision-in-principle of the League Council, there were several unclear parts in the deal, mainly concerning the division of duties and the structure of financing.273

The 1924 budget of the High Commissioner was 153.000 Swiss francs. Together with private contributions it came to 304.000 francs.274 From the beginning, the idea was that the refugee budget must be kept separate from the regular budget of the Labour Office, although it must be supervised by the Office. The headquarters of the High Commission had to be removed from the League Secretariat and placed under the supervision of the ILO.275

The situation was somewhat frustrating for the decision makers of the League, as it became clear that the refugee problems could not be solved as quickly as the task covering the prisoners of war. This was obviously one of the reasons why it was decided to transfer the technical problems of employment, settlement, and migration to the International Labour Organization. While the preparations for the transfer were in progress, the Governing Body of the ILO appointed a Committee of four members to coordinate the planning. The Committee consisted of representatives of each tripartite groups and the Chairman of the Governing Body.276 This was done at least partly in order to show that the matter was seriously considered.277 The Council of the League

268 Ibid.
269 Minutes of the 22. Sessione of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 170
270 Simpson 1939, 203-204
271 Minutes of the 23. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 250
272 Minutes of the 23. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 263
273 Minutes of the 23. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 259
274 Ibid.
275 Minutes of the 23. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 283-284
276 OB, Vol 9, 1924, 139
277 Minutes of the 23. session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 263
decided in its 29th Session to invite Nansen or his representative to give all information of administrative or financial character to the Committee. Legal or constitutional counseling was to be given by the Secretary General or the President of the Council.278

This designated ILO’s Committee prepared its Memorandum for the Meeting of the Governing Body in the autumn. The outcome of the work of the Committee, as recorded in the Memorandum, was that services could be rendered only to Russian and Armenian refugees. Other refugees should remain on the liability of other organizations. The High Commission should be closed down. Nansen should put his personal input to the use of the ILO. It was supposed to be a temporary arrangement, and the organization had to be dissolved as soon as it became possible.279 The Governing Body approved a resolution in October 1924. According to it the ILO took partly responsibility for the refugee work of the LON, with certain conditions.280 The resolution urged Albert Thomas to prepare for a plan for employment services within the means granted by the League. The Director General was to appraise the adequacy of the budget; the League had budgeted 203,000 Swiss francs for the refugee work for 1925.281

The Governing Body of the ILO was invited to take a final decision-in-principle at its forthcoming session whether it would be disposed to agree to the eventual transfer of the Russian Refugee work to the International Labour Organization. The “traditional” premises for the plan were the capability and capacity of dealing with the questions concerning employment and emigration conditions. Additional reason given at the Council Meeting was the Labour Office’s ability to guard the refugees from exploitation.282

At this stage the matters concerning the transfer were dealt with in the Council under heading “Russian Refugees”. In the same meeting the matters of Greek and Armenian refugees were handled as well, but separately, without mentioning the transfer of responsibilities.283 Later same year, the matter came to the agenda under heading “Transfer to the International Labour Office of the work for Russian and Armenian Refugees”. It was then understood, according to the background

278 Minutes of the 29. Session of the Council of the LON (11.-17.6.1924)/OJ, 5th year, No 7, July 1924, 925-926
279 Minutes of the 24. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 405
280 These conditions, see Chapter 3.1.2.
281 Minutes of the 24. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 336
282 Minutes of the 29. Session of the Council of the LON (11.-17.6.1924)/OJ, 5th year, No 7, July 1924, 904-905
283 Minutes of the 29. Session of the Council of the LON (11.-17.6.1924)/OJ, 5th year, No 7, July 1924, 906-908
documentation, that in case of any questions involving political considerations, the ILO should consult the Council of the League.  

The Committee of the ILO indicated that if the Governing Body agreed to the transfer it would require an adequate budget. Only this would enable the work for the refugees to be carried out to a satisfactory conclusion. The (planned) budget of 150,000 Swiss francs would be hardly sufficient for the Russian refugee work alone, and quite inadequate if work for other refugees was added.

The Council approved the necessary recommendations providing for the transfer of the refugee work for Russian and Armenian Refugees to the ILO. The question was then referred to the Assembly for consideration since the budget of 1925 was affected. The Assembly adopted the Council’s decision and decided to place at its disposal sufficient funds specially set aside for the administrative services required to deal with the establishment of the refugees during the year 1925. The designated sum was 203,000 Swiss francs.

The transfer of the refugee work was financially sealed at the end of 1924. Nansen presented a report on the future execution of the work for Russian and Armenian Refugees. The Council of the League approved the proposals contained in the report in its last Session of the year in December 1924. It was agreed that the ILO would take responsibility of activities from the beginning of 1925. The changes in the practical form of the organization were not dramatic, but they held significance in principle, which made them something more than just a formality. The first regular budget for the Refugee Service was prepared for the year 1926. The Council decided that it was not necessary to handle the budget as a separate item on the Agenda of the Assembly. Instead, it could be considered by the Assembly under Agenda Item 21; Budget for 1926, including the budgets of the ILO and of the Permanent Court of International Justice.

The report of the ILO for the first months of the operations of the Refugee Service included also the estimates for the budget of 1926. It was not possible to submit to the

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284 Minutes of the 30. Session of the Council of the LON (20.8.-3.10.1924), Annex 669/OJ, 5th year, No 10, Oct 1924, 1468
285 Ibid.
286 Minutes of the 30. Session of the Council of the LON (20.8.-3.10.1924)/OJ, 5th year, No 10, Oct 1924, 1365
288 OB, vol 9, 1924, 201-202
289 Simpson 1939, 204
290 Minutes of the 34. Session of the Council of the LON (8.-11.6.1925)/OJ, 6th year, No 7, July 1925, 891
League anything else but provisional approximations. The figure on the proposal was
the same as for 1925; 203.000 francs. It was given not as a final sum, but it was
believed to be necessary in order to cover the obligatory expenses.291

The position of the High Commissioner still existed. The relations between it and the
ILO were conducted on a personal level, since the Assistant High Commissioner (from
1923) Major T.F.Johnson was at same time the Head of Department of Refugee
Questions of the ILO.292 The High Commissioner’s staff, headed by Major Johnson,
was transferred from the League Secretariat to the ILO (Labour Office). Thus, the
Refugee Service was formed.293 The organization formed a part of the Diplomatic
Division of the Labour Office. This practical arrangement made possible the
cooperation with the Migration Section of the Labour Office, as well as with the agents
in different countries.294

Nansen retained his position as the High Commissioner in this disposition. He was,
however, increasingly absorbed by the Armenian resettlement in Erevan and Soviet
Armenia, as the planning and even implementation of the scheme was underway.295
Nansen represented the LON in the new organization. He was still directly responsible
for his actions to the Council of the League.296 He was mandated to take the lead in
matters with a political nature and act as a liaison between the LON and the ILO in
those matters which fell into the competence of the League and therefore were outside
the domain of the ILO.297

The personnel brought continuity to the work. Albert Thomas took still responsibility
for coordination between the local agents of the High Commissioner and the Labour
Office.298 Hereby, the large network of the representatives of the ILO could be best
utilized. The Labour Office made inquiries on employment matters of the refugees in all
European countries.299 Albert Thomas gained reputation as a protector of refugees

291 Minutes of the 34. Session of the Council of the LON (8.-11.6.1925), Annex 780/OJ, 6th year, No 7, July 1925,
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292 Thompson I, 31
293 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 362
294 Minutes of the 25. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1925, 93
295 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 362
296 Simpson 1939, 198
297 Minutes of the 25. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1925, 93
298 Minutes of the 25. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1925, 91
299 Simpson 1939, 204-205
during those years.\textsuperscript{300} He was personally involved in all major arrangements in the administration of the refugee work.

The Advisory Commission, which was formed earlier, continued its duties in connection with the Labour Office. The Commission consisted of the representatives of many different private and semi-private organizations. (Save the Children, Lord Mayors (Armenian) Fund, Jewish Colonization Association etc.).\textsuperscript{301} Coordinating the activities of the Commission also underlined the Labour Office’s role as an umbrella organization.

The administration of refugee matters in the ILO was quite clustered. Some persons held several positions and the highest leaders of the organization were always at the front line. Some overlaps were apparent. In the beginning of the Refugee Service there was a designated liaison between the Service and the Governing Body; it was the Sub-committee of Refugee Matters, which later was changed into a Permanent Committee by the decision of the Governing Body.\textsuperscript{302} The committee was nominated by the Governing Body, and the Chairman of the Governing Body acted as the Chairman of the Committee.\textsuperscript{303} The Committee prepared memorandums and recommendations for the refugee administration and thus acted as an advisory body.\textsuperscript{304}

The LON was responsible for issuing the financing of the Refugee Service. The Governing Body of the ILO approved the budget proposal of the League Council before it was submitted to the General Assembly for final confirmation.\textsuperscript{305} The Labour Office had sole responsibility and thus great liberties on the use of the funds issued in the budget.\textsuperscript{306} Sometimes the Refugee Service made proposals to the League for additional budgetary funds. An example of this was connected to the plans on the revolving fund for refugees in 1926.\textsuperscript{307}

It was the Finance Committee of the ILO, which prepared for the regular budget proposal of the Labour Office to the Governing Body and Labour Conference. The refugee budget was separate from this, but in some connections it was brought forward

\textsuperscript{300} See Phelan, Edward: Yes and Albert Thomas. London 1949, 196
\textsuperscript{301} Minutes of the 25. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1925, 94; Records of Proceedings of the 7. Session of the ILC, 1925, 934
\textsuperscript{302} OB, Vol 13, 1928, 14
\textsuperscript{303} Minutes of the 37. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1927, 413
\textsuperscript{304} E.g. Minutes of the 38. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1928, 177
\textsuperscript{305} Minutes of the 33. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1926, 451
\textsuperscript{306} Simpson 1939, 206
\textsuperscript{307} E.g. Minutes of the 33. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1926, 389; Simpson 1939, 205
in the Governing Body, that the Finance Committee should also take into account the refugee expenditure. In 1927-1928 there seems to have been an active discussion on whether the Governing Body should take bigger role in the preparation of the refugee budget. It was usual during those years, that the costs overrun the budget.

The belief on the temporary nature of all refugee problems was always at the background. The League Assembly urged in its resolution of September 1926 the High Commissioner and the Labour Office to intensify their measures for helping the Russian and Armenian Refugees. The Assembly invited the High Commissioner and the Governing Body of the ILO to consider the possibility of making effective response to the appeals for their co-operation in the permanent settlement of these refugees and of coordinating the activities of private organizations working for the refugees. It is difficult to interpret whether this was direct criticism or indirect praise, since this was exactly what these organizations were supposed to be doing in the first place! In his response, Albert Thomas informed the Secretary General that the Governing Body has particularly instructed the International Labour Office to endeavor to respond to any appeals which it may receive with a view to improving the precarious position of the refugees.

In the same connection the Assembly also urged the Governments of the Member States to intensify the settlement of unemployed refugees and to contribute to the replenishment of the working capital fund ("revolving fund") of the refugee organizations. The Assembly further invited the Governing Body of the ILO to appoint a co-trustee to be responsible jointly with Mr. Nansen for the administration of the revolving fund. In his response Albert Thomas informed the Secretary General that the Governing Body had appointed Mr. Jean Monnet as the co-trustee of the fund.

The Headquarters of the Refugee Service was in its "natural" place in Geneva. The administration of the organization was partly old, partly new. Besides the central office, the Service had agents in several countries. The agents had terminable contracts and in the administration they were compared to correspondents. Some of the agents were former local representatives of Nansen, some of them old correspondents of the

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308 E.g. Minutes of the 35. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1927, 175
309 Minutes of the 40. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1928, 441
310 OJ, 7th year, No 12, Dec 1926, 1667
311 OJ, 7th year, No 12, Dec 1926, 1668
312 OJ, 7th year, No 12, Dec 1926, 1667-1668
The task of the agents was to form committees consisting of the authorities of host countries and (local) voluntary relief organizations. These were supposed to act as advisory boards and take responsibility for the communication between the Refugee Service and the refugees.314

Refugee Service had a proper office in some countries which were suffering most from the problems of the massive emigration of Russians. The network of representatives and offices was largely inherited from Nansen’s organization.315 It may be considered extraordinary that it was possible to uphold an office also in Moscow. By 1926 Refugee Service had established several delegations overseas as well. In Latin America (Argentina, Brazil) the offices had a clear function: to prepare and implement the resettlement plans.316 In Finland, the “Secretary General”(although this was a wrong title) of the Finnish Red Cross, Colonel Schwindt was regarded as the honorary delegate of the Refugee Service.317

There were attempts to get other official refugee organizations under the umbrella of the Refugee Service as well. The Greek Refugees Settlement Commission had been formed under the supervision of the League, but it was working in quite an independent manner. The representative of the workers’ delegation of Greece made a proposal at the 7th Labour Conference with a view that the Commission should be attached to the Refugee Service.318 The representatives of the Labour Office considered, however, that the Conference was not a proper forum to decide such matters, and the proposal was never advanced.319

During the period of the Refugee Service the LON and the ILO jointly organized a few international conferences on refugee matters. Nansen was normally the formal initiator, and the practical arrangements were taken care of by the League Secretariat and the Labour Office in collaboration.320

The following is to demonstrate the level of expenditure of the refugee apparatus of the intergovernmental organizations in the 1920s.321

313 Minutes of the 25. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1925, 94; Records of Proceedings of the 7. Session of the ILC, 1925, 934
314 Records of Proceedings of the 8. Session of the ILC, 1926, 47
315 Minutes of the 25. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1925, 94
316 See Chapter 3.3.5.
317 Records of Proceedings of the 8. Session of the ILC, 1926, 46
318 Records of Proceedings of the 7. Session of the ILC, 1925, 829
319 Records of Proceedings of the 7. Session of the ILC, 1925, 830
320 E.g. Minutes of the 32. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1926, 295; OB, Vol 11, 1926, 121-122
321 Compiled by the author of this from different sources, see e.g. Simpson 1939, 212; cf. also Chapter 5.2.
The expenditure of the Refugee Service was annually slightly over 300,000 Francs. The sum is slightly higher than the one used by the High Commissioner in the beginning of the 1920s. The expenditure on the whole seems not have been raised dramatically despite the plans for refugee resettlement at that time. There is no clear indication, how the budget and the expenditure of the Refugee Service and the High Commissioner were separated. This is definitely something that gives opportunity for further studies.

When comparing these sums to the total budget of the League system, it can be stated that the amounts were considerable. It is very difficult to make exact comparisons, because the official budgets were usually defined in US dollars and in Sterling Pounds, and the refugee expenditure was in Swiss Francs and the rates fluctuated during the decade. It seems, however, that the total budget of the League (including ILO) during the 1920s was slightly over 20 million Francs annually.322

In the deliberations in 1928, it was clear that the next year will be the last year of the ILO’s responsibility. The Governing Body made public the following reasons for the refusal to continue the work: a) The remaining tasks were more suitable for the High

322 Another comparison can be made to the salaries of the leaders of the organizations: The annual salary of the Secretary General of the League was 200,000 gold francs, and the salary of the Director General of the ILO was 72,000 gold francs; see http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1921/nov/10/league-of-nations-budget + http://www.indiana.edu/~league/pictorialsurvey/lonapspg30.htm
Commissioner, b) desire to avoid the duality of the existing activities.\(^\text{323}\) The recommendation at that time was that the work should be continued by the High Commissioner under the supervision of a Mixed Advisory Committee assembled from the representatives of the League Council and the Governing Body of the ILO.\(^\text{324}\)

During the year 1928 it became obvious that the latter of the above mentioned two excuses was even more legitimate. At the same time, the Labour Office had to provide the Governing Body with a clarification on the definition of the division of duties.\(^\text{325}\) The reason given to the unclear administrative situation is a natural one, personality: the same person was acting as the Head of Refugee Service and as the Assistant High Commissioner.\(^\text{326}\) This was connected to the fact that the Labour Organization, even from the beginning, was not willing to get involved with politics. Therefore the ILO considered all activities provisional. All these things contributed to the determination of the ILO leaders to discontinue the managing role in the refugee work.

The ongoing difficulties with financing definitely did not encourage the ILO to continue the assignment of the Refugee Service. Nansen approached the Governing Body with a suggestion that the task of evacuating the refugees from Constantinople had to be accomplished, or the organizations should surrender. If the American private financiers would take over, the control of the actions would be on their side.\(^\text{327}\) There must have been a question, how it would turn out, if the private sources were supervising the work of the world organizations.

Further reasons for the determination to conclude the activities of the Refugee Service were found. A joint memorandum of the Refugee Committee and the Finance Committee of the ILO noted in 1928, that the refugee work had been political by its nature from the beginning.\(^\text{328}\) In addition to that, it was contradictory to the benefit of the organization to continue the resettlement programmes to the new continent. It would deteriorate the relationships with the workers’ organizations of the recipient countries.\(^\text{329}\)

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\(^{323}\) Frings, 24; Simpson 1939, 206  
\(^{324}\) Simpson 1939, 206  
\(^{325}\) Minutes of the 38. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1928, 172  
\(^{326}\) Minutes of the 39. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1928, 343  
\(^{327}\) Minutes of the 38. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1928, 174  
\(^{328}\) Minutes of the 40. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1928, 415-416  
\(^{329}\) Minutes of the 40. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1928, 416
This signified a proposal for a new organization, including the model for next administration, as well as a mixed commission to assist the High Commissioner.\textsuperscript{330} The proposal was adopted by the Governing Body unanimously.\textsuperscript{331} The decision was passed to the Council of the LON. The Council probably did not have any opportunity to oppose the decision. While saying goodbye to the Refugee Service, the Director General noted that there had been mistakes in the work despite all possible precautions.\textsuperscript{332} In the background, there was the deepening economic recession that prevented all resettlement activities.\textsuperscript{333} At that point also even Albert Thomas was skeptical on the work.

The year 1929 was a time of uncertainty for those who were involved in the international refugee work. The ILO was still in theory liable for the annual budget of the refugee organization, but in practice the whole organization was at a standstill. There was a provisional arrangement, according to which the League Council took responsibility for the temporary administration.\textsuperscript{334} The work for creating a whole new administrative model for the refugee work organization was under way at the same time.

According to the decision of the ninth Assembly of the League, an advisory commission consisting of representatives of governments was formed. The official name of the body came to be the Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC). The task of it was to see how the refugee work could be continued.\textsuperscript{335} The High Commissioner requested for the advisory help of the ILO. The appeal was quite naturally presented to Albert Thomas.\textsuperscript{336} The Governing Body assigned a delegation consisting of the representatives of the workers’ group as well as the employers’ group. The team was supposed to act as the technical advisory section of the Committee.\textsuperscript{337}

The Refugee Service was able to achieve some remarkable result during its active existence. Although some objectives were not reached, the Refugee Service could accomplish quite much, especially in the fields of resettlement and integration of refugees. The staff of the Refugee Service had to show loyalty to both ILO and the High Commissioner, and this seemed to have created some problems. There may

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\textsuperscript{330} Minutes of the 40. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1928, 415
\textsuperscript{331} Minutes of the 40. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1928, 417
\textsuperscript{332} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{333} Ibid.; Simpson 1939, 206
\textsuperscript{334} Simpson 1939, 198
\textsuperscript{335} Simpson 1939, 207
\textsuperscript{336} Minutes of the 45. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1929, 333
\textsuperscript{337} Minutes of the 46. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1929, 557-558
\end{flushleft}
have been some lack of clarity in the responsibilities. By the end of 1929, it was found practical and convenient to follow the original plan of impermanence, and transfer the functions undertaken by the ILO back to the High Commissioner and ultimately to the LON.\textsuperscript{338} Director General Thomas suggested to the 12\textsuperscript{th} Labour Conference that the cooperation with Nansen should be continued, but only at a consultative level.\textsuperscript{339} It was defined that the responsibilities of the Labour Organization will be discontinued on January 1, 1930. From that on, the League Council took the lead.\textsuperscript{340}

3.2.4. The Greek and Bulgarian Refugees Settlement Commissions

The exchange of populations between Greece, Turkey, and Bulgaria were supervised by Commissions organized by the League. They all had similar features. Bentwich described the role of the Commissions in the 1930s in following way: “It was the function of the Commissions to supervise the migration, to facilitate the transfer of the movable property, and the valuation and liquidation of the immovable property of the emigrants, and to make arrangements for the sum due to the exchanged population in each country on account of the property liquidated to constitute a government debt to the country to which the proprietors emigrated”.\textsuperscript{341}

This facilitation started when the Greek and the Bulgarian Governments asked for help in solving their extensive refugee situations. The Turkish Government didn’t make the same explicit request. As a consequence, in 1923 the League decided to form an autonomous Greek Refugees Settlement Commission which was supposed to help the refugees to settle and get employed in their new home lands.\textsuperscript{342} The Greek Refuge Settlement Commission was set up under a Protocol approved by the League Council in September 1923, by which the Greek Government agreed to establish the Commission according to the Organic Statutes attached to the Protocol. The

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{338} Grahl-Madsen 1983, 362
\item \textsuperscript{339} Records of Proceedings of the 12. Session of the ILC, 1929, 220
\item \textsuperscript{340} Records of Proceedings of the 12. Session of the ILC, 1929, 218
\item \textsuperscript{341} Bentwich 1935, 124
\item \textsuperscript{342} Frings, 27-28
\end{itemize}
Commission was ultimately accountable for its activities to the League Council. Walters describes the events in his History of the LON: “The great majority (of the refugees) were Greeks and their settlement in Greece was a problem of vast magnitude indeed, but different in kind of from that of foreign refugees: the League played a major part in its solution, but after the first weeks of wild confusion were over, the work was entrusted to a special organization and not to the High Commissioner.”

The original Protocol was signed in September 1923 in Geneva. Further modifications were made in September 1924. The Hellenic Parliament ratified the original text in June 1924 and the alterations to it in October 1924. By the Protocol, the Greek Government assigned to the Commission 500,000 hectares of land to be used for the purposes of settlement of the Refugees. The Government also agreed that all financial advances will be placed at the disposal of the Commission.

It was stipulated in the original Geneva Protocol for the establishment of the Greek Refugees Settlement Commission, that the Hellenic Government will as soon as possible raise a loan or loans of 3 – 6 million pounds. As the circumstances in the beginning of the Commission were not favorable, the Commission had to exist on advances. Later, the Commission estimated that at least 20 million pounds would be required to establish the refugees properly. The Commission had to, however, adjust the scheme according to the existing possibilities and decide to request loans totaling 10 million pounds from the League of Nations. The text of the convention was also altered to correspond with this reality.

The total loan scheme was drawn up in 1923-1924 under the auspices of the League. The programme was then finally agreed and issued with a great success in the markets of London, New York, and Athens in December 1924. The Council of the League was in a position to state in its resolution in March 1925 that the Commission was at last provided with the necessary financial means.

According to the organic statutes of the Commission it was established as a legal person. The Commission was independent from the Greek Governments executive or administrative authority, and thus considered as completely autonomous. The

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343 Simpson 1939, 222-223
344 Walters, 189
345 OJ, 5th year, No 12, Dec 1924, 1795
346 OJ, 5th year, No 12, Dec 1924, 1795-1796
347 Minutes of the 33. Session of the Council of the LON (9.-14.3.1925)/OJ, 6th year, No 4, April 1925, 504-505
348 Minutes of the 33. Session of the Council of the LON (9.-14.3.1925)/OJ, 6th year, No 4, April 1925, 437-438
Commission was composed of four members. Two of them were appointed by the Greek Government and approved by the League, one member was appointed directly by the League, and finally, the chairman of the Commission had to be a national of the United States of America and a person representing relief organizations.\textsuperscript{349}

Henry Morgenthau\textsuperscript{350}, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Greek Refugees Settlement Commission, reported to the Council in March 1924 that the Commission had £ 1,000,000 at its disposal, which would enable it to demonstrate what could be done, provided that sufficient funds were forthcoming. According to Morgenthau’s report, £50 would suffice to settle a family on a farm. It would have been necessary, however, to obtain 6 - 8 million pound sterling in order to be able to solve the entire problem. It was estimated, that the problem could have been solved within two years with that sum. According to the estimate of Morgenthau, Greece could be self-supporting after that.\textsuperscript{351}

The nominations of the Commission were formally approved by the League Council. The Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs submitted proposals to the Council for the Greek members of the Commission.\textsuperscript{352} There is no visible record of any disputes concerning these appointments. According to the Protocol of 1924, the work of the Greek Refugees Settlement Commission was supposed to be liquidated in 1928. For that reason, the Council decided in 1927 to appoint Mr. Charles Eddy provisionally for three months only as the President of the Commission, whereas the normal term of the Presidency was one year. It seems, according to the Council documents, that the Greek Government had a certain influence to these appointments at least during the later years of the existence of the Commission.\textsuperscript{353}

The Settlement Commission issued quarterly reports to the League of Nations on its operations. In its report in May 1924 it was stated that a further advance of one million pounds sterling was obtained from the Bank of England on May 7\textsuperscript{th} and steps were taken to allocate this sum, in suitable proportions, to the agricultural and urban settlements in the different provinces of Greece. This was the second proportion of the loan to the Greek Government. In the same report the Commission informed the Council on the use of the first proportion, also amounting to one million pounds.

\textsuperscript{349} OJ, 5th year, No 12, Dec 1924, 1797
\textsuperscript{350} The US Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire 1913-1916, later in many positions connected to the questions of Middle East
\textsuperscript{351} Minutes of the 28. Session of the Council of the LON (10.-15.3.1924)/OJ, 5\textsuperscript{th} year, No 4, April 1924, 508-509
\textsuperscript{352} e.g. Minutes of the 30. Session of the Council of the LON (20.8.-3.10.1924)/OJ, 5\textsuperscript{th} year, No 10, Oct 1924, 1348
\textsuperscript{353} Minutes of the 47. Session of the Council of the LON, 5th meeting 22.9.1927/OJ, No 10, Oct 1927, 1447
According to the expenditure performance reporting, it seems that generally taken, the money had reached its original targets, which were the settlements. The Project cost table shows that the proportion of various administrative costs appears to have been reasonably small.\textsuperscript{354}

The quarterly reporting system seems to have been quite disciplined, at least in the beginning. In its third quarterly report in August 1924 the Commission informed that the total sum put at the disposal of the Commission so far was three million Pounds. The first million was advanced by the Bank of England in November 1923, the second million by the same institution in May 1924, and the third million by the Government of Greece in July 1924. All these loans were issued through the National Bank of Greece. Advantage was taken of sharp rises in the value of the pound sterling to lay in a stock of drachmae. It was decided to have the accounts for 12 months ending on December 31st, and audited by persons nominated by the Ministry Finance and the National Bank of Greece respectively. The detailed reporting gives a possibility to follow the expenditure in practice: how, where and when the money was actually used.\textsuperscript{355}

An auditors’ report was given on the last day of the year 1924 on the entries of the books of the General Accountants Office of the Greek Refugees Settlement Commission and the vouchers and receipts of the Treasury from establishment of the Commission up to that date. The Auditors found that all entries had been made in good order, the balances of the general and auxiliary books were as per attached statements, the vouchers and receipts were duly audited, and the balance at hand was exact.\textsuperscript{356}

The Financial Committee of the League also received summaries of the reports on the position of the Greek Committee. The summaries published in the Official Journal of the League don’t allow us to have a deep insight of what was discussed in this connection. The summaries as such are brief, neutral, and declaratory. The chairman of the Financial Committee was Mr. Gustave Ador, who also had a long career in the Red Cross and thus experience on refugee matters.\textsuperscript{357}

The task of the Greek Refugees Settlement Commission was not so unpleasant and desperate by position, as was the case in many other international refugee operations.

\textsuperscript{354} OJ, 5th year, No 8, August 1924, 1069-1070
\textsuperscript{355} OJ, 5th year, No 11 (part II), Nov 1924, 1719
\textsuperscript{356} OJ, 6th year, No 8, August 1925, 1059
\textsuperscript{357} Minutes of the 35. Session of the Council of the LON (2.-28.9.1925)/OJ, 6\textsuperscript{th} year, No 10, Oct 1925, 1498 and 1502
The Chairman of Commission Mr. Howland said in his address at the Council in 1925, that the attitude of the people of Greece towards these refugees had been most admirable. Despite the heavy taxes caused by the refugee operations, the citizens had never shown anything less than the greatest hospitality, and their attitude carried evidence of homogeneity among the Hellenes.358 A typical handling of a Greek Commission’s quarterly report of the League was the one of the Financial Committee in case of the 12th report at the end of 1926. The Committee stated “No questions arise for decision”.359

The League seems to have had quite a lot of involvement to the internal matters of Greek State in these connections. In the beginning of 1927 the Financial Committee raised two points: the stabilization of the state budget and the request for certain additional information regarding the financial position of Greece. The representative of Greece in the Council assured that the present Coalition Cabinet was doing its utmost to put the country on a sound financial basis.360 The Council noted in its 56th session that the work of the settlement of the refugees will come to an end before long. For this reason the liquidation of the Settlement Commission had been under consideration for some time. The Greek Government also had decided to give its proper attention to the matter.361

During the final phase of the Greek Refugees Settlement Commission in 1930 the acting President of the Commission Sir John Hope Simpson made a presentation to the Council on the situation. According to his proposal, the Council took note and approved the Convention signed by the Hellenic Government and the Settlement Commission at Geneva on January 24, 1930, also noting that a law had been passed by the Greek Parliament, empowering the Government to ratify the Convention. The Council recognized in the same connection that necessary arrangements had been made, which will enable the Commission to be dissolved.362 The Financial Committee recommended that the Greek Commission can be dissolved and there was no action required on the basis of the reporting of the commission.363

The complete Termination Convention included statutes to transfer all property of the Commission, real and personal, to the Hellenic Government. This included real

358 Minutes of the 35. Session of the Council of the LON (2.-28.9.1925)/OJ, 6th year, No 10, Oct 1925, 1359
359 Minutes of the 43. Session of the Council of the LON (6.-11.12.1926)/OJ, 8th year, No 2, Feb 1926, 173
360 Minutes of the 44. Session of the Council of the LON (7.-12.3.1927)/OJ, 8th year, No 4, April 1927, 383
361 Minutes of the 56. Session of the Council of the LON (30.8.-6.9.1929)//OJ, 10th year, No 11, Nov 1929, 1675
362 Minutes of the 59. Session of the Council of the LON (12.-15.5.1930)/OJ, 11th year, No 6, June 1930, 520
363 Minutes of the 59. Session of the Council of the LON (12.-15.5.1930), Annex 1209/OJ, 11th year, No 6, June 1930, 671 and 680
estate, movables, cash, securities, as well as all rights and claims of every kind.\(^{364}\) The 26\(^{th}\) Report of the Settlement Commission included the practical substance of the financial aspects of the Convention. The terms and conditions of the termination from the standpoint of individual debts were well anticipated and documented in detail.\(^{365}\) The Council finally decided in its 60\(^{th}\) Session, that in accordance with the Article XIX of the Organic Statutes of the Commission, the Greek Refugees Settlement Commission shall be dissolved on December 31, 1930.\(^{366}\) This signified the last step in the liquidation plan.

During its existence, the Commission was a considerable employer. At its maximum, in the year 1928, the personnel employed by the Greek Refugee Settlement Commission amounted in number to 2042. On dissolution, the Commission was still employing 623 persons, who were transferred to the Greek Government and the Agricultural Bank.\(^{367}\) It must be noted, that these counts include the Greek personnel working in the field, and any comparisons to the regular League staff would be incompetent.

In its 27\(^{th}\) Report in August 1930, the Greek Commission, and Sir John Hope Simpson on behalf of it, stated that “This work is not yet finished”. The colonies had not yet reached a degree of consolidation allowing them to be finally emancipated from the guardianship which the Commission had exercised over them. That work had to be carried out in the future by the Hellenic Government.\(^{368}\)

After the official decisions and agreements concerning the termination of the Settlement Commission, several supplementary agreements were concluded between the different parties concerned. A Special Agreement in November 1930 between the Commission and the Greek Government further defined the terms and conditions of valuation of the land issued for the refugees. A Supplementary Contract between the Chairman of the Commission and the Representative of the Hellenic Government concerning the collection of debts from urban and agricultural refugees was signed also in November same year.\(^{369}\)

\(^{364}\) Minutes of the 59. Session of the Council of the LON (12.-15.5.1930), Annex 1212/OJ, 11\(^{th}\) year, No 6, June 1930, 730-734
\(^{365}\) OJ, 11th year, No 8, August 1930, 983
\(^{366}\) Minutes of the 60. Session of the Council of the LON (8.-12.9.1930)/OJ, 11\(^{th}\) year, No 11, Nov 1930, 1322
\(^{367}\) OJ, 12th year, No 3, March 1931, 587
\(^{368}\) Minutes of the 60. Session of the Council of the LON (8.-12.9.1930), Annex 1235/OJ, 11\(^{th}\) year, No 11, Nov 1930, 1486
\(^{369}\) OJ, 12th year, No 3, March 1931, 597-598
The International Financial Commission decided to accept the arrangements by which the National Bank of Greece and the Agricultural Bank (later changed for Bank of Greece) will be in charge of repaying the principal of the refugee loan to the Financial Commission. Previously the Settlement Commission had been responsible for that.\textsuperscript{370} It can be concluded that after the Greek Government appealed to the League, the Financial Committee at once drew up a plan for an international loan to be administrated by an autonomous organization. It was expressively provided that the yield of the loan should not be devoted to temporary charitable purposes, but to lasting measures for the settlement of the refugees. The corresponding principles were applied to Bulgarian refugees, and the same success was achieved.\textsuperscript{371}

The first glance in the situation, and the work of the Commission as illustrated by the primary sources of the League, would suggest that it was not exactly well defined or organized in the very beginning. It was not named as ad hoc commission, but its approach and working methods would correspond very much with any ad hoc based work. Whatever shortcomings the Commission may have had, it was able to conduct its work and also accomplish some very tangible and concrete results. It is possible to conclude that the at end of its work the achievements were considered quite remarkable. It appears that the Greek Refugees Settlement Commission was properly founded and established despite some minor inaccuracies. It was mandated with sufficient authority. The Commission was also properly financed, administrated, and accounted for. The settlement activities seem to have been managed in a very professional manner compared to the ad hoc nature of many other attempts under the umbrella on the League of Nations.

The Peace Treaty of Neuilly bound the Bulgarian government to receive the Bulgarian emigrants moving from neighboring countries. At first, the refugees moved more or less spontaneously, but soon the League jointly with the Bulgarian government formed a Commission for Bulgarian Refugees in 1926.\textsuperscript{372} In Bulgaria the work of refugee settlement was carried out under the supervision of a Commissioner appointed by the Council, rather than by the settlement commission with a mixed composition. The plan was somewhat similar to the operation going on in Greece at the time, but a number of things made the settlement in Bulgaria more difficult. The refugees arrived in

\textsuperscript{370} OJ, 12th year, No 3, March 1931, 600
\textsuperscript{371} The Aims, Methods and Activity of the League of Nations. Secretariat of the League of Nations. Geneva 1935, 133-134
\textsuperscript{372} Frings, 29-30
a series of small waves during three decades, the area was smaller, and the land suitable for agricultural settlement in Bulgaria was already more or less occupied.\textsuperscript{373}

For the work with the Bulgarian refugees, the executive machinery established was quite independent. By the Protocol approved by the League Council in September 1926, a High Commissioner was appointed by the Council. His approval was necessary for all plans for refugee settlement, and he had complete powers to refuse to advance funds from the proceeds of the settlement loan if he doubted the conditions of the settlement scheme. He had to report to the Council at least quarterly.\textsuperscript{374}

Since the Commissioner of the League of Nations for the Settlement of Bulgarian Refugees was obliged by the League to provide quarterly reports, they were naturally screened by the Financial Committee, which gave its inspection accounts with possible remarks and comments to the Council of the League. The first report of the Commissioner was submitted to the League at the end of 1926, covering the first two months of the operations. The report included the general plans for settlement, execution of a programme of urgent works, matters concerning legislation related to refugees, accounts, revenues, and loans.\textsuperscript{375}

The Commissioner was involved with the legislative work by drafting laws in liaison with relevant Bulgarian authorities. The first Commissioner’s report contained the law on the National Bank of Bulgaria passed by the Parliament, as well as the draft law for the settlement of the refugees on the land with the aid of the proceeds of the loan authorized by the League of Nations.\textsuperscript{376}

The second report of the Bulgarian Commissioner contained relevant information on the loan authorized by the Council of the LON. The loan was issued simultaneously in London and in New York on December 21\textsuperscript{st}, 1926, with great success, as the report has it. The block in pounds sterling amounted nominally to £2.400.000, of which, a part was offered for public subscription on the London market and the rest was subscribed by financial undertakings in Italy, Switzerland, and Holland. The American block amounted nominally to $4.500.000. In conformity with the Protocol establishing the

\textsuperscript{373} Skran, 169
\textsuperscript{374} Simpson 1939, 223
\textsuperscript{375} Minutes of the 43. Session of the Council of the LON (6.-11.12.1926), Annex 920/OJ, 8\textsuperscript{th} year, No 2, Feb 1926, 189-194
\textsuperscript{376} Minutes of the 43. Session of the Council of the LON (6.-11.12.1926), Annex 920-Appendix IV+V/OJ, 8\textsuperscript{th} year, No 2, Feb 1926, 196-213
Commissioner, the terms and conditions of this issue were submitted to the Chairman of the Financial Committee for approval.377

From November 1928, the structure of the reports submitted to the Council reflected the changed roles of the organizations and the development in the operations. The office was now the Commissioner of the League of Nations in Bulgaria. The reports of this official were divided in two parts. The first one continued to report the progress made in the settlement of refugees by means of the loan issued for this purpose in December 1926 on the basis of the Protocol signed in Geneva on 8.9.1926. The second part dealt with the Stabilization Loan of the Kingdom of Bulgaria based on the Protocol of 10.3.1928 and the Additional Act 8.9.1928.378 The structure of the organization was changed according to the requirements of the operations.

The Financial Committee noted the 17th Report of the League Commissioner for Bulgaria in January 1931 and heard a statement by him on progress made with the work of refugee settlement. The Committee could conclude that the greater part of the work had been completed. There remained but a relatively small balance from the loan, nearly all earmarked, for the remaining work to be carried out during next few months.379

The office of the Commissioner of the League was combined by a personal linkage with the post of the Adviser to the National Bank of Bulgaria during the period when Mr. René Charron held the two public positions.380 The Financial Committee concluded in its report in the Official Journal in December 1931, that the work of the LON Commissioner for Bulgaria is almost completed. The last of the loan funds had been expended, and the work was at an end, except for a few points which would be completed by the spring following year.381

In retrospective, it can be reviewed that the difference between the two respective Commissions derived from the their background: The whole state of Bulgaria seemed to be under supervision of the League from time to time, whereas the Hellenic Government was able to stand on its own feet. Therefore, the role of the Bulgarian Commission achieved much broader scope than just taking care of the matters of refugees.

377 Minutes of the 44. session of the Council of the LON (7.-12.3.1927)/OJ, 8th year, No 4, April 1927, 526
378 Minutes of the 53. Session of the Council of the LON (10.-15.12.1928)/OJ, 10th year, No 1, Jan 1929, 183 and 189
379 Minutes of the 62. Session of the Council of the LON (19.-24.1.1931)/OJ, 12th year, No 2, Feb 1931, 486
380 Minutes of the 62. Session of the Council of the LON (19.-24.1.1931)/OJ, 12th year, No 2, Feb 1931, 487
381 Minutes of the 65. Session of the Council of the LON (19.9.-10.12.1931)/OJ, 12th year, No 12, Dec 1931, 2404
3.3. Refugee Aid made possible under the League's Umbrella

3.3.1. Emergency Relief

The challenges in the beginning of the 1920s were enormous. There was not much intergovernmental experience on this kind of work but it was realized, however, that when it comes down to helping refugees in the field, emergency relief is definitely the first step to be taken. Humanitarian aid (or emergency relief as a synonym) is material or logistical assistance provided for humanitarian purposes, typically in response to humanitarian crisis. By commonly accepted definitions, the primary objective of humanitarian aid is to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity. It is therefore different from development aid, which seeks to address the underlying socioeconomic factors which may have led to a crisis or emergency. Development aid aims at more fundamental developmental change. The operations are funded by in various ways. It may include donations from individuals, corporations, governments, and other organizations. During the Inter-war period the funding and delivery of humanitarian aid was increasingly organized at an international level. This was a change to the previous national approach and facilitated faster and more effective responses.382

Refugee camps are always in need of assistance. Although not much documented knowledge is available from the Inter-war period, it is obvious that food, medicine, shelter, machinery, sanitation, and the expertise to provide them, were required. The Red Cross and other NGOs providing such assistance were often seen simply as the conduits of international aid. These units and organizations were largely depending on those who controlled the resources. This normally meant governments and private donors, as well as the intergovernmental institutions as coordinators.383

The source material of the League does not reveal much about the practical humanitarian aid in the field. We mostly have to satisfy ourselves with descriptions by earlier researchers. The work took place in the receiving countries. Therefore it is

382 For this see e.g. Skran; Simpson; Sjöberg
383 See Kent, 76
necessary to look into those places; what was going on at national level. In the beginning of the 1920s there were emergency situations in several countries bordering the Soviet Union. Refugees were threatened by famine in Constantinople. Nansen, as the High Commissioner, was faced with the need of finding funds for the maintenance of these refugees. Moreover, the High Commissioner enlisted and coordinated the active field assistance of voluntary organizations and some Governments. \(^{384}\)

Humanitarian aid was what the refugees mostly needed first. They were people who were abroad, mostly without identity, and often without food or even water. The word humanitarian derives from humanity. The questions of responsibility and support for refugees in need were linked with central questions about human society which was in centre of considerations while arranging the services for refugees. \(^{385}\)

Shortly after his appointment in September 1921, Nansen had correspondence with the French Government on the funding of certain relief activities. France considered its input larger than could be expected within reason. Therefore it wanted to discontinue the rationing of Russian refugees in Constantinople. Nansen made an appeal to the French Government to postpone its decision which would, in turn, give some room for the High Commissioner to concentrate all his efforts on measures needed for the final settlement of the problem. This appeal met its point, and finally France only reduced its supplies by an amount corresponding to the number of refugees leaving Constantinople. \(^{386}\) The events also reflect the idea of the division of duties that existed between the different actors according to the original idea of the refugee work undertaken by the world organizations.

The Secretary General of the LON listed in January 1923 countries that had made contributions, paid or promised, for the purpose of relief work helping the refugees from Asia Minor. Altogether 13 countries were on the list. Most donations were small sums of money, but also items, such as tents, were donated. \(^{387}\) The division between political and legal protection and the humanitarian work could not always be maintained in practice. At least later, in the 1930s, it was sometimes the Nansen Office instead of the Secretariat of the League, which had to make political interventions, since the NO had representatives in capitals, although this was not the purpose according to the statutes of the organizations. \(^{388}\)

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\(^{384}\) Grahl-Madsen 1983, 361

\(^{385}\) Knudsen, 43

\(^{386}\) OJ, Vol 3, Dec 1921, 1247-1249

\(^{387}\) OJ, 4th year, No 1, (part II), Jan 1923, 126

\(^{388}\) Grahl-Madsen 1983, 363
Although the League made serious attempts to assume a leading function in refugee work through the entire period under examination, it was clear that most of the time they had merely a planning and coordinating role. In the field they were totally depending on outside financing and on others doing the concrete work.\textsuperscript{389} It was also quite common phenomenon, that the refugees, who had arrived earlier and settled already, were helping the new comers.\textsuperscript{390} Some refugees coming from Russia were definitely not in a need of any kind of help. On the contrary, some upper class emigrants had large sums of money and other assets on them. In this respect, Finland offers a special example, as a newly independent state and former Grand-Duchy of the Czarist Russia, with lots of former experience on Russian upper class people residing in the country. There were complaints in Finland in some towns that the aliens were buying the shops empty with their bunches of cash money. This doesn’t change the fact that many were coming with empty pockets and urgently needed assistance. There were some voluntary assistance organizations established in Finland already, when the refugees started flowing to the country. However, they were not very well organized and their work was sporadic.\textsuperscript{391}

Prolonged involvements in the field were normally challenged by the pressure to achieve more permanent solutions, although the operations may have resulted in sympathy. The normal depiction was that a disaster like refugee problem should be an isolated phenomenon with short duration.\textsuperscript{392} The American organizations delivered large amounts of supplies to Finland, as the Americans had the quick victory of the anti-bolsheviks in their sight. When this vision faded away, the stocks were there, and already paid by the Russian Red Cross. It became obvious that the right address to the supplies was the refugees. The Russian organizations were assigned to take care of the deliveries and distribution. As could be expected, constant allegations on misconduct were reported.\textsuperscript{393}

The role of the American help was significant, especially in food supplies. In 1921 the ARC withdrew from Europe, and left the supplies behind. The national organizations were supposed to continue the relief activities with those stocks. As the work was established and in progress, it was the government that provided for the funds and supplies, and the voluntary organizations that took care of the

\textsuperscript{389} Grahl-Madsen 1983, 367; see also Appendix IV  
\textsuperscript{390} Leitzinger II, 416-417  
\textsuperscript{391} Nevalainen, 104  
\textsuperscript{392} Kent, 77  
\textsuperscript{393} Nevalainen, 106
implementation of the distribution.\textsuperscript{394} American Red Cross had been delivering clothes, shoes, and food to Finland (as well as all over Europe) since the First World War. Another active organization was the American Relief Administration. This agency was largely connected to Herbert Hoover who cooperated with the White Generals. The existence of the Americans symbolized the general relief work in Finland, and the supplies were used to assist also the refugees coming to Finland.\textsuperscript{395}

The Finnish Government established a State Refugee Relief Centre (VPAK) in March 1922. All previous organizations and materials were subordinated to it.\textsuperscript{396} The work of VPAK was financed by the government. The work took several forms: relief/assistance, boarding schools, refugee information, distribution of clothes and food, health care, mental services and employment exchange services.\textsuperscript{397} Although many voluntary organizations were also active, the significance of the VPAK for the refugees was in its own class.

It was the new flows of refugees in 1922 which brought about the necessity to create a centralized refugee aid organization for the coordination of the activities and thus establish the State Refugee Relief Centre. The basis of the work lay on the stocks left by the Americans.\textsuperscript{398} The first reception centres ("vastaanottokoti") and childrens’ homes for refugees were founded. Some of the reception facilities were in fact not very different from prison camps. The Centre was a kind of a headquarters. It received provisions from the Ministry of Interior and acted accordingly, conveying orders to the departments in the field. There were some simple criteria for the relief work. Those who were able to work and make their own living, should not be assisted. The guideline of the humanitarian work was ordered to follow the same principles as were applied in normal municipal assistance of the poor.\textsuperscript{399}

A general phenomenon in Finland seems to have been that there was an abundance of relief supplies in the beginning of the 1920s. This led to profiteering among the refugee community.\textsuperscript{400} When public assistance was finally established and American supplies vanished, the abundance changed into shortage. The 1920s saw, however, diminishing numbers of people in a need of aid, thanks to the improving economic situation. The circumstances went into worse again in the beginning of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{394} Nevalainen, 107
\item \textsuperscript{395} Nevalainen, 106
\item \textsuperscript{396} Nygård 1980, 90
\item \textsuperscript{397} see Nygård 1980, 87-115
\item \textsuperscript{398} Nevalainen, 111
\item \textsuperscript{399} Nevalainen, 112
\item \textsuperscript{400} Nevalainen, 110
\end{itemize}
1930s with the economic crisis. The number of people in need increased again, although on the whole, the activity was merely marginal compared to the acute crisis in the beginning of the 1920s. The refugees received emergency relief in form of food in Finland until 1925. Thereafter the aid was monetary assistance. The officials seemed to be quite satisfied with the non-Russian refugees coming from Russia since many working age adults had been able to get employed gradually, and humanitarian aid could be concentrated for those who were not able to work because of their age and studies.

There were also orphanages and several nursing homes for the needs of refugees in Finland. Some of them were supported or even run by the government, some had private and voluntary background. It was the most vulnerable individuals and families who had to take refuge in these establishments. The same phenomenon could be seen in all countries that received large numbers of Russian refugees. The general level of the social security in each respective country was reflected in the living conditions of the most vulnerable aliens.

The relief work in the beginning of the 1920s was always trading between the various actors. This was the situation especially in the beginning of the existence of the organizations, when the numbers of the needy refugees were at highest. The difficult circumstances definitely required cooperation. In October 1921 the Acting President of the League Council described well these ad hoc based arrangements in his Memorandum. The Council appealed to British, French, and Italian Governments in order to obtain financial means for supporting the remaining 15,000 Russian Refugees in Constantinople. The Memorandum made it clear, that the charitable organizations had now come to the end of their resources. Moreover, the Governments had diminished their assistance. The High Commissioner had at his disposal no funds for his work, except those accorded to him by the Governments interested. Even if he had had funds, under the resolution by which the Council of the League appointed him, he would not have been able to utilize those funds for purposes of charitable relief. The High Commissioner made an appeal through the Acting President of the Council to make available £ 30,000 which would have been sufficient to maintain the refugees and to save them from starvation.

401 Nevalainen, 114-115
402 Leitzinger II, 415
403 Here see Nevalainen, 116-124
404 Nevalainen, 124
405 OJ, 3rd year, No 1, Jan 1922, 57-58
It can be observed from the League sources, that Nansen took his work in coordinating the relief efforts very literally. He brought forward detailed reports from various sources before the League Council. In case of Greek Refugees, this meant reports from private charitable organizations as well as local (Greek) authorities.\textsuperscript{406} These documents included very precise plans; it could be brought into question whether this was out of proportion from what was expected from Nansen according to his original mandate as the High Commissioner.

3.3.2. Legal Status and Travel Documents

The most formidable part of the League’s refugee policy was the work in the sector of enhancing the legal position of refugees. All this goes to the basic elements of the phenomenon, since in a compact form a refugee is a person seeking asylum in a foreign country in order to escape persecution. Asylum is a form of protection that allows individuals, who are in the country of refuge, to remain there, provided that they meet the definition of a refugee and are not discounted from asylum. Asylum as a modern term was not in use in the beginning of the refugee work of the League. In various connections the matters connected to practical asylum were included into a larger package which was covered by the term "legal status".

In everyday spoken language an asylum means approximately that it is allowed for a refugee to stay and live in a country which is not his or her home country. It is a place of refuge that is safe for the comer. States have the capacity to grant an asylum according to the principle of sovereignty on their own territory. According to this principle, no other state should be allowed to exercise any physical control over the individuals staying on that territory.\textsuperscript{407}

Person’s right to receive political and legal protection is problematic almost by definition. It is quite commonly approved idea that people who have been persecuted in their home country for political grounds, should be able to get asylum and protection in another state. Then we come to a difficult clarification, whether individual cases can be classified as political pressure, or as escape from justice based on justified criminal allegations. These are practical matters the refugee workers meet in cases where the

\textsuperscript{406} E.g. Minutes of the 24. Session of the Council of the LON (17.-24.4.1923) Annex 515/OJ, 4\textsuperscript{th} year, No 6, June 1923, 696-703
\textsuperscript{407} Riila, 40-41
comers are in dispute with the present legal government of their own country on how, and by whom, the country should be ruled.\textsuperscript{408}

Even long before the present declarations of the human rights advocated by the UN, there were exercises aiming to the same end. In 1917 a “Fundamental basis of the human rights” was published under the umbrella of the American Institute of International Law. It presented eight categories of international rights that could be considered universal. In 1929 the International Institute of International Law issued a Declaration on International Human Rights, in which the main arguments sound very modern; people should have equal rights regardless of their race, sex, language or religion.\textsuperscript{409} It should be recognized, however, that these declarations were not created by intergovernmental institutions, and were weakly known by national decision makers.

Asylum seekers were returned to the place where they came from when it was considered necessary and politically viable. This happened often regardless of the possibilities to consider of letting them stay, and without studying the legal grounds of the decision.\textsuperscript{410} Countries have traditionally used measures to prevent the asylum seekers from arriving, and treated them harshly when they come. The Federal Government of Switzerland presented a full account of the situation of the Russian Refugees in the country in 1921. This contained a clarification on the legal status of the refugees which was in principle determined by a convention of 1873 between Russia and Switzerland. It became clear, that a number of federal stipulations had taken place since the refugee problem appeared in Switzerland in 1919.\textsuperscript{411} The federal stipulations were issued to instruct the local (Cantons) officials in their dealings with the Russian and Armenian Refugees.

Expulsion is an order to leave the territory. In case of a refugee without a legal nationality and passport, an expulsion can produce a situation where he or she is confronted by an impossible equation: there is no other place to go anymore.\textsuperscript{412} In the beginning of the 1920s, the High Commissioner tried to influence governments in order to prevent expulsion of refugees. He had to intervene and find reasons for postponements until other solutions could be found. That time Nansen still hoped that

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Riila, 25-27}
\footnote{Francois, 316}
\footnote{Cf. Dummett, 125}
\footnote{OJ, Vol 2, July-August 1921, 494-496}
\footnote{Francois, 321-326}
\end{footnotes}
the biggest of the problems, the issue of the Russian refugees, could be solved by repatriation.\textsuperscript{413}

The Inter-Governmental Conference on the Status of Refugees in June 1928 was able to produce a document which covered almost all possible aspects concerning the legal status of refugees. The most relevant recommendations were the ones concerning the refraining from expulsion measures, fiscal equality with nationals, facilities for freedom of movement, and most importantly, change in the passport formula making it possible for the holders of the Nansen passport to return to the country which issued the certificate. 12 States signed the Arrangement quite quickly before the end of 1928, some with reservations.\textsuperscript{414}

The 1928 Arrangement was related to the legal status of Russian and Armenian refugees. The Convention concerning the International Status of Refugees 1933 created a legal status for those categories of refugees who were covered by the Nansen Passport arrangement of 1928. Passport holders obtained thus a legal status, although only few states respected it.\textsuperscript{415} Important step from theoretical point of view in the 1933 Convention was the recognition of the rights of the refugees to obtain legal treatment equivalent to the citizens or other residents of the country of sojourn. According to this refugees should be entitled to legal aid. The Convention further stipulated that refugees should not be exposed to extraordinary taxes or other additional charges compared to ordinary citizens.\textsuperscript{416}

The Russian and the Armenian refugees seem to have had a special position and status during the Inter-war period. They had a legal status throughout the 1920s and 1930s, defined by international agreements. In Finland, the Russians crossing the border were “refugees” in 1918-22. Later they became Russian “emigrants”.\textsuperscript{417} In principle, the legal status of a refugee is generated approximately in the same way today as it was established during those decades: there is an accepted international definition on who is a refugee,\textsuperscript{418} and the individual states decide whether the status can be granted. There are, however, some differences as well. Today the system is clearer and more covering. On those days the system was only taking its initial steps.

\textsuperscript{413} Grahl-Madsen 1983, 361  
\textsuperscript{414} OJ, 10th year, No 3, March 1929, 483-484  
\textsuperscript{415} Grahl-Madsen 1983, 363  
\textsuperscript{416} Francois, 363  
\textsuperscript{417} The Finnish language doesn’t make the distinction on ‘emigration’ and ‘immigration’ as the English language does.  
\textsuperscript{418} E.g. now the conventions of 1951 and 1967
Therefore, there were only few countries that were really committed to the system on a political level.

