The world-wide web of humanitarianism: NGOs and population displacement in the third quarter of the twentieth century

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ABSTRACT
Non-state organisations were important actors in the international refugee regime after the Second World War. This article traces connections between refugee crises and geo-politics by focusing on the interaction of three NGOs with the new Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the 1950s. One non-state actor, the World Council of Churches (WCC), highlighted the suffering of German expellees as illustrating the limitations of the refugee regime. The second non-state organisation, Jami'at al' Islam (JAI), asserted its right to represent all Muslim refugees in Europe. Along with its anti-Communist stance it adopted an anti-colonial rhetoric and denounced the limitations of UNHCR's mandate, but it was later exposed as a front for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The third organisation, Comité Inter-Mouvements Auprès des Evacués (CIMADE), formed in 1939 to help French Jews escape deportation during the Vichy era, subsequently aided Algerians who suffered persecution by the French authorities. Like WCC, this began a long ‘career’ in humanitarianism. In its dealings with these NGOs, UNHCR trod cautiously, because it was constrained by its mandate and the governments that contributed to its budget. Each example demonstrates the challenges of ‘non-political’ efforts to offer humanitarian assistance to refugees and the limits to the autonomy of non-state organisations.

KEYWORDS
NGOs; UNHCR; World Council of Churches; Jami'at al’ Islam; CIMADE; refugees; international refugee regime

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Introduction
Non-state humanitarianism cannot be understood without considering the bigger picture. This means taking account of the context in which different non-governmental actors operated and which helped shape their thinking and actions. This is true for the age of imperial humanitarianism, as well as for the era of ‘neo- humanitarianism’ and ‘liberal humanitarianism’.[1] So far as the post-1945 era is concerned, this meant reshaping the world after the defeat of Fascism in Europe and Asia, and – for the leaders of the self-styled ‘free world’ – combatting Communism on a global stage. For the historian it means tracing both the process of decolonisation and the manifestations of the Cold War in different guises and
in different sites, tracking political and geo-political economic changes, and analysing the dynamic institutional matrix represented by the new UN institutions and their interaction with non-state actors. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) did not act in an institutional, political and ideological vacuum. Nor, of course, were they simply bystanders. They advanced ideological and political claims even when they announced a 'non-political' stance.

This article addresses the purpose and practices of non-state humanitarianism in relation to mass population displacement in the decade and a half after the end of the Second World War. This critical juncture in global history was defined by Cold War confrontation and the geo-political whirlwind of decolonisation. There is an extensive literature on these topics, including the relationship between states and inter-governmental organisations, but much less attention has been devoted to non-state organisations that concerned themselves with refugees.\(^2\) To be sure, a growing historiography explores the post-1945 refugee crisis in Europe and in other parts of the world, although only rarely does it bring the post-war crises of population displacement, humanitarian action and geo-politics within a single frame.\(^3\)

Non-state organisations are diverse by virtue of their profile, longevity and practical experience. They co-operate but also compete with each other in order to carve out a distinctive place within what Alex de Waal famously called the 'humanitarian international'.\(^4\) We might think of this as a humanitarian chorus, in which NGOs sometimes sang in harmony but at other times produced cacophony. As one exasperated UN official put it in 1951, it is 'extremely difficult to get non-governmental organisations to act cooperatively'.\(^5\) Harmony or discordance might be the result of fundamental differences of ethos, although clashes of personality also played their part.\(^6\)

No less important a question arises: to whom were NGOs answerable? Issues of accountability direct our attention to the fact that non-state actors formed part of the international refugee regime that came into being in the aftermath of the Second World War, with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as its cornerstone.\(^7\) UNHCR was charged with safeguarding

any person who as a result of events occurring [in Europe] before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.

This temporal and geographical limitation was a subject of endless debate within the UN.\(^8\) But UNHCR had to tread a careful line for other reasons. It relied on the support of UN member states, all of which insisted that it stay clear of politics and be 'non-operational'. As a non-operational agency, UNHCR called upon NGOs to help implement programmes of assistance for refugees.\(^9\)

This article presents three brief case studies of non-state humanitarianism in relation to population displacement, and points to several dynamics. One is a transnational perspective, evident in the activities of faith-based organisations such as the Protestant World Council of Churches, which prided itself on being unconstrained by the limited mandate imposed on the UNHCR and operated in multiple sites. Another dynamic emerges from the tensions and collisions that arose in relation to a 'non-Western' NGO, Jami’at al’ Islam (JAI), on the one hand, and the UNHCR and its more conventional partners on the other. Not only did JAI claim an exclusive right to represent Muslim refugees in Europe, it also poured scorn on the suggestion that 'solutions' could be non-political. Yet, as will be seen, there was also a sting in the tail about its claim to legitimacy. The third non-state actor considered here, the
Comité Inter-Mouvements Auprès des Evacués (CIMADE), challenged state sovereignty. CIMADE assisted French Jews during the Vichy era, but a decade later it went to the aid of displaced Algerians who were fighting for independence and who suffered persecution by the French authorities. It argued that ‘solidarity’ was as important in challenging an illegitimate state as ‘charity’ was in helping to sustain sovereign power.

