

New Episcopal Church group calls for divestment from Israeli occupation, in recognition of the new political landscape in Israel and Palestine



Desmond Tutu speaking at the German Evangelical Church in 2007. (Photo: Elke Wetzig/Wikimedia Commons)

The following is a press release from the Episcopal Committee for Justice in Israel and Palestine, followed by its statement, titled “The Episcopal Church’s Response to the New Political Landscape in Israel/Palestine A Paper and Resolution to the 78th General Convention.”

A Call to the Episcopal Church to Recognize the New Political Landscape in Israel & Palestine: New Church Group Calls For Divestment From Israeli Occupation

As the Episcopal Church approaches its 78th General Convention in Salt Lake City this June, a new group, the Episcopal Committee for Justice in Israel and Palestine, has been created to advocate for a just and lasting peace in the Holy Land. (See below for names of group members.)

To coincide with the announcement of its formation, the Committee has issued a statement and resolution, featuring a foreword by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, calling on the church to recognize the new political realities in Israel/Palestine and to adjust its policies accordingly to ensure that we are not profiting from human rights abuses and the suffering of our fellow human beings. Specifically, the Committee is calling on the church to investigate whether we are complicit in Israeli human rights abuses through investments in companies that

profit from Israel's illegal occupation and colonization of Palestinian lands, and to advance the process to divest from such companies if we are found to be doing so.

"As a church we have consistently opposed the occupation,' said Reverend Canon Gary Commins, DD, Deputy to General Convention from the Diocese of Los Angeles, past chair of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, former Chair of the Episcopal Service Corps, and one of the authors of the statement. "At the present time, we may be complicit in the oppression of the Palestinian people. The time has long passed when the Episcopal Church must recognize this. The time is now for us to truly respect the dignity of every human being, including Palestinians."

Noting the changes that have occurred since the church's Executive Council called for constructive engagement with such companies in 2005, including the collapse of the US-sponsored peace process last year due mainly to Israeli settlement construction, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent pledge never to allow the creation of a Palestinian state, the statement urges church members to take a moral stand, following in the footsteps of our brothers and sisters in other mainline churches such as the Presbyterians and United Methodists, who have adopted boycott and divestment initiatives targeting Israel's nearly half-century-old occupation of Palestinian lands. The statement reads in part:

"At this juncture, in this new landscape, our purpose is to help end the occupation and to assure civil rights and equality for all the peoples of Israel and Palestine. The Church's approach should be straightforward: boycott, divestment, and sanctions are tools of nonviolent peacemaking that put the weight of our corporate dollars behind our commitment to justice. The Church's financial portfolio can again be used as an instrument of political change. And it can help to break the stalemate while illuminating the ways that America otherwise enables a brutal status quo."

The statement also includes a resolution calling on the General Convention to institute a process for being socially responsible with its investments related to companies that undergird the infrastructure of Israel's occupation. (See here for full text of statement and resolution.)

The Episcopal Committee for Justice in Israel and Palestine [members listed below]

The Episcopal Church's Response to the New Political Landscape in Israel/Palestine

A Paper and Resolution to the 78th General Convention

Issued by: The Episcopal Committee for Justice in Israel and Palestine

The Very Reverend Walter Brownridge – Deputy to General Convention from the Diocese of Hawaii, and Dean, the Cathedral of St. Andrew, Honolulu.

The Reverend Canon Gary Commins, DD – Deputy to General Convention from the Diocese of Los Angeles and past chair of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship and former Chair of the Episcopal Service Corps.

Ms. Sarah Lawton – Deputy to General Convention from the Diocese of California and recipient in 2013 of the House of Deputies medal.

Dr. Derek Leebaert – Author of several prominent books on US national security, including *Magic and Mayhem: The Delusions of American Foreign Policy* (2011), partner in the global consulting firm, MAP AG, and a founding editor of the Harvard-based periodical “*International Security*.” He is a former adjunct professor at Georgetown University and is an Episcopal layman, the Diocese of Washington.

