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GIUNTA CATTOLICA ITALIANA PER L'EMIGRAZIONE

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PER L'EMIGRAZIONE ACTIVITIES  
ON NATIONAL LEVEL



# THE GIUNTA CATTOLICA ITALIANA PER L'EMIGRAZIONE

## ACTIVITIES ON NATIONAL LEVEL

by Giuseppe Lucrezio

The increase of emigration during the late post-war period has confirmed the decisive role of "individual" emigration, that is, migration resulting from individual initiative and not from mass recruitment under international governmental or bilateral agreements.

And this is logical: men are obviously involved in economic plans although planification of these movements is a very complex matter and requires thorough preparation and intense activity to adapt both to the varying demands of the general situation and to the particular needs of the countries involved. Assisted emigration requires from the governments enormous financial, technical and diplomatic efforts and burdens them with the responsibility not only for possible imperfections in the plans but also for those that the emigrant believes should be attributed to governments.

It is undeniable that today the very conception of assisted emigration has to be revamped if it is to answer the demands of a modern economy. Emigration in the world of today has taken on entirely new characteristics, and past experience, useful as it may be, is insufficient to provide a



precise frame for a mass emigration policy that is certainly effective.

Individual emigration especially that resulting from a call or summons from an emigrated relative, is undoubtedly more economical and safer. The person doing the inviting ("chiamante") knows the working capacities and the character of the person called ("chiamato"), he assures him of work he is certain to have and which will most probably be adapted to his possibilities. After arrival, the new migrant will find in the one who called him over a real and private social worker who will help him to get acclimated and to overcome at least the first difficulties confronting any person who goes to a foreign land.

Much more complex is the situation of those who emigrate under a working contract, because they have to make sure of the validity of the contract itself. When it is validated by consular authorities and verified by competent governmental or non-governmental organizations in the immigration country, then any reservations in this respect become needless.

Of course, individual emigration also involves dangers and drawbacks, but they are easier and less expensive to compensate for.

Excluding big colonization schemes (and recent experiences have shown what a long and complex preparation such schemes require), assistance could be



directed towards allowing and encouraging individual emigration which, among other advantages, awakens less suspicion and fear of competition among the trade unions of the immigration country.

An efficient information service available to both the caller ("chiamanti") and the called ("chiamati") on the actual working and living conditions in the various countries; publicity material aimed at increasing the number of "summons" with the help of assistance organizations having adequate facilities; a quick but serious control on the spot of the trustworthiness, the seriousness and the substance of the offers of employment and working contracts; a strong and wise effort to prevent the separation of families; suitable kinds of assistance in Italy, during the journey, and abroad; adequate helps to enable the emigrant to afford the heavy expense of his transfer and settlement - all these are measures that might, without any excessive burden and with an assured result, intensify the main and most useful current of emigration.

We should return now to some of the points mentioned summarily above, but we did not want to end this summary without having drawn attention to the necessity of improving information services. (Appreciable results in this field have been obtained both by governmental and non-governmental agencies but there still remains a lot to be done).



Another urgent necessity is that of constantly improving the cooperation between governmental bodies and voluntary assistance agencies.

There is another point we find necessary to underline briefly: that is the financing of individual emigration, by which we mean financial assistance of those who have the opportunity to emigrate but who do not have enough money of their own to cover the travel expenses.

In our opinion one of the most effective means of assistance would be the grant of loans, with all due precaution, but without interest, and in a spirit of enlightened liberality.

One must go in search of the good emigrant, the one who either may be utterly indigent or one who has a little something but not enough to enable him to face all the emigration expenses, provided he is a trustworthy person who does not have the type of guarantee which banks from their particular viewpoint rightly consider as indispensable for the grant of credit.

Let us remark that the inquiries which certify to the abovementioned facts are anything but easy; it may not be sufficient to resort to the usual procedure. One cannot judge a man just because he has the required documents in good order or because his neighbors speak good or evil about him: one might risk making colossal mistakes one way as



the other.

Voluntary agencies may also in this respect be of precious help, and a striking example has been given by the loans they have already granted thanks to the I.C.E.M. revolving fund, thus enabling thousands of emigrants to depart, with the total outlay in loans to a value of several million of dollars and trifling general expenses.