These case studies serve four purposes. First, they demonstrate the ‘soul-searching’ (as the editors put it) to which non-state humanitarian actors have been prone. Second, they show how individual NGOs developed a humanitarian ‘niche’ in order to distinguish themselves from the claims of rival organisations. Third, they demonstrate the constraints that NGOs faced in seeking to establish a degree of autonomy. Finally, they point to the challenge and limitations of ‘non-political’ engagement in humanitarian efforts to assist refugees.

**Non-state actors and global population displacement**

The post-war crisis of population displacement had numerous manifestations, but faith groups in particular accused Western states of pursuing partial and discriminatory policies, assisting some groups of refugees and neglecting others. The leading Protestant organisation, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), insisted that ‘there is no area of refugee need and no stage of the migrant’s journey which does not challenge the Christian Church to be present and ready to assist’. International attention concentrated heavily on Europe’s Displaced Persons, who had been drafted into the Nazi war economy but who refused to be repatriated when the war ended. International attention concentrated heavily on Europe’s Displaced Persons, who had been drafted into the Nazi war economy but who refused to be repatriated when the war ended. The World Council of Churches (WCC), to which the LWF was affiliated, described them as ‘strangers and pilgrims’ who had a claim to public sympathy and support. The WCC also noted that the US Escapee Program gave priority to so-called ‘neo-refugees’ who fled from the Soviet bloc after the establishment of Communism in Eastern Europe in 1948. But where, its member churches asked, did this narrow conception of refugee relief leave others, such as those who fled as a result of civil war in Greece? What about Hindu, Sikh and Muslim victims of the violence associated with Partition and the new territorial configuration of India and Pakistan; or Arab refugees displaced by the 1948 war in Palestine; or Chinese refugees who fled to Hong Kong following the creation of the People’s Republic of China? ‘How (pleaded the LWF) can any voluntary agency undertake to help one refugee while passing the next one by?’

The WCC made a particular point of condemning the Potsdam Agreement on the expulsion of ethnic Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia, seeing this as symptomatic of a general lack of concern: ‘The refugee issue shows clearer than many others that peace will be lost unless the spirit of discrimination (spirit of Potsdam) be overcome by a more humane and Christian approach to “my neighbours in need.”’ Elfan Rees, the WCC’s leading spokesman on refugees, reinforced the message (‘We must fight against “the spirit of Potsdam” which divides human beings into “eligible” and “uneligible” categories of merchandise’) and called for the rights of German expellees to be protected and for them to be integrated in Europe, not just in Germany, as part of ‘a more balanced resettlement policy’. In his view, voluntary agencies, particularly faith-based, had a duty to speak up on behalf of refugees who were not recognized by the international political community.

The rhetoric of rights circulated alongside more overt political concerns about the potential attractiveness of Communism to refugees. Edgar Chandler, a leading figure in the World Council of Churches, fulminated that ‘the fact is surely obvious that the Communist
penetration of the Near East is serious, and Moscow has never in history had the indirect influence it now enjoys there. Dedicated programmes of assistance, particularly to Palestinian refugees, and an open-door policy for others were needed to convince refugees that they had made the correct choice in fleeing Communism for the West. Other faith-based organisations made the same point. James Norris, the European director of Catholic Relief Service, described the ‘challenge to democracies and the serious threat to peace which is posed by the ever growing refugee population of the world’. He went on to say that ‘in the Far East, as well as in Europe, unpredictable events in Communist areas may suddenly increase the flow of refugees as has happened in the past’. Integration was slow and painful. Special problems are created by youth; we need to ‘save for democracy young people who never had any education but that of the Nazis and the Communists’.15

This breadth of focus ensured a consensus that the multiplication of new refugee ‘problems’ required a corresponding ‘solution’ of a kind that the UN alone could not provide. Some vocal members went even further, arguing that the WCC had a responsibility towards what would now be termed ‘economic migrants’, and not just towards refugees. Chandler pointed out that the WCC’s Service to Refugees ‘had been gradually expanding to a service to migrants in need who did not come within the strictly technical definition of refugees’ and that it had a responsibility towards them too: ‘Men in vast numbers, especially in Asia, are hungry or under heavy economic pressure.’ There was therefore a bigger game in town, namely the need to find an outlet for ‘surplus’ populations in southern and south-eastern Europe, by means of organized emigration.16

In relation to refugees, their claims to humanitarianism were an essential component in fashioning the modern refugee as a passive, ‘traumatized’ and worthy object of intervention. This approach was typified by the WCC, whose officers assiduously sought ‘human interest’ stories from refugees ‘on the doorstep’, such as those of ethnic Greek or Albanian origin who recently fled to Greece from Albania or Romania. Newly arrived refugees who might be able to provide ‘interesting information about conditions in homeland’ were particularly desirable. They recounted tales of starvation, police harassment and torture, and dispossession of farmers and small businessmen. For example, Evangelos N., who escaped from Romania in 1951, stated: ‘I am grateful to God that I and my family have been able to escape into the free world. Poverty and misery is what prevails in life there.’ Bulgarian refugee Demetrius G. vouchsafed that ‘only 30 per cent of the Bulgarian people believe in Communism. The remainder simply accept and suffer the consequences of a totalitarian regime waiting for the time of their liberation.’ What is striking here is less the formulaic nature of the stories than the purpose they served, namely to challenge the consensus enshrined in international refugee law that there was a clear distinction between political persecution and economic deprivation.

