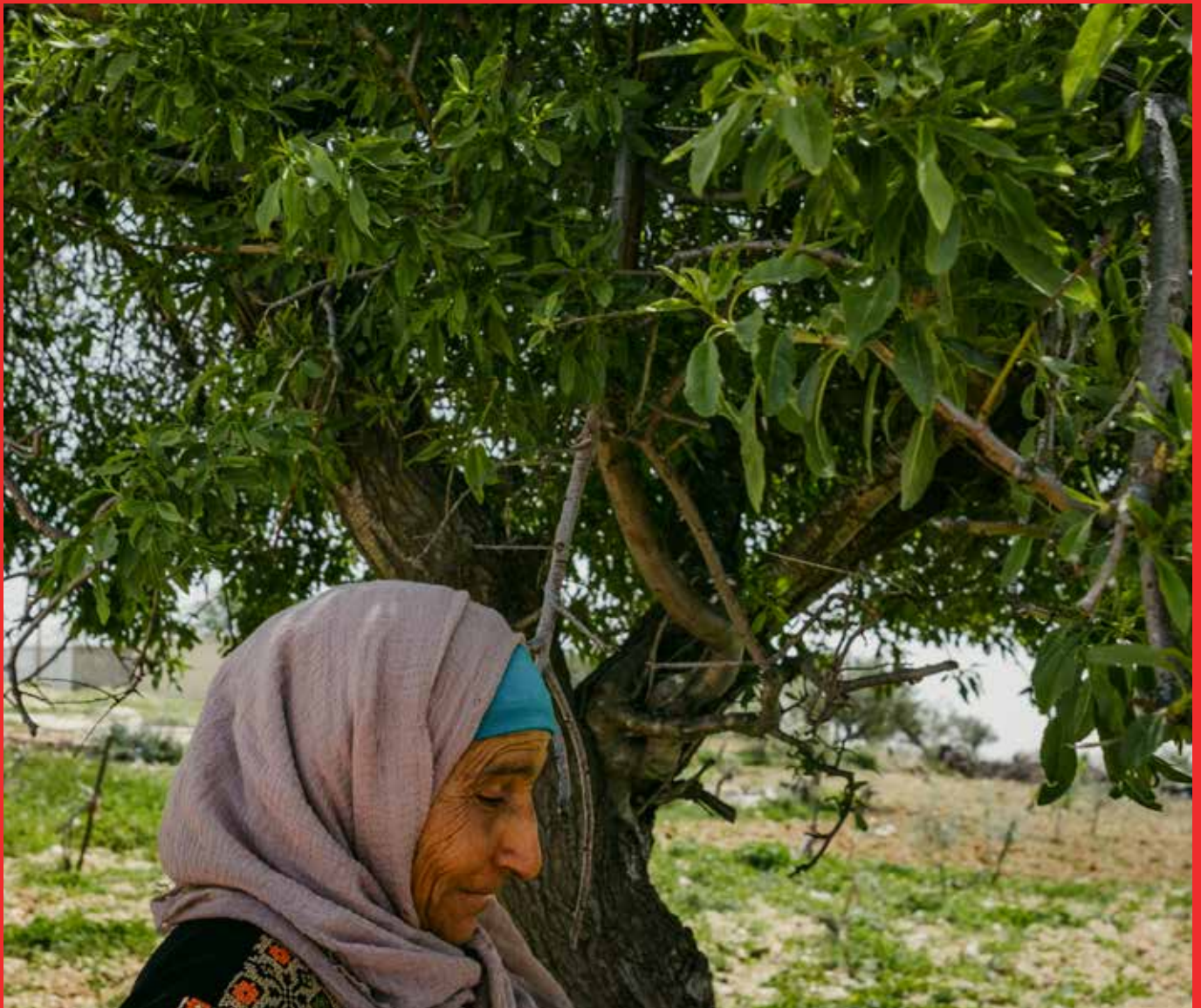




FROM MILK POWDER TO RIGHTS

DanChurchAid's History in Palestine
from 1954 - 2022



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Cover photo: Nils Carstensen / Design: Anne Mousten

Forword

As we celebrate DanChurchAid's 100th anniversary, it is a privilege also to mark the long history we have in Palestine. We are immensely proud of our long-standing collaboration with Palestinian and Israel partners to assist Palestinians in need. As this fascinating historical representation demonstrates, our focus and approach in Palestine has evolved over the years. From the initial short-term humanitarian assistance of the early 1950s to the current multi-faceted humanitarian, development and advocacy programme founded on our Human Rights Based approach. We have evolved from providing small-scale material assistance administered from Copenhagen, to a professional programme team representing both DanChurchAid and Norwegian Church Aid (DCA/NCA), based in Palestine and working closely with our local partners on a day-to-day basis.

I would like to thank our former and long-standing colleague, Uffe Gjerding, for his thorough and thought-provoking account of the history of DanChurchAid in Palestine. And last, but not least, I would like to thank our Palestinian and Israeli partners and our team of dedicated DCA/NCA colleagues in Jerusalem and Gaza who work tirelessly to make our programme in Palestine as impactful as possible.

Jonas Vejsager Nøddekær

International Director, DanChurchAid

Author's introduction

On the occasion of DanChurchAid's 100th anniversary I have offered – on request from DCA's regional office in Jerusalem – to write up a brief history of DCA's involvement in Palestine. The exercise has been extremely interesting and rewarding for me and I hope readers will also find this presentation of interest.

The main sources for my work have been minutes from DCA's board and executive committee meetings, annual reports, articles in DCA's magazine NØD (under a variety of names) and a selection of articles from the media. All of this material was kindly made available to me by DCA.

As we all know, history is not an objective science. History is always written and interpreted from a present day and subjective perspective. This also applies in this case. My own 30-year experience with DCA - including many years of working with the Middle East - along with my own personal points of view, have undoubtedly influenced my selection of the historical material and themes and the interpretation thereof.

The Middle East context as well as DCA as an organisation has evolved tremendously since DCA for the first time provided humanitarian aid to Palestinian refugees in 1954. DCA, which was founded in 1922, had already existed for 32 years at that time, but only a change of name and mandate in 1954 opened up for the possibility of engaging in humanitarian work beyond Europe. The Middle East – mostly Palestine - became the first focus of this expansion of its sphere of interest and humanitarian work and it largely remained so until the mid-1960s, when DCA got involved in other continents.

Apart from DCA's engagement in Europe, which has some particularities of its own, the Middle East/Palestine engagement as regards time therefore represents the longest span of DCA's history: 70 years. This makes this study all the more interesting, because it reflects how DCA's self-understanding and involvement in humanitarian

work in general evolved over time, including its theological understanding of diakonia (Christian service). It also reflects how society's understanding and the developmental political environment evolved over almost seven decades.

In order to somehow illustrate this, I have chosen an approach of writing this history where I follow a chronological timeline, but for each period of time I have written an introduction and described DCA's work from four thematic perspectives: 1) understanding of aid; 2) awareness-raising and engagement; 3) financing; and 4) practical implementation.

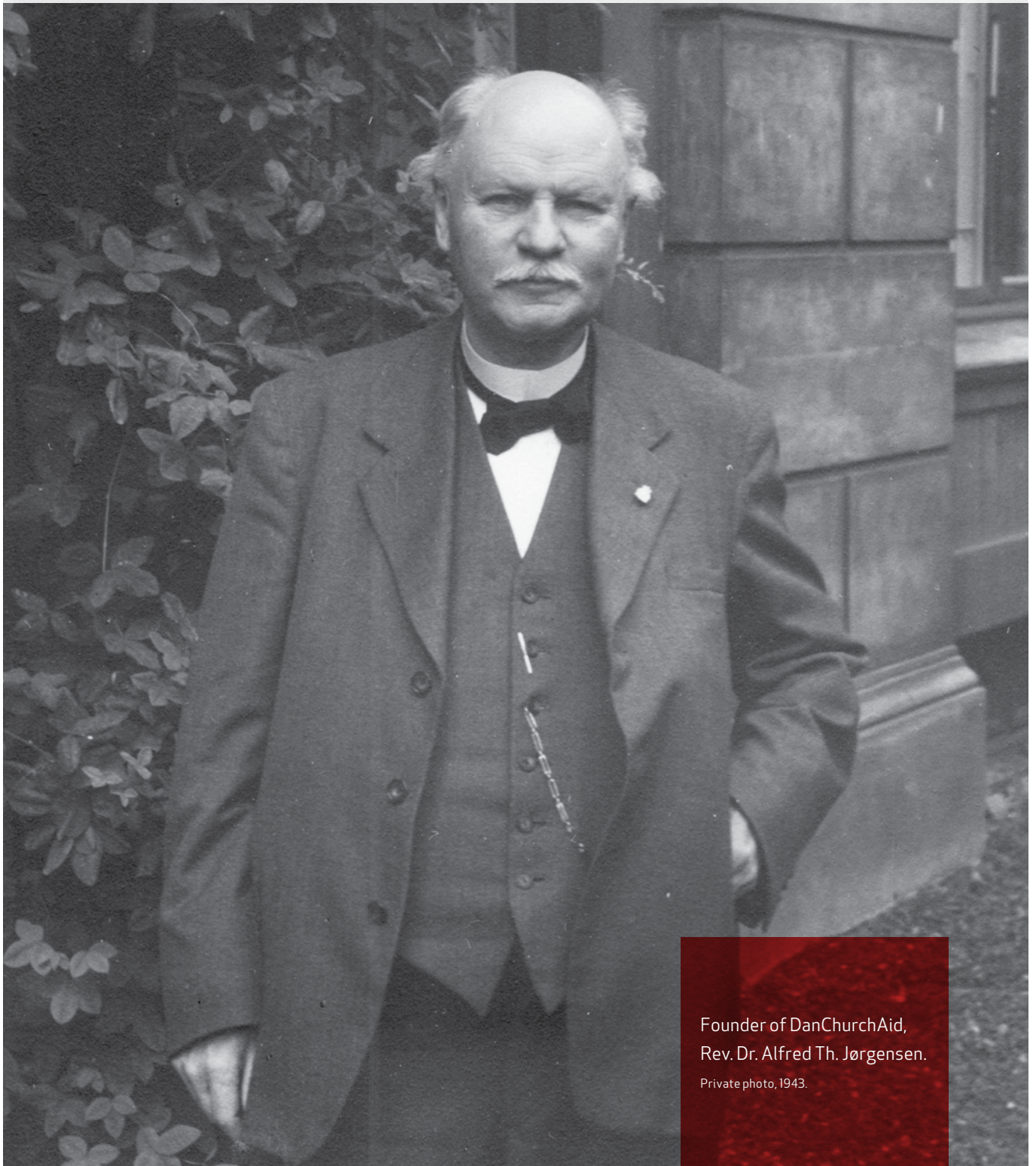
Writing this history in this manner, enables us to reflect on issues such as: (1) How did DCA understand and present its humanitarian work in the early years and through the following decades? (2) What was DCA's own understanding of the political context and how did it present this to its church constituency and broader public over the years? (3) When, why and how did DCA see the need to engage in a rights-based approach and in advocacy work in the Middle East – a context that was and is highly politically volatile and contested? Hopefully this thematic approach can also stimulate open reflection on where DCA finds itself today and which direction it might wish to take in the future.

