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WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

PROGRAMME UNIT ON JUSTICE AND SERVICE

Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service

DIRECT DIAL: (022) 91 _____

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In the past the Refugee Service address list contained mainly information on WCC-related resettlement offices and correspondents; the present list includes a number of Agencies related to us through a variety of programmes but not necessarily versed in resettlement.

We thought it would be helpful to let you have the attached list showing the degree of resettlement experience of the offices listed.

This is not to say that an office with little or no experience would not try to help if approached but merely to remind you to explain in more detail when you seek their assistance, but do not use acronyms please.

Mercedes Saitzew
Resettlement Officer

P.S. I am also enclosing for your interest a copy of a paper I presented at the Miami Consultation last September entitled "Looking Back - A Brief History".

RESETTLEMENT EXPERIENCE

Agency/Office	Fully Operational	Good	Medium	Slight	None	Remarks
AACC (Ms S Kemoli)	-	-	X	-	-	Germany WCC Athens
Argentina CAREF	-	-	X	-	-	Spain WCC, Mrs. Neopetros
CEAS	-	-	-	X	-	Indonesia ICI
Australia ACC Sydney and Melbourne	X X	- -	- -	- X	- -	Italy
Austria Vienna Inn. Mission Salzburg SERVITAS	X -	- X	- -	- -	- -	Lebanon WCC Ms. A. Paganian
Belgium CSP, Mrs Biacsko-Harts	X	-	-	-	-	Mexico CICOP
Brazil CESF	-	-	-	-	X	Netherlands Schelling (J. Williams)
Burma BCC Rangoon	X	-	-	-	-	New Zealand ICI
Canada ICCR Dr T. Clark	X	-	-	-	-	Paraguay CICR (Rev. A. Talar)
Caribbean CCC	-	-	-	-	X	Peru Id. Mech.
Chile FASIC	-	X	-	-	-	Philippines WCC
Colombia FERAL	-	-	-	-	X	Portugal CICIC
Costa Rica Episc. Church. (E. Desueza)	-	-	X	-	-	Sweden Stenlund (D. Carstenson)
Cyprus Refer to WCC Athens	-	-	X	-	-	Switzerland WCC/ICR
Ecuador CEPE	-	-	-	-	X	Taiwan WCC
Egypt Refer to WCC Athens	-	-	-	-	-	Thailand WCC (J. Burford)
France CIMADE	X	-	-	-	-	



<u>Agency/Office</u>	<u>Fully Operational</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Slight</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
<u>Germany</u>	X	-	-	-	-	
<u>Greece</u>	X	-	-	-	-	
WCC Athens	X	-	-	-	-	
<u>Hong Kong</u>	-	X	-	-	-	
HKCAR, Mrs. Neugebauer	X	-	-	-	-	
<u>Indonesia</u>	-	-	-	-	-	
CCI	-	-	-	-	-	
<u>Italy</u>	X	-	-	-	-	
<u>Lebanon</u>	-	-	X	-	-	Cooperates with WCC Athens
MECC Ms. A. Papazian	-	-	-	-	-	
<u>Mexico</u>	-	-	-	X	-	
CECOPE	-	-	-	-	-	
<u>Netherlands</u>	-	-	X	-	-	
Stichting (J. Willemse)	-	-	-	-	-	
<u>New Zealand</u>	X	-	-	-	-	
ICCI	X	-	-	-	-	
<u>Paraguay</u>	-	-	-	X	-	
CIAE (Rev. A. Ihle)	-	-	-	-	-	
<u>Peru</u>	-	-	-	-	X	
Igl. Meth.	-	-	-	-	-	
<u>Philippines</u>	-	-	-	X	-	
NCCP	-	-	-	-	-	
<u>Portugal</u>	-	-	-	X	-	
COPIC	-	-	-	-	-	
<u>Sweden</u>	-	-	X	-	-	
Diakonia (D. Carragher)	-	-	-	-	-	
<u>Switzerland</u>	-	-	X	-	-	non-operational as yet
SFH/OSAR	-	-	-	X	-	
HEKS/EPER	-	-	-	-	-	
<u>Taiwan</u>	-	-	-	X	-	
TCC	-	-	-	-	-	
<u>Thailand</u>	-	-	X	-	-	CCT is not operational in resettlement
CCT (J. Dunford)	-	-	-	-	-	



<u>Agency/Office</u>	<u>Fully Operational</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Slight</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
<u>Turkey</u>						
ICMC	X	-	-	-	-	
<u>U.K.</u>						
Christian Aid	-	-	X	-	-	
<u>U.S.A.</u>						
CWS	X	-	-	-	-	
PBF	X	-	-	-	-	
LIRS	X	-	-	-	-	
<u>Venezuela</u>						
Refugee Office	-	-	X	-	-	



Refugee and World ServiceLOOKING BACK - A Brief History

The history of refugees is the history of humanity; the progress of civilisation introduced legislations and definitions but has not been able to eliminate the causes which continue to drive desperate people from their homesteads, wrecking lives and causing untold suffering.