Granting asylum was mainly a humanitarian issue. Nevertheless, there were also security considerations as well as social and economic consequences that governments took into account in their decision making.\footnote{Cf. Joly, 32} Administrative detention has been used to promote immigration control, either by facilitating expulsion, or by ensuring that the aliens subject to immigration proceedings do not run off. The logic has been that those in detention will be encouraged to leave the country. Further to this goal, others will be discouraged from coming to the territory.\footnote{Helton, 136-137}

The counterpoint to asylum and legal status of refugee is the return. If it is voluntary, the normal term would be repatriation. Involuntary return is often called expulsion. This means that unwanted persons are forced to leave the country. Sometimes refugees can be turned back already at the border. If the persons are already in the country, banishing means a denial or cancelling of an asylum. Extradition happens on a request of another state.\footnote{See e.g. Leitzinger II, 222-223} The common thing for all these cases and terms is that a person cannot stay in the country where he or she had fled to.

From a foreign policy viewpoint, the decision to accept refugees was influenced by the relations with other states, including international alliances, military pacts and trade agreements. Western countries often saw themselves as “terre d’asile” in order to demonstrate the superiority of western democracy compared to dictatorships.\footnote{Joly, 33} Many countries have definitely granted asylums to unwanted refugees, because expelling or returning them would have been, not only inhumane, but also harmful to the country’s reputation.

It has been reported that several thousands of Russians were returned from Finland to Russia in the beginning of the 1920s secretly, without any contact or cooperation with the Soviet authorities. This was considered better since the people who wanted to go back home didn’t normally want to deal with those authorities. In many cases more official dealing could have meant severe punishments after getting back. Only a small number of the “Kronstadt refugees” went back to Russia, even the Soviet Government had granted a general amnesty for them.\footnote{Leitzinger II, 237-238}
The legal status and the right to asylum was widely contemplated in international connections, although the situation varied from a country to another. In Finland, there was no mentioning about “asylum” in the national legislation during the 1920s. The concept was vague; refugees could get protection, i.e. practical asylum for humanitarian reasons. Asylum was considered to be an international arrangement, but the protection was granted on purely national grounds. Justification for the protection, “asylum”, was derived from the general sense of justice. It was reported that the local authorities or the border control sometimes took the matters into their own hands regardless of the laws. The new decree of 1930 defined the granting of an asylum to a refugee so that it was estimated what the real need for legal protection was. This need was considered by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. In a negative case the applicant of an asylum was to be expelled.

Generally speaking, in the 1920s and 1930s there seems to have been very little concern on the asylum and the legal basis of it. After the Second World War this aspect has been addressed more frequently. Although some scholars expressed as their opinion that the refugees should have a universal right to obtain asylum when needed, the governments never widely recognized such principle. Normally governments would reserve themselves the right to decide whether asylum can be granted or not. As an illustration from the Inter-war period, a joint meeting of Scandinavian countries' officials on refugee matters came to the conclusion that governments can use their sovereign right to consider the asylum matters and make decisions of their own. Refugees did not own a subjective right to obtain the desired status.

Most of the asylums granted were so called territorial asylums, which means that they were not based on e.g. diplomatic status. Another basis was extralegal principle, i.e. the status was not based on any national or international legislation. In practice, the refugees were often treated as any other foreigners. In many connections, asylum was compared to a political status. The situation was manifold and unclear. Some might have been classified as political refugees for the reason that

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424 Nevalainen, 74
425 Nevalainen, 76
426 Nevalainen, 78
427 ILR, Vol 9, 1924, 317
429 Sinha, S. Prakash: Asylum and International Law. The Hague 1971, 19-21
430 Sinha, 50-53; ; presentation of these two types of asylum, see Goodwin-Gill, 96
431 See eg. Oulun maaherran viraston kirje Kuusamon nimismiehelle 4.1.1921/ UM11.C.19
they had fled the Bolsheviks, but some had also escaped from the British troops operating in North-Western Russia. 432 Some countries had specific laws concerning aliens in general and refugees in particular. In some other countries, however, officials were using ordinary legislation when making decisions on expelling aliens. 433 The legal and political protection reached the refugees in most cases only on a formal level. That official protection could not change the reality that the refugees had hard times in economic terms, in their everyday life.

In connection to the 1928 Arrangement, the League Assembly particularly urged that states should not expel a refugee from their territory until it had been secured that he would be received into another country. This was seen important, because the worst was happening in many incidents, as the people had to travel from a country to another. The aim of the appeal of the Assembly was to underline that a refugee should not be put in a position of an outlaw. This appeal was repeated annually in the resolutions of the Assembly, but unfortunately neglected by the governments. The 1933 Convention had provisions on expulsion and non-admittance at the frontier. However, no significant change was proven during the years. 434

On the whole, it can be said that the validity of the 1928 Arrangement as a legal instrument was questionable. For example, France had signed the document. When finally discussed among the proper authorities in France, it was not endorsed. It was realized that that the definition of the legal status of the refugees and of their protection required something more categorical than benevolent recommendation as a demonstration of the good will of the ones who drafted the texts. 435 During the next decade, the 1933 Convention repeated and put together the principles laid down in the previous agreements concerning juridical conditions. On paper, refugees were supposed to have access to the courts of law and be able to obtain legal assistance without any obstructions. 436 Ratification and compliance with this kind of arrangements was always a problem throughout the period under examination.

It can be stated, however, that the World Organizations did their utmost to try to avoid over politicizing of the refugee questions. This was an inevitable consequence of the nature of the organizations. The League, and especially the ILO, wanted to
emphasize the neutral, technical and impartial nature of the work in all possible connections. Because the principle of national sovereignty was followed, it was left to the states to grant or refuse asylum to refugees. Nation-states created the de facto practice of non-refoulement. Nations would not normally insist the return of a political refugee in the absence of specific extradition treaties.\textsuperscript{437} This means generally that refugees in practice have been protected from the country where they were likely to face persecution or danger to life or freedom.\textsuperscript{438}

The refugee question in Finland was politicized to certain extent. The right wing parties showed sympathy for Finnish related Carelians and Ingermanlanders (or Ingrians). They were seen as potential allies in the struggle against the common enemy, Russia, with its expansive history. On the other hand, the left wing parties saw the refugees as competitors in the labour market. In the Finnish Parliament this was manifested in the discussion where the left wing parties wanted to wash their hands when the bill had to be paid, since according to their thinking, the whole refugee problem was a creation of irresponsible expansive politics of the right wing activists. In principle, both the left and the right, took a humanitarian attitude towards the refugee problem as such.\textsuperscript{439}

The biggest obstacle for conducting a normal life for a refugee was often the lack of identification and travel documents. Therefore it has been necessary to establish provisional arrangements in order to tackle the issue and alleviate the problem. In our modern world a special certificate of identity, sometimes called an alien's passport, is a travel document issued by states to foreign nationals who are unable to obtain a passport from their state of nationality. Some states also issue certificates of identity to their own nationals as a form of emergency passports. Holders of these certificates of identity are not automatically entitled to go back into the state which issued the certificates. A refugee travel document is normally more potent. It is issued to a refugee by the state in which he or she normally resides, allowing him or her to travel outside that state and to return there. It can be estimated that most refugees are not able to obtain passports from their states of nationality (from which they have escaped) and therefore need some type of document.

\textsuperscript{437} Plaut, 79-80


\textsuperscript{439} Nygård 1980. 119
Major part of the Russian exiles lacked any kind of identification document. Some had old identity cards issued by the Russian Empire, but no other country would accept them as legal identification. Some states, like Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Finland issued identity cards for refugees, but these documents were not accepted outside these states. This was a clear handicap and an obstacle for reasonable existence. Other countries would not like to receive aliens who were unidentified.\textsuperscript{440} If a person managed to enter into a country without an identity, his or her life would not be much of a joy, since it was difficult for unidentified persons to get a job or find lodging.\textsuperscript{441}

Some kind of an identity document was required by most countries for people who were resident on the soil of the state. This meant that something had to be done for people without a legal and valid identity. States had internal identification systems. Moreover, in many countries (like Finland) refugees needed an internal passport for moving from a place to another inside the country. In Finland, this kind of travel document ("passi") could normally be issued by local police or representative of Refugee Relief organization.\textsuperscript{442} Similarly, authorities could also issue certificates that ensured the departure from a country. These documents, however, were not normal passports. The Soviet authorities also required some kind of a passport or travel document from those who wanted to go back to Russia in order to settle there.\textsuperscript{443}

The actions taken by the Soviet Government to denaturalize its former citizens, who were refugees abroad, were also contributing to the initiatives towards the international refugee passport system. In July 1922 an international conference on Russian refugees and their passports was convened. Sixteen governments attended the conference. The conference adopted a simplified passport formula which substituted the former insufficient national documents. It contained all "normal" passport features, also stating that the bearer of the document was a person of Russian origin with no other nationality or any citizenship. One of the motivations that Nansen seemed to have in creating the passport system was the better prospects that some western countries could offer to the refugees, compared to the impoverished neighbor countries. The system made the resettlement possible for those who were willing to travel on.\textsuperscript{444}

\textsuperscript{440} Stoessinger 1956, 14
\textsuperscript{441} Thompson I, 28
\textsuperscript{442} VPAKA II Db1
\textsuperscript{443} Pakolaisten paluuta koskevan neuvottelun pöytäkirja 1.-3.3.1921/UM.11.C.14; also Ambassador Järnefeldts telegram to political department of the MFA, (Classified) 16.5.1921/UM 11.C.19
\textsuperscript{444} OJ, No 8, 1922, 926
In the planning phase of the arrangements for the conferences which established the identification document system in the 1920s, it was realized and recognized that the system could never be universal and binding. The conferences recognized the different conditions prevailing in different countries concerning the issuing of documents as well as the acceptance of them. It was necessary to allow certain flexibility, which was needed since many states were applying the system in their own way, deriving from the legislative ground and administrative practices.445

The most significant achievement in this line of international work was the identification system which became known as the Nansen passport. Nansen passports are internationally still recognized identity cards first issued by the League of Nations to stateless refugees. Approximately 450,000 Nansen passports were issued during the Inter-war period, helping hundreds of thousands of stateless people to immigrate to a country that would have them. It has been widely considered as one of the great successes that could be attributed to the League of Nations.

As early as in March 1922 Nansen was able to present a proposal for a special form of certificate of identity to the Governments of the Members of the LON for their consideration. Nansen appealed to the Governments to agree to grant such certificates to refugees in their territories who may desire them and to provide visas to the certificates as they would grant visas to ordinary passports. In the same special report Nansen also appealed to the Governments of the Member States to grant visas free of charge, since it was seen pointless to use the relief funds for the refugees’ visas. The High Commissioner wished that the Governments would instruct their consular representatives to grant the visas without delay and free of charge.446 By May 1922, several countries had responded and started issuing free visas. Nansen was able to report on favourable responses in case of Great Britain, Greece, France, Switzerland, Austria, Spain, Argentina, Brazil, Serb-Croat-Slovene State, and Poland.447

A Conference of government representatives adopted a simplified form of identity certificate in July 5, 1922 as an “Arrangement with regard to the issue of Certificates of Identity to Russian Refugees”. Sixteen countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Japan, Poland, Romania, the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland) were represented.

445 Francois, 359
446 Minutes of the 17. Session of the Council of the LON (24.-28.3.1922), Annex 321a/OJ, 3rd year, No 5, May 1922, 396-398. The model of the certificate, see same document, 399-400
447 Minutes of the 18. Session of the Council of the LON (11.-17.5.1922), Annex 344/OJ, 3rd year, No 6, June 1922, 615
in the Conference. The new simplified form resembled in all important respects those already issued by certain countries, e.g. Germany and Czechoslovakia. The proposed document contained all information usually included in a passport and stated that the bearer was a Russian national by origin and has acquired no other nationality. This arrangement was finally adopted by 53 States. This is how the famous Nansen Passport became as a central element of the international refugee work. This type of document was not totally unprecedented, but certainly innovative at that situation. In 1927 the Third General Conference on Communications and Transit adopted a Recommendation relating to Identity and Travelling Documents for Persons Without or of Doubtful Nationality. This recommendation signaled the introduction of modern alien’s passport.

Nansen’s staff was involved in the designing work of the passport formula, and representatives of the Russian refugees’ organizations in a similar manner. League Council sent an appeal to Member states for approving the system after the July conference. The first Government to reply was Finland on 15.8.1922. In the reply, the Government of Finland informed the League that the passport system has been approved, and that it will be applied from 1.October same year. Soon after that, also France and Britain replied positively. Consequently, many other announcements by Governments started to take place. In January 1923 there were already 21 states applying the passport arrangement.

When the Nansen Passports for Russian refugees were introduced in 1922, it was a matter of national authorities to ratify and execute the measures connected to the arrangement. As an example, in Finland it was not set into force by a normal decree, but instead there was a decision by the President of the Republic assigning the executive power to the secret police EKP. The EKP wanted that Nansen Passports should be granted only to refugees who needed it for travelling abroad. Finnish authorities cooperated with the Soviet authorities in order to double check whether a Soviet citizenship had been granted to the applicants of Nansen Passports. There were reports by local police authorities that some holders of the Nansen Passports had not

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448 See the document form; Minutes of the 19. Session of the Council of the LON (17-.24.7.1922)/OJ, 3rd year, No 8 (part II), August 1922, 926-927
449 See Appendix V A and V B, forms of the Nansen Passport
450 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 360
451 OJ, No 11, part 1, 1922, 1137-1139; ILR; Vol 6, No 5, 1922, 773
452 OJ, No 1, part 2, 1923, 122
453 Leitzinger II, 173-174
454 Leitzinger II, 174
actually travelled, but obviously wanted to have the document for other (security) reasons. These passports were considered to secure the asylum and residence better that ordinary permits granted by governors.\footnote{Leitzinger II, 175} 

The South African Government replied in October 1922 that the proposed identity certificate form for Russian refugees could not be applied in South Africa as such, but a similar form named as “Emergency certificate of Nationality” is in use for same purposes.\footnote{OJ, 4th year, No 1 (part II), Jan 1923, 122-123} This example shows how governments accepted the identity certificate system by February 1923, either in practice or in principle. There were, however, also examples of states (Belgium, Canada, and Estonia) that had indicated being not prepared to issue these documents.\footnote{Minutes of the 23. Session of the Council of the LON (29.1.-3.2.1923), Annex 472/OJ, 4th year, No 3, March 1923, 387} In his report in July 1923, Nansen stated that almost all Members of the LON interested in the question had adopted the identity certificate system.\footnote{Minutes of the 25. Session of the Council of the LON (2.-7.7.1923), Annex 542/OJ, 4th year, No 8, August 1923, 1040} 

In 1924 the National Armenian Delegation informed the High Commissioner that approximately 320,000 Armenian refugees in various countries are in an urgent need of identity certificates. Nansen presented a plan according to the Council resolution made in September 1923. The plan was submitted for the consideration of interested governments. In the proposed form it was clearly stated that the certificate was not valid for return to the country which issued it. It was also supposed to cease to be valid if the bearer entered Turkish territory.\footnote{Minutes of the 29. Session of the Council of the LON (11.-17.6.1924)/OJ, 5th year, No 7, July 1924, 967-970} 

The High Commissioner and his staff drafted an official “Plan for the issue of a Certificate of Identity to Armenian Refugees” in 1924. This time no conference was deemed necessary. Instead, the plan was circulated to governments for their approval. Since the procedure was seen already in case of Russian refugees, 39 states were able to recognize the plan of Nansen Passports for Armenians.\footnote{Grahl-Madsen 1983, 361} The Council adopted a resolution in its 30th session in September 9, 1924, deciding that the convening of a special conference for consideration of the question appears not necessary and the plan drawn up by the High Commissioner can be regarded as definitive. The Council
also invited the Governments interested in the question to consider giving their formal adhesion to the plan.\textsuperscript{461}

Meantime, governments indicated their support for the plan. Most countries were in practice prepared to adopt the system. There were some states, however, which could not show unreserved favourable attitude for a reason or another. Most governments didn’t find it necessary to convene a conference on the matter then or later.\textsuperscript{462} Finland was not active when the passport system was extended to the Armenians, although countries like Sweden did recognize the passports for Armenians.\textsuperscript{463} The above mentioned plans were supplemented in 1926 and 1928. By these later arrangements the Nansen Passports became available also for Assyrian, Assyro-Chaldean, Assimilated (Syrian and Kurdish) as well as for Turkish refugees.\textsuperscript{464}

It appears that the High Commissioner together with the League advisors and the concerned governments were considering two different models for finding a solution to the legal problems resulting from the lack of passports and other documents among the refugees. The first was that the necessary papers should be provided by the governments of the countries where the refugees had found a temporary abode. The second was that these papers should be issued by the High Commissioner acting on behalf of the League of Nations. After some consideration Nansen finally came to the conclusion that the first option was preferable, since it gained significant support among the national representatives.\textsuperscript{465} In 1926 it was confirmed that the price of the Nansen Passport should be the same as the price of national passport.\textsuperscript{466}

Nansen passports could be issued to Armenian refugees from 1924, and to Turks, Assyrians, and Assyro-Chaldeans from 1928. In Finland, the head of the Secret Police, Esko Riekki considered this very disadvantageous for Finland, since especially Armenians were known as “adventurers” in the country which had received people of this nationality also before, through the connection of being a part of the Russian Empire. It was also suspected that the Soviet Union would use this opportunity to send agents to its neighbouring countries. Consequently, Finland didn’t issue Nansen

\begin{footnotes}
\item[461] Minutes of the 30. Session of the Council of the LON (20.8.-3.10.1924)/OJ, 5\textsuperscript{th} year, No 10, Oct 1924, 1292
\item[462] E.g. OJ, 5th year, No 11 (part II), Nov 1924, 1714-1717
\item[463] Minutes of the 30. Session of the Council of the LON (20.8.-3.10.1924)/OJ, 5\textsuperscript{th} year, No 10, Oct 1924, 1267
\item[464] Grahl-Madsen 1983, 361; Joly, 7
\item[465] OJ, 3rd year, No 4, April 1922, 348
\end{footnotes}
Passports to Armenians.\textsuperscript{467} In the Finnish system, the Security Service EKP took care of the tasks connected to the documents issued to the refugees. Nansen Passports were thus issued only for Russian refugees. When the League system was extended to further groups of refugees, Finland did not consider it appropriate or necessary to comply with these arrangements either.\textsuperscript{468}

In many countries there was no decree on who should be the issuing authority of the Nansen Passport. In Britain it was very loosely defined. In Finland the police authorities were the issuing officials.\textsuperscript{469} The Nansen Passport was not valid for return to the issuing country in the beginning of its existence. Later in the 1920s also return was made possible by international arrangements.\textsuperscript{470} The Nansen passport was in many instances a sojourn permit as such. Although it was not required from the refugees while staying in a country, it had the qualification of giving the individual refugee a better possibility to turn to the representatives of the High Commissioner.\textsuperscript{471}

Passport matters were political and thus difficult to the ILO. Since they were an essential part of refugee work, it was impossible for the ILO to refuse to handle the issues. In practice, that meant receiving applications.\textsuperscript{472} An international refugee conference of 1926 recognized unanimously the right of the Labour Office to apply for different types of visas for the refugees. In the same conference, it was recommended that refugees without means should be able to obtain identity and travel documents free of charge.\textsuperscript{473} This became actual in 1928, when Albert Thomas acquired some 3000 visas from different recipient countries for Russian refugees expelled from Constantinople. In this connection, Thomas also had to negotiate with the Turkish authorities on the delay of expulsions.\textsuperscript{474}

The Nansen Passport system was a designated formula to help certain groups of refugees. The only general measure affecting all persons deprived of nationality was the 1927 recommendation by the Communications and Transit Organization. The recommendation urged states to employ a uniform “document of identity and travel” which was similar to the Nansen certificate bearing also the mention “Good for return” to the country of issue. Most of the Members of the League accepted the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{467} Leitzinger II, 516
  \item \textsuperscript{468} Nevalainen, 73
  \item \textsuperscript{469} About the various practices see Simpson 1939, 266-267
  \item \textsuperscript{470} See e.g. Thompson I, 29-30
  \item \textsuperscript{471} Stoessinger 1956, 18
  \item \textsuperscript{472} Minutes of the 27. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1925, 303
  \item \textsuperscript{473} Minutes of the 32. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1926, 295 and Annex B
  \item \textsuperscript{474} Minutes of the 38. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1928, 173
\end{itemize}
recommendations in principle, but in practice, as in many previous cases, a uniform document was never achieved. Most countries continued to issue special alien’s documents of their own. These documents had different names. In Britain it was a “document of identity” given by the Home Office, in Germany a “Fremdenpass”, in Holland a “Gunstpass”.475

The arrangements on internationally approved identity system were seen as very significant from the viewpoint of the public image of the League. It could be thought, that in this respect, the League had corresponding capacities with independent states, with its own passports and stamps.476 The League was, after all, an entity compiled by plenipotentiary state members. Even the members were not donating any of their sovereign rights or capacities to the League the position of the Intergovernmental Organ was very different from that of the international voluntary organizations.

3.3.3. Repatriation

The question of repatriating refugees during the Inter-war period materialized especially in connection to Russians. Generally, if the refugees are able to go back to their country of origin, it can be called repatriation as a method of solution of the refugee problem. Moving must be then voluntary. According to the principle of non-refoulement, refugees must not be returned in any manner against their will to territories in which their lives or freedom may be endangered.477 Historically, voluntary repatriation has not been easy to arrange. However, as there are some examples, it is certainly possible.478 Many Russian refugees didn’t want go back to their original home country. Reasons for that were various. Basically, returning may not be safe in cases, where the reasons for fleeing are still remaining. Typically, former home area is populated by violent political or religious enemies. Most of the family members and relatives may have been killed. A whole new life with a family, work and dwelling has

475 Bentwich 1935, 121
476 Jonkari, 262
477 Goodwin-Gill, 260
often been acquired in the place of refuge. In these cases, there is no motivation to go back.479

For Fridtjof Nansen, it was quite natural to occupy himself with the repatriation plans soon after his nomination as the High Commissioner for Refugees. In the beginning of his duties Nansen was optimistically thinking that the Russian refugees could go back to Russia.480 He had just finished the task of repatriating half a million prisoners of war. In his hopes the refugee problem was a temporary one, and he thought that it would be possible to repatriate the bulk of the fugitives. Due to his multiple roles in the beginning of the 1920s, Nansen had a permanent representative in Moscow. This connection was also used in view to organize the possible repatriation. Some kind of safety guarantees were discussed in this respect.481 It took some years to realize that eventually this plan had to be abandoned.482

In his General Report in March 1922, Nansen estimated that the final solution483 of the refugee problem in Europe was to get the refugees repatriated to their native land. It was, however, more than challenging to try to tackle this program, since the ravages of famine and disease throughout Russian territory precluded the execution of any such proposal.484 In modern discussion, repatriation has been seen as the best and most desirable solution for the refugees. The rationale for this is simple; people are at their best at home. The only large efforts made by the League system that could be called repatriation programmes, were prepared for the Russian refugees. For others, alternative options seemed more suitable. These options were settlement and resettlement.

Nansen’s statement in another report in May 1922 concluded that the repatriation of the refugees to Russia at the present time did not appear to be a practicable solution to the question. This was a contrast to what he had reported earlier that year. Based on the reports the High Commissioner had received from the international agencies, Nansen had come to a conclusion that it was better for the refugees to remain in Western and Central Europe than to return to Russia.485 Therefore, the High

479 Lundqvist, Anna-Stiina; Liberian pakolaiset kotoutumassa Sierra Leoneen, artikkeli Pakolainen -lehdessä 1/2010, s.11. Suomen Pakolaisapu ry
480 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 361
481 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 360
482 Bentwich 1935, 115
483 Nansen used this expression in his reports!
484 OJ, 3rd year, No 4, April 1922, 348
485 Minutes of the 18. Session of the Council of the LON (11.-17.5.1922), Annex 344/OJ, 3rd year, No 6, June 1922, 612
Commissioner continued asking for financial allocations for the assistance and support of the refugees.

The repatriation of Russian refugees from Bulgaria between 1922 and 1924 under League of Nations supervision represents the earliest international attempt to organize a coordinated refugee return. The Russian Red Cross in Great Britain provided relief for people exiled from Russia and their children who were in the country. Many of these people found it difficult to adapt to a new way of life in a foreign country. Russian refugees were being shuttled from a country to another. Practically, all countries close to the Soviet State were involved.

Repatriation was also an official issue in the negotiations and agreements between the Soviet Russia and the bordering states. There were talks concerning reciprocal exchange of people. Bolsheviks granted amnesty for those who would return. It has been reported, that the trust for these arrangements was not very high.\textsuperscript{486} The feasibility of repatriation as a durable solution depends on political factors, among them the reason for the flight. There may be great differences between the individual refugees who flee. Some escape personal persecution and some can be members of the group that flee the impact of a political struggle.\textsuperscript{487} It was reported that in 1922 some 181,000 Russian refugees returned to Soviet-Russia voluntarily. The Soviet authorities were not altogether satisfied with this development, since it was obviously difficult for them to supervise the repatriation.\textsuperscript{488} Although there is no statistical evidence, it is fair to say that a great part of this repatriation process was spontaneous, i.e. self-initiated by the refugees themselves, and not actively organized by the refugee agencies. When evaluating the success of the projects, it has been shown in international studies that in most refugee movements the spontaneous repatriation forms a major part of the total result.\textsuperscript{489}

Nansen’s preferred option in the beginning was to seek the repatriation of refugees, but he was absolutely clear in considering that this should be voluntary. Many refugees, however, didn’t want to return. They and the political opponents of the new Soviet regime wanted to ensure that refugees were allowed to remain in the countries of asylum, or to be resettled elsewhere.\textsuperscript{490} This was politically convenient. Many of the refugees who had fled because of the rise of the Bolshevism, had their suitcases

\textsuperscript{486} Nevalainen, 45-46
\textsuperscript{487} Goodwin-Gill, 256-257
\textsuperscript{488} Leitzinger II, 243
\textsuperscript{489} Cuny and Stein, 304
\textsuperscript{490} Joly, 7
packed, waiting for the chance to go back. Many of them were active in establishing projects with the aim of overthrowing Lenin and his Soviet regime, with the help of foreign powers.\textsuperscript{491} It was quite natural that the most active ones could not nourish the idea of returning after it became obvious that the Soviet state was a permanent fact.

Repatriation of the refugees faced difficulties at the Russian side of the border. Soviet authorities wanted to select those who were allowed to return. Special evacuation committees were established for that purpose. It has been reported that the working methods of these committees were not very efficient.\textsuperscript{492} It is always difficult to determine whether the circumstances have changed so that the people can go back. This evaluation and repatriation are always connected. The country of origin has, in principle, a duty to receive back its citizens. Again, the state of origin may choose to ignore these duties and refuse.\textsuperscript{493} Uncertain and contested property rights have also been considered to be an important obstacle to refugees’ return. It happens quite often that a rearrangement on property takes place in conflict situations. The uncertainty about the availability of a home on return reduces the incentive for the refugees to go back.\textsuperscript{494} It also became obvious in the 1920s, that even for the Soviet authorities working in the evacuation committees it was not clear, how covering the general amnesties were.\textsuperscript{495}

Nansen made an effort to negotiate a general arrangement on the repatriation of the Russian refugees 1922-1923. The work was not completed because of the inconsistent conditions posed by the Soviet authorities. There was also a deep distrust on the conditions among the refugees.\textsuperscript{496} The complexity of the international refugee administration led by the League didn’t particularly encourage the individual refugees to lean on the system. It happened from time to time that the helpers and the refugees did not speak the same language. It has been shown by studies that generally speaking, the irresolution of the refugees in dealing with the international system is sometimes displayed when the refugees choose to go back home spontaneously.\textsuperscript{497} This is exactly what happened in the exercises with the Russians.

The repatriations that were carried out practically on the grounds of bilateral ad hoc agreements in the beginning of the 1920s, were not completely succesful. People were

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{491} Nevalainen, 43
\bibitem{492} Nevalainen, 47
\bibitem{493} Goodwin-Gill, 261
\bibitem{494} Zaum, 297
\bibitem{495} Nevalainen, 48
\bibitem{496} ibid.
\bibitem{497} Cuny and Stein, 306
\end{thebibliography}
not able to cross the border even with temporary permits. The reason was reportedly the chaotic enforcement of the border control at the Russian side. After all, it seems that no permanent bilateral or multilateral internationally covering agreements were established for the repatriation. Most of the returners went back individually, on their own expense, and at their own risk.

The situation in Soviet Russia was under constant changes, which was reflected in the facilitation of repatriation. The rules and conditions were changed from time to time, and the practical arrangements sometimes worked, sometimes didn’t. It was also true, that some of those who returned, had a merciless end. Some refugees were actually repatriated with the help of officials, but the program on the whole was not a real success. By 1923 the scheme eventually came to its end.

In the case of the Russians, voluntariness, safety, and protection in repatriation were demonstrated to certain extent, although the situations were used for political purposes by the refugee groups interested in resisting Soviet state power. Repatriation was thus a fundamentally political project. It eventually failed in the Russian-Bulgarian case because of disputes between the League of Nations, the Soviet State, and the Russian refugees themselves regarding the nature of the operations. These questions of political communities and their ambitions in general have posed the greatest challenge to repatriation as a durable solution to all refugee crises.

By 1924 it was clear that the Soviet Government would not take back Russia’s former subjects with conditions that would be acceptable for the League officials. From 1925 very few went back to Russia. If people moved, they traveled to third countries, some even overseas. It was estimated that 181,400 refugees went back 1921-1931. However rated, this was only a tiny number among those who came to west.

The biggest obstacle in refugees’ mind was the uncertainty. There were promises on amnesty, but many were doubtful on those promises, since the messages were often unclear and even contradictory. When negotiations between Soviet authorities and Finnish Government were conducted, it was reported that the Soviets very clearly

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498 Nevalainen, 50-51
499 Nevalainen, 48
500 Nevalainen, 54
501 Grahl-Madsen, 361
503 Bentwich 1935, 115
504 Nevalainen, 57
stated that some groups were not wanted back to Russia. This included those who had carried arms against the Bolsheviks, as well as the former officials of the Czarist police and the clergymen.505

There were also other obstacles during and after the turmoil of the revolutionary warfare. The British troops recruited some Eastcarelians to their ranks when they were maintaining the Archangelsk government. Many of these recruits escaped and were afterwards considered as deserters.506 Negotiations were held between the British and the Finnish authorities on the conditions of their return.507

In 1923-1924 Russian and Finnish authorities had several talks on the return of the refugees. It seems that the refugees were going back in small groups, consisting of few dozens of people. For each returning group there was a consultation between the authorities in order to clear who was going, when and where. The checkpoints were defined, and temporary passports were issued for those who were crossing the border.508 In some instances the Finnish State Council (the Cabinet) also made decisions concerning the arrangements made with the Soviet Russia, also instructing the customs officials with the practicalities of returns.509 Finnish officials felt obliged to make a note to the Soviet colleagues for the incidents wherein the returning people had been arrested and convicted against the promises of amnesty.510

Despite the difficulties and irregularities, it seems that many of those who really returned, were well received in Russia. The representatives of the High Commissioners in Russia reported that the spontaneous repatriation gave good results511. Reports revealed that Soviet authorities handled the situations favorably, even in cases where the returning refugees had gone back home illegally, without any arrangements by authorities.512 Later Nansen’s reports contained also information contradictory to this.

The emigration of Armenian refugees to Erivan was a movement to a new country of settlement, rather than repatriation, but if regarded as an example of repatriation, the numbers were quite remarkable. About 30,000 people were subject to this organized

505 Pakolaisten paluuta koskevien neuvottelujen pöytäkirja 1.-3.3.1921/UM 11.C.14
506 Churchill, 123-125
507 See UM 11.C.18
508 UM 11.C.12; VPAKA III, Db1
509 UM 11.C.12
510 See Jääskeläinen 1961, 318; UM 11.C.19
511 Although Nansen’s big plans were not materialized
At the end of the 1930s, John Hope Simpson presented as his estimation that deliberate repatriation on a large scale is scarcely relevant in a discussion of practical instruments of solution. By his words, “in predictable circumstances voluntary return of refugees to their home countries could occur only on so small scale as not to affect the refugee problem itself”.514

3.3.4. International Agreements and Arrangements

The number of different international arrangements reflects the intensity of the work the intergovernmental community was conducting on behalf of the refugees. The series of the success in reaching international agreements and arrangements regularly over the 1920s also indicates clearly the continuity and conscious strive towards organized manner and discipline in handlings of refugee matters.

In the beginning of his refugee work career Nansen strove to obtain an ambitious personal project. The objective was an agreement of the states in the League, which would give the refugees the same freedom of movement and the same measure of protection as was enjoyed by nationals of a state.515 In most cases, legal and other arrangements concerning foreigners in general are based on conditions of reciprocity. In case of refugees, this cannot normally be achieved. Traditionally, it has been difficult for states to make concessions without compensation based on the idea of reciprocity.

Many bilateral treaties were concluded between nations providing assistance for destitute subjects of the contracting countries. There were attempts to generalize these obligations by an international or a multilateral convention. Some of the arrangements and agreements achieved during the 1920s and 1930s reflected these ambitions. The nature of the final documents as non binding recommendations was always the obstacle that prevailed. It often happened, that the international radicalism which was expressed in conferences at Geneva and elsewhere, was confronted by national conservative ambitions when the recommendations were supposed to be implemented by the governments.516 The following concentrates on the agreements concerning refugees explicitly. Other treaties are excluded from this deliberation.

513 Simpson 1939, 528
514 Simpson 1939, 529
515 Bentwich 1935, 116
516 Bentwich 1935, 122
The Conference summoned by the Council of the League in August 1921 concerning the (Russian) refugee questions and the nomination of the High Commissioner can be considered as the first arrangement on refugees coordinated by the League. 13 States and other delegations were represented at the Conference, and as a result, a series of unanimously adopted resolutions were passed. In those documents, the first outlines for the work of the High Commissioner were established.517

Nansen’s first task as the High Commissioner was to provide the refugees with some kind of element of nationality. Refugees were stateless people and the first necessity was a passport in order to be able to travel from a country to another. The Arrangement with regard to the Issue of Certificates of Identity to Russian Refugees was adopted on 5.7.1922 by an international conference convened by the High Commissioner. It can be considered a great success, since 53 states were able to adopt it. This arrangement was the one that established the “Nansen Passport”.518 History proved this arrangement to be very significant, and this travel document system and administration was current for couple of decades.519

Although the international conference convened by Nansen in 1922 adopted an identity certificate which was approved by the Council of the League, Nansen could not accomplish all he had been aiming at. The governments were intimidated of having permanently a large number of alien inhabitants. Therefore, a weaker status for the passport had to be accepted. The new Nansen passport was valid only for one year at the time, without a right to return to the country of issue.520 It must be taken into account, that all these provisions were authorized by an international conference possessing no binding authority. At this point, there was still no generally valid definition for a Russian refugee.521

The Protocol of Lausanne was signed on 24.7.1923. This protocol was a part of the Peace Treaty between Turkey and the Allied powers. The Treaty included some territorial clauses, which, in turn, led into other arrangements. There were articles concerning nationality, protection of minorities, prisoners of war etc. 150 Turkish persons were named in the Protocol.522 Later these people got an official legal status

517 E.g. OJ, Vol 3, Dec 1921, 1114-1115
518 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 360
519 Simpson 1938, 610
520 Bentwich 1935, 116
522 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 361
as refugees, called “the Friends of Allies”. In the Protocol, the League guaranteed to protect the non-Moslem citizens of Turkey. There was, however, no obstacle for the Turkish government to strip the nationality and make people practically stateless in their own country.523

The refugee questions were often connected to other minority questions in the exercises of the League system. It was thought that in this manner the established position of refugees could best be reached. After the Lausanne Treaty 1923, the League Council appointed a Swedish, a Danish, and a Spanish national as members of the Mixed Commission provided by the Article 11 of the Treaty concerning the exchange of Greek and Turkish populations. The rest of the members were appointed by the Greek and Turkish Governments.524

After the Armenians had become a regular issue on the League’s agenda, Nansen paid more attention to them, while the “old issues” concerning Russian refugees were supposed to be handled by the Refugee Service of the ILO. In 1924 the High Commissioner considered the issue of identification documents as the most significant question, and a “Plan for the Issue of a Certificate of Identity to Armenian Refugees” was drafted. There was no specific conference, but the Plan was simply circulated to Governments and later adopted by 39 States.525 It was decided that the Plan would be simply applied to ‘persons of Armenian origin’ who are not ‘Russian refugees within the meaning of the Arrangement concluded at Geneva on July 5th, 1922’.526

The first really covering exercise took place in 1926. The Council of the League authorized Nansen to convene an international Conference on the extension of the work on behalf of the Russian and Armenian Refugees. An Inter-Governmental Conference was held in Geneva on 10.-12.5.1926. 24 countries were represented. The arrangement document was agreed upon on 12.5.1926. In June, Nansen reported to the Council on the results of the Conference. One of the outcomes of the Conference was the recognition of the necessity to create a revolving fund to provide for the cost of the transportation and settlement of refugees. The legality of the Nansen passports was strengthened in principle, and as a result of the conference, the League Council in

523 Simpson 1939, 32
524 Minutes of the 26. Session of the Council of the LON (31.8.-10.9.1923)/OJ, 4th year, No 11, Nov 1923, 1312-1313
525 Grahl-Madsen 1966, 122 and 125
526 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 361; a date 31.5.1924 is connected to this document
its resolution invited the Member States and others to give effect to the arrangements.527

The intergovernmental Refugee Passport Conference was summoned in connection to a bigger exercise concerning passports in general. The Advisory and Technical Committee for Communications and Transit arranged a Passport Conference in Geneva on May 12-18, 1926. 45 States, Areas, as well as organizations were represented. The Conference adopted a set of recommendations, including questions relating to emigrants and persons without nationality. These recommendations were not, however, very radical by nature.528

As a result of the 1926 Conference, another more far-reaching Arrangement was adopted. It laid down the definitions of “Russian and Armenian” refugees. These arrangements were subsequently approved by the Council of the League as well as the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization. The definitions were as follows:

“Russian: Any person of Russian origin who does not enjoy or no longer enjoys the protection of the Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and who has not acquired another nationality.

Armenian: Any person of Armenian origin formerly a subject of the Ottoman Empire who does not enjoy or no longer enjoys the protection of the Government of the Turkish Republic and who has not acquired another nationality.” 529

As the word ‘origin’ in the definition referred to a territory, it was considered clear that the definition applied without distinction of race or religion.530 There was a consideration to extend the measures taken on behalf of the Russian and Armenian refugees to other analogous categories of refugees. It appears, according to the source material, that the initiative was made by Nansen. The Governing Body of the ILO took no action on the initiative which was reported to the LON Council as such.531

The Third Conference on Communications and Transit in 1927 has been mentioned in connection of refugee protection, because it took on its agenda questions closely

527 Minutes of the 40. Session of the Council of the LON (7.-10.6.1925)/OJ, 7th year, No 7, July 1926, 875-876 and 983-985
528 E.g. “The Conference considers it desirable that certain facilities for travelling should be granted to persons without nationality... etc” OJ, 7th year, No 8, August 1926, 1088-1098
529 Minutes of the 47. Session of the Council of the LON, Annex 990/OJ, No 10, Oct 1927, 1336
530 Grah-Madsen 1966, 123
531 Minutes of the 47. Session of the Council of the LON, Annex 990/OJ, No 10, Oct 1927, 1336
related to the problems of refugees, although the aim and purpose of the organization itself was more general. The conference occupied itself with issues related to stateless people, including also other groups than those which were defined as refugees. The recommendations adopted by that conference included detailed instructions for identity documents designated for travelers without a citizenship or nationality. One of the recommendations recognized also the fact that bearers of the “aliens travel documents” were not usually entitled to protection of the diplomatic and consular officials of the country that issued the documentation.532

The above mentioned Conference on Communications and Transit adopted a recommendation relating to Identity and Travelling Documents for Persons Without or of Doubtful Nationality. This was the beginning of alien’s passports.533 This recommendation showed its significance later when the German refugee problem emerged. It was possible for German refugees to get a travel document only by virtue of this set-up.534

The 1927 recommendation was the only general measure affecting all persons deprived of nationality. The recommendation urged states to introduce a consistent document of identity and travel which was similar to the Nansen certificate with an improvement of the property “Good for return” to the country of issue. This arrangement was also seen to improve the possibilities for the holder to obtain visas and other permits.535 It was obviously easier for states to approve this kind of arrangement under the umbrella of a neutral organization. This set-up was presumably not considered as political as the arrangements initiated by the High Commissioner were.

The Expert Committee which prepared the proposal and devised the document had further desires and more ambitious goals. These more generous proposals were strongly opposed by the representatives of the totalitarian states, and at the end they were abandoned. Most of the Members of the League accepted the recommendations in principle, but in practice a uniform document for stateless persons was never achieved. Most countries continued to issue their own special documents for refugees and other aliens.536

532 Francois, 360-361
533 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 360 and 364
534 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 364
535 Bentwich 1935, 121
536 ibid.
Towards the end of the 1920s, the body of experience on problems of refugees, as well as legal responses to them, had increased to a point where the advocates of the refugees could even consider attempts to create a more comprehensive arrangement for the control of situations.

The Conference in June 1928 was able to produce a document which covered almost all aspects of the status of refugees in general. The final document was issued on 30.6.1928. The conference of the representatives of governments drew up an arrangement concerning the juridical status of the Russian and Armenian refugees. The binding effect of the documentation is much more difficult to certify. It recommended that the High Commissioner, through his representatives in different countries, should exercise a number of consular functions, such as:

- certifying the identity and civil status of the refugees, as well as strength of records in the country of origin
- giving certificates to the refugees of their service history, of university degree etc.
- recommending the refugees to the competent authorities in various matters

The recommendations stated further, that the personal status of a refugee should derive from the law of the place of residence, unless the law of the country of origin was recognized or applicable to the situation.

The League started preparing for the arrangement of the extension of the measures taken to assist Russian and Armenian refugees also to other categories of refugees in 1927. In November 1927 the Secretary General of the League issued a circular letter to State Members and Turkey, soliciting for opinions and positions on the matter. On the basis of the replies of the States, there seemed to be very little opposition to the proposal.

Since the idea of extension received substantial support from the Member States of the LON, the Council issued a resolution in its 50th Session in June 1928, inviting the Inter-Governmental Conference on the Status of Refugees (28.6.1928) to consider appropriate recommendations in order to extend the benefits previously granted to Russian and Armenian refugees to other categories of refugees. It was particularly defined, that these categories would be the Assyrian, Assyro-Chaldean, and Turkish Refugees. The particular groups in question were referred to as refugees who were in conditions analogous to those of Russian and Armenian Refugees. From other

537 OJ, 10th year, No 3, March 1929, 483-487
538 Bentwich 1935, 116-17
539 OJ, 9th year, No 3, March 1928, 357-359
540 Minutes of the 50. Session of the Council of the LON (4.- 9.6.1928)/OJ, 9th year, No 7, July 1928, 897-898
connections we can also conclude, that these categories were small enough to be managed.

The Assyrians and the Assyro-Chaldeans were scattered in several locations in the Near East (notably in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon), in Greece, and in South of Russia. The number of the Turkish Refugees was very small, only about 150 individuals, but they were considered politically significant, since they were referred to as the “Friends of the Allies” and proscribed by the Turkish Government.541

The Assyrian, Assyro-Chaldean, and Assimilated Refugees were defined as follows: “Any person of Assyrian, Assyro-Chaldean origin, and also by assimilation any person Syrian or Kurdish origin, who does not enjoy or no longer enjoys the protection of the State to which he previously belonged and who has not acquired or does not possess another nationality”.542 Turkish refugees were defined separately: “Any person of Turkish origin, previously a subject of the Ottoman Empire, who under the terms of the Protocol of Lausanne of 24 July 1923, does not enjoy or no longer enjoys the protection of the Turkish Republic and who has not acquired another nationality”. The words ‘Turkish origin’ was included in this definition in order to contradistinguish these ‘Turkish refugees’ from other refugees from the territory formerly belonging to the Ottoman Empire.543

The same Conference also adopted an Agreement concerning the functions of the representatives of the High Commissioner. This arrangement was ratified by Belgium and France. By the virtue of this Agreement, the High Commissioner’s representative in Brussels determined the eligibility for refugee status, and thereby the asylum on behalf of the Belgian Government. In France, the representative of the High Commissioner became eligible to participate to the work of the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA)544

In order to implement the recommendations the League wanted replies from the Member States. Some countries, like Uruguay, were very prompt and accurate in their proceedings. The Government of Uruguay was finally able to send its positive reply to Secretary General after long legal and political deliberations. The President of the Republic had decided to issue a decree empowering the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to

542 Grahl-Madsen 1966, 127-128
543 Grahl-Madsen 1966, 129
544 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 361
take measures in conformity with the League recommendation. On the basis of the documented replies it seems that some countries were not as accurate in their proceedings, and the decisions might have been made in a more unofficial manner.

After broadening the scope of the refugee work to new groups including Assyrians, Assyro-Chaldeans, and Turkish Refugees, the League send another circular letter to all Member States, as well as to some other Governments. The purpose of the request for information was to find out to what extent the countries would be willing to perform their policy on issuing Nansen certificates, visas, and other benefits for refugees. One of the specified issues in the circular letter was the situation of Russian disabled ex-servicemen (which should have been treated in the same manner as national ex-servicemen!).

It is difficult to see the purpose of this extensive exercise of bothering Governments with this matter, except that the recommendation to do so was passed by the Assembly of the League. The request was also sent to the United States. The reply from the US State Department made the position of the US Government clear. The US was not in a position to issue Nansen passports, had not adopted the Nansen stamp, and could not regard the Russian ex-servicemen eligible to any national benefits. However, the reply stated that the American consular officers may accept Nansen certificates in lieu of passports.

The League’s documents reveal, that the initiative for this exercise of 1928 was initiated by the Inter-Governmental Advisory Commission. The initiative had obviously passed its way in the Assembly becoming a resolution and recommendation, which then had to be executed by the Council and other relevant organs of the League. After the Inter-Governmental Advisory Commission had been formed, the League sent repeatedly circular letters to Member States. The mechanism seems to be the same in most cases. The Assembly passed a resolution or recommendation on the basis of the deliberations of the Advisory Commission, and the Council and the Secretariat had to execute those by requesting the positions and indications of policies of the individual governments. On the whole, the 1928 Arrangement gave the refugees “certain elementary rights of the kind that nationals usually possess.” It contained provisions concerning the personal status of refugees: expulsion, taxation, freedom of residence,

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545 OJ, 11th year, No 4, April 1930, 323
546 See e.g. OJ, 12th year, No 8, August 1931, 1689-1692
547 OJ, 12th year, No 8, August 1931, 1689
548 See e.g. OJ, 12th year, No 9, Sept 1931, 1880-1881
549 Simpson 1938, 610
as well as travel documents. This Arrangement has been seen as a “forerunner for the Refugee Conventions of 1933 and 1938, and consequently for the present Refugee Convention of 1951 and its 1967 Protocol”.

3.3.5. Statistics, Settlement, and Loans

In order to conduct any kind of measures on behalf of refugees it was essential to know first how many people there were, who they were, and where they were located. On a national level census and statistics have also been connected to the national security. All states have had some kind of need and tendency to control the unwanted foreigners staying in the country because they can be considered a potential risk to security. Supervision of the comers started in principle at the border and ended with the naturalization, or alternatively, with the exit.

The significance of the statistics was not merely satisfying curiosity. The ultimate purpose was to find out how many refugees can be accommodated in a certain place, how many should and could be transferred to other places, and whether states and governments were willing to receive and able to contribute to the employment and other needs of the refugees. Census was obviously easier to implement among the agricultural settlements. In the agricultural communities these measures also had a special function because of the nature of the livelihood and profession of the people. The examples and the experiences of the agricultural census and statistics were encouraging. They contributed to the entire establishment, as well as to many aspects of the refugee work done by the national and international authorities.

Refugee women encounter specific problems regarding protection, assistance, and participation in decision making. Most remarks on female refugees are not based on statistical data, simply because such data on refugee women do not exist. The source material from the 1920s is silent about female refugees specifically. In spite of the recognition that women and girls constitute most of the refugee population, policymakers and field workers especially during the Inter-war time did not have proper information which could have enabled them to take into account the specific situations

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550 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 361
551 Leitzinger II, 334
552 OJ, No 4, 1922, 342
and problems connected to female refugees. It can be concluded on the basis of the source material, that refugee women were not specifically allowed a greater voice in decisions regarding their own lives. On the other hand, it is not fair to say, that they did not have adequate protection and assistance.\textsuperscript{553} Although the trend observed over the last few decades has been towards a “feminization of global migrations”\textsuperscript{554}, there is no reason to believe that the proportions of women during the refugee movements of the 1920s and 1930s were essentially smaller than today.

According to Nansen’s reports, the first exhaustive census on Russian Refugees, in all countries concerned, was implemented already during the first six months of Nansen’s official work as the High Commissioner. The census was carried out by High Commissioners representatives in different countries, classifying the refugees according to their occupation.\textsuperscript{555} In his report in March 1922 Nansen didn’t forget to praise the role of the ILO in providing invaluable services to the High Commissioner in carrying out the census “with the greatest ability and foresight”. Nansen also reported on the difficulties the census had encountered on the part of the refugees themselves in the Serb-Croat-Slovene State and in Constantinople, where the help of the Allied Police was needed in order to get the work completed. However, Nansen was able to report that the census was made complete, and that it offered invaluable basis for the solution of the refugee problem.\textsuperscript{556}

The Greek Refugee Settlement Commission also carried out similar measures in urban settlements. This work had to deal with two different classes of refugees: a) those living in settlements built for the refugees and b) those living in towns in hired lodgings. All these refugees were asked to furnish:

- name
- number in family
- occupation followed in of origin
- present occupation
- whether any indemnity received from the State and if so how much
- what are the resources of the family?

\textsuperscript{554} Camus-Jaques, 142
\textsuperscript{555} OJ, 3rd year, No 4, April 1922, 339-340
\textsuperscript{556} OJ, 3rd year, No 4, April 1922, 342
The work was carried out by the employees of the Greek Commission and by special agents engaged for that purpose. The Greek authorities and the Church rendered their help for this enormous task.\textsuperscript{557}

The Greek Refugees Settlement Commission reported on the results of the census carried out in 1927 to the Council. According to the Commission, the census was implemented with the double object of ascertaining, first, the number of families and individuals, and secondly, their housing conditions. As regards the dwellings, the refugees were divided into different categories and subdivided classes. The analyzed results were used in order to be able to form a competent opinion as to direction in which the assistance should be afforded by the Commission.\textsuperscript{558}

In some countries statistics was taken more seriously than in others. For example, in Finland it was the Secret Police EKP that controlled and supervised the refugee administration as well as other matters concerning all foreigners in the 1920s. Local police authorities were obliged to keep records on refugees and submit quarterly reports to EKP during the first years after Russian mass emigration to Finland around 1920. This system was gradually lightened, and from 1926, the reports were given semiannually. Finally, some subdivisions of the EKP stopped the reporting regarded as “unnecessary burden”.\textsuperscript{559} Finland was a new state, and former Grand-Duchy of Russian Empire, and most of the refugees in the country had come from Russia. These were sufficient premises for the caution.

Despite all efforts in Finland it was impossible to know the exact amounts of refugees in the country.\textsuperscript{560} This was the unfortunate fact, even the system of keeping records and taking care of statistics was one of the most effective in the world, thanks to the heritage of the regime of the Swedish Kingdom.\textsuperscript{561} The official material had the problem of incompleteness and inconsistency. In 1928 the responsibility of statistics on refugees was transferred to the Statistics Authority of Finland.\textsuperscript{562} The statistics on refugees in the 1920s and 1930s are still available for researchers in the archives of the Tilastokeskus.\textsuperscript{563}

It seems that the figures compiled by different study makers give us different information. The material provided by the national authorities was inaccurate, and the

\textsuperscript{557} Minutes of the 46. Session of the Council of the LON, Annex 988/OJ, No 10, Oct 1927, 1298
\textsuperscript{558} Minutes of the 48. Session of the Council of the LON (5.-12.12.1927)/OJ, 9th year, No 2, Feb 1928, 236-237
\textsuperscript{559} Leitzinger I, 92-93
\textsuperscript{560} Leitzinger I, 88
\textsuperscript{561} Leitzinger I, 60
\textsuperscript{562} Then Tilastollinen päätoimisto, now Tilastokeskus, see Leitzinger I, 89
\textsuperscript{563} Leitzinger I, 90
content of information depended on the provider of the material. 564 This can be followed roughly by scrutinizing the figures concerning Finland. According to the ILO there were 13,000 Russian refugees in the country in 1924. 565 The National State Refugee Relief Centre, however, estimated that there should have been some 23,500 refugees in Finland, of whom, approximately half should have been ethnic Russians (and half Ingermanlanders and Carelians). 566 The figures to the ILO had been provided by Colonel Schwindt, the representative of the HC in Finland. Obviously his figures included only the ethnic Russians. They were close to accurate as numbers, but didn’t give the right picture of the refugee situation in the country.

The statistics prepared by different organizations give following figures on the numbers of refugees in Finland. 567

ARC 1920……………………………25 000
Countess Bobrinsky’s office 1921…25 000
Dr. Izjumov 1922………………31 000-32 500
High Commissioner 1929…………14 318
Subcommittee of private org.1930…18 000
Nansen Office 1936-7………..14 500-16 000

The Refugee Service made a survey based on an inquiry in 1927 concerning the expenses accrued to the governments as they were forced to take care of the refugee problem of their country. It was pointed out, that the costs in the countries neighboring Russia were immense; 20 million Swiss gold francs. 568 This group of states consisted of Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Latvia, Poland, the Kingdom of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, Czechoslovakia and Switzerland. 569

The work of the officials of the Refugee Service was never easy. It was challenging for the officials to get reliable data. 570 Obviously, field operations on census and statistics had to be taken by national authorities. In some countries it was not advisable for the foreigners to be counted as refugees since it would have led to expulsion. 571 On the other hand, it was impossible for the international bodies to make plans for settlement of refugees without the statistical measures. The statistical work of the

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564 Nygård 1980, 71-72
565 Minutes of the 24. Session of thye GB of the ILO, 1924, 409
566 Manner, A.: Valtion pakolaishuoltoa neljä vuosikymmentä. VPAK:n arkistoluettelo. 581, 7-8
567 For the Table see Simpson 1939, 82 and 109 and 559-560
568 Minutes of the 36. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1927, 348
569 ILR, Vol 17, No 1, 1928, 70
570 This can be seen in Minutes of the 36. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1925, 91
571 ILR, Vol 17, No 1, 1928, 78
League and the ILO had thus practical aims because it was considered that (re)settlement is one of the three durable solutions for refugees (the others are repatriation to the country of origin and local integration in the country of first asylum), allowing refugees to resettle in a third country, usually an industrialized one, with the resources to provide the requisite support to ease the possible transition to a new country.

