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**PALESTINE REFUGEES—
AID WITH JUSTICE** ★

**AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES**

A Report on the Consultation on the Palestine Refugee Problem jointly convened by the member churches of the World Council of Churches in the Middle East and the Council's Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service, at Nicosia, Cyprus, September 29 - October 4, 1969

**WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
GENEVA**

PREFACE

The First Beirut Conference on Arab Refugee Problems took place in May 1951, three years after the 1948 war. The Cyprus Consultation of September/October 1969 took place two years after the "June War". (The Second Beirut Conference which reported on the 5 years work from 1951 took place in 1956.) It is, I think, valuable to compare the first Beirut Conference with the Cyprus Consultation.

The initiative in the Beirut meeting was a request from the Near East Christian Council, at that time a body representing missionaries, Evangelical churches and other western Christian organizations working in the Near East. The initiative for the Cyprus Consultation was a request in November 1968 from an Emergency Committee that had been set up immediately after the June war, its membership was composed of the Division of Refugee Work of the Near East Council of Churches, by now entirely a council of the indigenous churches in the Near East (with one exception, all Evangelical), and members of the Inter-Church Aid Committee of Syria and Lebanon, which included Orthodox, and Evangelicals, together with some delegates from the East Jordan area committee for refugee work, the President being Metropolitan Elias Kurban of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch.

The Beirut Conference was jointly sponsored by the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council, at that time two separate bodies with an understanding that ecumenical Christian service outside Europe should normally be the responsibility of the International Missionary Council. The participation of the World Council of Churches in the sponsorship of the Beirut Conference was in fact one of the first steps by which the refugee and service work of the World Council of Churches developed from an almost entirely European concern to a world-wide operation.

The Cyprus Consultation was jointly sponsored by the Middle East member churches of the World Council of Churches acting through the Emergency Committee and the Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service of the World Council of Churches (into which the International Missionary Council had been integrated in 1961).

The places in which the two meetings were held are also significant. In 1951, it was possible to bring together those concerned with the Palestine

refugees in the capital city of an Arab country, for the Arabs in Israel were a small minority of the Palestinians. In 1969, the only place in which it was possible to bring together those concerned with the Palestinian refugee problem as a whole, both with those who had taken refuge in neighbouring Arab lands and with those in Israel or in Israeli-occupied areas, was the island of Cyprus.

There is a significant difference in the membership of the two meetings. This report contains a complete list of the membership of the Cyprus Consultation. At Beirut in 1951 there were 73 delegates, observers and consultants. Of these only 19 were indigenous to the Near East, 14 being Orthodox and 5 being Evangelical. Of the remaining 54, 31 were resident in the Middle East either as church leaders, missionaries or workers with Near East branches of Christian organizations such as Lutheran World Federation YMCA and YWCA. Twenty-three came from outside the area. Of the total of 54 "Westerners", all but 2 were either American or British; the 2 significant exceptions being Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, then the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, and the late Miss Sarah Chakko of India, so far the World Council of Churches' only woman-President. Apart from a seminar on forms of relief needed by the different Arab communities, in which 6 people from the Middle East and the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem took part, both the speakers and the chairmen of all the plenary sessions were Anglo-Saxon; as were the chairmen of the four working parties.

The Cyprus Consultation report shows the much greater extent to which both participation and the leadership in the Consultation came from members of the Middle Eastern churches themselves, and also that the smaller proportion of people non-resident in the area came from a much wider range of countries including both East and West Germany, France, Bulgaria, Scandinavia, and Australia.

The first Beirut Conference was greatly concerned with forms of relief and the role of voluntary agencies in relation to the United Nations organization for Palestine refugees, UNRWA. By 1969, these patterns of relationship had been clearly worked out and did not require detailed consideration. However, the Cyprus Consultation, like the Beirut Conference, still had to call on the Christian churches to urge their governments to give whole-hearted support to UNRWA.

A major concern in Beirut was the co-ordination of the Christian relief and rehabilitation work which was being carried out by a number of committees that had sprung up, due to fine local initiative, in the different areas in which the Palestinian refugees found themselves after the 1948 war. It proposed that this co-ordination should be carried out through the Near East Christian Council and the United Missionary Council of Syria and Palestine. From this decision grew the NECC Committee for Refugee Work to whom responsibility for all the ecumenical work for the Palestinian refugees was entrusted up to the June war of 1967, and again entrusted from the winding up of the Emergency Committee as an operating body in November 1968 until the Cyprus Consultation. The Cyprus Consultation recommended the continuation of the system of working through the local Area Committees, urging them to make their membership more widely

representative. However, for the co-ordination of the work as a whole, it called for the creation of a new Near East Ecumenical Committee for Refugee Work in which the Near East Council of Churches Division of Refugee Work, representatives of all area committees, and representatives of member churches of the World Council of Churches in the area who were not members of the Near East Council of Churches, i.e. Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches, would be invited to participate as members.

The concluding words of the 'Forward' to the Beirut Conference are, "This report is published for the information it gives on a forgotten problem and as a spur to Christian action. It is not a record of things done but an idea of things that must be done." The Cyprus Consultation was also concerned with the problem, not so much as one that was forgotten, but one that was not adequately known and understood by Christians throughout the world, especially in the West. It therefore called for the establishment of an Information Office, and a major interpretation programme to churches outside the Middle East, while at the same time calling upon the churches and related agencies in the Middle East to establish a more organized system by which the churches in the Middle East would themselves contribute financially to the ecumenical programme for the Palestinian refugees.