Within the context of the World Council of Churches the concern for refugees is rooted in the growing social conscience of the Churches, which very early on reached out beyond their traditional constituencies, first to strangers in their midst, later to the uprooted of the world.

No history of the Refugee Resettlement, however brief would be complete without a mention of at least some of these forerunners; nor can it be seen separate from the overall programme of the WCC Department of Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid. In early days emphasis was unequivocally on the reconstruction not of old structures but of new instruments of ecumenical service; before they could begin to help others many churches had to be nursed back to strength. It is salutary to remember that some of today's pillars of our work were at the receiving end in those years; it is even more salutary to add that all have repaid and continue to repay thousandfold the aid received from the ecumenical family, which true to its vocation gave its support unstintingly to all churches in need.

Resettlement Consultation, Miami
September, 1986



Mercedes Saitzew

FORERUNNERS

- 1908 The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America adopts the Social Creed of the Churches.
- 1910 At the initiative of French churches, church representatives from Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Switzerland form the "Fédération Internationale des Chrétiens Sociaux".
- 1914 First tentative contacts to the Church of Rome but the outbreak of World War I prevents a planned meeting. It also cut short a meeting of the World Alliance of Churches for Promoting International Friendship (WACPIF), most of which was spent in prayer and the despatch of cables to all European heads of state, in a desperate last-minute attempt to obviate disaster.
- 1915 WACPIF meeting in Bern; delegates from Germany, Italy and Great Britain present for the last time until the end of the war. Change of name to: World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through Churches (WAPIFC) reflected diminished membership. Provided relief for prisoners-of-war and civilian internees, legal aid involving international law.
- 1919 "Life and Work" founded in Geneva at the first post-war meeting of WAPIFC, following a call for joint Protestant action.
- 1922 The Bethesda Conference in Copenhagen assembled for the first time 75 delegates from 37 churches and church bodies from 21 European countries and passed the resolution to form "The Central Bureau for Relief of the Evangelical Churches in Europe", which was at that time at the heart of the ecumenical movement. The name was later changed to: The European Central Office for Inter-Church Aid.
- 1936 The International Christian Committee for Refugees (ICCR) is formed in London, UK. Its original task of aiding German Christian refugees of non-Aryan origin was later expanded to include Jewish and other refugees.

THE FORMATIVE YEARS

- 1939 Jan. The Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches (in the process of formation) assumes the task of calling on the churches to help alleviate the tragic plight of refugees. Priorities:

- coordination of programmes
- facilitation of emigration/immigration of refugees

An enormous task, as hundreds of thousands sought refuge from persecution and the onslaught of war in Belgium, France, Poland and other European countries. Cooperation between the agencies, churches and lay persons in Europe was very close; the American Committee for Christian Refugees provided most of the financial support.

The strong backing of the ecumenical family gave to those involved in the work the strength and the courage to persevere in their task.

1939 Feb. The Ecumenical Secretariat for Aid to Refugees (ESAR) is organised by WCCpf; the Secretariat was programatically linked to both WCCpf and ICCR.

1939 Sept. Six Christian organizations meet in Geneva to form the Emergency Committee of Christian Organizations (ECCO), working in close cooperation with the Red Cross. Within this framework the Provisional Committee of WCCpf and WAPIFC organised the "Chaplaincy Service" for Protestant and Eastern Orthodox prisoners-of-war, internees and refugees.

1944-1947 Department of Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid (DRICA) is inaugurated by WCCpf and takes over the functions of the European Central Office for Inter-Church Aid (Agreement of 19 April 1944). The Ecumenical Secretariat for Aid to Refugees is attached to DRICA, which thus became the first WCC instrument of ecumenical fellowship and sharing.

The Refugee Division is established by WCCpf. The Division is governed by the Ecumenical Refugee Commission and incorporated in DRICA. Agreement signed with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA) and later with the International Refugee Organization (IRO).