Mr. Newland Smith – Senior Deputy to General Convention from the Diocese of Chicago and recipient of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship’s 2015 Nevin Sayre peace award.

Foreword

By Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, Cape Town

My dear sisters and brothers in the Episcopal Church in the United States:

I recall so joyously the witness and generosity of your Church in helping those of us caught in the shackles of apartheid during those dark days of our oppression. You were an enormous strength to us, and we forever remain bonded in our commitment to justice for all people everywhere.

In recent years, I have been increasingly dismayed at the deteriorating conditions of the Palestinian people living under occupation, which has now gone on for 47 years with no end in sight. Even a decade or more ago when I was in the Holy Land I saw the marks of apartheid in the policies of the Israeli government. The Palestinians are forced to live in segregated areas, often relocated to less desirable land so Jewish settlers can live in fine red ceramic-roofed houses with paved roads while most Palestinians live in squalor in villages and refugee camps. Water is diverted to settlers so they can have nice green lawns, irrigated fields and community swimming pools while Palestinians endure shortages and dusty roads. I looked at this and I saw the ugly face of apartheid and the racism within it. I have been vilified numerous times for making this comparison to apartheid. I shrink not one step backwards. I saw and I name what I saw: apartheid, separation, segregation. I might add that these settlements are illegal under international law, as is the occupation itself, and an affront to the world.

My visit was before the building of a wall which separates Palestinians from settlers and the state of Israel. Where this wall or fence or barrier violates Palestinian land, it serves as a form of segregation. Segregation is a word seared in your own nation’s experience when you struggled to promote civil rights through the eradication of Jim Crow laws. You made a witness then and I ask now: are you being called to do so again on behalf of a deeply oppressed people? I remain heartbroken to see the gross injustice of the occupation being imposed by Jewish people who, themselves, have endured so many centuries of oppression and suffering, much of it at the hands of Christians, culminating in the tragedy of the Holocaust. One would have expected just the opposite, a country, Israel, which would be a light to the nations, a beacon of justice. Other Jewish voices have arisen to denounce what is done in their name through this shameful occupation.

I understand the enormous burden western Christians carry for the many centuries of anti-Semitic behavior towards our Jewish sisters and brothers. It is a dreadful record

which will require years of healing and reconciling work to fully overcome. But I must point out to you quite emphatically that the injustices borne by Jewish people in Europe and later the United States cannot be corrected at the expense of another injustice perpetrated against the Palestinian people. Why should the Palestinians be the bearers of the sins of western complicity in anti-Semitism and the Holocaust? Your rightful initiative to reconcile with the Jewish people should not come with a blind eye for the inhumane policies inflicted by the state of Israel on the Palestinians.

I therefore commend this paper that has been prepared by thoughtful Episcopalians who recognize your own country's complicity in Palestinian suffering under occupation, and of your investments that undergird that suffering. Please read and study it carefully. I fully endorse it. You proved with us in South Africa that only economic pressure could force the powerful to the table. As you have courageously done before, may you once again witness to the cause of Christ's justice to free the oppressed and by so doing to liberate the oppressor so that these two peoples can finally be reconciled and live together in dignity, security and peace.

God bless you all as you as a Church wrestle to discern what God requires of you in this hour. With a heart full of love to a people I will always embrace, I am

Yours faithfully

+Desmond Archbishop Emeritus Cape Town

The Episcopal Church's Response to the New Political Landscape in Israel/Palestine

Summary

Today, no negotiations are underway between Israelis and Palestinians to end Israel's nearly half-century military occupation and colonization of Palestinian land in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his Likud party have recently been elected to a third consecutive term, following Prime Minister Netanyahu's pledge that he will allow no Palestinian state to be established as long as he remains in office.

Also, in March, Meir Dagan, the former head of Israel's spy agency, the Mossad, warned that by deepening Israeli control of the West Bank the Prime Minister is leading Israel toward "apartheid." Mr. Dagan is just one of a number of Israeli leaders, and many others, including at least two former Israeli prime ministers, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, and South African Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, to use the term "apartheid" in relation to Israel's policies towards the Palestinians.