From this point of view, non-state actors demonstrated considerable freedom of manoeuvre and played something of a subversive role on the international stage. The WCC criticized Western governments for restricting the admission of refugees. They made common cause with UNHCR, particularly in assisting the so-called ‘hard core’ of Displaced Persons in camps in Germany and Austria, at the same time supporting their own programmes in various parts of the world, including in Korea in the 1950s. Yet it should not be forgotten that the WCC regarded the welfare of refugees as only one element in the bigger picture of discouraging a drift towards the Catholic faith and in developing ties between member churches: ‘Inter-church aid is more than a humanitarian activity.’ Humanitarianism was subordinated to Protestant ecumenism.
NGOs and UNHCR: the friction of decolonisation

Relations between UNHCR and non-governmental organisations were not always cordial. In some instances they were downright acrimonious. This emerged most clearly in the angry private exchanges between UNHCR and a vocal Muslim NGO, Jami’at al’ Islam Inc. (‘Congregation of Islam’), which described itself as ‘a humanitarian and educational foundation … a Brotherhood and a benevolent society of Moslems [sic] active in refugee relief and rehabilitation [and] the sole Islamic organisation recognized internationally’ by the UNHCR. This hardly begins to tell the full story. In fact, JAI had links to the CIA through the US Escapee Program, which channelled funds to various anti-Soviet émigré organisations. The cast of dubious characters in JAI happily took American money by inflating the number of Muslim refugees from the USSR. UNHCR was unwittingly caught up in this shadowy Cold War politics.

Of particular concern to JAI were attempts by Communist agencies to persuade Muslim refugees who had fled persecution in the USSR, Yugoslavia or Albania to return to the Soviet bloc, by ‘sending out agents who endeavour to spread discontent among the émigrés’, some of whom, ‘unexperienced in political problems, acquiesce to this kind of propaganda’. The British journalist Robert Kee, who spent several weeks in Germany and Austria enquiring after the results of World Refugee Year in 1959–60, peppered his report about these refugees with the story of Anver Hazer, who enlisted in the Azerbaijan Legion and ended up in one of UNRRA’s camps and married a German woman. Finding it impossible to settle in Turkey, where he had been resettled by the International Refugee Organisation, Hazer returned to Germany in 1953, to dilapidated accommodation in Munich that housed him, his wife and their six children. In Kee’s words, Hazer had been put in an impossible position. In response to stories such as these, UNHCR referred to the temporal restrictions of its mandate. But this cut little ice with JAI, which maintained that Muslim refugees qualified under the terms of the 1951 Refugee Convention, having been persecuted by the Soviet Union during the war. Nor could JAI understand why UNHCR protected Hungarian refugees who fled following the uprising against Communist rule, yet failed to assist Muslim refugees. UNHCR stood accused of failing to give them a fair hearing and even of condoning past iniquities, such as the ‘genocide’ that resulted from the forcible repatriation of Muslims to the Soviet Union at the end of the Second World War.

JAI went on to broaden its attack on the refugee regime. James Price, its spokesman in the United States, challenged his American audience to think about Turkish refugees from the Soviet Union, ‘clustered in Iran along the Soviet border’, and Muslims who fought the Red Army, as well as ‘the difficulties which attended the Partition of India’. To these historic situations he added new refugees in Africa, ‘victims of colonial repression’ who represented ‘a challenge based more upon geography and history than upon religion’. Price went further still, arguing that Muslims live under conditions of poverty, ignorance, near serfdom and actual slavery … There are as many Negro Muslims in Africa living, for the most part, under alien rule as the combined Arab populations of the Middle East. There are approximately fifty million Muslims in Red China, a number almost equaling the population of Jews.

Above all, Palestinian refugees have been ‘warped by years of camp life’ and need projects that ‘will help them bridge the life in exile’ until they can return. JAI charged the UN Relief
and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) with collaborating with voluntary agencies (volags) ‘whose objectives are often incompatible with the expressed desires of the Arab refugees themselves’. YMCA, for example, engaged in ‘physical and vocational rehabilitation’, but this was ‘tied to a subtle propaganda objective’ whereby young Arabs were persuaded to ‘settle down’. Arab youth were told that they must ‘foreswear all hope of regaining what was unjustly taken from them and seek instead new homes in other lands’.