Priorities



- Christian ministry and welfare to refugees in countries of first asylum, in cooperation with local churches and churches in exile.
- Promotion of overseas resettlement for displaced persons/refugees under the mandate of IRO and the participation of UN (Refugee Division).
- Advocacy for the recognition by IRO and the subsequent resettlement of refugees from ex-enemy satellite countries: Hungary, Roumania and others (WCCpf Refugee Commission).
- Aiding churches in Germany and Austria with the local integration of expelled refugees of German origin; the probability of overseas resettlement of so many millions having been a priori dismissed. (WCCpf Refugee Commission).
- Welfare and spiritual care in countries of resettlement, usually undertaken by churches and agencies in countries of reception with or without financial contributions from WCC.

The formative period of the WCC and of its Refugee Commission thus came to a close and the new era began with the apparently sheer impossible task of ensuring a future for 16 million homeless people.

FROM ASSEMBLY TO ASSEMBLY

- 1948 **FIRST ASSEMBLY - AMSTERDAM.** In a remarkable Resolution the Assembly recalled that aid to Jewish refugees was at the origins of the Refugee Division and that the churches therefore noted with deep concern the extension of the refugee problem to the Holy Land where no less than 350,000 Arabs and other refugees were waiting for help. Recognizing the need for the extension of its Mandate beyond Europe and the Near East DRICA appealed to the churches to make the millions of uprooted people in the Far East part of their compassion and giving.
- 1949 The Department of Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid became The Department of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees (Central Committee in Chichester).
- 1950 The Church World Service Displaced Persons Operation in Europe was integrated with the Refugee Division of the WCC. Agreements were signed also with the UK-based Christian Reconstruction in Europe and a number of other agencies.
- 1951 Conferences in Belgium and Germany to assess the spiritual and material needs of Orthodox refugee communities in Europe.
- 1951 Conference on Palestinian refugees in Beirut.
- 1951 Inauguration of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.
- 1952 Closure of IRO.
- 1952 Formation of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) and introduction of travel loan funds. TL agreements were signed between ICEM and WCC.
- 1952 Inauguration of "The President's Escapee Programme", later U.S. Escapee Programme. Originally limited to Eastern European refugees, the programme now provides various benefits to refugees of different nationalities resettling in the USA, as well as emergency assistance to new refugees in European countries of transit.

Programmes

Resettlement of and various assistance to refugees in Europe, Far and Middle East.

Sponsorship schemes are set up by the churches. First in the USA and some years later in New Zealand in accordance with their respective immigration laws; the churches in Australia and Canada set up sponsorship schemes for refugees who because of age or some other handicap could not meet the criteria of governmental immigration programmes. In the seventies the churches in Belgium started the first sponsorship scheme in Europe.

Service to Refugees opens its own travel loan fund (WCCFRTLTF) for persons ineligible for ICEM assistance.

1952 Beginning of the WCC resettlement programme for refugees of Russian and Turkish origin in China. The programme which ended in December 1985 was implemented by resettlement office in Hong Kong in cooperation with UNHCR and ICEM. Of the 22,226 persons assisted the bulk went to Australia; a smaller group of 1883 Russian "Old Believers" moved to WCC/UNHCR farming projects in Latin and Central America and the rest repatriated to Turkey. Changes in international policy later allowed Chinese relatives to be resettled together with the principal applicant. Numerous couples who had divorced to enable the European spouse to emigrate were later reunited abroad.

1952 Beginning also of the first WCC refugee programme in Latin and Central America (Caribbean) with offices or correspondents in 11 countries. During their 15 years of service and Christian witness these offices assisted 12,000 refugees from Eastern Europe, the Far and Middle East to resettle in Latin and Central America. During the same period 3,000 persons were helped to emigrate from this region to other continents. Jointly with UNHCR and other agencies several Old People's Homes were built and lifetime annuities purchased for a number of aged and handicapped refugees.

1954 **SECOND ASSEMBLY - EVANSTON.** While at Amsterdam the Department was identified with a concern for Europe, at Evanston the Division was identified with a concern for the whole world.

The first outreach outside Europe took place in the refugee field, notably in Africa and Asia where according to a 1955 report "churches shouldered new burdens due to diminished material resources, wholly new political and social structures to which in recent times has been added the additional burden of refugees".

The Department of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees became a Division of the World Council of Churches.

In the Assembly Work Book the statement that "the best solution for many homeless foreigners is migration" is followed by stressing the essential role of voluntary action in local integration of refugees in their countries of actual residence because "this may become the biggest long-term commitment of the Division in this field".