Looking into and putting into perspective DCA's history in Palestine has been an interesting, stimulating and encouraging journey for me. I wish to thank present and former DCA staff who have advised me in the process, but take full personal responsibility for the outcome of this study.

June 2022

Uffe Gjerding, M.A. in theology,
former Global Programme Coordinator in DanChurchAid.

The early beginnings of DanChurchAid



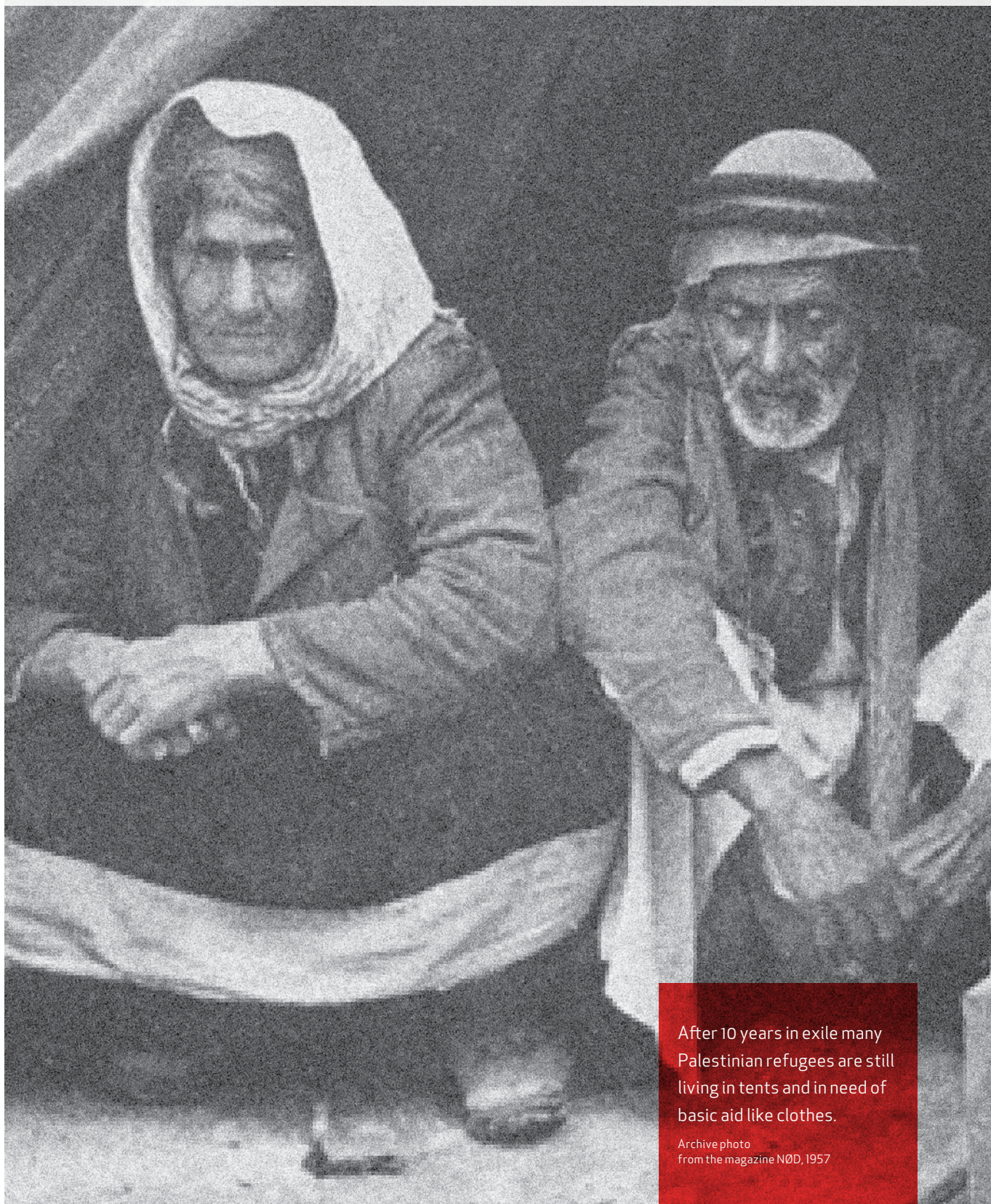
Founder of DanChurchAid,
Rev. Dr. Alfred Th. Jørgensen.

Private photo, 1943.

DanChurchAid (DCA) was founded in 1922 as *"Den danske Folkekirkes Nødhjælp til Europas evangeliske kirker"* (The Danish Evangelical-Lutheran Church's Emergency Aid to the Evangelical Churches of Europe). 100 leaders (all male) from Protestant churches in 22 European countries met in 1922 in Copenhagen to discuss how they could support each other after WW1, when many small churches in the countries most ravaged by war could only survive with assistance from outside. Denmark had not been strongly affected by the war and was therefore ready to support less fortunate sister churches. Rev. Dr. Alfred Th. Jørgensen was the founder and for 30 years the first leader of the new Danish church initiative, which he and others with him only thought would last a few years. But after WW2 Europe was again in ruins and millions of refugees found themselves without homes; in Germany alone there were 12 million refugees. The international ecumenical organisations – the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches – were established in 1947 and 1948 respectively and became important channels for aid to refugees within and outside of Europe, including the Palestinian refugees in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

In 1954 DanChurchAid got its present name "Folkekirken Nødhjælp" (literally: The Emergency Aid of the Evangelical-Lutheran Folk Church) and a new statute was formulated, whereby its mandate was broadened to also work outside Europe and targeting needy people irrespective of faith or religious conviction.

| From **1954** to **1970**



After 10 years in exile many
Palestinian refugees are still
living in tents and in need of
basic aid like clothes.

Archive photo
from the magazine NØD, 1957

Introduction

In 1952 The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) had approached the well-established “Mission to the East” (Østerlandsmissionen) that was particularly active in Syria, with a request for milk powder assistance to Palestinian refugees in Syria after the displacement of more than 750,000 Palestinians following the establishment of the State of Israel and the war in 1948 (referred to by Palestinians as the Nakba - the disaster). The Mission, however, found that this was beyond its mandate, but asked Poul Hartling (later Foreign Minister and Prime Minister of Denmark and, lastly, UN’s High Commissioner for Refugees) to create a special Syria Committee of former missionaries to raise funds for this specific purpose amongst the constituency of Østerlandsmissionen. On May 18, 1954 the board accepted that the Syria Committee became a working group within DCA and from then on became heavily involved with assistance to Palestinian refugees through the Lutheran World Federation (LWF)¹.

1: Understanding of aid

This period could be characterized by the phrase “give them a fish”². Central to DCA’s aid in the first decade was the shipment of material aid: milk powder, second-hand clothes etc.

The first allocation was made on October 11, 1954, when it was decided to send 3 tons of milk powder to Syria. This was dispatched (presumably by ship to Beirut) in November 1954. From 1955 until 1963 the item “milk powder to Syria” became a fixed item on the budget of DCA. During the first year DCA received earmarked donations of DKK 8,000 from individual donors³. Several special requests were made to DCA, e.g. in 1955 an electric bread-cutting machine worth DKK 2,200⁴. The LWF ordered shipments from Denmark with items such as medicine, china, food-processor, trays, floor mops and other oddities apparently not available locally. The shipment of second-hand clothes also became a regular activity in these early years. Already in March 1955, 25 tons of second-hand clothes were collected nation-wide in Denmark and shipped to Syria. By 1961 DCA’s budget had set aside DKK 50,000 for 12 tons of milk powder, DKK 10,000 for medicine for the mobile clinics, and DKK 15,000 for the schooling of blind refugee children, i.e. a total contribution of close to DKK 100,000 to the LWF in the Middle East.

In the next decade – from 1965 - DCA broadened its involvement by selecting some of the projects proposed by the World Council of Churches (WCC). Thus a 3-year support was initiated for YMCA’s Vocational Training Centre in Jericho (DKK 70,000) and a Women’s Vocational Training in Gaza (DKK 32,000) for one year. LWF projects supported in 1965 were (a) Home for the blind (DKK 20,805); (b) Distribution of milk powder (DKK 6,935); (c) Sowing Centre (DKK 32,386); Employment project (DKK 6,935); (d) An extra contribution to AVH (DKK 27,560); (e) DKK 3,450 to the Jerusalem Crippled Children’s Center; and (f) Milk powder to Syria (DKK 14,750).

The type of activities and the partners undertaking them in the Middle East remained very stable and constant over quite a number of years. There were discussions in the LWF during these years as to whether the massive involvement with the Palestinians should continue, given the many other humanitarian crises and development needs that were surfacing. But ultimately it was recognized that the political insecurity, that is characteristic of the Middle East, is also a kind of distress, which has a strong impact on people’s minds and daily lives. It was concluded that a neutral organization like the LWF should continue to guarantee a non-political effort for people in a difficult situation. In 1959 DCA’s chairman paid his first visit to the Middle East and confirmed the necessity of continuing the aid and the request by LWF to maintain Danish presence locally.

1. For a full report on LWF’s Jerusalem programme see “A Heritage of Service – LWF 1948-2010”

2. This and following terms refer to the Chinese proverb: “Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you will feed him for a lifetime.” To this was then added a third element of rights: “give them a fishing license.”

3. DCA’s magazine “Nødhjælpen” advertised this option, noting that each donation of DKK 10 would cover milk supplies for one child for three months.

4. The reception of the bread cutting machine at AVH is described with much humor in an article in “Nødhjælpen” in December 1955. The article is titled “A curious sight on the Mount of Olives: The bread-cutting machine was placed in a cage”.

2: Awareness-raising and engagement

Information work that focused entirely on describing how the aid provided reached the needy beneficiaries was from the beginning a key element in DCA's work. It was thus seen primarily as a fund-raising tool.

Until the mid-1960s, almost every issue of the quarterly magazine "Nødhjælpen" ("The Emergency Aid") brought articles about the aid provided to the Palestinian refugees through the LWF. Sometimes extensive articles were published, like in the autumn of 1958, written by Axel Christensen (based at the AVH) describing the situation in the Middle East and the extensive aid provided to the refugees

It is perhaps worth reflecting on why DCA in 1967 – after the 'Six-day War' - raised 10 times as much money as the Danish Red Cross and twice as much as a newly created "Denmark Helps Israel" committee. We can only double guess. But certainly, DCA was by then well-known and respected in the Danish churches and parishes and certainly DCA had since 1954 been very good at informing about the work carried out amongst Palestinian refugees. Most of the time DCA had Danish people on the ground who could report back on the situation and create an understanding of the conflict and the sufferings of the Palestinian refugees. At the time, the humanitarian and human rights consequences for the Palestinians following the establishment of the State of Israel, let alone the fact that between 1947 and 1949, at least 750,000 Palestinians from a 1.9 million population were made refugees, were largely absent from public and political conversation and understanding. Tensions were quite noticeable in 1967. An example is the row created when the chief editor of the daily Christian newspaper "Kristeligt Dagblad", Bent A. Koch, accepted to publish an article in which the author noted that the conflict had two parties and that not all was black and white. He asked: "Why doesn't anybody in the ongoing debate try to explain the point of view of the Arabs?" criticizing the coverage of the reality on the ground and receiving fierce criticism for putting forward this argument.⁵

Overall, in the DCA internal discussions and publications the whole conflict was treated from a purely humanitarian needs perspective and never was any doubt raised about the obligation to offer the best possible assistance to the Palestinian refugees, although minutes from the Board show that there were certainly a variety of personal opinions on the issue of Palestinian refugees amongst staff and board members.