Both in 1951 and in 1969, consideration was given to the fundamental causes of the problem and to possibilities of the solution. In 1951, there was a greater hope than in 1969 that United Nations action would be able to find some settlement of the "outstanding political differences between the Arab States and Israel" and stated its conviction that until this took place, there could be no permanent solution of the problem of the Palestinian refugees. The Cyprus Consultation reflected the general tendency of today's world thinking, not only Christian, that there could be no peace without social justice and remarked that all the ecumenical work of compassion "should be done in the context of the struggle for a just solution". It headed its proposal for a two million appeal over two years with the statement that the new programmes to be carried out as a result of this appeal should be "in support of the self-respect and individual dignity of the Palestine refugees and displaced persons".

Finally, the Cyprus Consultation recorded the growing "awareness of the reality of a Palestinian community, and manifestation of a Palestinian identity" as a development that had been accelerated enormously through the June 1967 war and the events that followed it. It is perhaps significant that the official title adopted in Beirut was "A Conference on Arab Refugee Problems", while that adopted at Cyprus was "A Consultation on the Palestine Refugee Problem".

The Cyprus Consultation was not a general review of the whole Palestine and Middle East problem, nor was an attempt made to enlarge its membership so as to include representatives of all the different views held by Christians on this problem. It was a working consultation of Christians concerned in the ecumenical programme for Palestine refugees, and in Cyprus, as in Beirut, it was seen that it was impossible to consider justly or even effectively, programmes of relief and rehabilitation without taking into account the sufferings and aspirations of the Palestine refugees whom the ecumenical programme was designed to help.

Naturally the statement and recommendations of the Cyprus Consultation commit only those who took part in it. The official statements to which the World Council of Churches was committed up to the time of the Cyprus Consultation, concluding with the eight-point Middle East Statement adopted by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches in Canterbury, August 1969, are included as an appendix to this report.

This report concludes, however, with the text of the actions taken by the Divisional Committee of the Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service of the World Council of Churches when it considered the Statement and Recommendations of the Consultation, at its meeting in Geneva in December 1969.

Not everyone, and indeed not all Christians, will agree with all that is in the Consultation Statement and Recommendations and the various addresses given to the Conference and contained in this Report. They are, however, commended to all Christians and indeed to all men of goodwill, to study for a deeper appreciation of the more than twenty-year long sufferings of the Palestine refugees. I would commend especially that this document be read with the text and quotation from a Father of the Church, with which the Consultation began its Statement and Recommendations, in mind.

"Each one, as a good manager of God's different gifts must use for the good of others the special gift he has received from God."

(I Peter IV : 10 New American Translation)

"Anything that happens anywhere is the affair of the total congregation."

(St. Ignatius of Antioch)

CONSULTATION STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

I Peter 4:10

"Anything that happens anywhere is the affair of the total congregation." Saint Ignatius of Antioch

It is in this spirit of service and oneness that for 21 years, Christians of the Middle East supported by their brethren all over the world have been carrying on a ministry of relief and rehabilitation to the Palestinian refugees.

Ecumenical Conferences on the Arab refugee problems were held in Beirut in 1951 and 1956. On September 29, 1969 - a little more than two years after the 1967 war, we assembled in Cyprus for a third Consultation on the Palestine refugee problem and the challenge it presents to the Churches of the Middle East and the world. We are grateful to our host Church, the Orthodox Church of Cyprus, and to the President and people of Cyprus, for their hospitality. Many of us have come straight from visits to Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, U.A.R. or Israel and the Israeli-occupied lands, where we had been able to see the plight of the Palestinian refugees and displaced persons for ourselves and talk with representatives of churches and governments in the countries we visited. The majority of delegates are members of the Middle Eastern churches, some of us Palestinians. The other delegates represent churches and church agencies in twelve countries outside the Middle East. We are happy to have with us as consultants, representatives of UNRWA and many Church (both Catholic and Protestant) and non-Church Voluntary Agencies engaged in refugee work in the Middle East.

The purpose of our Consultation has been:

- a) to learn for ourselves the situation of Palestine refugees since 1948;
 - the great aggravation of the situation by the War of June 1967,
 - the increased displacement of Palestinians and the displacement and evacuation of hundreds of thousands of other Arabs from their homes;
- b) to review the work of rehabilitation and relief which was entrusted to the Near East Council of Churches (then Near East Christian Council) by the first Beirut Conference and which has been carried out faithfully and effectively by the NECC and its associates through the recurring crises of the last eighteen years;
- c) to find ways for a greater involvement of the Churches of the Middle East in this work, and
- d) to define the priorities called for by the present situation.

His Beatitude the President of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios, opened our Consultation and the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, gave the opening address. We have heard reports of the work and problems of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and of the Palestine Refugee Programme of the Near East Council of Churches. We have reviewed the statements of the World Council of Churches on the Palestine refugee problem and especially the statement of its Central Committee in Canterbury, August 1969. We have studied the social and political dimensions of this problem.

As we look back on the First and Second Beirut Conferences which had expressed their shock at the plight of the refugees from Palestine, and re-read the words of the 1951 Conference Statement:

"More than three-quarters of a million Palestinian refugees have been subjected to terrible privations, lasting in many cases for a period of three years. They have suffered grievous physical and material losses, but their mental, moral and spiritual hurt has perhaps been even greater. Furthermore there is no end in sight."

we realize that in 1969 the plight of the Palestinian refugees is even worse; there has been no progress in their return to their homeland - on the contrary, hundreds of thousands more have lost their homes and so far there has been no restoration of justice and peace in the Middle East.