Meanwhile, civilian deaths and maimings keep accumulating, while the Occupation, which is its own form of violence, becomes more entrenched each day.

A new political landscape has taken shape. It is one in which the Israeli government has explicitly eschewed what for the United States has been a twenty-year commitment to the

policy that a two-state solution is “the goal of resolving the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians.” Yet the Episcopal Church’s support for Palestinian freedom and self-determination has not progressed to reflect these realities. Clearly, we need to factor this new landscape into our decisions going forward.

Ten years ago the Church affirmed a policy of using its investments to encourage positive change in the conflict, in contrast to divesting from companies determined to be upholding the Occupation. The 2005 resolution directed the Social Responsibility in Investments committee to dialogue with companies in the Occupied Territories and those “whose products or services contribute to violence against either side, or contribute to the infrastructure that supports and sustains the Occupation.” The policy called for corporate shareholder engagement with such companies to pressure Israel on matters such as the building of settlements on Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, a violation of international law. Such infrastructure was identified as settlements and their bypass roads, the separation barrier where it is built on Palestinian land, and demolition of Palestinian homes. “Positive investment” was also proposed where companies could contribute to economic development in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as one means to create the institutions and infrastructure that would allow Palestine to be a viable state and partner for peace.

Ten years later, it’s time to assess the results of these policies. Where do we now stand, and what next steps are consistent with the Church’s previous witness and decisions?

We’ve therefore examined the Occupation anew. We applaud economic steps that improve life for Palestinians and help them build state institutions. And we wholeheartedly endorse support of the humanitarian institutions of the diocese of Jerusalem which promote peace and build capacity. But we are also mindful that to first “build economic infrastructure” among those under military occupation is a familiar tactic of immovable authority. It is the means to spin out serious discussion of justice until the day that the dominant party believes some sort of appropriate economic conditions are flourishing. And it was the approach long used by the South Africa of which Archbishop Tutu writes to rationalize black subjugation.

We also take to heart Archbishop Tutu’s emphasis on America’s own dismal Jim Crow experience of violently subjugating people of another ethnicity—and we regard the Occupation as a U.S. civil rights concern. That is what it has become. America, after all, enables the Occupation through weapons transfers and military aid, vetoes of diplomatic pressure in the United Nations, tax breaks, and, not least, commercial ties.

At this juncture, we move for the Episcopal Church to put in place an economic strategy—underscoring the Church’s previous decisions on corporate engagement—that upholds its commitment to Palestinian civil and human rights and a peace other than that of oppression. This approach by no means excludes “positive investment” in Palestine, but it does urge the Church to be serious about those businesses that “contribute to the infrastructure that supports and sustains the Occupation.”

The Current Reality

Unlike ten years ago, or even three, there is no process underway or on the horizon to end the almost half-century-old Occupation that dominates the lives of 4.4 million Palestinians at the same time that the Occupation pulls Israel toward becoming “an apartheid state,” in the words

of U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, and many others.

U.S.-initiated Israeli-Palestinian negotiations had already failed before the July-August 2014 violence, with its 71 Israeli and 2,189 Palestinian dead, including 513 children in Gaza. The chief U.S. envoy blamed “sabotaging” by supporters of the settler movement within the Israeli government. Yet Israel and its hard right Likud government incur no penalty for the ongoing settlement building that Washington and the international community have long declared illegal and a major impediment to peace.

At this juncture, Israeli policy is summed up by the Center for Strategic Studies at Israel’s Bar-Ilan University: “Doing nothing and managing the conflict is Israel’s most sensible approach... Pressure on Israel to change the status quo is unlikely.” America, in this perspective, is to be kept “at bay.” Meanwhile, large-scale Israeli expropriations of Palestinian land continue as Prime Minister Netanyahu announces ongoing confiscation as a means to “punish” Palestinians for what he deems noncooperation with the status quo, further damaging the already dire prospects for the two-state solution.