3: Financing

Until 1967 all the funds DCA had at its disposal were collected in Danish parishes and, as DCA became more known, also amongst the general public (especially from the time of the major Biafra undertaking in 1968-69). Only rarely did DCA appeal for funds earmarked for specific projects. And only in 1967 DCA received its first grant from the Danish government (Danida).

Maybe the amounts raised and spent in DKK during the first decades sound modest. But if we take into account that DKK 1,000 in 1955 is equivalent of DKK 15,000 today, DKK 1,000 in 1967 is equivalent of DKK 10,000 today, and DKK 1,000 in 1975 is equivalent of DKK 5,000 today, then the figures take on a different significance; the amounts mentioned above would have to be multiplied by 10 or 15 to assess their value today.

The following is an example of successful fund-raising in this period: On June 8, 1967, the WCC launched an emergency appeal of USD 2,000,000. DCA's executive committee met on June 9 and immediately committed itself to USD 15,000 (around

5. In his book »Min Tid« ("My Time") Bent A. Koch on pages 172-177 recalls how he was viciously confronted by his newspaper's readers and most of the remaining press and many politicians for his views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in 1967. He was accused of being anti-Zionist and even anti-Semitic (Bent A. Koch had been a part of the Danish resistance movement in 1943). He then explains that it was his friendship with Christian Christiansen (LWF director in Damascus/Jerusalem from 1952-57) and with theology Professor Svend Holm-Nielsen (son of a missionary to Syria) that had stirred his interest for the Palestinians.

DKK 100,000) and informed the press. A special appeal was launched in all Danish parishes on Sunday June 11, generating an unprecedented income of DKK 343.000 plus another DKK 205,000 in earmarked contributions. DKK 100,000 were received from the Danish Refugee Council and a first-time ever contribution of DKK 100,000 to DCA from the Danish government was granted that year. The total income was close to DKK 1,000,000 alone in the year 1967.

4: Practical implementation

In addition to material aid, the first decades of aid were to a high degree also characterized by the posting of Danish 'experts' in key positions locally.

Rev. Christian Christiansen from Denmark worked for the LWF in Syria from 1952 and later became the director of LWF's activities in Jordan based at the Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH) in Jerusalem (1954-1957). He was followed by another Dane in this position, Axel Christensen (until 1960, when he took up a position at DCA HQ). From 1970-1972 Erik Andersen was the administrator of AVH and after him came Jørn Parslev (1972-1974), Olaf Beck (1974-1979) and Jørgen Rosendal (1993-1996; formerly at the Ahli Arab hospital in Gaza). This created a feeling of ownership and created excellent ties between DCA and LWF's work amongst Palestinian refugees.

In 1965 two Danish physiotherapists – Ruth Jensen and Grethe Borgen Nielsen - were sent out to Jerusalem to serve at a rehabilitation center for handicapped children close to the AVH: the Jerusalem Crippled Children's Centre. At that time Danish chief nurses had already been at the AVH for some years – first Sister Julia Kall, later followed by Sister Karis Sieverts Jensen (seconded by "Mission to the East") and Nikoline Hansen as instructor at the nursing school from 1966. There was also a nurse in anesthesia, Vigerd Hansen, who joined the team at the AVH in 1966. Nurse Inge Peulicke Nielsen, who was also at the Crippled Children's Centre from 1966, fell in love with John Mac Innes, a doctor and son of the Anglican archbishop of Jerusalem. They were married in Denmark on November 14, 1966.

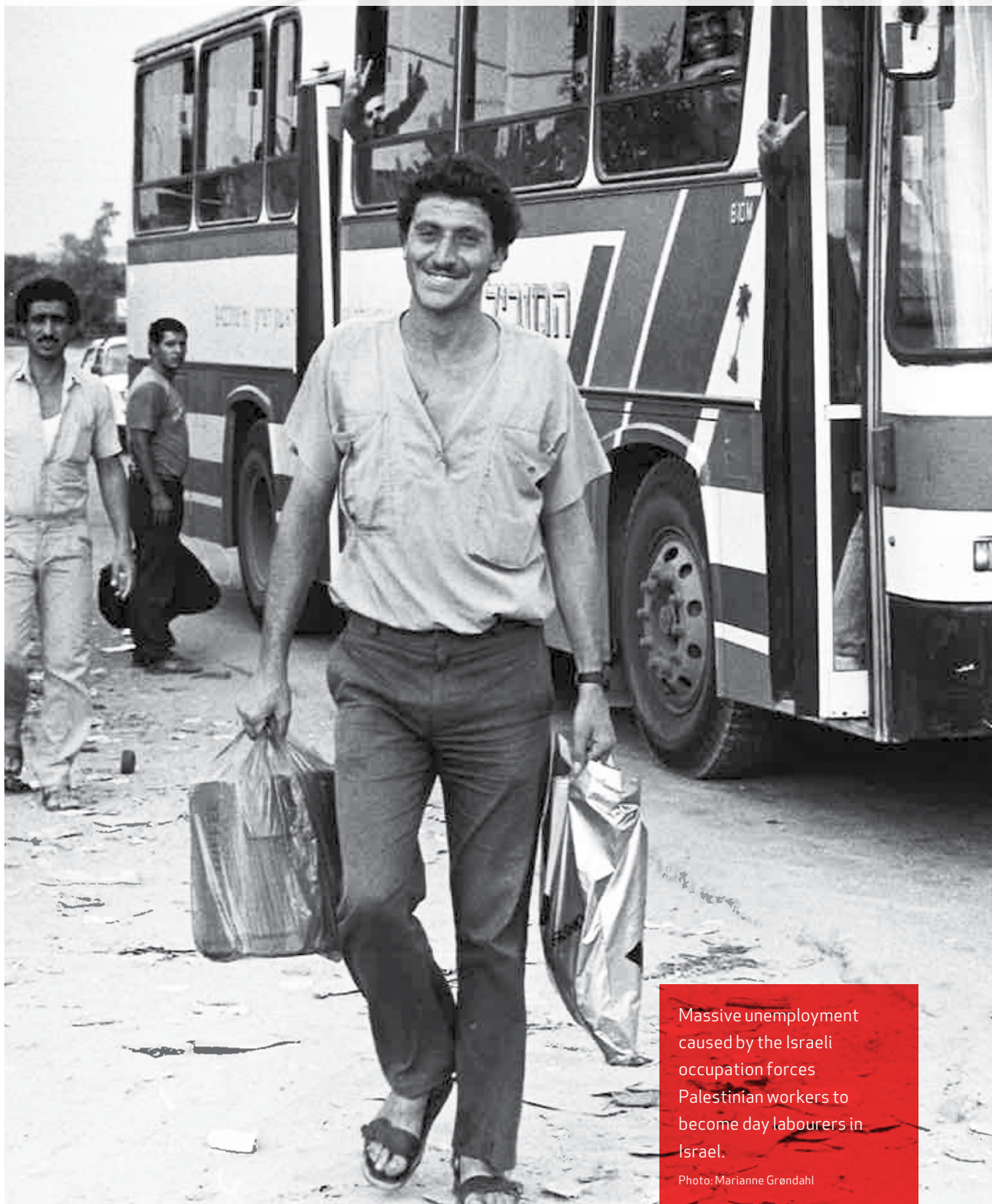
DCA's aid to Palestinian refugees had slowly increased and stabilized over the first 10+ years. But then disaster struck in 1967 with the 'Six-day war' from June 5-10, 1967. Israel occupied the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights. Amongst those most affected by the war were the Palestinian refugees. About 250,000 had to leave the West Bank and move eastwards over the Allenby Bridge to Jordan where they settled in five new UNRWA camps. Of these 145,000 had already been displaced once in 1948 at the creation of the State of Israel. Two major camps in Jericho were almost completely emptied.

The AVH was now on occupied territory and along with the LWF clinics had been heavily damaged during the war, but continued their operations. The Danish chief nurse, Miss Nikoline Hansen was evacuated to Denmark briefly, but returned soon after and stayed on until she retired in 1972 physically worn down at the age of 59⁶.

An interesting example of a different approach to providing aid was when the WCC appealed to provide help to 298,000 persons in Egypt, who had had to leave Suez and Ismailia after Israel's bombing of the cities on September 27, 1967. DCA decided not to collect and dispatch blankets, but spent USD 7,000 on rehabilitating a local blanket factory.

6. Miss Nikoline Hansen was a truly committed heroine. Upon return to Denmark, DCA provided her with a pension for half a year. She was too young to receive old age pension and was refused a state pension as invalid, even though DCA hired a lawyer to pursue her case. Her male colleagues, by contrast, were duly honored and offered important positions.

From 1970 to 1987



Massive unemployment caused by the Israeli occupation forces Palestinian workers to become day labourers in Israel.

Photo: Marianne Grøndahl

Introduction

These were years with less focus on the Middle East – except for a short period around the ‘Yom Kippur War’ in October 1973. DCA’s focus moved increasingly to other parts of the world.

This did not mean that all was well in Israel/Palestine. The Israeli occupation with all its ramifications made the lives for Palestinians more and more challenging as witnessed i.e. by the Danish people on the ground and by numerous visits organized by DCA. And it also exploded in the First Intifada in December 1987 with all its consequences as described in the next section.

1: Understanding of aid

This period could be characterized by the phrase “teach them to fish”. DCA still supported expatriate Danes on the ground, but more trust was gradually bestowed on local partners to manage their own projects. Funding, which previously had been earmarked for specific activities, were gradually given more overall to the programmes run by local trusted partners such as the LWF, the MECC/DSPR and YMCA East Jerusalem.

Whilst emergency aid was still needed in some situations, e.g. in connection with the recurrent wars, development aid had become the main focus both in the Danish government’s and DCA’s policies and understanding of what was required to provide long-term results in the developing world (the term initially used: ‘underdeveloped world’ was gradually replaced by terms like ‘the developing world’ or ‘the third world’).

2: Awareness-raising and engagement

The 1970s mark an important shift in DCA’s understanding of its role in providing information and awareness raising. The term ‘development education’ was coined and became an important focus in itself. In 1975 DCA ultimately adjusted its statutes accordingly with an obligation “*to inform on the background of the need for aid.*” Another debated issue was whether DCA could claim to be a church organization and whether as such it could/should position itself politically.

Key debates on both issues took place in DCA's board in these years.