Through two decades the relief and rehabilitation agencies of the churches have sought to be wise stewards of the resources provided by church people in many countries for relieving the plight of the refugees and for helping them to maintain human dignity. Our work for refugees has been in close cooperation with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). The experiences of the years have deepened our awareness of the enormity of the tasks faced by UNRWA, and the competence and dedication with which it has dealt with the complex problems of the refugees.

GUIDE LINES SUGGESTED TO THE CHURCHES

Essential as programmes of relief and rehabilitation are, however, we are convinced that in themselves they are not an adequate Christian response to the injustice and misery under which the great majority of the Palestinian refugees continue to suffer, despite all the efforts of the United Nations. Nor is relief and rehabilitation alone a response to the aspirations for self-determination and nationhood of the Palestinians. We consider it our duty to call upon the churches of the world to use all their influence towards a just solution involving necessarily the recognition of the rights of the Palestinians from which alone a lasting peace could come to the Middle East. Towards this end, we suggest to the Churches the following guide lines:

There is growing awareness of the reality of a Palestinian community, and manifestation of a Palestinian identity as shown, for example, in the Palestine liberation movement. Awareness of this Palestinian identity may be a first step

towards the redress of the injustices done to the Palestinians. This means specifically that all of our work, both in humanitarian fields and in the preparation of educational and informational material, must be done not only for the Palestinians but with them.

While the statement of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches in Canterbury in August 1969 is not regarded as, in every respect, acceptable to all the members of the Consultation, we welcome it as a step forward in building understanding among the Churches of the need to work for justice to the Palestinian people.

In particular we believe, in line with the Canterbury Statement (Point 3), that in supporting the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine, without recognizing the rights of the Palestinians to self-determination, injustice has been done to the Palestinian Arabs by the Great Powers, and this injustice should be redressed.

In line with the Canterbury Statement (Point 8), we are concerned about the guardianship of the Holy Places, the status of Jerusalem, and the people of the city, and we welcome the proposal that the World Council of Churches should initiate discussions on the point.

Concerning the subject of biblical interpretation, we note with satisfaction that the Canterbury Statement (Point 7) has warned against "the misuse of the Bible in support of partisan political views."

We recognize the difficulties to be expected in any effort to vitalize the churches' work, both in the field of humanitarian service, and in the struggle for the fundamental rights of the Palestinian refugees. And with the Canterbury Statement, we pray "that our Churches will have a renewed sense of the continuing and increasing tragedy of the Palestinian refugees and other displaced persons, and of the imperative obligation of the Churches to minister to their needs and support their basic demand for justice." (Point 5)

All our work of compassion should be done in the context of the struggle for a just solution.

The Consultation requests the World Council of Churches to ask its member churches to use all their influence on their governments towards the redress of the injustice done to Palestine refugees; such redress to be based upon the principles of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Consultation welcomes the actions of the Churches' Commission on International Affairs (CCIA) in convening consultations on the Palestine problem. It recommends that further consultations be held in which Palestinians should be included and that the conclusions of such consultations be communicated to the United Nations Secretary General and to the member churches of the World Council of Churches.

The Consultation requests CCIA, working in consultation with the churches of the Middle East, and with due regard to the

guidelines stated above, to intensify regular discussions at the United Nations and with all governments concerned with influencing a political solution. It suggests that the exchanges which take place should not always remain unpublished.

The Consultation suggests that the various Divisions of the World Council of Churches should be requested to examine their programmes in order to ensure that the ramifications of the Palestine refugee question are not overlooked. For instance, the Division of Ecumenical Action could be asked to see how far it can involve itself in aspects of leadership training and appropriate youth work in the light of the specific needs of the Palestine refugees."

INFORMATION ON THE PALESTINE REFUGEE PROBLEM

We found that one obstacle to the action of the Churches throughout the world was the lack of responsible information on the Palestine refugee problem. We make therefore two recommendations:

1. We consider it an imperative obligation of all Christian Churches to use their utmost efforts through their organizations, conferences and publications, and in cooperation with the sister Churches of the Middle East, to bring out, responsibly, the facts about the Palestinian refugees and other displaced persons, and the grave injustices done to the Palestinian people, so as to help create the conditions conducive to a just solution.
2. We call upon the churches of the world, at all levels from the local congregations to national and regional councils, to promote an informed Christian discussion of the Palestine question. There must be deep understanding of the inalienable nature of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people. Our concern for justice must go forward concurrently with renewed humanitarian efforts.

REFUGEE PROGRAMMES

We have reviewed the programmes carried on at the present time through the Near East Council of Churches in the light of present needs and we have considered what further contribution the churches of the world should now be called upon to make through the Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service of the World Council of Churches. We have reached the following conclusions:

This Consultation calls upon the World Council of Churches, Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service to ask the member churches to reorder their priorities so as to provide \$ 2,000,000 for new programmes over the coming two years in support of the self-respect and individual dignity of the Palestinian refugees and displaced persons through the following urgent priority activities, listed in order of immediate need:

1. A major interpretation programme to Churches outside of the Middle East shaped and led by the Churches and people within the Middle East is urgently needed.

