To All Members

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Holy Land Christian Committee
and Others Concerned

Dear Friends:

The matter I have to lay before the Committee I conceive to be a very delicate one. I do not believe it can be evaluated in all of its implications by projection against the background of experience of the majority of us. I feel it must be analyzed in the light of current facts as they impinge upon it, and that its significance should be weighed in terms of what it spells out for the future of Christianity not only in this country, but in the whole world.

It is not a mole hill that is being conjured into a mountain. It is rather the cloud no larger than a man's hand that may presage darkness and disaster ahead.

This Committee was established somewhat over a year ago to bring to the attention of Christian people throughout the country the plight of the oldest Christian community in the world. There was a considerable, but insufficient, volume of relief work being done by several large and small relief organizations or groups for the Arabs, both Moslem and Christian, who had lost their homes and means of livelihood by reason of the establishment of the Republic of Israel and the upset conditions attendant upon this establishment. While the great majority of Arabs left their homes in Palestine, there were a few who did not. Among these few were the residents of Bethlehem, which was the only one and only wholly Christian town in all of Palestine, although there were sizeable groups of Christians in other towns and cities as well. Bethlehem was attacked three times by the forces of Israel, but survived the attacks and was finally occupied by the military forces of the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan, to give the full designation to what was formerly referred to as Trans-Jordania and now as Jordan.

It is well at this point, in view of what has been happening since, to observe that Christian Bethlehem is a definite thorn in the flesh to Israel, as representing a failure of their arms and as possessing a greater potential appeal to the West than the Moslem Arabs.

The Holy Land Christian Committee has no concern with Zionism as such. It is non-political in its outreach. It has, however, along with other activities looking to the raising of funds for resident Christians in Palestine, sponsored the efforts of Mr. Yusif el Bandak, officially delegated by the municipal authorities of Bethlehem to seek aid for his people. Mr. Bandak has performed no service for the Committee since last December. He has, however, been a figure of controversy ever since the Zionists discovered that he was revealing a true picture of the condition of Christians in the Holy Land. He wrote from Libya where he now is serving with the United Nations Commission there that his absence from America.
would give Christian Church leaders an opportunity to find out that the Zionists are not fighting against Bandak, but against the Holy Land Christians. With this fateful observation, I come at long last to the cloud no larger than a man’s hand.

A few months ago, Mrs. Joseph P. Nuneenmacher enlisted the support of a few friends in Los Angeles to launch a campaign for raising funds for needy Christians in the Holy Land. The project was launched with vigor. A substantial body of sponsors and local committee members were signed up for a fund-raising program that would culminate in an International Ball to be held in the Ambassador Hotel on April twentieth.

No sooner did it become apparent that this campaign was promising great success than an increasingly virulent opposition to it developed, carried on largely undercover, with a technique startlingly like the undermining tactics of Communists and fellow-travelers. Members of the Los Angeles sub-committee were called by ‘phone, urged to withdraw from the committee, for whatever lying reason appeared to fit the individual—loss of advertising, injury to social position, termination of good business contacts—anything to excite fear or shake confidence. First, Bandak was a target, the money was to go to him. When it was clearly revealed that he was out of the country, the target shifted to your Committee; your Chairman was an anti-Semite. Mrs. Nuneenmacher thereupon declared that no money raised in her campaign would go through the Holy Land Christian Committee. She was then given to understand that the attacks would cease.

They have not ceased. An announcement that Baron Frery von Blomberg, an American citizen of German adoption, would appear in Los Angeles on April fourth on behalf of her committee was met with a storm of lies about him, so vicious and given out so close to the date he was to appear, that it was considered best that he should not arrive until denials from reputable sources could catch up with slander and innuendo. He was actually visited by a Zionist in person in his home town of Boston and warned against going to Los Angeles. The tentacles reach far. In some obscure way, the Los Angeles press has been approached and has indicated a possible withdrawal of any publicity about the International Ball scheduled for April twentieth.

Christians, what goes on here? Is an organized minority, using utterly despicable means, to be enabled by lies and threats to keep help from Christians in need, because it does not fit the aims of political Zionism that the oldest Christian community in the world should survive as an entity; that it suits best the Zionist purpose that Western Christians should not be reminded that there are any but a few thousand unfortunate and backward Arabs suffering inconvenience because theirs is no more the Promised Land. This thing in our midst, showing itself good, bad, and indifferent, but always working selfishly and self-seekingly, is sinister, is dangerous, is being as disregarded by intelligent Christians as was Communism twenty years ago, and yet is equally menacing to the Faith we hold dear.

Those of you who have friends in Los Angeles can do much to help Mrs. Nuneenmacher of 1256 West Seventh Street in the few days left before the twentieth of April. But the matter at issue is
vastly more significant than an International Ball. It is a challenge to Christians everywhere to alert themselves in respect to a subversive power that seeks to emasculate Christianity, to inveigle it, in the name of the neighborly love it cherishes, to tolerate wickedness, to condone evil, to sanction misappropriation, to connive at dishonor.

There should be an end of Christian complacency. It is by all means a time for Christians to be awake. The individual members of this Committee can do much to let in light on a very dark and discreditable picture. For the Master’s sake, do something.

Faithfully yours,

C. S. FREEMAN

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