In theoretical terms resettlement can take place to third countries (or “overseas” as the terminology had it in the 1920s), or in the first country of refuge. (Greeks were “resettled” in Greece) Resettlement can never be an option for more than a part of the world’s refugee population because it requires so much official international work and benevolent cooperation. Nonetheless, resettlement has proven to be a blessing for hundreds of thousands of refugees who have made new lives in new countries. If durable solutions are evaluated according to the extent to which they protect human lives, it can be alleged that resettlement in a third country is more valuable than any other option.572

For first-asylum countries already suffering from massive unemployment or from acute cultural and ethnic divisions, resettlement plans mean alleviation to the problem. They give a clear signal that asylum can continue to be extended to new arrivals because the refugee burden will eventually be shared.573 However, recent studies reveal what people have always known: the complexities and hardships of third country resettlement. Refugees resettled have learned that life conditions in a new country can be hard, alienating, and troublesome. Solutions do not always correspond with the past or promised circumstances.574

The most visible domestic concerns of host governments are economic. This includes the high cost of public assistance, and difficulties in settlement. The most fundamental issue, however, is the relationship that refugees form with established residents in their new local communities. These relationships influence the acceptance of the comers.575 When refugee women are resettled in new countries, their problems take on entirely different dimensions. There are difficulties in adjusting to a completely new environment. Very few of them can be prepared for the drastic changes in life. The

573 Loescher, 30
574 Bach, 314-315
575 Bach, 316
female refugees are therefore silent and invisible in many instances and their needs go largely unrecognized.576

After his appointment, Nansen recognized in the official League documents that the only real solution for the refugee problem was to settle them in productive employment in countries where they will not become “a charge on the public funds”. Nansen made efforts to induce countries where such a prospect was possible. He mentioned especially that the Government of Czecko-Slovakia had agreed to accept 6000 refugees from Constantinople and that the arrangements for execution of the plans were well advanced.577

Restrictive measures in immigration policies took place in many places of the world in the 1920s. The Immigration Acts of 1921 and 1924 in the United States marked limitations on immigration from Europe, and favored immigrants born in northern and Western Europe in the expense of those born in southern and Eastern Europe. In Latin America, countries also developed restrictive immigration policies favoring those willing to be agricultural colonists.578

In the beginning of his work, Nansen made an appeal to Governments through the Secretary General of the LON, making it clear that in connection to resettlement questions the High Commissioner was fully dependent on the assistance and cooperation of the Governments of the various countries concerned. It was necessary to arrange transport of the refugees to other countries, to grant transit visas, find the necessary means for the maintenance of the refugees as well as their settlement in productive employment.579

Among the very first duties Nansen assumed after his appointment was an inquiry made to the governments as to categories of refugees which they might be able to receive. The results were disappointing. The High Commissioner received only few replies. With the exception of that from the Brazilian Government, they were practically all negative. Brazil indicated that employment could be found for a certain number of refugees in coffee plantations. An overall remark was, that owing to the universal economic depression it was impossible to find work for large numbers of refugees since there was already extensive unemployment among the own nationals of countries concerned.580

576 Camus-Jaques, 149
577 OJ, Vol 3, Dec 1921, 1217
578 Skran, 22-23
579 OJ, Vol 3, Dec 1921, 1218
580 OJ, 3rd year, No 4, April 1922, 342
The essential conditions for settlement had to be fulfilled. The question asked in this connection was, whether refugees could be settled in wide open spaces which were available in many places on the globe, notably throughout the British Empire. It was recognized, however, that the space itself is not enough for a settlement. Careful preparations beforehand were required. Financing had to be in place. Thirdly, technical supervision was needed when refugees got there. Some kind of communications and social amenities also had to be in place if the settlement was meant to be a success.\textsuperscript{581} Let alone the willingness of people to move to a place sometimes located in the middle of nowhere.

The formal obstacles in resettling Russian refugees in Finland give an insight to the circumstances and the environment where the refugee work had to be accomplished. It was difficult for the refugees to acquire real property in Finland. A special authorization was needed, and those were difficult to obtain. In some parts of the country, close to the Russian border, it was totally forbidden for foreigners to own land or any other real property.\textsuperscript{582} When the Finnish Red Cross was delivering humanitarian supplies from Sweden to Russian refugees in Finland, a remarkable commodity among others were boat tickets for travelling abroad.\textsuperscript{583}

Some refugees in Finland had put their hope in rural settlement and agriculture in the first place. Many refugees had been living in rural communities in Russia and many were classified as peasants before the revolution in Russia. These people didn’t have any other profession. The main obstacle was, that it usually was not possible to own any land unless the person was a Finnish citizen. The refugee organizations made efforts to facilitate the land acquisition of refugees, since a comprehensive general land reform in Finland was realized at that particular time. The results were discouraging. Only small amount of families were able to get land in order to start occupation. The authorities were seemingly unwilling to change the regulations, even in case of non-Russian (“almost Finnish”) refugees.\textsuperscript{584}

There were always push and pull factors in resettlement. One of the pull factors during the period under examination was family reunification. After the Russian revolution families were scattered in many places of Europe as well as in China.\textsuperscript{585}

\textsuperscript{581} Simpson 1938, 608
\textsuperscript{582} Nevalainen, 87
\textsuperscript{583} SPR:n vuosikertomus 1922, 844
\textsuperscript{584} Nevalainen, 137-139
\textsuperscript{585} Ståhlberg, 178
Immigration took place to Germany, France, Baltic States, and Czechoslovakia by this motivation (i.e. family reunion).\textsuperscript{586}

In the middle of the 1920s there was a scheme to develop a resettlement fund using the revenue of Nansen stamps. Although the selling showed results, the creation and performance of the fund was a disappointment. It was, however, one type of indication of solidarity, from those refugees who could afford the fee of five gold francs, to those who couldn’t. The most remarkable resettlement plans were made for Latin America. In the 1920s the Refugee Service expanded its network of agents in Americas. A Delegation assigned by the Refugee Service spent five months in Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay in 1925 on a mission. They reported that the success of the resettlement scheme depended on the development of a necessary organization, as well as on creation of a credit fund.\textsuperscript{587}

Resettlement of refugees took place, but the volume of it was not what was ambitiously planned. The results were few hundred people per target country.\textsuperscript{588} The agent network was effective to certain extent, but the development of the credit fund was left half way. The Agents of the ILO (Refugee Service) referred to the strict legislations and administrative practices of the target countries.\textsuperscript{589} These, in turn, were results of the economic recession in Latin America during that time.\textsuperscript{590} However, it was reported that on the average the refugees resettled to Latin America were better off than those staying in Europe.\textsuperscript{591}

One of the greatest efforts undertaken and completed successfully by Nansen was the resettlement scheme of the Armenians in the 1920’s. Alone in Syria, about 40,000 Armenians resettled in Villages build with the funds and coordination by Nansen and his staff.\textsuperscript{592} The Assembly of the LON allocated in 1924 funds for a mission that was assigned to study possibilities to resettle Armenian refugees to the Armenian districts in the Soviet Union. The practical arrangements were supposed to be handled by Nansen and the Labour Office.\textsuperscript{593} Nansen visited the sites with a delegation in 1927 in an

\textsuperscript{586} Simpson 1939, 375
\textsuperscript{587} ILR, Vol 17, No 1, 1928, 80
\textsuperscript{588} Minutes of the 40. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1928, 449-455
\textsuperscript{589} Records of Proceedings of the 12. Session of the ILC, 1929, 219
\textsuperscript{590} Simpson 1939, 198
\textsuperscript{591} Minutes of the 40. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1928, 449-450
\textsuperscript{592} Hansson II
\textsuperscript{593} Minutes of the 22. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 169-170; Simpson 1939, 36
attempt to find practical possibilities and negotiate terms and conditions for the resettlement. The results turned out to be scarce.\(^{594}\)

There seems to have been separate lines of activities concerning the Armenians. The National Armenian Delegation issued an appeal on a scheme for the settlement of 50,000 Armenian refugees in 1924. The League received numerous replies from states to this appeal during the same year. The positions of the Member State Governments varied a lot. All had deep sympathy towards the homeless Armenians. Some governments made non-specific and non-committal promises, but some, such as the Government of Norway, informed directly that there were no funds available for this kind of scheme.\(^{595}\) The British Government stated that there was very little information on the scheme, and it could be brought in question whether the proposal had been properly investigated and thus practically feasible.\(^{596}\)

A more organized approach was demonstrated when the Council issued a resolution in September 1925 containing the Terms of Reference for the Armenian Refugee Settlement Commission. The assignment of the Commission was based on the Assembly resolution regarding the settlement of Armenian Refugees in Caucasus and elsewhere. The Commission was supposed to be consisting of five members. The Commission held its first meeting in Paris 30.10.-1.11.1925 with members who had been nominated according to the Terms of Reference. Nansen was one of the members, and the rest of them were appointed by the President of the Council. The Government of the Republic of Armenia was represented closely in connection with the Committee. The Committee was supposed to have undertakings and representatives in Erivan. This is interesting, taking into account, that it was quite unclear what the Armenian State was, and where its Government was seated. The Commission recognized that a loan of £ 1 million was needed for the activities.\(^{597}\)

The Council noted the report given by the Commission for the Settlement of Armenian Refugees in its 37th session in December 1925.\(^{598}\) The financial position of the Settlement Commission remained to be a difficult question. The Council adopted a resolution in its 40th session, instructing the Secretary General to ask the Chairman of

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594 About this see Nansen, Fridtjof: L’Arménie et le proche orient. Paris 1928, 198-250
595 OJ, 5th year, No 6, June 1924, 845-847
596 OJ, 5th year, No 9, Sept 1924, 1226
598 Minutes of the 37. Session of the Council of the LON (7.-16.12.1925)/OJ, 7th year, No 2, Feb 1926, 129
the Commission to appoint two of the members of the Commission to discuss the financial aspects with the Financial Committee.\textsuperscript{599}

It is quite obvious that the Armenian Refugee Settlement Commission had serious plans for the resettlement of refugees to Armenia still in 1926, since the Commission presented a report with resettlement schemes to the Armenian State, which then already was one of the members of the Transcaucasian Federation of Soviet Republics (the other two being Georgia and Azerbaijan). This Federation formed a part of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics with its headquarters in Moscow.\textsuperscript{600} The Government of the U.S.S.R. informed the Armenian Commission and the League that it, in principle, approved the irrigation plan connected to the agricultural settlement of the refugees, as well as the loan arrangements for it.\textsuperscript{601}

The Council still discussed the Armenian settlement scheme towards the end of 1928. Nansen stated that the appeals to the governments had not produced very great results. Other representatives also recognized that the replies were not encouraging on the whole. A number of suggestions in order to solve the problem were, nevertheless, produced. The only thing the Council was able to decide was that the question will be submitted to the Assembly for investigation.\textsuperscript{602} The League did not want to close the case. The Assembly adopted a resolution in September 1928 requesting the Council to continue negotiations with those governments which had offered assistance. The Council decided to act accordingly.\textsuperscript{603}

In the 41st session of the Council, however, the Financial Committee expressed as its opinion, that loan arrangements similar to the ones in case of Greece and Bulgaria, were not possible in present circumstances for the resettlement of the Armenians. The Financial Committee found the technical feasibility of the resettlement scheme satisfactory, but regretted that the circumstances were as they were.\textsuperscript{604} The Council recommended that money should be collected from private sources either in a form of a loan or a gift. The Council discussed about nominating persons to supervise the due expenditure of the money.\textsuperscript{605} Further reports by the Financial Committee and the special commission set up by the Council made it clear, that in the view of legal and

\textsuperscript{599} Minutes of the 40. Session of the Council of the LON (7.-10.6.1926)/OJ, 7th year, No 7, July 1926, 875
\textsuperscript{600} Minutes of the 40. Session of the Council of the LON (7.-10.6.1926)/OJ, 7th year, No 7, July 1926, 977
\textsuperscript{601} Minutes of the 40. Session of the Council of the LON (7.-10.6.1926)/OJ, 7th year, No 7, July 1926, 981-982
\textsuperscript{602} Minutes of the 51. Session of the Council of the LON (30.8.-8.9.1928)/OJ, 9th year, No 10, Oct 1928, 1649-1651
\textsuperscript{603} Minutes of the 52. Session of the Council of the LON (12.-26.9.1928)OJ, 9th year, No 10, Oct 1928, 1669
\textsuperscript{604} Minutes of the 41. Session of the Council of the LON/OJ, 7th year, No 10, Oct 1926, 1340
\textsuperscript{605} Minutes of the 42. Session of the Council of the LON (16.-20.9.1926)/OJ, 7th year, No 10, Oct 1926, 1404
other conditions prevailing in the territory of the U.S.S.R., the issue of a public loan with ordinary guarantees could not be contemplated.606

Since it was obvious that the public loan to Armenia was not possible, the League decided to make an appeal to all the Member States of the League to solicitate their financial assistance to the plan which had been before the League for three years for establishing the Armenian Refugees in the “Republic of Erivan”. The appeal was made through Nansen. Some replies from governments were obtained. The replies were unambiguously negative, with the exception of the response of Roumania, promising thousand pounds for the mentioned purposes.607

It was clear in the 1920s that the resettlement plans in Europe were not going to be successful. For the refugees, other than Greeks and Bulgarians, the only hope was resettlement overseas. These attempts towards solution were accelerated in 1922.608 This was also one of the reasons why the Nansen Passport system was created.609 In retrospective, the Armenians were the only refugee group that Nansen and the Labour Office were extensively and systematically trying to resettle. Serious plans were made to settle the Armenians from Turkish territory to Soviet-Armenia. Nansen headed missions to the area with the purpose to make an arrangement with the Soviet authorities for establishing agricultural settlements. It was assumed that the LON would issue funds or a loan arrangement for the purpose.610 Finally, the funds turned out to be insufficient and the plans never really materialized.611 The Soviet authorities were definitely not encouraging the plans, and a general observation can be made, that it was specifically the reluctance to provide sufficient guarantees for loan arrangements which finally made the plans unrealistic.

Arranging loans as a method of financing the resettlement activities had a crucial bearing. When Greece had to find room to resettle and assimilate some 1.3 million refugees coming from Asia Minor in the 1920’s, a loan was arranged for these purposes.612 This scheme included the establishment of an independent settlement commission supervised by the League as well as large scale loan arrangements to the Greek Government. The details of the terms and conditions of the Greek loan were

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606 Minutes of the 45. Session of the Council of the LON (13.-17.6.1927)/OJ, 8th year, No 7, July 1927, 774
607 OJ, 9th year, No 3, March 1928, 355-357
608 Minutes of the 13. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1922, 347
609 Stoessinger 1956, 18; Thompson I, 27-30
610 Plans can be obtained from ILR, Vol 8, No 5, 1923, 710; Minutes of the 26. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1925, 163; Records of Proceedings of the 7. Session of the ILC, 1925, 932
611 Thompson I, 33
612 Hansson II
brought to the attention of the League of Nations. Normally, a loan arrangement includes at least the following: lender, borrower, guarantor, and possible countersecurity. If these cannot be revealed from the documents, the package can be considered concealed for a reason or another. On the basis of the source material, it is not quite clear, what the role of the LON was in this package.613

The Greek Refugee Settlement Commission concerned itself about the agricultural as well as urban resettlement. The Commission was occupied with initial arrangements, implementation, and also post appraisals of the activities. A tour for the members of the Council was arranged to the settlements in Greece. Belonging to the same category of functions was the follow-up of the harvest situation in Greece among the areas where refugees had been resettled. The Council voted in 1927 a sum of 4 million drachmae for the relief of those who had suffered from serious losses in certain regions due to drought.614

In urban settlements the Greek Commission contributed to the facilitation of urban refugees purchasing the dwellings they were occupying. The Council backed the credit arrangements, as well as contributed to the legislation of Greece in order to enhance the development.615 The Greek Commission, being desirous to give rural refugees a feeling of stability and permanence, took steps to issue, to those whom it had settled, title-deeds for their property as soon as the final allocation of their land was completed. The final title-deeds were supposed to be granted to settlers when their debts to the Commission were paid. The League Council approved the final forms of these documents. This legal ratification of possession was to intensify and improve the performance of the settlers on their land.616

The international organizations and the governments of the receiving countries put their hope in agricultural settlement in treating the difficult problem. It was thought that this would better facilitate the living of the people in their new conditions. The simple thinking at the background was, that in agricultural settlements these people would be producing rather than consuming food produced by others. However, it is a fact that the attraction of big cities is common among all immigrants. In the report of the Greek Commission in 1929 the text reveals, that it had been pointed out more than once that agricultural refugees have for various reasons been unable or unwilling to establish

613 See e.g. OJ, 4th year, NO 10, Oct 1923, 1138-1148
614 Minutes of the 46. Session of the Council of the LON, Annex 988/OJ, No 10, Oct 1927, 1297-1298
615 Ibid.
616 Minutes of the 57. Session of the Council of the LON (13.-25.9.1929), Annex 1174/OJ, 10th year, No 11, Nov 1929, 1745
themselves in the country districts, and are overcrowding the towns, which are already over-populated with people scarcely able to earn a living. Many would prefer even low wage town jobs rather than agricultural work.\textsuperscript{617}

The League appointed a Commissioner of the LON for the Settlement of Bulgarian Refugees in 1926. The Commissioner gave its first report covering two months at the end of 1926. The Financial Committee examined the report and noted that it shows already some progress. According to the report, a great part of the necessary legislation had been voted by the Bulgarian Parliament, or was being discussed by it. The Financial Committee also heard the Governor of National Bank of Bulgaria on the financial arrangements. The Committee noted certain omissions or errors in this connection. The Committee found it necessary to receive quarterly reports from the Commissioner in the future regarding all facts of Bulgaria’s financial situation.\textsuperscript{618}

The report of the Commissioner for the Settlement of Bulgarian Refugees emphasized the basic problems which had to be taken into account. The first precondition was that Bulgaria was not a very large country, the total area being only some 103,000 square kilometers. The second premise for the difficult task was that Bulgaria was poor in arable land. An effort was made to avoid over-populating the cultivable areas and to increase the amount of arable land by drainage and preparing land for agriculture.\textsuperscript{619} In the proposals to the League the Commissioner understood that no settlement under the loan should be established within 10 kilometers of the frontier (as required by the neighboring States) and the refugees coming from Greece should be settled at the greatest possible distance from their place of their origin.\textsuperscript{620} These principles were recognized in the Council’s resolution adopted in December 7, 1926.\textsuperscript{621}

In connection to the second report of the Commissioner, it was noted in the Council that thorough contemplation of all related questions was absolutely necessary in order to prevent mistakes, duplication of work, substitution of persons, and finally to keep away from the frontiers the elements which might endanger the good relations existing between Bulgaria and the neighboring States.\textsuperscript{622}

\textsuperscript{617} Minutes of the 57. Session of the Council of the LON (13.-25.9.1929), Annex 1174/OJ, 10\textsuperscript{th} year, No 11, Nov 1929, 1739
\textsuperscript{618} Minutes of the 43. Session of the Council of the LON (6.-11.12.1926)/OJ, 8\textsuperscript{th} year, No 2, Feb 1927, 174
\textsuperscript{619} Minutes of the 43. Session of the Council of the LON (6.-11.12.1926)/OJ, 8\textsuperscript{th} year, No 2, Feb 1927, 181-182
\textsuperscript{620} Minutes of the 43. Session of the Council of the LON (6.-11.12.1926)/OJ, 8\textsuperscript{th} year, No 2, Feb 1927, 183
\textsuperscript{621} Minutes of the 43. Session of the Council of the LON (6.-11.12.1926)/OJ, 8\textsuperscript{th} year, No 2, Feb 1927, 187
\textsuperscript{622} Minutes of the 44. Session of the Council of the LON (7.-12.3.1927)/OJ, 8\textsuperscript{th} year, No 4, April 1927, 384
The acquisition of land was a central strategic question. It was not possible to make agricultural settlements without allocating land to the settlers. Taking into account the basic nature of this question, it is remarkable that so little concern was given to it in the reports and other documents. First of all, appropriate legislation was needed since the land had to be confiscated from someone, unless it was owned by the Government. In Bulgaria, a Governmental organization called The Geographical Institution was used as the advisor in the question. Otherwise, the reports don’t show much transparency despite few references.623

In its 12th report the Commission of the LON in Bulgaria stated, that the most difficult problem from the beginning of the establishment of the refugees had been the search for land suitable for the settlement of the refugees. All other matters were depending on that. Therefore, there were no tangible results until the summer of 1927.624 In the same report it was noted that the work of establishing large communities of refugees was deliberately avoided, because it was better to concentrate on construction of houses for isolated units or small groups scattered throughout a large number of already existing villages. This, in turn, resulted in the problem of separating the various workshops and the difficulty of transport.625

As far as assistance, development cooperation, and relief in a larger context is considered, we can divide the financial possibilities in two: grant and loan. Grant is donated for good, but the purpose of a loan is to get it recovered. The market economy in the global scale works so that there are always lenders. The lenders are willing to lend, provided that there are sufficient guarantees. Normally, governments are considered as sovereign guarantors and thus acceptable. In cases where governments need the help in a form of loan, other guarantee arrangements are required. Another party of the deal is the borrower. Governments may borrow money by issuing sovereign bonds. By those, the governments are bound to pay back the sums they have received.

In all these cases, the lenders will capitalize on the arrangement. Also the ones who borrow and pay the interest, gain from the situation, provided that they are fast and efficient enough to use the money efficiently before paying it back. Having this in mind

623 See e.g. Minutes of the 50. Session of the Council of the LON (4.-9.6.1928), Annex 1043/OJ, 9th year, No 7, July 1928, 1058-1059

624 Minutes of the 56. Session of the Council of the LON (30.8.-6.9.1929), Annex 1172/OJ, 10th year, No 11, Nov 1929, 1713

625 Minutes of the 56. Session of the Council of the LON (30.8.-6.9.1929), Annex 1172/OJ, 10th year, No 11, Nov 1929, 1715
there were plans in 1925 to create a Revolving Fund for the financing of the migration of the refugees.\textsuperscript{626} The intention was to use the revenue from the sales of the Nansen Stamps for capitalizing the fund. Nansen himself was the supervisor of the fund. Another supervisor was nominated by the Governing Body of the ILO. This assignment was given to Jean Monnet (former Vice Secretary General of the LON) in 1926.\textsuperscript{627}

The only really significant refugee loan arrangements organized by the world organizations were the ones established for the settlement purposes in Greece and Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Government came forward with a request for a loan for the settlement of Bulgarian Refugees in 1926. The Financial Committee examined the proposals, and gave thorough opinion on the possible terms and conditions of such loan. The final recommendation of the Financial Committee was that the only possibility for a successful credit scheme would be guaranteed with the League’s association to the arrangements.\textsuperscript{628}

The Financial Committee considered the matter and at the end of summer 1926 an advance of £400,000 was arranged for the urgent needs in connection with the settlement of Bulgarian Refugees. The Council finally approved the plans for issuing a loan for these purposes in September 1926.\textsuperscript{629} In the 43th Session of the Council it was noted that under the Protocol for the Settlement of Bulgarian Refugees, the Council had undertaken to appoint Trustees to represent the interest of the bondholders of the settlement loan. The proposal of the rapporteur was adopted, and three Trustees were appointed, including Mr. Markus Wallenberg from Sweden.\textsuperscript{630}

Another loan was arranged with the object of restoring Greek finances and continuing the work of the establishment of the refugees.\textsuperscript{631} Similar arrangements were prepared simultaneously in the case of Bulgaria.\textsuperscript{632} The loan was extended to the Greek Government for relending. It was thought, that in this way the money would be most efficiently spent. The legal basis for the Greek stabilization loan was a Protocol signed on 15.9.1927. That plan covered a sum of 9 million pound sterling. In March

\textsuperscript{626} Minutes of the 32. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1926, 295; Simpson 1939, 204-205
\textsuperscript{627} Minutes of the 33. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1926, 389
\textsuperscript{628} Minutes of the 40. Session of the Council of the LON (7.-10.6.1926)/OJ, 7th year, No 7, July 1926, 920-922
\textsuperscript{629} Minutes of the 41. Session of the Council of the LON (2.-7.9.1926/OJ, 7th year, No 10, Oct 1926, 1246
\textsuperscript{630} Minutes of the 43. Session of the Council of the LON (6.-11.12.1926)/OJ, 8th year, No 2, Feb 1927, 158
\textsuperscript{631} Minutes of the 46. Session of the Council of the LON, 6th meeting 15.9.1927/OJ 8th year, No 10, Oct 1927, 1134-1135
\textsuperscript{632} Minutes of the 46. Session of the Council of the LON, 6th meeting 15.9.1927/OJ 8th year, No 10, Oct 1927, 1136-1137
1928, it was reported that 6.5 million had been raised by the issue of loans for public subscription in London and New York.\textsuperscript{633}

The loan arrangements were referred to as ‘refugee loans’ in the beginning, but from 1927 the League documentation as well as the reports of the both (Greek and Bulgarian) Refugee Settlement Commissions started referring to these arrangements as ‘stabilization loans’. The development of the societies of Greece and Bulgaria respectively was more or less supervised by the League of Nations. The sums allocated to these development purposes were considerable, measured with any modern day’s parameters. The purpose and the scope of the stabilization loans were broader than just settlement of refugees. A scheme on reconstruction of the whole country was discussed in connection of these loans.\textsuperscript{634}

It was clarified in the report of the Financial Committee that the work in arranging the loan scheme was conducted under the auspices of the League of Nations. A detailed plan for the issue of the loan was drawn up in agreement with the League technical organizations. The plan adopted was supposed to put the finances of the Greek State in a completely sound condition. It comprised of the liquidation of Treasury arrears and took note of the existence of a satisfactory state of budgetary equilibrium and provided with the establishment of a new Bank Issue. The Committee seemed to have a solid confidence that the Greek Government undertakes to maintain the equilibrium during the forthcoming financial periods.\textsuperscript{635}

In the same session the Council also discussed the possibility to issue a similar loan to the Bulgarian Government. The Bulgarian Authorities stated that the task of the settlement of the refugees can only be accomplished with the help of another foreign loan. In their entry, the Bulgarian authorities referred to the undermining effect of the war. Bulgaria considered that the loan would contribute to the consolidation of peace and world stability.\textsuperscript{636}

The structure of the stabilization loan arrangement was similar to the previous loans in the sense that the money came from the International Financial Commission. It was put forward for relending by the Greek Refugees Settlement Commission to the end-

\textsuperscript{633} Minutes of the 49. Session of the Council of the LON (5.-10.3.1928), Annex 1012/OJ, 9\textsuperscript{th} year, No 4, April 1928, 463
\textsuperscript{634} Minutes of the 49. Session of the Council of the LON (5.-10.3.1928), Annex 1012/OJ, 9\textsuperscript{th} year, No 4, April 1928, 459 and 463
\textsuperscript{635} Minutes of the 46. Session of the Council of the LON, 6th meeting 15.9.1927/OJ 8th year, No 10, Oct 1927, 1134
\textsuperscript{636} Minutes of the 46. Session of the Council of the LON, (1.-15.9.1927, 6th meeting)/OJ 8th year, No 10, Oct 1927, 1136-1137
users, i.e. the refugees in a need of loan. The Greek Commission’s reports include detailed declarations on when, how much, and for what purposes the new credits were issued. Typical purposes were purchases and distribution of seeds for the settlements, construction of houses, and compensations for crop failures. Also loans to individual families for their settlement were extended.637

The nature of a loan requires recovery. The Greek Refugees Settlement Commission actually received repayments from the refugees in Greece. Payments were made by both agricultural and urban refugees. The repayments were transferred to the International Financial Commission for amortization of the Loan.638 The reports of the Greek Commission contained information on amounts recovered. It seems that of the amounts recovered, the main part was for the redemption of the loan, and Commission retained a small part for other purposes.639 The repayments were made in both cash and bonds. The bonds seem to have formed the major part of the repayments, over 90%. As to the bond, they were kept on deposit until redeemed. The dates for redemption were fixed separately by the Commission.640

These arrangements had also further relevance. As a result of the cooperation between the Greek Government and the Greek Refugee Settlement Commission, creation of an institution to grant agricultural credits took place. The establishment of the Agricultural Bank of Greece was decided upon by the Convention of June 17th, 1929, concluded between the Government and the National Bank of Greece, which until that had been in charge of agricultural credits. The aim of the new bank was to encourage and assist the rural populations by according loans to them.641

A special bill was introduced in Bulgaria to guarantee the lucrative execution of the rest of the loan arrangements after the work of the League Commissioner had been terminated in 1932. A law concerning amendments and additions to the previous law for the settlement of the refugees with the aid of the loan authorized by the League of Nations was introduced to the League in the 22nd report of the Commissioner of the LON in Bulgaria. The law stipulated, among other things, that the refugees shall be

638 Minutes of the 46. Session of the Council of the LON (1.15.9.1927), Annex 988/OJ, 9th year, No 10, Oct 1927, 1297
639 Minutes of the 45. Session of the Council of the LON (13.-17.6.1927), Annex 975/OJ, 8th year, No 7, July 1927, 939
641 Minutes of the 57. Session of the Council of the LON (13.-25.9.1929), Annex 1174/OJ, 10th year, No 11, Nov 1929, 1742
exempt from all payments of overhead expenses paid from the proceeds of the loan for
the purpose of their settlement.\textsuperscript{642}

The reports communicated to the League show that the repayments of the Bulgarian
loans declined after the Bulgarian Government took responsibility of them.\textsuperscript{643} No
explicit reason can be found from League sources. This gives us a possibility to
conclude that perhaps the League’s intervention was justified and in place. The use of
the loan schemes was limited to the cases where the refugees had a new stable home
country and a government to protect them. In the absence of a stable homeland the
attempts to arrange loan schemes for the Armenians and other refugee groups never
materialized.

There were some scattered exercises for arrangements on compensations for
abandoned properties of the refugees. The question of the return of the deposits of the
Armenian Refugees in foreign banks at Smyrna, as well as their property left in Asia
Minor, was brought before the Council several times in the 1920s. The Spanish, Italian,
and Swedish representatives in the Council sent a petition to the Turkish Government
concerning the matter. The situation seemed to be complicated. The representative of
the Secretary General stated in his letter that the League Secretariat had no power to
make any intervention on the issue.\textsuperscript{644}

The Council of the LON made recommendations in December 1925 on Refugees
coming from Bulgaria in Greece as well as Refugees coming from Greece in Bulgaria.
The respective Governments were supposed to give reports through the Mixed
Committee formed by the representatives of these countries. In the beginning of 1927
both Governments provided statistics of liquidation cases taken place both in Greece
and in Bulgaria. The data included cases of Bulgarians in Greece and Greeks in
Bulgaria.\textsuperscript{645}

The Mixed Greco-Bulgarian Commission issued debt certificates to Greek refugees
who had been forced to abandon properties back in Bulgaria while leaving the country.

\textsuperscript{642} OJ, 13th year, No 8, August 1932, 1518
\textsuperscript{643} Minutes of the 69. Session of the Council of the LON (3.10.-19.12.1932)/OJ, 13\textsuperscript{th} year, No 12 (part II), Dec
1932, 2021
\textsuperscript{644} Minutes of the 37. Session of the Council of the LON (7.-16.12.1925), Annex 838 and 838a/OJ, 7\textsuperscript{th} year, No 2,
Feb 1926, 356-357
\textsuperscript{645} OJ, 8th year, No 6, June 1927, 732-735
The Greek Refugee Settlement Commission accepted the certificates in an understanding that those bonds bore interest and were redeemable for 12 years.646

3.3.6. Residence, Employment, and Assimilation

The question of residence permits falls always into the domain of national sovereignty. What the League could do, was to try to influence the matter by establishing the legal status of refugees. Refugees were homeless people upon their arrival to a new place. This brought great insecurity, and the first thing for them was to find a place to stay. Problems were not solved, however, solely by finding or creating abode. There was a constant threat of being driven away without a residence permit. When refugees were allowed to settle, there was continuous fear that this right could be withdrawn at any time.

The economic and other difficulties that refugees were facing at the place of their arrival, could sometimes lead into mental disorders, which, in turn, drove the people in activities considered to be unlawful or even criminal. In many cases people were willing to do anything to avoid returning to the country which had expelled them. The worst scenario for them was to get forcibly pushed back to confront the law of their ex-homeland and even be condemned by the law and politics that had originally persecuted them. By establishing the legal status, the League hoped to save refugees from unjustified expulsions.

Expulsion is an administrative or governmental act by which the state invites or compels the refugee to leave the territory of the state. It is normally based on some kind of legislation. Refoulement, in turn, is purely a police measure. The League of Nations dealt with these matters in many occasions. This issue was first raised in a questionnaire to governments by Nansen in 1928. The High Commissioner then inquired whether the measures of expulsion and of refoulement were applied to refugees at the frontier, as well as how they were carried out.647

Later same year, the Intergovernmental Conference on the juridical status of refugees included in the Arrangement of 30.6.1928 a recommendation which stipulated that no expulsion should be ordered in the case of Russian and Armenian refugees

646 Minutes of the 46. Session of the Council of the LON (1.-15.9.1927), Annex 988/OJ, 8th year, No 10, Oct 1927, 1296
647 Simpson 1939, 246-247
who could not enter an adjoining country in a regular manner. Since that, the matter was on the agenda of the Consultative Intergovernmental Commission, and from 1932 to 1937 it was on the agenda at every meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations.\footnote{Simpson 1939, 248}

In the 1920s it was believed that refugee problems could be solved in few years. One of the facts that contributed to this belief was the rebuilding process taking place everywhere after the First World War. The refugee work advanced rapidly in the beginning, mainly for the reason that there was work available, and many countries welcomed new labour force. It could even be said that the times were favorable for refugees.\footnote{Hansson II} Nansen considered from the beginning that maintaining refugees in camps on doles was a waste of money. Instead, they should have been transferred to places where they could obtain employment.\footnote{OJ, 3rd year, No 4, April 1922, 432}

Refugees caused a variation of problems as well as pressures to the authorities of the receiving country. The handling of the problem required personnel that otherwise would not have been needed. In most of the cases, the comers didn’t speak the language of the recipient country. This imposed new forms of requirements to the organizations receiving and taking care of the refugees.\footnote{E.g. Leitzinger II, 341} In Finland, the governors issued a residence permit (ololippu) for one year at the time. This permit was valid for a certain administrative district (lääni). Governor’s office could also administrate the place of residence or dwelling within its administrative district. Matters concerning the removal of refugees from a district to another belonged to the Ministry of Interior.\footnote{Nevalainen, 74}

From 1926 the Governor could not alone make a decision on refusal of a residence permit. The matter had to be submitted to the Ministry of Interior.\footnote{Ibid.} A new decree on foreigners in 1930 changed the title of the residence permit as well as the connection between the residence permit and the work permit. Those two became interlinked.\footnote{Nevalainen, 77-78} The practicies with the residence permit were considered uncomfortable and cumbersome. Many refugees who had come from east were illiterate. It was difficult for them to take instructions from authorities and comply with the jungle of rules.\footnote{Nevalainen, 86}
In his comprehensive investigation Sir John Hope Simpson points out that most of the refugees given asylum have been adult people fully capable of working and whose youthful training has already been paid for by their original home country.\textsuperscript{656} This, in turn, meant that the host country was receiving the economic benefit. In Finland, a person who had obtained a legal status of a refugee was able to get a work permit with much less bureaucracy than other immigrants. The permits for refugees were more “liberal” and general by nature compared to normal foreigners’ permits. Those permits were not bound to a certain profession or precise employment. All this was, however, prevailing due to the division of labour between ministries and officials, not that much about the needs or rights of the refugees.\textsuperscript{657} Some agencies were simply more liberal than others.

The Finnish Ministry of Interior was reportedly in the position that there were two possibilities to manage the refugee situation with so many comers; sending them back or finding employment. As the first option was not possible for humanitarian reason, the second was favoured. Some other authorities, notably the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, did not agree with this view.\textsuperscript{658}

The refugees in Finland were not entitled to all social security benefits. Also their taxation was heavier than in case of citizens. They were not entitled to the family deductions. Work permits were needed, but they were sometimes difficult to obtain. In this respect, Finland seems to have represented average treatment of refugees. In some countries the living was harder, and for highly educated professionals, such as doctors and lawyers, it was practically impossible to find employment. On the other hand, in countries like Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, refugees had almost the same rights as citizens.\textsuperscript{659}

Only a small minority of the refugees made their living in trade and other similar livelihoods in Finland. There were also some restrictions. The statistics are slightly distorted in this particular matter since it has been reported that those who really had some serious business and earlier connections to Finland, were able to get the citizenship quite quickly. Thus, they were no longer refugees in the statistics.\textsuperscript{660} There were confrontations between the refugee workers and other workers in all countries where the comers were trying to find work and make their living. Local people

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{656} Comments on this see: Hansson II
\item \textsuperscript{657} Leitzinger II, 183
\item \textsuperscript{658} Nevalainen, 127-128
\item \textsuperscript{659} Nevalainen, 87-88
\item \textsuperscript{660} Nevalainen, 143
\end{itemize}
experienced the comers as rivals in the labour market. The refugees were also abused as cheap labour force in many cases by the employers.661

The Assembly of the League and the International Labour Conference had the Greek refugees constantly on the agenda in 1922. The representative of the Greek government appealed to the ILO for assistance to the High Commissioner in his efforts on behalf of the refugees. A resolution on the assistance was adopted by the ILC, and the Governing Body was advised to act accordingly.662 The representative of the Greek government referred to the fact that employment and residence were the biggest concerns among the problems of the refugees.663

The ILO was involved with the question of serious unemployment among refugees in Eastern Europe since 1921. The Red Cross appealed to the Labour Organization, and the Director General was authorized to render technical assistance for developing a labour exchange system for refugees in Eastern Europe. Nansen took the lead in the project. The High Commissioner had, however, very little knowledge and information on the conditions and volumes of the refugees to be able to start any kind of action.664 A proper census was needed and the ILO stepped into the picture.

Nansen saw the census as the most urgent and essential basis for the future actions. The Labour Office conducted surveys in the member countries. The data collected concentrated to the professions of the refugees and their ability to work. Also inquiries on governments' willingness and ability to provide work were made. The purpose of all this was to find suitable jobs for refugees in favorable countries. In the background there was the striving to make the refugees productive and useful members of their present societies.665 Therefore it was believed that these actions would be beneficial for both parties and also encourage people in the middle of difficult economic situations.666

The census carried out by the ILO turned out to be a very important initial tool for Nansen in his work for refugees.667 The reply activity was not what the High Commissioner had hoped, and the data was for some parts incomplete.668 Some

661 Nevalainen, 148; These questions concerning employment in general: Minutes of the 38. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1928, 173
662 Records of Proceedings of the 4. Session of the ILC, 1922, 490
663 Records of Proceedings of the 4. Session of the ILC, 1922, 420-421
664 Stoessinger 1956, 16
665 OB, Vol 4, 1922, 341-342
666 Minutes of the 24. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 330
667 Stoessinger 1956, 16
668 OB, Vol 6, 1923, 1-3
member states showed attitudes which were not exclusively positive. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that even as they were, the results were valuable information for the High Commissioner. At least on the attitudes, if not for anything else.

Nansen pointed out in his report in March 1922 how important it was to establish a labour exchange system in order to secure employment for refugees who would then no longer be a burden upon the public funds. He used the Serb-Croat-Slovene State as an example. About 10,000 refugees had been able to find a job through the well functioning network of labour exchange bureaux organized by the Government. The plans for a comprehensive employment exchange service turned finally out to be too ambitious. However, single actions were taken. The representatives of the Labour Office had some service activities since 1922 in Greece, Bulgaria, in the Kingdom of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. Labour Office was active in this respect in Greece still after the Lausanne Protocol came into effect.

The duties of the Director General of the Labour Office and the network of his agents were defined thoroughly when the Refugee Service was formed. These guidelines were mostly the same as the ones of the ILO previously. The Refugee Service was assigned to act as a coordinating and communicating umbrella organization. The core of the work was to try to improve the employment situation of the refugees. In this respect, the capacity of the Labour Office was unique when it comes down to the evaluation of the economic trends and the impacts of them to the employment situation.

The unemployment figures among the refugees remained high in many countries. According to the estimate of the Labour Office, one fifth of the refugees were without a job in Germany in 1924. In China the situation was unlimitedly hopeless; half of the people were unemployed. The statistics were compiled in a manner that only those capable of working were counted. The additional burden was posed by those who were not able to work.

The refugees found employment fairly well in France. Agriculture was a large employer, since there were farms that were big enough to absorb the supply of workers. In Finland the farms were family enterprises that supported only the family

669 OB, Vol 5, 1922, 233-235
670 OJ, 3rd year, NO 4, April 1922, 347
671 E.g. Minutes of the 6. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1921, 19-20 and 51
672 OB, Vol 6, 1922, 2
673 Minutes of the 17. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1923, 153-154
674 Records of Proceedings of the 7. Session of the ILC, 1925, 933
675 Minutes of the 24. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 409
members, but the production was not real business and there was nothing left over to be sold outside the farm. There was definitely work to do, but no possibility to pay any monetary compensation. In France the large car manufacturers Citroen and Renault employed substantial numbers of refugees. Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia absorbed great numbers of highly educated Russians in teaching professions.\textsuperscript{676} The facilitating factor here must have been the linguistic relation between Russians and these countries. The good situation of France, due to the fact that there was a lot of commercial agricultural work available, was suitable for the Russians. The national authorities taking care of the employment of the foreigners were constantly in contact with the Labour Office.\textsuperscript{677}

Regardless of all the efforts and good examples, the overall situation was grim. It was estimated in 1921 that there were one million unemployed Russian refugees. In 1927 there were still 182,000 Russians and 63,000 Armenians without work. The situation improved, but never became good. This was also one of the factors leading to frustration and to the closure of the Refugee Service. If there was no work, there was no settlement.\textsuperscript{678} In the 1930s, with the economic recession, it became evident that it was even more difficult for refugees to obtain work permits.\textsuperscript{679}

Most refugees in Finland were employed in agricultural jobs despite the practical difficulties described before. For many this was the field of work they were used to. On the other hand, soldiers were put in the forestry jobs, which was like punishment, and the results of those attempts were not encouraging. Many labour exchange services showed results, but on the whole, this activity seems not have been a great success.\textsuperscript{680} Merely a curiosity is, that refugees were used as strike breakers.\textsuperscript{681} Anyhow, the shift from agricultural work to industrial professions was very rapid in case of refugees, mainly because of the difficulties in land acquisition. Also the earnings in industrial and other jobs in towns were much more inviting than in agricultural communities.\textsuperscript{682}

Albert Thomas was a diligent researcher of demographic phenomena. With this background he had plans to develop arrangements which would improve the social status of foreigners in general and the foreign workers specifically. This interest

\textsuperscript{676} Nevalainen, 147
\textsuperscript{677} Minutes of the 25. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1925, 92; Minutes of the 33. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1927, 388
\textsuperscript{678} Records of Proceedings of the 11. Session of the ILC, 1928, 201
\textsuperscript{679} Minutes of the 77. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1936, 53-54
\textsuperscript{680} Nevalainen, 128-130
\textsuperscript{681} Nevalainen, 134-135
\textsuperscript{682} See Nevalainen, 140-142
included then refugees seeking employment through all these preconditions.\textsuperscript{683} Thomas made concrete proposals in 1928, some of which led in international agreements. Very few governments (5 states) were able to ratify these agreements, however.\textsuperscript{684}

Foreign persons working in industry and service sector often have to contend with illegal employment and harsh working conditions. Migration, even for economic reasons, is clearly an ordeal for people working in these professions.\textsuperscript{685} In most countries during the 1920s and 1930s, there were restrictions for foreigners to work in certain professions and occupations. Also rights to social security benefits were reserved for nationals of the country only.\textsuperscript{686} Many other limitations concerning private rights and practices were prevalent in every day’s life of the aliens.\textsuperscript{687} All these matters were in the focus of the international refugee organizations while contemplating the overall alleviation of position of the people living abroad without a legal status. Each country had its own stipulations concerning foreigners on entry and sojourn on the one hand, and on naturalization on the other. Normally these two had been kept separate from each other. Most countries also had specific alien’s legislation which worked in between, regulating for example foreign ownership.\textsuperscript{688}

The acquisition of some other nationality was the most radical solution for a refugee. For certain categories of refugees this solution was feasible. The Greek refugees from Turkey, Russia, Bulgaria and other countries, who arrived in Greece between 1913 and 1922, were granted Greek nationality by the Greek law of 1922. The Greeks, who arrived from Bulgaria under the Convention of Neuilly 1919, became Greek citizens on their arrival. The same concerned the people who came from Turkey under the Convention of Lausanne 1923. Greek refugees outside Greece, for example those in Cyprus, were enabled to obtain Greek citizenship on application to the Greek consul. Bulgarian refugees arriving in Bulgaria from Greece under the 1919 Convention also benefited from the provisions concerning automatic naturalization. Moslems of Turkish

\textsuperscript{683} See Simpson 1939, 204  
\textsuperscript{684} Thompson I, 40  
\textsuperscript{686} Francois, 327-330  
\textsuperscript{687} Francois, 330-332  
\textsuperscript{688} More on this: Leitzinger II, 299-300
origin from abroad settling in Turkey were immediately granted Turkish citizenship by special decisions even without the ordinary residential qualifications.\textsuperscript{689}

Citizenship is a status defined in a constitution. It carries with it certain civil rights, in particular\textsuperscript{690} the right to vote. In many societies during history, the citizenship has signified subjection, a feudal link between monarch and individual, each side having duties towards the other. Nowadays the most important nominator is that citizens collectively participate in the political process.\textsuperscript{691} Originally citizenship was connected to republics derived from the example of the French Revolution. In kingdoms the word subjection or “subjecthood” was carrying approximately the same meaning.\textsuperscript{692} In many connections the words citizenship and subjection have been used as synonyms.\textsuperscript{693} In this presentation “citizenship” simply means the passport a person is carrying or a hypothetical citizenship of the original home country.

People could lose their nationality or citizenship for various reasons during the Inter-war period. In some cases the travelers could be denaturalized if they left their home country for a certain number of years. In other instances people could lose their nationality if they left the country “without intention to return”. It could be be even possible, that people were automatically denaturalized if they just left their home country.\textsuperscript{694} Individuals who lost their nationality, became stateless, i.e. refugees.

Legislation has no practical meaning unless there is effective enforcement and execution of the laws. There was no centralized law enforcement concerning foreigners in most countries before our modern time. From the point of view of refugees, this meant that their lives were in many cases in the hands of officials who didn’t have specific instructions to follow.\textsuperscript{695} This, in particular, was the situation where the political help and technical assistance of the intergovernmental organizations were needed.

Assimilation in the sociological meaning signifies the blending of minority groups into the surrounding dominant society. Immigrant assimilation is a complex process in which an immigrant becomes fully integrated into a new country. Social scientists have distinguished some primary benchmarks to assess immigrant assimilation for describing the process whereby a minority group gradually adopts the customs and attitudes of the prevailing culture. Citizenship is the state of being an integral part of a

\textsuperscript{689} Simpson 1939, 235-236
\textsuperscript{690} In our modern societies
\textsuperscript{691} Dummett, 79
\textsuperscript{692} See Leitzinger II, 50-60
\textsuperscript{693} Leitzinger II, 51
\textsuperscript{694} Francois, 301
\textsuperscript{695} Reference to this is made in Leitzinger II, 319
particular social, political, or national community. Citizenship carries with it both rights and responsibilities. Generally citizenship can be seen as the relation between an individual and a particular nation.

Legislation on naturalization seems to be more new-born than other types of stipulation concerning refugees as foreigners. As noticed, citizenship has been rather undefined thing until modern time. Therefore, naturalizing a foreigner and becoming a citizen or a subject is not an unambiguous thing. During previous times, a citizenship could be obtained through a guild, or by decision of a local authority. In the 19th century the development went towards the need of an approval by higher or central authorities as well as more definite stipulations. Naturalization and citizenship became political and governmental questions.696

Men and women have traditionally been in a very different position in respect of nationality or citizenship. In many countries women were considered to be under a guardianship of a male member of the family, normally meaning a father or a husband. Therefore, the citizenship would have been a consequence of the naturalization or denaturalization of a male family member. Marriage was a dominant factor also in Inter-war period. A woman could assume the nationality of her husband and in many countries this meant losing the original nationality.697 It was reported that during the 1920s a number of female refugees were able to obtain a citizenship of the country of arrival through marriage arrangements. In case of children and under-aged persons in general, there have been simplified procedures in the assimilation process in certain countries. The motivation has then been the protection of children.698 Interesting detail is, that a Finnish person could be a citizen of Finland and a subject of Russia at the same time during the 19th century, when Finland was an autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire.699

Citizenship was not the first concern for most of the refugees to come into their mind. The circumstances allowed these considerations only later, after personal status had been somehow stabilized. The refugees knew that they had been living in a place located within the borders of a state. It is, however, impossible to know how many of them had been registered as citizens of their home country. Today citizenship is automatically connected to civil rights or the rights of a citizen. A common nominator here is the right to get protection. This matter was specifically taken into the definitions

696 More about this in Leitzinger II, 303-319
697 Francois, 307-308
698 Francois, 309
699 Leitzinger II, 53
of refugees in the 1920s. The essence of the existence of refugees was uncertainty. It was considered that after a reasonable period of time, the settlers should obtain some kind of certainty for their living, without threat of being deported.

Russian refugees were not particularly eager to assume new nationalities in their countries of residence. The idea of getting back to Russia was in the background. People also wanted to remain faithful to the Mother-Russia and Russian identity. The Soviet Government gave the possibility for the refugees staying abroad to obtain the Soviet citizenship by registering themselves in the Soviet Embassies. Many took this opportunity, and in the 1920s there were unknown numbers of Soviet citizens residing as refugees in foreign states, since getting the citizenship didn’t coincide with the possibility to go back to Russia. It has been reported that sometimes the refugees do not necessarily want to get naturalized even they have the opportunity. It can be considered an asset to be able to live without a citizenship or with a double nationality and identity.

Many Russian refugees lived their whole lives without any nationality or citizenship. They could travel and get identified by carrying a Nansen passports or alien’s passports. Difficulties in naturalization processes throughout Europe were a result of the thinking that states and governments had obligations towards their citizens; aliens formed a different cast. After all, naturalization didn’t mean well or wealth for some, on the contrary; it seems that some people wished to remain stateless, free of obligations of any citizenship.

In Finland the application for the citizenship was addressed to the President of the Republic. It was sent to the State Council (the Cabinet). There was a threshold of five years residence in the country as a precondition for the citizenship. Other conditions were e.g. clean reputation, ability to support oneself, etc. There was also a need for recommendations and statements. It was seen that those with higher education and professional position could more easily obtain the citizenship than working class people with no or only little education.

The Advisory Commission to the High Commissioner recognized in its report 12.6.1929 the impossibility of a radical solution to the refugee problem. This expression referred to three models of final solution which had been contemplated by the League
during its refugee work. The three had been the guiding principles for the whole work. The first one was naturalization of refugees. The Commission noted with satisfaction the generous reception afforded by various countries to the requests for naturalization of refugees. However, the Commission recognized that it would be impossible for the various countries, in which refugees were located, to proceed to mass naturalization of those aliens. Naturalization was seen as a privilege which cannot be granted without distinction to every person who requests it.705

The Soviet Russian Government announced a citizenship to be granted to persons who register themselves at the diplomatic missions of Soviet-Russia before 1.6.1922. The Russian ambassador in Helsinki send a note to the Ministry of Interior two weeks after the deadline announcing that the Finnish authorities should mark to the identification papers given to the refugees with “Russian citizen or subject of Russia” only in cases where the persons can provide a proof that they have registered in time.706 In practice this arrangement was to make the refugees stateless. It is not possible to verify from the existing material how this “procedural advice” was followed. Several other legislative measures were taken later by the Bolshevik government in an attempt to denaturalize former citizens.707 These measures coincided with the introduction of the refugee passport system. In Finland, like in many other European countries, Ius sanguinis principle was followed. According to it, a child born to refugee parents was also a refugee without a citizenship of the country of sojourn, unless the parents were naturalized.708

Naturalization as a solution to the refugee problem repeatedly engaged the attention of the League Assembly. It would naturally have been an easy and elegant way handle the refugee problem. League action was, however, necessarily restricted to recommendations to the Member States, as the League could not interfere with the sovereignty of individual states. As early as 1928 the League Assembly adopted a resolution inviting the governments concerned to extend facilities for naturalization to the refugees in the countries in which they were resident. Those recommendations had, however, very limited effect.709

Residence, and the further form of it, assimilation are closely connected with the question of arranging educational facilities for refugees. More people require more

705 Minutes of the 55. Session of the Council of the LON (10.-15.6.1929)/OJ, 10th year. No 7, July 1929, 1078
706 UM 11.C.19 (‘Ambassador Tsernyh’)
707 Simpson 1939, 233
708 Simpson 1939, 376 and 294-295
709 Simpson 1939, 237-238
resources. Nansen sent a letter on March 15, 1922 to the Secretary of State of the United States requesting the US Government to grant to the Russian students and refugees in the US permission to attend, without charge if possible, the institutions of secondary teaching and the universities of the country. In the reply in May the US State Department informed Nansen that the colleges and universities in the US were under private control and the Government had no direction over them. Also the public schools in various States were not governed by the federal law. The State Department was reportedly not informed of any reasons to prevent Russian residents in the US entering these educational facilities.710

Nansen reported to the Assembly in September 1922 that the results of the appeals to the governments to render help to the refugee students were disappointing.711 In Finland, however, the first schools for Ingrian refugees were opened already in 1919. There were as many as 22 operating refugee schools in Finland in 1922-1923. It was counted that two thirds of the refugee children attended school education and half of all refugee children went to school facilities designated for refugees.712

Wherever Russian refugees went, they had education and schooling of the future generations in their own mind. Teaching of the Russian language was supposed to be organized for thousands of young people. There was a clear mission for the education: preserving of the Russian culture. This was seen imperative for the building of the “New Russia”, free of the Bolshevik rule. In 1924 there were 90 high school level institutions all over Europe under Zemgor-organization only. Vocational schools existed here and there. Also even smaller refugee communities had their own elementary school system.713 Little by little the Russian schools got integrated to the general educational systems of the countries of residence. There seemed to be very little or no hope of the collapse of the communist system in Russia and returning became an increasingly distant dream. It was deemed more useful to provide integrating and assimilating education than to nourish the dreams of old Russia.714

Czecko-Slovakia was known for its ability to absorb Russian refugees and provide education for them. The motivation becomes clearer in the letter of the Foreign Minister of the Czecko-Slovak Republic to the Secretary General of the LON in January 1922 and the Memorandum attached to it. Czecko-Slovakia was dealing with the education

710 OJ, 3rd year, No 7, July 1922, 724
711 OJ 3rd year, No 11, (part I), Nov 1922, 1137
712 Leitzinger II, 415
713 Nevalainen, 150
714 Nevalainen, 151
of nearly 5000 Russian and Ukrainian students, and it was financially at the end of its resources. The Czecko-Slovakian Government called upon the High Commissioner as well as the Member States of the LON to share the burden. The rationale for the humane and liberal policy was that the Government believed that the education given to the refugees will fit them to return and enable the people to restore the economic and political life of Russia. The reconstruction of Russia would, in turn, guarantee peaceful development of the relations between the countries. The Czecko-Slovak Government wanted to emphasize the sincerity of its suggestion by stressing the humanitarian nature of its obligations: they were acting “on behalf of people so closely related to the Czecko-Slovak nation”.  