Authorized DICASR and in particular the Service to Refugees to work in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Approved the continuation of S/R work in Europe and the Near East.

Programmes

Resettlement and various assistance to refugees in Africa, Asia, Europe, Far and Middle East and Latin America.

The October 1956 uprising in Hungary mobilised all resources of the Service to Refugees, in particular of its Resettlement Desk. By the end of 1960 the S/R had completed the bulk of the work with 28,000 resettlements and over 1,000 local integrations to its credit. The movement of over 2,000 Hungarians from Yugoslavia laid the foundation for the still existing small resettlement programme for Eastern European and other refugees in Belgrade.

- 1959- WORLD REFUGEE YEAR. At the request of the churches a World Refugee
1960 Year Work Book was compiled, containing projects to be carried out by the S/R, and projects for homeless people not under the mandate of UNHCR to whom the churches are being called to minister. Almost five million dollars were raised, of which half was credited to S/R projects and the other half used to help homeless people in Asia and the Middle East. Also thanks to the appeal of WRY many refugees who after repeated rejections had given up all hope suddenly saw their dreams of resettlement fulfilled. The goodwill generated in WRY outlived its appointed term, opening new possibilities for even the most difficult-to-resettle refugees.



- 1961 THIRD ASSEMBLY - NEW DELHI. The Report on Divisional operations stated that "the largest programme is that of the Service to Refugees", which indeed it was with a strong central structure in Geneva, 35 field offices in different parts of the world and several correspondents.

It was noted that the gravity of the refugee situation had shifted from Europe and the Middle East to new focal points in Central Africa; India and Pakistan; Latin and Central America; Vietnam. Churches were invited to intensify their efforts to help refugees as individually appropriate: to repatriate; to establish themselves where they are; to resettle elsewhere.

The Division was authorized to maintain an appropriate Service to Refugees and continue its cooperation with UNHCR and other related bodies; to submit to church funding agencies requests for the financial support of refugee projects; to provide services of consultation and advice to member churches rendering ministry to refugees in their midst.

While affirming the impartiality of the Service to Refugees, the Assembly encouraged an even closer cooperation with the Church Commission on International Affairs (CCIA) so "that the practical work of the churches through Service to Refugees may be matched by responsible representations of Christian judgements in the areas where political decisions are taken".

The name of the Division was changed to: The Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service (DICARWS) to mark the worldwide awareness of refugee needs.

Between 1964 and 1966 a Special Refugee Committee examined the work of the DICARWS. The report accepted in November 1966, gave the following definition of refugees whom it believed should be the responsibility of churches to assist through a centrally administered or coordinated refugee programme:

"People in urgent need, who have voluntarily or involuntarily abandoned their homes without prospect of return because of persecution or privation for political, religious, racial or economic reasons of destitution from war, revolution, and national (sic) disaster."

The report also recommended a more international focus, decentralization, a change of activities - reducing some, terminating others - and advocated assistance through S/R to certain categories of migrants. This last however raised serious questions for the churches, resulting in the creation of the Secretariat for Migration. The new non-operational Secretariat was mandated to assist member churches in all parts of the world in their responsibilities towards people on the move, be they temporary migrant workers or permanent immigrants/emigrants.

The ensuing 1966/67 revision of the New Delhi mandate firmly removed near-refugee migrants from the S/R Agenda, curtailing the resettlement operation which had previously included victims of earthquakes and persons from guerilla-stricken areas in Greece, returnees of mixed Dutch/Indonesian origin in the Netherlands and many others in refugee-like situations.

Programmes

In the period between New Delhi and the next Assembly in Uppsala (1961-68) DICARWS encouraged and helped national and regional churches and councils to take over the direct administration of the refugee work in their areas.

Africa

The first to respond were the African churches which through AACC and the Special Ecumenical Programme for Emergency Action on Africa (EPEAA) assumed full coordinating responsibility for the refugee operation in Africa. A small number of African refugees were resettled in other continents.

Asia

In Asia the programmes were carried out by or in cooperation with: NCC/CASA who administered projects for refugees from East Pakistan. The NCC/Relief Committee (1961-1969) shared the responsibility for the "Sharan" programme for Tibetan refugees. The Bengal Refugee Service (NCC/WCC/CWS) (1961-1965) which was involved in various programmes, crowned its work by resettling 8,000 refugee-squatters from Calcutta.