This was possible owing to the ramificated organization of these agencies and to the fact that they are united all together in international organizations which succeed - thanks to the cooperation of the various national agencies - in recovering quite easily their loans in the reception countries and in controlling on the spot their references and guarantees, all of which would be very difficult for any other type of organization especially outside of its own territory.

We notice with great satisfaction the increasing interest that even the public authorities now dedicate to these questions, an interest that is shown by the various measures adopted.

Of course, those whose departure is considered to be "assisted emigration" also need to be helped and guided, but in this respect governmental organizations act in another way, predominantly through informational activities and complementary assistance.



As we have said, assistance to emigrants can only be provided by the State in certain fields though in the most important of them - and in certain respects (according to its specific competence and on the basis of subsidiarity) so that numerous tasks are still left to non-governmental organizations (which are called "voluntary agencies").

These agencies may be confessional, neutral, related to trade unions, or flatly political. Each of them is organized of course in a different manner, having its own characteristics and varying with the country and the local legislation on this matter.

These various types of organizations may, however, be divided into two main groups:

a) Organizations connected with a single national organization, with duties of a representative or executive or operational nature and with branch offices adequate in number and structure to the needs, etc.

b) Organizations which are connected to more than one organization, each of them having their own specific powers and particular operational tasks, all of them headed by a central institute which is supposed to coordinate and support their activities, to represent them all in its national or international headquarters, to provide them with all necessary information, etc. etc., and to carry out the operational activities which, for practical reasons,



must be concentrated in a single institute for each country (as is the case for instance with the granting of loans, etc.).

In this brief report we intend to examine certain aspects of the organizations belonging to type b, first of all in the Catholic field. More precisely we shall say a few words about the Catholic organizations for assistance to emigrants, how they are set up in Italy, and in particular how the Giunta Cattolica per l'Emigrazione is organized.

### Catholic Services of Assistance to the Emigrant

#### A) The Church

The Sacred Consistorial Congregation, which received from Saint Pius X the mission of providing spiritual assistance to emigrants, has also been appointed by His Holiness Pope Pius XII to carry on the work of the Church in the field of migration.

The Apostolic Constitution "Exsul Familia", in accordance with the above-mentioned sanctions governs whatever relations may arise in this respect between the Sacred Consistorial Congregation and the Sacred Congregation of Oriental Rites and of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith and has created a Supreme Emigration Council and an International Secretariat for the Apostolate of the Sea connected with the Sacred Consistorial Congregation.



The same Apostolic Constitution "Exsul Familia" confirms the establishment within the Sacred Consistorial Congregation of the Office of the Delegate of "Opere di Emigrazione" who, in a later part of this report, will be briefly referred to as the Emigration Delegate.

This delegate is appointed to encourage by the most appropriate means the spiritual welfare of emigrants, without any distinction as to race, tongue, nationality or, servatis servandis, of rite. It is also his task to maintain suitable contacts with national and international institutes and organizations at work in the emigration field.

Moreover the Delegate assists with his advice and activity all Catholic institutions, and organizations, national and international, dealing with emigration and assisting migrants. The corresponding diocesan and parochial associations refer to him for matters not interfering with the rights of the Ordinary.

In the Secretariat of State of His Holiness there is a special "Emigration Office" for migration matters falling within the competence of the Secretariat of State.

For the special preparation of priests who intend to devote themselves to the spiritual assistance of emigrants (ship chaplains and missionaries to emigrants) His Holiness Pope Pius X created the



Pontifical College of Priests for Italian Emigration.

B) International Lay Organizations

In 1951 was created the International Catholic Migration Commission (I.C.M.C.) for the purpose of uniting and coordinating the activities of the various National Catholic Organizations which deal with migration, representing them on the international level and studying the specific problems of this field.

Among other activities, the I.C.M.C. operates an information and editorial center. The head office is in Geneva. Worthy of particular mention is the fact that the I.C.M.C. has constituted a special fund for the purpose of granting interest-free loans to certain types of individual emigrants who repay on easy monthly terms. The request for credit must be processed through the responsible national Catholic organization.

C) The Italian Organization.

1) The Director of the Opere per l'Emigrazione explains his tasks as they have been defined in the Apostolic Constitution "Exsul Familia" (Title II - Chap. I - Art. 6).

Also specified in "Exsul Familia" (Title II - Chap. III) are the powers and duties of the Director of Ship Chaplains for Italians.