2. The Consultation calls upon the Near East Council of Churches' Division for Refugee Work, and the proposed successor body, to establish an information office, and a fund raising appeal to the Churches and related agencies of the Middle East in support of the Palestinian refugee programme.
3. Expansion must be given immediately to vocational school training, maternity and child welfare training, and more organized youth activity within and without the refugee camps. Special efforts are needed to train Palestinian refugees to lead and administer the Churches' Middle East refugee programme.
4. Programmes and projects must be more selective and provide increased depth of individual assistance leading to real self-help goals. Such activities would include loan programmes (for education, establishment of business and help for individual housing), employment placement, development projects (for agriculture, marketing and small industry and handicrafts).
5. More family service centres are required which will serve mothers and pre-school children, offer medical clinical services where otherwise totally lacking and which will include concern for mental health, the handicapped, the aged, and social work services.
6. There will be exceptional instances of need for a short term emergency food and material assistance programme.
7. There will be needs related to the individual urgent situations of the areas or countries concerned which will require exceptional attention, e.g. the donation of life saving medicaments which a country cannot otherwise obtain.
8. Particular attention is to be given to the especial needs of the people in the occupied territories.
9. Meanwhile programmes and projects should be studied by existing staff, or new survey reviews should be requested of government and specialized agencies (such as UN) and of university expertise.

As governments and UNRWA carry the primary responsibility for mass housing, mass feeding and public health for the Palestinian refugees, the Churches should take care not to duplicate what governments and UNRWA do.

The responsibilities placed upon UNRWA by its mandate have always far exceeded the budgetary resources placed at its disposal by the member governments of the United Nations. UNRWA now faces once again a very serious budgetary crisis which - unless it is speedily resolved by the member governments of the United Nations - will still further reduce the possibilities of UNRWA providing even a bare minimum of feeding, medical and school services for hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees and their children.

We call upon the World Council of Churches and its member churches around the world to urge the member governments of the United Nations to strengthen the hands of UNRWA and provide, without further delay, resources needed for guaranteeing UNRWA's basic programme.

PROPOSAL FOR THE FUTURE STRUCTURE OF THE WORK FOR PALESTINE
REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

In a comprehensive review of the refugee work, the Consultation has noted that since the Beirut Conferences of 1951 and 1956 many changes have occurred in the life and situation of the Palestinian refugees as well as in the life and witness of the Middle Eastern Churches themselves, particularly in the realm of ecumenical relations and commitments, as well as in their involvement in refugee work and the new insights and experiences gained thereby.

In view of all these changes, the Consultation became aware of the need for:

- 1) An overall planning and administrative committee;
- 2) Increased ecumenical involvement of the churches and Christian agencies in the Near East;
- 3) Representation of area committees on the overall planning committee;
- 4) Greater participation by the churches in the rest of the world in the refugee programme which makes claims upon the conscience of all men;
- 5) Closer collaboration with other service agencies working with the Palestinian refugees.

Therefore the Consultation recommends:

- 1 The establishment of a Near East Ecumenical Committee for Refugee Work (NEECRW), which would be composed of:
 - the membership of the existing Near East Council of Churches Division of Refugee Work (consisting of five members appointed by the Near East Council of Churches and five members appointed by the Area Committees respectively), plus one representative of any area committee not already represented in the NECCDRW;
 - two members from each of those member churches of the World Council of Churches in the area, (i.e. the "host countries" of the Palestinian refugees) which are not members of the NECC and which are willing to become members of the NEECRW.

The Near East Ecumenical Committee for Refugee Work (NEECRW) should have the authority and functions which have up till now been exercised by the NECCDRW, plus authority for the appointment of executive staff.

- 2 Continuance of the present system of working through the Area Committees.
- 3 In the composition of the NEECRW and the Area Committees the following considerations should be taken into account:
 - wider representation of Churches in the area, taking into consideration the size of the communities represented on the committees;
 - inclusion of women;
 - inclusion of youth;
 - inclusion of Palestinians;
 - attention to the appointment of persons with specialised skills and qualifications for the refugee work programme.

4. Closer collaboration with Catholic Churches and Catholic refugee service agencies, other Churches and other Christian agencies involved in refugee work in the area, through consultation and participation in committees and joint operations to whatever extent may be possible.
5. A stronger and continued support of and closer collaboration with local, international, voluntary, and inter-governmental agencies engaged in refugee work in the area.
6. A search for means of possible cooperation with Service Agencies of other faiths.

CONTINUATION PROCEDURES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE FORMATION OF THE NEAR EAST ECUMENICAL COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEE WORK (NEECRW)

The Consultation agrees to recommend that:

1. The Near East Council of Churches Division for Refugee Work (NECCDRW) should continue operations of the refugee programme until such time as the Near East Ecumenical Committee for Refugee Work (NEECRW) is formed;
2. The NECCDRW should proceed immediately, in association with the area committees, to prepare the 1970 budget;
3. It be suggested to the NECCDRW and the area committees that additional persons be invited to participate in the 1970 budget planning for refugee work;
4. A Continuation Committee be appointed by this Consultation to plan the formation of the Near East Ecumenical Committee for Refugee Work, this Continuation Committee to consist of the following persons:

Mrs. Mary Aghaby
Bishop Najib Cuba'in
Mr. Fuad Farah
Mr. Sami Habiby
Metropolitan Elias Kurban
Archimandrite Constantine Michaelides
Rev. Isbir Makdisi
Mr. George Mistkawi
Mr. Labib Nasir
Bishop Karakin Sarkissian
Bishop Saliba Shamoun
One Coptic Orthodox member from Egypt to be
appointed by EACCS

and with the Rev. Albert Isteero as Executive Secretary, Mr. Gabriel Habib as Assistant Executive Secretary and Mr. J. Richard Butler as Administrative Secretary and Convenor. (It was noted that if a member cannot attend a meeting he should name a substitute for that meeting.)