All programmes covered emergency aid, scholarship, medical aid, child care and, where appropriate the wherewithal for local integration.

The Asian Christian Service and the Vietnam Christian Service provided medical care and public health teams for refugees in temporary camps and permanent settlements.

The Resettlement scheme for Christian and ethnic minorities in Burma was inaugurated in consultation with the Burma Christian Council. Emigration from various other points in Asia continued.

Europe

Field offices in Austria, FRG, the Netherlands, and Sweden were incorporated in local church structures; In some countries the emphasis shifted further from resettlement to local integration. Pre-1967 projects included a small housing estate in Macedonia and other assistance for Greek returnees from the USSR. Further "Housing with Care" projects and social centres were compiled for elderly and often handicapped refugees.

Spanish churches inaugurated programmes for Cuban refugees in transit to the USA.

Resettlement of Eastern European refugees considerably declined after 1960.

Near East

Assistance programmes and increased resettlement via Lebanon reflected the growing harassment of Christian minorities in the neighbouring countries.

Latin and Central America

Saw refugees arriving and departing. A special feature was the second resettlement of elderly and handicapped refugees who had not been able to build up a new existence. Some joined relatives in other continents, a few were moved to Old People's Homes.

Fraternal Workers Scheme of young students mainly from the USA and Great Britain made a significant contribution towards the local integration of refugees. Many a young man and young woman remained lifetime friends of refugees whose homes they had helped to build.

1968

FOURTH ASSEMBLY - UPPSALA.

Related refugee situations to human rights issues, called for their universal recognition, for justice and a greater spirit of reconciliation.

Welcomed the closer relationship and at times common action with the Church of Rome since the Second Vatican Council.

Mentioned the increased channeling of government funds through church agencies which additional to the USA is now practiced also in FRG, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Sweden.

Referred to the "population explosion" and its relevance to development; the increasing importance of the latter also in relation to refugee work. (Development Decade of UN; World Food Programme).

Discussed the pattern of response to human need and the role of the Division in both developed and developing countries.

Underlined the common awareness that action by and through churches must combine the prophetic element with technical competence.

Called upon the churches to maintain their efforts to aid refugees and requested the Division to strengthen its work through a flexible centrally organised operation, cooperation with local church partners and the encouragement of initiatives to meet needs in an imaginative and pioneering way. Thus there was given to the Division's Refugee Programme a renewed and strengthened mandate for its activities in different parts of the world.

Programmes

Africa

The Refugee Department of the Special Ecumenical Programme for Emergency Action on Africa (EPEAA) was transferred to AACC which reported that relics of old structures and new inter-African conflicts were responsible for new waves of refugees. Neither the end of the Sudan conflict nor the modest reflux due to decolonisation had been able to reduce the problem to any appreciable extent.

1972: evacuation of Asians expelled from Uganda. Canada and a few other countries visaed over 2,000 persons on the spot and arranged transportation. The not immediately resettlable were airlifted to Europe to await emigration or local integration, both of which were completed by the end of 1974.

1974: political changes in Ethiopia added enormously to the already large refugee population of Africa and to the work of church bodies in countries of asylum. It was in this connection that African states for the first time appealed to the international community to accept a fair share of these refugees for resettlement outside Africa. The USA, followed by Canada and Australia responded by introducing annual immigration quotas first for Ethiopians, later also for other African refugees.

Asia

Christian Services continued their medical programmes in Indochina. A small group of Moslem Turkestani refugees in Srinagar, Kashmir received educational aid.

1971: the Pakistan war, which led to the creation of Bangladesh produced masses of homeless. A generous response to the 8 million dollars appeal launched by WCC enabled CASA in India and CCDB Bangladesh to assist these refugees during transit and facilitate their integration in the new country.

1975: saw the end of the war in Indochina and the inauguration of a gigantic resettlement scheme, which began with the airlift of 140,000 Vietnamese refugees to the USA.

The Church of Christ in Thailand through its border communities and using its own funds provided emergency relief - rice and medicine - to refugees from Laos, pending the outcome of negotiations between UNHCR and the government of Thailand. WCC took over the funding of expanding programmes which meanwhile cover several camps for refugees from Laos and CCT pursues its appointed task undeterred: rebuilding what had been destroyed by fire and adapting the work to frequent changes of location and not less frequent changes of governmental policy.

A smaller but increasingly worrying item was the steadily growing number of Karen refugees from Burma, who have no refugee status, no chances of emigration or of an adequate integration in Thailand. They depend entirely on the aid from churches and the Karen communities in Thailand.