- 1) The 'development education' debate took place in the board in 1973 (and again in 1975, 1976 and 1977). It definitely had immediate and long-term implications also for DCA in the Middle East. This was a discussion of whether information/educational work ('development education'), where focus also was on broad developmental and injustice issues, should be seen as a task for DCA to undertake (sometimes termed the 'charitable approach' versus the 'justice approach'). Initially the board was quite split, some feeling that focus should only be on informing about the actual project work carried out in the field and this with a view of raising funds. Ultimately, the new understanding of global development and 'development education' as an independent operational activity prevailed. DCA should not just provide aid, but be a spokesperson for the rights of the people it worked with.
- 2) The other related crucial debate in those years (1974-1977) raised also for the Middle East such important issues as to whether DCA should take political positions and have a role in the formation of public opinion. The initial discussions were often inconclusive, but the tendencies became clearer and clearer. As the chairman stated in his annual report in 1976: "It is my impression that every time we gather to debate on principle issues underlying our daily work, it gives impetus to a development." There was a growing realization that just as DCA's partners had a 'political' identity and motivation for selection of projects, DCA needed sometimes to take 'political' positions.

Within DCA and in the Danish public there had been frequent debates on DCA using "church" in its name and on whether DCA was political or not. DCA's board held a special seminar in November 1972 with presentations on the theme, "The place of aid work in the political interplay and the possible political consequences". Interestingly, Rev. Johannes Langhoff (DCA board member and member of the WCC's Central Committee) uses Israel/Palestine to illustrate one of the dilemmas: "As an example we could mention the aid to the Arab refugees in the Middle East refugee camps. They had fled from Israel at the establishment of the State of Israel. Israel didn't want them back and Arabic states couldn't integrate them. These refugees found themselves in a terrible situation and simply had to be assisted, even though it was a political hornet's nest to get your fingers into. They have been helped both by the UN and the LWF, but then it has also not been possible to avoid accusations of facilitating Palestinian resistance movements, because a number of the persons that were helped have joined the resistance movements."

DCA's chairman tried to sum up the debate in his supplementary comments to DCA's annual report from 1972 by stating: "In dealing with the church's – and thus also DCA's – responsibility to combat social injustice in the world, especially with respect to the conditions in the third world and racism: Naturally we all share the desire to see dignified living conditions for humans all over the world – also by DCA – but even though DCA gladly contributes to achieve this, where the possibility for doing so is present, it lies outside of its real mandate. In principle DCA must be politically neutral and follow its praxis until now, i.e. providing aid where aid is needed irrespective of the social and political conditions in the region or country." A new chairman of the board in 1974 (Jørgen Nielsen, a chief of police and lawyer), however, marks a generational change in DCA more in line with the new trends. He says to *Kristeligt Dagblad* (June 21, 1974): "I don't think we should shy away from an issue just because it could have political aspects. We should take a stand on them when they arise, but they should not be made into such a big problem



Photo: Marianne Grøndahl

that they make us shy away from providing aid”...”We have consciously moved into development aid and it is probably mostly in that connection political issues may arise”...”We need a much more in-depth awareness about conditions in developing countries and why we in Denmark should be providing support.”

In Palestine itself the almost continuous presence of Danish personnel in and around the LWF provided for a feeling of closeness to the context and the work there and numerous detailed stories published in the monthly magazine *NØD/’Brød til Verden’* based on reports and regular visits from Denmark. Readers of “NØD” (all Danish pastors and all individual donors to DCA) must have been very well versed with the situation of the refugees and the support given especially to the LWF and the Augusta Victoria Hospital (3-4 articles per year). In 1972, when DCA celebrated its 50th anniversary, an anniversary film, including film-shooting from Jordan and a special educational film with printed materials for schools “Living with us in Jordan” (“Hos os i Jordan”) was produced.⁷ Finally a slide-show was produced with 44 slides about refugees in Jerusalem and promoted as “We take the side of the victims – also in the Middle East.” And it seems that for the first time a local partner is given the word in “NØD” (2/1979) during a visit to the YMCA Vocational Training Centre in Jericho, namely Labib Naser, GS of the East Jerusalem YMCA, who is quoted for saying: “You have no idea of what it is like to be a stateless Palestinian... We feel betrayed by our Arab neighbours... From the State of Israel we cannot expect much.”

Reports and publications from this period reflect a continuous unwavering sympathy for and humanitarian support to the Palestinian refugees. In 1976 DCA writes: “With

7. “Hos os i Jordan” was one of three educational films of a very innovative respectful approach and perspective on development that received wide loan distribution in Danish schools.

the creation and development of the State of Israel, we are now faced with 1.5 million refugees...we are constantly informed about the changing political situation in the Middle East, whereas the information is much more sparse about the humanitarian initiatives.” The conflict is often talked about as being unresolved and Israel unwilling to take responsibility for refugees or development.

In 1981 DCA’s new general secretary, Jens Jørgen Thomsen, and chairman, Jørgen Nielsen, visited Israel/Palestine and wrote an analytical report critical of Israel’s behavior in the occupied territories: “...The Jews are settling spread out over the territories...Court martial conditions with arbitrary arrests are applied in East Jerusalem as well as in Gaza and on the West Bank.” Half a year later the general secretary visited again and was so shocked by what he was a personal witness to, that upon his return he called a press conference on May 18, 1982, where he criticized Israel and the reality of unequal rights he had experienced. This triggered the first major media debate and wave of donor letters criticizing DCA for taking an allegedly political position. DCA’s board discussed the event at large, some wondering if a press meeting was the best way to bring forward such impressions from a visit, but the support to the general secretary, who did not regret any of his comments, was unanimous. The chairman expressed in the media and in letters to donors that DCA was politically non-partisan in its humanitarian work, but had an obligation to inform about the background of the humanitarian disasters it addressed through its work.

In retrospect one might conclude that the May 18, 1982 press meeting and the ensuing internal and external debate was seminal. DCA’s general secretaries and board have ever since on numerous occasions taken clear reactive and proactive public stands on the Israeli occupation as a root cause of Palestinian suffering. Probably the first material with this approach focusing on the Palestinians was produced in 1983 by Kristian Paludan (who also produced DCA’s innovative educational films).

DCA sent out staff and journalists to the region and decided to conduct a more intense and ongoing information campaign describing and condemning the sufferings and the root causes, including the continued growth of Jewish settlements.⁸ More than ever there was a focus on human rights abuses.

Perhaps the most successful and comprehensive media attention from this period was when DCA sent out one of Denmark’s most well-known authors, Kirsten Thorup, together with photographer Marianne Grøndahl, to report from the occupied territories in November 1987 (just before the outbreak of the First Intifada). In a 2-page article in “NØD” Kirsten Thorup wrote: “It was a shocking experience. I had of course heard about the situation of the Palestinians, but the trip affected me more than I had expected.” Sending a well-known author as an eye-witness triggered a renewed media debate about DCA’s methods of portraying the Israeli military oppression and the Palestinian sufferings. The media debate was exacerbated by a publicized letter from DCA to the Israeli ambassador protesting against the IDF’s incursion into YMCA property in East Jerusalem and attacking American and European visitors there and wounding two students, who had participated in peaceful demonstrations.

8. Journalist Knud Vilby wrote numerous articles in major newspapers and gave a national radio interview after a visit. LWF sent a delegation, but plans to send a delegation of Danish religious leaders (Lutheran, Baptist, Catholic, Jewish), didn’t materialize.

3: Financing

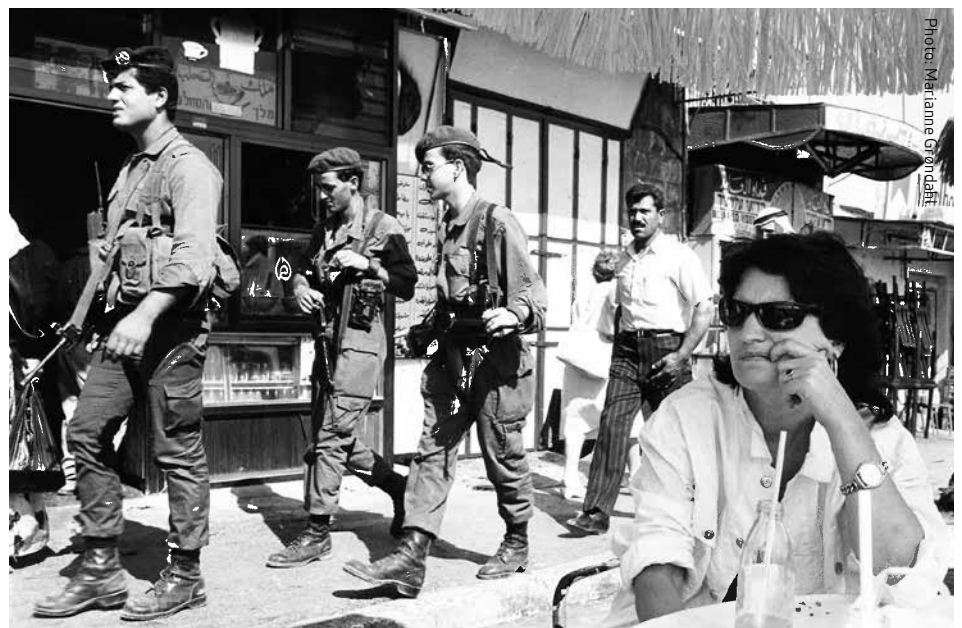
Since DCA’s overall income increased year by year, also the contributions earmarked for the Middle East gradually grew, but globally the share for the Middle East fell over time. For example, in 1971, 20% of DCA’s regular income was still allocated to the

Middle East: USD 72,500. But already by 1973 this had fallen to 7.5%, although the amount in USD remained stable.

Some special grants were offered, e.g. in 1977 for a new roof for YMCA's VTC in Jericho (USD 25,000) and to the Jerusalem's Crippled Children's Centre, when LWF handed it over to local management (USD 10,000 for some years).

4: Practical implementation

The type of activities and the partners undertaking them in the Middle East remained very stable and rather traditional over quite a number of years.





From 1988 to 2000

Soldiers at checkpoints
makes it unsafe to be
Palestinian.

Photo: Mikkel Østergaard

Introduction

This was a period of huge changes. On the ground in Israel/Palestine the First Intifada broke out in December 1987 and lasted until a peace process set in in the early 1990s. The conflict again brought the Israeli/Palestinian issue into the headlines and in many ways changed the public and political perceptions in the West about Palestine. The humanitarian and development work naturally also changed character as we will see below.

Also the Gulf War in 1990-91 ushered in a new dynamics in the Middle East. The Madrid process in 1991 was the beginning of peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians and ultimately led - through a parallel secret process conducted by Norway - to the signing in Washington D.C. of the Oslo 1 Accord in September 1993. There was widespread hope that peace was now in sight with the possible creation of a Palestinian state. This was, for example, voiced by East Jerusalem YMCA's GS, Kameel Nasir, in a Christmas message in NØD in December 1993, when he wrote that although celebrations ought only to start when the Palestinian people have achieved their goal and actually experience peace on earth. But the message of Christmas "obliges us to work even harder to translate the Christmas message in the life and work carried out by e.g. the YMCA in The Holy Land, so that we can all become God's instruments for peace".