5. A target time-table be adopted as follows:
 - a) a Constitution to be drafted and proposed no later than 31 December 1969, in order that it may be studied by the Churches concerned, by the Area Committees and by the Central Committee of NECC (which meets in January 1970);

- b) further meetings as needed for review of the draft Constitution in the light of comments received, in readiness for the Triennial meeting of the NECC in April 1970, and for submission to the Churches;
 - c) early summer of 1970 be set as target date for the beginning of operations of the NEECRW.
6. The Continuation Committee in drawing up the Constitution should provide for an agency for fund-raising among Churches of the Near East for refugee work.
 7. The Continuation Committee give consideration to the procedure to be followed in communicating with the Churches on the plans for the Near East Ecumenical Committee on Refugee Work, and responsibilities of membership.
 8. The Continuation Committee in drafting the Constitution, make provision for the dissemination of information on refugees and refugee service programme and for the setting-up of an information bureau.
 9. The Continuation Committee should give attention at an early date to the location of the central office of the Near East Ecumenical Committee for Refugee Work.

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Out of its deliberations on the refugee question, the Consultation felt the need for a regional conference of Churches in the Middle East, which would enable them to give wider expression to their common task in the region. While this subject is not strictly within the scope of the Consultation, we would express a strong hope that negotiations be carried forward as soon as possible towards the establishment of such a regional conference of Churches.

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CONCLUSION

As we conclude the findings of our Consultation, we are reminded that all of our concerns for justice and peace have their beginning and ending in God. God's judgement is on all systems of men and God's grace accompanies all.

In the world of our time, which is in need of and searches for justice, the task of the church is to manifest its dynamic and committed action for "peace on earth and good will among men."

This is a time when the cause of justice is particularly at stake for the Palestinian people.

We, as Christians, commit ourselves, in obedience to God's judgement and under His merciful grace, to the full recovery of their human dignity and legitimate rights and to the redress of the injustice done to them.

We pray that God will lead the Middle East to peace in justice for the manifestation of His will for all mankind.

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ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE DIVISION OF INTER-CHURCH AID,
REFUGEE AND WORLD SERVICE, WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
ON THE REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION ON THE PALESTINE REFUGEE PROBLEM
TAKEN AT THE MEETING OF THE DIVISIONAL COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 1 - 5, 1969, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

A) REPORT OF THE CONSULTATION

The Refugee Sub-Committee suggest to the Divisional Committee the following resolutions on the report of the Consultation Statements and Recommendations

1. The Divisional Committee receives the Report of the Consultation on the Palestine Refugee Problem jointly convened by the member churches of the World Council of Churches in the Middle East and the Division, recognizes its importance for understanding the refugee situation in the Middle East, and commends for study the insights into the problem it contains.
2. The Divisional Committee refers the Recommendations headed "Guidelines Suggested to the Churches" and "Information on the Palestine Refugee Problem" from this Consultation to the General Secretariat for study and action through appropriate channels.
3. The Divisional Committee endorses the appeal to the W.C.C. and its member churches in support of UNRWA in the last two paragraphs of the recommendations on Refugee Programmes.
4. The Divisional Committee welcomes the Consultation's Proposal for the Future Structure of the Work for Palestine Refugees and Displaced Persons.
5. The Divisional Committee welcomes the recommendations of the Consultation for Continuation Procedures and Procedures for the Formation of the Near East Ecumenical Committee for Refugee Work (NEECRW), and instructs the Director and staff of the Division's Service to Refugees to cooperate with the Continuation Committee, and provide them with any assistance they may need, it being clear that the responsibility for the formation of the NEECRW and other continuation procedures remains with the Continuation Committee appointed by the Consultation.

B) THE REFUGEE PROGRAMMES OF THE CHURCHES

- 6a. The Divisional Committee accepts the recommendations of the Cyprus Consultation in its section headed Refugee Programmes that the Division urgently asks the member churches to provide \$ 2,000.000 for vital programmes over the coming two years in support of the self-respect and individual dignity of the Palestine Refugees

and Displaced Persons, and requests the Director of the Division to appeal forthwith to member churches for this support.

- 6b. The Divisional Committee accepts the 1970 Programme for Palestine Refugees and Displaced Persons in the June 1967 war amounting to \$1,041.987 and endorsed by the Near East Council of Churches' Division for Refugee Work as the first instalment in the \$ 2,000.000 appeal, and requests that the director draws the particular attention of the churches to this programme in his appeal.
7. The Divisional Committee notes with approval:
 - a) The request of the NECCDRW for the services of a Consultant to meet with the churches of the Middle East and assist them in preparing an Information and Interpretation Programme "shaped by and led by the churches and people within the Middle East" as called for in the recommendations of the Consultation held in Nicosia in September/October, 1969. The Committee requests the Director of the Service to Refugees to act, in cooperation with the Communication Department of W.C.C., in fulfilling this request.
 - b) The Initiative of the East Jordan Committee and the response of the NECCDRW in taking action leading to establishment of an information office charged with supplying to the churches of the Middle East information on the churches' programme for Palestine refugees.
 - c) The recommendation of the NECCDRW that careful study must be made of all programmes and projects currently supported through DICARWS/NECCDRW and calls this to the attention of the Consultation Continuation Committee.

MIDDLE EAST STATEMENT

adopted by the Central Committee of the
World Council of Churches, Canterbury, August 1969

"The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches reviewing the situation in the Middle East in the light of the resolution of the Uppsala Assembly and later events in the area, notes with deep concern the constant deterioration of the situation and the increasing threat of an explosion which could affect the peace of the world, adopts as its own the principles which the former Central Committee of the World Council of Churches set forth in its statement on the Middle East at Heraklion in August, 1967.