Europe

1968: The post-Uppsala period opened on the aftermath of the Soviet Intervention in Czechoslovakia and a new wave of refugees to Western Europe, which has not ceased to this day.

1975: Decolonisation of Angola, the Cap Verde and Mozambique brought over 600,000 persons to Portugal. Although officially known as "retornados" in truth many of them were born in Africa and had never set foot in Portugal before. Whether white, of mixed origin or black they all needed assistance with their integration in a country which was going through a particularly difficult political and economic stage. The Protestant churches with the help of WCC and its ecumenical fellowship gathered to help jointly with the government and other agencies. The Centre in Figueira da Foz was turned into a reception and counselling centre, first for the "retornados", later for refugees from Latin America.

Once a continent of emigration and local integration, Europe became a continent also of documented immigration when governmental quotas were announced first for Asian refugees from Uganda, later for refugees from Latin America and Indochina.

New features of the resettlement operation to and from Europe were:

- the introduction of Third Country Programme processing for Armenians emigrating from USSR to the USA via Rome
- the participation, additional to Yugoslavia, of Eastern European countries in the resettlement of Latin American refugees.

The WCC resettlement office in Belgium integrated with the Centre Social Protestant.

The WCC resettlement office in Turkey was closed and all pending files handed over to the International Catholic Committee for Migration, which still completes all initial documentation for US-bound refugees sponsored by the WCC.

Near and Middle East

The 1967 war had vastly increased the number of Palestinian refugees and its repercussions were felt throughout the region: more Armenians and Assyrians were obliged to leave Iraq, groups of Kurdish refugees appeared and presently there were to be also refugees from Lebanon.

1968: the programme for Palestine refugees is entrusted to Service to Refugees, which cooperated with the Emergency Committee in Beirut representing the Orthodox churches and the member churches of NECC (since 1974 MECC). The programme was later transferred to the Middle East Desk of CICARWS.

The Service to Refugees retained the responsibility for non-Palestinian refugees, mainly Christian minorities from Iraq. The majority of these refugees wanted to emigrate; since not all could be resettled overseas the Refugee office in Beirut added local integration to its work, which included scholarships, vocational training and housing. One of the last housing projects was "El Maskonyia" (Ecumenical village) for 67 families.

Special arrangements were made for an inordinately large number of prematurely aged and handicapped refugees, many of whom had spent all their life on the move fleeing successive religious and ethnic purges. With a little care they were happy in Lebanon which they thought was a safe haven at last, alas.....

By 1975 the situation had deteriorated to the extent that an air-lift (the third one after Uganda and Vietnam) organized in cooperation with UNHCR, ICM evacuated the non-resident refugees to Greece. As always happens in such situations the number of refugees which landed in Athens was much higher than expected, calling for hasty emergency arrangements and delaying resettlement.

Two small but difficult programmes were:

- The resettlement of Greek Christians and several "dissident" Turks from Cyprus and
- The resettlement of Roumanian Christian (or Judeo-Christian) refugees from Israel via Greece.

Latin and Central America

The second phase of the Refugee Service involvement in Latin America began with programmes for Brazilian refugees in Chile administered through local churches and refugee committees.

1973: the fall of the Allende government turned many of the previous hosts into refugees; those who could crossed to Argentina; those who had passports fled abroad, in stages or as far as their resources would take them. A large number sought shelter in Embassies and were gradually resettled, the preparations involving complicated "safe conduct" agreements, arrangements for property left behind and later also assistance to families who could not or would not accompany their relatives or join them abroad.

Concurrently with the programme in Chile the Refugee Service initiated and funded reception and emergency programmes in Buenos Aires and Mendoza, Argentina; these were later followed by similar programmes in Peru, Brazil, Mexico, Panama and small contributions to other countries in the area. All projects were prepared and implemented by Ecumenical committees formed by the churches; refugee committees participated in the preparation and administration of projects.

The work was and still is carried out in cooperation with UNHCR, which makes financial contributions to projects and ICEM. Several WCC partners act also as implementing agencies for fully UNHCR funded projects.



I am conscious that the information on the refugee work in Africa has been less ample than that given on Latin America. This has two reasons: the first is that having no direct working contact with Africa my knowledge of the work, although not of the problem is necessarily limited.

1975 FIFTH ASSEMBLY - NAIROBI

Let me state by way of introduction that between 1968 and 1975 the "Division" became again the Department of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service and has so remained through Nairobi and Vancouver which surely is a record.