2) Among the lay organizations, the Giunta Cattolica Italiana per l'Emigrazione has the task of uniting and coordinating the activities of all the Italian Catholic organizations in the field of emigration.

The Giunta is composed of a President and the following members: The National Director of Emigration Services in Italy, the Rector of the Pontifical College of Priests for Italian Emigration, the National Director of Ship Chaplains, the National Director of Apostolatus Maris, the National Director of the organization for assistance to woman workers in the rice fields, the President of the National Association for Assistance to Italian Missionaries, the President of the A.C.I., the President of the Patronato A.C.L.I., the President of the P.O.A., the Director of ONARMO, the General President of the Society for the Protection of Girls, the President of the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul, the National Director of the Apostolate of Prayer. The Delegate for the Emigration Services is an ex officio member of the Giunta.

In addition the Giunta may co-opt not more than three Presidents of Diocesan Emigration Committees on the proposal of the National Director, and may choose, as well, several other persons particularly competent in this matter.

Within the Giunta there is a Governing Board



presided over by the President of the Giunta and composed of the President, the Vice-President and the Secretary Treasurer.

The President, who is empowered to represent the Giunta legally, the Vice-President and the Secretary Treasurer are all appointed by the Holy See.

The Giunta is a member of the I.C.M.C. (its President is a member of the Governing Committee of that organization) and it is, moreover, the correspondent agency for the Commission in Italy.

The Giunta's purpose is to contribute to the increasingly effective assistance to emigrants in order to safeguard the natural rights of human beings as they are defined in papal teaching.

In particular it will have to:

- a) represent in matters concerning emigration the Italian Catholic organizations before government bodies, Italian and foreign, and also at congresses and conferences on emigration problems;
- b) to strive for better coordination of Catholic initiatives in the fields of emigration and assistance to emigrants;
- c) to establish and maintain contacts with international, national and possibly local organizations for assistance to emigrants;
- d) to hold congresses, conferences and meetings so as to improve the cooperation and give a Chri-



stian orientation to the legislation and public opinion concerning emigration problems;

e) to develop any other activity useful in the fulfillment of its aims.

In case of need the Holy See may charge the Giunta to deal with refugee problems.

The Giunta publishes its own widely circulating Bulletin with supplements on matters which interest more directly the affiliated organizations and in general those which deal with emigration problems.

It has sent representatives to the most important meetings and national and international conferences where emigration questions or related matters are to be discussed.

The Giunta also maintains contact, sometimes direct, with counterpart national Catholic organizations in other countries. The direct contacts have been made either in Italy with delegates of these organizations who were there on visit, or abroad through representatives of its own sent for this purpose.

Ofcourse, the ties are close and contacts frequent between the Giunta and the International Catholic Migration Commission.

Frequent, too, are the contacts between the G.C.I.E. and ICEM, some of them personal contacts



between representatives of the two organizations in Rome and in Geneva.

Mention has been made of the granting of loans to emigrants; it might be added now this service is complemented by the numerous measures of assistance of all kinds that the Giunta and its affiliated organizations offer to needy emigrants (room and board entirely or partially free in Emigrants' Hostels managed by the P.O.A. or A.C.L.I. in Genoa, Naples and Messina, technical assistance connected with the documents and formalities; contacts with shipping companies to procure greater comfort and lower-cost passage, etc.).

3) Diocesan Committees for Emigration were created, as we have said, by His Holiness Pope Pius X first by a letter from the Secretary of the State dated September 8, 1911, and by the Motu Proprio "Iam pridem" of March 19, 1914.

His Holiness Pope Pius XII, gloriously reigning, in the Apostolic Constitution "Exsul Familia" confirmed this institution and warmly recommended to the Ordinaries in Italy the organization of such committees as being one of the most effective means of preparing and assisting amigrants.

These committees have now been set up in almost all the dioceses and their activity, carried on in close collaboration with the Direction of Catholic Emigration Services in Italy and with the Giunta Cattolica Italiana per l'Emigrazione, is always



increasing, especially since the initial phase of organization has ended.