But there were soon worrying voices. From Jørgen Rosendal, hospital administrator at the AVH, and Ruth Bårris, chief nurse at the Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza, concerns were raised about the many restrictions of movement on Palestinians and the many victims of clashes with the Israeli army. The massacre of 27 people in the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron in 1994 by a Jewish settler was another example, where Al Haq encouraged DCA to write a letter of concern to the Israeli Government (att. Minister of Defense, Yitzhak Rabin).⁹

1: Understanding of aid

Internally, in DCA the years 1992-95 again marked a change with the appointment of a new general secretary, Christian Balslev-Olesen, and a new chairman of the board, Max Kruse. This change was accompanied by a new formulation of DCA's policy¹⁰ and a much more systematic approach to planning, focusing and professionalizing DCA's work. A stronger coherence between development work, awareness-raising, building public opinion and lobby/advocacy activities was promoted actively¹¹. In the process Palestine was selected as the key country in the Middle East and visits of staff and board members familiarized HQ with the context and the projects with a view of developing a more adequate and coherent programme with the partners and a response to the political developments on the ground. This period could be characterized by the phrase "give them a fishing license". At the beginning of this period this approach was manifested in support to human rights organisations as well as to reconciliation efforts (in the Oslo years). Later this was expanded to also include advocacy.

9. In the following years letters of concern in specific cases were sent to Israeli authorities as well as to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

10. Quotes from the new policy document from 1993: "DCA cooperates with churches and other partners in addressing root causes of people's needs and sufferings, alleviate distress and create better and more just living conditions. Emphasis is on "a relationship of solidarity and mutual commitment in partner cooperation." Theological formulations like: "A theology of reconciliation - not one that covers up injustice or inequality, but one that requires dialogue, repentance, forgiveness and a will to see justice be done."

11. A mid-year report in 1994 stated this change as follows: "In NØD we admit that through a non-propagandist and very honest approach we appeal less to people's feelings of compassion and focus more on encouraging people to use their brains to take a stand on complicated realities e.g. Palestine."

2: Awareness-raising and engagement

In these years DCA gradually brought more in-depth analyses to its board and to the public on what finally exploded in the first Intifada in 1987. The 1987 annual report reads: "In this situation DCA has not been able to stay silent about the methods being used against the Palestinian population in the occupied territories. Some would say that DCA is politicizing. But we answer with an image brought to us by the Philippine theologian Edicio dela Torre: "If a mother sees her big child suppress the smaller child, she will scold the older one. But this does not mean that she does not love that child." And in 1988: "If one ethnic group A is oppressed and exploited by another ethnic group B, which is fighting to stay in power, we provide aid to the victims of oppression and are then accused of being politically biased towards group A. We can't evade the fact that our humanitarian aid can have political implications such that the power relations somehow change over time." In 1990 the formulation in the annual report was sharpened even further: "DCA is not good at taking sides. We are always on the side of the losers...We both support those who are in need and attempt to change the structures that create this need."

After a visit in January 1988 DCA's GS stated publicly that "the collective humiliation that soldiers are subjecting the Palestinian population to is inhuman and unjustified." A growing public understanding and sympathy for the Palestinian cause could be observed and a hope that at the end a viable peace might be achieved. A visit by the WCC's Middle East secretary, Ghassan Rubeiz, to DCA also provided a deeper understand of the context and what DCA could do to address the situation. He mentioned for the first time the Fourth Geneva Conventions that are applicable to the occupied territories.



There was a belief that if the Intifada succeeded a Palestinian state might be created. Thus, more dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians was encouraged. In 1989 international, Israeli and Palestinian peace movements conducted a series of events in Jerusalem and Bethlehem during Christmas under the slogan “1990: Time for Peace”. The Danish bishop Bertil Wiberg participated and Archbishop Desmond Tutu held a Christmas sermon in the Church of Nativity.

Awareness of the Christian presence in the Middle East was also growing in DCA. The fact that many of these ‘first Christians’ were emigrating as a result of the conflict¹², but also the important role they were still playing in society. Churches in the Middle East were asking for more attention and contacts in the West. In 1994 DCA published an educational booklet on “The Churches in the Middle East” and in 1994 supported the publication in Danish of Colin Chapman’s book “Whose Promised Land?” which contains a sharp criticism of Christian-Zionism. Visits were organized in these years for important church programmes in Denmark by Jean Zaru (Sabeel), Harry Hagopian (MECC, Jerusalem), Majed Nassar (Beit Sahour). DCA invited the Alternative Tourism Group (ATG) in Beit Sahour to Denmark to visit travel agencies that organized trips to Israel in order to offer alternative tourism that includes the Palestinian and the local Christian component. Rifat Kassis, director of YMCA’s Rehabilitation Programme, visited Denmark for two weeks in early 1995 meeting with youth in confirmation classes, part of the action campaign “The Shepherds’ Field”.¹³

Study trips to Israel-Palestine were organized by DCA, including church delegations. At the end of 1996, DCA invited a delegation of Danish politicians to Israel/Palestine¹⁴ (the first of many to follow). They were shocked by the facts on the ground – especially the construction of new settlements and roads.”¹⁵

Danish youth became increasingly interested in Israel-Palestine in these years. In 1993 the Danish Christian youth movement FDF/FPF with over 30,000 members initiated a 2-year (EU-funded) campaign with information, media attention, fund-raising (goal: 1 million DKK), a campaign bus, national summer camp and youth exchange campaign under the slogan “Betna Betkum” focusing on the Middle East.¹⁶ The campaign was so successful that it was extended by another year.

The Danish high-schools’ national annual fund-raising event, ‘Operation Day’s work’, chose amongst several options to make Palestine the object of their massive information and fund-raising campaign in 1998. They raised DKK 4 million (supplemented with DKK 1.1 mill. from Danida) for educational institutions in Gaza (VTC), YMCA-VTC in Jericho, Beit Sahour (YMCA Rehabilitation Programme), YMCA Women’s Counselling and a Lutheran High School in Beit Sahour. The choice of Palestine was by no means uncontroversial, but they stood firm against all criticism of being politically biased. This was also the 50th anniversary of the displacement in 1948/the Nakba, and DCA devoted most of a 16-page issue of NØD in May 1998 to inform in depth about the Palestinian issue, the limited outcome of the Oslo peace process and the humanitarian work undertaken.

DCA had also been involved in rehabilitating the Anglican Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza, and during these years Danish hospital directors and nurses were eye witnesses to the atrocities committed by the IDF especially in Gaza and reported them back to the board and to the public in Denmark.¹⁷

Overall, these were years where DCA’s information work, especially the monthly

12. In 1948 the Christians constituted 10% of the Palestinian population. In 1990 they were about 3-4% and by 2020 the figure had fallen to about 1½%.

13. NØD, April 1995, “Cocoa drinkers and dreamers”: “We Palestinians are dreamers. Our dreams aren’t realistic, but they keep us alive.”

14. Jørgen Estrup (R), Ulla Tørnæs (V) and Peter Duetoft (CD) together with DCA’s chairman Max Kruse, board member Helle Ulrichsen and DCA staff member Uffe Gjerding.

15. NØD, October 1996

16. FDF/FPFs publications “Betna Betkum” (activity booklet) and “My House is your House” (study material) were circulated in large numbers and translated into English and shared with partners.

17. Ahli Arab Hospital: Olaf Beck, Erik Nistrup Madsen, Jens Erik Tranholm Mikkelsen and his wife Aase, Anne-Lena La Cour, Jørgen Rosendahl and his wife Carmen, Torben Glarborg Jørgensen; AVH: Jørgen Rosendal, Ruth Bårris (1992-1997); JCCC: Margit Stavnsbjerg Henriksen

magazine NØD, expanded and provided more in-depth analytical articles and interviews with partners. With a circulation of more than 100,000 copies to individual donors, parishes, libraries and the press, this was probably an important complementary source of information to what the media otherwise published. Also a new “Newsletter” provided media and others with important analytical information about developments in DCA’s main areas of focus, including Palestine.

3: Financing

DCA continued supporting its traditional partners for many years, but also expanding the number of partners, e.g. from 1987 also an initial 3-year support for a Centre for Women’s Health operated by the Union of Palestine Medical Relief Committees (MRC). In 1990 a first grant of USD 15,000 was given for legal aid to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza (St. Yves).

The first Danida development grant of DKK 1 million was given to the newly established East Jerusalem YMCA Rehabilitation Programme in Beit Sahour, which provided support to the many victims of the Intifada.

DCA was able to access an extra DKK 15 million in ‘transition’ development aid from Danida in the years 1993-96, as a symbolic support to the peace process. Thus by 1995 over DKK 7 mill were allocated to work in Palestine – an amount that grew further to about DKK 10 mill in the years that followed (with a peak of DKK 17 mill. in 1999). When the LWF’s Augusta Victoria Hospital faced a major crisis in 1996-98, Danida agreed to a special grant of DKK 12 million to ensure its rehabilitation and survival^{18/19}.

The period also opened up for substantial new opportunities for funding, which DCA pursued based on its policy of wanting to limit its dependency on Danida funding (which had grown to 50%) and diversify its funding sources. New EU applications for ECU 300,000 (DKK 2.4 million) were submitted for YMCA’s VTC programme, ECU 300,000 towards the MECC/DSPR clinics in Gaza (1991-93) and an EU grant of ECU 360,000 (DKK 2.9 million) for the renovation of the AVH.

The humanitarian consequences of the Gulf War on Palestine were enormous. All major partners – LWF, MECC, YMCA, MRC – requested extra humanitarian assistance to reach out to the many who had lost their income and were isolated due to rigid restrictions on movement, long-lasting curfews, loss of 130,000 jobs in Israel (unemployment had risen to 50%; hospitals were receiving 80-100% more patients etc.). About DKK 1 million were granted during six months.

All this also meant an increase in staff in HQ’s Middle East group to two-three staff, including a part-time staff from the Information Department.²⁰

4: Practical implementation

DCA had for several years started focusing more on human rights issues around the world. Now, finally, the time came for the Middle East. The Israeli occupation and the many violations of human rights had led to the creation of a number of Israeli and Palestinian human rights organisations. DCA decided, in addition to its traditional long-term partners, to support several of them: B’Tselem, Al Haq, LAW, Badil (Palestinian Refugee Rights), Palestinian Centre for Rights and Law (later changed to: Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, PCHR). PCHR was, for example, also concerned about whether the newly created Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian elections would live up to international human rights standards. An awareness of the difficulties

18. DCA also sent two nurses, Jeanette Grootes and Anna-Lena La Cour to assist the hospital in the transition period.

19. The AVH came under competent local management (Dr. Tawfiq Nasser) and became specialized in dialysis, cancer treatment and diabetes (supported for years by the Danish Diabetes Foundation and Dr. Torsten Dekkers as a senior volunteer along with numerous Danish volunteer foot therapists). Danida provided another DKK 8 mill. from 1999.

20. As a part of professionalizing and focusing the programmatic work, DCA’s Middle East Programme Coordinator, Uffe Gjerding, spent six months in 1998 working from Jerusalem developing DCA’s Country Programme and providing support to the MECC/DSPR in developing their Strategic Plan.

also facing Palestinians within the 'Green Line' also led to support of the Galilee Society - The Arab National Society for Health, Research and Services.

Grassroots peace and dialogue initiatives like the Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement Between People in Beit Sahour (PCRBP), the International Centre for Peace in the Middle East (ICPME), the Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy (PCPD) and the Alternative Information Centre, The Jerusalem Link, Reut Sadaka, Sabeel (Ecumenical Theological Centre) - all supported by DCA, grew out of the ashes of the Intifada. But at the same time new Jewish settlements were planned and constructed. A farmer who had lost most of his land expressed it as follows: "You can't take our land with one hand and establish peace with the other hand." DCA took upon itself the coordination of agencies' awareness-raising and campaigning on the issue of the creation of a new major settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim (Har Homa) close to Bethlehem and also supported the creation of a Danish "Clergy for Peace" initiative under the Ecumenical Council of Denmark.