The Assembly has clearly reaffirmed the importance of the refugee programme and commended to the concern of the churches all uprooted people to whom they can give spiritual, material and any other kind of necessary assistance.

The Assembly:

- Mentioned the ministry to refugees from Angola and deplored the continued armed conflict between political factions which has been delaying repatriation.

Welcomed the Rome agreement between Indonesia and Portugal on East Timor and called on both countries to cooperate in the implementation of its contents.

- Urged the government of Australia to offer sanctuary and immigration facilities to those who wish to be resettled in Australia.
- Commended the efforts of Indonesian and Australian churches to provide relief and called to all member churches to help those who suffer as a result of the conflict.
- Called on the government of Argentina for humanitarian reasons to normalize speedily the situation of political prisoners and exiles in the country, and to react immediately to the appeal by UNHCR.
- Stressed the importance of justice and said that service can only be rendered effectively when it is related to the latter. Thus services such as refugee resettlement have been increasingly assessed in terms of their contribution or relationship to social, economic and political justice. Urged close cooperation between Units and exemplified the respective roles of CCIA and CICARWS in a given situation.
- Mentioned the decline of traditional resettlement activity and the growth of regional refugee programmes in Africa and the Middle East.

Programmes

Africa



I am conscious that the information on the refugee work in Africa has been less ample than that given on other continents. This has two reasons: the first is that having no direct working contact with Africa my knowledge of the work, although not of the problem is necessarily limited.

The second and more important reason is that I stand in awe of what I do know about the dedication of the churches, the magnitude of the task, the dogged struggle against the vicissitudes of man (sexist language is OK here) and uncontrollable natural disasters.

What can one say on a page or two which could begin to do justice to the task of caring - in the full sense of the word - for four million refugees? Or of the efforts to find ways and means to keep the refugees in Africa, instead of trying to get rid of them, the sooner the better? As I said earlier on it was only after the arrival of refugees from Ethiopia and the ensuing natural calamities that Africa - and its churches - asked the international community to share the burden.

I want to mention though the vast rural projects with refugee settlements transformed into villages and citizenship granted en bloc; urban refugees are more difficult to settle no doubt, but is that not so everywhere?

There is also a project I should like to single out: Assistance to Sahraoui Refugee in Algeria. Taken over from the Middle East Council of Churches in 1985, it aids an unusually high number of women, young children, old people and invalids to pursue various activities and so keep their sanity in the midst of the barren nowhere of their camp, short of water, short of everything.

Asia

In Thailand the number of Indochinese refugees reached 200,000 between 1975-81 and the phenomenon "boat people" added a wholly new dimension to the problem which soon extended to Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines; some boats even reached Australia and there were boat people in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.

Several spontaneous relief and protection actions by local member churches and NCCs were followed by still ongoing HKCS programmes; a few small short-term projects were implemented by NCC Indonesia and NCC Philippines. Integration assistance was provided by and through member churches in South Korea and Taiwan.

Apart from these two countries and the 14,000 integrated in Hong Kong, the emphasis was and still is definitely on resettlement outside the region.

UNHCR and the government of Vietnam signed Agreement on the Orderly Departure Programme.

While in India CASA was able at last to wind up its programme, Pakistan received the first refugees from Afghanistan which in less than five years have increased from a few thousand to 3 million. Since a mass repatriation is improbable and mass resettlement impossible, the emphasis is on local integration, which for once is not opposed by the government of the host country. Although this is a case of Moslem refugees in a Moslem setting the churches have as on former occasions identified themselves with the problems of their country and the Inter-Aid Committee in charge of the programme is expected to submit proposals to the consortium of funding agencies coordinated by WCC.

The WCC Resettlement office in Hong Kong integrated with the Hong Kong Christian Service.

Europe

No particular upheavals to report in the first half of the post-Nairobi period; from Eastern Europe refugees arrived in usual numbers, the majority moved on to Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA. Comparatively few stayed behind and eventually settled where they were.

Half-way through, the relative calm was disrupted by the arrival of refugees from Iran who for months remained the pariahs whom no country would accept, which made them and the countries of temporary asylum restless.

Soon afterwards refugees from Poland filled all accessible countries but unlike their Hungarian and Czechoslovakian forerunners proved much more difficult to resettle and the local integration rate is very low by comparison.