Moreover, the failed negotiations revealed Israel’s rejection of U.S. military plans that could help secure the land that would need to be evacuated by the Israelis for the establishment of a Palestinian state. Add to that the Israeli rejection of statements by Palestinian negotiators that they would adopt a phased Israeli military withdrawal over five years.

Other critics, such as Generals Colin Powell and David Petraeus, have warned of the U.S. national security liabilities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—and of a perception of U.S. favoritism toward Israel. We’re now confronting the moral issues of this conflict that our Faith demands. We are reminded of Jesus’ first action in his public ministry, to read from Isaiah: “He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.” (Luke 4:18)

We’re also confronting the economic underpinnings of a cycle of terror and counter terror which continues amid a degree of Israeli-induced oppression which Archbishop Tutu concludes is actually worse than anything that he witnessed in apartheid South Africa. By that he means a realm of military checkpoints, segregated roads and housing, brutal suppression of even nonviolent dissent, and a completely asymmetric record of civilian dead.

How then should the Episcopal Church respond to this new landscape? What strategies can we adopt to help build a lasting peace given both the ongoing violence of an indefinite Occupation and the absence of negotiations?

Fundamentally, we believe that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a U.S. civil rights issue for our time. It is an American issue because Washington repeatedly vetoes United Nations resolutions criticizing Israeli settlement building and other violations of international law; it conveys billions of dollars annually to Israel in unrestricted foreign military aid, requiring no accountability as required by law for the use of U.S.-supplied weapons and munitions to enforce the Occupation; and because publicly-traded U.S. corporations profit from the Occupation.

There are additional reasons that place the Occupation at America's and thus the Episcopal Church's front door. They include U.S. tax breaks to pro-settler organizations that underwrite self-described "gated communities" in the West Bank built on Palestinian land. This situation has been in place now for a generation. What's different today is knowing the situation can't be resolved between Israelis and Palestinians themselves; that America is no longer regarded as an evenhanded mediator; and that prevailing opinion in Israel states explicitly that nothing needs to change.

The status quo, after all, benefits the commitment of many influential Israelis to a Greater Israel to include the Palestinian West Bank and East Jerusalem. Such has been laid out, for instance, by Naftali Bennett, leader of the Jewish Home Party and a key member of Prime Minister Netanyahu's last government, in which he held the posts of Minister of the Economy and of Religious Services. He frankly rejects a two-state solution, calling on Israel to annex most of the West Bank where Israeli settlers live, while encouraging an upgrade of roads and infrastructure, among other (economic) quality of life improvements for Palestinians, who will continue to be denied their freedom and rights indefinitely.

Secretary of State Kerry had also warned in August 2013 that failure of the negotiations would lead to Israel facing an international boycott "on steroids" similar to what happened with apartheid South Africa. It was a somber personal observation from a longtime champion of Israel in the U.S. Senate. He was simply acknowledging political reality: The U.S. and the European Union, being ever more diverse democracies, won't keep upholding an arrangement by which millions of Palestinians are kept under a discriminatory regime by an armed foreign sovereign.

Occupation, after all, is its own form of violence. Yet apartheid South Africa's transition to democracy demonstrates that nonviolent economic pressure works. As Archbishop Tutu wrote last year: "We learned in South Africa that the only way to end apartheid peacefully was to force the powerful to the table through economic pressure."

The Episcopal Church helped spearhead that campaign. It knew such pressure wasn't going to emerge from Washington. Always there were political-military rationalizations for delay. The Church understood that measures for peace had to be imposed on others through a nonviolent economic strategy. The disparity of power between black and white South Africans assured that compromise wasn't going to arise from within. The same situation exists today between Palestinians and Israelis in the Holy Land.

We note that the Episcopal Bishop of Jerusalem disagrees with recommendations of economic pressure through divestment. We respectfully emphasize, however, that the question of ongoing U.S. financial support of the Occupation—and the degree of Episcopal Church support through its investments—is an American and Episcopal Church concern. It is one we are not willing to keep shirking. And we further note that some 170 organizations of Palestinian civil society embrace economic pressure on Israel as a legitimate nonviolent form of resistance to the Occupation. Those sectors of Palestinian civil society calling for economic measures to be taken against Israel include the Christian Palestinian community, as embodied in the 2009 Kairos Document.