Prague, Harbin, and Paris had Russian academy level institutions. Russian academics had positions in the Baltic states, Balcans, Czeckoslovakia and France. It was calculated that in the beginning of the 1930s there were 19,000 Russian emigrants who had passed an academic degree. The emigrants also moved from a country to another in an attempt to seek decent education. France and Czechoslovakia were exceptions in this respect. In Paris and in Prague some 5000 Russian refugees passed a university degree by 1932. Another great educator of Russian refugees was the US. Other refugee groups didn’t seem to have similar educational ambitions in the new countries of residence. They more or less had to rely on the education system the surrounding society was offering.

In Finland, the Government’s authorities had certain goals and ambitions on education and enlightenment of the refugees. A designated refugee office was established within the School administration for this purpose. The general interest of this particular administration was clearly targeted on the Finnish-kindred refugees. The activities were politically motivated. Also in these activities the impetus faded away after it became obvious that these refugees would not return.

In the 1920s a Russian refugee’s organization Zemgor paid special attention to the situation in Finland and Estonia, where the refugee children were living “in exceptionally bad conditions”. In Finland there was education available for the Carelians and Ingermanlanders in their own language, but in very few cases for the

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715 OJ, 3rd year, No 3, March 1922, 274-275
716 Nevalainen, 150
717 Nevalainen, 171
718 Paasivirta, 203; Simpson 1939, 103-104 and 375-376
719 Nevalainen, 151-152
720 Simpson 1939, 100
ethnic Russians. There were also scarce opportunities for the Russian children to learn Finnish, which was, in turn, a prerequisite for higher education. Some parents sent their children to ordinary Finnish language or Swedish language schools according to their possibilities.721

However, there were as many as 22 refugee schools supported by public funds in the beginning of the 1920s. The general administration as well as the educational curricula followed the normal national schooling in Finland. There were also cases in which refugee children could not attend school education because of the lack of funds of the local administrative district where these people were residing. The legislation in fact defined only the obligatory education of citizens, and this was interpreted strictly in some local communities. This was changed in 1932, as the new legislation ordered local communities to arrange education for all residents, including non-citizens. Some refugee schools were active until the late 1920s, last ones closed their doors in 1930, with the exception of two specialized institutions. Taking into account all refugee school activities during the period under examination, there were 34 institutions providing education for refugee children in Finland.722

What the material doesn’t tell us clearly, is the education of women. Discrimination appears also in education and skill-training programmes. Some of this takes place negligently in practice, something it is arranged on purpose. In most cases, today as well as in the 1920s, the female refugees arriving in the host countries have less education and fewer marketable skills than men. Due to this, refugee women have little chance of improving their situation. Household tasks often take major part of their time. Most of the training opportunities today, as well in the 1920s, have a predominantly male focus.723

It has been calculated that in Finland even one third of the public funds allocated to refugee work were directed to educational activities in the beginning of the 1920s. During the following decade this amount was only about six percent. Although the results have been described modest at the highest, it was clearly seen that the refugee children who grew up in the 1920s and 1930s, had much better chances in their new environment than the older generations which didn’t receive any education.724 Almost 1000 refugees studied in public secondary academies (Kansanopisto). The success in

721 Simpson 1939, 376
722 See Nevalainen, 154-157
723 Camus-Jacques, 149
724 Nevalainen, 172
vocational institutions was not as good. The attendance as well as the results were an obvious disappointment for the educational authorities.\textsuperscript{725}

The 4\textsuperscript{th} Assembly of the League invited the Council to request the Governments of the State Members to afford the High Commissioner their assistance especially as regards the development of the means of general and professional education. It was reported to the Council that the Russian school system was established in 1920 in countries which harbor the great bulk of the Russian Refugees, namely, “the Slav countries and the border states on the European frontier of Russia”. In the rest of Europe there were reportedly only few Russian schools. The situation of Serb-Croat-Slovene State, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Germany, France, Latvia, Poland, and Estonia were separately reported before the Council. Remarkable sums for these purposes were used by some of the countries.\textsuperscript{726} Curiously enough, Finland was not mentioned. This could be due to the compilation technique of the report; perhaps the agent in Finland was not alert enough at the point when information was needed and gathered. It was not until the early the 1930s, when the Refugee Convention of 1933 prescribed on education: "refugees were to have the same rights in the schools and universities as were accorded to foreigners in general".\textsuperscript{727}

3.4. An Account of the First Decade of Intergovernmental Refugee Work

The 1920s was a period characterized by idealism, great hopes, and disappointments for the League of Nations. Although the refugee problem was not new or surprising as such, the scale and magnitude almost overwhelmed everyone involved. The League of Nations opened a dialogue between states and intergovernmental bodies as well as established a platform for deliberations between nations on refugee questions, which had previously been handled bilaterally or even internally in host countries.

\textsuperscript{725} Nevalainen, 159-167
\textsuperscript{726} Minutes of the 27. Session of the Council of the LON (10.-20.12.1923), Annex 586/OJ, 5\textsuperscript{th} year, No 2, Feb 1924, 379-382
\textsuperscript{727} Bentwich 1935, 119
A sufficient general motivation for the LON to authorize itself to do refugee work was that refugee problems could be seen as a threat to peace. Another important mind-setting factor behind the policy making of the LON in the 1920s was the belief that the refugee problems of the day were only temporary and could be solved quickly.

From the beginning, it was understood that the LON had been mandated to conduct certain measures as general obligations. These would include issues in the field of general international social justice. The mandate for the LON’s refugee work derived from those general principles. Refugees were seen as a grave humanitarian problem beyond national interests which required attention, and which only the new world organizations could offer. There were different reasons and motivations for helping each of the refugee groups. Universal humanitarianism or respect for human rights was not particularly clearly expressed in these connections during the 1920s. The discussions on the principles were manifested in the temporary nature of the mandate of the High Commissioner, which, in turn, was the visible and actual administrative outcome of the deliberations in the LON.

The larger League system worked in a relatively coherent way. The ILO had a visible role during the whole decade. Recurrently it was deemed appropriate for the ILO to take on the main responsibility for the intergovernmental refugee work. The role of the ILO in the 1920s has attracted too little attention until this. Yet it was Albert Thomas, who, together with Nansen, became the symbol of helping refugees during the decade after the First World War. Although Thomas was the public face of the ILO, diligent work at the Labour Office provided the basis for most big operations. It was not possible to plan and implement assistance without receiving the necessary data on the existing situation. The Labour Office was also a concentration of expertise in many fields important for the execution of any refugee operation. The masses of refugees could not be treated and maneuvered in the same way as military campaigns were undertaken.

The special role of the ILO only becomes clear by scrutinizing the appropriate sources that reveal the humanitarian as well as the more political premises of its refugee work. The ILO was needed by the League because of its expertise, but behind the scenes there were also motivations connected to the trade union movement, and in the case of Russian refugees, about ideas on the socialist order in the Soviet Union that were simply incorrect and overly positive.

A much more far-reaching matter was that through gathering information, conducting censuses, and compiling statistics the regime obtained an insight into how much work still remained to be done. Without this any policy making would have been
impossible or incompetent at best. The ILO’s activities gave nation states a feeling for
the first time that the burden brought about by refugees could be shared.

The basic mission of the ILO was in the social and economic field. The organization
faced a dilemma in that it was trying to speak up for unemployed refugees as foreign
workers whilst at the same time trying to protect the rights of the host countries’
workers. The most difficult question faced by the ILO was trying to avoid political
questions connected to the refugee issue. The technical nature of the work was
therefore highlighted whenever possible. The ILO wanted to make a separation to the
passport system and concentrate its activities on coordinating matters connected to the
employment and settlement of refugees.

There was a constant tendency in the ILO to avoid political deliberations. While the
LON could undertake the political protection of refugees, the technical nature of the
services rendered by the ILO was always emphasized. Thus in the package of the
League system the obligations which the ILO undertook had a much narrower basis
than those of the LON.

For the first time in history there was a platform to carry out a reliable mapping
exercise on the magnitude of refugee problems in the form of conducting census with
the help of the ILO’s expertise. Basically, because of this activity, refugees were not
treated like cattle anymore. Who they were and how many there were was brought to
the fore for the first time. These ILO activities put pressure on national authorities to
carry out measures which otherwise would not have been implemented.

The original idea was to take care of Russian refugees together with prisoners of
war and the famine relief delivered to Russia. When it became obvious that other
refugee groups needed attention as well, it was not possible for the LON to refuse to
take on this responsibility. Protection was not extended to all refugees universally. The
definitions set out in international agreements only covered designated refugee groups.

The voluntary and involuntary exchange of populations between Greece, Turkey,
and Bulgaria also produced massive refugee problems, although in these cases people
had new homelands to go to. The grimmest of all the refugee problems between the
World Wars was the one of the Armenians. The Armenian question was brought to the
attention of the League soon after the establishment of the world organization with its
refugee regime.

The High Commissioner for Refugees was established when Nansen gave his
consent to be nominated to this high position. A less known fact is that the ILO began
its refugee work even before the League officially took action. The High Commissioner
was able to convince the League Council of the importance of the question for world
peace and that it was indispensable for the LON to take on this responsibility. The organization set up for refugee work was, at least at the beginning, based on ad hoc solutions. It was quite natural to use the existing networks of voluntary organizations, such as the Red Cross.

Funding was always to be problematic. Throughout the existence of the organizations, the funds assigned for refugee work could only be used for administrative purposes. Practical assistance, including humanitarian work, was supposed to be undertaken by voluntary organizations. As the financing of the activities was based on selectivity it was difficult for the High Commissioner to make coherent long-term plans.

Refugee work took various forms and in some countries it ultimately reached unexpected dimensions. The LON had a decisive role in Greece and Bulgaria, not only in assisting local authorities with refugees, but also on a larger scale in developing national economies and institutions.

There was a great need for emergency relief in the 1920s due to the huge dimensions of the various crises. It seems that the original idea of the control was kept, and the LON only assumed a coordinating role while the NGOs delivered the humanitarian aid.

The seriousness of the League’s efforts in attempting to solve various refugee questions was definitely illustrated in the chain of agreements and arrangements that were made during the decade. As a matter of fact, there was a new international arrangement almost every year throughout the 1920s.

It was considered necessary to define different categories of refugees, because the various intergovernmental authorities believed that only in this way could the refugees themselves make a claim, and thus be liberated from the previously existing position in which they were totally at the mercy of the national authorities of the country of their asylum.

The most essential issue for the refugees was to find a home somewhere. This could be established through settlement in the country of their asylum or by resettlement to somewhere else. Some schemes were made for Russian and Armenian refugees, but in the case of Finland, for example, it was found that those who were unwilling or for some reason unable to settle immediately found their way to third countries on their own. Resettlement work was conducted successfully in Greece and Bulgaria.

The legal system for protecting refugees was not particularly strong, because most states reserved themselves the right to comply to whatever regulations did exist in their
own manner. The LON’s legal system was much more important in that it brought refugee issue to public and international attention. The message then was: “this is how the national authorities should behave”.

In the beginning of the decade there seems to have been a general understanding that the refugee problem was a temporary one, and that after some time the refugees would return home. It took almost a whole decade for the international community to realize that for most of the exiles, there was no home left to go back to. The plans made for large scale repatriations of refugees were never implemented. Only voluntary return, when possible, had some significance.

Although the LON’s refugee organization has been depicted as a band of prominent individuals who enthusiastically drove forward their ideas, this project has clearly shown, by systematically using sources connected to policy making and supervision, that there was much more institutional stamina than previously assumed.

International refugee work started as the problem of Russian refugees emerged. Finland was involved strongly because of its geographical proximity and political position. The situation in Finland was two-fold: on the one hand, different ranks of Russians came to the country on Russia’s border which had been a Grand-Duchy of the Russian empire. On the other hand, many in Finland welcomed ethnic Karelians and Ingrians, who were considered “almost Finnish”.

One extraordinary feature of the Finnish example was that Finland offered free public school education for refugees, which was much more generous than the help offered by many other host countries. This was targeted, however, almost exclusively at ethnic Finnish kindred refugees. Moreover, this was at a time before intergovernmental agreements stipulated anything about the education services to be rendered to refugees. When the recommendations were eventually adopted, the entire refugee problem in Finland had already been almost resolved.

Finland was typical of many countries offering asylum in the sense that in the beginning Finland’s official policy was that the refugees should go back. When it became obvious that this would not be possible for most of the exiles, measures to take care of the new comers had to be taken, partly with the help of the international refugee regime.

The asylum offered in those days was in most cases a practical asylum. Refugees were allowed to stay in Finland without being granted any official status individually. Only those who stayed more permanently received identification documents. Those who returned quickly were often not even listed or registered. The system concerning the legal status of refugees being worked out by the League tried to regulate and
standardize this particular situation by creating model documents and by establishing definitions.

The supplies delivered by international bodies to Finland were of the utmost importance when the crisis was at its most acute phase. It took a few years for the Finnish authorities to establish a governmental refugee assistance organization. Even that agency more or less depended on relief material from abroad.

The work on establishing the legal status of refugees, including travel documents, was something unseen before. It was conducted consistently throughout the whole decade. Although Finland was the first state to adopt officially the Nansen passport, the Finnish authorities were not particularly eager to issue those documents even though the need in the country was great. It seems that many of the Russian refugees wanted to travel on from Finland, further away from the Soviet Union.

The number of exiles in Finland decreased rapidly towards the end of the decade, partly due to the unofficial return of refugees, and partly because of people moving to third countries, encouraged by the refugee passport system of the LON.

The most visible administrative outcome of the decade was the creation of the network of officials which was extended to all countries involved with refugee problems. Nansen had a tremendous personal role in these networking operations. Finland had both the High Commissioner's representative as well as an official designated by the Government for communication with the League in Helsinki.

Although the achievements of specific organizations and agencies in the field of social rights and migration have been recognized, the enduring nature of the LON’s refugee work specifically has been left almost unexplored. And yet, as can be seen on the basis of the preceding discussion, it was specifically the LON’s refugee work, taking into account its sensitive and border crossing nature, that can be singled out from amongst the mass of other achievements during the 1920s. The problems were acute and burning compared to any other issue to be solved by the world organizations. Immediate interventions were sometimes needed in order to avoid mass starvation or political and social unrest. In many cases, the physical security and integrity of people was at stake.
4. IDEAS ON A PROACTIVE APPROACH 1931-1939; NANSEN’s LEGACY

4.1. Previous Principles and new Human Rights Motivations

The refugee problems of the 1930s were not as massive by size as they had been in the previous decade. They were, nevertheless, politically more significant. Issues concerning refugees became known also to the general reading public. The problems and the responses to them had some similar characters as in the 1920s, but some differences also appeared.

There was a kind of an ambiguous attitude towards the people who were forced to leave their home in Europe during the 1930s. General public was very much in favour of giving necessary protection to those who were homeless, but the Governments had a different view. The desire to protect and promote human rights was among the variety of ways of thinking about international cooperation, but it was far from being the most important of these.\(^1\) In many cases people were travelling from a border to another.\(^2\) The authorities obviously had again their thoughts on possible political consequences, whereas individual citizens could think more of the humanitarian aspects.

Based on the discussions and motivation during the Inter-war period, it has been concluded that the difficulties of the refugees resembled a situation of a market failure. International regime with its principles and codes was needed, because national solutions alone could not solve the refugee problem. Lack of trust between nation states prevented the formation of bilateral agreements that might have alleviated the situation.\(^3\) According to Skran, the most obvious explanation for the formation of the international refugee regime is that a consensus of humanitarian principles inspired the international community to deal with the pressing relief problem.\(^4\) The assistance norm required that states help refugees in need. The asylum norm gave states the authority to grant or deny asylum to refugees. The initiatives of the international refugee regime

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1 Mazower 2009, 191
2 Nevalainen, 82
3 Skran, 94
4 Skran, 85
contributed to the development of the specific idea which was articulated clearly for the first time: refugees should be treated as a special kind of migrants.\textsuperscript{5}

The principles established in the 1920s had their continuation in a form or another during the 1930s. International politics in the 1930s was characterized by the rise of the Nazi-Germany. The principles that were laid down directly or indirectly were followed faithfully for the entire League existence. The main principles identified and separated from the mass of resolutions and other declarations were: The League accepted responsibility for protection of certain classes of refugees; the suggestions to render League’s protection to all categories of refugees were opposed. League intervention was on a temporary basis. League funds could be used only for administrative expenses. League’s organizations were expected to coordinate relief and settlement efforts without using any funds of the LON. These principles remained practically unchanged during the whole Inter-war period.\textsuperscript{6}

The preconditions meant that the system only applied to specified categories of refugees. Some refugees received international assistance, while others with equal needs did not. This was clearly a deviation from the humanitarian principle of the regime. There were some debates leading nowhere over this in the League. Finally the matters were effectively postponed so that they did not come forward until after the Second World War.\textsuperscript{7} According to Grahl-Madsen these principles “made the League involvement half-hearted”.\textsuperscript{8} In 1935 Norway proposed that the League should create a central organization with responsibility for all refugees regardless their origin. The proposal did not achieve support in the Assembly.\textsuperscript{9}

The actors of the international refugee regime responded to the German refugee crisis in a manner where confrontation with the Nazi-government was evaded. The regime concentrated on rule-making rather than dealing with the governments that frequently expelled refugees. Major T.F. Johnson, the Secretary General of the Nansen Office, made an initiative in 1934 to discuss with the German and French governments in this regard, but the Secretary General of LON was too hesitant to take action.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{5} Skran, 185
\textsuperscript{6} Grahl-Madsen 1983, 366; Simpson 1939, 192-197; see also Chapter 3.1.1.
\textsuperscript{7} Skran, 143-144
\textsuperscript{8} Grahl-Madsen 1983, 366
\textsuperscript{9} Grahl-Madsen 1983, 364; Simpson 1939, 216
\textsuperscript{10} Skran, 142
The situations producing refugees evolved during the 1930s and so did the thinking of the international community. The refugee situation of Germany was not generally considered to be a desperate one before 1938. Many thought that the problems could be solved through normal migration channels. The threatening circumstances produced by the 1938 incidents and the Evian Conference summoned by the United States as a consequence, required new thinking within the LON. It was considered mandatory to start negotiating with the German government as a part of the solution to problem of the people who had to travel out of their country. The idea was to influence the situation before the people became refugees.11

After Nansen’s death, the refugee work was completely reorganized. It was considered best to entrust the political and juridical side of the work to the regular organs of the League. International Nansen Office was established to bring the humanitarian side of the task to the implementation phase.12 It was pointed out in several connections in the 1930s, that juridical and political protection of the refugees should lay on the shoulders of the League. But in reality, it was the Nansen Office that took a dual role by carrying the responsibility of the political side of the work in the field.13

As a result of conflicting goals, refugee assistance by the League was a product of a series of compromises. It had to make sure that its programmes reflecting the policy choices did not offend any members.14 The significance of the League in handling issues concerning refugees was that it gave to these problems “certain uniformity by standardizing more or less the conditions, under which they present themselves internationally”.15 The tradition has prevailed. An analysis is that despite a few exceptional attempts to bridge the gap between the humanitarian refugee work and the international security and conflict management during that time, as well as after that, a division remained between these two. The international refugee regime was based on the separation of the humanitarian from the political. Even today, the modern UN refugee machinery is seen as non-political and neutral, conducting peaceful and humanitarian actions.16

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11 Skran, 245-247
12 Hansson I, 16-17
13 See e.g. Hansson I, 11
14 Skran, 275
15 Bourquin, 16
16 See e.g. Morris and Stedman, 69
The Committee on International Assistance to Refugees established by the League Council in 1936 stated in its report in January 1937 that one of the most important findings of its work was, that in all evidence gained, no satisfactory solutions for the extensive refugee problems could be found unless they were based on the principle of close cooperation between all states, whether Members of the League or not.17

The Committee of three18 set up according to the Assembly resolution came up with a report in May 1938. On the basis of the fact that the refugee problem was far from solved, the Committee saw that the coordinating role of the League would still be indispensable. The Committee also took a view that a single organization might be set up for a limited period of time, to take the place of the two existing organizations. The proposed organization would be directed by a person designated by the League, as the “High Commissioner for Refugees under the protection of the League of Nations”. It was the idea that he would be assisted by a small staff comprising neither refugees nor former refugees.19 It was important for the League to keep its impartiality in the eyes of countries like Nazi-Germany, even those were the ones causing the actual problems.

The League lacked a strong mandate for dealing with German refugee crisis. The Great Powers wanted to conduct a peaceful co-existence with Germany and that hampered the organization’s ability.20 The withdrawal of Germany was very damaging to the League’s prestige and image.21 Therefore, a great part of the work was done behind the scenes and stressing the detachment from the official League. However, everyone could see that the human rights issues were becoming on the top of the agenda. When the issue of refugees from Germany first came up at the League in October 1933, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands proposed that the League assist the refugees, without interfering in German internal affairs.22 There was no mentioning how this would be achieved, and it represented clearly the traditional thinking inherited from the 1920s. The Secretary General Joseph Avenol of France also

17 Minutes of the 90. Session of the Council of the LON (20.-24.1.1936), Annex 1576/OJ, 17th year, No 2, Feb 1936, 142
18 These were ad hoc committees most often consisting of three Member States’ representatives. Matters were usually handled confidentially in these Council committees-of-three, and often through direct discussion with the state concerned. See Pedersen 2007, 1100
19 Minutes of the 101. Session of the Council of the LON (9.-14.5.1938), 8th meeting 14.5./OJ, 19th year, No 5-6, May-June 1938, 365
20 Skran, 195
21 Skran, 207
22 Skran, 230
represented the cautious outlook and was very careful not to offend Germany.\textsuperscript{23} The success of some operations depended largely on the support of one or more Great Power. Sometimes the Great Powers were the driving force behind the schemes and their behavior contributed to the failures of the system.\textsuperscript{24}

There are strengths and capacities in the international community which can provide mandates for different tasks. Sometimes there can be competing mandates issued simultaneously. This was the situation when the US Government took the initiative to establish the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees in 1938. This can be interpreted as a respond to the growing feeling that not enough was being done by the international community on behalf of refugees.

The League was seen to have a special responsibility for those who fled from the Saar, beyond its general responsibility of a humanitarian character. This was because the inhabitants of the Saar were, in a sense, its former subjects. The League was expected accordingly to be prepared to meet from its budget all the expenses deriving from the maintenance and settlement of those refugees. The refugees from Germany and other countries were seen as a responsibility delegated to the League by the Members. The Saar refugees, however, were seen to be under direct responsibility of the League because of the special obligation.\textsuperscript{25}

In the beginning of his duties as the High Commissioner in 1933, James G. McDonald accepted the mandate given to him by the League and was content to stay within the strict guidelines given to him. He had a known background with understanding some of the German interests.\textsuperscript{26} In his position McDonald proved to be independent, demanding and energetic. He became disappointed with the separation from the League. He realized within couple of years that institutional changes alone would not solve the refugee problem. Frustrated enough, he made his resignation a show and a public appeal in order to draw attention to political side of the problem.\textsuperscript{27} His appeal raised quite a lot of attention in news media, especially in the United States.\textsuperscript{28} This was clearly the first time that the international refugee apparatus was able to draw public attention to the root causes of refugee problems and raise issues of human rights to the consciousness of the decision makers of the world.

\textsuperscript{23} Skran, 142
\textsuperscript{24} Skran, 183
\textsuperscript{25} Bentwich 1935, 128
\textsuperscript{26} Skran, 230-231
\textsuperscript{27} Letter of Resignation of James McDonald, High Commissioner for Refugees (Jewish and other) Coming from Germany addressed to the Secretary General of the League of Nations. London 27.12.1935; Skran, 232-234
\textsuperscript{28} Skran, 236
In his resignation letter James MacDonald expressed as his feeling, that efforts must be made to remove or mitigate the causes which create German refugees. This should be separated from the work of the High Commissioner’s Office. He also anticipated that it could not be a function of any other body assigned by the League. It would have been a political function, belonging to the League itself. MacDonald’s call for an end to human rights abuses within Germany was not completely wasted. In fact, MacDonald was one of the first people to advocate international measures to protect human rights. He believed that the abuse of human rights was not a domestic affair, but concerned the entire international community.

MacDonald wrote that the refugee problem should be tackled at its source of disaster because in the prevailing economic conditions of the world the recipient countries had only limited power to take care of refugees. This duty should belong to the League, which was the only possible association of states for the consideration of matters of common concern and such magnitude.

There were serious obstacles to the work. In order to enlarge the jurisdiction of the Nansen Office in the 1930s, a unanimous resolution of the League of Nations would have been required. But, even the prolongation of the life of the Nansen Office was already being fought by the Soviet Union because of the fact that it looked after the interests of White Russians, who were considered enemies of the Soviet state. The idea of broadening the jurisdiction of the Nansen Office was anticipated to meet additional opposition from the Rumanian and the Polish Governments, due to their fear that such action might involve greater interference by the League in their domestic affairs. It was also anticipated that Germany would not be willing to have any cooperation with an organization belonging directly to the League.

In the presence of the allegations of being politically oriented or biased, the President of the Nansen Office had to do his utmost to try to convince the international community, that the Office was totally non-political in the most absolute sense of the word. Therefore the position of the Office was compared to the neutrality of the Red Cross. In order to be more convincing the Assembly occasionally characterized the

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29 McDonald, vi
30 Skran, 257
31 McDonald, vi
32 Thompson II, 379-380
33 Hansson I, 23
work of the two refugee organizations, the High Commissioner and the Nansen Office, as being “vast in scope and eminently humanitarian”.  

Simpson wrote in 1939 that the reasons for the reluctance of the League in its refugee work were obvious. The League was an association of states aiming at universality, and in undertaking the protection of people driven by persecution from a given state it was bound to incur a certain amount of hostility from that state, an actual or potential state member. This important consideration was not operative when Fridtjof Nansen was first appointed, because the Soviet Republic was not a member of the League during that time. It was, however, strongly operative in the 1930s when the first High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany was appointed. Germany was then a Member of the Council.  

The activity of the Inter-Governmental Advisory Commission from the beginning of the 1930s, as well as the accuracy of the work of the Governing Body of the Nansen Office, brought about a number of resolutions and recommendations passed by the Assembly. A major part of these can be considered as policy guidelines. It was normally agreed that the Council took note of the Assembly’s resolutions and instructed the Secretary General to communicate them to the Governments concerned as well as to the Nansen Office. It must be noted, that many of these recommendations included elements that could be considered, at the least, extremely difficult to be implemented. An example of this was the recommendation to invite Governments and international organizations to resume their activities for obtaining funds for the Erivan Settlement Scheme in the end of 1932 when the Soviet Regime in this Armenian area had been more or less stabilized and in practice widely recognized.  

The League communicated all resolutions and recommendations as well as the conventions to the Members states. Replies were expected to some of them, especially to those including measures to be taken or commitments to be pledged. The replies didn’t always come fast. This was due to the political, legislative, and administrative procedures in respective countries. Sometimes there was probably no local bureaucracy involved, but the Governments wanted to postpone the answering for tactical reasons. Some of the requirements of the international community could not

34 The League from year to year (1936), 228
35 Simpson 1939, 191-192
36 Minutes of the 69. Session of the Council of the LON (3.10.-19.12.1932)/OJ, 13th year, No 12 (partII), December 1932, 1934
37 Late replies see e.g. Polish reply to request concerning the application of the Nansen stamp system; OJ,14th year, No3, March1933, 484
be met by all countries involved with the refugee problems. In some cases the local national authorities must have been uninterested.

Some rejections, however, were grounded with a good cause. The US Government was a regular example of this. In its reply to the Secretary General on one of the recommendations the State Department in 1933 stated that “under existing laws” the American Government was not in a position to give effect to the proposed recommendation. However, the US Government did not completely refuse the proposed privileges, provided that internal (US) legal aspects will be fulfilled.38 This could be interpreted that the US Government was willing to give protection and aid to the refugees, but only on its own conditions.

A typical answer was the one from the Danish Government in September 1933. The reply contained five lines and at the end of it the representative of the Government stated: “…for the rest, the report does not give any rise to other observations by the Danish Government….” 39 In the same volume of the Official Journal even sarcasm could be recognized. The Yugoslav Government stated in its reply: “The Royal Government, as it has duly informed the League of Nations Secretariat, has always applied the recommendation embodied in this chapter”.40

The international economic recession brought its own characters to the guidelines and appeals of the League to the Governments. The Assembly recommended in its 15th ordinary Session in September 1934 that governments should put credits at the disposal of the Nansen Office in order to settle unemployed refugees in countries which were willing to receive them. The Council further requested the Secretary General to ask the Governments concerned to inform the Secretariat as to what action they think can be taken on the recommendation.41

James McDonald was appointed the High Commissioner from a non-member state in order to maintain the relation between the League and Germany. Perhaps it was thought that for the Germans it would be easier to negotiate with an American. Without a closer link to League, the High Commissioner found that he did not have enough authority and background support.42 McDonald resigned and Germany left the League almost simultaneously in 1935. With these events it became obvious for the League

38 See e.g. OJ, 14th year, No10(part I), October 1933, 1169-1170
39 OJ, 15th year, No 1, January 1934, 92
40 OJ, 15th year, No 1, January 1934, 93-94
41 Minutes of the 84. session of the Council of the LON (11.-21.1.1935), 1st meeting 11.1.1935, item 3511/OJ, 16the year, No 2, Feb 1935
42 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 363
Council by 1936, that the mandate given to the High Commissioner was not strong enough. The separation of the High Commissioner from the League weakened its ability to assist refugees. Therefore the next High Commissioner was officially appointed by the League and more closely attached to its structures.43

In the 1930s the ILO disliked the idea of being involved in the politically sensitive questions of German refugees. However, the ILO had its representatives in the IAC throughout the decade. The Governing Body made note on the reports of the Committee given to the League Council.44 The ILO was involved in large-scale migration studies which were conducted in several parts of the globe. This made the IAC to recommend closer cooperation between Nansen Office and the Labour Office in 1935. The scope was in the matters belonging to the core competence of the ILO, i.e. employment, transportation, and other related matters, where the expertise of the ILO could be best used.45 Also students and agricultural workers were seen as a part of the ILO’s core competence.46

In the 1930s the ILO had its representatives in the Nansen Office’s Governing Body. The ILO was represented in the IGAC as well, and the persons involved were the same during 1929-32.47 The ILO seems to have had very little in common with the High Commissioner for German Refugees. Since the High Commissioner’s office was quite independent and distant from the LON, it didn’t have natural channels to the Labour Organization either.

Not much had been moving in the ILO in the first years of the 1930s as far as refugee policy was concerned. In 1933 the League Council made a proposal to the Governing Body of the ILO on cooperation in refugee matters. ILO was requested to lend its help to the LON within the limits of its competence.48 The ILO had had some touch to the German refugee matters while making surveys on employment situation of intellectual workers in different countries. There was unclarity among the members of the Governing Body on what could be done. The outcome of the deliberations was that the results of all studies could be shared with refugee organizations, although it was

43 Skran, 237
44 Minutes of the 73. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1935, 477
45 Minutes of the 74. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1936, 186-187
46 Minutes of the 74. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1936, 76
47 Minutes of the 46. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1929, 557-558; Minutes of the 55. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1932, 546
48 OB, Vol 18, 1933, 399
not known, what the usefulness of that data could be. The Governing Body of the ILO would have preferred the Nansen Office as the competent organization. It would have also enabled the cooperation between the ILO and the League on German refugees. The situation was, however, such that the HC had the responsibility and the two organizations remained distant from each other.

At the end of the Inter-war period, the Evian Conference was convened. The Governing Body of the ILO was at first reluctant to participate. Some pressure was required from the side of Leon Jouhaux to produce a decision to send the Vice Director General of the Labour Office to the Conference as an observer. The Conference recognized in its resolution the invaluable work done by the Labour Organization. The migration studies prepared by the Labour Office were considered as the basis of the refugee work, and the IGCR was supposed to cooperate with the existing organizations, including the ILO. The Director General of the ILO was called upon to participate to the meetings of the IGCR when his expertise was required.

It seems that the ILO did not have any particular budget allocation for the refugee work during the 1930s. The measures taken on behalf of refugees were included in the “normal duties” of the Labour Organization, e.g. in field of migration studies, and so were the funds. The only connections where the ILO had to be present when politics and the financing of the refugee policy were discussed were in its representation in the advisory organs of the Nansen Office and the IGCR.

In 1932, after being “Mr. ILO”, and thus having assured the organization’s strong presence in the world for thirteen years, Albert Thomas suddenly died. This, together with the loss of Nansen, had an impairing effect on the refugee work, especially when it happened during a period of economic recession. The successor of Thomas as the Director General, and his deputy since the birth of the Organization, Harold Butler of Britain, was soon confronted by the Great Depression with its resulting massive unemployment. Butler took over the duties in the international committees and other organizations as the representative of the ILO. During this period, ILO’s work was marked by the confrontation between workers' and employers' representatives on the role of the Nansen Office and the IGCR.

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49 Minutes of the 64. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1933, 418
50 Ibid.; Stoessinger 1956, 37-38
51 Minutes of the 84. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1938, 26; Leon Jouhaux was one of the founders and leaders of the anti-nazi Centre of International Freedom and Justice in Germany; see Mammach, Klaus: Die Deutsche Antifasistische Widerstandsbewegung 1933-1939. Berlin 1974, 187
52 Minutes of the 85. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1938, 54 and 155
53 Simpson 1939, 226
54 Thompson I, 26-37
subject of the reduction of working hours, without any visible results. In 1934 the United
States became a Member of the ILO. This made some contemporary thinkers propose
that it was the ILO which should take the responsibility and the leadership for the
international refugee work. Because of the advantage of the American membership,
the ILO was considered to be better equipped to deal with the problem of political
exiles in a more effective and comprehensive way.55

At the end of the 1930s the ILO was proposed again to take leadership of the
refugee work. It was obvious that the present organizations could not handle properly
the refugee questions which were heavily politicized. The new organization was
supposed to handle all groups of refugees.56 It could be observed from the documents
of the ILO already during the previous decade, that there were worries about the
refugees getting at the mercy of private employment exchanges and other even more
suspicious entrepreneurship.57 The overall motivation, however, continued to be to
courage the refugees to become valuable individuals rather than burdens in their
new societies.58 The only realistic possibility to create an ILO-coordinated refugee
organization would have been to include all refugees universally to the scope of the
regime. By the end of the 1930s the opposition against any refugee work undertaken
by the ILO had grown drastically, and it was not possible to achieve any consensus on
assuming the wide responsibilities that the refugee work would have imposed to the
organization.

Some refugees had even more serious problems than just unemployment. Old age
and disabilities made the living hard for many. It was almost impossible to try to find a
favourable solution to these problems on a national level, since after the war the
inability to normal work was huge problem in many countries. The ILO tackled the
questions of the social security and working safety of foreigners in many connections.
Although refugees were not specifically mentioned in these connections, they were of
course “included”, since they were aliens residing abroad.59

Michael Hansson, president of the Nansen Office 1936-1938 also shared his
countryman Nansen’s view of the appropriate role of a refugee agency. In his public
appearances, he constantly stressed the humanitarian and non-political character of
refugee work. In contrast to this, some actors in the international refugee regime

55 Thompson II, 378
56 Thompson II, 380
57 Records of Proceedings of the 11. Session of the ILC, 1928, 201
58 E.g. Minutes of the 24. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1924, 330
59 See e.g. Records of Proceedings of the 18. Session of the ILC, 1934, 435
challenged the idea that the refugee agencies should be politically passive. In fact personalities like James McDonald even argued that fulfillment of the humanitarian principle sometimes required stepping to the domain of state sovereignty because the circumstances required this. The background for this perception was the simple observation that assisting refugees necessitated addressing the root causes of a refugee movement.60

After the Evian conference the IGCR represented the new hope of handling the situation with a political solution. IGCR was harnessed with the dual task of negotiating with Germany over departure conditions of refugees, as well as arranging with host governments for places of settlement. George Rublee, the director of the IGCR, devoted most of his time to the first assignment. The biggest issue was the practice by which the German government confiscated most of the emigrants’ capital before their departure. Rublee indeed was able to negotiate with the Germans. His ideas were known as the Rublee Plan. At one point, German government came up with their own modified plan known as the Schacht Plan, and finally a coordinated model was discussed. This all came too late, at the edge of the war in 1939. Consequently, everything concerning refugee aid was postponed until the post-war time.61

Even though the German refugee problem was not among the biggest by numbers during the Inter-war period, it was very visible. One of the reasons for this was the fact that a large number of the German refugees consisted of intellectuals, some of them quite distinguished and famous. The academic society in many countries linked up for action. The Academic Assistance Council was founded already in June 1933 in order to protect and help people with academic professions forced to leave Germany without any certainty of how to make their living in a new country. The Society for Protection of Science and Learning worked for the same purposes since its creation in 1937.62 The treatment of certain academic professionals and the forced migration of the scholars and scientists from the German universities roused the free people of the world to an understanding of the persecution and refugee issues. Before the Second World War this had bigger public influence than any other happening or outrage of the Nazis.63

The results of the academic assistance were concrete. In 1933-35 of approximately 650 scholars who migrated from Germany, 287 were placed permanently in some 30

60 Skran, 229-230
61 Skran, 247-255
63 Bentwich 1953, 9
countries, and 336 were placed temporarily. All the deliberations conducted around the intellectuals contributed to the fact that the human rights issues were more acknowledged and the international community on the whole became aware of them.

4.2. The Response to New Requirements

4.2.1. “Pre-Hitler and Post-Hitler” Refugees

If the 1920s could be characterized by naming it the decade of reconstruction, the following decade was definitely politicized. This was also reflected to the refugee questions. Refugees were seen as a result of ongoing political processes. The responses to the refugee problems, when they occurred, were at least partly paralyzed because of these same processes. Sometimes politics disturbed or even prevented proper handlings of the issues.

During the years 1929-32 the League didn’t show much activity in refugee matters. For example, the flow of Mennonites from Soviet Russia in 1929 did not cause much reaction. Then, suddenly in 1933 everything changed. Stoessinger has described the situation by saying that refugees have their own way of counting time: “Pre-Hitler and Post-Hitler”. In contrast to the refugees of the 1920s, who were driven from their home countries quite fast and suddenly, refugees from Germany left over a longer period in waves: the rise of Hitler in 1933, the creation of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, as well as the Anschluss and Kristallnacht in 1938 were the most apparent push factors. This could have had given the international refugee regime some time to get prepared.

The Weimar republic was quite liberal in political sense and Jews had fairly good economic, religious and cultural status in the German society. The governmental offices and universities were open for them. Jews themselves were mainly loyal to the

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64 Bentwich 1953, 13
65 Frings, 25
66 Stoessinger 1956, 34
67 Skran, 49
republic, and there was quite little enthusiasm on Zionism. Although the matters are very much disputed, there seems to be quite little real evidence of serious large-scale native anti-Semitism of the Germans. The beginning of the change took place in 1933 when Nazis came to power.68

Discrimination and violence started fairly soon after the Nazis took over in Germany. The terror and atrocities were directed mostly to Jews but also to other minorities. Since the Nazi Party became the only legal political party in the country, its political opponents became targets. The refugees coming from Germany can be roughly divided in two categories: 1) non-Aryans, leaving the country for legislative reasons, and 2) political refugees, who were opposed in other practical terms.69 The Communist Party had been made illegal by the end of May 1933, and the leaders of it had been expelled, incarcerated, or killed. After this the attack was targeted to social democrats and trade unions. The attack against the church was delayed. The Evangelicals and the Catholics had somewhat different treatment in this respect.

The first wave of refugees was seen already in 1933. There were many prominent artists and scientists among these refugees. 1935 Nuremberg laws and 1938 Anschluss caused visible peaks in the statistics. In late the 1930s Gestapo was often the push factor.70 The persecution of the Jews took place in waves. Sometimes the happenings were spontaneous, organized by the Sturmabteilungs, later also some more systematic campaigns took place.71 The Nazi Government even had some concerns on the negative impact of the treatment of the Jews to the foreign trade. It can be said, however, that the persecution became more intensive as time went on.72 The anti-Semitism was an official governmental policy. In the beginning, the emigration of the Jews was favored by the neighboring countries. Therefore, in the early 1930s, it was fairly easy for Jewish refugees to settle in other countries with their assets. When German borders were closed from financial assets, the sympathy for these exiles also decreased.73

All became too evident in 1935 when the Nürnberg laws were issued. The Jews were denied of citizenship. The discrimination assumed systematic forms. This

68 Rautkallio 2004, 77 and 99
69 Thompson I, 45
70 Torvinen, 30-36
71 Rautkallio 2004, 81
72 Rautkallio 2004, 82-83
73 Simpson 1939, 127
development culminated in the Reichskristallnacht on 9.-10.11.1938. The leadership of the Nazis was behind of the happenings or at least aware of the arrangements. The first gatherings to the concentrations camps also took place in the 1930s. Paradoxically enough, the Zionists in Germany had been very enthusiastic about the segregation of the Jews from German society, aiming to have their own pureblood Jewish nation and state.74

Another paradox is, that Nazi-Germany was a fairly open state. Domestic and foreign media was able to make news coverage on treatment of the Jews as it happened, realistically and timely. The treatment of the Jews was quite well known all over the world.75 That was probably good on the one hand, and bad on the other: Jews received some sympathy in other countries, but the official states and governments remained reserved having a fear of escalating the delicate international political set-up.

For the Nazis, the Jewish question was racial rather than religious. Belonging to Jewish religion was seen as an evidence of representing certain race.76 The race was also emphasized in the legislation, where there were references to blood lines. The Nurnberg laws defined Jews as subjects of Germany, but not citizens. After 1938 Decree the Jews were not considered to be any kind of Germans. Then it was already impossible for the Jews to obtain passports.77

Also the Jews who still had German citizenship and were carrying a German passport were in trouble while travelling abroad. Some states could admit them into the country only if they had another visa to a third country on their passport. The fear was that they could apply for an asylum. This gave the authorities an excuse for a denial of entry.78 The German National Socialist Propaganda Minister Dr. Joseph Göbbels stated in 1938 that some 180.000 people, mainly Jews had left the Third Reich during recent years, but there were still about 700.000 Jews in Germany, who must leave the country.79

The German government made a somewhat complicated arrangement with the Jewish organizations for the financing of the resettlement from Germany to Palestine. Those who wanted to emigrate from Germany had to deposit a considerable sum of

74 Rautkallio 2004, 101
75 Rautkallio 2004, 41
76 Simpson 1939, 130
77 Torvinen, 34-36; Simpson 1939, 135
78 Leitzinger II, 187
79 Hansson II
money on a German bank account. The emigrants lost part of their deposit, and the benefit was at least partly confiscated by the German authorities. This Ha’avara agreement (signed 1933) was not even the most unbefitting arrangement from viewpoint of the emigrants. Those who were rich did not want to move to Palestine in conditions that they considered primitive. Instead they wanted to move to the USA or Britain, having to tolerate the prices for the arrangements which were much higher than the one for Palestine.80

The definitions denied German citizenship from persons of Jewish or other “non-German blood”. The Nazi programme further demanded that “anyone who is not citizen of the State may live in Germany only as a guest and must be regarded as being subject to foreign laws”.81 Sicherheitsdienst had deliberations with the Zionist organizations, both openly and in discretion. The common goal was the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.82

The biggest receiving countries were Britain and France. Palestine and the USA received most of those who went overseas.83 The Jewish organizations implemented a programme according to which the refugees were received in the first place of refuge, and then transferred in a coordinated manner to somewhere with a permanent settlement in sight.84 In some recipient countries the classification according to the religion or “race” as Jewish was the most important criteria. In some countries (e.g. Finland), however, the “jewishness” was a secondary criterion of classification, the primary being the country of origin.85

The German refugee problem was significant by its nature. The attack against the dissidents and other “undesirables” by the Nazis was so openly severe that it raised reactions. In normal times the replanting of these intellectual and energetic emigrants in other countries would have been an easy task, not calling for any organized international effort. But the coinciding economic crisis made the times more difficult and the task more substantial.86

The German Government dissociated itself, for obvious reasons, from the international refugee cooperation. It agreed, however, to give written recommendations to those of its subjects who were refused a renewal of their German passport. This type

80 Rautkallio 2004, 112-113
81 McDonald, Annex, 2
82 Rautkallio 2004, 115-116
83 Vernant, 60
84 Simpson 1939, 142
85 See Rautkallio 2004, 235
86 Bentwich 1935, 125
of document was required by the authorities in several states before they could issue a document of identity and travel to a foreigner.87

The Ministers of economics of Germany and Austria had negotiations with the Director of the IGCR George Rublee on the arrangement that would have guaranteed a possibility for some 400,000 Jews the right to move out from Germany. In a counterbalance these emigrants would have worked in foreign countries for the benefit of German exports.88 The plan never materialized, but the essential thing was that the talks were conducted by the person assigned by international community. Normally it was the duty for the “intergovernmental officials” to try to keep the people in their own home country, or get them back there if they had fled. It could be even stated, that in this point, that Mr. Rublee showed some far-sightedness beyond his normal official duties and mandate.

All together, at least 150,000 Jews moved from Germany during 1933-1938.89 For the most part of the 1930s, the borders of the recipient countries remained open for them. The British government had to restrict access to Palestine because of the need of the support of the Arab governments.90 However, the estimates on the volumes of the refugees coming from Germany vary a lot. The numbers come to results between 135,000 and 500,000. Apparently 90 % of the refugees were Jews.91

Another way of classifying the refugees was to try to identify the reason for the exile. In 1935 this was estimated in the following way92:

- Jews ......................... 60,000-65,000
- Social democrats ........... 5,000-6,000
- Communists ................... 6,000-8,000
- Pacifists and democrats ....... 2,000
- Catholics ........................ 1,000
- For various reasons ........ 2,000

When the refugees started to appear in the neighboring countries in 1933, it was not easy to distinguish them from normal travelers. In some cases it was advisable for organizations and authorities to inflate the numbers. Sometimes they would be

87 Bentwich 1935, 27
88 Rautkallio 2004, 124
89 Rautkallio 2004, 119
90 Rautkallio 2004, 122
91 E.g. Torvinen, 38; Simpson 1939, 142
92 See Toller, 387
minimized for a reason or another. Also people in transit would confuse the statistics.\textsuperscript{93} While leaving Germany, the refugees could have either ordinary passport, a passport without possibility to return or a passport of a stateless traveler. Some didn’t have any travel documents. After 1938 Jews didn’t get any new passports and the old ones were invalidated. It was therefore impossible for them to get any foreign visas.\textsuperscript{94} France and Czechoslovakia were the only countries where these refugees were granted admission without any difficulties, often even without valid identity documentation.\textsuperscript{95}

The German refugee problem was first addressed in the International Labour Conference in 1933. The workers’ representatives of the neighboring states Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, and France had drafted a resolution for the conference to be adopted. Reference was made to the political situation of Germany. The economic picture was grim in many countries due to the recession, and the refugees coming from Germany were worsening the situation. Resolution made an appeal to the Labour Organization to start taking measures to alleviate the conditions.\textsuperscript{96} The representative of Holland referred to the traditions of freedom of his country and stressed that racial matters should not form an obstacle in solving the problem.\textsuperscript{97}

In some countries organizations were formed to unravel the question. The ILO was advised to cooperate with those national organizations.\textsuperscript{98} The representative of France Mr. Leon Jouhaux supported strongly the actions for the refugees, without interfering the internal politics of Germany.\textsuperscript{99} A common view was that the refugee questions should be handled, no matter what the attitudes towards Germany and its government were.\textsuperscript{100}

In the middle of the 1930s tens of thousands were seeking ways to flee abroad. Many were prepared to sacrifice their savings in order to do that. The official restrictions on export of capital effectively closed the gates, and the borders of most countries were closed against fugitives with no money. Nevertheless, because the pressure was not relieved, those who could were leaving Germany.\textsuperscript{101} The Jewish

\textsuperscript{93} Torvien, 37  
\textsuperscript{94} Simpson 1939, 143-144  
\textsuperscript{95} Toller, 390  
\textsuperscript{96} Records of Proceedings of the 17. Session of the ILC, 1933, 421 and 508-509  
\textsuperscript{97} Records of Proceedings of the 17. Session of the ILC, 1933, 421-423  
\textsuperscript{98} Records of Proceedings of the 17. Session of the ILC, 1933, 423 and 427  
\textsuperscript{99} Records of Proceedings of the 17. Session of the ILC, 1933, 428  
\textsuperscript{100} Records of Proceedings of the 17. Session of the ILC, 1933, 421-429  
\textsuperscript{101} McDonald, v
philanthropic organizations used huge sums of money to get the Jews out of Germany and to find a refuge elsewhere, temporarily or permanently.  

As a result of the handlings in the ILO, a resolution of the Labour Conference on refugees was presented to the League. ILO didn’t take immediate practical action in the matter. Some studies on the position of refugee intelligentsia were made same year. The ILO was using same principles as in the 1920s, despite the long period of inactivity in refugee matters.  

The LON started soon preparing for a new organization for solving of the problem. The German government opposed the project such fiercely, that it became too distant and independent from the League and thus inefficient. The German refugee problem as such was not discussed much in the League Council, in fact it was addressed only minimally. The Council handled the obligatory matters such as nominations and establishment of organizations. Nothing referring to the political system of Germany producing the movements of refugees was discussed. Only long after Germany had left the League and the actions of Hitler made it evident that there may be a bigger conflict in making, the League Council was activated.

The Jewish question was essentially larger than just the deteriorating situation of Jews in Germany producing refugees as a visible indication of minorities’ ill-treatment. The position of Jews in many other European countries started a discussion of “national rights” for Jews in more general terms. The Committee of three exchanged views in the beginning of 1938 on the desirability of extending the authority of the High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany to cover refugees coming from the territory which formerly constituted Austria. The British Government pointed out in their letter to the Secretary General in April same year, that it was increasingly difficult to distinguish between the refugees coming from Germany and those coming from Austria. The matter was brought before the Council in May. As a result of the

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102 Thompson II, 387  
103 Records of Proceedings of the 17. Session of the ILC, 1933, 515  
104 Stoessinger 1956, 36  
105 Minutes of the 64. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1933, 417-418  
106 See Minutes of the 64. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1933, 419-421  
107 Thompson I, 45-46  
108 Mazower 2009, 107-108  
109 Minutes of the 101. Session of the Council of the LON (9.-14.5.1938), 3rd meeting 11.5./OJ, 19th year, No 5-6, May-June 1938, 311  
110 Minutes of the 101. Session of the Council of the LON (9.-14.5.1938), Annex 1718./OJ, 19th year, No 5-6, May-June 1938, 601
deliberations, the Council adopted a resolution which authorized the High Commissioner to interpret his mandate to be applied to refugees coming from Austria, until a final decision on the subject has been taken by the Assembly. In the discussion concerning the matter it was noted that the major part of these refugees were Jewish.\textsuperscript{111}

The High Commissioner was asked to consult the Governments concerned on the subject of the application to refugees coming from Austria of the provisions of the Convention concerning refugees coming from Germany (10.2.1938), and if necessary of the Provisional Arrangement of 4.7.1936 on the same subject. The High Commissioner drafted an Additional Protocol to be examined by the Governments concerned, with the purpose that the document will put the refugees from Austria legally to the same category with the German refugees. The case of the German refugee was thus defined by the Convention of 1938 at Geneva. The difficult, long and complicated definition was seen to cover also groups of people inside Germany – notably the inmates of concentration camps who certainly did not enjoy the protection of the German Government.\textsuperscript{112}

In January 1939 both French and British Governments communicated a request to the Council asking the League to consider the possibility of extending the powers of the High Commissioner to refugees from the territory formerly part of the Czechoslovakia which had become a part of the German Reich and did not enjoy the protection of the German or the Czecho-Slovak Government. The Council authorized the High Commissioner provisionally to act in accordance with the arrangements and protocols concerning the refugees coming from Germany when dealing with these above mentioned refugees. The matter was to be taken to the Assembly later same year for official decision.\textsuperscript{113}

As a result of a referendum, the Saar territory was returned to Germany in 1935. The plebiscite held in the Saar territory in January 13, 1935, supervised by the League, resulted to the clear victory of the votes for joining with Germany. Francophile persons and other opponents of the Nazi regime fled the Saar territory. France started almost immediately receiving fugitives who felt themselves threatened. France took an active role in speaking for the Saar refugees. It required action from the League to help these

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{111} Minutes of the 101. Session of the Council of the LON (9.-14.5.1938), 8th meeting 14.5./OJ, 19\textsuperscript{th} year, No 5-6, May-June 1938, 367-368
  \item \textsuperscript{112} Simpson 1939, 609
  \item \textsuperscript{113} Minutes of the 104. Session of the Council of the LON (16.-20.1.1939) 3\textsuperscript{rd} meeting 17.1./OJ, 20\textsuperscript{th} year, No 2 Feb 1939, 72
\end{itemize}
people. As a result of this, the Nansen Office started issuing passports for the refugees and preparing for their resettlement to Paraguay.

The French government announced that it would receive the fugitives, but at the same time it urged that the responsibility on the emigration should be taken by the League of Nations. It had to be the League’s mission to prevent the expansion of the problem. This was supposed to be done by securing the strict observance of the undertakings of Germany so that it would not act upon those who had voted against reunion. The enforcement by the Council of the League and the Permanent Court of Arbitration had a central role in those undertakings.\footnote{Bentwich 1935, 1218}

The French Government asked in January 18, 1935 that the question of refugees coming from the Saar should be placed on the agenda of the 84th session of the Council. The Council decided to take the item on the agenda of the present session. In its letter and accompanying aide-memoire the French Government pointed out that despite the declarations of the German Government and the international guarantees a practical problem was arising. The French speaking Saarlanders did not trust those promises. The position of the League was different in this case than in any of the other refugee questions. The League had administrated the Saar territory for fifteen years, and the people had been some sort of subjects of the League. Therefore the French Government saw that now the League had special obligations towards the people who had taken refuge.\footnote{Minutes of the 84. Session of the Council of the LON (11.-21.1.1935), 3rd meeting 18.1., Item 3537 and Annex 1532/OJ, 16th year, No 2, Feb 1935}

In the 84th session of the Council the Secretary General reminded the Council that the League budget contained no available credit to which expenditure for the maintenance and settlement of the Saar refugees could be charged. Should the next Assembly decide to add to the budget by opening special appropriations for that purpose, they would not be available before the beginning of 1936.\footnote{Minutes of the 84. Session of the Council of the LON (11.-21.1.1935), 3rd meeting 21.1., Item 3557/OJ, 16th year, No 2, Feb 1935}

The Secretary General sent a note to the members of the Council proposing that the League should entrust the work of dealing with the refugees from the Saar to the Nansen International Office.\footnote{Minutes of the 86, Session of the Council of the LON (20.-25.5.1935) 4t meeting 24.5., item 3593/OJ, 16th year, No 6, June 1935} The proposal was regarded as accepted by normal League procedures. Since the fugitives were French, the procedures concerning the Saar refugees were effective and quick. The League Assembly decided to put the

\begin{footnotes}
\item Bentwich 1935, 1218
\item Minutes of the 84. Session of the Council of the LON (11.-21.1.1935), 3rd meeting 18.1., Item 3537 and Annex 1532/OJ, 16th year, No 2, Feb 1935
\item Minutes of the 84. Session of the Council of the LON (11.-21.1.1935), 3rd meeting 21.1., Item 3557/OJ, 16th year, No 2, Feb 1935
\item Minutes of the 86, Session of the Council of the LON (20.-25.5.1935) 4t meeting 24.5., item 3593/OJ, 16th year, No 6, June 1935
\end{footnotes}
responsibility of the protection and care of the Saar refugees to the Nansen Office, not to the High Commissioner. The Arrangement of 24 May 1935 extended the provision of Nansen Passports to the Saar refugees. These people were thus added to the list of people whose sufferings the League was attempting to alleviate. Even the Saarlanders were regarded as having a special claim, the assistance of the League was not considered very satisfactory. This was only in proportion to the insignificant funds at its disposal. The most effective help still came from France. In retrospective, the help to the Saar refugees must be considered very prompt and effective compared to any other operation undertaken by the LON. When the pressures were in place and the task was not too overwhelming, results could be shown.