In Spain, where already in the mid-seventies the government, UNHCR and the churches had to face first refugees from Guinea Equatorial and a little while later a large contingent of refugees from Latin America. Luckily there was no language barrier for either group and the facilities which had been installed for Cuban refugees were still there, as were also most of the people who ran the earlier programme. Two church schools accepted boarders and day pupils, a Home at Escorial took care of babies and older children from broken homes and in emergencies. WCC provided emergency and integration funds first for Guineans, who were all accepted for permanent residence and later naturalized; afterwards for Chileans and Argentinians. Most Argentinians have since returned home, the Chileans are still in Spain.

- Resettlement in general was as good as various immigration laws would permit;
- Third country processing in Italy was authorized also for US-bound Roumanians
- A truly positive item was the readiness of Das Diakonische Werk to sponsor the placement of aged and handicapped refugees in appropriate institutions.
- Refugees from Haiti arrived in France and were assisted by CIMADE.
- In Portugal the Conselho Portugues de Igrejas Cristas (COPIC) extended temporary assistance to refugees from East Timor pending their resettlement in Australia.

Near and Middle East

The setting has not changed: armed conflict in the Lebanon; war between Iran and Iraq; any number of small skirmishes, each taking its toll on human life and adding to the misery.

Against this background the victims, past and present, of violence and ill-considered political decisions: two million Palestinians, undetermined numbers of Lebanese, stateless refugees waiting for peace, for a place to live, for food. The strain on MECC and other local structures is enormous but life and work go on, help is given and the dialogue which may one day lead to peace is pursued.

And everywhere there were refugees from Iran, numerous but less visible. Their aim always is resettlement but many do not fit into any current immigration category.

Christians from Iraq are no longer able to leave the country except clandestinely, which permitted our field offices in Athens and Rome to concentrate on the resettlement of Middle Eastern refugees whom no country wanted to accept.

Finally there were the Iranian Christian internees in Iraqi internment camps for whom resettlement was requested by the Red Cross, which acts as intermediary.

The WCC Resettlement office in Beirut was closed in 1976 and the ongoing responsibility handed over to MECC.

Mrs Helen Mayer the WCC correspondent in Jerusalem died in 1985 and was not replaced.

Latin and Central America

Additional to ongoing assistance programmes for refugees in the country, projects for assistance to returnees have been introduced in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay.

In Costa Rica the Episcopal church began its refugee work amidst Sandinist refugees and after the fall of the Somoza regime helped with their repatriation to Nicaragua.

Shortly afterwards above were replaced by refugees from El Salvador, mostly urban people for whom accommodation and work had to be found in San José. While their problems have been more or less settled a third group arrived, again from Nicaragua but Misquitos this time who fled the country - marching up to 20 days with hardly any food or water - to escape relocation and other reprisals.

The programme in Peru was closed; other programmes continue, adapting to changes and making the best use of local resources and funds donated by the ecumenical family.

While conditions in Latin America have been improving, the political climate in Central America deteriorated driving many Guatemalans into exile. The largest group went to Mexico where refugees and refugee agencies are having a hard time aggravated by the earthquake which killed several refugees and caused much material damage.

NORTH AMERICA

Additional to being traditional countries of documented immigration Canada and the USA became also countries of first asylum for Ethiopians, Haitians and Salvadorans.

It was a new experience, posing many legal and protection problems which WCC-partner agencies met by developing legal services and a coordinated advocacy system.

Reacting to cases of forcible deportation and near deportation, American congregations started the Sanctuary Movement which has been effectively protecting refugees from harassment and deportation.

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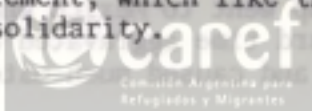
SIXTH ASSEMBLY - VANCOUVERLatin and Central America

After discussion on the refugee programme in the general context of struggle for justice and human dignity having received the CICARWS report, the Assembly recommended that the Refugee Service of CICARWS should continue to give strong leadership in coordinating a research and information network to promote advocacy for refugee concerns.

The Assembly several times referred to the refugee situation in the Resolution on Afghanistan and Statements on Central America, the Middle East and Southern Africa.

It was the Central Committee of July 1984 which recalled that 1984 was the 40th Anniversary of what is now known as CICARWS and underlined that "even before the official founding of the WCC in 1948 the churches needed and created this instrument for the expression of their growing sense of the universal Koinonia.."

The committee gave thanks for services rendered, among them the refugee service and resettlement, which like the others were tangible expressions of ecumenical solidarity.

AND THE FUTURE ?NORTH AMERICA

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