From 2000 to 2010



Replica of the security wall
built at Roskilde Festival in
2004

Photo: DanChurchAid

21. E.g. 7 journalists and one photographers were selected to each spend 2 months in Gaza to provide documentation
22. Jeppe Kofod (S), Margrethe Auken (SF), Ebbe Kalnæs (CD). Extensive media coverage came out of the visit.
23. Led by Bishop Niels-Henrik Arendt, chairman of DCA's council. Upon their return they reported to Danish politicians on their observations and demanded that the trade agreement with Israel be fully respected in light of human rights violations.
24. In a report to DCA's board Peter Lodberg as a reaction to a media controversy writes: "Israel, that has refused a UN investigation, has lost its innocence."... "The big question is: How do we convey the message that we are dealing with a situation, which keeps reminding us of South Africa before 1994."
25. Rev. Mitri Raheb wrote about this from a Christian faith perspective in his book "Bethlehem Besieged" in 2004; published in Danish in 2005.
26. Jørgen Flint-Pedersen produced two films with the titles "The Occupied" and "Marriage in Ramallah" depicting life in these terrible times. DCA had - legitimately enough - used Danida funds to finance the film, but was forced to retract.

Introduction

In September 2000 the Second Intifada broke out as a result of the failure of the 2000 Camp David Summit and Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to the Temple Mount. This time the Intifada was much more violent and with many casualties amongst both Palestinian and Israeli civilians. Closures and restrictions exacerbated the already miserable living conditions of many Palestinians. Terrorism in the form of suicide bombings was used by some Palestinian groups especially from 2001-2006. Hopes in the peace process vanished and with it most of the dialogue and reconciliation efforts. DCA and its partners had to revert to providing more emergency aid and support to documenting human rights violations, but also to intensify their information work²¹ and political lobby efforts towards authorities and politicians (in Denmark and in the EU), including a trip for Danish politicians and three journalists²² and one for Danish church people²³ at the beginning of 2001.

The 'nine-eleven' attack on the World Centre Twin towers in New York and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, had far reaching implications globally and in Palestine. The fight against terror overruled human rights considerations. And the 'clash of civilizations' paradigm, where Muslims everywhere were under suspicion, gained ground. With a strong focus on the violent conflict, those years securing media focus on human rights was difficult. DCA sought to bring in some other information and perspectives like the closures, collective punishment, liquidations, destruction of property and the lack of international protection. The Jenin massacre in April 2002 was a terrible event. DCA's GS, Peter Lodberg, visited shortly after and reported to the media and in Danish national radio.²⁴ Both the DCA's board and annual meeting gave its full support to the line taken by DCA staff on Israel/Palestine.

A special Danish dimension caught fire globally, when satirical cartoons depicting the prophet Mohammed were published in the daily 'Jyllandsposten' on September 30, 2005. DCA had to withdraw its ecumenical companions for a period of time, and DCA got involved in promoting dialogue work, including the participation of board member bishop Karsten Nissen in a panel debate on Palestinian TV.

On the ground things got ever more difficult and the humanitarian situation worse by the day. The construction of the "Separation fence/wall", by-pass roads, house demolitions and more settlements made movement and maintaining a livelihood more and more difficult for the Palestinians. The spiral of violence with suicide bombers and violent retaliations had a heavy toll in terms of dead and wounded civilians. Extensive destruction e.g. in Bethlehem (incl. the siege on the Church of Nativity for 40 days), Ramallah, Jenin and Gaza took place as Israeli troops entered areas A.^{25/26} DCA wrote letters of complaint to the Israeli ambassador. As a sign of desire to still work on reconciliation, the Israeli-Palestinian 'Parents Circle of Bereaved Families' was invited to Denmark in 2003 by DCA and received DKK 450,000 from the Roskilde Festival.

1: Understanding of aid

Important changes took place in DCA around the year 2000. The concept of mutuality in partnership was started through a Partners' Round Table exercise jointly with Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) in September 1997²⁷. As a part of democratizing DCA's governance structures (a requirement often demanded of the partners), an international core group was created as an advisory body to the board of DCA²⁸. At the Palestine country level annual partner meetings/round tables were created, where the representatives of the ACT (Action by Churches Together) donor partners met with local partners to discuss local developments and the programmatic responses of the partners.

When DCA revised its statutes in 2001, the element of advocacy was introduced as an objective, by adding the formulation *“increase awareness of the causes of need and of inequalities, and mobilize popular and political will to act in order to change these conditions”*. This was clearly reflected in DCA's 'Programme Presentation 1999-2002', in which the Middle East section notes that *“Factors leading to poverty and oppression can ultimately only be removed through political change. Therefor DCA's role is to interpret this to the Danish public and politicians, with a special focus on church-related people and the youth. Awareness-building must be coupled with advocacy that applies pressure on these authorities – be they Israeli or Palestinian – who carry responsibility for the present state of affairs, but also on the Danish authorities who may be able to influence the developments in the region.”*

In 2000 the five European ACT agencies working in Israel/Palestine drew up a joint Palestine policy and strategy in dialogue with local partners, and with PNGO (Palestinian Network of NGOs) worked on a common Palestinian-European advocacy strategy. At the EU level, APRODEV (Association of Protestant Development Agencies in Europe) established a Middle East group with one staff. The aim was to lobby the EU on critical issues relating to Palestine, especially the incorrect application of the Israel-EU trade agreement (carried out in cooperation with the Mattin group and Palestine Monitor).

2: Awareness-raising and engagement

While DCA in the previous period had become much more focused on looking at the root causes of distress and poverty, in these years DCA also focused on offering action-oriented activities e.g. doing advocacy.

Obviously, the year 2000 was an occasion for celebration in The Holy Land. DCA co-published a 64- page booklet “Jerusalem Mosaics” with a focus on Jerusalem and how the local Christians are coping with the challenges they are facing, and also on how Danes can relate to and act on what is happening in The Holy Land.

When DCA in cooperation with the Roskilde Festival in July 2004 agreed to build an 8-meter high copy of the ‘separation wall’ in order to focus on the humanitarian situation in the occupied territories events took a different turn than intended. ‘Accompaniers’ (see below) had organized a ‘café behind the wall’ with information material on the humanitarian situation and an option for signing a petition against the wall²⁹. 20-30,000 festival participants signed up and the 75,000 participants in the festival were positive about the wall carrying the inscription “Make peace not walls”. The event generated DKK 600,000 to be used for mobile clinics on the West Bank through UPMRC. However, never had DCA been witness to such an extensive and heated debate with about 400 newspaper article and letters, including editorials

27. One of the statements that came out of this meeting was that: “Advocacy and political action are seen as an integral part of development.” It was recommended that DCA and NCA “build a stronger alliance for justice and introduce a culture of advocacy and political awareness as an integral part of development assistance.”

28. At its first meeting, one of the issues discussed by the Core Group was “DCA as a ‘political’ organization”. Rifat Kassis, YMCA East Jerusalem, represented the Middle East in this core group for a number of years.

29. DCA's board had already signed a petition against the wall. In its August newsletter, DCA's carried an editorial: “We have chosen sides – we support the efforts of civil society”.

30. 10 years later, in 2014, the Roskilde Festival requested to repeat an event with the wall at the festival. DCA's newly established youth branch, NU, took responsibility for the event and with young Israelis and Palestinians from 'Grassroots Jerusalem' visiting to inform the festival participants about the situation in Israel/Palestine. The event generated donations of DKK 500,000, 5000 signatures to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and new members for NU. DCA's board expressed gratitude that NU had engaged in this activity, although also the event again proved to be somewhat controversial, but with less media attention and political impact.

31. In 2008/9 DCA developed a wholly new communications approach and strategy based on the theory that motivating people to act (e.g. financial contributions) would motivate them to learn more and eventually support advocacy. So, information dissemination/ awareness-raising was no longer seen as the point of entry to engagement and action. There was a feeling that some of the information work/ action on Israel/Palestine – e.g. the wall at the Roskilde Festival - had been counterproductive as seen in reactions from some sectors in the public. "DCA is a voluntary organization with high credibility because we act. We are there for others, speak out on their behalf, we contribute something. As soon as we speak of attitudes/positions some will agree and others disagree. In other words, it becomes political. Disagreement, intransigency and the desire to be in the right, surface. Our research tells us, that DCA risks its position as a people's organization. It is suicide for us as a humanitarian organization in terms of our popularity if we are primarily known as having taken positions rather than acting." (Quote from introduction to new communications strategy). Some board members reminded that DCA should still not be afraid of on occasion of speaking out about controversial things. With time the information department became the 'engagement department'.

32. "Drop the Dates" was the title of a 'viewpoint' in NØD January 2003.

33. DCA board meeting January 2002

from major newspapers. About half were positive and the other half critical accusing DCA of being political. The event was afterwards analyzed by DCA, its board and its council in order to see what lessons could be learnt in terms of conveying DCA's main concern: the humanitarian situation.³⁰ In the advocacy plans for 2005 DCA stated that "given the entrenched positions in a Danish and global public context regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a key challenge will be to design a new advocacy and communications strategy that contributes to moving opinion amongst politicians and the part of the public that has not yet made up its mind on the conflict".³¹

DCA's – and APRODEV's – advocacy became more focused, in line with DCA's objective with its advocacy work (2006); "DCA partners and country offices are able to influence local and national political decision-making to the benefit of the poor and marginalized". DCA launched an awareness-raising campaign against settlement products imported in violation of the EU trade agreement with Israel³². Ultimately DCA wanted "not to use the term 'boycott', but rather to strengthen the understanding of peace in the Middle East, based on the capacity of Danish authorities to act accordingly, based on conventions and principles."³³ It was hoped that by taking "a legalistic approach DCA may be able to mobilise Danish importers, consumers and authorities around the matter." In 2006 a focused campaign "Where is the border drawn?" was launched after careful analysis of target groups and messages. Focus was on the illegal settlements and the confiscation of land and the humanitarian consequences. This 'objective' approach did not generate much media attention and a debate in parliament over a motion on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict became very polarized. Yet, after a lengthy dialogue with the British-Danish security company G4S, DCA decided in 2011 to terminate its contract with them and start afresh – at a considerable cost – with a new security company. DCA's action had further impact up to the level of the European parliament. From 2012 and onwards DCA engaged in documentation and communication around the protection of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in the occupied territories including through cooperation with DanWatch and through ACT EU.

Two containers of oranges (47,000) from Gaza were successfully imported through DCA to COOP-Denmark in early 2000 as an attempt to provide access for Palestinian





products to the outside world. The exercise demonstrated the almost unsurmountable challenges that this posed that no commercial trade company was ultimately willing to undertake. The informational value of the exercise was also important.