As has already been said, the delegates of organizations dealing with emigration on the diocesan level are members of the diocesan committees for emigration. This means that all the subsidiary branches of organizations which are united and coordinated in the Giunta Cattolica Italiana per l'Emigrazione take part, among them being the "Opere Diocesane di Assistenza" (ODA), Patronati Provinciali ed Organizzazioni locali delle ACLI (PPACLI), Segretariati del Popolo delle ACLI (Comunali), Comitati Diocesani di Azione Cattolica (C.D.A.C.) and Associazioni Collegate (men, women, young boys and girls belonging to Catholic Action, the C.I.C.C., etc.); some other organizations such as the "Centro Italiano Femminile (CIF) of purely local character and also the "Patronati Emigranti", wherever they exist.

In the ports, local organizations of the Apostolatus Maris also belong to them.

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We hope that these brief particulars and the folder attached will be sufficient to give a summary idea of the existing Italian organizations for assistance to emigrants.



## II.

### Activity in 1956

Encouraged by the approval of its Statutes, graciously granted by His Holiness, the Giunta not only carried on its usual activities during 1956 but managed to increase and intensify all its fields of activities so as to work always more and better, striving to attain the goals set in the Apostolic Constitution "Exsul Familia".

Intense and continuous efforts have been made to extend the action of Catholic organizations and render it just as available and effective as it is in other fields of assistance for the numerous people who seek to find in emigration a solution to their problems.

Invaluable to us were the advice and directives of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, the Secretary of State of His Holiness, the Delegate for Emigration Services, and the Director of the Emigration Services in Italy, with whom the Giunta has been in constant contact.

The information activities have been given an impetus by the remarkable increase in distribution of the bulletin. Famous names have written of the problems of liveliest interest and the news section has been given particular attention. Besides the usual information supplements, a special



number of the bulletin was issued for the 80th anniversary of His Holiness and a special supplement for Emigration Day.

Domestic and foreign quarters in which the bulletin circulates have given it the warmest of welcomes. On the anniversary of His Holiness and for Emigration Day, special numbers issued for the occasion were sent to all Italian parishes as a means of contributing as much as possible to the success of these important ceremonies.

This year also on Emigration Day, on the initiative of the Giunta a ceremony was organized in Milan attended by the highest civil and ecclesiastical authorities and including the awarding of prizes and prize trips to Italian Catholic emigrants.

Among its own publications, the Giunta has dedicated one issue of its bulletin to the visit to the emigrants of His Eminence Cardinal Piazza. The publication of "Orientation Notes for Emigrants" has moreover been started: Those concerning Australia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and the Union of South Africa have already been published (in fact some of them are already in second editions) and those on some other countries are in the process of being printed.

Of course, the task of representing the Catholic viewpoint in various national and international meetings, in technical and study commissions,



in congresses and in any other necessary circumstances has not been neglected. Special mention must be made of the participation in the UNESCO Conference on the cultural integration of immigrants which was held in Havana, and also of the participation in meetings held on various occasions in Europe.

In collaboration with the I.C.M.C. in Geneva the Giunta is now preparing the Third International Migration Congress to be held in Assisi from September 22 to 26, 1957.

The Giunta's library and documentation have been made available to students preparing theses on emigration.

In the specific field of coordination of Catholic activities for assistance to emigrants, the Giunta has intensified to the utmost its collaboration with the Diocesan Committees for Emigration, with the P.O.A., and the Patronato A.C.L.I.

In addition to the family reunion program, a detailed review of which will be given further on, officials of the G.C.I.E., sent on special missions during this year, established direct contact with most of the Diocesan Delegates and have provided them with every possible technical assistance.

Thanks to the collaboration of I.C.M.C.-Geneva and of similar Catholic organizations abroad the Giunta was able to extend its long arm of assistance to many Italian Catholics, already emigrated,



sting manual was prepared for the use of the branch administrative agencies with material provided by the Giunta.

Both the P.O.A. and the Patronato A.C.L.I. guided by the G.C.I.E. have managed the training of their branch office staffs throughout the entire national territory by means of visits and lectures.

The officials of the Giunta, in addition to being available for collaboration with the other organizations whenever needed, give particular attention to the visits to the Diocesan Committees for Emigration and to their participation in the latter's assemblies.

Numerous circulars were sent to the Diocesan Committees, and counselling and information centers are presently being established. Posters were printed and distributed among the diocesan committees to be put up at the doors of all the churches of Italy inviting the emigrants to seek the assistance of Catholic organizations.