1. Recognizes that no lasting peace is possible without respecting the legitimate rights of the Palestinian and Jewish people presently living in the area and without effective international guarantee for the political independence and territorial integrity of all nations in the area, including Israel;
2. Recognizes that the great powers have special responsibility for creating the political climate and the external circumstances in which peace can be restored on the basis of the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution of November 22, 1967;
3. Believes that in supporting the establishment of the State of Israel without protecting the rights of Palestinians injustice has been done to Palestinian Arabs by the great powers which should be redressed.
4. Re-affirms that the World Council of Churches should continue to fulfil its responsibility to serve the needs of all refugees, and requests it to include in this concern both Arabs and Jews and the basic idea of legitimate free movement;
5. Welcomes the plans to convene in Cyprus in September next a consultation on "The Middle East Refugee Programme", and prays that our churches will have a renewed sense of the continuing and increasing tragedy of the Palestinian refugees and other displaced persons, and of the imperative obligations of the churches to minister to their needs and support their basic demand for justice;
6. States again its concern that basic internationally recognized human rights be observed for all people and urges the General Secretary of the United Nations to intensify his actions towards this end;
7. Suggests that the subject of biblical interpretation be studied in order to avoid the (mis)use of the Bible in support of partisan (political) views and to clarify the bearing of faith upon critical (political) questions.
8. Recommends that serious consideration be given by the appropriate department of the World Council of Churches to initiating discussions with Christians, Jews and Moslems as to the guardianship of the Holy Places, the status of Jerusalem and the people of the city.

VOICE OF FREE PALESTINE



A NEWSLETTER:
Arab American Congress
for Palestine

Feb. 1969

The Palestine National Liberation Movement (Fateh)

Its Principles:

1. Palestine is part of the Arab nation; the Palestinian people are part of the Arab population; their struggle is that of the Arabs, too.
2. The Palestinian people have the natural and legal right to Palestine. They have their independent identity and they alone have the right to determine their destiny and to hold the leading position in any matter that concerns their case without the guardianship of any power.
3. The Palestinian people are the vanguards of the Arab masses in the common struggle for liberation and survival.
4. The struggle of the Palestinian people is part of the common struggle of other nations against Zionism, colonialism, and imperialism.
5. The liberation of Palestine is a national duty in which the Arab masses participate with all their material and moral resources.
6. All plans, agreements, and resolutions dealing with the Palestinian people, issued or to be issued by the United Nations, or any group of nations, or any single nation, are considered violation of the Palestinians' right to self-determination. They are not valid, and rejected.
7. Zionism is an aggressive colonialist racist movement in ideology, goals, structure, and methodology.
8. Israel's presence in Palestine is an aggressive Zionist occupation, an imperialist expansionist base, and the Zionist state allies itself with imperialism.
9. Liberating the Holy Land and defending its sanctity are an Arab and humanitarian duty.
10. "Fateh" is an independent national revolutionary movement, Palestinian in its eruption, Arab in its depth, representing the revolutionary vanguards for the Palestinian people.
11. "Fateh" does not interfere in the internal politics of any Arab nation; likewise, it does not allow any force to interfere in its own affairs or to obstruct the struggle for liberation. It considers the Palestinian problem above all Arab conflicts and the liberation of Palestine as the first in priority.

Its Goals:

1. Liberating Palestine means destroying the Zionist structure of Israel politically, militarily, socially, ideologically, and economically.
2. Establishing an independent progressive Palestinian nation that guards the legal rights of the citizens on the basis of justice and equality, without differentiating between religions, or convictions. Jerusalem is to be the capitol.
3. Establishing a society based on knowledge and brotherhood that guarantees all the human rights of the citizens.

The Means for fulfilling these goals:

1. Armed struggle is the only and basic strategy for liberating Palestine.

2. The Palestinian people must be the foundation and the vanguards of the revolution and the Arab people must be partners in this struggle for survival.
3. The revolution must strive to give the Palestinian people the leadership in the struggle to liberate Palestine and it depends on the power of the Palestinian people and their ability to mobilize and organize their lines.
4. The revolution must endeavor to produce the Palestinian identity within the structure of the revolutionary struggle in the international arena.
5. The Palestinian popular armed revolution is the living image of armed struggle.
6. The Palestine National Liberation Movement (Fatch) is the vanguard of this revolution.
7. The basis for the continuation and the victory of the revolution depends on the unity of the Palestinian people within the framework of the Movement's principles, aims, and means.
8. The unity between the Palestinian people and the Arab masses can be achieved through the Arab people's participation in the Arab Supporting Front for the Revolution.
9. The Revolution must continue to enlarge, deepen, and fulfill the Arab Supporting Front and other friendly fronts all over the world.
10. The Revolution must strive to establish relationships with Arab and friendly nations aiming at developing the positive aspects of the positions taken by these nations regarding the Palestinian Revolution on condition that such an effort will not endanger or restrict the continuation and escalation of the armed struggle.
11. The Revolution must establish and develop contacts with the forces opposing Zionism and imperialism.
12. The Revolution must strive to convince the concerned nations in the world to stop Jewish immigration to Palestine.

What Is Israel?

This article is one of many articles that will examine various aspects of Zionist Israel. To begin such an analysis, one must first view the general framework within which the various elements of the Zionist state are enclosed. Hence one must first examine the concept and trends of Colonialism.

The traditional definition of colonialism is the extension of political and economic control over an area through the establishment of an alien European society. Settling in an undeveloped milieu (that of the natives) the European colons become the privileged masters representing modern civilization and scientific development. They look upon the natives as natural resources that can be utilized for the establishment and growth of their society. This concept of colonialism (producing a settler state society) is similar to Zionism which will be discussed in the next issue of this newsletter.