Thirty-six years ago the Church committed itself to both the establishment of a Palestinian state and to Israel's security. It has long condemned violence by all parties. Toward the expansion of settlements, the Church's position has been in line with Washington's: they are illegal.

In 1991, the Episcopal Church through the General Convention urged Congress to reexamine the Foreign Assistance Act in light of Israel's uninterrupted settlement building and to withhold aid until settlement expansion stopped. The General Convention did so again in 1994, and re-affirmed that position once more in 2012. Moreover, the Executive Council not only established a policy in 2005 of corporate engagement with businesses in its stock portfolio but has challenged such enterprises on the extent of their ties to the Occupation.

To be clear, corporate engagement involves direct dialogue with such businesses. It includes letter writing, face to face meetings, and the filing of shareholder resolutions. The Executive Council specifically has targeted ITT Corporation for its military equipment provided to Israel's occupying forces, which are engaged in serious human rights abuses as has been documented by numerous Israeli, Palestinian, and international human rights organizations. Yet the Episcopal Church's urging of support for self-determination for Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem has been as fruitless as have official U.S. policy statements, including those denouncing Israel's system of "institutional, legal and societal discrimination" against its own Arab citizens.

Now in 2015, political factors in the U.S.-Israeli relationship may indeed still be sufficient to keep Washington "at bay," despite U.S. laws on foreign aid. However there is no reason for the Episcopal Church to be equally constrained in its witness. To the contrary, justice demands its full engagement in keeping with decades of Church policy.

There are different forms of economic strategies that can be employed that are commonly referred to as boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) — such as on U.S. corporations that profit from the Occupation; or on Israeli companies that themselves are profiteering in the occupied Palestinian territories. Many Israelis who condemn the Occupation, for example, have long boycotted products made in West Bank settlements.

Further, growing support in the American Jewish community for applying economic pressure against Israel may be the most telling evidence of the need to move ahead on this issue, lest history judge us harshly for our inaction. As the respected Americans for Peace Now, a Jewish based advocacy group in Washington, D.C. with a counterpart in Israel, concludes unequivocally:

"We actively call for the boycott of settlements and settlement products. ... As a matter of principle, we believe it is legitimate for activists to press companies to adopt practices that deny support to settlements and the occupation, including through targeted boycotts and divestment. In such cases, we believe that the onus is on activists to demonstrate that their target is the occupation and its manifestations, rather than Israel's existence and legitimacy."

Additionally, the rapidly growing Jewish Voice for Peace and its impressive Rabbinical Council say: "We are among the many American Jews who say to the U.S. and Israeli governments: 'Not in our names!'"

To this end, the Church must discern its appropriate form of BDS in accordance with its values of nonviolence and commitment to justice and in light of its shared complicity in the ongoing Occupation. The purpose of deploying Church resources is not, in the final analysis, aimed at advancing a specific political outcome, whether a so-called two-state solution or a single democracy with equal rights for all. Israelis and Palestinians can themselves decide.

At this juncture, in this new landscape, our purpose is to help end the Occupation and to assure civil rights and equality for all the peoples of Israel and Palestine. The Church's approach should be straightforward: boycott, divestment, and sanctions are tools of nonviolent peacemaking that put the weight of our corporate dollars behind our commitment to justice. The Church's financial portfolio can again be used as an instrument of political change. And it can help to break the stalemate while illuminating the ways that America otherwise enables a brutal status quo. To start, we can again make civil rights an issue for boardrooms, CEOs, and the investor relations departments of U.S. corporations.