When Lindt at first chose not rise to this challenge, JAI responded that although they did not wish to dwell on the origins of refugee problems, this has to be tempered in practice by the previously mentioned necessity to raise concrete support lest the refugees starve before a neutral, humanitarian spirit can come to the rescue … In view of the inescapable historical fact that the last few centuries have seen most of the Islamic world dominated by non-Muslim European colonial powers, it follows that the new resurgence of the spirit of liberty among Muslims – resisted by some of these European powers – provides the raw material for refugee problems of great magnitude.

In essence, Price argued, JAI was ‘neither more nor less political than the activities of non-Muslim Voluntary Agencies who conduct public appeals for refugees from “Hitlerism”, “Communism” or even the ‘rising tide of nationalism’.

UNHCR was left in an uncomfortable position, but JAI ratcheted up its accusations by sending a tart message to the executive committee for World Refugee Year which ended with the words: ‘peoples recently emancipated, and those struggling for freedom from alien oppression, look with increasing suspicion on a UN and a UNHCR and an UNRWA staffed almost exclusively by Occidentals whose nations have colonial possessions or a colonial history’. JAI coupled this with a recommendation that the General Assembly appoint Africans and Asians to positions of high responsibility in the UNHCR. If not, these states should make their own contribution directly to African and Asian refugees, ‘avoiding mechanisms which deny Africans and Asians a legitimate say in matters of their vital concern’.

By the early 1960s, JAI maintained that ‘civil refugees in Algeria are harbingers of things to come in the rest of Africa, south of the Sahara’, singling out South Africa, Angola and Mozambique. In what seems to have been a final parting shot, JAI observed that ‘unless immediate measures were taken there would be no coping with the vast, unnecessary suffering which would be inflicted on Africans throwing off foreign rule and white supremacy’. Failing a ‘miracle’, JAI anticipated at least five million new refugees within a few years, as a result of freedom struggles in Mozambique, South-West Africa and South Africa. In a final parting shot, JAI urged the General Assembly to appoint Africans and Asians to positions of high responsibility in the UNHCR. If not, refugee-receiving states should make their own contribution directly to African and Asian refugees, ‘avoiding mechanisms which deny Africans and Asians a legitimate say in matters of their vital concern’.

Ultimately JAI decided against any further co-operation with Geneva. It also gave up hope that Catholic and Protestant organisations would ‘cast aside parochial sentiments’ and their attachment to missionary activity in favour of a commitment to joint action to support the struggle for freedom. It was not enough, Price said, to

hand a bowl of rice or a sack of cornmeal to salve our consciences: is this the brotherly love we would preach to a man in a stockade? If so, we had better step aside quickly or be trampled as the Russians move in to fill the vacuum.

In August 1962, JAI announced its immediate withdrawal from the non-Islamic world, citing ‘repeated rejection of Islamic initiative for an inter-faith effort to relieve suffering in
Africa as representing Western unwillingness to enter into meaningful partnership with the Islamic East in the solution of mutual problems. In fact, the CIA grew tired of funding JAI’s erratic leader Ahmed Kamal having seen little return on its investment, and the organisation evaporated. This was an ignominious end for a non-state actor that had not only been a thorn in the side of the UNHCR but had also made pertinent observations about the limitations of the international refugee regime.

**NGOs and the refugee crisis in North Africa**

The bitter war in Algeria between 1954 and 1962 owed much to the fact that the French authorities regarded it as an integral part of France and were prepared to use force to support this claim, as did those who sought independence. In response to an insurrection organized by the pro-liberation Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), French troops – among other measures – cleared the indigenous population from areas adjacent to the borders with Tunisia and Morocco – countries that became independent in March 1956 – as part of a ‘pacification’ strategy. More than three and a half million Algerians were ‘resettled’ in concentration camps between 1955 and 1962. These tactics strengthened popular support for the liberation movement.

The struggle between the French state and the FLN unleashed a refugee crisis. In all, at least 200,000 and perhaps as many as 300,000 Algerians crossed into Tunisia and Morocco. Far greater numbers of civilians were internally displaced. The French government resolutely opposed any suggestion by the United Nations that those of its citizens who fled from Algeria to neighbouring Tunisia and Morocco should be accorded refugee status. Its energetic attempts to scupper the internationalisation of the crisis met with scant success, and France eventually decided that it was diplomatically astute to accept UNHCR help in Algeria. Meanwhile, in Tunisia, the relief operation followed a direct appeal by President Habib Bourguiba for humanitarian assistance in May 1957, although the government also wanted to make a political point about political persecution. UNHCR for its part decided that it had no wish to be seen as a ‘High Commission for European refugees’, assisting Hungarian refugees but refusing to help Algerians. To do otherwise would be to give the Soviet Union a propaganda victory.