Hence, Colonialism as defined above carries within it certain characteristics that are related to the mother-nation. For example:

1. the colons may leave their country of origin because of religious, political, or civil oppression. The establishment of the United States depended on the first Puritans that escaped religious intolerance in England. Israel and its establishment were a product of the anti-semitism that raged in Europe.
2. another segment of the colons (especially the late immigrants) join the new society because of the special privileges given to them, ex. the European non-French colons in Algeria.
3. Within one generation, feelings of independence prevail over those of fear of oppression. Within one generation, the Puritans began to form their own society with its own identity away from England; in less than one generation, we began to hear in Israel "I am an Israeli" instead of "I am a Jew." We also began to hear about the necessity for Israel to give up its strict religious nature and to open the path for the new generation to choose its own way of life.
4. the colons' real intentions regarding the natives are always hidden under false slogans. They repeat endlessly that they brought with them progress and modern civilization. This was the French claim in Algeria, and in Israel we often hear "we made the desert bloom."
5. Once the natives are controlled and the issue is removed away from the scene, for a while at least, the colons begin to differentiate between the various nationalities that form the new society. In the United States, we find differentiation between Americans of Anglo-Saxon, Italian, Spanish, Polish descent, etc... In Israel, there is differentiation between oriental and European Jews, then between German, Russian, etc. Jews, and naturally between Jews, as a whole, and the non-Jewish Arabs.
6. in some cases, the colons resort to a non-European group to act as a buffer between it and the natives, In colonized Africa, the Indians and the Arabs acted as buffer; in Israel, the Oriental Jews play this part. The group that is forced to become the buffer-force in the society is usually more resentful of and more hostile to the natives than the European colons. It finds itself oppressed by the Europeans and at the same time it regards itself as superior to the natives. Thus it pours its resentment on the natives, i.e. the Indians in Kenya, and we all remember their expulsion from Kenya.

7. such colonialism cannot be limited to the area occupied by the colonialist forces, rather it becomes a constant threat to the surrounding area. In Algeria, the French occupied Tunisia and Morocco in South Africa, the English occupied Rhodesia. In Israel, the Zionist forces are calling for continuous immigration of Jews to join the new society. Land is required for all the new immigrants and occupying the surrounding countries is the only solution. To the Zionists, an "Eretz Israel" (from the Euphrates to the Nile on both sides of the Jordan River) must be established regardless of the natives that live in the desired territories.

8. This inevitable expansionism is based on philosophical, social, and economic arguments. Philosophically, the colon's society is established on the basis of the privileged nature of the Europeans and their right to exploit the region. The colon's technological and cultural superiority (as they claim) justifies their actions. This argument is first applied to the occupied area; then it becomes the motivating force for expansionism. Socially, the settler-state society is based on a strict military foundation in order to control the resisting natives. The struggle between the natives and the colon becomes a chain reaction resulting from the colon's scientific development and their sense of superiority and from the natives' weakness, their awareness of the oppression under which they live, and their refusal to submit. The colon's military strength creates great tension and interior pressure that must be released through expanding with total disregard for the indigenous population of the surrounding region. The American colonialists moved westward to release some of the pressure built in the established colonies, and with expansion, the native Indian was sacrificed. Economically, the industrial growth of the colonial society is in constant need for raw material; in Israel's case, the need is for water. There is also continuous need for markets in which the products can be sold. These pressuring demands and needs force the colon to expand on the account of the backward and weak natives.

9. the struggle for the survival of the oppressed people unites them with the threatened population around them; this then leads to material and moral support for the oppressed natives from the neighboring population. The Arabs outside of Israel are not the only ones to demonstrate this example. The Africans rose with their brothers in Rhodesia when the white minority declared their independence. They would have entered into a military struggle with the racist governments, just as the Arabs militarily faced the Zionist forces in Palestine in 1947.

10. finally, the colon society is tied to the exploitive interests of World Imperialism. In the present time, Israel allies itself with the United States.

Beside these basic characteristics that define a settler-state society, there are common developmental trends that are followed by the various colonizing societies, and Israel is no exception to them. For example:

1. these societies begin with the presence of an economic or political interest in the particular region, i.e. the East India Company in India, the Gold and Diamond Company in South Africa, the Jewish Company (as called by Herzl) later the Jewish Agency in Palestine.

2. The exploitive forces resort to a colonizing nation to occupy the desired region; usually both these forces are the same- the East India Company and England. The Zionists know the necessity for such a step, and in his Memoirs, Herzl points out that he contacted Turkey first, then Russia, and then England to convince them of his idea of a Jewish State. He had to resort to these major powers of his time because the Zionist movement had no government of its own. England finally responded positively to Herzl's demand.

3. At the beginning, the Colonizing nation and the Colons unite in the common effort of suppressing the people; often the local administration is composed of both of these forces, i.e. Rhodesia before its breaking away from England, Algeria before its independence, Palestine in the first few years of the Mandate. Very often, too, the colonizing nation uses the colons beside its main army to force the natives to submit. This did happen in Palestine and one finds information regarding England's use of the European Jewish population to suppress the Palestinians in the records of the Ministry of Colonial Affairs.

4. Once the natives are suppressed, conflict rises between the colons and the colonizing government; at first the conflict is minor, but eventually it becomes very bitter and violent, when their interests clash; i.e. the French colons in Algeria, the so-called independence of Rhodesia, the American Revolution against England, and the underground movement (Haganah, Stern, and Irgun) in Palestine against the English Mandate.