Iraq was the only mandated territory to be granted independence through collective agreement. The country was admitted the membership of the League in October 1932 after being under British administration since the end of the First World War. Studies have shown, nevertheless, how limited the withdrawal of the British administration was. The independence was granted only with extensive British military and economic presence. The existence of the State of Iraq was a result of international or intergovernmental deliberations and quite unique development as such. The reservations directed against this “quasi-statehood” were for its own part based on the fears related to the fragile status of the minorities in Iraq. This, in turn, may be interpreted as one of the main reasons and primary impetus for the international attention the (internal) refugees finally received in the League and elsewhere.

The Permanent Mandates Commission was deeply uneasy about the tens of thousands of Assyrians who were considered to be especially vulnerable. They were Christians, Britain’s wartime allies, and for a large part already displaced and dispersed among the Muslim population. After reaching no acceptable covering arrangement the international community had to witness deterioration of the Assyrian situation. The crisis escalated with an armed group of Assyrian men clashing with Iraqi troops. Local Muslims looted Assyrian homes and finally the army massacred hundreds of Assyrian men. As a consequence, the League searched, with limited success, for a state willing to accept the remnants of the Assyrians.

118 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 363
119 Walters, 597
121 Pedersen 2010, 976-977
122 Pedersen 2010, 995
123 Pedersen 2010, 997-999
The Government of Iraq produced a letter to the Secretary General in December 1933 explaining how peaceful the situation was and how impossible it was for them to detect any problems of Assyrians. In fact, the problems seemed to be solved except some individual incidents, including the Assyrians refusing to work for their own relief. Iraq in practice passed the problem to the League. The League representatives in Iraq and elsewhere had a different opinion. Their gathering of the situation was that there should be a resettlement scheme created for those Assyrians who may wish to leave Iraq. It can be observed from the documentation, that for those who had already left Iraq, there was no hope for returning home. This would mean resettlement elsewhere as League’s remedy, rather than repatriation to Iraq.

In his Nobel speech Michael Hansson, the president of the Nansen Office, asked what will happen when the Spanish Civil War comes to an end. At that time there were enormous amounts of internal refugees in Spain, and it was anticipated that at some point the neighboring countries will have to receive large numbers of these political exiles. France was again anticipated to be the target country as many times before. Some organizations provided help; there was the International Commission for Aid to Refugee Children in Spain formed by several international actors. Also the League sent a mission to Spain to gather information on the situation in the late 1930’s. The indication was that there were as many as several millions of people who were living in conditions that would make them de facto refugees.

The question of Spanish refugees came up during the 95th session of the Council at the end of 1936. The Spanish Government sent an appeal to the Council on the basis of certain events. Several attempts to intervene with the atrocities taking place among displaced people had obviously occurred. The Spanish Government (representing the Falangists) stressed the fact that it was the duty of every State to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of other States. They also reminded that the Members of the League had recognized this duty in the Covenant. The Council in its resolution unanimously endorsed these principles. In the same resolution the Council, however, noted that there were problems of humanitarian character in connection with

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124 Minutes of the 78. Session of the Council of the LON (15.-20.1.1934), Annex 1495, Appendix III/OJ, 15th year, No 2 (part I), Feb 1934, 228-229
125 Minutes of the 78. Session of the Council of the LON (15.-20.1.1934), Annex 1495, Appendix III/OJ, 15th year, No 2 (part I), Feb 1934, 225-228
126 Hansson II
the present situation, in regard to which coordinated action of an international and humanitarian character is desirable as soon as possible.\textsuperscript{127}

The background for these deliberations was that a number of Spanish nationals had taken refuge in Embassies and Legations in Madrid. These people had a reason to be afraid for their lives, and they were offered protection by the Diplomatic Missions. This, in turn, was interpreted by the Spanish Government as a violation of the principle of non-interference. The representative of Spain required that if these refugees were to be evacuated, it should be placed “in the hands of some neutral organization which is beyond suspicion.” The International Red Cross Committee was considered an organization qualified for this task.\textsuperscript{128}

The initiative to take the issue to the agenda of the 96\textsuperscript{th} session of the Council came from the Government of Chile, sending a letter to the Secretary General concerning the situation of persons who had taken asylum in the Embassies and Legations. Later this request was endorsed by the Governments of Cuba and the Netherlands.\textsuperscript{129} It was brought forward in the Council that the movement of people fleeing from the area of hostilities was considerable and extended behind the whole fighting front. In January 1937 there were more than a million refugees, representing about 15\% of the population. In some places, the absorptive capacity was exhausted. A list of possible available places of accommodation was presented to the Council. It was reported that Madrid received refugees at the same time as almost half a million inhabitants of the city were evacuated elsewhere.\textsuperscript{130} The conditions in the country were simply chaotic.

The biggest obstacle for any action was the attitude of the Spanish Government. The main objection of the representative of Spain concerned international intervention, to which he could not agree. The Spanish Government raised no objection as to the actual evacuation of the refugees. However, it was the requirement of the representative of Spain that Spanish military forces should be responsible for the safety of the refugees and should guard them. This brought the situation to a dead end.\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{127} Minutes of the 95 (extraordinary) Session of the Council of the LON (10.-16.12.1937), 4\textsuperscript{th} meeting 12.12/OJ, 18\textsuperscript{th} year, No 1, Jan 1938, 18-19
\textsuperscript{128} Minutes of the 95 (extraordinary) Session of the Council of the LON (10.-16.12.1937), 4\textsuperscript{th} meeting 12.12/OJ, 18\textsuperscript{th} year, No 1, Jan 1938, 20
\textsuperscript{129} Minutes of the 96. Session of the Council of the LON (21.-27.1.1937), Annex 1631/OJ, 18\textsuperscript{th} year, No 2, Feb 1937, 135
\textsuperscript{130} Minutes of the 96. Session of the Council of the LON (21.-27.1.1937), 3\textsuperscript{rd} meeting 25.1./OJ, 18\textsuperscript{th} year, No 2, Feb 1937, 94
\textsuperscript{131} Minutes of the 96. Session of the Council of the LON (21.-27.1.1937), 5\textsuperscript{th} meeting 27.1./OJ, 18\textsuperscript{th} year, No 2, Feb 1937, 127
The deliberations were very extensive, obviously because all this happened in Europe, in the vicinity of the core areas of the League. However, these refugees were not abroad, and thus out of the reach of any intergovernmental organization unless the Spanish Government otherwise decided.

At the beginning of October 1936, a “National War Refugees Committee” was formed at Madrid as a controlling, executive and supervisory body. It was supposed to make general arrangements for the evacuation, as well as arrange distribution and accommodation of refugees. The Committee consisted of representatives of the various political parties in Spain as well as of local authorities.\textsuperscript{132} The peculiar thing is that the Government of Spain signed and thus joined the Provisional Arrangement concerning the status of Refugee coming from Germany (1936) in the middle of their own refugee crisis in January 1937.\textsuperscript{133}

The Spanish Government submitted a request to the Council in September 1938 for technical assistance in the study of measures for providing food supplies for refugees. The Government was faced with the grave and urgent problem of ensuring the supply of food during the coming winter for approximately three million displaced people. The Council authorized the Secretary General to institute a preliminary enquiry on the matter. In the same deliberation it was noted that there were similar needs on the both sides of the front lines.\textsuperscript{134} The most exceptional thing was that the Spanish authorities were requesting for help to people who were in their own country.\textsuperscript{135}

In 1938 it was reported that in France alone there were tens of thousands Spanish refugees. France had returned to Spain men between the age of 18 and 45, but had kept most of the comers. The refugees were looked after by an organization called the Comité d’Accueil which was organized by the French Trade Unions. The organization provided accommodation and relief without charge.\textsuperscript{136} On the whole, there were lots of discussions on Spanish refugees in the organs of the League. The course of the discussions confirmed by the research literature shows that the refugees coming from Spain remained without League protection.\textsuperscript{137} The LON Council virtually decided not to take action on behalf of the refugees coming from Spain and Fascist Italy. The League

\textsuperscript{132} Minutes of the 96. Session of the Council of the LON (21.-27.1.1937), Annex 1644/OJ, 18\textsuperscript{th} year, No 2, Feb 1937, 216
\textsuperscript{133} OJ, 18\textsuperscript{th} year, Nos 3-4, March-April 1937, 257
\textsuperscript{134} Minutes of the 103. Session of the Council of the LON (26.-30.9.1938) 2\textsuperscript{nd} meeting 30.9./OJ, 19\textsuperscript{th} year, No 11, Nov 1938, 875
\textsuperscript{135} see also OJ, 19\textsuperscript{th} year, No 12, Dec 1938, 1146-1150
\textsuperscript{136} Simpson 1939, 619
\textsuperscript{137} Grahl-Madsen 1983, 364
members and the Council did not want to provoke the fascist governments of those countries despite the call for help by the representatives of the Nansen Office in France.\footnote{Stoessinger 1956, 31-32. France was receiving most of the refugees from both of those countries}

The problem of the exiles from Italy was different from all other refugee problems during the Inter-war period. Generally, refugees are and were stateless in the common sense as well as from the legal point of view. However, the Italians were not stateless. They did not fall under the legal definition usually applied in these connections. As refugees, they were still Italian nationals and may have been in possessions of Italian passports. Their exile was purely political in character. They could have, in theory at least, terminated their exile if they were willing to submit to the Fascist State. One of the unofficial definitions for Italian refugee was “an Italian living abroad, who cannot return to his country without personal danger, because of his political activity against fascism”.\footnote{Simpson 1939, 117}

With an element of uncertainty, it is possible to estimate that the number of Italian refugees who fled from Fascism amounted to 800,000 during the Inter-war Period.\footnote{Toller, 388} There were tens of thousands Italian political refugees in France alone. The French Trade Union, the Confédération Générale du Travail, urged the French Government to help these exiles. In 1937 a meeting was held in Lyon, at which Italian refugees established an organization called the Unione Popolare Italiana to combine the efforts of the Italian political refugees and the anti-Fascists.\footnote{Simpson 1939, 618}

Dr. Giuseppe Nitti, in a report to the Simpson’s survey, defined Italian refugees in more categorical terms:

- Persons who have gone abroad to escape from political judgments given by Fascist Tribunals
- Persons who had crossed the frontier without passports to escape threatened legal proceedings
- Persons who have left Italy legally with passports but who no longer enjoy the protection of their Government\footnote{Simpson 1939, 118}

Simpson’s report, being virtually the only covering source of information on Italian refugees, divides the Italian political emigration falls into four periods: 1. The period between the march on Rome in October 1922 and 1926; 2. November 1926 – June

\footnote{Stoessinger 1956, 31-32. France was receiving most of the refugees from both of those countries}
\footnote{Simpson 1939, 117}
\footnote{Toller, 388}
\footnote{Simpson 1939, 618}
\footnote{Simpson 1939, 118}
1929; 3. June 1929 - July 1936; 4. Since July 1936.\textsuperscript{143} The Italian refugees never got a legal position by an international definition. A document, signed by a large number of well-known Italians abroad, was presented to the Intergovernmental Committee at Evian, asking for international recognition for Italian refugees, similar to the refugees coming from Germany.\textsuperscript{144} Nevertheless, the verdict of research has been that the refugees coming from Fascist Italy were unambiguously left without League's protection.\textsuperscript{145}

\subsection*{4.2.2. Nansen Office}

Fridtjof Nansen died in May 1930 at the age of 68 years. In the fall of the same year the League of Nations authorized the founding and the work of Nansen International Office for Refugees. The Office began its work in April 1931. In its mandate it was defined to be an autonomous body under the authority of the League.

The Inter-Governmental Advisory Commission for Refugees consisting of representatives of the Governments most directly concerned with the problem of refugees, held its second session in Geneva in the beginning of September 1930. The Commission decided after exhaustive examination, to propose that the Assembly should 1) entrust the political and legal protection of refugees to the League’s regular organs, and 2) create an International Office for Refugees to deal with the humanitarian work hitherto entrusted to the High Commissioner for Refugees. The Council decided to approve the report of the Commission in its 60\textsuperscript{th} Session and forward the question to the Assembly.\textsuperscript{146}

The Nansen Office was established to take charge of and carry out the humanitarian and relief work for a limited period of time. Although this was the original mandate of the Nansen Office, it was obvious that the Office had to intervene in political and legal questions from time to time, since it had representatives in different capitals, and the League didn’t.\textsuperscript{147} When the statutes for the Nansen Office were established in 1930, it

\begin{footnotes}
\item[143] Simpson 1939, 120
\item[144] Simpson 1939, 122-123
\item[145] Grahl-Madsen 1983, 364
\item[146] Minutes of the 60. Session of the Council of the LON (8.12.9.1930)/OJ, 11\textsuperscript{th} year, No 11, Nov 1930, 1309
\item[147] Grahl-Madsen 1983, 363; Simpson 1939, 211
\end{footnotes}
was understood that the refugee work will cover the following refugee groups officially defined by international arrangements: Russians, Armenians, Assyrians, Assyro-Chaldeans, as well as Turkish refugees.\textsuperscript{148}

The Council decided that the Statutes of the Nansen Office should be submitted to its approval. According to this, the Chairman of the Governing Body of the Office, Max Huber communicated the draft Statutes to the Secretary General. The same documents were also circulated to all members of the Council. The Council approved the Statutes in its 62nd Session in January 1931 and requested the Chairman and the Secretary General to take necessary measures for convening the Governing Body of the Office.\textsuperscript{149}

According to the Statutes, the organs of the Nansen International Office for Refugees became to be:

- The Governing Body
- The Managing Committee\textsuperscript{150}

Although the Nansen Office was to be an autonomous body, it was regulated by the Article 24 of the League Covenant. This Article dealt with the regulation of bureaus and commissions dealing with international matters.\textsuperscript{151} The report of the Nansen Office was considered each year by the Sixth Commission of the Assembly. A resolution was issued on the subject each year by the Assembly.\textsuperscript{152}

The Rules of Procedure of the Nansen International Office for Refugees were published in the Official Journal in April 1931. All other regulative documentation of the new refugee organization was presented in the same issue. On the basis of the League material, it was the first time that any refugee establishment showed such openness and transparency in its establishment and planned activities. The capacity, mandates, and tasks of the Governing Body, The Managing Committee, as well as the Administrative Secretariat were duly defined, regulated, and documented.\textsuperscript{153} Also the members of each of the bodies were listed. The Governing Body had members appointed by the IGAC, the Secretary General, the ILO, the Advisory Committee of Private Organizations as well as the Governing Body itself. The Office had staff in its

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{148} Minutes of the 60. Session of the Council of the LON (8.12.9.1930), Annex 1232/OJ, 11th year, No 11, Nov 1930, 1462
\item \textsuperscript{149} Minutes of the 62. Session of the Council of the LON (19.-24.1.1931)/OJ, 12th year, No 2, Feb 1931, 156-157
\item \textsuperscript{150} Minutes of the 62. Session of the Council of the LON (19.-24.1.1931), Annex 1263/OJ, 12th year, No 2, Feb 1931, 310
\item \textsuperscript{151} Grahl-Madsen 1983, 363
\item \textsuperscript{152} Bentwich 1935, 120
\item \textsuperscript{153} OJ, 12th year, No 4, April 1931, 746-748
\end{itemize}
Central Service as well as representatives in different countries. All these were listed even with their nationalities and addresses. The personnel had clear staff regulations. The financial regulations of the Office were in place.\textsuperscript{154}

In turn, the participation of the President of the Governing Body of the Nansen Office in the work of the IGAC\textsuperscript{155} was seen necessary. In the report of the IGAC in September 1931 it was clearly stated: “Inasmuch as the Nansen International Office for Refugees is the successor of the High Commissariat for Refugees, the Commission considers that the Office should be represented on the Commission. It accordingly recommends that arrangements should be made to invite the President of the Governing Body of the Office, M. Max Huber, to become a permanent member of the Commission”.\textsuperscript{156} The President presented the first report of the work of the Governing Body to the Secretary General already in May 1931.\textsuperscript{157}

The first President of the Office, Max Huber, resigned for health reasons. He sent a letter expressing his intentions to the Secretary General in November 1932. The Council noted the matter in its first session of 1933 in January. The Council also noted that Mr. Huber was appointed President by a resolution of the Assembly, and the Statutes of the Office contained no rule for the appointment of the President. It therefore seemed clear that the successor of Mr. Huber had to be nominated by the Assembly as well. Since there were urgent budgetary matters to be handled in the Office, the appointment of the new President was put to the Agenda of the Special Assembly in session at that moment, rather than waiting to the next ordinary Assembly.\textsuperscript{158} Already in May same year, the new President, Georges Werner, appeared in his duties before the Council presenting the joint reports of the Nansen Office and the Advisory Commission.\textsuperscript{159}

The work of the Nansen Office was dictated by the prevailing political convenience. When the Saar refugees started to cross borders, their protection and care was commissioned to Nansen Office instead of the High Commissioner.\textsuperscript{160} This was to emphasize the humanitarian nature of the work to be done. The protection of the Saar

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item OJ, 12th year, No 4, April 1931, 748-754
\item Cf. Chapter 4.2.5.
\item OJ, 12th year, No 11, Nov 1931, 2118
\item OJ, 12th year, No 6, June 1931, 1004
\item Minutes of the 70. Session of the Council of the LON (24.1-3.2.1933)/OJ, 14th year, No 2, Feb 1933, 221 and 345
\item Minutes of the 73. Session of the Council of the LON (22.5.-6.6.1933)/OJ, 14th year, No 7 (partII), July 1933, 806
\item Grahl-Madsen 1983, 363
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
refugees was greatly due to the activity of the French government. At that point, Germany was still a member of the League. In this case the League deviated from its own rules and accepted responsibility for both the legal protection and settlement of the refugees. It did so because of its previous role in administrating the Saar territory and because the French government offered to provide the funds for the settlement. Moreover, these refugees did not travel with empty pockets, but brought with them more financial means than the refugees who fled from Germany.\footnote{161}

The original thought was that Nansen Office would be mandated for ten years, until the end of 1939. Already at the beginning the contemporary executive committee proposed that the Office’s closing should be advanced to the end of 1938. The termination of the Office was brought forward because of the optimism derived from the encouraging results of the time.\footnote{162} When this decision was made, no one could expect the change of the international situation as it then unraveled in the course of the 1930s. Max Huber also held the position of the President of the ICRC. The Vice-Chairman of the ICRC, Georges Werner, became his successor in the Nansen Office. Werner died in 1935, and presidency was vacant for a year, until Judge Michael Hansson assumed the duties in 1936. Major T.F. Johnson was nominated as the first Secretary-General of the Nansen Office. Johnson had already been involved in refugee work for a long time by this.

The Office had a Governing Body with a President who at the same time was the leader of the whole organization. The Governing Body consisted of eleven members; the Secretary General of LON and the Director General of the ILO and nine others. The refugees were also represented in the Governing Body for the first time in organizations’ history. Two of the members were Russians and one Armenian.\footnote{163}

The holders of the position of the President of the Nansen Office are here in a consecutive order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Secretary General</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Max Huber (Switzerland)</td>
<td>T. F. Johnson (UK) 1931-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georges Werner (Switzerland)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Hansson (Norway)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\footnote{161}{Skran, 201}
\footnote{162}{Hansson II}
\footnote{163}{Thompson I, 37; Simpson 1939, 210}
The post of the President was quite windy at the beginning. Mr. Hansson finally distinguished himself as the most visible character, being also the one to receive the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the organization.

At its creation, on the mandate of the Nansen Office, it was defined that the organization will take responsibility for the material assistance of the refugees. The League would assume the responsibilities connected to the legal and political protection of the refugees. The essence and the meaning of the work of the Nansen Office was that it brought the refugee work of the international community and the donors among the needy recipients, while the official League of Nations often remained distant. President Hansson himself also evaluated the work as having a powerful influence to public opinion and the news media in many countries.\(^{164}\)

In the 1930s, during the existence of the Nansen Office, Norman Bentwich described the work of the organization: “The work of the Nansen Office was not restricted to the provision of identity and travel documents and of quasi-consular protection for its refugees. Together with philanthropic organizations which were associated with the work, it has contrived to find homes for the homeless.” It was also noted that the Nansen Office had been commissioned in the work of settlement, especially in case of the Armenians in their settlement to Syria and Erivan.\(^{165}\) The Office was characterized as an international consular service, because of some features connected to its portfolio.\(^{166}\)

Michael Hansson, in his capacity as the President of the Governing Body of the Nansen International Office, presented his report concerning the liquidation of the Office to the Council at its 97\(^{th}\) session in May 1937. The Council noted that big problems of substance will be raised by the proposed liquidation. The report was intended to be disseminated to Governments in a view to examine the magnitude of the task entailed by the systematic termination. This was meant to involve the governments that had associated themselves with the refugee work, as well as the various organizations implementing the tasks. It was the duty of the 1938 Assembly to take the final decision on the termination and Mr. Hansson expressed as his wish that the decision by the League could be made with fullest possible information at its

164 Hansson II
165 Bentwich 1935, 119
166 Bentwich 1935, 120
disposal.\textsuperscript{167} This may be interpreted as an appeal to the Governments; no extra time for the Office was directly recommended, but the people responsible for the refugee work would not have been dismayed if such decision had been the outcome of the deliberations.

The administrative problems were emphasized in the report: work still remains to be done after the liquidation of the Nansen Office. The activities, now performed by the Office, must continue since the problem will not disappear by terminating the Office. The credit scheme implemented by the Office should be continued, at least to the extent of recovering the loans.\textsuperscript{168} It was noted that the Nansen Office is, however, making strenuous efforts to bring the refugee problems as near solution as may be possible.\textsuperscript{169}

It was noted that the liquidation of the Governing Body, the Managing Committee and the Finance Committee would meet no difficulties, since the appointments of the members of these bodies expire at the end of 1938, and they were not paid for their work. The representatives of the Office numbered 18 in 1937. Some of them were receiving a fixed stipend, some were granted allowances to meet the costs of the staff required. They were appointed by the Managing Committee and approved by the government of the country in which the holder of the position was to carry out his mission.\textsuperscript{170} All possible work performed by the Nansen Office and the costs of the activities during the years 1931-1936 were presented statistically in the Appendixes of the mentioned report.\textsuperscript{171}

One of the serious handicaps of the Nansen Office was that it was competent to protect the interests only of Russians, Armenian, Assyrian, Assyro-Chaldean, Turkish, and Saar refugees. In several instances the development of the Nansen Office into a world-wide refugee organization was seen the most effective solution for the refugee problem on the whole. Covering all possible refugee groups with the political

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{167} Minutes of the 97. Session of the Council of the LON (24.-29.5.1937), 2\textsuperscript{nd} meeting 25.5./OJ, 18\textsuperscript{th} year, No 5-6. May-June 1937, 295-296
\item \textsuperscript{168} Minutes of the 97. Session of the Council of the LON (24.-29.5.1937), Annex 1656/OJ, 18\textsuperscript{th} year, No 5-6. May-June 1937, 454
\item \textsuperscript{169} Minutes of the 97. Session of the Council of the LON (24.-29.5.1937), Annex 1656/OJ, 18\textsuperscript{th} year, No 5-6. May-June 1937, 455
\item \textsuperscript{170} Minutes of the 97. Session of the Council of the LON (24.-29.5.1937), Annex 1656/OJ, 18\textsuperscript{th} year, No 5-6. May-June 1937, 456
\item \textsuperscript{171} Minutes of the 97. Session of the Council of the LON (24.-29.5.1937), Annex 1656, Appendices A-H/OJ, 18\textsuperscript{th} year, No 5-6. May-June 1937, 458-471
\end{itemize}
authorization of the League, it would have formed a strong backbone for activities.\(^\text{172}\) The Nansen Office faced difficult times during its existence. It was, however, supported by governments more than many other organs. As the Nansen Office closed its doors, it merged with the League’s other refugee organizations to form a larger unit.\(^\text{173}\)

The composition of the Governing Body gave an opportunity for refugees themselves to take an official part in the work for the first time. Two of the members elected by the Advisory Committee of Private Organizations were Russians and one was an Armenian refugee. This became possible only after Nansen’s death. Nansen is said to have resisted suggestions that Russians should be given posts in the Service. Later refugees were in some cases appointed as local representatives, and they always played an influential part by their membership of the Advisory Committee.\(^\text{174}\)

The Convention of 28.10.1933 was in fact prepared largely by the Nansen Office. The successful operation of the Arrangements and of the Conventions depends, finally, on local interventions in specific cases. The Secretariat of the League had no network of local representation; hence much of the political and legal work was therefore de facto conducted by the local representatives of the Nansen Office.\(^\text{175}\)

Judge Michael Hansson definitely brought legal experience to the work. He also had similar enthusiasm as his countryman Nansen. In addition to all this, he had certain realism which had at times been lacking in the management of the organization in earlier years. His main achievement was said to be the simplification of the complicated machinery of the Nansen Office.\(^\text{176}\)

It was clear that carrying out the humanitarian tasks required money, more than any other form of assistance. The League allocated annually sums of 250.000 – 300.000 Swiss francs to the Nansen Office. These funds were earmarked for administrative purposes.\(^\text{177}\) It was clear that this kind of sums were insufficient for any larger field operations, even without the particular exclusion of operative purposes.

The League provided the Nansen Office with a mandate, but the funds for its activities were insignificant. The basic structure of the funding of the Nansen Office looks as follows:

\(^{172}\) Thompson II, 379  
\(^{173}\) Hansson II  
\(^{174}\) Simpson 1939, 210  
\(^{175}\) Simpson 1939, 211  
\(^{176}\) Simpson 1939, 212  
\(^{177}\) Hansson I, 17-18
a) The League provided funds for administrative expenses of the Nansen Office. The level of the allocations was diminishing yearly until the end of the mission of the organization. The total administrative costs for Nansen Office for 1931-36 were just about 2 million Swiss Francs. At his Nobel Peace Prize speech in 1938, Michael Hansson pointed out that the League has time to time been quite reluctant in making the allowances available to the Office.

b) A total amount of 2.6 million Swiss francs was provided by the Humanitarian Fund in 1931-36 for various purposes.

c) Funds for the field work came from various sources: 1) revenues were obtained from private contributions. 2) The bulk of the funding came, however, from the fees charged for the Nansen Certificates/Passports. This contributed a total of 875,000 Swiss francs during 1931-36. 3) Third source was the sale of postal stamps in France and Norway; this brought 72,000 Swiss francs into organization during 1931-36.

d) A separate specific Near East Fund was able to accumulate a sum totaling 6.8 million Swiss francs during the mentioned six year period.

In 1935 the Norwegian Government introduced a scheme for issuing surcharged postage stamps. The amount of the surcharge was transferred to the Nansen Office. The IGAC endorsed the system and laid stress upon the importance of the scheme which would help the Office to accomplish its tasks. The Council, however, did not particularly endorse the scheme, except adopting the report of the IGAC including the recommendation. In the very beginning of its existence, Nansen Office also got donation from Nansen’s estate, a sum of 250,000 Norwegian kroner which was said to represent partly the accumulated funds formed by the Nobel Prize, which Nansen

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178 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 363
179 Hansson II
180 Ibid.
181 Ibid.
182 Simpson 1939, 213; Grahl-Madsen 1983, 363
183 Minutes of the 86. Session of the Council of the LON (20.-25.5.1935), 1st meeting 20.5, item 3574/OJ, 16th year, No 6, June 1935
himself received in 1922. The Office also got a contribution from the British Government.  

In May 1935 the Governing Body of Nansen Office asked for an additional appropriation of 20,000 Swiss francs. This was supposed to be an increase in the League’s annual contribution to the Office, which was the administrative budget of the Office. The Governing Body also further asked for an advance by the League to the Office, 200,000 Swiss francs, in order to meet the costs of assistance, conveyance, and settlement of the refugees. These requests were made in connection with the Saar refugees. The suggestions were handled in a very positive manner and received positive consideration with notice that it was extremely exceptional. It must be noted in this connection, that the refugees in question were French people from a territory formerly administrated by the LON.  

The Supervisory Commission of the League considered the matter, and according to their suggestion the Council decided further in September 1935 to allocate 10,000 Swiss francs (instead of requested 20,000) for the Nansen Office for administrative expenses in 1935 in respect of the settlement of refugees coming from the Saar from the budget item “Unforeseen expenses – Political”.  

There is an example of the budget of the Nansen Office in the League source material for the year 1934, when the resources and the activities of the Office were in full use. The budget was divided in two: Administrative budget and the Assistance budget. For the administrative side there was a perfect balance; the income and the expenditure were the same 319,183 Swiss francs. On the assistance side the income was 851,336 francs and the expenditure only 587,080 francs. The practical work obviously was a result of the present needs and the responses to them.  

Michael Hansson pointed out in 1937, that the financial and other resources of the Office had been far from sufficient in carrying out all the enormous tasks imposed to it. The main source of own income had been the fee of 5 gold francs for the issuing or renewal of the Nansen certificate. The Office was supposed to conduct operations, but...
the League provided no regular funds for the humanitarian activities. The only exception had been the allocation of 200,000 Swiss francs for the Saar refugees.\textsuperscript{188}

The Nansen Office had counted that by the beginning of 1937 it had committed an enormous amount of 520,000 individual interventions on behalf of refugees\textsuperscript{189} The criticism from outside towards the Nansen Office was focused in two main points: It didn’t take action as fast as it should have done, and that the Office, or at least some of its representatives in capitals, were politically oriented.\textsuperscript{190} The need for neutral “consular representatives” was recognized. It was contemplated, however, that certain types of “politically oriented” representatives could very effectively promote the activities. An example of this was the Office’s honorary representative in Czechoslovakia; daughter of President Masaryk.\textsuperscript{191} In the beginning of 1937 Michael Hansson also expressed as his opinion that the present administration of the Nansen Office should be simplified. One side of this was to make it possible for the representatives to carry out humanitarian operations more independently.\textsuperscript{192}

As any development aid or humanitarian assistance, refugee aid can be provided either in a form of a grant or a loan. A direct grant was used for those in greatest need. People who were incapacitated or otherwise inadequately capable of providing for themselves, were supported by donating funds for their immediate needs. The Nansen Office used loans in order to encourage people to help themselves by initiating small business or to get accommodation. In many cases, people were not able to repay the loans. However, lending activities also contributed to the accumulation and recycling of the funds. Some refugee organizations were able to use the funds obtained in a form of subsidies in a manner that even increased the original bulk of funds.\textsuperscript{193} This refers to successful microloan activity. It has been proven in modern development cooperation that microloans have successfully enabled extremely impoverished people to engage in self-employment projects that allow them to generate an income and, in many cases, begin to build wealth and exit poverty.

The Assembly adopted a resolution on 5.10.1937 in which it instructed the President of the Governing Body of the Nansen International Office to arrange for the effective and complete liquidation of the Office. The Assembly also noted that the mandate of

\textsuperscript{188} Hansson I, 9-10
\textsuperscript{189} Hansson I, 11
\textsuperscript{190} Hansson I, 21
\textsuperscript{191} Hansson I, 30-31
\textsuperscript{192} Hansson I, 26
\textsuperscript{193} Hansson II
the High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany will come to an end on 31.12.1938 in accordance with the previous decisions. On this basis, the Assembly requested the Council to draw up a plan for international assistance to refugees in the future. The Council entrusted the examination of the whole of the questions connected to the task to a Committee consisting of three of its members, which were the representatives of Bolivia, Britain, and France.\textsuperscript{194}

In some later studies it has been rather ironically assessed that the most important achievements of the Nansen Office were the assistance of the Saar refugees as well as the preparing the termination of itself. However, as this research work shows, as a part of a larger system, it definitely had its role in the continuation of the regime and formation of the intergovernmental refugee policy.

4.2.3. The High Commissioner for German Refugees

The German refugee problem started to materialize soon after Nazis came to power. The reaction by the League was rapid; the High Commissioner for the Refugees Coming from Germany was established already in 1933. The office was defined to be as independent from Geneva control as possible without totally dispelling formal attachment to the LON.\textsuperscript{195}

It was surprise to nobody that the German delegates raised objections to these plans. As a compromise the High Commissioner was not placed directly under the League. This meant that finally “the High Commissioner had the title but not the powers nor the importance of a League Commissioner”. The High Commissioner had no regular budget provided by the League, and the work had to be supported by privately contributed means which was naturally a challenging state of affairs.\textsuperscript{196} When the new High Commissioner’s post was under consideration in 1933, the German Delegation to the League first said that it would disinterest itself in the matter. Later it severely opposed the proposal that the High Commissioner should be directly attached to the League. The final form of the Assembly resolution on the High Commissioner’s mandate therefore stated that the Council of the League should invite states and

\textsuperscript{194} Minutes of the 100. Session of the Council of the LON (26.1.-2.2. 1938), 4\textsuperscript{th} meeting 29.1./OJ, 19\textsuperscript{th} year, NO 2, Feb 1938, 110-111
\textsuperscript{195} Bentwich 1935, 153
\textsuperscript{196} Toller, 398
private organizations to be represented on a Governing Body of the HC. The duty of the Governing Body was to give guidance and practical help to the High Commissioner in his work.\textsuperscript{197}

All this meant that the autonomous High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany had to report to a separate Governing Body instead of the Council of the League. The probable reason for this was that Germany then was still a member of the League\textsuperscript{198}, and some hope existed for a peaceful settlement of the refugee matters and cooperation with the Nazi regime in general. Before completing the establishing the office, a long discussion in various international levels took place on topics whether the position should be connected to the League and how closely that should be done.\textsuperscript{199}

A remarkable step in League’s proceedings was the item on Council’s and Assembly’s agenda in October 1933. It was formulated in quite cumbersome way as “Organization on an International Basis of Assistance to Refugees (Jewish and Other) coming from Germany”. That was the first time this item appeared in the deliberations of the League, and in practice it meant the re-creation of the High Commissioner’s post after some years gap following Nansen’s death. The Assembly suggested that the Council should nominate a High Commissioner to negotiate and direct collaboration on the work for the refugees coming from Germany in all countries which are able to offer help.\textsuperscript{200}

In October 1933 the Council appointed an American, James G. McDonald to act as the High Commissioner for Refugees (Jewish and other) coming from Germany. In selecting a national of a powerful but neutral country, it was hoped that Mr. McDonald could increase the involvement of the United States government in the League. Raising funds for the work from wealthy American Jews was at the aim as well. It was though that this way the new organization could avoid the dangers of European political divisions. The headquarters of his office had to be in set in Lausanne. Although neighboring cities, symbolically the HQ was far enough from Geneva, the seat of the League. The Secretary General of the League, Joseph Avenol, made McDonald’s independent and separate status clear to him. McDonald was ordered to report to the Governing Body of the HC, instead of the League.\textsuperscript{201} The newly formed High

\textsuperscript{197} Bentwich 1935, 125-126
\textsuperscript{198} Grahl-Madsen 1983, 363
\textsuperscript{199} About this see Frings, 37; Thompson I, 46; Simpson 1939, 215; Salomon, 22
\textsuperscript{200} Minutes of the 77. Session of the Council of the LON (4.-26.10.1933)/OJ, 14\textsuperscript{th} year, No 12, Dec 1933, 1616-1617
\textsuperscript{201} Skran, 197-198
Commissioner had two main responsibilities in the beginning: it was considered important to coordinate the relief and settlement efforts, as well as to negotiate with governments in order to facilitate refugee travel and settlement.\textsuperscript{202} The tasks sound very similar to those of the High Commissioner of the 1920s.

The first and foremost practical matter and task the Commissioner entered into was the personal documentation for the refugees who didn’t have German passport or other document for identity and nationality.\textsuperscript{203} As emphasized in the previous connections, the High Commissioner did not receive the responsibility of the protection of the Saar refugees in 1935, since the Nansen Office was considered to be better equipped for that.\textsuperscript{204}

McDonald lacked strong support from the League and therefore was in a constant need of friends with money. As anticipated from the beginning, the help of private organizations became even more important than it had been for Nansen and the Refugee Service during the previous decade. McDonald established an Advisory Council of private organizations consisting of the representatives of 25 Jewish and non-Jewish agencies. These NGOs formed later the major source of funds needed in the operations initiated by the High Commissioner.\textsuperscript{205}

The Headquarters of the Commissioner was in Lausanne for the beginning, but was later transferred to London. The purpose was to signify the distance from the League even geographically. As the League didn’t assign funding to the Commissioner, the money came not only from private organizations but also from some individual Governments (e.g. Sweden).\textsuperscript{206}

The High Commission for Refugees Coming from Germany had a Governing Body/Board with 13 representatives of Governments. Its Advisory Council consisted of representatives of different philanthropic voluntary organizations.\textsuperscript{207} In the autumn of 1935 the Governing Body took action to liquidate the office of the High Commissioner at the end of January 1936. McDonald resigned just before that in December 1935. Therefore his resignation could be interpreted as a protest against the inadequate or lacking League policy. The Council of the League was supposed to make other provision for the coordination of the activities on behalf of the refugees coming from

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{202} Skran, 198
\item \textsuperscript{203} Thompson I, 47
\item \textsuperscript{204} Grahl-Madsen 1983, 363
\item \textsuperscript{205} Skran, 198
\item \textsuperscript{206} Thompson I, 47
\item \textsuperscript{207} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
Germany. The idea seems to have been to reorganize the work done on behalf of both “German” refugees and the “Nansen” refugees on a more coordinated basis.208

James McDonald left his post in December 1935 with great publicity because he felt that the German refugee problem could not be tackled only by relief measures. The autonomous High Commissioner did not have enough political muscle without a closer connection to the League.209 In his resignation letter James MacDonald expressed as his feeling that efforts must be made to remove or mitigate the causes which create German refugees. Failing to accomplish this was one of the reasons to his resignation.210

It has been later analyzed that the resignation of McDonald was a protest against his inability to do the most important: political action required to address the causes. Jews seeking to leave Germany had to leave behind their financial assets, which made them also politically powerless. At the time of economic depression they were unable to fulfill the basic conditions of potential home countries: not to become a burden on the public purse.211

Soon after this, the League appointed a new High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany, British Sir Neill Malcolm. He had made a career as a League official and received his administrative expenses from the League budget. As High Commissioner, Malcolm directed his energy on developing a legal status for German refugees, which was an open question at that time. Many other important but more practical questions on emigration and settlement were put entirely on the shoulders of private organizations.212

It was also the sense of the Governing Body of the High Commission for the Refugees coming from Germany that the work could be better carried forward by an organization directly under the authority of the League. The effectiveness of the High Commissioner’s efforts was weakened from the beginning by the compromises. The compromises were originally accepted in order to avoid the veto of Germany,213 but later definitely regretted as Germany had left the League anyhow.

The Norwegian Government made a proposal in 1935 that High Commissioner’s office should be merged with the Nansen Office under the authority of the League in
order to achieve better control, efficiency, and effectiveness of the activities. That would have meant a League organization with centralized responsibility for all refugees. The Norwegian proposal was not adopted, as it too ambitiously attempted to widen the scope of the political and legal protection given by the League to include all refugees regardless of their nationality or origin.

The League took, however, some steps to coordinate the activities of the two organizations. Although more clearly identified in the mandate of the HC, the same basic principles applied in practice for both: 1. the activities must be defined to people who already have left their home country, 2. The High Commissioner limits its work to seeking governments’ support to the solution of legal problems, employment, and dwelling, 3. High Commissioner should encourage the initiatives and coordinate the work of the NGOs. During this period, the work seems to have been bothered by some weaknesses; the three organizations, the Nansen Office, the High Commissioner, and the ILO had their own responsibilities, but their work in practice had overlaps. The Organizations were simply not coordinating their activities enough.

A recommendation of the Special Council Committee to examine provisional measures to be taken on behalf of refugees in January 1936 considered that the Council authorizes its President to appoint a temporary High Commissioner of the LON to deal with questions connected with refugees coming from Germany. According to the recommendation the Council also authorized a maximum of 50,000 francs to the activities. For the first time, the High Commissioner’s immediate duties were duly defined. Those were: 1. To prepare and arrange a meeting of an inter-Governmental conference on legal protection of refugees coming from Germany. Also the United States will be invited. 2. To undertake consultations in order to find work and placement for the refugees. 3. To establish a liaison with private assistance organizations in order to coordinate international efforts.

The League obviously wanted to save the relationship with Germany as long as it seemed possible. Only when Germany had left the League and Sir Neill Malcolm was appointed High Commissioner for Refugees in early 1936, his status could be similar to

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214 Grah-Madsen 1983, 364
215 Hansson II
216 Basis for this classification, see Torvinen, 49
217 Stoessinger 1956, 37-38
218 Minutes of the 90. Session of the Council of the LON (20.-24.1.1936), 6th meeting 24.1./OJ, 17th year, No 2, Feb 1936, 126-128
the first High Commissioner in the 1920s. The appointment process went on quickly. In the beginning of February same year, the President of the Council and the Secretary General were proceeding in consultation with the Council members on no objection-basis, whether their candidate, Sir Neill Malcolm, could be acceptable choice for the High Commissioner’s office. The new holder of the position was to assume the office on February 14. The silence of the members was interpreted as their consent. Sir Neill Malcolm started at his office on a provisional basis in February 1936. Later that year the Assembly recommended that the High Commissioner should be appointed until December 31st, 1938. The Council made this final appointment by its resolution in the 94th session in October 1936.

John Hope Simpson expressed as his judgment in 1938 that the position of the High Commissioner was changed after the resignation of Mr. McDonald, and the High Commissioner became an agent of the League of Nations. The fact seems to be that in 1936 the League integrated the High Commissioner more completely into its structure. Sir Neil Malcolm’s functions were restricted to juridical advisory activities and the coordination of the activities of the voluntary and academic societies. Money-raising by and for his office continued to be a delicate question.

The League Assembly reached a decision in 1938, encompassing the idea that the refugee work should continue by combining the existing organizations, the High Commissioner for German Refugees and the Nansen Office. The solution was a single High Commissioner for Refugees under the protection of the League of Nations based in London, and the arrangement became effective in the beginning of 1939. The mandate for it was given for five years. Sir Herbert Emerson was appointed to the office with effect from January 1, 1939. He was harnessed with the responsibility for the Russian, Armenian, Saar, and German refugees, the last one including also refugees from Austria and Sudetenland. This organization was in great troubles from the beginning; it didn’t have funding and it was much hated by the Government of the Third

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219 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 364
220 OJ, 17th year, No 3, March 1936, 296
221 There is a full but concise description on the nomination process in the Council documents in this connection, see Minutes of the 94. Session of the Council of the LON (2.-10.10.1936), 4th meeting 10.10, item 3822/ OJ, 17th year, No11, November1936,1201
222 Simpson 1938, 617
224 Bentwich 1953, 21
225 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 364
Nevertheless, all this meant that finally the organizations for the “Nansen refugees” (Russians, Armenians etc.) and the “German refugees” (German, Austrian, Sudeten-Czech etc.) were gathered under one High Commissioner in London.227

During the whole decade of the 1930s, the High Commissioner was more loosely attached to the League than the Nansen Office. Its reports were not officially appraised by the Council or the Assembly of the League. Otherwise the High Commissioner and the Nansen Office were quite similar by their structure. Both had a Governing Body and an Advisory Council consisting of representatives of different types of NGOs dealing with the refugees.228

A lively discussion on the future of the refugee organization of the League took place before entering to the resolution. The decision to terminate the activities of the Nansen Office was being implemented, and the High Commissioner was the part that was still left. It was only after long and difficult deliberations that the League Council and Assembly adopted the necessary resolutions in order to make decisions to create a High Commissioner whose mandate would cover all the classes of refugees for whose protection the League had assumed. This High Commissioner had no power to enter into any legal commitment whatsoever on behalf of the League of Nations. Furthermore, the League assumed no responsibility, legal or financial, in respect of his activities. The new High Commissioner was completely independent from the previous two offices, the Nansen Office and the former High Commissioner.229

When the High Commissioner for refugees coming from Germany was established in 1933, it became evident soon that the main part of the financiers were Jewish.230 Since the funds released by the League could be used only for administrative purposes, an important source of financing of the field activities of the refugee organizations was the selling of the Nansen stamps to passports of the refugees.231 The revenues were considerable, taking into account that it was estimated that the sum required for the employment of one refugee individual was only 30 centimes.232 It is not explained in the source material how this calculation was obtained. If we consider what was said about the use of the League funds, it could mean personnel costs and administrative cost divided by the number of refugees assisted.

226 Stoessinger 1956, 39
227 Bentwich 1949, 153
228 Bentwich 1935, 1226
229 Simpson 1939, 220-221
230 Bentwich 1949, 153
231 The amounts of revenues can be discovered in Simpson 1939, 206
232 Minutes of the 33. Session of the GB of the ILO, 1926, 388
Altogether, the High Commissioners position and Office was in a crisis during the entire 1930s. The death of Nansen in May 1930 exposed the leaders of the LON to a very difficult position. All administrative matters had to be reconsidered. The well known figure was gone, and purely economic and financial matters became dominant in the organization.\textsuperscript{233} At one point, there had been a decision to discontinue the whole refugee work at the end of 1938.\textsuperscript{234} The High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany could not afford to maintain a system of representatives in major refugee-hosting countries, which meant that the High Commissioner could do very little in the way of providing consular or other services to refugees.\textsuperscript{235}

When the Committee of three\textsuperscript{236} came up with a report in May 1938, it noted the Invitation made by the United States Government to set up a special committee to deal with certain aspects of the refugee problem. On the basis of the fact, that the refugee problem was far from solved, the Committee of three saw that the coordinating role of the League would still be indispensable. The Committee also took a view that a single organization might be set up for a limited period of time, to take the place of the two existing organizations. The proposed organization would be directed by a person designated by the League, as the “High Commissioner for Refugees under the protection of the League of Nations”. The idea was that he would be assisted by a small staff comprising neither refugees nor former refugees.\textsuperscript{237}

Both the Nansen Office and the High Commissioner were thought to be provisional organizational arrangements. The possible continuation of the mandate of the refugee work was a constant topic of deliberations. Even at the end of the mandate of the High Commissioner for German Refugees at the end of 1938, there was a decision taken by the League Assembly concluding that the refugee work must continue under the League authority for the next five years at least. This was supposed to be done in practice by combining the High Commissioner and the Nansen Office.\textsuperscript{238}

Holders of the High Commissioner’s position:

-Fridtjof Nansen (Norway) 1921 – 30

\textsuperscript{233} Simpson 1939, 208
\textsuperscript{234} Simpson 1939, 207
\textsuperscript{235} Skran, 120
\textsuperscript{236} Cf. e.g. Chapter 4.2.2.
\textsuperscript{237} Minutes of the 101. Session of the Council of the LON (9-14.5.1938), 8\textsuperscript{th} meeting 14.5./OJ, 19\textsuperscript{th} year, No 5-6, May-June 1938, 365
\textsuperscript{238} Hansson II
4.2.4. The Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees

At the end of the 1930s demands for a new kind of refugee organization were growing. The direction of the proposed work was supposed to be placed in the hands of prominent personalities who had international reputation. The necessary financing had to be found, and the various private bodies were supposed to subordinate their activities to this organ. It became increasingly clear by the end of the 1930s, that the jurisdiction and mandate of the organizations connected to the League could not be broadened and strengthened. The opposition among the countries actually or potentially producing refugees was too pronounced. Therefore, it seemed more appropriate to concentrate the handling of the Jewish refugee problem in an organization which not a part of the League.\(^{239}\)

The demands for better handling of the problem were increasing, especially among the Jews of America, who constituted one-fourth of world Jewry. The proper handling of the problem was a political approach, charity was simply considered to be not enough. This could be achieved only by an organization headed by outstanding politicians or diplomats of the democratic world. Moreover, practical and full collaboration with Jewish organizations everywhere, and the support of the democratic governments was required.\(^{240}\)

There were some political pressures in the United States to do something about the Jewish refugee problem even before 1938. President Roosevelt made a decision in March 1938 to invite representatives of governments to a conference in Evian in

\(^{239}\) Thompson II, 380
\(^{240}\) Thompson II, 386-387
France. \footnote{Sjöberg, 14} This Conference took place in July 1938. The Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees was created by 30 governments following the conferences held in Evian and London in summer 1938. \footnote{Grahl-Madsen 1983, 365; Hansson II} Despite the great attention attached to it, one of the later judgments of historians has been that the Evian Conference failed to establish its original idea, i.e. to negotiate seriously on migration between nations, the main international political players. \footnote{Joly, 8}

United States was not a member of the League of Nations. Thus this committee was entirely independent of the League. It was supposed to collaborate with the League’s High Commission in order to make arrangements for the movement of refugees to overseas countries. \footnote{Hansson II} The initial purpose and motivation of President Roosevelt and his administration in making the proposal for the new Committee remains somewhat obscure. \footnote{See Sjöberg, 227-237} Tommie Sjöberg has described the substance of the Committee: “…IGCR was not the very first intergovernmental body created to deal with the refugee issue, but it was the first to be set up outside the increasingly discredited League of Nations’ machinery…… IGCR was also the first international refugee organization set up on a permanent footing.” \footnote{Sjöberg, 13} The shortcoming of the League as U.S. not being the member came fully into open as the refugee problem of Nazi-Germany was faced by the international community. \footnote{Grahl-Madsen 183, 364} An international body with the U.S. as an active participant was clearly needed. As it was not politically realistic to get the US join the League, something else had to be done.

Soon after the Evian Conference the Secretary General of the League brought to the notice of the Members of the League a letter received from the Secretary General of the Inter-governmenntal Committee, including the text of the resolutions adopted by the Conference on 14.7.1938. In the text it was clearly emphasized that the resolution concerns exclusively involuntary emigration from Germany, including Austria. \footnote{OJ, 19th year, No 8-9, Aug-Sept 1938, 676-677} The possibility of resettling Jewish refugees to Palestine was on the agenda of the Evian Conference. The scheme was finally blocked by the UK as the administrator of the Palestine area under the Mandate of the League of Nations. \footnote{Joly, 8} The underlying idea
of the established Committee was a conciliatory one: The first task of the Committee was to start negotiations with the German authorities on the issue of the assets of the Jewish refugees. The purpose was to secure the right for the refugees to take at least a part of their rightful and legal assets with them. This was to be the first step in path of establishing some kind of cooperation to enhance the resettlement.250

Another feature distinguishing the IGCR from the previous refugee organizations connected with the League of Nations was that the membership of the Committee was originally restricted to countries of temporary refuge or permanent resettlement (of the Jewish refugees). No countries which were considered as producing refugees themselves were invited to become members in 1938.251

The declared objective behind the American initiative on the IGCR was to achieve a decisive improvement in the prospects of assisting refugees. The machinery at the disposal of the League was regarded as quite inadequate for dealing with the far-reaching refugee problem created by the Anschluss in the spring of 1938. However, Sjöberg has in his doctoral dissertation demonstrated that this objective was never reflected in the behavior of the states particularly well.252

The Committee has been described as an American construct. It consisted of representatives of 31 states. The work of the Committee covered two classes of refugees forced to leave their homes on account of their political opinions, religious beliefs, or racial origin: 1) those who had not yet left their country of origin (e.g. Germany and Austria); 2) those who had already left their country of origin but had not yet settled permanently elsewhere. The aim of the negotiations carried out by the representatives of the Committee with the Nazi authorities was to get the legal property of the comers from Germany and Austria to their countries of refuge. The Second World War interrupted also this invaluable effort.253

It is remarkable that for the first time officially concern was expressed for those who were in danger in their own home countries, i.e. the potential refugees. The methodical terror by the Nazi organizations was everywhere already in 1933. Concentration camps were established in Germany in the course of the 1930s, and they were used increasingly instead of ordinary prisons. This was widely known by those who listened

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250 Hansson II
251 Sjöberg, 16
252 Sjöberg, 227-228
253 Bentwich 1949, 153-154
to the stories of the refugees in the 1930s, but it took until 1938 before something was done about it.

After being duly established, one of the two main tasks for the IGCR was to negotiate with the German government concerning a more orderly emigration plan. The other was to try to achieve a more favorable reception for refugees in settlement countries through negotiations with governments. Through diligent proceedings, the Director of the IGCR was able negotiate an unofficial plan for the emigration of about 400,000 Jews with the German government. The outbreak of the Second World War made the concrete implementation of these programmes impossible.

The Committee had its headquarters as well as a permanent secretariat in London, with the purpose to aid potential and actual refugees coming from Germany (including Austria). It was felt only natural, that an American was appointed as the Director of the permanent secretariat. Mr. George Rublee was the first holder of this position. The idea was that the Director could negotiate with the German Government without having to carry the burden of being connected with the League of Nations. The task turned out to be overwhelming for the Director. Germany simply was not in the mood to negotiate. Mr. Rublee resigned after few months of posting in February 1939.

Only six months after the Evian Conference there were indications that the United States as the leading power wanted to work for the integration of the IGCR and the High Commissioner. In this plan the Committee was supposed act as an advisory body to the High Commissioner on resettlement questions. Later the Americans argued that the work of the IGCR would primarily be supervisory and consultative in the future. In order to avoid overlapping duties, there was no need to maintain an independent administrative centre for the IGCR or even hold regular meetings. It was thought that if the High Commissioner and the IGCR’s Director were one and same person, the work could be conducted within the framework of the High Commissioner’s regular duties. The member states of the IGCR could then only meet occasionally as required. After the Second World War the policy of the United States was still consistent as it continued to favor an institution with specifically designed functions. This policy field reflected the concepts of the US Government in its foreign policy in

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254 See Toller, 386
255 Sjöberg, 228-229
256 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 364
257 Germany had left the League in 1935
258 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 365
259 Sjöberg, 229.230
260 Sjöberg, 230
general, as it was to limit international influence over national migration and refugee policies as much as possible.\footnote{261}

The Secretary General communicated to the Members of the League the exchange of letters that took place between Lord Winterton, Chairman of the Inter-Governmental Committee, and Sir Herbert Emerson, the High Commissioner for Refugees of the League. This communication stressed the advantages which would accrue from a closer cooperation between the Committee and the High Commissioner. Furthermore, it was proposed that this cooperation might be made most effective by uniting the functions of the Director of the Committee and the High Commissioner in same person, while maintaining the separate and independent existence of the two organizations. Sir Herbert gave his acceptance to the proposed arrangement.\footnote{262}

This merger materialized as the High Commissioner Sir Herbert Emerson was nominated as the Director-General of the IGCR.\footnote{263} The IGCR was assigned to be responsible for the refugees coming from Germany and Austria, whereas the High Commission should concentrate on Russian and the people from the Saar Region. The IGCR also took nominal responsibility for the Refugees who had escaped the Falangist persecution from Spain to France. In practice it was the French government that had to carry the burden of protecting these people.\footnote{264}

For the next four years, the IGCR existed merely on paper.\footnote{265} However, after the League had lost its credibility and capacity, the IGCR became more important actor towards the end of Second World War. The Committee was able to assist thousands of refugees from German and German-occupied territories and bring them to safety. In 1943 and 1944 the mandate was broadened and it became a part of the Allied efforts to protect and assist people in liberated territories.\footnote{266}

On the whole, Sjöberg has demonstrated in his doctoral dissertation that it seems highly unlikely that the United States government took the initiative on the IGCR in order to increase the possibilities of assisting the European refugees in the first place. Instead, the initiative could serve important political purposes for the United States.