UNHCR argued that the crisis demonstrated its capacity to respond with expert assistance, by despatching to Morocco and Tunisia trained staff who had experience of working with Hungarian refugees and with the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees. UNHCR called upon other organisations to provide operational relief. The lead agency was the League of Red Cross Societies (LRCS), which organized the distribution of relief supplies (primarily from the United States) inside Tunisia and Morocco, together with the local Red Crescent societies. But once in the field, UNHCR officers were exposed to turf wars, including the tendency of the Red Cross to question the competence of the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers) and even the UNHCR itself. This was not the only problem. CARE was forced to abandon its plans for Algerian refugees, because of the ‘uncooperative attitudes’ of Tunisian and Moroccan governments toward voluntary organisations. Following Algerian independence, UNHCR’s Deputy High Commissioner John Kelly wondered privately ‘if we should ever again become so closely connected with any one Voluntary Agency, as in Algeria [where] we are inevitably associated with our sole partner, even in the results of their own maladroitness’. 
The refugee crisis allowed Jami’at al’ Islam another foot in the door. In 1956 it announced half a million dollars of relief supplies to assist refugees inside Algeria who had been ‘herded by the French army into ghettos reminiscent of Nazi concentration camps.’ JAI also seized the opportunity to demand that Algerian refugees in Tunisia and Morocco ‘obtain a better future than the continued humiliation of public charity administered by missionary and other alien interests.’ Perhaps aware of this kind of critique, the World Council of Churches decided to fund clinics and kindergartens, ambitious reforestation programmes, experimental farms and training centres, ‘providing work so that the unemployed can gain self-respect by supporting themselves.’ Characteristically, Bruno Muetzelfeldt, the director of LWF’s Department of World Service, spoke of having to tread carefully, but privately commented that an inter-denominational joint programme ‘may open the door for opportunities of evangelism.’

Among the NGOs that flocked to Algeria was the Comité Inter-Mouvements Auprès des Evacués (CIMADE), a French Protestant charity that was founded during the Second World War to assist Jewish refugees from Alsace who had been interned by the Vichy regime. CIMADE set great store by being in the position of a ‘privileged witness’, with some of its personnel living alongside internees in camps such as the notorious one at Gurs. Its history discloses important shifts in humanitarian thinking. CIMADE did not hesitate to criticise the French state; from 1942 its members falsified records to protect French Jews who were liable for deportation from Vichy France, on the grounds that it was their Christian duty to counter the actions of an illegitimate regime. Inspired by this example, in 1958 CIMADE began to lend its support to displaced and disposed Algerians, and to revive its support for clandestine operations by enabling members of the FLN to evade capture. These actions undermined CIMADE’s public claim to be purely humanitarian and pointed to its moral commitment to bear witness.

The aftermath of the refugee crisis in Algeria and its neighbours was fraught. When refugees eventually managed to make their way home they found a country that had been ravaged by war. According to Ammar Bouhouche, ‘aid stopped as soon as they went home.’ There was a lack of capacity on the part of government and NGOs, although the LRCS and Church World Service continued to maintain a presence in the country. Urban and rural labourers received food parcels from the United States in the short term, but the rural population and proletariat felt that independence yielded meagre results. As for Tunisia, the UNHCR representative wrote to Geneva in January 1961 to point out that ‘the Tunisian government have problems both in the political and economic field which they consider more important than the question of refugees from Algeria’, notably the need to forge relations with new African states and to address local unemployment. UNHCR felt that much remained to be done in order to secure political and social stability in North Africa. The US Administration shared these concerns. As a State Department official put it in January 1961, the Algerian crisis had the potential to destabilize other parts of the world, including the Middle East, where Arab leaders might ‘set in motion a movement of the Algerian type to recover Palestine’ with the encouragement of the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile Algerian harkis who had served in the French civil service or in other capacities fled to metropolitan France in order to evade the wrath of the victorious nationalists. Around 100,000 were living in France by 1962, with little official acknowledgement of their needs. ‘Refugee villages’, such as those at Les Dourbes, near Digne, and Montfuron, near Manosque, having been occupied by Algerian and Yugoslav refugees were now emptied to make way for the pieds noirs. During the 1950s CIMADE concentrated on finding jobs
for refugees on French farms, whether they had fled from Eastern Europe or from Algeria. An article for English readers during World Refugee Year praised its work in reassuring refugees from Communism of the ‘rightness of their decision [even] when physical conditions are discouraging’. Much was made of the debating clubs that allowed ‘freedom of speech to those for whom it was so long denied’. The author made a point of adding that CIMADE assisted ‘North Africans who are often disillusioned and discouraged by their reception in metropolitan France’.

This was part of a broader debate about the ‘problems’ posed by new immigrants – refugees and non-refugees – who moved from under-developed parts of Europe to Western Europe. At a conference in Frankfurt in June 1963 the WCC referred to the ‘integration of Western Europe’ that created a single labour market and was now ‘blurring the old-time rigidity of national frontiers’. As a result:

- hundreds of thousands of migrant workers – Roman Catholic and Protestant from Italy, Spain and Portugal, Orthodox from Greece and Moslem from Algeria and Turkey – are settling in countries like Switzerland, Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK and Sweden.
- This new phenomenon poses many difficult problems such as integration, pastoral care, housing, social welfare, family reunion, mixed marriages etc.

The ‘blurring of national frontiers’ left unresolved the question as to the part that faith-based NGOs might be allowed to play in policy issues including immigration policy.