As in the past, every kind of support has been given to all the moral and material assistance activities for migrants. These measures of assistance have been extended to several thousands of emigrants not only through the supplying of general information but also by statistical, technical, professional or medical documentation, and by the granting of interest-free loans for the ocean voyage, etc.



lies who were victims of the catastrophe of Marcinel-le.

The Giunta, apart from other such donations given through the missionaries to the sons of our emigrants, has seen to the adoption of the small parish of Bun Duong in Southern Viet-Nam with the intention of demonstrating, despite its limited means, its feelings of Christian brotherhood for these populations, so ill-fated yet so attached to our Catholic Faith.

During the past year, contacts with the Italian authorities have been intensified with remarkable results: the Foreign Ministry has given maximum support to the family reunion scheme promoted by the Giunta, and it has made a decisive contribution to the opening of the Giunta's offices in Egypt.

The Giunta, as requested by the above-mentioned Ministry, has made a valuable contribution to the study of the Vanoni plan and of the new set of emigration laws. The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, on its part, has extended to the emigrants assisted by the Giunta the same rights and facilities which are granted to those assisted by ICEM and has issued administrative directives to all its branch offices to act accordingly.

The Activity of the P.O.A. and of the ONARMO.

- 1) Within the limits and in accordance with



the provisions of the Apostolic Constitution "Exsul Familia" the P.O.A. has given all possible assistance to individual prospective worker emigrants and to their families still in the homeland waiting and hoping to be able to join them.

2) In order to obtain the most complete and prompt reunion of families temporarily separated by emigration, and in response to the new impetus given to the economic and moral programs by the International Catholic Migration Commission, technical measures have been adopted to help achieve this aim by taking advantage of the travel allowances granted by the Catholic Loan Fund to emigrants and their families.

3) This work greatly benefitted from the intensified pace of exchange of news between families and emigrated workers, personal news and practical instructions to enable the interested persons to benefit from the various provisions made in their favor by the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy and the governments interested in migration, and particularly by the Intergovernmental Committee (ICEM).

4) Great care was also taken by the P.O.A. to protect the economic interests in Italy and abroad of the Italian migrants and consequently of their families still in the homeland: all the more so whenever disasters or fatal accidents occurred to workers. Special and immediate measures were thus adopted in favor of the families of the workmen who were



killed in the mine of Marcinelle (Belgium) and in similar cases, thus showing to the stricken families immediate and tangible evidence of the Church's affectionate and brotherly understanding.

5) In the same way immediate and continuous assistance was given to the migrants in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt whose repatriation became necessary as a result of the critical political and military situation which had developed in those countries.

6) The service of moral, religious and social assistance has been maintained and improved by special staff at the emigrants' centers in the railway terminal in Rome (where a special chapel has been equipped for religious services for emigrants, railwaymen and travellers). The same has been done in Genoa, Milan Palermo, Naples, etc., where in the emigrant centers by order and agreement with the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare our correspondent assistance organization ONARMO, has taken over the supplying of food.

#### Assistance of the Patronato ACLI

Regarding the Christian Associations of Italian Workers (Associazioni Cristiane Lavoratori Italiani (ACLI) the Patronato has been specially appointed to assist emigrants both in Italy and abroad.

The Patronato ACLI is, in fact, particularly well qualified for this kind of assistance. It was



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officially recognized by the ministerial decree of December 29, 1947, published in the Gazzetta Ufficiale of January 7, 1948, as the organization of assistance and protection of the Italian workers, to obtain for them acknowledgement of their social rights.

The Patronato ACLI carries on its activities free of charge to the benefit of all workmen without any distinctions whatsoever.

Regarding emigration the Patronato does not promote movements. It does not interfere with the proper tasks of the State which are the responsibility of duly-appointed central and local agencies. But the Patronato is an organization of assistance to emigrants in all the matters concerning the emigrant himself: for information he may need, for fulfillment of the formalities required of him, for all useful or necessary preparations and especially for everything concerning his social welfare for which the Patronato is especially designed and has particular competences.

Since at present the Patronato has 92 provincial branch offices in Italy and 8,000 Secretariats scattered all over our country, it is easy to realize the importance of such an organization merely in the field of emigration.

