

Guide

World War II Era Records of the World Council of Churches

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World Council of Churches Library



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Guide to the microform collection

IDC numbers YDS-1 – YDS-19



PUBLISHERS 2000

Introduction

The documents in this collection form a subset of the World Council of Churches archives dating from 1932 to 1957. They were assembled hurriedly and in a very provisional form during the dark days of the war by an administration just being born and still in the making. Under such chaotic conditions, some elements were inevitably lost and the original order of the records was difficult to reconstruct. Yet a dramatic story is revealed here, the story of the fledgling ecumenical movement's thought, policy, and activities in the face of the power of Nazi Germany.

The ecumenical movement

The ecumenical movement represents the effort of churches divided for centuries to re-establish contact with each other, to rediscover their common heritage, to explore possibilities for collaboration, to react in situations of crisis, and to find a new place within society by participating in the foundation of a new world community. To achieve these ends, the churches founded many organizations, including the *International Missionary Council* in 1910, the *Universal Council on Life and Work* in 1925, and the *Faith and Order* movement in 1927. In 1938, the *Life and Work* and *Faith and Order* movements came together to form the World Council of Churches, which was officially inaugurated in Amsterdam in 1948. Today the World Council of Churches is a worldwide fellowship of churches from different traditions: Orthodox, Anglican, Old Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Baptist, and Pentecostal.

During the Second World War, the World Council of Churches in Process of Formation was instrumental in smuggling several hundred Jews across the borders into Switzerland, actively helped by courageous and inventive young French workers affiliated with CIMADE (Comité Inter-Movement Auprès Des Evacués). Reflecting on this era, Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, wrote "... as I look back on these attempts to help the Jews during the war years, I feel far from proud. I know that I should have done a great deal more." Not all the sources testifying to this period

have been preserved, but what remains is gathered in this collection.

Sections

The archives of the ecumenical movement are housed in the Library of the World Council of Churches, based in Geneva. They are divided into many different sections, reflecting the various bodies that have been active in the ecumenical scene during the 20th century. The records of the *International Missionary Council* and the *General Correspondence Archives* of the World Council of Churches' General Secretariat, previously published on microfiche by IDC Publishers, are examples of such sections.

The present collection makes another section of the ecumenical archives available on microfiche, dealing with Germany and fifteen other countries in the period from 1932 to 1957. The archives are organized by country. The documents in the archives consist of newspapers, press clippings, press releases, telegrams, correspondence, minutes, manuscripts, and personal notes.

Records relating to Germany account for thirty boxes and are divided into four sections:

1. Church struggle: documents of H. Schönfeld;
2. Church struggle: documents of H. Hemiod;
3. Wartime;
4. the Jewish question.

Correspondents

In recent years, these archives have been studied by historians of the Bergier Commission, a commission

set up to investigate the role of Switzerland during the Second World War. The collection includes correspondence of such notable individuals as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Bishop Bell, H. Schönfeld, Karl Barth, James McDonald, Georges Casalis, Adolf Freudenberg, Martin Niemöller, Bishop Dibelius, Gerhart Riegner, Marc Boegner, and Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft. The archives document not only the issues and events of the War, but also the beginning years of the World Council of Churches. As Dr. Visser 't Hooft wrote: "The war came. And at first it seemed as if it would at least mean that the clock of ecumenical history would be definitely set back. The staff became smaller and smaller. Many plans had to be cancelled. But right in the midst of war the tide turned. What new contacts between the churches lost in frequency, they gained in intensity and depth. The war did not weaken the council. On the contrary."

Pierre Beffa

Director, World Council of Churches Library

Funding

This publication came about with support from the Kenneth Scott Latourette Fund, Yale Divinity School Library.

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301.43.28/6	Studienabteilung : various documents, articles concerning the ecumenical study to the Amsterdam assembly of 1948 (English and German studies).	280-282

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
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301.43.28/8	Studienabteilung : Germany, various papers, 1946 - 1952, I.	282-284
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301.43.28/12	Studienabteilung : Germany, travel reports, background information, I.	287-290
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YDS-5 Germany : Jewish question

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
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301.43.29/2	Situation of jews during the war : France in wartime, 1939 - 1945.	3-7
301.43.29/3	Situation of jews during the war : France, Belgique.	7-8
301.43.29/4	Situation of jews during the war : Germany.	8-9
301.43.29/5	Situation of jews during the war : Hungary, I.	10-12
301.43.29/6	Situation of jews during the war : Hungary, II.	12-15
301.43.29/7	International missionary council committee on the christian approach to the jews, I.	15-18
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301.43.30/1	General, 1938 - 1949, I.	21-22
301.43.30/2	General, 1938 - 1949, II.	22-24
301.43.30/3	Freudenberg files, I, file 1 to 5 : "la situation des juifs en Pologne" ; "Tout les juifs dehors" ; Visit to Germany, 16-18/7/1945 ; notes on church conditions in Germany in July 1945 .	25-26
301.43.30/4	Freudenberg files, I, file 6 to 7 : Hendrik Kraemer, "der Rätzel der Geschichte" ; "Informations de Palestine", 1943 - 1945.	26-29
301.43.30/5	Freudenberg files, I, file 8 : Judenfrage, Holland, 1942.	29-31