**Conclusion**

The three NGOs discussed above had a different profile and outlook. Jami’at al’ Islam now seems an evanescent, minor and awkward player in light of the huge contemporary expansion in organized Islamic humanitarianism, yet its significance should not be discounted. As the self-appointed Western-based agency for Muslim refugees, JAI took a staunch anti-Communist position, which in principle endeared it to Western cold warriors. But it simultaneously adopted an anti-colonial stance, accusing Western governments and UNHCR of neglecting Muslim refugees and failing to recognize the need to introduce a non-white element into the institutional matrix. Beyond the politics of the post-1945 era, JAI is also a telling illustration of the proclivity of critics to rush to judgement about Islamic charitable relief, as happened following the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, when Islamic relief efforts were construed as heavily politicized and even calculated to support ‘terror’. These arguments were anticipated by complaints in the late 1950s about an overly politicized JAI.

The irony is that JAI was Janus-faced in simultaneously claiming the moral high ground whilst taking money from the CIA.

Historians distinguish between the Cold War and the process of decolonisation, and the distinction operates in the courses they teach and the journals to which they contribute. But the crises of displacement after the Second World War were both a function of the prolonged and painful struggle to shake off the chains of colonial rule in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, and the complex aftermath of the Second World War in Europe and the crystallisation of Cold War confrontation. Thus a hard and fast distinction between decolonisation and the Cold War is not very helpful. Nor, as this article has shown, did NGOs make such a distinction. The World Council of Churches showed impatience and anger towards Western governments and the Soviet bloc alike; its spokesmen were alarmed lest Western action (or inaction) opened the door to Communism. Unlike JAI, it has enjoyed a long and successful
life in the field of humanitarian relief and other endeavours connected to its ecumenical purpose, largely because it has apparently chosen to avoid rocking the boat.\textsuperscript{53} The behaviour of CIMADE shows a close correspondence between its efforts to support Jews targeted for deportation during the Vichy era and Algerians who suffered as a result of the actions of the French state in Algeria. CIMADE subsequently supported liberation movements elsewhere, including in Vietnam, Cambodia and Nicaragua, as a mark of its commitment to ‘solidarity’ as well as ‘charity’. It too continues to pursue a vast range of humanitarian work, along with an ecumenical purpose that drives it to ‘speak out’.\textsuperscript{54}

UNHCR faced considerable challenges in relation to Cold War refugees and ‘escapees’, and the growing evidence of population displacement in the face of anti-colonial movements. But because it received most of its finance from UN member states, UNHCR had to tread carefully. In relation to Algeria the High Commissioner recognized that France would resist anything that smacked of external interference.\textsuperscript{55} Nevertheless, by the early 1960s its ‘good offices’ formula provided something of a way out of the difficulties imposed by the 1950 Statute and the 1951 Convention. UNHCR’s rapid growth has gone hand in hand with a vast extension of its ties to non-state actors in the search for ‘durable solutions’.

Finally, taking a long view we can begin to see how NGOs contributed to forging a strong link between population displacement and economic development in ways that were barely addressed during the 1950s. Something of this conceptual shift was captured in an address given by Charles H. Jordan to the Freedom from Hunger Conference in November 1965. Jordan described how non-state actors – ‘without relaxing their efforts on behalf of refugees and migrants’ – took ‘an increased interest in problems of social and economic development in the emerging countries’:

The two areas are related. The turbulent world in which we live presents us almost daily with problems of new refugees and displaced people in many parts of the world, among them the newly-independent countries of Asia and Africa. The voluntary agencies have come to realize that they cannot properly single out for special assistance groups of refugees who have sought asylum in areas where the settled population itself lives in conditions of hunger and deprivation. Thus permanent solutions for refugees are only possible in a setting of national and international cooperation for social and economic development.\textsuperscript{56}

This theme was taken up by UNHCR as well as by NGOs in ways that represented a departure from existing humanitarian practice. What Jordan failed to say (and he was not alone in this) was that rank-and-file refugees could not escape the claim of self-appointed spokesmen to speak on their behalf, any less than they could avoid subordination to humanitarian agencies, no matter how well-intentioned. Then as now, the chief actors in the refugee regime – inter-governmental and non-governmental alike – find it hard to acknowledge their accountability to the people they claim to assist.\textsuperscript{57}

Notes

1. Barnett, \textit{Empire of Humanity}.
2. On the proliferation of NGOs, see Cooley and Ron, “The NGO Scramble;” Gorman, “Private Voluntary Organisations;” Kent, \textit{Anatomy}; Ferris, \textit{Beyond Borders}. For a study of broader social movements in relation to population displacement in the 1950s, see Gatrell, \textit{Free World}?
3. Cohen, \textit{In War’s Wake}; Ballinger, “‘Entangled’ or ‘Extruded’ Histories?;” Ballinger, “Impossible Returns, Enduring Legacies;” Holian and Cohen, “Introduction;” Feldman, “The Humanitarian
Circuit;” Gatrell, Making of the Modern Refugee. The classic works include Vernant, The Refugee in the Post-War World, and Holborn, The International Refugee Organisation.