5. When one side wins the struggle (and it is usually the colons except in the Algerian case), they re-establish cordial relationship between them, i.e. South Africa, Rhodesia with England, Israel with England and the rest of Europe.

6. Once the settler state society is declared independent of the initially occupying nation, it develops its identity, its own interests, its own diplomatic relationships, and its own political structure and alliance. Though this new identity may conflict with the mother-nation, it is always in total harmony with the interests of the imperialist exploitive forces in the world, i.e. Israel's alliance with the U.S., with France during the French occupation of Algeria and the Algerian struggle for liberation.

Within this outline of the major characteristics and trends of a settler state society, one finds great applicability to the characteristics and trends that formed the State of Israel as a European settler state. In the coming newsletter, Zionism will be discussed in details and the similarity between it and colonialism will be pointed out.

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BLINKING AT THE LAW, THE STATE DEPARTMENT HELPS THE PLO

U.S. law prohibits American taxpayer funds from being given to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Yet, in apparent disregard for the law, State Department officials have been providing funding for United Nations projects which directly and indirectly aid the PLO. Says Mark Edelman, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations, the State Department has "chosen to interpret the law rather narrowly." This is a practice which he vows to change.

P.L. 97-241, enacted by Congress in August 1982 (replacing P.L. 96-60, enacted in August 1979), specifically requires that the U.S. withhold all of its share of the money that the U.S. budgets for the U.N. Committee on the Exercise for the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (Palestine Committee) and for the U.N. Special Unit on Palestinian Rights. The U.S. share amounts to 25 percent of the budgets for these committees. P.L. 97-241 also requires, according to paragraph (a)(3) of Section 104, withholding all U.S. money for "projects whose primary purpose is to provide political benefits to the PLO or entities associated with it."

The State Department claims that the U.S. has been obeying the law by working with figures supplied by the U.N. The U.S. then decides how much to withhold, although it presumably on occasion questions the accuracy of the U.N.-supplied numbers. State Department records indicate that the U.N. submitted the following figures on March 3, 1982, to Theodore Papendorp, counsellor at the U.S. Mission to the U.N.:

	(in thousands of U.S. dollars)					
	Direct Costs			Apportioned Costs		
	1981	1982	1983	1981	1982	1983
Special Unit						
for Palestinian Rights	459.0	1,187.6	645.1	62.7	143.8	78.9
Palestine Committee	59.7	39.2	32.6	263.1	529.7	440.5
Total	518.7	1,226.8	677.7	325.8	673.5	519.4

The trouble is that these figures are phony and may be deliberately misleading. Both in 1982 and 1983, the Special Unit's Regional Seminars on the Question of Palestine alone cost about \$2.5 million. Yet the

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U.N. reports only about \$500,000 in "Apportioned Costs" for 1982 and 1983. This, says Edelman, "is ridiculous, of course." The U.N.'s 1983 figure, moreover, does not include the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, a major PLO propaganda effort scheduled for August 16-17, 1983, at the Paris headquarters of the U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), expected to cost over \$5.7 million.

What is worse, the State Department so far is withholding for FY83 only the U.S. share of what the U.N. claims are "Direct Costs" of the Palestinian projects. Yet Edelman argues that the "Apportioned Costs" (all of them, not just the U.N.'s bogus figures) are definitely part of the expenses of the Palestine Committee and the Special Unit. Not to withhold the U.S. share of this money violates the law. Since the total to be spent by the U.N. for the various seminars and conferences sponsored by the Special Unit is \$8.2 million, the U.S. should be withholding at least \$2,050,000 and possibly more if other PLO "projects" in the U.N. are uncovered.

UNESCO is a case in point. According to State Department records, the U.S. withheld only \$30,659 from UNESCO last year. Yet UNESCO's own Approved Programme and Budget for 1981-1983 indicates that the total "Aid to Refugees and Liberation Movements" is at least \$8.8 million. Congress should determine how much of this is spent on the PLO--particularly considering UNESCO's strong anti-Israeli, pro-PLO record.

Why has the law been interpreted so laxly by the State Department? Why has it not closely examined the real expenditures of the Palestine Committee and Special Unit? Why has there not been a close scrutiny of other U.N. agencies regarding their PLO support? Richard Hennes, Executive Director of the State Department's Bureau of International Organizations says that the amount withheld by the U.S. for PLO activities is "largely symbolic," for it does not really prevent the U.N. from apportioning the full amount to the Palestine Committee and the Special Unit. Congress, however, did not enact the law as an empty symbol or to be enforced symbolically. For this reason, Congress should begin investigating how the State Department contributes to U.N. projects. Congress should scrutinize the whole range of help that the U.N. gives the PLO--not just through the U.N. Secretariat but through agencies such as UNESCO. And Congress should determine who is responsible for the State Department's permissive interpretation of U.S. law.

The Reagan Administration has stated clearly that it does not want to contribute to U.N. projects that violate the intent of the U.N. Charter to promote peace and respect for the territorial integrity of member states. The PLO openly is attempting to violate the territorial integrity of a member of the U.N. The American people, through their elected representatives, have declared their opposition to supporting the PLO through the U.N. Deputy Assistant Secretary Mark Edelman says that he intends to ensure that the law at last is obeyed. Congress should make sure that this is done.

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For further information:

U.N. Documents A/C.5/26/83, 4 December 1981; A/C.5/37/64, 29 November 1982; Supplement No. 49 (A/37/49); A/C.5/37/4.

Thomas G. Gulick, "How the U.N. Aids Marxist Guerrilla Groups," Heritage Foundation Background No. 177, April 8, 1982.