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
301.43.30/6	Freudenberg files, I, file 9 : Reports and documents from Hungary.	31-33
301.43.30/7	Freudenberg files, II, file 12 to 15 : "kirchliche Hilfe für Christen jüdischer Herkunft" ; Tätigkeit der Studienabteilung von 1939 - 1945 ; "Quelques aspects de l'oeuvre protestante parmi les réfugiés en france".	33
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301.43.31/4	Freudenberg files, II : Büro Grüber, Reichsvereinigung, II.	41-42
301.43.31/5	Freudenberg files, II : Büro Grüber, Reichsvereinigung, III.	42-44
301.43.31/6	Wcc action at the time of extermination of the jews, I : contains the conversation between Visser 't Hooft, Freudenberg and Barot concerning the Cimade-Wcc activities during the war.	44-45
301.43.31/7	Wcc action at the time of extermination of the jews, II : contains the correspondence with Riegner, 1941 - 1948.	45-47
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YDS-6 Austria

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
301.436.1/1	Austria general : 1945 - 1956.	1
301.436.1/2	Evangelisches Hilfswerk : reports, 1953 - 1955.	1-5
301.436.1/3	Church and state : 1946.	5

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
301.436.1/4	Reconstruction, refugees : 1946 – 1953.	5-6
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YDS-7 Czechoslovakia

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
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301.437.1/2	Communist state : relation between church and state.	5-7
301.437.1/3	The churches in Czechoslovakia.	7-10
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YDS-8 Poland

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
301.438.1/1	Reports on visits : 1944 - 1953.	1-2
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301.438.1/3	Youth, education and theological faculties.	3-6
301.438.1/4	General papers, I.	6-8
301.438.1/5	General papers, II.	8-10
301.438.1/6	General papers, III.	10-12

YDS-9 Hungary

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
301.4391.1/1	General papers, I : 1944 - 1951.	1-2
301.4391.1/2	General papers, II : 1944 - 1951.	3-4
301.4391.1/3	Church and state, I : 1945 - 1950.	4-6
301.4391.1/4	Church and state, II : 1945 - 1950.	6-9
301.4391.1/5	Protestant churches, I : 1944 - 1950.	9-13
301.4391.1/6	Protestant churches, II : 1944 - 1950.	13-15
301.4391.1/7	Study group : 1943 - 1948.	15
301.4391.1/8	Evangelism and national reformed free council : 1943 - 1948.	15-17
301.4391.1/9	Ecumenical cooperation : 1944 - 1950.	17-18
301.4391.1/10	Minority problem : 1946 - 1947.	18-19
301.4391.1/11	Reconstruction : 1946 - 1947.	19-21
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YDS-10 France

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
301.44.1/1	Prisoners of war, 1945 - 1949.	1-2
301.44.1/2	Reconstruction, 1944 - 1947.	2-3
301.44.1/3	Le protestantisme français : general studies until 1945, I.	3-4
301.44.1/4	Le protestantisme français : general studies until 1945, II.	4-6
301.44.1/5	Youth, 1940 - 1946 : Wscf.	6-7

YDS-11 Italy

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
301.45.1/1	Religious freedom, relations with state, I : 1945 - 1957.	1-4

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
301.45.1/2	Religious freedom, relations with state, II : 1945 - 1957.	4-6
301.45.1/3	Waldensian church : 1938 – 1957.	6-9
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YDS-12 Netherlands

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
301.492.1/1	Wartime : messages from the churches, I.	1-2
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301.492.1/8	Wartime : brochures, I, "Stemmen uit Nederland".	16-18
301.492.1/9	Wartime : brochures, II, "Stemmen uit Nederland".	18-20
301.492.2/1	Wartime : reports, 1940 - 1945, I.	21-22
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301.492.2/4	Wartime : reports, 1940 - 1945, IV.	25-28
301.492.2/5	Dutch reformed church : synod of 1945 and new church order, I.	28-30
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301.492.2/7	Ecumenical movement and ecumenical council in the Netherlands, 1938 - 1950, I.	33-37
301.492.2/8	Ecumenical movement and ecumenical council in the Netherlands, 1938 - 1950, II : "Gemeente-commissie v.d. dec. Rad van kerken in Nederlands", "Nederlands ofdeling, wereldbond der kerken, 1938 - 1939".	38-39