4. De Waal, “An Emancipatory Imperium?”

5. Charles Hogan, Head of UN ECOSOC NGO Section, 20 April 1951, Fonds UNHCR 11, Records of the Central Registry, Series 1 Classified (hereafter Fonds UNHCR 11), 2/8/GEN Policy and aims of UNHCR, 1960–1962, 4/0 Voluntary agencies – general, 1950–52.

6. This is not to overlook shifts over time in the ethos and practice of individual NGOs. See Hilton, “Ken Loach and the Save the Children Film.”

7. For present purposes, I define a refugee regime as an assemblage of institutional actors governed by international norms based upon an agreed definition of “the refugee.” See Skran, Refugees; Salomon, Refugees. A broader approach to the notion of a regime, including the problematisation of the category of refugee, is adopted by Gatrell, Making of the Modern Refugee.

8. In 1961 the UN General Assembly formally adopted the so-called “good offices” formula under UN Resolution 1499 (XV), enabling UNHCR to widen its remit. Holborn, Refugees, chapter 18.

9. Glynn, “Genesis and Development of Article 1;” the best overview is Loescher, UNHCR and World Politics.

10. Wyman, DPs; Reinisch and White, Disentanglement.

11. The expression “neo-refugees” was coined by Elfan Rees in 1948. It also appears in a resolution passed by the LWF Assembly in Hannover, July 1952, Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Archives, Box 36, Folder, “Refugees, General, 1948–1957.”

12. LWF Archives, Geneva, Box 36 Folder, “Refugees, General, 1948–1957.”

13. Monthly report of Ecumenical Refugee Commission (ERC), July 1947, World Council of Churches (WCC) Archives, Geneva, 425.1.031, ERC Fieldworkers 1947–48; Rees, report to the General Secretariat of the Reconstruction Department, February 1947, File 425.1.033, ERC Different Countries and Refugee Groups 1947/8; Rees, statement on “the refugee problem to the WCC Assembly, Amsterdam, August 1948”, quoted in Gaines, World Council of Churches, 527; Rees, “The Refugee Problem Today.” The WCC was formed in 1948. In the same year it created a Department of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, although this had been preceded by a Department of Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid, formed in 1942.

14. Chandler, The High Tower of Refuge, 95–6.

15. Speech by James J. Norris, 5 November 1953, American Catholic University of America Collection, Series 3, Box 170, NCWC/USCC Office of the General Secretary/Executive Department, Office of UN Affairs, Folder 39 (Refugees: Memos, 1949–60).

16. “The Churches and Migration: the Need for a Policy,” memo, 23 January 1958, Christian Aid Archives, SOAS, University of London (hereafter CA), CA/I/6/2, Migration: Papers 1954–59.

17. Harrell-Bond, “The Experience of Refugees.”

18. WCC Archives, Geneva, File 425.1.043, “Human interest stories” (full names are given in the original records).

19. Gaines, World Council of Churches, 870, quoting a resolution passed in 1959.

20. Bulletin of Jami’at al Islam, Series V, no. 1, 1960. JAI should not be confused with the organisation of the same name that was founded in 1941 by Abu Ala Mawdudi. See De Cordier, “Faith-based Aid;” Benthall, “Cultural Proximity.”

21. Jami’at al’ Islam Inc. claimed to have originated in Central Asia in the late 1860s during the Russian conquest of Turkestan. This is certainly a foundation myth. On the murky world of JAI in Europe, its association with the CIA, and its demise in the early 1960s, see Johnson, A Mosque in Munich, 139–54.

22. Ibrahim Gacaoglu to the Minister for Refugees and Victims of War, Federal Republic of Germany, 25 March 1959, alluding to the “Committee for the Return to the Homeland” in East Berlin. Fonds UNHCR 11 Records of the Central Registry Series 1, Classified Subject Files, 15/64-15/74, Box 271, folder 1.