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{261}{Karatani}
  \item \footnote{262}{OJ, 20th year, No 3-4, March-April 1939, 229-230}
  \item \footnote{263}{Bentwich 1949,153; Grahl-Madsen 1983, 365}
  \item \footnote{264}{Ristelhueber, Rene: The International Refugee Organization. International Conciliation. No 470. New York NY 1938, 172-173}
  \item \footnote{265}{Sjöberg, 230}
  \item \footnote{266}{Grahl-Madsen 1983, 365}
\end{itemize}
government, both in foreign policy (the threat of German expansion), as well as in domestic politics (something should be done about the Jewish refugee problem).267

4.2.5. Other Supplementary and Advisory Organs

The work on behalf of the Greek and Bulgarian refuges continued until the beginning of the 1930s. An Arrangement was concluded between the Governments of Greece and Bulgaria in November 1931 in order to finalize the reciprocal population exchanges. The Arrangement was based on a proposal of the US President Hoover made in June 1931. The purpose of it was to enhance the execution of the previous agreements made between these two countries, suspending the inter-governmental debts and to arrive to a practical settlement of open matters. It was supposed to prepare the termination the work of the League Commissions both in Greece and in Bulgaria.268 For the League it was time to terminate its responsibilities in these countries, and thus get the things cleared and done. At the same time, the work of the Greco-Bulgarian Mixed Commission had to be terminated. The remaining tasks of the Mixed Commission were referred to the Financial Committee of the League.269 The President of the Greco-Bulgarian Intermigration Commission submitted to the Council on 28.1.1932 a letter in which he confirmed that the Mixed (Intermigration) Commission will definitely terminate its work on January 31, 1932. The task of this particular Mixed Commission was to supervise reciprocal voluntary emigration between Greece and Bulgaria. Its activities covered a period of just over eleven years. It was also reminded in the discussions of the Council of the League that refugees are not voluntary movers, and the activities of this Commission must be kept separate from refugee work.270

267 Sjöberg, 124-125
268 OJ, 13th year, No 1, Jan 1932, 270-271
269 Minutes of the 66. Session of the Council of the LON (25.1.-20.2.1932)/OJ, 13th year, No 3 (part II), March 1932, 469
270 Minutes of the 84. Session of the Council of the LON (11.-21.1.1935), 3rd meeting 14.1.. Item 3524/OJ, 16th year, No 2, Feb 1935
In the course of changes and evolution of the organizations, there was some continuity. Still in 1938, when the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees was formed, it was recommended that the Director General of the International Labour Office should be invited to be represented at meetings of the Committee when questions affecting migration were under discussion.271 A summary of the evolution of the League refugee organizations was presented in 1938 by the League’s Information Section. The evolution was then characterized as taking different forms as a reaction to varying demands. For example, in the middle of the 1920s, the Labour Office was needed for taking the main responsibility simply because the refugee problem then was taking mainly an economic form. On the other hand, in the 1930s, when the problems were highly politicized, the organization had to take a corresponding shape.272

In the 1930s the Nansen International Office and the High Commissioner for Refugees were organizations appointed by the Council and acting under the direct supervision of the Financial Committee of the League.273 In addition to those, there were some specific organizations formed under the umbrella of the LON, aiming to solve the problems of one or some refugee groups, without any principle of universality. Some of the bodies, in turn, had general, political, and advisory mandate and agenda. Some were formally connected to the League; some were at least seemingly totally separated from the League.

**Subcommittee for the Resettlement of Assyrian Refugees, SRAR**

A Subcommittee for the Resettlement of Assyrian Refugees was formed in 1933. Iraq had joined the League in 1932. The minority problems of Iraq had been under surveillance of the international community for some time. The Assyrians, being Christians in the middle of the Moslem majority, formed the most visible minority group in the eyes of the Europeans. Finally the big powers came to the conclusion that the only feasible manner to tackle the question was to resettle the Assyrians to other countries.274

The Council directly appointed the Sub-committee in October 1933 for the Assyrians of Iraq and delegated extensive powers to it for the preparation and execution of a

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271 Simpson 1939, 226
273 Simpson 1939, 191
274 Frings, 36-37
settlement scheme, and in December 1935 approved of the statutes of a Trustee Board. The chairman and one member of the Trustee Board had to be appointed by the League Council and the third member was supposed to be a representative of the High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon. The Trustee Board had to report quarterly to the Council and could be dissolved by the Council.\textsuperscript{275}

The Inter-Governmental Advisory Commission, IGAC:

The Inter-Governmental Advisory Commission was attached directly to the League. It contained representatives of fourteen states.\textsuperscript{276} This Advisory Commission had a visible role in forming the policy and guidelines of the League of Nations especially in the 1930s. There seems to be quite close interdependency between these two. The Commission consisted of representatives of important Member States. The leading League organization, the Nansen International Office, had its representative in the Commission, and the Commission, in turn, had close advisory connection to the Office.

The Commission had regular sessions, and according to the resolution of the Assembly in 1931, the League received reports from the Commission on its sessions. A typical recommendation of a Commission’s report to the Council was to undertake tasks connected to the adoption of recommendations created by the Commission and endorsed by the League. As result of this, numerous communications between the League Secretariat and Member States Governments were circulated. The Council also seems to have adopted the reports of the Commission.\textsuperscript{277}

The Inter-Governmental Advisory Commission for Refugees was not an executive office and thus had no regular budget as the High Commissioner and the Nansen Office did. It did not conduct any practical refugee work. The Commission examined questions and made conclusions. On that basis, it gave its own recommendations to the League, which, in turn, forwarded the questions to be implemented, if they were supposed to be implemented. Some contemplations of the Commission were purely

\textsuperscript{275} Simpson 1939, 191 and 223

\textsuperscript{276} Bentwich 1935, 120

\textsuperscript{277} E.g. Minutes of the 79. Session of the Council of the LON (14.-19.5.1934)/OJ, 15\textsuperscript{th} year, No 6 (part I), June 1934, 496-497 and same, Annex 1499, 524
hypothetic and did not include any agenda for action. The sessions often lasted more than one day, and there was a multiplicity of items on the agenda.\textsuperscript{278}

Nansen Memorial Fund, NMF:

In May 1931 a group of prominent politicians presented an appeal for forming a Memorial Fund for the completion of the humanitarian work of Fridtjof Nansen. Among the signatories of the appeal, there were heads of states and ministers from various European countries. The main motivation for the appeal was, as the signatories underlined, that Nansen’s work for the League of Nations was left unfinished when he died. The aim of the contribution was to add to the funds and capacity of the Nansen International Office which had been mandated to take care of the remaining relief work among refugees. Contributions were called and could be sent to the Nansen Memorial Fund at any of the branches or correspondents of Lloyds & National Provincial Foreign Bank Ltd. A list of those included banks in 38 different countries and other platforms.\textsuperscript{279}

Advisory Committee of Private Organizations, ACPO:

The Advisory Committee of Refugee (Relief) Organizations contained representatives of some forty national and international philanthropic bodies.\textsuperscript{280} The report of the IGAC in September 1931 stated that the Commission had decided that the ACPO shall continue to be attached to it, and will participate in its work as hitherto.\textsuperscript{281}

Committee on International Assistance to Refugees, CIAR:

The Assembly decided in September 1935 to ask the Council to appoint a small Committee of competent persons to report to it on “certain questions connected with the problem of refugees”. The initiative behind the decision had come from the

\textsuperscript{278} See e.g. Minutes of the 86. Session of the Council of the LON (20.-25.5.1935), Annex 1541/OJ, 16\textsuperscript{th} year, No 6, June 1935
\textsuperscript{279} OJ, 12th year, No 6, June 1931, 1005-1006
\textsuperscript{280} Bentwich 1935, 120
\textsuperscript{281} OJ, 12th year, No 11, Nov 1931, 2120; cf. also Chapter 4.1.
Norwegian Government. The Council acted accordingly and the Committee on International Assistance to Refugees was established. The task of the Committee was to collect all useful evidence concerning refugee problems and their solutions, particularly from the IGAC. The Committee was to submit its report to the Council. This, in turn, would equip the Council to take appropriate measures in finding solution for the problems. The financial aspect of the establishment was settled by a decision of the Fourth Committee of the Assembly authorizing the appropriation of a sum of 5,500 francs from the credits placed at the Council’s disposal for the year 1935.282

The Committee met at Geneva from November 28th to December 7th 1935. As a result, it submitted its report to the Council in January 1936. One of the principal points which the Committee was called upon was the winding up of the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees coming from Germany. The letter of resignation of James McDonald came simultaneously with the preparing of the report of the CIAR. The report of the Committee was divided into three main parts. Part I contained an analysis of the information at the Committee’s disposal. Part II contained the conclusions of the Committee on the main points with which it was called upon to deal. Part III contained the Committee’s proposals regarding measures which might be taken by the Council or the Assembly. The Committee recommended special remedy for the problem of the High Commissioner for German Refugees; the appointment of a temporary Commissioner for this class of refugees, and a definition of his duties and means of action.283

The actual report shows that the scope of the work of the Committee was broad. All possible aspects of the present refugee problems were handled. The magnitude of the problem was divided into two parts: a) the refugees who were dealt with by the Nansen Office and b) the refugees coming from Germany.284 The numbers of refugees that the Nansen Office was dealing with were as follows, at the end of 1936:

- Russians: 700,000-800,000
- Armenians: 240,000
- Assyrians and Assyro-Chaldeans: 7,000
- Turkish: 150
- Saar: 3000-4000

282 Minutes of the 89. Session of the Council of the LON (17.9.-7.10.1935), 4th meeting 28.9., item 3648/OJ, 16th year, No 11, Nov 1935
283 Minutes of the 90. Session of the Council of the LON (20.-24.1.1936), 1st meeting 20.1./OJ, 17th year, No 2, Feb 1936, 69-70
284 Who were supposed to be covered by the High Commissioner
The number of refugees coming from Germany was estimated to be 80,000-100,000.\textsuperscript{285}

This shows how uneven the approach of the League was in respect of the groups targeted. The motivation for the protection of Turkish refugees was clearly a special one, since it is hardly imaginable that those 150 individuals could have caused a humanitarian disaster compared to the huge amounts of some other refugee groups. The Committee stated that the figures do not give a true idea of what the refugee problem means from the point of view of commitments and regretted that at this point it had not been able to obtain sufficiently exact data.\textsuperscript{286}

It seems that the mandate of the Commission was not extended after it had concluded its work in a form of a report. It was clearly a provisional establishment. The composition of the Committee indicates that it was a band of experts, selected to be best suited for the task to be undertaken. The nationalities of the members were mentioned in documents, although it was quite clear that in this capacity they did not represent their respective governments, but their own expertise.\textsuperscript{287}

Special Council Committee, SCC:

The Council decided in its 90\textsuperscript{th} session in January 1936 to constitute a Special Committee of the Council to consider provisional measures to be taken regarding assistance to refugees coming from Germany. The provisional measures were recommended by the CIAR in its report. (See above). The Committee consisted of six members and a rapporteur. The members were representatives of the United Kingdom, Denmark, France, Italy, Poland and the USSR.\textsuperscript{288} The Committee was appointed on January 22, and it gave its report to the Council already during the same session on 24.1.1936. The Committee recommended that the Council should immediately appoint Norwegian Michael Hansson to act as President of the Governing Body of the Nansen Office. Another recommendation was that the Council authorizes its President to

\textsuperscript{285} Minutes of the 90. Session of the Council of the LON (20.-24.1.1936), Annex 1576/OJ, 17\textsuperscript{th} year, No 2, Feb 1936, 144

\textsuperscript{286} Minutes of the 90. Session of the Council of the LON (20.-24.1.1936), Annex 1576/OJ, 17\textsuperscript{th} year, No 2, Feb 1936, 144

\textsuperscript{287} Minutes of the 90. Session of the Council of the LON (20.-24.1.1936), Annex 1576/OJ, 17\textsuperscript{th} year, No 2, Feb 1936, 142

\textsuperscript{288} Minutes of the 90. Session of the Council of the LON (20.-24.1.1936), 3\textsuperscript{rd} meeting 22.1/OJ, 17\textsuperscript{th} year, No 2, Feb 1936, 77-78
appoint a temporary High Commissioner of the LON to deal with questions connected with refugees coming from Germany.\textsuperscript{289}

It has been reported that a few difficult questions of the settlement were referred for advisory opinion to the Permanent Court of International Justice. That same tribunal was called upon to decide on some details as to the persons to be included in the compulsory transfer of populations when the grand exercises between Greece and Turkey took place. The reports reveal that the advice of the Court was adopted by the parties.\textsuperscript{290}

Some advisory organs, as well as some individual governments, made various proposals towards the end of the 1930s concerning the future organizations for refugee protection. Notably the Norwegian Government was active in this respect. The background for these proposals according to the Norwegian Government lay in the fact that it seemed illogical and unpractical to establish differences of treatment between the various groups of refugees under the protection of the League of Nations. It would be to the advantage of both the League and of the refugees if the whole work of assistance could be consolidated and coordinated. Norway submitted a draft resolution recommending creation of a single organization on the liquidation of the Nansen Office and of the High Commission at the end of 1938, and instructing the Secretary General to prepare a scheme for this purpose. The resolution was never adopted. Instead, it was confirmed to wind up the Nansen Office and continue the work somehow, as it was reaffirmed that “the political and legal protection of refugees has not ceased to be an obligation of the League”.\textsuperscript{291}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{289} Minutes of the 90. Session of the Council of the LON (20.-24.1.1936), 6th meeting 24.1./OJ, 17\textsuperscript{th} year, No 2, Feb 1936, 126-127
\item \textsuperscript{290} Bentwich 1935, 124
\item \textsuperscript{291} Simpson 1939, 218-219
\end{itemize}
4.3. Performance on a Practical Level

4.3.1. Humanitarian Aid

The humanitarian field operations did not take place in the 1930s in the same scale as they were necessary during the previous decade. The limitations in the mandate of the League refugee organs were the cause for the fact that the intergovernmental efforts in the field were restricted. Very little can be said about the practical humanitarian aid that was supposed to be coordinated by the League system. In case of the Assyrians, the League’s material offers a unique description from a refugee camp in Mosul. A report by Major Thompson was forwarded to the League at the end of November 1933. The camp was opened in August 1933, and it was administrated by a local Committee consisting of five local Iraqi members and Major Thompson as the President of it. In November 1933 the number of refugees in the camp was a little over 1500 persons, including men, women, and children, the latter two groups forming the majority of the residents. About two thirds of the refugees were accommodated in tents, the rest in houses. According to the report the supply of foods seemed to be sufficient for everyone living in the camp. Electric light was provided in the houses and lanterns in the tents. According to the report, health situation in the camp had been satisfactory, thanks to the assistance rendered by the British Royal Air Force health and medical services.\(^{292}\)

All this suggests that even in modern terms, the conditions in the refugee camp did not indicate utmost destitution.\(^{293}\) Where did all the money come from? The report confirms that the Iraqi Government had freely met all demands to finance the administration of the camp. The biggest amount was expended in the initial stages of the formation of the camp. The sum actually spent on the running of the camp was about 200 Iraqi dinars per week. This amount covered food, milk, rent of houses, tents, pay of staff, electricity, and minor repairs.\(^{294}\)

\(^{292}\) Minutes of the 78. Session of the Council of the LON (15.20.1.1934), Annex 1495/OJ, 15th year, No 2 (part I), Feb 1934, 229-230. The RAF was entrusted with a significant role in defense of Iraq for a long time during the Inter-war period; see Pedersen 2010, 979

\(^{293}\) This is said against the background of what we know about refugee camps in general all around the world then and later

\(^{294}\) Minutes of the 78. Session of the Council of the LON (15.20.1.1934), Annex 1495/OJ, 15th year, No 2 (part I), Feb 1934, 231
The League sent a Health Mission to Spain in order to gather information concerning the humanitarian circumstances as well as the situation of displaced people gathered all around the country in Spain. The Mission was formally sent at the request of the Spanish Government. Refugees, both men and women, were in a need of protection. Men and women definitely shared the same needs for physical protection. However, women refugees, because of their sex, were frequently subject to the additional risk of sexual abuse. Health services are often inadequate for women in camps. Poor sanitation in overcrowded refugee camp housing affects women the most, because it is they who have to cope with frequent pregnancies and with children’s illness. The League deliberations reveal nothing that would support the idea that this was recognized during the existence of the refugee work organizations of that time.

Overall picture is, that whenever there was a question of aid supplies and money, there were allegations on ambiguities. “Revelations” of misuse of funds were frequent. The sad thing is that many of the cases were real. It must be kept in mind that humanitarian work or emergency operation requires money more urgently and in a larger scale than any other form of refugee assistance. This was a constant problem as the League simply didn’t have sufficient funds. Moreover, it was difficult and complicated to get authorization to allocate the funds that were available. The organizations didn’t have any reserves, and the operations had to be more or less improvised.

4.3.2. Political Protection and Identification

Refugee status was also in the 1930s considered to be essentially a temporary position and to be terminated as soon as possible. This had to be done either by returning to the country of origin and resuming full citizen’s rights there, or by integration in a country providing permanent asylum, accompanied by legal absorption

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295 Minutes of the 96. Session of the Council of the LON (21.-27.1.1937), 1st meeting 21.1./OJ, 18th year, No 2, Feb 1937, 94
296 Reference to this fact; see Camus-Jaques, 145
297 Camus-Jaques, 148
298 Nevalainen, 235
in the form of naturalization. In the 1930s the international community generally accepted the idea that every individual should be in a possession of a nationality. The existence of stateless people was considered to be an abnormality. A legal status of refugees was largely depending on the documentation the people were able to obtain. People needed to prove their identity and legalize their signature in order to live normal life and comply with formalities in a modern society.

Not all exiles were officially refugees. Some people didn’t want the status of a refugee, even they were fugitives. On the other hand, there were individuals who applied for the status and asylum without being in real danger and persecuted. Again, political and economic convenience dictated the approach of an individual. It was a political dilemma. People were considered refugees as long it was convenient. When it was not, they became “illegal immigrants”. People would like to have the status of a refugee, if they feel that it is useful for them.

In the 1930s the German refugees were in a difficult legal position, since they were not covered by the previous agreements. Only in 1936 the first Provisional Arrangement concerning their documentation was adopted. In 1938 the Convention relating to Status of Refugees coming from Germany made a serious attempt to organize and arrange the situation. Later the same legal benefits were extended to refugees coming from former Austria and Sudetenland.

In the 1930s the delegates of the various League refugee agencies provided refugees with a variety of services, from recommendations to government officials that refugees be issued with an identity certificate or visa, to certifying professional qualifications or family status. From 1932 to 1938 the Nansen Office made an average of more than 18,000 interventions annually relating to personal status of Russian, Armenian, Assyrian, and the Saar refugees. In addition, the representatives of the High Commissioner provided consular services directly in France and in Belgium under the terms of their 1928 Accord.

There was also another curious phenomenon in connection with the Russian refugees. Soviet authorities counter-expelled some refugees who had been returned from Finland to Soviet Union unofficially, without the consent and cooperation of the Soviet authorities. This happened also to some who had assumed Soviet citizenship.

299 See Riila, 47
300 Francois, 371
301 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 364
302 Skran, 177
303 Leitzinger II, 240
The Honorary Representative of the League High Commissioner Mr. Gripenberg protested the policy of the Finnish governmental authorities to return large numbers of refugees to Soviet Union in 1933. In his request for explanation he told that the High Commissioner had exact information on the deportations. The explanation of the Finnish authorities seems to have been that the Soviet government had a number of prison camps and forced labour camps close to the border, and unwanted fugitives were frequently met crossing the borderline. This dialogue went on for some time and lead to a slight conflict between the Finnish Government and the High Commissioner.304

During the Inter-war period there was the division between a) political and legal protection and b) humanitarian work. This distinction could not be faithfully followed in practice. For example, in the 1930s it was the Nansen Office instead of the Secretariat of the League to make (political) interventions in capitals, since the NO had the network of representatives.305 There are, however, very little references in the League source material to any real political activities in capitals on the matters of refugees.

The citizens of former Russian Empire were classified as refugees by the League of Nations. The people who later fled from the Soviet Union were treated equally and a parallel was drawn between the groups. It was politically difficult to create a new definition after the Soviet regime was finally established. The granting of an alien’s passport or a Nansen passport was considered a symbol of an asylum, even if the foreigners had come to the recipient country with a legal (old) passport and visa.306

The Nansen Office and the Advisory Commission conducted a joint exercise in the beginning of 1933 in order to secure a more stable legal status for refugees. The aim was to simplify the international and national procedures, background for this being the fact that only limited number of countries was primarily concerned with the problem.307 This was, of course, also a symptom of initial activity of the new President of the Nansen Office, Mr. Werner, who had just started.308 The Nansen Office interceded on

304 Leitzinger II, 245
305 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 363
306 Leitzinger II, 551
307 In answers to the circular letters etc. the replies of individual countries had stated that this was none of their concern
308 Minutes of the 73. Session of the Council of the LON (22.5.-6.6.1933)/OJ, 14th year, No 7 (part II), July 1933, 806
behalf of refugees in more than 800,000 instances during the first five years of its existence.\textsuperscript{309}

A crucial issue concerning the refugees' legal status was the delicate question of expulsion. The IGAC drew up several additional recommendations concerning expulsion in its seventh session in 1935. The IGAC requested the Council to ask information from the governments as to the principles at present applied in regard to refusal of entry and expulsion in case of refugees who cannot be allowed to reside in other countries as well as previous recommendations on the same subject included in the resolutions of the League.\textsuperscript{310}

The international conventions and arrangements of 1933, 1936, and 1938 contained basic elements of the legal status of a refugee.\textsuperscript{311} Many of the elements were connected to the limitations on expulsion or return. Refugees required to leave a contracting State were supposed to be allowed a reasonable time to make arrangements. Legally resident refugees were not to be expelled or sent back across the frontier without a reason connected to national security or public order. Governments also agreed in general not to return refugees to Germany.\textsuperscript{312}

The word “asylum” was widely used for the first time in connection with the discussion concerning the refugee situation in Spain. In the beginning of 1937 the status of Spanish persons who had taken asylum in the Embassies and Legations at Madrid was discussed in the Council. The Chilean Government raised the question of the position of these people as well their possible evacuation to other countries. Meanwhile, these people were safe in the premises of several Diplomatic Missions. This was referred to as taking asylum.\textsuperscript{313} The question was, whether it is appropriate according to international rules, to accommodate these people, and whether they could be removed safely out from Spain.

The Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps at Madrid presented to the Foreign Affairs authorities of the Spanish (Valencia) Government a memorandum setting forth the principles applicable to the evacuation of persons who had been granted asylum in the Embassies and Legations. The memorandum required safe departure abroad for

\textsuperscript{309} Hansson II
\textsuperscript{310} Minutes of the 86. Session of the Council of the LON (20.-25.5.1935), 1st meeting 20.5., item 3574/OJ, 16th year, No 6, June 1935
\textsuperscript{311} See Chapter 4.3.3.
\textsuperscript{313} Minutes of the 96. Session of the Council of the LON (21.-27.1.1937), 1st meeting 21.1./OJ, 18th year, No 2, Feb 1937, 64-67
persons who had been granted asylum. Old men, women, and children were to be allowed complete freedom of movement outside Spain. Special provisions were laid down for males capable of bearing arms that had been granted asylum. The Council had very extensive discussion on the issue of Spanish refugees, without any obvious outcome.

As the League of Nations sought to provide a solution for refugees, definitions were adopted for each category by intergovernmental conferences convened for the purpose. These definitions were adopted by the Council and the Assembly, and they were incorporated in international Arrangements and Conventions concerning refugees. When considering asylum, residence permit or expulsion, the refugees themselves were often unaware of their rights. One of the most important of the recommendations made by the Consultative Intergovernmental Commission in 1935 was that the governments should arrange for an internal organization to help the refugee and give him an opportunity to represent his case. The evidence on the case should not be made secret.

The legal definitions were designed to serve League’s administrative purposes as well as state authorities. The handicap was that they only covered those groups to whom juridical and political protection had been extended by the League. Nevertheless, they were used for the purpose of distinguishing refugees from other aliens. The Assembly concerned itself about the practice of certain states punishing the refugees for illegal entry and residence. The consequence of this often was the dismissal of the refugees into neighboring countries, where the same process started again. In 1937, however, the Assembly could note that certain improvement had taken place.

Refugees were often stateless people, but not always. Refugees were in a need of identity certificates regardless whether they were stateless or officially or effectively citizens of their original home country. For instance, a certain status of semi-statelessness appeared in 1930s, when the refugees coming from Germany needed help: many of them were formally still German nationals, but practically unable to get

314 Minutes of the 96. Session of the Council of the LON (21.-27.1.1937), 3rd meeting 25.1./OJ, 18th year, No 2, Feb 1937, 99-102
315 Simpson 1939, 3
316 Simpson 1939, 250
317 Simpson 1939, 229
318 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 364
any identity papers from German authorities. In many instances money helped. People who arrived to France with a transit visa had sometimes a possibility to stay permanently and receive a carte d’identité, although people with transit visas should not have been given permits to stay. Naturally, the refugees without means suffered comparatively in such situations.

The Nansen certificate was available only for the “Nansen refugees”. It was not available, for example, for Italian refugees or stateless persons in general. Many difficulties were encountered by the refugees who were not Nansen refugees. The same applied to the Nansen refugees in those countries which had not joined the Arrangements under which the Nansen Certificate was issued. The travel and identity documents lacked uniformity, since not all countries adopted the recommended forms. The consequence was that the bearers of the passports often experienced difficulties in obtaining visas upon them. Similar difficulties were occasionally encountered by refugees because their travel documents were issued in more or less improvised manner. Some were not in a form of a booklet like a normal national passport and did not provide sufficient space for endorsements.

Documents were required if the refugees wanted to travel on. The holders of the Nansen Passport obtained a theoretical legal status as a result of the Convention concerning the International Status of Refugees in 1933 prepared by the Nansen Office. However, the Convention was ratified and respected by few nations only. Nansen passports were awarded to specific groups which were specified already during the 1920s; Russians 1922, Armenians 1924, Assyrians, Assyro-Chaldeans, Syrians, Kurds, and Turks in 1928.

In Finland, the Secret Police (EKP) opposed the possibility to automatically prolong the validity of the Nansen passports and the right to return which was connected to it. This would have made it possible for the refugees to be returned to the country that issued the passports after committing crimes in some other countries. There was a suspicion that new agreement of Geneva on 28.10.1933 concerning the Nansen

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319 Francois, 367
320 Toller, 391
321 Simpson 1939, 240-241
322 Simpson 1939, 241
323 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 363
324 Joly, 7; see Chapter 3.3.4.
passports was created in unrealistic philanthropic spirit and influenced by Russian emigrants.325

The issuing of Nansen Passports in Finland was time consuming because the applications were often incomplete. In many instances, the personal data seemed to be inconsistent, “intentionally or unintentionally”. Plenty of bureaucracy was involved. This was connected to the statistics and registration, which also had the problem of incompleteness and inconsistency. The administration seemed to be fully aware of the nature of the problem.326 In 1930s, as the world was close to a new war, travelling of foreigners became reportedly more difficult. Some states and certain authorities were worried and suspicious about agents and propagandists. Surveillance became more intensive.327

The revenues accrued from the selling of the Nansen stamps were small. For example in Finland following figures were recorded in the 1930s.328

1933….760 CHF  
1934….585 CHF  
1935….515 CHF  
1936….660 CHF

There seems to be no reliable records from the 1920s on the revenues.

Besides the legal status, the refugee identity documents gave the refugees moral support. Without papers, the refugees would be at the mercy of the national authorities. With those papers, they could turn to the representatives of the High Commissioner. Since the original Nansen Passport gave no possibility for the return to issuing country, it was somewhat weaker travel document than normal national passport. It was not until 1933 when an arrangement on the renewed Nansen passport was achieved. According to that, the passport was also good for return. Although only few states ratified this arrangement,329 the 1933 Convention marked a substantial improvement compared to the original arrangement of Nansen Certificates in regards of the period of validity as well as the right to return to the country of issue.

The German refugees were not included in the regular Nansen passport system. The Recommendation of the Communications and Transit Conference in 1927 had introduced an early alien’s passports. This was the arrangement that gave possibility

325 Leitzinger II, 245-246  
326 Leitzinger II, 88-89  
327 Leitzinger II, 336  
328 See Simpson 1939, 206  
329 See e.g. Thompson I, 28
for the German Refugees to get identity and travel documents when the problem became topical. The German question was handled in separate procedure line when the Provisional Arrangement concerning identity and travel documents for German Refugees was adopted in 1936. This was followed by a Convention of 1938. The benefits of the 1936 Arrangement and 1938 Convention were also extended to the refugees coming from former Austria and Sudetenland.330

Demands were made publically for the extension of the Nansen passport system, not only to the German, but especially to the Spanish refugees in 1930s.331 In fact, the problem of the statelessness of the German refugees found its solution practically already by the application of the recommendations of the Conference of 1927. The majority of the German refugees remained German subjects, but some had been stateless already in Germany. Some refugees became stateless since they left by cancellation of their German nationality. Many of the refugees who still were Germans, could not obtain a renewal of their German documents from the German consular authorities. In these cases, the governments were invited, and generally agreed, to employ the “International Passport” of 1927. There was an ongoing discussion whether it was necessary to devise any new or exceptional document similar to the Nansen certificate for the German refugees.332

The legal protection of the refugees coming from Germany was on a separate track from other refugees. The special identity certificate system was established for these refugees as a reflection of this. After the first appointment of the High Commissioner for refugees coming from Germany, the majority of the exiles were still holding valid German passports. That situation changed again when the refugees coming later became stateless without any valid documents. The Provisional Arrangement in 1936 facilitated the issue of a travel and identity document to these refugees. The form was similar to the Nansen Certificate, but there were also some distinctions. Finally, only seven states became official members in the Arrangement.333

The Governments which were parties to the various arrangements regarding the issue of the Nansen passports to refugees were using different types of certificates. Certain governments had even introduced distinct passports for the various categories of refugees residing in their territory. This sometimes caused confusion and different practices, not only for the frontier officers, but also for the bearers of the passports. The

330 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 364, See also Chapter 4.3.3.
331 See e.g. Toller, 398-399
332 Bentwich 1935, 126-127
333 Simpson 1939, 241
IGAC gave a suggestion in 1935 for adoption of a standard type of Nansen passport. The task of introducing such model type was entrusted to the Nansen Office.\(^{334}\) The travel and identity system for refugees coming from Germany was not a particular success in comparison with the Nansen passport system. Since so few countries adopted the 1936 Arrangement, the usefulness of the system was naturally limited.\(^{335}\)

In 1935 the Council put forward a recommendation stipulating that countries which have introduced the Nansen passport system should extend the benefits immediately to the refugees coming from the Saar – i.e. to all persons who, having previously had the status of inhabitants of the Saar, had left the Territory on the occasion of the plebiscite and were not in possession of national passports.\(^{336}\) In July 1935 the Secretary General gave a communication with a plan for the issue of Nansen passports to the Saar refugees. The plan contained a form of the identity certificate, as well as conditions for the issuing officials and the eligibility of the bearers of the certificate. It was not supposed to infringe the laws and regulations in force in any State with regard to the control of foreigners, and was valid for one year from the date of issue. The issuing authorities could, in case of need, be qualified to extend the validity of certificates for a period not exceeding six months. Children under 15 years of age were supposed to be included on the certificates of their parents. All these conditions derived from previous arrangements and conventions concerning the certificates (1922, 1924, 1926, and 1933). There was a special provision in the certificate form: “It shall cease to be valid if the bearer enters German territory”. About twenty replies from the Governments came before the end of 1935, most of them expressing the willingness to apply the system to the Saar refugees.\(^{337}\) Replies from Governments continued to come in 1936, most of them favorable for the proposal.\(^{338}\) This would suggest that there were no big constraints in respect of accepting this kind of arrangements in general.

When the matters came down to Germany itself, however, political convenience was practiced over the issues of the refugees.

\(^{334}\) Minutes of the 86. Session of the Council of the LON (20.-25.5.1935), Annex 1541/OJ, 16th year, No 6, June 1935

\(^{335}\) Skran, 120

\(^{336}\) Minutes of the 86. Session of the Council of the LON (20.-25.5.1935), 4th meeting 24.5., item 3593/OJ, 16th year, No 6, June 1935

\(^{337}\) OJ, 16th year, No 12, Dec 1935, item 9, 1683

\(^{338}\) See e.g. OJ, 17th year, No 3, March 1936, 297
4.3.3. International Conventions and Arrangements

Compared to previous decade, the 1930s witnessed some serious attempts to develop an all-covering, universal, and complete legal protection system for the needs of refugees. A series of documents were negotiated, finalized, and signed during the decade.

The Protocol on Stateless Persons 12.04.1930 was not specifically directed to concern refugees, and there was a wider international agenda behind it. However, it could have been interpreted to cover also refugees among other stateless groups. It is also worth noticing that this agreement was among the very few long lasting arrangements, which was even extended in application by colonial powers in Africa still after the Second World War.339

The Convention concerning the International Status of Refugees 28.10.1933 was drawn up by the Inter-Governmental Conference which met in October 1933. The text was communicated to all Members of the League. The Council made a decision regarding the introduction of the Convention also to States non-members of the League “which might care to become parties to it” for their signature proceeding. It was therefore transmitted to the following States: Brazil, Free City of Danzig, United States of America, Liechtenstein and Monaco.340

The Nansen Office had in practice a major role in preparing the Convention. It strengthened the legal status of the refugee groups covered by the Nansen Passport arrangement of 1928. The handicap of the Convention was that it was ratified only by few States.341 In the 1933 Document it was articulated for the first time that there was a principle according to which the refugees should not be returned to their countries of origin. This principle occurs as an international instrument in many occasions since that. The contracting parties further agreed that resident refugees should not be removed or kept from their territory “by application of police measures, such as expulsions or non-admittance at the frontier, unless dictated by national security or

339 Maluwa, 118-119
340 Minutes of the 78. Session of the Council of the LON (15.-20.1.1934)/OJ, 15th year, No 2 (part I), Feb 1934, 109
341 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 363
In cases, where it was absolutely necessary to use expulsion, the persons were not to be deported unless another country was willing to receive them.\textsuperscript{343} The Conference drew up the Convention with the object “to establish conditions which shall enable the decisions already taken by the various states to be fully effective”. This was to say that the existing recommendations were supposed to be collected and compiled in a binding international treaty. The main provisions of the Convention, applying only to Russian, Armenian, and “assimilated” refugees, concerned: 1) administrative measures concerning the issuance of the Nansen passports, 2) juridical conditions concerning the legal assistance before the court of law, 3) equal labour conditions with nationals, 4) refugees’ right to welfare and relief, 5) education (refugees should have equal access to higher education), and 6) the fiscal regime stipulating that refugees should not be subject to any exceptional duties, charges or taxes.\textsuperscript{344}

The Convention didn’t contain any new definitions of the term ‘refugee’ or of special categories of refugees. This was done in several other arrangements during the two Inter-war decades. It appears that this particular Convention was originally meant to cover all the refugee groups mentioned in the previous agreements and arrangements.\textsuperscript{345} The 1933 Convention was defined to come into force as soon as ratifications or accessions had been received on behalf of at least two members of the League or non-member states. The governments showed no particular haste in implementing the project and the Assembly of 1934 adopted a resolution inviting states to ratify the convention without delay in order to get the problem eliminated.\textsuperscript{346} For the later development it is worth noticing that it was not until 1933 that the important principle of non-refoulement was included into an international treaty. It was particularly the Article 3 of the Convention concerning expulsions which has been accepted by all later arrangements since its creation.\textsuperscript{347}

The Refugee Convention of 1933 has been considered one of the most important international agreements on refugees. In practical terms it contributed considerably to restricting expulsions (from the countries of refuge). Although the agreement was finally

\textsuperscript{342} Goodwin-Gill and McAdam, 202; Maluwa, 121
\textsuperscript{343} Hansson II
\textsuperscript{344} Bentwich 1935, 117-118
\textsuperscript{345} Grahl-Madsen 1966, 130-131
\textsuperscript{346} Bentwich 1935, 119
\textsuperscript{347} Maluwa, 121
ratified only by eight nations, it was respected by many others in practice.\textsuperscript{348} The concrete relief work connected to this agreement was largely executed by the representatives of Nansen Office even though they didn’t have a legal authorization to do so. The 1933 Convention has been described as the Charter of Liberty for the Nansen Refugees.\textsuperscript{349}

The Nansen Passport system was extended for the Saar refugees by the Arrangement of 24.5.1935. It was affiliated to by 17 countries.\textsuperscript{350} The Plan defined the Saar refugees as “all persons who, having previously had the status of inhabitants of the Saar, have left the Territory on the occasion of the plebiscite and are not in a position of national passports”.\textsuperscript{351}

The Provisional Arrangement of 4.7.1936 concerned identity and travel documents for the Refugees coming from Germany.\textsuperscript{352} As a result of the recommendations made by the IGAC, the CIAR and the Special Council Committee in 1935/1936\textsuperscript{353}, the Secretary General sent in March 1936 a communication to States Members and certain States non-members of the League including a convocation and provisional programme of an inter-governmental conference on assistance to refugees. According to the programme, the conference was meant to deal mainly with the questions on Jewish and non-Jewish refugees coming from Germany.\textsuperscript{354} The conference took place at Geneva in July 1936 and as a result of it, a system of travel documents for German refugees was drafted.\textsuperscript{355}

The Convention of 10.2.1938 was relating to the Status of Refugees coming from Germany. A similar approach was used in both 1936 Arrangement and 1938 Convention to cover the majority of the people who had left Germany for reasons of persecution. The first article of the 1938 Convention defined the case of the German refugee refugees as “a) Persons possessing or having possessed German nationality and not possessing any other nationality who are proved not to enjoy in law or in fact the protection of the German Government, and b) stateless persons not governed by previous Conventions or Agreements who have left German territory after being established therein and who are proved not to enjoy in law or in fact the protection of

\textsuperscript{348} Hansson II
\textsuperscript{349} Simpson 1938, 610
\textsuperscript{350} Grahl-madsen 1983, 363
\textsuperscript{351} Grahl-Madsen 1966, 132
\textsuperscript{352} Grahl-Madsen 1983, 364
\textsuperscript{353} See Chapter 4.2.5.
\textsuperscript{354} OJ, 17th year, No 5, May 1936, 522-523
\textsuperscript{355} Cf. also Chapter 4.3.2.
the German Government.” 356 This was a very difficult definition. As Simpson interpreted it, the definition covered also the people in concentration camps inside Germany. They didn’t enjoy, as a matter of fact, the protection of the German Government. 357 Article 1 also excluded from the definition persons who left Germany because of economic reasons or because it was personally convenient. 358

The convention was signed by the representatives of 11 states. 359 Simpson estimated in 1938, almost immediately after the signing of the convention, that by virtue of this convention the German refugees are practically in the same juridical position in their countries of refuge as are the “Nansen refugees” (or “assimilated refugees”). 360 The biggest shortcoming of this convention again was that it didn’t help in any way the position of those to-be-refugees, who were still living in Germany. 361

The High Commissioner was asked to consult the Governments concerned on the subject of application to refugees coming from Austria of the provisions of the Convention concerning refugees coming from Germany (10.2.1938) and if necessary of the Provisional Arrangement of 4.7.1936 on the same subject. The High Commissioner drafted an Additional Protocol to be examined by the Governments concerned, with the purpose that the document will put the refugees from Austria legally to the same category with the German refugees. The term “refugees coming from Austria” was defined as “a) persons having possessed Austrian nationality and possessing German to the exclusion of another nationality; who are proved not to enjoy, in law or in fact, the protection of the German Government b) stateless persons not covered by the previous Convention or Arrangement who have left the territory which formerly constituted Austria after being established therein, and who are proved not to enjoy, in law or in fact, the protection of the German Government”. 362

By the Protocol of 14.9.1939, the benefits of the 1936 Arrangement and the 1938 Convention were confirmed and thus extended to refugees coming from “the territory which formerly constituted Austria” and from Sudetenland. 363 It was also defined that

356 Simpson 1938, 608-609; Goodwin-Gill and McAdam, 17; Grahl-Madsen 1966, 131-132
357 Simpson 1938, 609
358 Goodwin-Gill and McAdam, 17
359 Thompson II, 379
360 Simpson 1938, 617
361 Thompson II, 379
362 OJ, 19th year, No 7, July 1938, 646-647
363 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 364
persons who leave the territory which formerly constituted Austria “for reasons of purely personal convenience are not included in this definition.”

In addition to the actual agreements and arrangements concerning refugees there were some exercises that also may be considered somewhat relevant for them. In 1937 The League, together with the ILO, coordinated a multilateral exercise in a form of the Committee of Experts on Assistance to Indigent Foreigners. As a result of that a Convention on Assistance to Indigent Foreigners was drafted. There was no direct mentioning of refugees, but as the agreement was concerning benefits deriving from national legislation on social insurance etc., it could have been, to certain extent, interpreted to cover refugees as well.

As a result of the deliberations taking place within the League as well as in Evian during the summer and autumn 1938, the Government of the UK proposed a Protocol to be signed by any willing parties. The definitions for refugees coming from Austria were almost identical to the previously proposed by the draft by High Commissioner. References were made to the Arrangement 1936 and to Protocol 1938. The Protocol did not require ratification.

In many cases the member countries signed and ratified the arrangements and indicated that they would be respected and implemented. But this was sometimes the outer image without correspondence in the real internal situation. Again, the sporadic evidence comes from Finland. There were great discrepancies between the different authorities in respect of the compliance with the international arrangements. The Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice were often in favor of the arrangements, whereas the National Security Service EKP was openly non-complying and even hostile.

The network of agreements and arrangements concluded in the 1920s and 1930s had its significance that was proven only later. When the modern Refugee Convention was adopted in December 1950, it was recognized that the definitions of refugees in the previous arrangements and conventions of 1926, 1928, 1933, 1938, and 1939 will be valid and considered to form the basis of the new Convention.

364 Grahl-Madsen 1966, 132-133
365 Minutes of the 88-89. Session of the LON (10.9.-5.10.1937), Annex 1666/OJ, 18th year, No 12, Dec 1937, 978-982
366 OJ, 19th year, No 8-9, Aug-Sept 1938, 678
367 Jonkari, 261
368 In the Chapter I, Article 1 A (1) on the Convention
4.3.4. Resettlement

The principle of trying to find a durable solution for refugee problems through resettlement remained on the agenda of the intergovernmental refugee regime. There were many obstacles on the way. In the 1930s national immigration policies that were already strict in many countries, changed tighter, mainly because of the economic depression. In 1931 the United States started to apply new provision in the immigration controls which prohibited the entry of persons likely to become a public burden.\textsuperscript{369}

The intervention of the international organizations was motivated partly by the fact that the governments were controlling relatively empty territories which were not welcoming immigrants. The idea was that the countries might well change their attitude if the immigrants were carefully selected by representatives of international refugee agencies. In that manner the comers were thought to be better equipped in advance to become self-supporting and productive citizens. Many countries did not object to immigrants as such, but feared that they might be consuming public funds or turn out to be politically troublesome.\textsuperscript{370}

The Assembly in its plenary session in autumn 1931 decided to invite the Nansen International Office to devote particular attention to the precarious situation of more than 100,000 Russian Refugees in China, in order to find employment for them in other countries. In response to this, the Government of Paraguay informed the League that it was prepared to receive on its territory a thousand of these refugees. It was further defined that the eligible comers should be of German origin (Mennonites and Lutherans) that would be particularly well adapted for this colonization. The cost of transport and establishment would be met out of “special funds.”\textsuperscript{371}

In this particular case, however, the sources are referring to a dispute between Paraguay and its neighbor, to which the States wanted to raise international attention and to get reconciliation from the League. It seems that the motivation of helping the refugees in China could have been a secondary one for the activism that the Government of Paraguay was showing. The intention was to resettle the refugees from

\textsuperscript{369} Skran, 24
\textsuperscript{370} Thompson II, 382
\textsuperscript{371} This remained without further definition except that numerous private organizations would be involved contributing to the exercise. See Minutes of the 65. Session of the Council of the LON (19.9.-10.12.1931)/ OJ, 12\textsuperscript{th} year, No12, December 1931, 2297
China to an area bordering Bolivia. The representative of the Peruvian Government, acting as a rapporteur for this question, made a statement before the Council in May 1932. He referred to the Council’s decision concerning the evacuation of the Russian (German origin) Refugees from China and said that the decision of the Council and the activity of the Nansen Office might have effects on the territorial disputes between Bolivia and Paraguay.\textsuperscript{372} The Bolivian Government was firm in its position that the area (territory of Chaco) was “a part of national heritage” of Bolivia.\textsuperscript{373}

This above mentioned incident, although small by scale and rather unique, provides us with valuable descriptions of the details involved in resettlement activities in general, and in the practical work of the Nansen Office particularly. The President of the Nansen Office supplied the Secretary General with detailed information regarding the evacuation of the Mennonite Refugees from China. According to this communication, the activities were limited to the evacuation of the refugees from the Chinese territory. The Office took steps to obtain the necessary passports from the Chinese authorities, to arrange for transport facilities to the port of embarkation, and to negotiate agreements with the shipping companies. The Office didn’t assume any responsibility for the selection of the final destination of the refugees and didn’t want to get involved in the question bearing aspects of territorial disagreements between states.\textsuperscript{374}

According to the President of the Nansen Office, Russian refugees were finally resettled in 45 different countries.\textsuperscript{375} As the source material and the contemporary research suggests, most of the result must have constituted of the activities of the Russians themselves. Later in the 1930s, also the Nansen Office was involved with the resettlement activities of the Armenians. It was reported in the middle of the 1930s that some twenty thousand Armenians had been distributed in agricultural and industrial colonies in Syria, and another twenty thousand were transported to the Soviet Republic of Erivan, which was by many considered as a substitute for the Armenian national home. The plans of the Office’s settlement operations extended to all countries of the world. According to assessments later, thousands of Russian Mennonite refugees from Harbin were actually resettled to Paraguay.\textsuperscript{376} Nansen Office was able to resettle some

\textsuperscript{372} Minutes of the 67. Session of the Council of the LON (9.5.-15.7.1932)/OJ, 13\textsuperscript{th} year, No 7, July 1932, 1207
\textsuperscript{373} Minutes of the 67. Session of the Council of the LON (9.5.-15.7.1932), Annex 1372/OJ, 13\textsuperscript{th} year, No 7, July 1932, 1338-1339
\textsuperscript{374} Minutes of the 67. Session of the Council of the LON (9.5.-15.7.1932), Annex 1372a/OJ, 13\textsuperscript{th} year, No 7, July 1932, 1340-1341
\textsuperscript{375} Hansson I, 8
\textsuperscript{376} Bentwich 1935, 119-120, see also previous paragraph
600-700 Armenian families in small houses in Greece during 1931-37.\textsuperscript{377} With the approval of the Council, the Nansen Office arranged for the emigration and settlement of the Saar refugees in Paraguay. Despite having full range of these services by the refugee agencies, only disappointing amount of two hundred people from the Saar settled in the colony.\textsuperscript{378}

It was often said that the Jews were not suited to agricultural work. This was one of the matters that made the schemes of resettling Jews in third countries challenging. Nevertheless, it was considered that Germany was imposing burdens on its neighbors by obstructing emigration by measures connected to identification and documents. After all, it was the German Government that wanted to get rid of these people who were its own subjects.\textsuperscript{379} This equation had to be solved somehow.

For the Jews there were two possible destinations of resettlement: Palestine and Argentina, which were considered equally good for them. Palestine was considered the historic, ancient homeland of Jews. In Argentina there was plenty of room and a good climate. The return to Palestine was a sacred matter for many of the Jews. Theodor Herzl wrote his idea of modern Jewish state in his essay “Der Judenstaat”. This was also in mind of those who started to work with the Jewish refugee problem in the 1930s. In first years after the promulgation of Hitler’s anti-Semitic policy in Germany, most of the efforts of world Jewry to direct the flood of Jewish emigration from Germany centered on Palestine. Even the Jews who had been skeptical about the success of the “Jewish Homeland” were happy that some of the persecuted German Jews could find a refuge.\textsuperscript{380}

Although for some Jewish leaders the issue of returning to Palestine was a sacred one, some others came to the conclusion that it was better for them to try to settle elsewhere. For many, the most important thing was that the Jews should be able to settle somewhere on the globe and be there on their own, consider the land as theirs, and thus avoid creating a new Jewish problem.\textsuperscript{381} Nevertheless, some 40,000 German Jews immigrated to Palestine between 1933 and 1937. The growth of hostilities between Arabs and the comers made it evident that the whole question of the Jewish Homeland had to be reconsidered. Finally, the hopes of Jewish mass emigration to Palestine had to be abandoned. It was simply not possible to get sufficient numbers of

\textsuperscript{377} Hansson I,8
\textsuperscript{378} Skran, 201
\textsuperscript{379} Hansson II
\textsuperscript{380} Thompson II, 385
\textsuperscript{381} Hansson II
people absorbed in the Palestine to solve the Jewish problem of Germany and Eastern Europe.  

The High Commissioner estimated at the end of 1935 that of the more than 80,000 who had left Germany by then, three-fourths had found new homes or had been repatriated. More than half of the resettled had found their home in Palestine. This accomplishment had been achieved primarily by the work of the refugees themselves, as well as by the activities of the Jewish and Christian philanthropic organizations.

1930s was not a good time to move for refugees. Perhaps at no time in history the conditions had been less favorable to settlement. The lands of immigration which used to need the influx of foreign workers were closed. Commerce and other occupations of the refugees coming from Germany were faced by difficulties everywhere. The first task of the IGCR was to open negotiations with the German Government on an important issue: to secure German refugees (i.e. Jews) the right to take their assets with them. Furthermore, the aim was in general to establish cooperation in helping the refugees to further immigrate to other countries. On the whole, resettlement of refugees was benefited very little by the activities of the IGCR before it discontinued operations at the outbreak of the Second World War.

The resettlement schemes for the Jews were undertaken mostly by the Jewish voluntary organizations. The League did not have much practical role in the planning and the execution of the programs. At the Evian Conference in 1938, Sir Neill Malcolm made an observation in his speech stating that “in the present condition of labour markets in the countries of the world, any large-scale scheme of migration could only arouse hostility.”

The Secretary General sent a communication to member states and to some other governments in July 1935 concerning the settlement of refugees in overseas countries. The purpose was to investigate possibilities to resettle people to places which had possibilities to provide land and other facilities for these activities. Although the essential scope of the exercise was not very sharply presented in the initial communication, some replies were clearer. The Belgian Government stated that it “does not propose to authorize the settlement of the refugees in the colony of the

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382 Thompson II, 385
383 McDonald, vi
384 McDonald, Annex, 34
385 Hansson II
386 Skran, 218
387 Skran, 214
Belgian Congo”. The Government of the UK replied that any refugee who has definite prospects of employment or means of subsistence should, subject to compliance with the regulations enforced in the territory in question, have no difficulty in securing admission to any of the British oversea dependencies. The US State Department was faithful to its style: “The Secretary of State is not in a position to express any views as to the disposition in the United States of such aliens as may be admitted into the country for permanent residence. There are number of welfare, social service, Americanization, and foreign language organizations in the US which deal with such problems and to which individual cases might be referred for helpful advice.”\footnote{See OJ, 17th year, No 3, March 1936, 297-302}

After the British announcement to grant independence to its colonial protectorate, the question on Iraq’s minorities was brought up in the discussion of the members of the Permanent Mandates Commission (PMC). The nation-building was feared to have a negative impact on the position of the non-Arab populations.\footnote{Pedersen 2010, 984-985} Indeed, a large set of international debates on Iraq’s position concerned the relationship to its own people and the existing ethnic antagonisms. As a result, the PMC was constantly approached by petitions from Iraq’s Kurds and Assyrians.\footnote{Pedersen 2010, 992-993}

As the problem of the Assyrian minority in Iraq appeared, it became quite soon obvious that resettlement to new territories rather than in Iraq was the only practicable solution. The Iraqi Government stated that it was prepared to make as generous a contribution as its resources permitted to facilitate the settlement of the Assyrians outside its territory. What the Iraqi Government could not do, was to find land for the refugees. That had to be left on the responsibility of the League.\footnote{Minutes of the 78. Session of the Council of the LON (15.-20.1.1934), Annex 1495/OJ, 15th year, No 2 (part I), Feb 1934, 225} It was in these circumstances that the (Resettlement) Committee was set up. One of the reasons for the Council to push responsibility to a special Committee was the extremely difficult economic situation worldwide, which made all kind of settlement plans challenging to be carried out.\footnote{Minutes of the 78. Session of the Council of the LON (15.-20.1.1934), Annex 1495/OJ, 15th year, No 2 (part I), Feb 1934, 226} The Iraqi Government nominated a local Committee to work in collaboration with the representative of the Nansen Office in order to facilitate the resettlement procedures.\footnote{Minutes of the 78. Session of the Council of the LON (15.-20.1.1934), Annex 1495/OJ, 15th year, No 2 (part I), Feb 1934, 227} The (Resettlement) Committee accepted the offer of The
Nansen Office to nominate Major T.F. Johnson (Secretary General of the Nansen Office) to investigate, together with a delegation of the Committee, the possibilities of the resettlement of Assyrian Refugees to Brazil. The purpose was to see whether certain agricultural areas in Brazil were suitable for the project planned by the Committee.  

The Resettlement Committee submitted its report to the Council on 13.9.1935. The report was very thorough, consisting of over 30 pages. It contained a detailed study of the plan for the settlement of the Assyrians in the plain of Ghab, situated north from Beirut, near the Mediterranean cost. In the plan, there were lands reserved for the Assyrians, as well as a projected reservoir for the use of the agricultural settlements. The French Government had contributed greatly to the making of the report and to resettlement plan itself. The Iraqi Government and the French authorities were able to reach an agreement on transferring Assyrians from Iraq to other place in the Middle East to wait for the final settlement.

In September 1937 the Iraqi Government informed the League on their intention to depute an expert of the Land settlement department to the north provinces of the country to enquire into the economic conditions of the people, with a particular reference to the Assyrians. The expert selected was British A.H. Ditchburn, a former President of a Land Settlement Commission. In 1937-1938 the expert paid several visits to the area, and submitted a comprehensive report which was transmitted to the Council in August 1938.

There was also a Trustee Board on the settlement of the Assyrians in Khabur. The Trustee Board gave quarterly reports to the Council. The reports contained a description of the general situation as well as agricultural conditions and health situation. A separate medical officer’s report was attached. Another international attempt to facilitate the immigration and settlement of Assyrian to South America had been made by a special committee of the League already in 1933-1935. These plans had been found unfeasible, and finally they turned out to be unsuccessful.