In fact everywhere in Italy a worker who intends to emigrate may address the offices of the



Patronato and receive from them all kinds of advice, help and assistance, and the same help is extended to the emigrant worker who returns home and to his family in cases of matters pending with the various organizations and social institutions (either Italian or foreign) or with the worker's employer, concerning the reimbursement of credits, the settling of the worker's insurance status, the collection in their behalf of indemnities due to them, obtention of documentation, and so forth.

The Patronato ACLI provides the following services, among others:

- a) delivers news and information on the emigration possibilities for various countries, confining itself rigorously to the official information on the working and living conditions, the wages, the cost of living, housing conditions, social welfare measures and so on;
- b) helps the emigrants in the formalities for their emigration and in getting their documents in order;
- c) facilitates their access to the provincial labor offices, to the medical and selection commissions, to the centers of recruitment and of transportation abroad, etc., according to the norms set up for the various types of emigration and for the various countries;
- d) sends them to vocational centers so as to qualify them to meet the requirements for emigration;
- e) informs them of the various welfare and social



measures that may interest or help them, of the formalities necessary for obtaining what is available for an emigrant and for his family;

f) appeals to insurance and welfare organizations, both Italian and foreign, to defend the worker's rights and act on his behalf in case of dispute even before the courts.

In this assistance activity, it is particularly important to be in touch not only with the worker himself but also with his family in order to seize every possible occasion to act on their behalf as well as his, whether they remain in Italy or intend to join the emigrated head of the family. To this end the Patronato ACLI, on behalf and in collaboration with the Giunta Cattolica Italiana per l'Emigrazione, has created a broad information and assistance service which takes the form of loans so as to facilitate family reunion as far as possible.

Patronato ACLI assists the emigrants abroad through the organization of social secretariats. The importance of these secretariats is fundamental, for the emigrant arriving in a land unknown to him immediately finds a friend who helps him with problems little and big, a help which he may need in order to make him feel less painfully the separation from his own country. They are also of great help to those who, already established at their working place,



receive assistance and thus feel that they are not abandoned. In this way, it is possible to prevent, or at least considerably reduce, the cases not only of discontent but also of prejudice caused to our workers because of the impossibility or the difficulty they have in asserting their own rights.

These secretariats are established in places of particular importance for our emigration, and in each country are placed under the control of a Central Secretariat generally established in the capital city.

To every secretariat is attached a secretary who, according to the case and the possibilities, may have one or more collaborators.

Particularly close collaboration is also maintained with the Catholic Missions in order to give them every possible help in developing their activities and in procuring greatest possible participation of emigrants in those activities.

At present the Social Secretariats of the Patronato ACLI are operating in Belgium, France, Germany, Luxemburg, Switzerland, Canada and Venezuela.

Particular mention must be made of an initiative which the Patronato ACLI every year throughout Italy and which should be imitated also abroad. That is the "Giornata dell'assistenza sociale" (Social Assistance Day) which serves to attract to the Pa-



tronato and to its secretariats the attention of all those who follow its activities. Its purpose is also to deliver reports on the activities, and to render public data and figures on cases treated, initiatives taken, etc., so as to reinforce and vivify the ties connecting the workers and the assisted persons to the work and the efforts of the Patronato ACLI.

### Activity of the Woman in Catholic Action

The Union of the Italian women of Catholic Action in 1956 has:

- 1) visited members of ACI emigrated abroad (in Switzerland, France and Belgium), who still constitute nuclei of Catholic Action in connection with the UDACI whose publications they receive.
- 2) participated, wherever they were constituted in the activities of the Diocesan Committees for Emigration founded after the publication of "Exsul Familia".
- 3) got in touch with all the organizations dealing with emigration and in particular with the Giunta Cattolica Italiana per l'Emigrazione.
- 4) revived the interest in assistance work for emigrants through its publications and by carrying out an inquiry in the most important emigration regions for the purpose of publicizing the volume and the conditions:



- a) of emigration of women intending to reconstitute the family unit abroad;
- b) of emigration of women in search of employment.

5) published and distributed a small conversation course for the use of the women preparing to join their families abroad.

This course aims at giving women a spiritual, psychological, hygienic and social preparation. There are additional lessons in catechism, apologetics, and the language and customs of the immigration country.

Owing to its ramifications on the parish level and to its special nature (the course includes married women and single women of more than 30 years) this work is most important and appropriate to the UDACI and will be the one to which it now devotes the major part of its activities.