23. Kee, Refugee World, 76–7.
24. James Read to the President of JAI, 6 April 1959, Fonds UNHCR 11, 15/64-15/74, Box 271, folder 1.
25. Gacaoglu to UNHCR, Geneva, 23 July 1954, Fonds UNHCR 11, Box 271, folder 1.
26. James Price, Address to the Convention of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs, Washington DC, 17 June 1960, Fonds UNHCR 11, Box 271, folder 2; Price to Eisenhower, 23 May 1960, Dwight David Eisenhower Library, White House Central Files, 1953-61, General File, Box 873 Folder 122-J-1 WRY; Note from Jami’at al Islam, October 1960, on the “policy direction and programming of the UNRWA,” Fonds UNHCR 11, 13/1/31/GEN Algerian refugees (1958–61).
27. Price to Lindt, 6 April 1960, Fonds UNHCR 11, 15/64-15/74, Box 271, folder 1.
28. Price to Auguste Lindt, 18 May 1960, Fonds UNHCR 11, 15/64-15/74, Box 271, folder 1.
29. Mustafa Amier, JAI International, to ICWRY executive and delegates, Geneva, 4 November 1960, Fonds UNHCR 11, 15/64-15/74, Box 271, folder 1.
30. UN Archives, Geneva, ARR 55/0088, File Box 073 ICWRY; Mustafa Amier, on behalf of JAI International, to ICWRY executive and delegates, Geneva, 4 November 1960, in UNHCR Fonds 11, 15/64 – 15/74 Moslem Refugees; Series 1, Classified Subject Files.
31. Mustafa Amier, on behalf of JAI International, to ICWRY executive and delegates, Geneva, 4 November 1960, Fonds UNHCR 11, 15/64-15/74. In 1960, UNHCR’s full-time professional staff numbered 106, only 14 of whom were non-European and half of those were from Australia and New Zealand. India, Iran, Lebanon, the UAR and Uruguay contributed staff either to Geneva HQ or to branch offices. Fonds UNHCR 11, 2/8/GEN, Policy and Aims of UNHCR, 1960–62.
32. James Price, Address given on 17 June 1960 to the Convention of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs, Washington DC, as above.
33. Press release dated 15 August 1962, Fonds UNHCR 11, 15/64-15/74, Box 271, folder 3.
34. Johnson, A Mosque in Munich, 153–4.
35. Ruthström–Ruin, Beyond Europe, 187.
36. Bourguiba to High Commissioner, 31 May 1957, Fonds UNHCR 11, 13/1/31/TUN [1]; Ruthström–Ruin, Beyond Europe, 154–6, 160–1, 167.
37. Statement of the Office of UNHCR submitted to Committee of Experts, August 1960, Fonds UNHCR 11, 2/8/GEN Policy and aims of UNHCR, 1960–1962. See also the JAI proposal dated 25 February 1960, in Fonds UNHCR 11, 15/64-15/74.
38. I am indebted to Felix Ohnmacht for this information. See also Ruthström–Ruin, Beyond Europe, 175–7, 183; Nowinski, “French Catholic Activism in Algeria.”
39. Confidential letter from Kelly to T. Jamieson, 6 August 1962, and confidential memo dated 29 August 1962, Fonds UNHCR 11, 13/1/31 Rehabilitation-Algerians (1962–8). High Commissioner Felix Schnyder did not share Kelly’s gloomy appraisal, adding that he welcomed the contribution of LRCS to meeting the “humanitarian needs of the people” in North Africa, and looked forward to “longer term international cooperation in Algeria itself”, involving other NGOs as well as the ILO and UNICEF. Felix Schnyder, address to the Executive committee of LRCS, Geneva, 27 September 1962, Fonds UNHCR 11, 13/1/31 Rehabilitation-Algerians (1962–8).
40. Price to Eisenhower, 23 May 1960, as note 23.
41. Muetzelfeldt, confidential memo to members of the Commission on World Service, 9 March 1962, LWF Archives, Box 36, Folder Refugees – Algeria.
42. White, “CIMADE’s Intervention;” Gerdes, Ökumenische Solidarität; Onyedum, “Humanize the Conflict;” Klose, Menschenrechte.
43. Bouhouche, “The Return of Algerian Refugees.”
44. Bouhouche, “The Return of Algerian Refugees.”
45. Memo from Rørholt, UNHCR representative in Tunisia, to UNHCR Geneva, 12 January 1961, Fonds 11, Series 1, 13/1/TUN Assistance to Algerian refugees in Tunisia, 1959–62.
46. Schnyder to U Thant, 3 October 1962, Fonds 11, Series 1, 13/1/31 Rehabilitation-Algerians (1962–68).
47. Parker T. Hart, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, to Robert M. McClintock, US Ambassador, Beirut, 30 January 1961, Secret. NARA, RG 59 General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Office of the Country Director for Israel and Arab Affairs, Records relating to refugee matters and Jordan waters, 1957–1966, Box 1, folder UNRW A General 1961.
48. Fonds UNHCR 11, 1951–70, 13/1/31/GEN, Algerian Refugees (1958–61).
49. Richard Russell, report on visit to Paris, May 1963, CA/I/6/7, Aid to European Refugees: correspondence and bulletins 1956–66.
50. “Twenty Years of Work for Uprooted: French Refugee Aid Movement,” The Guardian, 22 January 1960.
51. Bishop Sjollema to Brian J. Dudbridge, 3 May 1963, CA/I/6/6, Migration: correspondence on Arnoldshain conference, 1963.
52. Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan, The Charitable Crescent.
53. Kwon, The Other Cold War.
54. http://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do; Ferris, Beyond Borders.
55. White, “CIMADE’s Intervention,” Epilogue; http://www.lacimade.org/.
56. FFHC/C2/65/Inf 5, CA/A/3/3 FFHC General, 1960-69. Charles Jordan represented the International Council of Voluntary Agencies. See also Coles, “Approaching the Refugee Problem Today.”
57. Harrell-Bond, “Can Humanitarian Work with Refugees be Humane?”

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