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394 Minutes of the 78. Session of the Council of the LON (15.-20.1.1934), Annex 1495/OJ, 15th year, No 2 (part I), Feb 1934, 228
396 OJ, 19th year, No 12, Dec 1938, 1151-1153
397 See e.g. OJ, 20th year, No 3-4, March-April 1939, 223-228
398 Skran, 224
4.3.5. Permission to Stay and Reside

Only after getting a permit, the refugees could safely settle, without fear of deportation. Satisfactory settlement of the refugees was also beneficial for the countries in which they settled. Positive politics enabled refugees to make a contribution instead of being a potential burden.\textsuperscript{399} As movements of people became more active in Europe in 1933, states started to pay more attention to the entry regulations as well as practices in enforcing them. In Finland a new decree on foreigners entry of 1933 gave a wide mandate to authorities in considering who was able to get into the country and who was not.\textsuperscript{400} Governments were afraid of bogus refugees and foreign agents. The enforcement of the laws and regulations was not up-to-date at all times. It was discovered that many refugees had been staying in the country without valid permits, especially in the 1920s. The supervision of the aliens was simply not efficient enough. Some individuals could have been living in the country for 15 years without any registration or any authorities knowing.\textsuperscript{401}

International action was comparatively successful in securing a travel document for refugees, as no real question of national sovereignty was involved. The case was different when an attempt was made to secure some guarantee of residence. The legal and political protection of refugees, which had been accepted by the League as a responsibility, required action also on the guarantee of residence. This was endorsed in the Arrangement of 1928, in the Convention of 1933, in the Provisional Arrangement of 1936, and in the Convention of 1938.\textsuperscript{402} The difficulty in obtaining a guarantee of residence for refugees was evidenced by the reluctance of governments to insert a formula into the refugee certificates entitling the holder to return to the country of issue. Guarantee of residence implies protection from expulsion. International action was directed to an attempt to reduce the number and the arbitrary nature of cases of expulsion. Although it was kept in mind in drafting the international arrangements that

\textsuperscript{399} Joly, 48  
\textsuperscript{400} Nevalainen, 78  
\textsuperscript{401} Nevalainen, 102  
\textsuperscript{402} Simpson 1939, 242
the governments had their ultimate sovereign right to expel an alien, the Nansen Office intervened regularly in cases of expulsions which seemed to be unjustified.\textsuperscript{403}

The economic crisis of the 1930 hit everywhere. Like always in these situations, countries started to build barriers around them. Refugees were not welcomed anymore; on the contrary, people wanted them to leave. The national labour force needed to be protected against unemployment. As a consequence, refugees were in large scale taken away the possibility to work and make a living.\textsuperscript{404} It was reckoned that despite all talks about agreements concerning variety of things that carried more political content, the greatest practical hardship for the destitute refugees in the 1930s was the difficulty in getting labour permits.\textsuperscript{405}

The economic recession made the life for refugees harder in Finland. The possibilities for employment were scarce. Municipalities even refused to take refugees to emergency employment works organized by government. Municipalities had their authority in this, even though the central government was in charge for the expenses.\textsuperscript{406} This could clearly be considered discrimination. In 1933 an advisory committee appointed by LON Council urged the ILO to prepare proposals for improving the status of foreign workers. The matter was prepared and worked on, but there never was sufficient consensus to have anything at hands at the end of the day.\textsuperscript{407}

The 1933 Convention prescribed on labour conditions that “the restrictions ensuing from the application of laws and regulations for the protection of the national labour market shall not be applied in all their severity to refugees domiciled or regularly resident in the country”. These conditions were supposed to be applied in favor of refugees if the following conditions were met:\textsuperscript{408}

- he had been resident for not less than three years in the country;
- he was married to a person possessing the nationality of the country;
- he had one or more children possessing the nationality;
- he was an ex-combatant of the (First) World War.

Furthermore, the Convention instructed that refugees who were victims of industrial accidents were entitled to receive the most favorable treatment which was accorded to foreign nationals. In case of unemployment, sickness, invalidity, or old age, and also in

\textsuperscript{403} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{404} Hansson II
\textsuperscript{405} Toller, 392
\textsuperscript{406} Leitzinger II, 416
\textsuperscript{407} Reports of the 18. Session of the ILC. 1934, Report VI; Records of the Proceedings of the 18. Session of the ILC, 1934, 435 and 663; Thompson I, 41
\textsuperscript{408} Bentwich 1935, 119
the application of social insurance laws, the refugees were also supposed to receive the most favorable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country. Lastly, the refugees were not to be burdened by any exceptional payments.409

The International Labour Conference of 1934 passed a resolution urging the formulation of an International Convention which was supposed to regulate the rights of foreign unemployed workers to participation in public assistance schemes. When the draft convention and recommendations were considered by the Fifth Commission of the Assembly in 1934, it was found that only very few governments were interested and thus had submitted observations. These observations were so diverse that it was impossible to make any definite conclusions in regards of a possible convention on the international status of refugees.410

In most countries during the 1920s and 1930s, there were restrictions for foreigners to work in certain professions and occupations. Also rights to social security benefits were reserved for nationals of the country only.411 Many other limitations concerning private rights and practices were prevalent.412 All these matters were in the focus of the international refugee organizations while contemplating the overall alleviation of position of the people living abroad without a legal status. Each country has its own stipulations concerning foreigners on entry and sojourn on the one hand, and on naturalization on the other. Normally these two have been kept separate from each other. Most countries also have specific alien's legislation which works in between, regulating for example foreign ownership.413

Acquisition of some other nationality was feasible for certain exiles. The Greek refugees from Turkey, Russia, Bulgaria, and other countries were granted Greek nationality by the Greek law in the 1920s. Bulgarian refugees arriving in Bulgaria from Greece under the 1919 Convention also benefited from provisions concerning automatic naturalization. Moslems of Turkish origin settling in Turkey were immediately

409 Ibid.
410 Bentwich 1935, 123
411 Francois, 327-330
412 Francois, 330-332
413 More on this, see Leitzinger II, 299-300; Some features in the national legislation concerning foreigners in general may have led into interpretations that the refugees as foreigners are enjoying better benefits than ordinary citizens. E.g. foreigners in Finland in certain cases were exempt from taxes, see: Erich, Rafael: Poikkeukselliset toimenpiteet ja vieraiden valtioiden kansalaiset. Eripainos Lakimiehen 2. n:osta v:ltta 1941.WSOY, Porvoo 1941, 206-207
granted Turkish citizenship by special decision of the Council of Ministers even without the ordinary requirements concerning residential status.\textsuperscript{414}

It was recognized in principle that people could become useful members of the communities and good citizens of their country of residence. This is the very essence and the meaning of the term assimilation. Assimilation was the main task for the Nansen Office for many years. The work of the NO won recognition in the countries where the number of refugees was highest.\textsuperscript{415} The speed of assimilation depended upon the character of the nation concerned. This meant the intellectual intensity and the rhythm of life. It was discovered, that e.g. the “American way of life” transformed most immigrants into “Americans” within relatively short period of time.\textsuperscript{416} Highly educated migrants carried with them capital which was not always financial; there was also transfer of skills and technology. This was positive brain drain.\textsuperscript{417} As time passed, assimilation became complete. Another alternative was that these people became a more or less isolated segment of the population whose customs differed from those of the majority. In the positive alternative the children of the immigrants retained some of the customs of their parents as a legacy but regarded themselves as full members of the national community into which they were born.\textsuperscript{418}

In most of the cases, however, the result was a kind of a dual identity.\textsuperscript{419} The fact seems to be, that most refugees through time have wanted to return to their own countries as soon as it has been safe to do so. Usually this continues until the refugee individuals have lived so long in the country of refuge, that they come to think of it as their home.\textsuperscript{420} When a place is a new home, the people are no longer refugees. In that respect they don’t show in the statistics any longer. In Finland during the years 1920-1939, altogether 4087 Russian families were naturalized. The statistics don’t tell us the exact number of the individuals who obtained the citizenship, since we don’t know the amounts of family members. The data shows, however, that the numbers of naturalized families didn’t vary very much annually, being approximately 100-300 per year.\textsuperscript{421}

\textsuperscript{414} Simpson 1939, 235-236; see also Chapter 3.3.6.
\textsuperscript{415} Hansson II. There was a wish that H C, after taking over the duties of NO, will continue the policy and work
\textsuperscript{416} Hansson II
\textsuperscript{417} See a description of this development on a general level: Rollet, 15
\textsuperscript{418} See e.g. Dummett 18
\textsuperscript{419} Reference to this development in Dummett, 19
\textsuperscript{420} Dummett, 35
\textsuperscript{421} Leitzinger II, 109-112
Some simplifications were introduced to the process of naturalization in Finland during the 1930s. This, and the fading of the hope to go back and live peacefully in the Soviet Union, resulted in slight intensification of naturalizations of refugees coming from Russia in the latter half of the 1930s.\footnote{Nevalainen, 89-90} It must be stated, however, that a major part of the people who obtained Finnish citizenship were non-Russians, i.e. Fenno-Ugrians by their national or cultural identity. Also here Finland seems to represent the approximate average. In European states the naturalization required similar processes of application and fulfilling certain requirements and conditions. Five years of sojourn as precondition was applied in many countries. In Belgium it was ten years, and in Germany even 20 years. In some Latin American countries the naturalization was almost automatic, without preconditions.\footnote{Nevalainen, 91} Some refugees did not want to go back, some could not do so. Then the natural choice was to get naturalized.\footnote{Kortistoluettelo Suomen kansalaisiksi otetuista Inkerin pakolaisista, VPAKA I, Ba6.} According to Simpson, in 1930-36 altogether 1577 Russians as well as 1448 Ingermanlanders and Carelians were naturalized in Finland.\footnote{Simpson 1939, 376 and 602. Apparently this is referring to number of individuals, cf. footnote 1485.}

Naturalization fell in the capacity of each and every state to be considered according its national legislation. When considering the provisions for naturalization in the nationality laws of the main European countries of refuge, striking amount of similarities can be identified. The conditions for naturalization, which prevailed at the end of the 1930s in most of the laws, may be summarized as follows:\footnote{Simpson 1939, 290-292}

- The applicant must be of age according to the law of the country in which he seeks to be naturalized.
- The applicant must have resided continuously for a certain period in the country. The most common period in the various laws was five years.
- The applicant must have sufficient means to support himself and his family.
- The applicant must be of good character.
- The applicant must have an adequate knowledge of the national language.
- The application must be supported by sponsors.
- The applicant must have lost his previous nationality or have reasonable chance of being released from it in case of naturalization.
- The applicant must take an oath of allegiance.
Arrangements of education and schooling for the refugees had been in the focus of the activities in the 1920s when the amounts of immigrants in Finland were high. The national legislation in Finland actually defined only the obligatory education of citizens, and this was interpreted strictly in some local communities. This was changed in 1932, as the new legislation ordered local communities to arrange education for all residents, including non-citizens.\footnote{Nevalainen, 155} The 1933 Refugee Convention prescribed on education, that the refugees were to have the same rights in the schools and universities as were accorded to foreigners in general.\footnote{Bentwich 1935, 119} As a general remark, it can be observed that the education possibilities for refugees were not discussed very intensively in international connections during the 1930s.

4.4. An Account of the Second Decade

The second decade of the existence of the League of Nations saw a deterioration in its political credibility. On the other hand, however, far-reaching progress on social justice and human rights was made.

In the field of refugee work, the different challenges presented themselves, but the principles behind the responses remained almost unchanged. There was a growing feeling that refugee questions were no longer just temporary problems requiring short-term assignments. The refugee regime, however, was unable to convert this feeling into action. Thus the organization chart kept changing. For these reasons, the biggest refugee groups of the 1930s were left without the legal and political protection of the League. The responses to crises and the projects implemented were not particularly innovative either.

There was a lot of energy and effort, which was embodied in the multiplicity of different organizations, but at the same time this multiplicity prevented effective coordination of policy. Proposals to create a LON organ with overall responsibility for all refugees never received sufficient support. The League was never able to build an exit strategy for its refugee work, although each mandate for the refugee bodies was provisional.
The refugee policy of the 1930s appears to be much more selective since the numerous groups of Spanish and Italian refugees were not included in the assistance programs in the same way as some other groups. Officially, there was a legal basis for this selectiveness, but it inevitably affected the evolution of the refugee work of the LON.

The organization of the international refugee aid network became more complex during the 1930s. This was manifested especially in the existence of parallel refugee organs, but also in the multiplicity of different advisory bodies as well as in the number of individuals who held overlapping positions in different establishments. This inevitably indicated that there was still no clear master plan for refugee activities.

The new element in the approach was the ambition to search for the root causes of refugee problems and to negotiate with the governments involved. This had, however, relatively little significance when considering the outcome of the work.

The great paradox of the refugee question of the 1930s was that the refugees were produced by fairly open societies and by open processes, which made it possible for the news media to follow developments. This allowed the international refugee regime to contemplate policies, activities, and measures as the problems occurred. The circumstances led to a situation where some kind of proactive attitude became possible.

One similarity with the previous decade was that the regime was trying to find prominent personalities with international reputations to direct its activities. The personal roles of Fridtjof Nansen and Albert Thomas were magnificent in the 1920s. Historical research has been seeking answers to the possibilities of key solutions through analyzing the activities of those individuals who stepped into high LON offices after the deaths of Nansen and Thomas. It has become a habit to emphasize the personal disappointments of these individuals, when things didn’t go as they had wished. It has been a pleasure to find that these disappointments had ultimately little to do with hard reality. This reality was the diligent work done by many other individuals apart from these diplomats.

Accounts of the results of the LON’s refugee work in the 1930s have been overshadowed by a few distorting factors: the most visible refugee group of the decade was the Jews. The LON was not able to prevent the Second World War. The international community was not decisive enough to stop the Nazis in Germany from executing the plans they had for the Jewish people. All this led to the holocaust.

The verdict of historical research has been at least partly unjust. The High Commissioners were not able to obtain the political support of the Great Powers or the
financing they had hoped for. However, the system still functioned. Agreements were
drafted and finalized. Humanitarian assistance was provided where it was needed.
People were transported to new settlements, mostly, in practice, as a result of private
entrepreneurial activities, but nevertheless under the auspices of the intergovernmental
refugee agencies.

On the other hand, the LON system was able to make decisions and take actions
rather effectively, when there was enough pressure to do so and when conditions were
right. The decisions made on behalf of the Saar refugees constitute a good example of
this.

The refugee problems of the 1930s were more politicized than those of the previous
decade. The first decade had seen the shock of massive movements of people. After
ten years of refugee work many were already prepared to forget the whole issue.
Everything changed immediately when the Nazis came to power in Germany, and the
international community was plunged into a new refugee crisis with political characters
unseen before.

The League responded rapidly with the appointment of the High Commissioner for
German Refugees. Another organization, the Nansen Office, supposedly represented
humanitarian continuity with the heritage after the big characters of the 1920s, Nansen
and Thomas, had passed away. It was anticipated that while the NO would take care of
the more practical side of refugee work, the High Commissioner would try to negotiate
political solutions. This disposition could not always be maintained and the approach
was not completely successful either.

There were substantial, contradictory pressures against the LON and the ILO during
the 1930s. Given these political circumstances, some attempts were made to remove
responsibility from the LON to the ILO in order to underline the social nature of refugee
work. Ultimately this proved to be unrealistic, and on the whole, the role of the ILO in
the 1930s was not as visible as it had been during the first decade. The ILO was
represented on the governing bodies and advisory boards of the various refugee
agencies established in the 1930s. It also continued to provide its expertise through
technical assistance and advisory services behind the scenes. It is fair to say that the
ILO was less visible because of the politicized nature of the refugee problems of the
1930s.

The need for political negotiations with the countries producing refugees was
recognized, but that never developed into a tool for handling refugee problems. The
LON wanted to maintain relations with those countries producing refugees for as long
as possible. This made it impossible to address the root causes of refugee problems,
which would have been the real and also loudly proclaimed remedy. Throughout the 1930s, there were two tracks for handling refugees: one for the Jewish refugees and another for other exiles. Again, the real success lay in the continuity and consistency. This was seen in particular when the times were bad and things went wrong.

The emergence of human rights as the general motivation for refugee work and the deterioration of the human rights situation in Nazi-Germany were of course interlinked. They coincided, but it is impossible to estimate which came first. This would require more study of this particular question.

Towards the end of the decade the United States government stepped forward as a result of domestic political pressures in order to find a sustainable political solution for the Jewish refugee problem. This gesture didn’t prove very effective, and soon the existing LON-agencies had to assume the remaining mandate of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees.

All those refugee organizations which were directly connected to the LON were established on a provisional footing. The IGCR was the first one thought to be a permanent organization without a temporary mandate. Nevertheless, this attempt was also at least partly watered down with plans to integrate the body with the League’s other organs.

The Saar refugees were targeted for “natural reasons” since the LON had a certain obligation after its special administrative role in the region. The Spanish refugees formed a problematic issue since most of them remained on Spanish territory and thus beyond the reach of international action. The Italian refugees were not stateless, and as they were, in a way, “voluntary exiles”, they were left without intergovernmental attention.

The principles in the approach concerning funding during the second decade were very similar to those of the 1920s. Administrative funds for both the High Commissioner and the Nansen Office were minimal. The expenses incurred in the process of field work were covered by funds coming from a number of different sources. Moreover, the need for humanitarian aid and other relief operations were not as urgent as they had been in the 1920s. The emphasis of refugee work lay in seeking legal and political protection. The difficult nature of the situation was illustrated by the fact that it was very difficult to find a covering solution for the issue of the statelessness of the German Jews who required identification and travel documents.

The 1930s witnessed serious attempts to develop an all-embracing, universal, and complete system of legal protection through a series of conventions and arrangements,
but even then these didn’t cover all refugees equally. Definitions were still specifically created for each refugee group.

The LON authorities clearly thought that there were relatively empty regions in the world where refugees could be resettled, and some exercises were initiated to that end. The practical implementation of the resettlement schemes were, however, almost totally undertaken by voluntary organizations.

There were no really significant plans for repatriating any refugees in the 1930s. Most resettlement plans were aimed at the “old” refugee groups, such as the Russians and the Armenians. Plans to resettle Jewish refugees were almost completely in the hands of the Big Powers and non-governmental (Jewish) organizations.

The economic crisis of the 1930s didn’t allow large employment and settlement schemes. What the regime could do, with the help of the ILO, was to concentrate on enhancing the labour conditions of foreign workers in general.

The second decade was more difficult for the ILO than the previous one had been. The organization could not assume a very visible role in policy making, because of the political sensitivity of refugee questions in general. This sensitivity, in turn, derived from the fact that the most visible refugees came from Germany. Partly for these reasons, the ILO didn’t have any designated budget allocation for refugee work and the measures were included in the regular budget of the organization.

The big plans on achieving a definitive solution were unrealistic and thus remained beyond the reach of the refugee regime. But so was too the dream of reaching a lasting peace. The fact that a final overall solution for the refugee problem was not achieved, does not decrease the success of the work which was done behind the scenes.

Although the problems of the 1930s were somewhat different from those of the previous decade, the approach of the League and the ILO was very much the same as before. The underlying motivations were developed, but responses to the various crises itself were similar. The same methods were used, and the same remedies were offered.

One difference was that the LON was more proactive, with a predetermined, more systematic, or universal, approach, that could be applied to future crises. Thus it can be said that the system developed, and showed no sign of stagnation.

The attitudes of the authorities in Finland towards international cooperation became harsher. This was especially the case in granting of Nansen passports. There was an obvious fear that the position and status brought by the Nansen passport could be used for “wrong purposes” and surveillance became more intensive. Finland didn’t suffer from a refugee problem in the same way it had in the 1920s, thus the need and
motivation to lean on international cooperation decreased significantly. Domestic solutions for the problems of the remaining refugees were preferred to transnational options.

Compared to the previous decade, the refugees of the 1930s were held hostage by the threat of violence and international political circumstances. The attitudes in the regime were right and sincere, but the LON was compelled to make concessions from the beginning. This inevitably weakened the potential of the organs established throughout the entire decade. The refugee policy of the LON and ILO in the 1930s was a series of compromises. Nevertheless, the regime existed and performed during the entire decade without any intermissions. The biggest importance of the LON policy was that it gave these international issues a standardized form by maintaining the organization with its mandate through difficult times, when actual results were not completely satisfactory.
5. ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ADVOCATES

5.1. Tools for Estimation

The purpose of this Chapter is not to give definite answers to questions concerning the results of the refugee work accomplished by the intergovernmental system. Since measurement is not in the scope of this presentation, the following rather points out the critical issues that lead to the actual performance and possible results.

Previous research can give some references for the estimation. According to Susan Pedersen’s testimony “League bodies dealing with transnational traffics – opium, refugees, prostitutes – also proved surprisingly effective. All made serious efforts to gather data on their subject.”1 This seems to lead us to the decisive factor while evaluating the efficiency and the value of the work on refugees. The evidence gathered from the source material refers indeed to careful scrutiny while gathering information, in analyzing it, as well as in reporting the results for decision making.

Organizations aiming to social and economic effects have always been interested in presenting the results of their activities from a comprehensive point of view. The financiers of the activities normally want to see the outcomes and measure them in a way or another. The more measurable the results are, the easier it is to give justification to the activities. While measuring, quantitative as well as qualitative aspects can be counted. There are tools created by the economic life to concretize and display the social and economic effects of certain interventions. Then again, these tools have little value when we are trying to evaluate the work of institutions that existed almost a century ago. This is because the methods of displaying the effects are based on questioning, interviewing, statements of experts, narrative case studies, as well as other contemporary practices of measuring both qualitative and quantitative evidence.

Local, national, as well as international reactions to refugee crises remained entirely ad hoc for centuries. After the establishment of the intergovernmental organizations their mandates remained narrowly restricted to certain refugee groups. The idea of a global governance of forced migration has emerged only more recently.2 The objectives, the scope, and the functions of the refugee regime were broadened

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1 Pedersen 2007, 1110
fundamentally during the decades. The refugee system was originally formed to deal
with the Russian refugee problem. It gradually grew to cover other refugee groups as
well. The regime was created to deal with refugee travel. By the end of the 1930s,
rules covering personal status and security, employment, and social services
developed for refugees had been on the agenda of the regime. The functions also grew
to include refugee settlement, increasing employment opportunities, and facilitating
immigration.³

The question which history research must ask is whether the establishment of the
intergovernmental refugee regime in the 1920s was the initiative for the later creation of
modern global governance. As a normative concept, global governance points to the
responses where public and private actors coordinate their policies.⁴ It is obvious that
the states were playing a crucial role in intergovernmental organizations because they
created the rules and were largely also running the institutions by providing able
personnel. They also held ultimate responsibility for policy-making and implementation
because of their input. In case of the international refugee regime, France and Britain
were the two countries that reportedly had the biggest influence on international
refugee policies. They provided most of the financial support. However, the Great
Powers in general “did not often exercise leadership in the positive sense”. They rarely
developed innovative proposals concerning refugee matters.⁵ In theory, this kind of
situation could have left some more space for independence and activity for NGOs, but
in fact they largely depended and were influenced by governments.⁶

It is extremely difficult to judge the success of aid operations. The aid projects may
have been successes in one respect but failures in another. They may have begun
successfully but then turned out to be failures, or vice versa. The objectives of the
operations may have remained so vague that it is not clear with what one should
compare the outcome. Therefore, it is more worthwhile to try to identify factors that
typically promote or complicate the activities.⁷

In emergency relief the most unfortunate cases are the ones in which substantial
part of the refugee aid ends up in wrong hands. The success of repatriation activities
depends of course very much on whether the conditions in the refugees’ home country
calm down so that it is possible for them to return, i.e. whether the initial causes for

³ Skran, 226
⁴ Benz and Hasenclever, 194
⁵ Skran, 279-280
⁶ Skran, 282
⁷ Hakovirta 1991, 87
fleeing are removed.\textsuperscript{8} This criterion is far more important than the will or the capability of the refugee aid organizations.

It has been demonstrated that large-scale third-country resettlement will only be considered if and when the prospects of repatriation are not promising. It also depends on whether one or more countries of first asylum close their borders and refuse to receive any more refugees. The success of any resettlement project is related to the attitudes of the recipient countries. In other words, how willing they are to receive refugees.\textsuperscript{9} Whatever measurements will be used to assess the success of refugee operations, it always comes down to the key question; the contribution of the rich and powerful countries. The willingness and ability of the major players on the international field to donate money and provide shelter for refugees is what matters most.\textsuperscript{10}

The makers of the refugee policy in the 1920s did not think in scientific theoretical terms. Their goal was political as well as practical, aiming at concrete results. Therefore, the formulation of modern development policies gives us better tools and methods to estimate the work of the refugee organizations. A policy has goals and activities defined by the policy have objectives. The objectives define the concrete measures leading to the practical effects. Since we don’t have the definite scientific tools at our disposal while conducting history research, these are expressions of attitudes rather than a product of serious calculative assessment.

Modalities refer to what was done in practice besides moral support and words. What kind of tool kit did the organizations have?

Efficiency means operations and resources allocated to the work in order to achieve results. The ways and means of the action are examined. According to basic assumption it is only fair to say that the work of the High Commissioner in the 1920s with the scarce resources was quite efficient.

Effectiveness means positive results in shorter term. This is related to funding of the work and the effective use of the resources available. It also goes into the decision-making and administrative guidelines. Possible results are related to the question whether the work of the League had any effect on the refugees in the field. Was the effect different from the work of the NGO’s? The coordinating role of the League and the ILO brought a lot of political relevance to the work. Without that the international regime probably never would have developed to the effect it finally reached to.

\textsuperscript{8} Hakovirta 1991, 88-89
\textsuperscript{9} Hakovirta 1991, 94-95
\textsuperscript{10} Hakovirta 1991, 96
Impact refers to positive results in longer terms. The most long lasting impact was the tradition of protecting the refugees from persecution deriving all the way from the beginning of Nansen’s times.

Quality is a broader concept that covers efficiency, effectiveness, and impact. Good quality refugee work has positive marks on all of these components. It guarantees predictability, consistency and the responsible use of taxpayers’ and other donor’s money.

Complementarity refers to the division of work. The international refugee policy and its concrete refugee work were implemented bilaterally, at the League level, multilaterally, and in cooperation with the NGOs. Different actors should take into account the wider framework of all aid delivery channels. Some actors have comparative advantages in certain fields. For example, in the 1930s the Nansen Office and the High Commissioner had a division of labour between each other. It was not always clear, and it could not be followed “by the book”. In principle, however, the idea was that the actors would complement each other’s work, while staying in their own domain of responsibility.

Coherence requires that the strategies and actions in all policy areas support the main goal. Coherent policy must strive to achieve, through concrete measures, the objectives of internationally agreed and nationally accepted agreements. In the light of what we understand by the term coherence, it would be fair to say that the different actors and organizations were not really acting in a coherent manner. The different parties were not always working in a totally comprehensive and consistent way throughout the world.

The best solution would have been prevention of conflicts producing refugee flows. Since this was not a realistic viable solution, the international community had to resort to the second best, which was working properly with the existing refugee population. This was not easy without international solidarity and equitable distribution of responsibility. The world is not there even today, but before the Second World War the international community was really far away from these goals.

In order to be able to measure the concrete effects we can use some references. We can compare how commensurable or uniform the activities are, i.e. how they affect different groups. We can also try to estimate how systematic and coherent the activities are; whether they are conducted under all conditions and under longer period of time. All this we can do only if it is possible to obtain some kind of standards of comparison from the source material.
A real solution would have been a situation where no refugees existed anymore. When does a cessation of a refugee status take place? Significant developments in the refugees own circumstances must be taken into account. The following factors bear important evidence:

- acquisition of a new nationality  
- reacquisition of a former nationality  
- voluntary repatriation (whether or not premature)  
- being specifically accepted and put on a democratic electoral roll in their native state

It should be possible to verify in an objective and dependable way that the situation which had justified the granting of refugee status has ceased to exist.\textsuperscript{11}

The opposite to the cessation of a refugee status is a protracted situation. This situation means a prolonged refugeehood, and at least partly forgotten promises. One way in measuring the success of an operation is to consider whether, or to what extent, the refugees are kept in a protracted situation. This is often seen in connection to static and passive populations and groups of refugees that are staying year after year in overpopulated refugee camps.\textsuperscript{12} The root cause for protracted refugee situation often is the unwillingness of the country of origin to cooperate in peace efforts. Assistance to these refugees through humanitarian agencies should not be a substitute for sustained political and strategic solutions. The humanitarian agencies cannot fully respond to, and resolve protracted refugee situations without the international donor community engagement contributing to the peace and security.\textsuperscript{13} During the Inter-war period the donor community was clearly represented by the League of Nations’ apparatus.

\textsuperscript{11} Whittaker, 22-23
\textsuperscript{13} Loescher and Milner I, 28
5.2. Necessary Funding

The League declared in 1921 that it could accept no financial responsibility for the relief, maintenance or settlement of the refugees. In spite of this, the Council and the Assembly received appeals to save groups of refugees from disaster. This decision was firmly maintained on the whole, and the official action of the High Commissioner was strictly limited within administrative functions. These limits were imposed by a budget of no more than ten to fifteen thousand pounds a year. Nansen never accepted any payment for his services to the League. Due to Nansen’s personal reputation, some additional funds were placed under his control from time to time. These funds were partly raised by the refugees themselves and partly contributed by governments or by private philanthropy.14

The League played the most influential role in international assistance projects for refugees, although the organs of the League were prohibited from spending money directly in the field work. Instead, they acted as important policy-making and planning institutions. The coordination of the international activities was aimed at the achievement of durable solutions. This work combined the resources of host governments, donor governments, private organizations, and refugees themselves. Money was moving from donors to the field where the refugees were with their problems. The League’s activities manifested a spirit of international cooperation. In that manner the burden-sharing norm was reflected in League’s operations more than anywhere else in the refugee regime.15 Nevertheless, nation-state was at the centre of things, despite all transnational thinking, and where there are nation-states, there also remains inequality among nations.16 The Great Powers were fundamental contributors to the League’s budget and obviously their views had to be heard.

The High Commissioner pointed out in his report on March 15, 1922 that the immense sums of money put to the relief work was not exactly well spent money, because it was not leading the situation anywhere. Nansen claimed that if the High Commissioner had had these sums at hand, the whole problem could have been brought to a final solution for a much less total expenditure. His remedy for the problem

14 Walters, 188
15 Skran, 147
16 Kennedy 1994, 122-127
was to disperse the refugees from places where they were living in destitution to places where they could obtain employment.\textsuperscript{17} Nansen was obviously referring to the fact that voluntary organizations were providing humanitarian help to the refugees but efforts were not coordinated in a proper manner. Instead, these operations took place in the field in various countries separately.

The funds of the League were specifically earmarked for administrative expenses only. Another general principle was that the League funds could not be used for humanitarian or other field work. Paradoxically, the Assembly always insisted on the importance of continuing the humanitarian work.\textsuperscript{18} There are references, however, that sometimes the High Commissioner used the funds also for travel expenses of the refugees.\textsuperscript{19}

Although it was constantly reaffirmed that the funds of the League were not to be used for any kind of field operations, the responsibility of the actions lay on the shoulders of the High Commissioner and other League representatives. In some instances the Assembly even gave instructions to the High Commissioner that he should encourage initiative for field operations by private organizations and assist them by negotiations with governments. The provision of funds for the settlement of refugees had to be sought from outside sources. The funds were generally administrated by the donors. In some instances the funds were, however, entrusted to the administration of the Nansen Office, notably in the case of the Armenian settlement in Syria. Some exceptions to the general rule took place in case of emergencies. For example, small sums were provided in 1921-1926 for the work of assisting women and children at Constantinople and Aleppo.\textsuperscript{20}

Consequently, the refugee agencies did operate with tight budgets. Skran points out that “throughout the Inter-war period, the refugee agencies ran on tiny budgets, put together on a piecemeal basis without the benefit of long-term financial planning”.\textsuperscript{21} During the great survey 1937-1939 Simpson was able to compile a presentation on the League expenditure for refugee services 1921-1937. On the basis of the documentation it doesn’t become quite clear, from where these figures were found, or how they were calculated. Nevertheless, there are no other covering estimates on the

\textsuperscript{17} OJ, 3rd year, No 4, April 1922, 342
\textsuperscript{18} Simpson 1939, 195
\textsuperscript{19} Skran, 188
\textsuperscript{20} Simpson 1939, 196
\textsuperscript{21} Skran, 284
matter and it must be remembered that Simpson and his crew was as close to the original sources and personnel of the League as one could possibly get.

According to Simpson:22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Swiss Francs</th>
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<td>1921</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1923</td>
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<td>1927</td>
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<td>1928</td>
<td>339,175</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
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<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>297,763</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>297,763</td>
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<td>318,490</td>
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</table>

The budget of the League was subjected to a series of controls for which it would be hard to find a parallel. It was prepared by the Secretary General in the spring of each year. This is to say, well before it was determined to come into effect. This was carried out according to the Financial Regulations of the League. It was then carefully examined by the Supervisory Commission. Next, it was submitted to the governments of the Members of the League and studied by national Treasuries. Finally, it was debated in the Finance Committee of the Assembly. When the Finance Committee had finished its work, it was laid before the Assembly to be formally adopted.23 It is needless to say that with this complicated process it was quite challenging to allocate funds for a controversial issue such as refugee work.

22 Simpson 1939, 195; See Chapter 3.2.3. for comparison and scaling of the respective sums connected to the refugee work. As it was mentioned, Nansen accepted no payment for his work. On the other hand, the annual salary of the Secretary General of the LON was appr. 200,000 Swiss francs.

The loans required for the Bulgarian and Greek refugee settlement schemes were raised directly under League auspices. In both instances it was made clear that no part of the funds should be used for relief work. The refugee bodies acquired funds through the Nansen stamp system under League auspices which was subject to League audit. The Assembly sometimes indicated objects to which these funds may be devoted.\textsuperscript{24} The use of the loan schemes was limited to the cases where the refugees had a new stable home country and a government to protect them. Consequently, the possibilities to arrange loan schemes for the Armenians and other refugee groups never materialized.

5.3. Uneven Attention on the Various Refugee Groups

The basic background notion is that archive based studies have revealed clearly, how the League of Nation reflected the interests, perspectives, and habits of Europe, and more particularly, certain part of the continent. Together with the ILO, the system represented the preoccupations of the British, French, Dutch, Belgian and Scandinavian states.\textsuperscript{25} The biggest flows of refugees during the Inter-war period were directed from east to west. They also got the major attention. In the Balkans there were also movements from west to east; from Greece to Turkey. The Turkish Moslem refugees in Turkey were not targeted by the world organizations. Meanwhile the Armenians in Turkey got attention and projects were implemented on their behalf. Turkey was not a member of the League or the ILO on those days (until 1932). It was probably more difficult for Turkey to appeal to these Intergovernmental entities than it was for the Governments of Greece and Bulgaria. In the 1930s the refugees from Italy and Spain had to leave their country for purely political reasons. They got almost no attention. The refugees coming from Germany had a different background, since most of them had to leave for racial-religious reasons. The refugee groups themselves were typical in the sense that they were involved in the contemporary conflicts from which their refugeehood resulted. Some of the refugees might have belonged to active

\textsuperscript{24} Simpson 1939, 196

\textsuperscript{25} Clavin 2010, 628
warrior communities, whereas some were politically passive refugees utilized by one or more parties. This was the case in both the 1920s and the 1930s, perhaps with the exception of the Jewish refugees from Germany.

The following presentation depicts the reasons and motives of the different refugee groups for their departure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>group</th>
<th>political</th>
<th>religious</th>
<th>racial</th>
<th>ethnic</th>
<th>economic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russians</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulgarians</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Albanians</td>
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<tr>
<td>Armenians</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assyrians/Chaldean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jews/Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italians</td>
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The presentation above describes the push factors. The motivations are always mixed, and there is never one unequivocal reason. For the receiving country, the question is always political to certain extent, since the comers are always opponents of the ruling government.

Contemporary refugee research has created some tools to illustrate the timing of the stream of refugees in relation to the conflict causing it. In this division, type 1 is refugees during the conflict, type 2 covers the period before, during, and after the conflict, type 3 is before and during the conflict, type 4 is during and after the conflict, type 5 is only before the conflict, and finally, type 6 is only after the conflict.

According to this classification the refugee flows depicted in this research project can be described as follows:

26 Hakovirta 1986, 150
27 Hakovirta 1981, 32
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>group</th>
<th>type 1</th>
<th>type 2</th>
<th>type 3</th>
<th>type 4</th>
<th>type 5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russians</td>
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<td>Armenians</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assyrians/Chaldeans</td>
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<td>Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jews/Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italians</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Why some refugee groups and nationalities got the attention of the world organizations and some did not? Why some groups were targeted with huge programmes and some had to satisfy themselves to vague references? Why money was found to assist some refugees but for others there was nothing? Politics can always be used as a plausible explanation. The lack of funds is a natural reason and all too well known for everybody who has worked in public sector, either in national or international level. There is always more potential expenditure than revenue. Lack of funds leads always to a situation, where trimming of the operational budget is necessary.

Some refugees were considered, some not. Hakovirta has shown in his studies that there is a modest positive correlation between the seriousness of refugee situations and their potency of attracting international attention. But here again, we must remember the difference between causality and correlation. All refugee situations are definitely serious, but can we draw a conclusion that the refugees considered by the League were the most destitute?

All too obvious and commonly used explanation to the uneven attention of the regime on different refugee groups is prejudice. This, however, is unsatisfactory and

28 Hakovirta 1986, 144
too simplifying attitude and doesn’t make justice to the actors of the refugee apparatus of Inter-war period. Governments were more generous in aiding refugees when it coincided with broader foreign or domestic policy objectives. There were conflicting goals, and the intergovernmental organizations were making decisions on the basis of consensus. Therefore, the refugee assistance decisions were inevitably products of compromise. One more thing to be considered was scarcity of necessities; time, money, and energy which made selection and prioritization involuntary.29

It can be noticed that the Intergovernmental Organizations were acting on behalf of refugees in almost each case during the conflict. As late as 1935 the Norwegian Government took initiative with a proposal that all political refugees should be included to the League’s protection agenda without regard to their country of origin. The Norwegian proposal was not adopted, and on the contrary to the original intention, it was even feared that the League would disengage itself completely from all refugee work.30

John Hope Simpson made a classification of refugees in three groups in his analysis in 1938. The division describes the administrative situation as it appeared that time: 1) the refugees who were looked after the Nansen International Office; the Russians, the Armenians, the Saarlanders, a certain number of Kurds, Turks, and Georgians, as well as Assyrians. 2) Refugees from Germany and Austria, and 3) small groups of refugees for whom there was apparently no international concern.31

The Russians were the first “official” refugee category that received legal and political benefits on the grounds of the status they had obtained by the definitions of international arrangements. Later, the Armenians were included. The term that was used in some connections was “assimilated refugees”. It refers to the fact that the Armenians were now considered to enjoy similar rights as the Russian refugees. At a later stage, the Assyrians, Assyro-Chaldeans, as well as a small group of Turkish refugees were referred to as “assimilated refugees”. The similarity in their situation was that they were deprived of their nationality and their travel documents. It was then required to provide them with documents of identity and travel, and to establish some agreement on their legal status, as well as to make sure that they received some type of protection in the countries in which they were living.32

29 Skran, 272-277
30 Hansson II
31 Simpson 1938, 609
32 Bentwich 1935, 115-116
Those refugees who had a new home country where to settle and a government to protect them were called refugees, but not “assimilated refugees”. Greeks and Bulgarians formed an example of this case. They were not in a need of refugee documentation (Nansen passports) since they could assume a new nationality and citizenship.

The Assembly of the League invited already in 1927 the Council to request the High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Labour Organization to study how the means and measures of protection and settlement in favor of Russian and Armenian refugees could be extended to other similar groups. Action was taken for the specific groups of Assyrians, Assyro-Chaldeans, and a small number of Turks. The Inter-Governmental Commission recommended the Council to reconsider the question of extending the arrangements for the Nansen refugees to new categories. But again, it was in May 1934 decided that this was impossible. The League Council emphasized that each government should have the possibility to decide what treatment should be applied to refugees in its territory.33

The exchange of populations between two states was very different from the “normal” refugee problem. The movement of populations in the Near East based on international treaties during the years immediately preceding the First World War was an enormous international exercise. Following the Balkan Wars, Turkey and Bulgaria concluded a convention and set up a Mixed Commission to supervise the operation. In 1914 Turkey and Greece entered into a corresponding convention. Similar machinery of a Mixed Commission was established. The scheme was interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War, and the implementation took speed only after the War. That time the League machinery was able to facilitate and supervise the activities.34

Three truly significant operations were conducted under the auspices of the League. The biggest one was the exchange between Greece and Turkey. An American Chairman and British directors with large experience on Native American settlement were appointed to the Commission administrating the operation. Two smaller operations, the exchange of populations between Bulgaria and Greece, as well as between Bulgaria and Turkey, proceeded reportedly smoothly. The transfer of the Orthodox people to Greece and the Moslems to Turkey, in accordance with the Convention signed at Lausanne in 1923, was compulsory. The exchange at field level,

33 Bentwich 1935, 120-121
34 Bentwich 1935, 123
however, was in practice carried out by reciprocal and voluntary manner controlled by Mixed Commissions.35

The international agencies recognized the fact that there were various kinds of refugees, although visibly staying in fairly similar conditions. “Nansen refugees” were refugees simply because they fled but large part of “German refugees” were made stateless by stipulations of the German law makers. Nansen Office estimated that in the beginning of 1937 there were still about 2 million stateless persons in Europe alone.36 Most of them were not classified as official refugees at that time. This made it possible for the press and public opinion to address the matters in a way that made the situation look either better or worse than it actually was.

Organizations established in the 1920s and 1930s to deal with the refugee problems were focused rather exclusively on European issues. Refugees existed in other parts of the world, but these flows were generally ignored by a Euro-centric state system that concentrated on humanitarian action closer to home.37 The only exception to this was the situation in Harbin and Shanghai in China, but again, the refugees themselves were of European origin.

The policy of including or excluding certain refugee groups was dictated by political convenience. It was at least partly the result of concern not to invoke the hostility of certain members or potential members of the League.38 Sometimes refugees were supposedly used as a political tool. There were different types of connections between refugees and power politics. The connection that can be clearly recognized in the scope of this research project is that refugees were used as proof of the unpopularity of certain dictatorial regimes.39 This interpretation applies at least to the cases of Russian, Armenian, and German refugees.

It is quite obvious that determining whom to protect was a selective, political process in the practice of the League. In a 1926 report, the High Commissioner identified over 150,000 people from eight national categories in analogous circumstances to Russian and Armenian refugees. These included Assyrians, Montenegrins, Ruthenes, Hungarians, and Jews. By choosing to extend legal protection to only certain few

35 Bentwich 1935, 124
36 Hansson I, 14
37 Benz and Hasenclever, 199
38 Goodwin-Gill and McAdam, 17-18
39 Roberts, 215
groups, there was definitely a potential need and space left for ‘complementary protection’.\(^{40}\)

In the beginning of the era of the League, also the transient Government of Georgia was trying to get their issues to the agenda of the world organizations. The situation of Georgians was somewhat similar to Armenia as regards that it was an independent state for a short period of time after the collapse of the Russian Empire, but was soon absorbed again by the Soviet Russia. During the interval, the Georgian Government also made an appeal to the League in order to get help in assisting the Russian refugees in its territory, as well as to get assistance for the Georgian Refugees in Constantinople at the time. There were reportedly some 400 Georgian refugees, most part of which was willing to move to Georgia in spite of the dangers incurred by this action.\(^\text{41}\) There seems to have been no visible reaction to this appeal.

In his report dated in June 1927 the High Commissioner Nansen named Ruthenian refugees as the natives of Galicia who fled to Austria and Czechoslovakia during and after the First World War. The number of these refugees was 9000 individuals. He also mentioned an undefined number of Montenegrin refugees staying in France, who were “unable to return to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes”. Both of these categories, according to Nansen, were in a need of “extension to them of the facilities accorded to Armenian and Russian refugees”.\(^\text{42}\) In this case, Nansen’s appeal raised only minor remarks and no real action was taken on behalf of these people.

Nansen went even further in the same report by recommending the extension of the measures taken on behalf of Russian and Armenian refugees to “Refugees in general in Central Europe without protection..”, numbering all together some 100.000 people. The report came out with a statement “…many of those persons are desirous of emigrating but are unable to do so owing to lack of passports.”\(^\text{43}\) One doesn’t need to be a wizard to be able to see that these were exactly the remarks making member state representatives negatively alert. The members of the League definitely saw other political matters more important than investing into activities that many considered tasks for humanitarian organizations.

The Turks settled their own people without help from the League. The settlement programme seemed to have been a success. Turkey had substantial land left by the Greeks while moving from Anatolia to the Hellenic State. Also agricultural facilities left

\(^{40}\) Goodwin-Gill and McAdam, 17

\(^{41}\) OJ, Vol 3, Nov 1921, 1026

\(^{42}\) Minutes of the 47. Session of the Council of the LON, Annex 990/OJ, No 10, Oct 1927, 1337

\(^{43}\) Minutes of the 47. Session of the Council of the LON, Annex 990/OJ, No 10, Oct 1927, 1338
by the Greeks were available for the comers. Turkey received some 30,000 people per year from Greece, Bulgaria and Rumania.\textsuperscript{44} There was also a small group of two thousand Portuguese political refugees who were not looked after by anyone. Five hundred of them were in Brazil, fifteen hundred in France.\textsuperscript{45}

The Jewish refugee problem had its own features. Various Inter-war refugee movements included Jews long before the well known German refugee problem. It was estimated that the Jewish migration problem in Europe included about five million people. It was also apparent that in a way they wished to seek an entirely new way of life. Many countries had for centuries forbidden the Jews to own land. There were also limitations for them to take up some professions or positions.\textsuperscript{46} These were the well-known push factors. In 1927 the High Commissioner expressed in his report that there were 16,000 Jewish refugees scattered in Bukowina, Bessarabia, and Transylvania. Those people were stated to be unable to obtain Rumanian nationality, and were in a need of identity papers and assistance to enable them to emigrate.\textsuperscript{47}

Previous anti-Semitic movements and campaigns were directed to areas which were occupied by Jews. However, the phenomenon of the 1930s was different and peculiar. It was not directed against the ghettos, but against the Jewish race as such – against the Jew who had retained his religion as well as against the Jew who had discharged it.\textsuperscript{48} On the whole, by the end of the 1930s, Jews had become practically outlaws in many countries. This sometimes lead to bizarre situations where Jewish refugees were left to starve in between countries as no authority was willing to handle their case. These people were even called “untouchables”.\textsuperscript{49}

At the end of the 1930s in Poland about ten percent of the population was of Jewish origin. The problem of anti-Semitism was an ancient one. Polish Government asked in several occasions, both the League of Nations Assembly and the International Labour Office, for coordinated large-scale action to secure admission of the Polish Jews into other countries which might have room for them.\textsuperscript{50} Bulgaria has been depicted as the only state allied with Germany that didn’t discriminate the Jews and where all Jews

\textsuperscript{44} Simpson 1938, 608
\textsuperscript{45} Simpson 1938, 619
\textsuperscript{46} Hansson II
\textsuperscript{47} Minutes of the 47. Session of the Council of the LON, Annex 990/OJ, No 10, Oct 1927, 1337
\textsuperscript{48} Thompson II, 383
\textsuperscript{49} Hansson II
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
avoided the horrors of the holocaust. This is only partly true. The reputation seems to be largely based on skilful propaganda carried out after the Second World War.\textsuperscript{51}

It seems obvious that sporadic efforts were made to distinguish the Jews among the Russian Refugees at least in some connections in the early 1920s. There were some separate schemes planned for them, executed partly by Jewish relief organizations and coordinated by the High Commissioner. There were some plans even then to transfer those refugees to Palestine.\textsuperscript{52} It can be stated, however, that from the perspective of the League and ILO systems there was no explicitly Jewish problem before the era of Nazi-Germany.

5.4. Success and Setbacks

As in every international series of action, success and setbacks followed each others. Different operations have been attributed by researchers with the merits belonging to the respective steps. On the whole, the creation of the international refugee protection system since the beginning of the 1920s, as well as establishing modes of operation for it, can be considered a wonderful success. It must be kept in mind that all this was created almost from scratch. There was no corresponding regime before the League. It is therefore an amazing achievement that a couple of years after the First World War there was an international refugee organization mandated by the intergovernmental community.

The League machinery had the initiating and coordinating role in the refugee regime. One way of measuring the success of the work is to see how covering the variety of entities taking part in the refugee work really was. The Committee on International Assistance to Refugees established by the Council in 1936 listed in its report in January 1937 all the organizations that had contributed to the Committee’s work during its existence in form of their own report. This listing of organizations was divided in three parts: A. private organizations dealing with refugees (13 organizations), B. organizations dealing with refugees under Nansen Office (16 organizations), C.

\textsuperscript{51} Rautkallio 2004, 74
\textsuperscript{52} Minutes of the 18. Session of the Council of the LON (11.-17.5.1922), Annex 344/OJ, 3\textsuperscript{rd} year, No 6, June 1922, 613
organizations dealing with refugees coming from Germany (19 organizations). Each category had a wide range of different groupings which they covered and some of the organizations seem to have been quite specialized for certain type of people. Some of the organizations which were active during the period under examination were established on quite an improvised basis, as the refugee problems emerged.

The role of the NGOs has been widely recognized in humanitarian work in general as well as in refugee aid especially. This doesn’t mean that the organizations would not have their own shortcomings. Sometimes the organizations may have too narrow perspective to be able to respond to changing situations effectively enough. On many occasions they can be bystanders only and perhaps record the violations. It has been pointed out that during the Inter-war period the assumption was that the practical field work of the refugee assistance would be financially covered by voluntary organizations. The situation reportedly led to the exhaustion of the resources of these organizations. This, in turn, obliged the NGOs to place limits on the numbers of refugees they could support.

There is no evidence that essential parts of the emergency relief would have ended up into wrong hands during the operations of the universal organizations in the 1920s and 1930s. Although these results are not directly demonstrated in the League sources, it is presumable that any large scale wrong doings or failures to deliver the aid to its destination would have been reported to the League. It would probably also have been reported in the various studies depicting the aid operations. This does not suggest that the people responsible on those days would have been any better or moral. Any time when large scale international aid operations take place, there are individuals who want to benefit by unfair or illicit means. However, we have a reason to believe that major part of aid reached its target.

Even though the rules of the international refugee regime did not guarantee a refugee entrance to a particular country, they did make the lives of refugees better. For many, having an internationally recognized identity document helped them to cross international borders legally. It also gave them a more secure legal status and thus prevented them from getting down to any illicit actions. As Skran has put it: “Holding a

54 See Appendix VI A and B, ”NGOs in Refugee Work”
55 Ruppesinghe, 136
56 Sjöberg, 228
57 A general study on these problems, see Hakovirta 1991, 88
Nansen passport did not guarantee a refugee anything, but it sometimes helped a great deal.\textsuperscript{58}

In order to become at least somehow respectable, a refugee needed a passport. The Nansen passport system was definitely the best known tool ever used in the international refugee work. The refugees had bad reputation without their own account. They had to violate immigration rules of the recipient countries by crossing borders without any permission. If a state wanted to get rid of these people, there was most probably another circle of violations ahead.

It has been demonstrated that the progress of asylum law and refugee protection has been generally positive, mostly in favor of refugees and asylum seekers. After a certain period of evolution, it has aimed at more or less durable and permanent solutions. It has put a legal framework around those who need it. In this way the Nansen tradition of direct action has been continued and cemented.\textsuperscript{59} One of the success stories of the 1920s and 1930s was also the way the refugees were themselves contributing to the solution of their problem. This was accomplished in various ways, but symbolically not least by purchasing the Nansen stamps to be affixed to their certificates and thus contributing to the fund raising of the League's refugee organization.\textsuperscript{60}

The inconsistency in all refugee work was related to the lack of coordination. In practice this could mean that some governmental authorities were trying to explore ways of restricting access of refugees, while other officials were investigating ways of overcoming an anticipated shortage of labour force.\textsuperscript{61} Today the governments would talk about immigration required by the demographic factors. Also during the Inter-war period nations and national economies had need for people to take care of the jobs, even the rhetoric was different from today. Looking for a better life was not the main reason why refugees were moving during the 1920s and 1930s. In general, there were mass movements for economic reasons only to the North-America.

Various legal documents dealing with refugees formulated between 1922 and 1939 were compiling the rules created to enforce the principles and norms of the international refugee regime. The most important ones concerned the definition of a refugee. There were several of them, one for each category. The purpose of any definition or description of the class of refugees was not only to facilitate and justify

\begin{itemize}
  \item Skran, 122
  \item Sieverts, 84
  \item Grahl-Madsen 1983, 367
  \item On this see also: Joly, 3
\end{itemize}
assistance and protection, but also to demonstrate the relevant rights or legal benefits.62

The repatriation plans for Russian refugees can be considered as one of the failures of the League. The attempts during the 1920s can be considered as an example of the obstacles preventing repatriation as a solution. For such scheme to work, all three parties must agree on its desirability. It includes the government of the host country, the authorities of the country of origin, and the refugees themselves. In this case, the Soviet Government initially expressed interest in the return of Russian refugees as part of wider strategy. The Bolsheviks hoped to prevent former Russian citizens from participating in anti-Soviet organizations abroad. Then, after some unfortunate incidents connected to the repatriation plans, the Soviets lost their interest for returnees who were considered politically questionable.63

The most important factor to be kept in mind, when estimating the possibilities and results of repatriation is whether the refugees can return safely, without having fear for their life or health. This criterion is far more important than the will or the capability of the refugee aid organizations.64 In all the examples of the Inter-war period the situation didn’t get any better. Whatever repatriation took place, it was based on voluntary return on individual basis, and without much intervention of intergovernmental bodies. The Inter-war refugees didn’t really have a place where to return to. In this sense the other solutions became natural options.

The basic problem in finding a regional solution was that Europe was overpopulated. Suggestions were made to find more sustainable solutions by settling the surplus populations in underdeveloped areas or by exporting them so that the risk of conflicts could be reduced.65 Eventually, the success of any resettlement project depends on the attitudes of the recipient countries: how willing they are to receive refugees. Resettlement was normally considered if and when repatriation seemed not possible and when countries of first asylum closed their borders and refused to receive any more refugees. Resettlement took place during the 1920s and 1930s, but it is challenging to evaluate the success of the programmes. Thousands of people found new homes as a result of resettlement projects. Most of the resettlement took place unregulated. Only few countries were unambiguously willing to act as a recipient country in large-scale programmes conducted and coordinated by the

62 Skran, 71-72; see also Appendix VII “List of Agreements and Arrangements...”
63 See Skran, 155
64 Hakovirta 1991, 89
65 Mazower 2009, 111-118
intergovernmental organizations. The normal reasons for unwillingness are connected to security and domestic policy, fear for internal unrest, unemployment, as well as inadequate guarantees of international cooperation.66

The settlement of Greek refugees in Western Thrace and the exchange of Greeks from Turkey and Turks from Greece, involving about two million people, were greatest success stories of Nansen and his colleagues. Major part of the work for the Greeks was undertaken by the Greek Settlement Commission which was assigned under the authority of the League.67 The Greek Refugees had a country where to go to and a government that would commit itself in taking care of them, though with its limited resources and with the help of international community. This would also make the procedures concerning Greek Refugees on the international platform somewhat special.