These courses are already being organized in entire valleys such as Verona, in villages such as Cosenza, and in many parishes of emigration places.

6) From the reports concerning the social year (Anno Sociale) which is just over, there resulted various initiatives spread over many fields. Among them let us mention the following: meetings for the summer emigration of women workers in dioceses of Aosta; training courses for emigrants in Feltre; a special collaboration with the Diocesan Commit-



tees for Emigration in Sora, Chiavari, Cremona, Isernia Naples, Florence, Piacenza; assistance in procuring documentation in Reggio Calabria; assistance work in Caiazzo and in Como; cooperation with the ONARMO and ACLI in various emigration dioceses such as Bergamo, for instance; sending of newspapers from Ripatransone; correspondence with the emigrants in Conversano and Caltagirone; collection of emigrants' addresses in Feltre and Piacenza; assistance to the center of emigration in Genoa by a donation of one thousand rosaries for emigrants sent by the National Center; inquiries on departures from Cosenza and on repatriations from England (Muro Lucano); preparation of a training course for hotel service in Concordia. Verona sent Christmas greetings to all emigrants of the diocese.

This year, however, the work in favor of emigrants has been marked by orientation and coordination on a national level in accordance with the aims and possibilities of the associations cooperating on the diocesan and parochial levels with the Committees depending on the Ecclesiastical Authorities and giving all possible help with a fervent good will in answer to local needs.

#### Activities of the Girls' Division of Catholic Action

For many years the Girls' Division of Catholic Action has been deeply interested in emigration,



especially that of girls and particularly from the point of view of their moral, spiritual and social preparation. The activity in this field is a double one:

- a) abroad, wherever emigrant Italian girls are found;
- b) in Italy, for girls who intend to emigrate.

In 1956 intense activity has been developed abroad, where 86 associations of Giovane Femmine (young girls) of ACI were organized:

38 of them in Europe (France, Switzerland, Belgium, Luxemburg, England);

3 in America (Argentina, U.S.A., Canada);

39 in Africa (Libya, Egypt, Eritrea, Somalia);

5 in Australia (Victoria, Queensland, South Australia);

One in Asia (Syria).

The person responsible for emigration on the Central Council has visited all the Girls' Associations of ACI in Libya, France and Belgium. In Switzerland there is a permanent delegate who is in charge of assistance to the Italian girls who emigrate there.

In the Italian dioceses the Girls' Division of Catholic Action prepares leaders for the training militants by giving courses of moral, religious and social instruction.



For these courses, three particularly appropriate publications have been issued in 1956: "Lavoro in terra straniera" ("Work in a Foreign Land") for emigrants in general; "Disporsi al servizio" ("Ready for Service") for hotel employees; "Apostola tra le operaie" ("Apostolate among Workers") for the workers.

The results, as already mentioned above, are most positive, for they enable every girl participating in these courses to become a true Christian personality, fully conscious of her responsibilities.

A "Vademecum for Emigrants" is being prepared in which more precise indications are given concerning what emigrants must do before they leave, during the journey, on their arrival and during the period of their emigration. It will also contain useful information concerning the land of immigration.

#### Activity of the Italian National Committee of the Girls' Protection Society.

The National Committee, with headquarters in Rome, unites and coordinates the activities of 72 Provincial Committees.

Their activity is carried on by Parochial Delegates in the large centers and by correspondents in small villages. These constitute the link between



the Committees and the outlying areas with an efficient convergent and divergent action.

In order to fulfill its purposes the Association has secretariats, homes, accommodations for families, offices in railway stations, etc.

Speaking in figures this complex work may be summed up for 1956 as follows:

Girls given shelter: 94,168 (among whom 10,855 were foreigners from all parts of the world); this means 294,804 night accommodations.

Girls assisted in railway stations: 163,473.

Girls assisted in refreshment centers operated by the Committee, and in miscellaneous other ways: 10,195.

Employment office: cases assisted: 18,768.

Secretariats: cases assisted: 132,039.

