

# ISRAEL BARS QUAKERS IN ARAB COURT CASES

## Americans Are Told That Legal Aid in West Bank Land Takeovers Duplicates State Activity

By **PAUL HOFMANN**

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**JERUSALEM, July 4** — American Quaker welfare workers said today that the Israeli Government had told them to stop providing legal aid to Arabs in the West Bank.

The Legal Aid Center of the American Friends Service Committee, in East Jerusalem, was informed however that it could continue with cases already in hand.

The center has been providing counsel, among other activities, for Arab landowners appealing to Israel's Supreme Court against the military government's requisition of property to be used by the army or by Jewish civilian settlers.

James Fine, a representative of the Society of Friends, said the Israelis contended that his group was duplicating Government services.

An American official said the Quaker committee had retained an Israeli lawyer to clarify its status. The official added that he was not aware of any legal aid provided by the Israeli Government for Arabs, and he suggested that the Quaker group ask the Israelis to specify what services it had in mind.

### Political Activity Barred

A statement by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare said that foreign charitable organizations operating in the Arab regions occupied by Israel in the 1967 war, including the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, must declare their purposes. The ministry emphasized that any political activity by such groups was prohibited.

Israeli authorities have been annoyed for some time by Quaker activity in the West Bank. Government officials have charged in briefings to committees of Parliament and in private conversation that the Quaker group was inciting Palestinian Arabs against Israel.

In a recent hearing before the Supreme Court in Jerusalem, Attorney General Gavriel Bach said that of 12 Arabs appealing seizures of their land, 3 were residents of the United States.

"There is a feeling," he added, "that there is a guiding hand involved and an interest to cause embarrassment to the Government of Israel." This was considered an allusion to the Quakers, who provided legal aid in the case. The court rejected the appeals.

### 17 Other Arabs Petition Court

Another set of petitions against requisitions in the West Bank is pending before the high court. The petitioners are 17 landowners in the village of Rubej, near Nablus, the biggest West Bank city. Under a temporary injunction last month, the Government has until July 20 to show why the Elon Moreh settlement on a hill just outside Nablus should not be canceled.

Israel's Chief of Staff, Lieut. Gen. Rafael Eytan, sent a draft affidavit today to Attorney General Bach declaring that the Elon Moreh settlement was of vital importance for Israeli defense.

Last month, the court considered a sworn statement by a former Chief of Staff, Lieut. Gen. Chaim Bar Lev, now secretary of the Labor Alignment opposition group, contending that the settlement was not vital for defense and, to the contrary, might need extra troops for protection in the event of war.

The attorney of the 17 Rubej petitioners, Elias Khoury, who has often worked with the Quakers, said today that the American Friends Service Committee had not provided legal assistance in the case.

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