In 1999 DCA initiated a pilot programme for young volunteers to Palestine to start in 2000. Volunteers were placed for 3-6 months with DCA's partners and became an important sign of solidarity and personal witnesses to events on the ground. Already in the year 2000, 14 medical students were sent as volunteers and they reported widely in the public on their return to Denmark. Soon the term 'accompaniers' was coined, because an important dimension of their role was to accompany Palestinians through check points to clinics, hospitals and their fields. On a recommendation from the Danish church delegation visiting in February 2001 this programme developed into what became the World Council of Churches' EAPPI (Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme to Palestine and Israel), which has lasted until this day with volunteers from many countries and continents.

Many visits were organized in these years, especially for politicians and church persons. Amongst the many visits in these difficult years were two church delegations, carried out jointly with The Ecumenical Council of Denmark and the Council on International Relations of the Church of Denmark in 2004 and 2006 (and again in 2015). These visits were eye-openers for the participants and symbols of solidarity with local partners and Christian communities. The participants published reports, sent letters to Danish

government and the EU commission on their findings and concerns, appealing for effective action by Denmark and the EU. They also wrote articles, gave lectures and some parish twinnings were established.

Danish YMCA/YWCA carried out a 2-year 'mission project' from 2000-2002, with a focus on Palestine. This included development of information material, study trips, fund-raising and a volunteer programme.

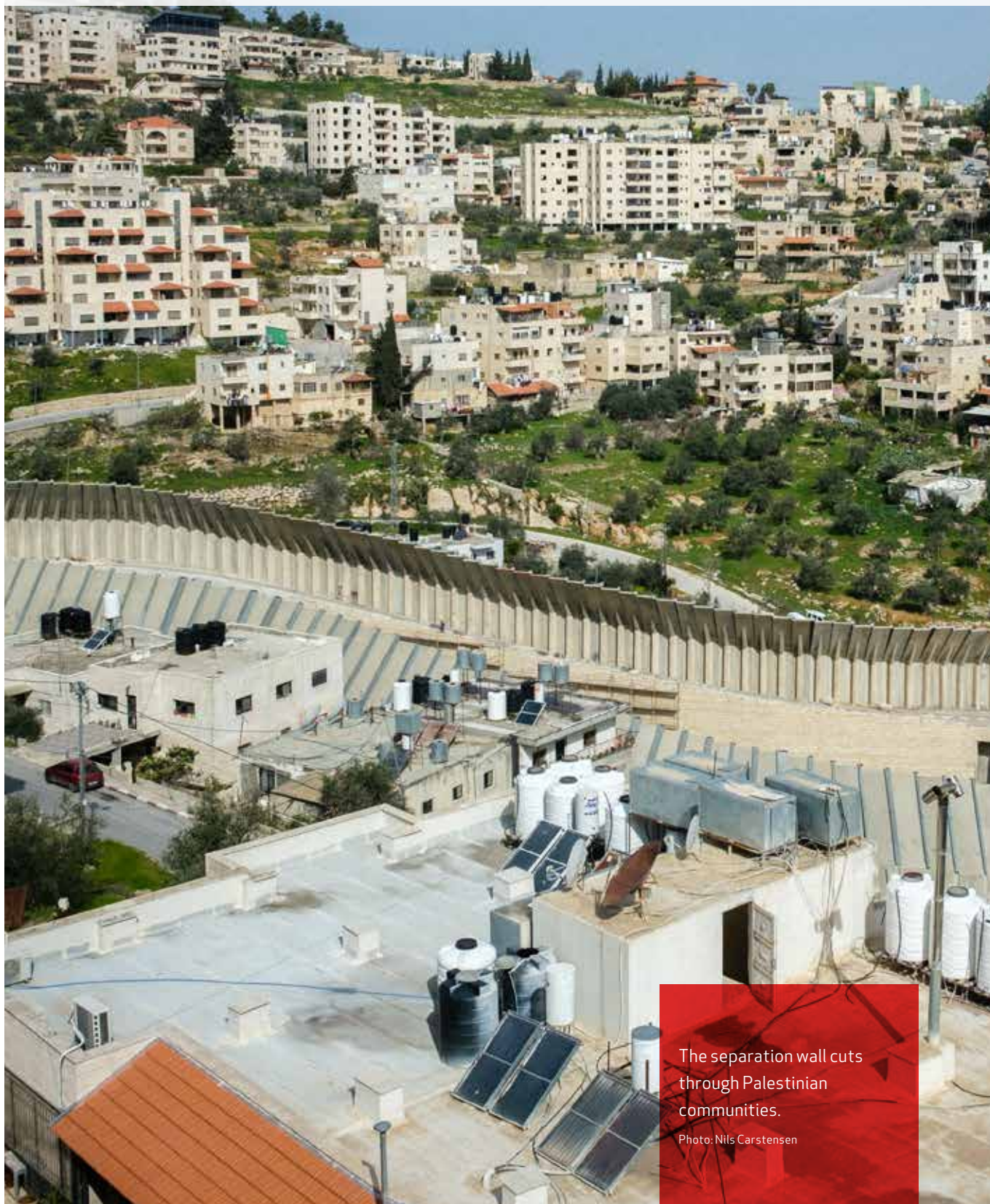
3: Financing

This was a period of continued diversification of funding, especially as cuts in Danida funds and conditionalities on NGOs increased. EU funds and private funds, e.g. the World Diabetes Foundation, became more important and Danes were presented with innovative ideas for financial donations e.g. the 'Give a Goat' annual campaign launched in 2002, which in Palestine was implemented in the form of donating to the planting of olive trees.

4: Practical implementation

Programmatically these were years when DCA decided on three programme types for Palestine: 1. Peace and reconciliation; 2. Access to humanitarian aid and basic services; 3. Women's rights in civil society ('political space'). Particularly the latter was a new focal point carried out with partners such as YMCA's Women's Programme and PWWS (The Palestinian Working Women Society for Development). A programme with senior volunteers was initiated with a psychologist (YMCA Rehabilitation Programme), medical doctors (AVH diabetes programme and cancer programme).

From 2010 to 2022



The separation wall cuts through Palestinian communities.

Photo: Nils Carstensen

Introduction

This most recent period has been characterized by a total disillusionment with the Oslo peace process. The occupation has only become more entrenched and more accurately described as de-facto annexation of large parts of the Palestinian territory. The blockade and recurrent wars in Gaza have had a devastating effect on the lives of Palestinian civilians.

Already in August 2010 DCA's chairman, Poul Mollerup, wrote in a newspaper article after a visit: "I am worried that we are getting all too used to a new "normality", where these will be the conditions under which one will have to live in the future. One side has the power – and imposes it – while the other side has to live a daily life which is strongly affected by being occupied"³⁴.

Recently, the occupation and Israel's policies towards the Palestinians are increasingly characterized as being of an apartheid nature by Palestinian, Israeli and international human rights organisations including Amnesty International³⁵.

The Palestinian leadership is fragmented with the PA/Fatah leadership in the West Bank and Hamas controlling Gaza. Elections for the legislative council have not been held since 2006 and the PA is on an increasing autocratic track. Both the West Bank and Gaza are characterized by a decreasing respect for human rights and civil liberties. The international community is less active in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict than before and there is no real prospect of the US or the EU investing real political capital in addressing international law violations and getting a viable peace process back on track. The Trump Plan from 2020 fundamentally challenged international law as the framework for a future peace agreement, but the EU did not revise its existing policy and the so-called EU-parameters for a two-state solution to the conflict are still in place.

1: Understanding of aid

DCA is moving from a focus on support to individual institutions and their activities to viewing development as a tool to create structural changes that can create more lasting solutions in addressing poverty and inequality along with increased 'space' for civil society to influence development. Projects are collected in programmes with common goals and partners are encouraged to cooperate or at least coordinate their efforts. Working with 5-year strategic plans ('Vision and Plan') have become the norm in DCA in these years and the basis on which DCA enters into long-term agreements and frame-funding with Danida and other donors. The latest 2015-2022 global strategy focuses on three goals: 1. Saving lives, 2. Building Resilient Communities, and 3. Fighting Inequality. For the Palestine country programme this means that DCA in collaboration with its local implementing faith-based and secular humanitarian and human rights partners work to address not only the consequences of rounds of conflict and displacement, but also seeks to strengthen the individual and collective social

36. DCA's chairman, Poul Mollerup, wrote in a newspaper article after his visit in August 2010: "I am worried that we are getting all too used to a new "normality", where these will be the conditions under which one will have to live in the future. One side has the power – and imposes it – while the other side has to live a daily life which is strongly affected by being occupied. I appeal to the responsible politicians on both sides to be considerate and be conscious of their responsibility, so that it will be possible this time to find a solution to the conflict. And I hope our own responsible politicians will agree to apply the necessary pressure on the parties involved in order to find a solution."

37. B'Tselem, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Harvard School of Law etc.



36. Interestingly the Palestinian participants were quite clear that changes would happen by 2030, while their Israeli counterparts didn't think much would change.

37. Initiated in 2014 and with a concluding report in September 2018: "Learning from community-led resilience responses in the occupied Palestinian territories". One beneficiary says: "Now I know that we don't have to wait for some donor to come and solve our problem. We can plan and come up with solutions ourselves."

and economic resilience of Palestinians living under occupation while supporting Palestinian and Israeli human rights defenders to promote respect for human rights and international humanitarian law among Israeli and Palestinian duty bearers.

From this period, worth mentioning are two processes that were innovative to DCA's way of working and interacting with its partners:

- The "Scenario 2025" process conducted in 2013-14 and producing a report on "Scenario 2025: The World...What it might look like" and "Some Key Challenges to agents of development". Two workshops conducted in Israel/Palestine in 2013/14 gave the partners an opportunity to reflect on future scenarios towards 2030 - beyond the traditional 3-year programmatic approach and to envision how they could act proactively on such scenarios in Israel/Palestine.³⁶
- The "Local to Global" (L2GP) project, which involved partners in looking at new ways of providing aid, where agency and power is transferred from international and local NGOs to local communities themselves. Through voluntary engagement local community members identify their own challenges and decide on their own priorities for support, e.g. through un-earmarked cash grants to local communities to design and implement their own resilience and protection responses.³⁷

2: Awareness-raising and engagement

DCA's efforts to raise public awareness about developments in Israel/Palestine and the root causes of the humanitarian needs moved increasingly from DCA's printed

media to its online channels including DCA's website and Facebook and to proactive press and media work³⁸. A recent example is the DCA press work around developments in Sheikh Jarrah and Gaza in May 2021. DCA staff in Jerusalem, Gaza and Copenhagen gave more than 15 interviews to national radio and television, were quoted in 47 Danish dailies and in more than 70 articles. DCA communication on Twitter reached more than 750,000 people, an all-time DCA record. Furthermore, DCA increasingly supported local partners' efforts to raise public awareness rather than doing this work itself.

While the communication work took on a slightly different form, so did efforts to inform policy conversations in Denmark and across Europe. In collaboration with other ACT agencies and the ACT EU office in Brussels, delegations became a vehicle for more systematic and continuous engagement with European policy makers and influencers on how to respond to developments in Israel/Palestine from an international law-based perspective. From an initial focus on Danish participants, the delegations became increasingly pan-European and were systematically followed up by joint engagement with Palestinian and Israeli partners in European capitals. Cooperation with research institutions including DanWatch continued and so did efforts to strengthen adherence to the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human rights in the occupied territories.