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
301.492.3/1	Reconstruction : 1945 - 1948, I.	39-40
301.492.3/2	Reconstruction : 1945 - 1948, II.	40-42
301.492.3/3	Youth work : 1945 - 1947.	42-43
301.492.3/4	Wartime reports from Holland concerning the churches and international affairs.	43-44
301.492.3/5	Church and social questions : 1943 - 1949.	45-47
301.492.3/6	Visser 't Hooft's Dutch correspondence, 1936 - 1945, I : G. J. Heering, K. J. Brouwer, Koopmans, H. C. Rutgers, Maes Plooi, G. van der Flier, G. F. Callenbach.	47-49
301.492.3/7	Visser 't Hooft's Dutch correspondence, 1936 - 1945, II : Anton M. Brouwer, J. Eijkman, C. L. Patijn, D. G. van der Leeuw, D. Crammelin, G. H. Slotemaker de Bruïne, C. M. van Asch von Wijck, H. Kraemer.	49-51
301.492.3/8	Visser 't Hooft's Dutch correspondence, 1936 - 1945, III : refugees and prisoner of war, I, also contains Walter Spiegel's certificates.	51-52
301.492.3/9	Visser 't Hooft's Dutch correspondence, 1936 - 1945, IV : refugees and prisoner of war, II.	52-54
301.492.4/1	Visser 't Hooft's Dutch correspondence, 1936 - 1945, V : Netherlands, A to B.	54-58
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Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
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YDS-13 Greece

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
301.495.1/1	General papers, I : various reports, 1938 - 1944.	1
301.495.1/2	General papers, II : various reports, 1946 - 1948.	1-5
301.495.1/3	General papers, III : various reports, 1949 - 1950.	5-9
301.495.1/4	General papers, IV : various reports, 1951 - 1953.	9-11
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301.495.2/1	Return of greek children : 1950 - 1951.	19-21
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301.495.2/4	Greek evangelical church : 1934 - 1954.	22
301.495.2/5	Translation of greek articles, I : 1963.	22-24
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301.495.2/9	Translation of greek articles, V : 1960.	32-33
301.495.2/10	Translation of greek articles, VI : 1959.	34-36
301.495.2/11	Translation of greek articles, VII : 1958.	36-38
301.495.2/12	Translation of greek articles, VIII : 1957.	38-40
301.495.2/13	Translation of greek articles, IX : 1954 - 1956.	40-43

YDS-14 Yugoslavia

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
301.497.1/1	Wartime and further political situation : church and state relations.	1-5
301.497.1/2	General papers, 1947 - 1957 : reports from visits, I.	5-7
301.497.1/3	General papers, 1947 - 1957 : reports from visits, II.	7-11
301.497.1/4	General papers, 1947 - 1957 : reports from visits, III.	11-13
301.497.1/5	General papers, 1947 - 1957 : reports from visits, IV.	13-16
301.497.1/6	General papers, 1947 - 1957 : reports from visits, V.	16-19
301.497.1/7	General papers, 1947 - 1957 : reports from visits, VI	19

YDS-15 China

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
301.51.1/1	China general reports, I : 1944 - 1957.	1-2
301.51.1/2	China general reports, II : 1944 - 1957.	2-5
301.51.1/3	China general reports, III : 1944 - 1957.	5-8
301.51.1/4	Church of Christ in China : 1946 - 1950.	8-12
301.51.1/5	National christian council of China : 1943 - 1950.	12-14
301.51.1/6	Youth, education, W.S.C.F. : 1942 - 1951.	14-18
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301.51.2/2	Church and state : the communist state, II.	22-24
301.51.2/3	Church and state : the communist state, III.	24-29
301.51.2/4	Church and state : the communist state, IV.	29-31

YDS-16 Israel

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
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301.5694.1/2	Palestine and the U.N.O., II : 1948 - 1954.	5-8
301.5694.1/3	Palestine and the U.N.O., III : 1948 - 1954.	8-12
301.5694.1/4	General papers, I : 1947 – 1957.	12-19
301.5694.2/1	General papers, II : 1947 – 1957.	19-27
301.5694.2/2	General papers, III : 1947 – 1957.	27-32

YDS-17 United States of America

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
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301.73.1/2	War and peace : international questions, 1939 - 1949, II.	4-6
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301.73.1/4	Federal council of the churches of Christ in America : material, 1927 - 1936, II.	10-13

YDS-18 Colombia

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
301.861.1/1	Colombia general, I : 1950 - 1957.	1-2
301.861.1/2	Colombia general, II : 1950 - 1957.	2-4
301.861.1/3	Colombia general, III : 1950 - 1957.	4-5
301.861.1/4	Colombia general, IV : 1950 - 1957.	5-6
301.861.1/5	Colombia general, V : 1950 - 1957.	6-8

YDS-19 Indonesia

Box/folder	Contents	mf.no
301.91.1/1	Rapporten zendigsconsulaat Indonesie, I : 1947 - 1949.	1-4
301.91.1/2	Rapporten zendigsconsulaat Indonesie, II : 1947 - 1949.	4-6
301.91.1/3	Bali, Java, I : 1933 - 1958.	6-9
301.91.1/4	Bali, Java, II : 1933 - 1958.	9-11