Washington's politicians may see fit to protect, supply, and subsidize a state that over decades has thwarted U.S. policy while subjecting millions of another ethnicity to an oppressive and discriminatory military rule. But we know that American grassroots opinion has a way of changing rapidly. Indeed, polls show that U.S. public opinion on Israel has shifted noticeably in recent years, as more and more Americans are questioning Israel's actions and policies. We also are confident that the U.S. will be able to keep contributing to Israel's security as the Occupation ends. Such security guarantees, after all, had been a key point of Secretary Kerry's 2014 peace negotiations, with full involvement of the U.S. military. Of course violent rejectionist elements will remain among both parties. But the U.S., Israeli, and Palestinian Authority security expertise that today enforces the status quo is likely to be equally skilled in containing such violence as democracy proceeds for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

In time, a majority of U.S. politicians may reassess the extent to which America is enabling its Israeli ally on the path to being "an apartheid state." To that end, grassroots pressure is now arising from churches and campuses across the country. This pressure takes the form of introducing genuine and concrete disincentives for Israel's continuing settlement building—the key impediment to a final agreement. The Episcopal Church needs to play a leading role in this, one of the central moral and human rights issues of our time.

First, these new civil rights advocates are already dismissing the hoary refrain from both Washington and Israel's government that "the time is not right" to resolve the Occupation. (The time is never right for such change, as it was never right in the Jim Crow South or in apartheid South Africa.) Instead, civil rights advocates are asking: "When, after forty-eight-years of Occupation and more than twenty years since the first of the Oslo Accords were signed, will it ever be 'right'?" The Church itself needs to have an answer in the absence of any meaningful negotiations.

Second, pressure is arriving, as many anticipated, in the form of BDS. It arrives from the bottom up, as in South Africa and the U.S. civil rights movement. An international campaign of economic pressure may become a global effort but for us, at this moment, the question is an authentically American one. The Episcopal Church was part of the history of the U.S. civil rights period of the 1950's and '60s and became deeply engaged in the movement on many fronts. To that end, we urge the Church to engage again. That means being in relationship with

denominational partners and others of faith, and campus activists and other Non Governmental Organizations, who are similarly committed to applying their energies and resources toward assuring equal rights of individuals trapped for decades in an American-enabled impasse.

BDS has proved its efficacy in the past, at home and overseas; it is now starting to prove itself again in addressing the Israeli-Palestinian impasse. Evidence includes the Gates Foundation having sold down its shares in G4S; in this instance, the world's largest private military and security company (G4S) has contracts with the Israeli Prison Authority, an institution holding some 5,000 Palestinian political prisoners, among them children. The United Methodist Pension Board has also divested from G4S. Evidence also includes last year's Presbyterian divestment action against Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard, and Motorola Solutions for the role of these corporations in enforcing the Occupation through home demolitions, surveillance, and more.

Third, BDS is a means of economic pressure that lends itself to step by step escalation, whether focused on companies, on a region such as the West Bank, or on specific boycotts or divestment campaigns. This complements what has been the Episcopal Church's unusually restrained approach to the conflict. It is a method as well that can embrace multiple issues, such as the initiative by several major U.S. Christian denominations to address violations by Israel of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act and the U.S. Arms Export Control Act. (The first prohibits assistance to any country that engages in a consistent pattern of human rights violations; the second limits the use of U.S.-supplied weapons to "internal security" or "legitimate self defense.")

For the Episcopal Church, BDS is ultimately a strategy to impose pressure on corporate decision-makers aimed at ending the Occupation. The Church has never shied from such initiatives in the past when justice and civil rights were at stake. For us to embrace BDS changes the national debate. It spotlights the degree to which the Occupation, and the oppression of Palestinian Christians and Muslims, is enabled by America.

Finally, for those in the Church who shun any manifestation of economic pressure on Israel, we ask to hear their own strategies for peace when facing what is now a nearly half-century-old Occupation with no end in sight.