The Israel/Palestine conflict also caught the attention of young people. The WCC's accompaniment programme continued with Danish and Norwegian participants and Danish folk high schools (højskole and efterskole) offered courses and visits to Israel/Palestine in cooperation with local partners, which became very popular and have created awareness and solidarity amongst youth, their parents and beyond. The olive tree planting campaign conducted in partnership with JAI (YMCA and YWCA's Joint Advocacy Initiative), each year brings close to 100 Danish boarding school students to Palestine. The annual Palestine Marathon events were opportunities for participants to participate in exposure visits organized by DCA and its partners.

In 2009 an important call emanated from the Christian community in Palestine: "Kairos –A moment of truth: A word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering". Amongst the signatories were the leaders of all the Christian churches in Palestine. In their own words:

"The Kairos Document is the word of Christian Palestinians to the world about what is happening in Palestine. 10 years later the call was renewed in "Cry for Hope": "Our word is a cry of hope, with love, prayer and faith in God. We address it first of all to ourselves and then to all the churches and Christians in the world, asking them to stand against injustice and apartheid, urging them to work for a just peace." A Global Kairos Network was established in support of the call of the churches and Christians in Palestine. DCA kept contact with Kairos Palestine, but other church groups in Denmark took the lead in disseminating the documents and supporting the movement's global advocacy initiatives."

3: Financing

The establishment of a local office quickly proved an asset in terms of diversification of funding and accessing further funding, e.g. from ECHO (Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission) and DG NEAR (European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations). The total programme thus grew from app. DKK 10 mill. in 2010 to DKK 27 mill. by 2012 and to DKK 49 mill. in 2021 with 15 strong local partners. Of course, the terrible wars in Gaza in 2008-9 ('Operation Cast Lead'), 2012 ('Pillar of Defense') and 2014 ('Protective Edge') and the Israeli ongoing blockade developed into a humanitarian crisis spiral, which necessitated significant humanitarian assistance.

38. DCA's magazine "NØD" – later "Magasinet" – brought about 70 pages of written information in the period 2000-2009 and only about 13 pages from 2010 to 2019, when DCA ceased to produce a printed magazine altogether.

DCA was well placed to respond effectively with its partners through a small local Gaza team. DCA's presence and high visibility also enabled the launching of special fund-raising campaigns for Gaza, one of which was organized in five cities in Denmark in 2009 by 'The Network' – a group of ethnic citizens with an academic background. The public contributed with DKK 800,000, Danida with DKK 3 mill and ACT with DKK 700,000, enabling DCA through 'The Food Bank' to provide the basic needs for 15,000 persons in Gaza. In the summer of 2014 another appeal had to be made to the public; this time it generated DKK 540,000 in a short time. Similar initiatives took place in relation to consequent escalations. Most recently DCA fundraised during the Gaza-war in May 2021 collecting more than DKK 571,083.

4: Practical implementation

DCA started establishing regional or country offices in all its focus countries from 2001. In 2004 DCA hired its first local part time consultant – Fadia Daibes³⁹ and in 2008 a country office headed by a Danish Country Representative was established in Ramallah. The office was moved to East Jerusalem in 2012. During this period, DCA moved from a centralized programme management run from Copenhagen to a decentralized programme management to create more synergy within and between programmes and the partners involved. Professional demands were required in terms of planning, monitoring, reporting (e.g. on outcomes), evaluation and capacity building of partners. It furthermore became clear that decentralizing DCA to Palestine would open up new opportunities to access donor funds only available if the organization had a local presence.

The new approach required much closer contact with partners than previously had been the case. Local partners had agreed that DCA establish a local office, participated in the development of DCA's country programmes and were the main implementers of the projects in DCA's portfolio.

Having a local office was also conducive to networking and cooperating with other international NGOs present in the country, sometimes sharing common office premises. At the global level DCA joined the new ACT Alliance, when it was formed in 2010 and encouraged the formation of national ACT Fora, e.g. in Palestine. In 2016, in an effort to cooperate further and make savings on running a local office DCA and NCA (Norwegian Church Aid) fused their programmes and offices into a joint programme (based on a positive similar successful experience in Zambia a few years earlier). While the joint DCA/NCA programme model was accompanied by some initial challenges, it proved beneficial in various ways. The new set-up allowed the country office to access a wider range of resources and technical expertise and enabled greater specialization and differentiation of roles in the country office which by the end of 2021 had 16 full time staff (14 in East Jerusalem and 2 in Gaza). It furthermore enabled the gradual reduction of administrative costs relative to the overall programme budget and became a vehicle for cross organizational learning between DCA and NCA.

In 2022, DCA and NCA renewed their joint commitment to the joint programme for another five years (2023-27). With DCA as the lead agency the joint programme continues to be conceptualized according to the global goals of saving lives, building resilient communities and fighting inequality. However, under this conceptual frame, key NCA organizational capacities are incorporated through an integrated Water and Sanitation and Gender Based Violence intervention in Gaza and innovation partnerships between Norwegian private sector companies and universities and Palestinian vocational training centers.

39. Fadia Daibes tragically died in a road accident on March 24, 2009 shortly after she completed her work for DCA.

The 2023-27 joint programme will further strengthen DCA's and NCA's commitments to localization of aid both through its continued commitment to a partner-implementation modality and scaled up advocacy with donors and other international agencies to meet the 'Grand Bargaining' commitments. These efforts further include increased investment in and advocacy for community-led action approaches such as Survivor and Community-led Action (SCIR), which places communities at the center of the decision-making and implementation of donor-supported initiatives in their areas. These efforts further include increased investment in and advocacy for community led action approaches such as survivor and community led action (sclr), which places communities at the center of the decision making and implementation of donor supported initiatives in their areas.

The joint programme will continue existing international advocacy including delegations and joint engagement with Israeli and Palestinian partners. It will strengthen the focus on promoting Palestinian voices and agency in international advocacy – especially focusing on enabling and facilitating young Palestinian men and women to be heard on all the issues that affect their lives, from the occupation to rights and democracy, gender equality and action on climate and environment.



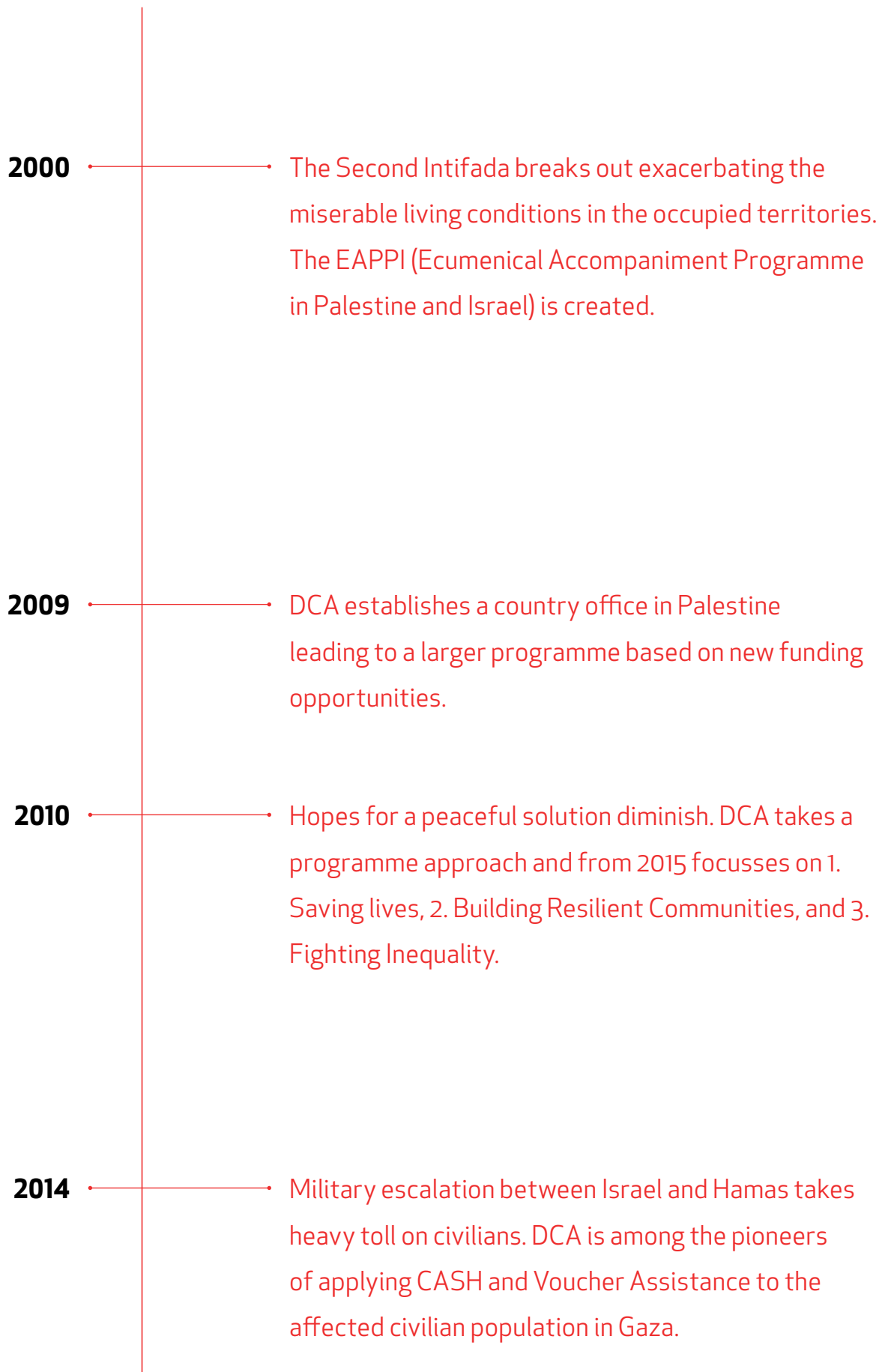
Photo: Nils Carstensen

DanChurchAid in Palestine

SEVEN DECADES OF HUMANITARIAN AID FROM 1954-2022

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- 1922** DanChurchAid founded as “The Danish Evangelical-Lutheran Church’s Emergency Aid to the Evangelical Churches of Europe”.
 - 1948** Creation of the State of Israel, the Nakba where 750.000 Palestinians become refugees.
 - 1954** Name and mandate changed to DanChurchAid and activities beyond Europe, starting with humanitarian aid to Palestinian refugees through The Lutheran World Federation.
 - 1965** Involvement in Palestine broadened with WCC/MECC and YMCA East Jerusalem as partners..
 - 1967** The Six-day War and major fund-raising for humanitarian assistance

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- 1975** • Revised DCA statutes with new emphasis on awareness-raising and influencing public opinion about the root causes of humanitarian needs.
- 1982** • DCA sharpens its criticism of the Israeli occupation and settlement policies creating a major media debate.
- 1987** • The First Intifada increases public awareness of the suffering of Palestinians and the injustices of the occupation. DCA reemphasizes its humanitarian mandate as one which takes sides with the losers
DCA sharpens its rights-based approach to development and initiates support to human rights organisations.
- 1993** • The Oslo1 peace accord ushers in a hope for peace. DCA supports dialogue and reconciliation initiatives. Major fund-raising and awareness-raising amongst Danish youth.







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100 YEARS OF HOPE AND ACTION
..... 1922 - 2022