Refugee settlements in Greece and Bulgaria, as well as in Syria and Lebanon did have positive impact to the life of the people. Here the League coordination turned out to be useful. This was, however, only a part of the resettlement story; the states and the international refugee regime could not offer similar solution for all refugee groups. The original humanitarian ideal of the system didn't work completely.68

The settlement programmes were the highlights of the High Commissioner's achievements. In this operation, the broad result of moving the populations of the Near East was that the populations of Macedonia and of Asia Minor and Anatolia became homogenous. This was seen to have a pacification effect in the region. It was estimated that politically, the exchange proved a signal of success. The old political and religious jealousness was replaced by greater understanding.69 Resettlement in third countries always require efforts from authorities' side as well as struggle from the refugees' side, but the results can be sometimes as rewarding as they were in these operations.

In the 1930s some specific national groups, including refugees from Germany (1936 and 1938) and Sudeten refugees from Czechoslovakia (1939) were able to benefit from international conventions and resolutions.70 The Evian Conference in the late 1930s turned out to be somewhat unsuccessful in terms of immediate effects. At that time no

66 About this see e.g. Hakovirta 1991, 94
67 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 362; see also Chapter 3.2.4.
68 Skran, 183
69 Bentwich 1935, 125
70 Joly, 7
countries wanted to loosen their immigration policies in the middle of the present economic situation.71

Sometimes the easiest alternative is to stay and hope that the things turn better. Interestingly enough, in most cases they turn better. Assimilation takes place. In case of Russian refugees there was a huge resistance in the beginning against all integration and assimilation to the new homeland. When it became evident that they were to remain outside Russia, it was sometimes too late to start to assimilate. The closed Russian communities were being formed already. The generation that was born in exile, became bilingual, or even trilingual. That has, in turn, probably contributed somewhat to the tolerance and internationalization of the world as whole.

It seems that the international community on the whole was quite ignorant of the refugee problems when the refugee relief work and the organizations were initiated. The main reason was that no-one could predict the magnitude of the problem and the volumes of the movers.72 States were not able to keep account on the people crossing the borders. It is here, where the value of the work of the international organizations, notably the ILO, has been recognized.

The intergovernmental world organizations were universal. This made the political aspects of the refugee problem difficult for them to tackle with. The refugees were always opponents of some government and always in-between; universal organizations were not supposed to act against any governments. This became all too evident in the 1930s when most of the Members of the LON were very reluctant to provoke Hitler and his followers.73 The paradox from the viewpoint of the refugee work was that although in the 1930s the League was establishing systems to help people fleeing from the dictatorships of Hitler and Stalin, there was nothing they could do to help the real disaster, i.e. the people who stayed and were not able to escape.74

It was estimated that the effectiveness of the High Commissioner’s efforts in the countries of refuge was weakened by the compromises of the 1930s, the most decisive one being the resolution to separate the office definitely from the League. The compromise was agreed upon at the time when the office was set up in order to avoid the opposition of Germany, an active member of the League.75 The Covenant of the League entitled the Council and the Assembly to deal with any issue on agenda within

71 Stoessinger 1956, 39-41
72 Thompson I, 14
73 Stoessinger 1956, 32-36
74 Joly, 8
75 McDonald, vi
the scope of activity of the League or affecting the peace of the world.\textsuperscript{76} It may have been seen that the interventions on refugee matters would have been counterproductive to the larger and more far-reaching endeavor; the conservation of peace.

At the end of 1930s Dorothy Thompson estimated that neither the Nansen Office nor the High Commissioner (at that time) was ever authorized to consider or deal with the whole question of political and racial exiles. The situation was being made acute by the fact that both of those organizations were supposed to expire and suggestions for their continuation or extension were expected. The work was on a very uncertain basis. It was reckoned that charity was not enough and problem should have been regarded and treated as one of international politics.\textsuperscript{77} New and different approach was required since there was now a need to help some people out of their home country, not only to assist the exiles abroad. The situation formed a kind of a setback for the League, but made the need for the approach of the IGCR more and more apparent.

The contribution of the rich and powerful countries has been identified as the most important single factor in assessing the reasons behind the success of refugee operations. The willingness and ability of the major players on the international field to donate money and provide shelter for refugees is what matters most. However, “no clear connection can be seen between the individual country’s wealth and its contributions to refugee aid”.\textsuperscript{78} This means that other things also matter. The role of the Great Powers in the processes of finding permanent solutions for difficult problems was indispensable. Collective mechanisms could not replace that input. This problem was never solved in a satisfactory and durable manner.\textsuperscript{79} It was not always possible to overcome the problems deriving from the contradictory interests of states. This was often the case with economic and social issues in which there appeared to be not only sectors of common interests, but also spans of rivalry.\textsuperscript{80}

Susan Pedersen makes a distinction between “great power agreements” and “collective agreements” in connection to the League. Most international arrangements related to the security and peacekeeping belonged to the first category, and were even seen as weakening the system of the League. In many cases even public opinions in

\textsuperscript{76} McDonald, x
\textsuperscript{77} Thompson II, 378
\textsuperscript{78} Hakovirta 1991, 96 and 99
\textsuperscript{79} Bourquin, 54
\textsuperscript{80} Bourquin, 26
Member states were not pacific and constructive.\textsuperscript{81} Agreements concerning refugees, however, were different. In those, the League appears as a key agent and a promoter of pragmatic and viable settlements.

The actors of the intergovernmental refugee regime were not able to develop a system of universal protection for all refugees in the Inter-war period. They left, however, a lasting legacy in the scene. The League and other actors developed a comprehensive body of rules governing the refugee issues. This took place in identity and travel, economic and social well-being, and physical protection. The authority of international organizations to defend refugees and intervene on their behalf was established. It is also a unique tradition in the field of human rights. Most importantly, refugees became defined as a separate category which could be marked off from other international migrants.\textsuperscript{82} Even the LON and the ILO were largely abandoned by Member states in the 1930s, “these organizations were able to draw on transnational networks of social scientists, economists, labour activists, and local activists to sustain them when inter-governmental support failed.”\textsuperscript{83}

5.5. Were the Problems Solved?

Not surprisingly, the basic finding is that states were asking for help and willing to conduct international cooperation when they needed assistance with their refugees. The approach was different when the intergovernmental bodies were soliciting for contributions for the work done elsewhere. During the Inter-war time there was no consolidated or regularized scheme to tackle this dilemma.

The refugee policy together with protection of minorities had their importance on a level which was somewhat different from the original idea of the League. The systems connected to these “soft values” could not coerce states or override sovereignty, but instead, they contributed powerfully to the articulation and diffusion of international norms.\textsuperscript{84} The international refugee regime did not develop according to a comprehensive plan or a grand design in the beginning of its existence. Instead, it

\textsuperscript{81} Pedersen 2007, 1094, 1096-1097
\textsuperscript{82} Skran, 144-145
\textsuperscript{83} Clavin 2010, 628
\textsuperscript{84} Pedersen 2007, 1107
resulted from a series of ad hoc responses by governments to successive refugee cases, beginning with the exodus of Russian refugees.

The League system carried a structural asymmetry with it. Many NGOs involved also “had European origins and characteristics, regardless of their universal pretentions”.85 It has been estimated that the impact of the international refugee regime was uneven, because the action varied over time, by refugee groups and by issue. The impact in the 1920s seems to have been bigger than in the 1930s. The regime significantly affected the treatment of refugees within host countries, but its influence on governments’ decisions about immigration policy or repatriation was much less. The reasons behind these facts are various. In the 1920s the work was conducted in a climate favorable to international cooperation which coincided with the founding of the League of Nations.86 Other explanations have stressed the economic factors; it is well known that the economic recession in the 1930s brought about vicious restrictions for all human life.

Refugees was one of the rare questions during the Inter-war period that was discussed on equal grounds by public, NGOs, government officials as well as elected politicians. It was addressed on a national level as well as on intergovernmental level. In that sense we can call it a genuine dialogue. The refugee aid system was originally formed to assist only Russian refugees. However, by 1939 also Armenian, Assyrian, Assyro-Chaldean, Turkish, Saar, German, Austrian, and Czech refugees stood under this umbrella of legal protection. Although certain refugees remained outside the regimes scope, this does not reduce the significance it had and the growth that did take place. It also demonstrates that it had an impact on how governments treated refugees and that some stakeholders wanted its field expanded.87

It was estimated that still after the Second World War there were about 250,000 Russian, Armenian, Assyrian, and Saar refugees requiring international care. There were also some 110,000 German refugees and 212,000 Spanish refugees who had been left on the responsibility of the IGCR. The end of 1946 finally marked the termination of the work of the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Other organizations took responsibility for the Refugees the High Commissioner had been taken care for. The new organization had new challenges besides the old remaining. The new World War had again uprooted enormous amounts of people.88

85 Clavin 2010, 629
86 Skran, 270-271
87 Skran, 144
88 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 365
There were different judgments on the results of the international refugee work during the 1920s and 1930s. In his writing, internationally famous Dutch legal scholar professor J.-P.-A- Francois stated in 1935, that a general conviction would be that the actions taken by the international community on behalf of refugees were insufficient. Some positive developments were identified in fields of legal and economic protection. However, the big plans concerning the coordination of the efforts of the private organizations, and the permanent solutions through resettlement and massive naturalization programs, remained all unaccomplished.89

The refugee work of the League of Nations covered a period of time that evidenced big and fateful events in Europe and elsewhere. Many of the features of the time made the refugee work challenging. There was the uneasy recovery after the First World War, economic crash with mass unemployment, the rise of dictatorial regimes in important countries, collapse of the wishful idea of collective security, and finally rearmament and new war.90 The refugee work of the League in the middle of all this was one of the developments that finally found its way through the hard times and survived until it was reassumed later. It is not altogether wrong to estimate that Nansen’s prestige in some parts of the world was higher than the appreciation of the League.91

The most important observation on the outcome of the refugee regime’s operation, according to Skran, was the establishment of the idea that refugees should be treated as a special category of migrant deserving preferential treatment. In this respect, the refugee work did matter. The regime mattered both a) because it facilitated the immediate refugee assistance in the field and b) because it led to the acceptance of refugees as a special category and to corresponding treatment on a principled level.92 However, because the work of the refugee organizations was interrupted by the war, we never know how efficient the work really was, as it was not completed.

Refugees were created by violations of human rights. Lasting solutions could be found only by tackling the causes of the problems. Anything else is just remedy for the symptoms. There was an attempt to accept and implement international legal standards concerning refugees. This was supposed to be done by agreements to be signed and ratified. There was an attempt to harmonize the international practices on refugees. There was a search for a coherent system, consistent with international

89 Francois, 368
90 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 365
91 Bendiner, 195
92 Skran, 261-262
standards. The refugee assistance efforts dealt with refugees only after they had de facto become refugees, which meant that they had left their home countries. None of the attempted solutions addressed the deeper problem how to keep the people in their homes in a decent life and thus to prevent refugee movements from occurring in the first place.\textsuperscript{93}

Symptomatic to the time was, that in his resignation letter 1935 James McDonald argued that it was not sufficient to attempt to alleviate the circumstances of the people who have fled; political action was required to address the causes. Jews seeking to leave Germany were prevented to do so because they had to leave behind their financial assets. At the time of economic depression they were unable to find new homes and to fulfill the conditions of potential asylum countries by which “they should not become a burden on the public purse”.\textsuperscript{94}

The resignation of James McDonald reflected a setback from angle of the refugee work. But the political decision makers had had bigger task to be handled; the Peace. A group of refugees, no matter how big or how visible, was seen as a reasonable sacrifice for that cause. Mr. McDonald himself wrote: “When domestic policies threaten the demoralization and exile of hundreds of thousands of human beings, considerations of diplomatic correctness must yield to those of common humanity”.\textsuperscript{95}

In the 1930s the international work was divided into two; there were the “Nansen refugees” and the “German refugees”. The first category was covered by the international arrangements concerning the legal status and travel documents. The situation of the latter group was more indefinite. Both had separate organizations looking after them.

The period covering the 1920s and 1930s has been characterized by the confrontation of dictatorships and democracies. As far as refugees are concerned, the depiction “era of democratic solutions” seems justified. It was the undemocratic systems that created the refugee problems and the democratic ones that wanted to seek for solutions.

In contrast to most refugees of the 1920s, refugees fleeing the Nazi-Germany in the 1930s had the misfortune to be from a powerful country with a rise in significance in the world politics. Although the Russians also fled from a Great Power, they did so at the time when the Soviet Union was a weak and isolated state. The Bolsheviks didn’t have the tools to affect significantly the politics of other countries towards its former citizens.

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{93}] Skran, 226
\item[\textsuperscript{94}] Joly, 8
\item[\textsuperscript{95}] McDonald, x
\end{itemize}
Germany was situated in the very center of international politics and the German government in the 1930s had increasing influence throughout Europe and the world.  

Democracy and respect of civil rights are indeed the best remedies to all problems that make people leave their homes. The League of Nations’ systems were established to reflect the reaction of the democratic powers towards the bad regimes producing refugees. Helping the refugees was thought to have an effect on those regimes, especially when attempts to repatriate refugees were conducted.

States of the world had great expectations from the League of Nations. It was supposed to maintain the peace and thus secure harmonious development of nations. But the members of the League failed. In this respect it is fairly easy to say that refugee questions had, after all, a very limited role, if any, in forming the political history of the 1920s and 1930s. We can say, however, that those solutions had influence to the later history of Europe in Greece and Yugoslavia, as well as in the Middle East.

Most peace agreements and other international arrangements and conventions last less than five years. They turn out to be too difficult to be implemented or the political will to follow them disappears. In this respect the agreements concluded concerning the demographic adjustments in the Balkans, Anatolia, and Greece were quite unique. This work can be described as a success.

Refugee work was a new phenomenon. Nobody knew what to expect. Everybody understood that the problem was immense and serious. It was also life threatening and peace threatening. The refugee problems were bigger than ever before. Therefore, it is fair to accept what Atle Grahl-Madsen wrote in 1980 in his report: “The League of Nations never promised the refugees very much, but with the scarce resources available, it more than kept its pledge”.

It was reported that certain authorities in Finland were unsatisfied with the results of the international cooperation inasmuch the country had to, due to its geographical position, carry a disproportionate responsibility of the mass movements of the Russian refugees. The head of the Secret Police of Finland even stated in 1938 that the High Commission had provided no help to authorities of Finland. On the contrary, in some cases it had been an obstacle to execution of legal measures decided by national authorities.

References:

96 Skran, 195
97 References to this are made in various studies concerning modern development policies (e.g. World Bank)
98 Grahl-Madsen 1983, 367
99 Leitzinger II, 182
100 Leitzinger II, 183
There were motives that directly could be derived from the refugee questions themselves, but also it must be recognized that there were hidden political and other incentives that could not be spoken out openly. It is also important to understand that the refugee policy reflected in the refugee work was hard every day work. It rarely had any highlights. These high moments are, anyhow, the points why the refugee work is remembered. When the politicians didn’t take up their duties and responsibilities, the international officials, national civil servants, as well as voluntary workers took care of the things and thus were exercising refugee policy.

Policy is shown to us in non-ideological and sometimes inefficient measures. It is bureaucratic, taking care of the regular everyday business. Despite the politics and policies, it is certain that alien’s passports and asylums were granted to unknown number of people who considered themselves refugees. When refugees were assimilated and naturalized, they ceased to be refugees.

The Nazi-Germany is remembered first among all refugee problems of the time. The obvious thing is that Nazi-Germany was no Cambodia or Sudan. There was certain degree of openness, and information flows through political leaders, news media, ordinary people, and, of course, the refugees. It was a dictatorship, but with modern characters. The people outside Germany were not ignorant of the happenings and proceedings in the country. The question was: who could and dared interpret the messages in a right way? International politicians were definitely not willing to do so. And, most importantly, it is not our duty to try to claim that they should have.

The LON has been criticized by historians for its inefficiency. This also applies to the refugee work. While recognizing this, we must bear in mind that the LON and the ILO were organizations with sovereign states as their members. This signified a certain kind of dilemma since the practical requirements were not matching with the universal principles of the organizations. The refugees were always produced by some nation or state, and at least on some level they were enemies of the present government. Acting on behalf of those people would be, in theory, acting against that particular government. On the other side of the coin there were requirements arising from the burdens the new people were imposing to the countries of their sojourn.

The recipient countries of the Russian refugees after the First World War were all economically weak, many of them newly independent (from Russia), and thus had no ways or means to take care of the huge amounts of unwanted aliens. Therefore, the help of prominent non-governmental organizations like the ARC was more than welcome and urgently needed. When the ARC departed from Europe, somebody had to step forward instead.
The refugees of those days normally didn’t apply for any official asylum. Instead, they were tolerated. This took place in most cases without any formal decisions by the Government. The statistics show a gradual decline in refugee numbers all over Europe. There were three main reasons to this: repatriation, assimilation to the present country of residence, and (overseas) resettlement.

In the first years of the refugee organizations they had their focus on the legal status and travel arrangements of the homeless. Later the organizations wanted to concentrate on something more permanent and get the exiles settled somewhere in the world. After Nansen and Thomas died, there were really no ambitious large-scale efforts taken on behalf of the refugees. The field was too scattered and the efforts too incoherent to achieve real permanent solutions.

The organizations had their life spans, and they were not long enough. It was thought that the refugee problem was only temporary by nature. The apparent inefficiency of the refugee organs was due to the too weak and distant connection to the League. Although many large scale programmes turned out to be failures, we must keep in mind that the organizations were able accomplish a lot. These were mostly small but important steps. The Nansen passport system was finally recognized by some 50 states.

During the first decade of the refugee work, as long as Nansen was the High Commissioner, the terms of reference for his work were rather loosely defined and he took quite a lot of personal liberties in performing his duties. After his death the job description became somewhat more precisely regulated. The High Commissioner’s post as well as the Nansen Office were both under control of the regular League’s organs. They were also under guidance of the Inter-Governmental Advisory Commission. The prefix “Nansen –” appeared in official connections only after Fridtjof Nansen’s death. In the 1930 the previous refugee certificates became known as “Nansen certificate” or “Nansen passport”. Moreover, the International Office for Refugees was very quickly named as “Nansen Office”.

It was sometimes difficult to decide to which persons the arrangements concerning refugees applied. The Inter-Governmental Advisory Commission was in the opinion that in this question the legal aspects of the matter should be kept distinct from the administrative aspect. The legal matter was to decide who should be defined as a

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101 ... as they would do today
102 Simpson 1939, 197-198
103 Only today we understand that it was not
104 Ristelhueber, 173
refugee. The administrative matter was to issue passports and other certificates for those who were considered refugees.  

The Inter-Governmental Advisory Commission reminded the League on its obligations while the new Nansen Office was in the making in 1930. It expressed a hope that, when refugee work now was being reorganized, the situation of the staff at present employed in the Refugee Service should be placed on a more definite basis and the interests of the staff should be safeguarded as far as possible. There was also a reference to resolutions made by the League and the ILO concerning the status of staff and employees. An indirect reference could be noted, that these matters had been on an improvised basis during the dominance of Fridtjof Nansen.  

The League took sincere responsibility for the activities of both the Greek and the Bulgarian Settlement Commission. The natural reason for this was the large amounts of money involved. The arrangements for Greece and Bulgaria were different from others in a sense, that extensive loans were raised for the settlement activities. This, in turn, was possible only because both refugee groups had homelands with more or less solid Governments to receive them and take care of their relief and settlement.  

It becomes quite obvious from the documentation that the greatest and the most thorough effort the League was taking, was Bulgaria. The country, its national economy on the whole, was supervised by the League. The settlement of the refugees was a small, but natural part of this supervisory work and assistance program. The National Bank as well as financial and fiscal policy of the Government of Bulgaria was conducted in cooperation with the League. The League had its representatives not only in advisory role, but also taking part into the political decision making and administration. It was involved in the public revenue as well as in the public spending.  

It is not possible for the observers of today to see the reasons for the politeness of the actions. This becomes real in the case how the international community was treating the Government of Iraq. It seems that the Iraqi Government and Authorities were making jokes on the international attempts to solve the problems of the Assyrians. The situations with the Soviet Union and Germany were more serious. Those were

105 Minutes of the 60. Session of Council of the LON (8.-12.9.1930), Annex 1232/OJ, 11th year, No 11, Nov 1930, 1463
106 Minutes of the 60. Session of Council of the LON (8.-12.9.1930), Annex 1232/OJ, 11th year, No 11, Nov 1930, 1465
107 A good perception of all this can be obtained from the last reports of the League Commissioner in Bulgaria 1932; see 22. and 23. Reports; e.g. OJ, 13th year, No8, August 1932, 1503-1543
countries that needed to be treated with utmost care because of their economic, military and political relevance. This, with League’s peace preserving primary mandate in the background, makes the politeness understandable and in a sense justified.

In the 1930s the attempts to solve the refugee problem was described as piecemeal treatment. The actions were taken as the problems arose and a comprehensive approach was missing. This was seen unsatisfactory by those politicians who wanted to consider the problems on the whole. An integration of the different organizations into one organization directly under the League of Nations was considered important, not only because of the financial aspect of the question, but also because such an organization would have become subject to entire machinery of the League. By the existing approach, the public opinion was not made aware of the situation. A centralized organization would have also meant that the burden of caring for the refugees would have been more evenly distributed among the different actors.  

Surveying the record of the 1920s and 1930s it was estimated by Bentwich in 1935 that the League activity on behalf of the refugees was manifested in two contrasted developments. The action in assisting the exchange of populations marked the success of international action. It demonstrated constructive treatment of the problem of racial and religious minorities. The activities of the High Commissioners in special emergencies, and the Nansen Office in general, indicated that something can be done. The larger problem of stateless persons as a phenomenon remained to be tackled.

In the 1930s the Nansen Office was criticized for slow actions. This was also addressed by the President of the Office Michael Hansson, who admitted the fact but at the same time explained how it was impossible for the Office to take action without the consent and the full cooperation of the individual governments and national authorities. This bureaucracy caused delays.

The refugee work accomplished during the Inter-war period influenced governments greatly. Firstly, the developments facilitated cooperation between states by changing the environment in which negotiations took place. Cooperation became more likely. The regime and deliberations around it also changed the preferences of governments. The formal institutions associated with the refugee regime gave governments new policy options unknown to them before.

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108 Bentwich 1935, 128
109 Bentwich 1935, 129
110 Hansson II
111 Skran, 263-264
112 Skran, 267-269
The policy makers of the League presumed that once the crisis producing refugees had passed, the refugee problem would disappear. In any “turning point” when a new refugee organization was established, it was assumed to need no more than few years to “solve” the problem. This was mainly due to the lack of relevant and covering studies concerning the experiences on refugee crisis. This does not, however, erase the fact that the League was able to react to new refugee situations at these “turning points”. The sequence of this strategy forms the coherence in refugee work of the League and the ILO during the period of the 1920s and 1930s. The body of experience on the long lasting and even permanent nature of the refugee crisis was only in the forming phase. The organizations established after the Second World War were then able to exploit this evidence material.

It seems that after all the IGCR had even less consistency than the League’s organizational refugee regime, although originally the whole idea of the Evian Conference and the Intergovernmental Committee was to create a permanent organization to replace the League’s “ad-hoc methods” in handling the refugee situations.

The Council had to take an attitude which was colored by carefulness, since the Members of the League were not prepared to undertake any large financial burden for the sake of refugees. But humanitarian aid and refugee settlement cannot be carried on without heavy expenditure. Therefore “the League’s endeavors were condemned to be always a palliative, never a cure”.113 Regardless of the different points of view, an international programme proposing to solve the global refugee problem would have been “a utopian task”. It should have removed from the world all conflicts and political instability, military actions, and even poverty as well. On the whole, it would have been impossible.114 The symptoms, however, were alleviated.

The greatest benefit the League was able to donate was to provide the refugees with legal protection. This was done above all through the invention of the Nansen passport. The question of passports was clearly connected with those of emigration and employment. Once this legal issue had been solved, it was possible to give very substantial assistance in other respects.115

Before the “new” refugee crisis in the 1930s when certain groups of people started to flee from Nazi Germany, the situation was less acute for some time. Most of the

113 Walters, 188
114 Einarson, 23-24
115 Walters, 188
refugees of the 1920s were either self-supporting, naturalized in their country of residence, repatriated, or dead. It must be kept in mind that the only full and lasting solution of the world refugee problem would be possible only through elimination of its causes. The refugee agencies of the League clearly had the potential to take responsibility without listening to the wishes of any particular member state too much. In the 1920 this leadership was able to gather support for programmes which were innovated. These efforts did not meet the needs of all refugees, but they certainly helped some of the most destitute people in exile. As Pedersen has evaluated, “The specialized bodies reconciled state interest and the demands of mobilized publics more successfully than the security bodies… often by incorporating experts and activists directly to their work.” This definition applies especially well to the refugee organization, where personalities such as Fridtjof Nansen were able to interrogate governments and to carry out on-site visits without having to fear for their personal integrity.

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116 Walters, 189
117 Hakovirta 1986, 151
118 Skran, 286
119 Pedersen 2007, 1110
6. CONCLUSION: Consistency and Stamina formed a Policy

The initial assumption of this historiographical discourse was that it should be possible to find evidence which will speak for the existence of continuation and consistency in the actions of the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization taken on behalf of refugees during the entire Inter-war period. This would be identified by finding elements consisting of advocacy work conducted by people who had the right position and influence for making plans that would systemize the approach applied in the refugee work as norms and administrative practices. The 'hard' evidence for the existence of this responsibility which is called ‘policy’ will be summarized in this synthesis (Part B) after discussing the general preconditions prevailing for the work as well as the outlines of the evolution of the activities during time between the wars (Part A).

A. The failure of the League of Nations in its central task, maintaining peace, has influenced the evaluation of other operations of the intergovernmental machinery during the Inter-war period. The achievements and the importance of the refugee work undertaken during the 1920s and 1930s have been shadowed by the mainstream of the assessments. Nevertheless, there are some researchers who have given an impetus and inspiration to this work by presenting the values behind the refugee work as well as somewhat remarkable results. The scope and the basic task of this study is to try to find and present elements which could allow us to conclude that there was firm determination and continuation in the work of the League and the ILO in finding solutions for the refugee problems which were previously unseen because of their magnitude as well as politically quite delicate. This has been done by scrutinizing the cross-cutting themes in order to verify whether there was coherence in the concrete action to support the main goal, which was alleviation of the refugee problem.

The new century after the First World War witnessed a shift from politically and militarily oriented alliances to a more comprehensive approach in cooperation. It was recognized that more sustainable patterns of international behavior must be promoted. The refugee policy of the world organizations was formulated, planned, and implemented by the Member States through the different Bodies of the League and the ILO. This was done in close cooperation with Non-governmental organizations, private
sector, and societies on the whole. The substance of the policy was guided by a number of prominent personalities who were able to draw the attention of the international community to the matters that otherwise would have been forgotten and left to be handled by national governments alone.

During the Inter-war period permanent solutions to refugee problems were extremely challenging to achieve with the means the international refugee regime had at hand. The basic boundary conditions and policies derived from those limitations refer rather to settlements that are described as the “second-best durable solutions”. When a problem consisted of overcoming a crisis with contradictory interests of certain states, its solution called for methods only at disposal of the collective institutions such as the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization in the 1920s and 1930s.

The international framework for protecting migrants and refugees during the Inter-war period has been criticized for being fragmentary. There was a multiplicity of categories of refugees as well as organizations for addressing their problems. There was also some overlapping from time to time. One good example is the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees formed by a number of states in 1938 by the initiative of the US President Roosevelt. This committee itself was independent and separate from the League, but was intended to collaborate with the High Commissioner.

The previous, rather sporadic research concentrated in sociological, psychological, and legal aspects of the refugee problems has produced a picture where the refugee work activities of the League seem inconsistent and weak. The analytical attempts have offered mainly normative analyzes to examine how the responses to refugee situations should look. However, on the basis of preliminary analyses on the source material it was possible to draw a presumption that this picture was a too simplified view of the situation prevailing during the Inter-war period. The deliberations in the organs of the League of Nations and the ILO included also serious considerations towards comprehensive solutions.

The League of Nations was established in order to provide the world with relief from armed conflict. The League was essentially a political organization. The League was entrusted with doing its duty through international law, arms control, conference diplomacy, and the idea of collective security. Taking responsibility of refugees was initially not thought to be among the priorities of the League. The ILO had its own role in this endeavor towards more just and sound world order.

The results of the research are based on interpretation and organizing the existing material and filtering the facts towards a new wisdom. In case of the League of Nations
we can hardly think of finding any undiscovered sources. Therefore we need to satisfy ourselves with working towards a new mindset. This work at hand as a part of modern and contemporary history research also seems to confirm the assumption that Nansen’s appointment marked the first formal attempt to take refugee issues on the agenda of the international political machinery.

The problem in every international and especially intergovernmental deliberation is that it is often not possible to address the matters by their actual names. In most cases this means that parties of an exercise are reluctant to admit that they simply don’t have resources to go into it deeply enough. In modern days politics this is shown when the civil society organizations actively advocate their agendas urging the governments to take action. The governments on the other side of the table give promises and pledge for future activities to fulfill the promises. However, the hands of the political leaders of democratic societies are tied to the extent that they are responsible to their voters for the use of public funds. During the Inter-war period the public revenue in countries was not so exclusively tied to the citizens as taxpayers as it is now, but nevertheless, the countries trying to solve the refugee problem were democratic and thus suffering from this handicap of the people’s power.

While the challenges faced by the international refugee policy were bigger than ever seen before, new solutions were also developed. New forms of governance and more advanced approaches were being employed through broad international cooperation to combat the marginalization of millions of people. This global governance did not signify a comprehensive global policy. However, the foundation for this guideline for actions was created by international debate on ethics; discussing the rights and responsibilities of human individuals.

It was realized and recognized that States have responsibilities and commitments towards their own citizens, but also towards other countries and other people. It was thought that the international fulfillment of these commitments created a basis for common security and development. It was also for the first time in history clearly remarked that progress towards democracy and the rule of law as well as the consolidation of civil rights was a precondition for peaceful, sustainable international community. This could be achieved only through a dialogue, coordination, and cooperation between the stakeholders involved.

Experience has shown that favorable economic development is a powerful tool against marginalization and political unrest. Economic situation is reflected to the treatment and the settlement of refugees. The fate of the refugees depended on the
economic growth that created new jobs, but at the same time could deteriorate labour standards.

Whatever the reasons are, developing countries have always been affected by internal migration, migration between developing countries, and migration to industrialized countries. This was also the heart of the story after the First World War. The League together with the ILO was the first international attempt to support the positive effects of migration while preventing and mitigating the harmful impacts. Movement of people itself is a crucial development issue, regardless of the perspective it is studied from.

It is fair to say that very few of the refugee situations during the Inter-war period fulfill the features and characters of a protracted refugee situation. There were only some sporadic remarks concerning any refugee camps. In Europe those camps seem to have been almost non-existent. There are, however, references to refugee camps in the Near East. These either don't justify the labeling of the situation as an unnecessarily prolonged refugee problem, since the populations in those camps were selected, and at the same time some prospects of resettlement for them were prepared. The League was in practice involved in all refugee problems in Europe and its geographical surroundings, thus contributing to the evolution of the situation, in a way or another.

The desire to protect and promote human rights was among the variety of ways of thinking about international cooperation, but it was far from being the most important of these. The overall ideology behind the activity of the world organizations was that politics and action can and must be adapted to the needs of humanity. This was seen possible through international and intergovernmental arrangements and relevant national policy instruments based on them. The coherent use of the instruments was supposed to be leading to efficiency in the relief work done among the refugees.

Over the entire Inter-war period, the League and the ILO performed in connection to refugee questions. The performance can be divided roughly into two periods, each of them forming a category for itself. The first decade was a time of massive refugee movements and responses to them, also in the field. The 1920s marked an extremely active time, when refugee situations occurred rather suddenly and followed each other. The League had to react accordingly. Because of the mass of the work to be done with the refugees, there was no time to think much about the future and the creation of standardized facilities which could form a tool for the refugee regime. The refugee situations in the 1930s were not as acute and urgent even though some of them were massive and politically delicate. Talking about predictability would be an exaggeration,
but certain preparedness was taking place in the thoughts of the people working in the intergovernmental system. This was the trend that finally led into the forming of modern refugee policy and strategic approach in the attempts to solve the refugee problems after the Second World War.

It is quite clear that the work of the international refugee regime mattered more in the 1920s than during the next decade, simply because the numbers of refugees were many times bigger after the First World War. Some kind of remedies and solutions had to be found, no matter how improvised or provisory. From the beginning, the actions were more successful in cases where the questions of national sovereignty were not involved.

The similarity of the 1930s with the previous decade was that the different conventions were mostly directed for certain refugee groups, e.g. refugees coming from Germany, by mentioning the groups in order to get them under the protective system of the refugee regime. The arrangements of the 1930s contained, however, some universal elements which did not exist in the arrangements of the 1920s. Because the problems were so politicized in the latter decade, strive appeared towards developing a universal approach on refugee questions. This, in turn, could be used in all cases, making individual nationalized approach unnecessary. It was probably feared that this individual approach could be interpreted as intervening to countries’ internal political affairs.

In the 1930s it was clear for the international refugee advocates that dealing with the causes of refugeeism would be the right way to act. It was though that by giving the High Commissioner a mandate to negotiate with the governments causing refugee problems and keeping the refugee organs separate and independent from the League could provide the representatives of the regime with the impetus and tools needed in solving the refugee problems.

The ILO endeavored to reach its main goal, which was decent work for all. This objective included quite naturally the refugees. This was the nucleus of the refugee policy of the Labour Organization throughout the two decades under examination, although occasionally other duties, such as coordinating the whole refugee work efforts, were put on the shoulders of the ILO.

The Organization was always regarded as temporary, and the Assembly did not fail to remind the actors each year that the machinery had only a few more years to live. The refugee organs were somewhat unpopular during their time despite their valuable efforts. Most European countries blamed the Organization for giving them less help than they felt entitled to expect. Many countries were reluctant to contribute to the
solution of a problem for which they admitted no responsibility. Mussolini’s Italy was consistently hostile. Germany and Russia tried to put an end to the regime for their own reasons. The United States refused to participate in its work. The only warm and firm support came from France and from the Scandinavian countries. It was definitely not easy to try to build up a proper, permanent, efficient, and well-defined organization in these circumstances.

One type of criticism towards the Nansen Office was certainly known before its times, from the start of the career of the High Commissioner’s Office, namely the accusations of being politically oriented or even biased. This discussion had its historical roots in the fact that the “customers” of the work were considered to be White Russians. On the other hand, Michael Hansson also admitted that in some cases the national representatives and delegates of the Office could have been more careful in the way they had discussed the refugee matters.

In 1938 the Assembly decided to merge the Nansen Office and the Office of the High Commissioner, with a mandate for five years. At the end of the 1930s the international political situation made the work of the organizations very difficult and tied the hands of the people responsible for the actions. Just before the outbreak of the Second World War, it was thought that the Director of the IGCR could negotiate with German Government in order to secure an orderly emigration of persons unwanted in Germany. Since this turned out to be impossible, the Director George Rublee resigned in February 1939. In that connection, another merger appeared, as the High Commissioner Sir Herbert Emerson, also became the Director of the IGCR.

Many evaluations have concluded that the real results of the refugee work were small. Nansen and his followers had to demand and receive the approbations, as well as the funds for the activities from the Assembly. The High Commissioner had to carry out direct negotiations with individual governments, instead of reaching a comprehensive intergovernmental consensus on refugee policies. However, in all these assessments the target has been set on the level where Nansen personally raised it. And that was ambitious; it was not less that the eradication of the entire refugee problem in few years time. Today we know that it has not been eradicated or not even dramatically alleviated, in spite of the huge resources given at the disposal of the modern international and intergovernmental refugee machinery.

Despite the shortcomings listed above, the refugee agencies were able to play a successful leadership role for several reasons. In contrast to states, they were primarily concerned with refugee issues without other major burdens. Unlike private organizations, their association with the League of Nations gave them the authority to
negotiate with governments directly. Because their proposals were generally perceived as being non-partisan, they were also more likely than those from Great Powers to win a consensus. The most visible example of this was definitely the achievement of creating a successful passport system never seen before.

The preliminary hypothesis in the task formulation was that the League of Nations and the International Labour Organization did have a refugee policy. In the light of the material gone through and the analyzing work done, is this proven correct? In many respects it can be stated that the League actions on refugees were reactive more than consistently planned. Nevertheless, it was based on certain values and moral guidelines as well as to legal principles.

It is fair to conclude that all the elements for a consistent policy were in place; the purpose statements, applicability and scope, effective dates, responsibilities, policy statements. They were established in a form or another. They were not in a single covering document, and they cannot be found as titles or headings when looking into the archives. Nevertheless, a policy document could be drawn up in retrospective on the basis of the compilation of the various documents and the practical work. One could even insist that an imaginary draft of this policy document could well be equal in quality with the present day's strategies.

The refugee policy of the League of Nations was formulated and adopted in the top organs of the world organization. It was planned and implemented in close cooperation with other intergovernmental organization, non-governmental organizations, State Members’ governments, private sector, and representatives of refugees.

The substance of the policy was guided by the refugee situations. The League of Nations faced challenges, sometimes smaller, sometimes bigger, throughout the whole period of time it was conducting its refugee work. The League was, however, able to respond and develop new solutions to the growing challenges. The organization was capable of showing creativeness in its reactions to the refugee situations repeatedly through the whole period under examination. Although the principles of the policies remain somewhat unchanged, new techniques were applied in combating the destitution of refugees.

There may have been sometimes even conflicting situations concerning the motives when the main duty of the League, maintaining peace, would have required attitudes where the refugees should have been forgotten. But, still the League reacted.
B. The original task was to provide evidence which will speak for sufficient consistency and continuity in the actions and would in turn allow us to conclude that a policy was in place and the evolution of it can be followed throughout the entire Inter-war time. On the basis of the discussions presented in the main chapters 2.-5., it is indeed possible to identify elements which are summarized in the following:

1. The practical aims and measures remained approximately the same throughout the whole Inter-war period. The legal and political protection was seen as the most important responsibility of the LON. In connection to this, the prime task was to provide the refugees with an acceptable means of identification. This had dual consequence; it gave the refugees a status, as well as the possibility to travel legally. The LON never took responsibility for the humanitarian aid and emergency relief. The LON endeavored to coordinate the measures taken by the private organizations. The LON spoke for the permanent and sustainable solutions. The implementation of resettlement plans were highly depending on the capability and willingness of the states. The schemes of resettlement in the Balkans area demonstrated the policy of the League in a magnificent way. Turks returned from Greece to Asia Minor receiving compensation for their financial losses. A LON loan enabled the Greek Government to provide new villages and industries for homecoming Greeks. Similar arrangements were executed in Bulgaria. The ambitious plan took almost a decade to complete, but it worked. In many other connections, the lack of cooperation from the side of the intended recipient country formed an obstacle for the success of the schemes.

2. There was always League’s funding available for the administrative activities when it was necessary. The funds were allocated to the organizations from the regular sources, and there were no specific innovative financing mechanisms for the refugee work.

3. There was a High Commissioner or corresponding official in place throughout the entire Inter-war period.

4. There were delegates of the refugee organizations in the hosting countries through the whole period under examination.

5. Because there was no permanent constitutional refugee organ in the League, there were no fundamental principles either. The policy was not based on the idea of assuring the refugees their fundamental rights and freedoms. It was based on practical observation and consideration that refugees are people in a need of help. It was also based on the fact that the grant of asylum and residence place heavy burdens on certain countries. The State Members were in the opinion that a satisfactory solution cannot be reached without international cooperation.
6. It was at all times recognized that the success of operations depended on the cooperation between states and the League. The League never assumed an attitude of an international super body in refugee questions.

7. When the modern Refugee Convention was adopted in December 1950, it was recognized that the definitions of refugees in the previous arrangements and conventions of 1926, 1928, 1933, 1938, and 1939 will be valid and considered as the basis of the new Convention.

(8.) Additional element to the above listed is that the League protection was never thought to be universal. Only selected groups of refugees were included to the schemes of refugee work.

The policy was not a result of goal oriented intentional design, but rather consisted of a series of responses without a single declaration. It was put into effect directly under the parameters set up by the policy organs; no separate implementation plans were drawn up. There was continuous monitoring in the form of reporting by the different refugee organizations. No final evaluations of the programmes were carried out. The normal reporting was conducted in order to verify that the goals were targeted and the declared principles were followed. The refugee organs were subject to regular internal auditing but there are no indications that excessive extra auditing would have been conducted. New modalities in refugee policy required also new and innovative approaches in administration. The missions and representatives played an important role in cooperation with governments.

During the 1920s the League and its refugee apparatus travelled from a crisis to another. The problems came to the scene so fast and so forcefully, that there was no time to think about the future or the approach after the acute situation. Things had to be done here and now. After the most burning situations were over and settled in the change of decades, there was some time to take a deep breath before the next shocks came. In the 1930s there was already a body of experience on the refugee questions. That gave the intergovernmental community the possibility to consider matters of consistency. Human rights issues came into picture, as well as the considerations of why there are refugees at all.

Connecting local and global level by taking Finland as a sample to demonstrate how ideas work and interactions are applied in practice has been done in order to offer a platform for other researchers. It can allow and motivate further studies in the future. This transnational approach can provide an important vehicle in the organization of historical knowledge.
Finland was involved with the international refugee questions from the beginning of the existence of the LON because of its geographical and political position. Finland offered asylum to refugees coming from Russia, but at the same time encouraged them to go back. It was very difficult for a new state to provide the necessary humanitarian aid, and the supplies delivered by the international organizations had a big role. Finland adopted quickly the Nansen passport system, which contributed to the decreasing numbers of refugees as many wanted to travel to third countries. During the 1930s the international cooperation had a diminishing role in the handleings of refugee questions in Finland as the problem itself was not significant anymore. Domestic solutions for the problems of the remaining refugees were preferred to international settlements.

It is clear that the ideas of human rights, for example, were not autocatalyzed in Finland, but they crossed borders. The same applies to the treatment of refugees in a larger scale. Finland was a newly independent state, where nationalization and transnationalization went hand in hand, interlocked with one another.

Traditionally seen by the history writing the global cooperation between the nations is relatively new phenomenon which emerged with the foundation of the United Nations. The League has been seen as focusing mainly on military security. But deeper focus tells us that organization created by the winners of the First World War assumed functions related to social and economic development from the beginning. The attachment of the ILO to the League system is one proof of this as such. More powerful evidence is the establishment of the refugee protection system. In order to further these goals, the League and the ILO and their Member States set up various specialized agencies, funds, and programmes.

The League had no quantitative targets for the international work. Today, the UN promotes higher standards of living, employment, social progress, as well as solutions to international economic, social, and health problems. The aim has been also to further international cultural and educational cooperation in order to promote universal respect for other people, nations, and cultures. The League had these ideas in the background of its ideology and Covenant, but they were not articulated aloud.

There were different types of dissatisfaction on the handling of the refugee problems. On the one hand, countries like Norway were discontent because the League was not performing in an effective manner. On the other hand, some countries didn’t like the way the League was making attempts to intervene. In other words, the League was doing either too little or too much, depending on the observer.

The League recognized its powerlessness in some respects. In order to find sustainable solutions for the refugee problems, certain preconditions should be in
place. To attain solutions, social conditions should have been stable. This would have meant peace and security, well functioning democratic governance, respect for human rights, and inclusive social and cultural development. The circumstances sometimes were against all the goals.

Favorable economic development was the best way to alleviate the destitution of homeless people. When there was growth, there was work available. That, in turn, made any excessive special arrangements for the refugees unnecessary. In that sense we may say that the actual concrete results of the improvement in the position of the refugees were not that much achievements of the refugee organizations. However, the organizations and the policy backing up their work were most needed, when times were economically bad.

The transnational character of the refugee policy becomes obvious when the scope is directed to continents other than Europe. Although we have agreed that the LON was a “European creature”, the refugee policy did not stop at borders on Europe. Indeed, a large number of exchanges extended beyond the places where the intergovernmental refugee policy was designed. The refugee communities in Far East, notably in Harbin and Shanghai, were interlinked to the global refugee assistance system. This development goes further as we acknowledge that it was especially the areas in South America, where the refugees from Far East were supposed to be settled.

Although Nansen’s personal prestige was considered higher than the appreciation of the League in some parts of the world and by some evaluators, it can be concluded as a result of all deliberations conducted in this work, that the refugee policy of the League was consistent and a pertinent part of the essence of the Organization. Regardless of what can be said about the overall performance of the LON, the refugee policy shows that the existence of the League was not exclusively tragicomic history. At least there was a Policy despite seeming inconsistencies. The refugee policy can be seen as one of the first symptoms of the emergence of genuine transnational thinking even the fuel for the League as such may have been utopianism and the platform for action imperial internationalism.
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Appendix I
General Structure of the LON
(Designed by the author)
Appendix II
Structure of the ILO
(Designed by the author)

International Labor Conference
"general assembly"
2 Governments rep/country
1 Employers rep/country
1 Workers rep/country

chooses

Governing Body
20 Governments rep
10 Employers rep
10 Workers rep

guidance

Feedback reporting

International Labor Office
Execution, implementation
Research
APPENDIX III A
LIST OF STATE MEMBERS OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

If no date of entry is indicated, the country was an original member

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<th>Notice of withdrawal</th>
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(source: Walters, 64-65)
APPENDIX III B

Non-permanent Members of the Council of the League

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<th>Year</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Spain, Greece, Belgium, Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Spain, China, Belgium, Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Spain, Sweden, Belgium, Brazil, Uruguay, China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Spain, Sweden, Belgium, Brazil, Uruguay, Czechoslovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Spain, Sweden, Belgium, Brazil, Uruguay, Czechoslovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Spain, Sweden, Belgium, Brazil, Uruguay, Czechoslovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Chile, Poland, Rumania, Holland, China, Colombia, Belgium, Salvador, Czechoslovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Chile, Poland, Rumania, Holland, China, Colombia, Canada, Cuba, Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Chile, Poland, Rumania, Canada, Cuba, Finland, Spain, Persia, Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Yugoslavia, Persia, Venezuela, Canada, Cuba, Finland, Yugoslavia, Peru, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Yugoslavia, Peru, Poland, Spain, Persia, Venezuela, Norway, Ireland, Guatemala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Norway, Ireland, Guatemala, Yugoslavia, Peru, Poland, Spain, China, Panama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Spain, China, Panama, Norway, Ireland, Guatemala, Mexico, Poland, Czechoslovakia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Mexico, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Spain, China, Panama, Argentina, Australia, Denmark, Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Argentina, Australia, Denmark, Portugal, Mexico, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Spain, Chile, Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Spain, Chile, Turkey, Argentina, Australia, Denmark, Portugal, Ecuador, Poland, Rumania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Ecuador, Poland, Rumania, Spain, Chile, Turkey, Bolivia, Sweden New-Zealand, China, Latvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Bolivia, Sweden, New-Zealand, China, Latvia, Ecuador, Poland, Rumania, Iran, Peru, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Iran, Peru, Belgium, China, Bolivia, Sweden, New-Zealand, Latvia, Dominican Republic, Yugoslavia, Greece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Dominican Republic, Yugoslavia, Greece, Iran, Peru, Belgium, China, Egypt, Finland, Bolivia, South-Africa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Jonkari, 405-406)
Appendix IV
Implementation of intergovernmental refugee work
(Designed by the author)

- Policy
- Guidelines
- Field work
REFUGEE'S CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY AND ORIGIN.

In accordance with the proposal dated ........................................
made to the Governments interested, by the League of Nations' High Commissioner
for Russian Refugees,

We 1 ............................................................... ........................................

certify that the bearer of this certificate, a refugee to 2 ..................................
territory, whose photograph, description and signature appear hereinafter,
claims and has been ascertained to be one 3 ........................................
........................................ a national of 4 ........................................... according to the law of
........................................ in force before August 1st, 1914.

We hereby request that he (she) may be permitted and assisted to travel
and to enter and remain for all lawful purposes to and in any country other than
4 ........................................ as though he (she) were the bearer of a passport duly
issued and recognised, notwithstanding that he (she) may not hold such passport,
subject always to the laws and regulations in force concerning the admission and
residence of foreign nationals.

We, therefore, request that this certificate may, to this end, be treated as
susceptible of receiving a visa in the same manner as a passport issued by a duly
recognised government.

This certificate is valid for ........ years from its date and may, at its ex-
piration, be renewed by us or by the consuls under our authority abroad, subject
to the regulations in force at the date of expiration.

This certificate shall cease to be valid if the bearer shall at any time enter
the territory of 4 ............................................................... ........................................

Given at ............................................................... ........................................
The .............. day of ................................................. 19...

Signed............................................................... ........................................

1 Insert name and title of minister by whose authority the certificate is issued.
2 Insert name of the country whose government issues the certificate.
3 Insert name of bearer of the certificate.
4 Insert name of the country of which the person in question would be a national, according to the
law of that country in force before August 1st, 1914.
DESCRIPTION OF BEARER.

Age
Date and Place of Birth
Sex
Occupation
Married or Single
Appearance

Photograph.
Signature of Bearer.
Observations.

DESCRIPTION OF WIFE OF BEARER.

Age
Date and place of birth
Occupation
Maiden name
(if widow or married woman travelling alone.)
Appearance

PARTICULARS OF CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 16 YEARS.

Name Age Sex

Photograph of wife.
Signature of wife:
APPENDIX V B
Simplified Nansen Passport 1922

(See e.g. OJ, 3rd year, No 8 (Part II), August 1922, 927)

Authority issuing certificate .................................................
Place of issue of certificate ................................................
No. .........................................................
Date. .........................................................

C. R. R. 30 1.

CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY.

Valid until ...................

The present certificate is not valid for return to the country which issued it without a special provision to that effect contained in it. It will cease to be valid if the bearer enters Russian territory.

Surname ..............................................................
Christian names ......................................................
Date of birth ........................................................
Place of birth .......................................................
Surname of Father ....................................................
Surname of Mother ...................................................
Person of Russian origin not having acquired another nationality .
Occupation ...........................................................
Former residence in Russia ...........................................
Present residence .....................................................

Description:

Age .................................................................
Hair .................................................................
Eyes .................................................................
Face .................................................................
Nose .................................................................
Special peculiarities ...................................................

Remarks:

.................................................................
.................................................................

Signature of Holder:

.................................................................

The undersigned certifies that the photograph and signature hereon are those of the bearer of the present document.

Signature of the issuing authority .................................

Seal.

1 This certificate is issued in conformity with the resolutions of the Governmental Conference convened by Dr. Nansen, High Commissioner for Russian Refugees, at Geneva, July 3rd to 5th, 1922.
APPENDIX VI A and VI B

NGOs in Refugee Work

A) In his report of survey in 1939, Simpson was using the following categorizing of the private organizations:

Organizations with generalized aims:

a) The Red Cross; the international organs of the Red Cross were the first to help refugees and to draw the attention of the League to the refugee questions

b) ARC: In 1924 the ARC withdrew from relief work for Russian refugees, but during the fiscal year 1924-5 some help was sent for the Greeks, the Turks (through the Turkish Red Crescent), the Bulgarians, and the Persians, as well as to the Bulgarian Red Cross in 1925-6. (Simpson,39,p.175)

c) The Save the Children Fund and the International Save the Children Union: The Fund resembled the Red Cross in some respects. The Union worked in close cooperation with the League.

d) Near East Relief: This organization carried out the most extensive operations in Asia Minor during the refugee crisis. It provided emergency relief in huge amounts, but also took care of construction of infrastructure.

e) The Society of Friends: The organization had ambitious schemes for general assistance to "helpless victims of the War". Their assistance was aiming to a sustainable livelihood of the refugees.

Organizations for Relief of Russians:

a) Zemgor; Russian Zemstvos and Towns Relief Committee originated from a federation of municipal and provincial organizations in Russia.

b) The Russian Red Cross; During the civil wars it worked in the areas occupied by the White Armies, and after their defeat it operated in foreign countries.

c) The Federation of Russian War Invalids and Wounded Abroad; This organization was founded at Constantinople in 1920, had headquarters in Paris, and operated wherever there were disabled ex-combatants.

Organizations for the Assistance of Armenian refugees in the Near East:

a) Non-Armenian Funds; The Society of the Friends of Armenia and the Lord Mayor’s (Armenian) Fund were established before and during the First World War.
b) Armenian Funds; Armenian benevolent Union, Armenian Blue Cross, Hamazkayin and the Committee for Assistance for Armenia were organizations channeling the most of the substantial contributions of the Armenians to the relief of their own people.

Organizations assisting refugees coming from Germany:

a) Jewish Organizations; It was estimated that some 90% of the refugees coming from Germany were Jewish. It was therefore obvious that the largest role was assigned to these organizations. The most prominent of these were the Jewish Colonization Association, then American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, The Jewish Agency for Palestine and the Council for German Jewry.

b) Associations assisting non-Jewish refugees; the principle organs of assistance for these political refugees were organized by European Social democrats and Communists.

c) Committees assisting Professional and Learned Persons; The interests of scholars and of intellectual and professional workers were cared for by various bodies.

(More on this categorizing, see Simpson 1939, 172-190)

B) In 1937 the League reported that the International Liaison Committee working in connection with the High Commissioner, consisted of the following non-governmental organizations:

- American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (Paris)
- Council for German Jewry (London)
- Hias-Ica Emigration Association (HICEM) (Paris)
- International Christian Committee for German Refugees (London)
- Jewish Agency for Palestine (London)
- Jewish Colonization Association (Paris)
- Jewish Refugees Committee (London)
- The Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (London)
- The Society of Friends, Germany Emergency Committee (London)
- Comité d’aide et d’assistance aux victimes de l’antisémitisme en Allemagne (Brussels)
- De Samvirkende Danske Emigranthjælpekomiteer (Copenhagen)
- Comité d’assistance aux réfugiés (Paris)
- Comité pour bijzondere Joodsche Belangen (Amsterdam)
- Schweitzerische Zentralstelle für Flüchtlingshilfe (Basel)
- Comité central tchécoslovaque pour les réfugiés provenant d’Allemagne (Prague)
- Zentralvereinigung der Deutschen Emigration (Paris)
- Bureau international pour le respect du droit d'asile et l'aide aux réfugiés politiques (Paris)

- Congrès juif mondiale (Paris)

- International Migration Service (Geneva)

- International Students Service (Geneva)

- International « Save the Children » Fund (Geneva) : Inter-Aid Committee for Children from Germany (London)

- Comité international pour le placement des intellectuels réfugiés (Geneva)

- Alliance israélite universelle (Paris)

- Joint Foreign Committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association (London)

- Agudas Israel World Organization (London)

- Notgemeinschaft Deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland (London)

(See: Les Réfugiés. Le activités de la société des nations, 9. Section d'information. Geneve 1938, 51-52)
APPENDIX VII

LIST OF MOST IMPORTANT AGREEMENTS AND ARRANGEMENTS CONCLUDED DURING THE INTER-WAR PERIOD
(Compiled by the author)

Arrangement with regard to the Issue of Certificates of Identity to Russian Refugees 5.6.1922

Protocol of Lausanne 24.7.1923

Plan of 1924/31.5.1924

Arrangement 12.5.1926

Recommendation of the Communications and Transit Conference of 1927

Arrangement 30.6.1928

Protocol on Stateless Persons 12.04.1930

Convention concerning the International Status of Refugees 28.10.1933

Arrangement of 24.5.1935

Provisional Arrangement 4.7.1936

Convention 10.2.1938

Protocol 14.9.1939