Resolution Submitted to the 78th General Convention of the Episcopal Church

Resolved that the 78th General Convention, the House of _____ concurring, direct the Executive Council's committee on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), consistent with existing policy of corporate engagement adopted in October 2005, to develop a list of U.S. and foreign corporations that provide goods and services that support the infrastructure of Israel's Occupation, and maintain and update such a list annually, and to vigorously conduct an audit of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society (DFMS) investment portfolio to determine which of these companies, if any, are in the portfolio, and report its findings to the Winter Meeting of Executive Council, 2016, to be made public through the Episcopal News Service, and be it

Resolved, that, consistent with existing Episcopal Church policy, CSR communicate by letter, emails, meetings and otherwise with the companies identified in the DFMS investment portfolio as being involved in the maintenance of the Occupation, if any, requesting that said companies withdraw from their business operations in Occupied Palestine until it is ended, and

report on such corporate engagement to the June, 2016, meeting of Executive Council to be made public through the Episcopal News Service, and be it

Resolved, that Executive Council, with the aid of its CSR committee, file shareholder resolutions with any companies earlier identified, at its Fall meeting, 2016, asking said companies who have not agreed to terminate their business operations in Occupied Palestine and with whom dialogue has not been fruitful, to begin a process of divestment, and be it

Resolved that upon receiving the position of said companies to these shareholder resolutions, Executive Council, by its June meeting of 2017, with the aid of the CSR committee, develop a process of divestment from those companies who have refused to divest or in which further engagement is deemed futile, and are considered by CSR to be the most egregious supporters of the infrastructure of the Occupation, and to develop a process for placing on its No Buy List those companies earlier identified as supporting the Occupation, whether currently held or not, and for Council to make known its process for divestment and adding to the No Buy List (and the companies involved) through the Episcopal News Service, and that Council provide a report to the 79th General Convention on its implementation of this resolution, and be it

Resolved that Convention directs the Executive Council to establish a work group to identify a list of products made or businesses present in West Bank settlements (including East Jerusalem) and publishing them within one year of adjournment of this Convention so that Church entities, including congregations and individual members can seek to boycott those products and/or businesses which are illegal under international law, and be it

Resolved that Executive Council identify \$15,000 for the work to be done in 2015, and Program, Budget and Finance provide \$30,000 in 2016 and \$30,000 in 2017 and \$30,000 in 2018 to fund the work of CSR on this and other issues.

Explanation: The time has long passed when the Episcopal Church must recognize that it may well be profiting from the oppression of the Palestinian people who have endured 48 years of suffering under occupation. The extent to which this may be true will be exposed and appropriately addressed through implementation of this resolution.

As outlined in the paper entitled, The Episcopal Church's Response to the New Political Landscape in Israel/Palestine, there is a failure of any tangible process for ending the Occupation through negotiation, while Israel expands its illegal settlement policy in occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Thus it is time to consider a process by which economic pressure through divestment and boycotts might be the appropriate action to take. This resolution provides a reasoned and prudent pathway for the Church to be faithful to the call for justice in this long and painful conflict. Maintaining the status quo is no longer viable in the absence of a peace process (or the use of repeated peace processes that never produce a just agreement) and Israel's defiance of United Nations Security Council resolutions, international courts, human rights and international law, and its colonialist policy of settlement expansion where Palestinians are being squeezed into diminishing land areas resembling Bantustans.

This deliberative process also allows Israel to be rewarded if it changes course, freezes settlements and negotiates a just resolution for both Palestinians and Israeli Jews in either a one- or two-state solution as the parties may determine. If there is no end to the conflict

through a negotiated just peace, then this process allows the Church to step up its witness on behalf of those living under oppression in Occupied Palestine.

The No Buy List is a list which Executive Council maintains of companies in which the DFMS will not invest, and includes tobacco companies and certain military contractors. The timeline proposed in the resolution conforms to the calendar of corporate engagement and shareholder actions ahead of annual meetings of most corporations which are held in the spring and early summer of each year.

The budget request is made in consideration of PB&F's inexplicable decision to defund Executive Council's Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility in 2009, after 38 years of sterling work on corporate social performance on issues related to health, the environment, human rights, workers rights and executive compensation, among others. The Episcopal Church was the first denomination to file a shareholder resolution in 1971 which called on General Motors to disinvest from South Africa. This work is vital to ensure that the Church's invested funds be evaluated for social performance as well as financial performance, lest the Church be complicit in putting profits before justice. The funding pays for part time staff consulting work and the cost of two meetings of the CSR committee per year.

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