And now a few examples of the various tasks carried on by the above-mentioned agencies:

a) Secretariats: Their purpose is to remain in touch with social security or administrative bodies, with Ministries and organizations; to take all necessary measures to place young girls in special institutions (such as orphanages, institutions for re-education or maternity homes for pregnant girls, etc.); to put the employment service into action to limit



the often unscrupulous practices of certain agencies; to gather information (sometimes also required from abroad) on the moral conduct of the families who have offered employment to immigrants (as nurses, governesses, etc.); to carry on correspondence in order to announce in advance to other Committees the arrival of a certain girl at a certain time and place, or in order to get in touch with the parents of girls who ran away from home and found shelter at the "Protezione della Giovane". The latter cases, which unfortunately occur daily, are brought to our attention by our assistants in the railway stations or by the Police.

b) Hostels: In these are housed for temporary stays girl students, teachers, Italian or foreign tourists, either individuals or groups that are for a brief period away from their usual place of residence, and this for various reasons (competitive examinations, search for a job, vacation, studies, etc.).

c) Homes: These open to girls without families or who are compelled to live for a long time away from home for reasons of study or work.

d) Station offices: The assistance in railway stations, in certain road-stations and in some ports is assured by Station Assistants or with a limited service in transit centers of minor impor-



tance. Many committees provide beds in the railway stations for young girls who must pass the night at the station for any reasons (for those who missed a connection, or for abandoned youngsters pointed out by social workers or railwaymen, or for girls of dubious background).

The task of the station agents is to provide information and advice of various kinds when requested; to look - at the arrival of a train - for lone girls who look young and uncertain, who might easily be attracted by offers of any kind; to direct the young travellers to the Protection lodging centers; to be ready, on being informed of their arrival, to receive those arriving from other cities.

Generally the information is sent from the correspondents at the place of departure to the proper Committees and is transmitted by these in due time to the place of destination.

The assistance in border stations is being developed more and more and is receiving special attention since it constitutes the beginning of the assistance to departing emigrants. In fact it frequently happens that women arriving at the border on their way to join the rest of their families have to spend a few days there unexpectedly because some of their documents are missing or not in order.

At the Brenner border and in Vintimiglia the-



re exist assistance centers with hostels; others exist in Chiasso, Domodossola and Tirano. Everywhere these travellers are helped to vanquish obstacles of a bureaucratic nature, they are comforted and reinvigorated, they are given shelter whenever it seems necessary or convenient for them to stay overnight. For convenience married women and children also receive this border assistance, contrary to the general rule.

Particular mention should be made of the organization which was consolidated in 1956 at Ponte Chiasso on the initiative of the Committee of Como which created a local sub-committee.

Many Italian women daily cross this border to work in Switzerland and return every evening to Ponte Chiasso. So the dormitory created by the Protection Society has been most useful, as is also the possibility, offered to those who wish it, of getting warm meals. This form of assistance is of great moral value since it is meant to reduce and, in time we hope, to suppress the noxious activities of those dangerous elements who try to entice young girls into dubious places by offering them hospitality.

#### Assistance to Emigration

Young girls emigrating abroad are assisted at the Center of Departure where information, advice and



itineraries are given them, and notification of their arrival is sent ahead to transit stations whenever necessary. Then the above-mentioned border assistance enters into action and contacts with the corresponding organizations abroad are taken up.

A few months ago, there was established in London a Secretariat of the Girls Protection Society dependent on the Italian National Committee. This was done in order to offer direct and effective assistance to the numerous girls recruited in England as servants or laboring women. The satisfying results obtained after the first experiment favorably looked upon by the Italian civil and religious authorities has led to give this organization a permanent status, though this was not an easy matter.

Its moral and social value is most obvious: for these girls travelling to a foreign country whose language they do not or only insufficiently know, and whose customs, climate and food are so different from their own, it is most encouraging to be expected at the station by our assistants.

It is a great comfort to them to know they may appeal to persons who will understand both their material and spiritual needs and who are ready to give them advice and assistance.

Accompanied to one of the hostels or to their place of work, guarded and protected in all



circumstances, they will hear the voice of their homeland that reaches out to its daughters even beyond its borders.

Complementary Assistance is organized to different degrees according to the possibilities of the local Committees and to local needs.

Some of these are, for instance: recreational occasions or regular meetings of homogeneous groups (servants coming from the same districts of Sardinia, Venice, etc. - nurses who were trained at the same school and who are working far from their place of origin); courses of professional training in knitting, sewing, etc.; general instruction for semi-illiterates; series of discussion groups led by the spiritual assistant.

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