

32.1.10

UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH
COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES



NATIONS UNIES
OFFICE DU HAUT-COMMISSAIRE
POUR LES RÉFUGIÉS

2/5/24/4/GEN

Télégrammes : HICOMREF
Téléphone : 33 10 00 33 20 00 33 40 00

Palais des Nations
GENÈVE

11 March 1963

Dear Mr. Hicks,

I understand from Mr. Beermann that you plan an extensive trip to Europe which is to last from mid-March 1964 until about mid-September. You mention that you intend to include Geneva in this tour and, indeed, we would be pleased to welcome you at this Headquarters.

You raise the question of what will happen concerning your present function during your absence, and assume rightly that a solution has to be found for this period. We wonder whether an arrangement could not be worked out whereby Mr. F. van Wijk would be prepared, in an honorary capacity, to keep an eye on your Office and to take care of at least the most urgent matters which do not allow for any delay. I know that you have established a close co-operation with him ever since the South African World Refugee Year Committee was set up and that Mr. van Wijk is familiar with the refugee problem both in and outside South Africa.

Such an arrangement would ensure the continuity of our representation in South Africa and, at the same time, enable you to resume your duties upon your return to that country.

In such a case we would offer you for 1964, at the appropriate moment, a Special Service Agreement which would cover the period 1 January - mid-March and mid-September - 31 December 1964.

I shall be pleased to have your reactions to the above proposals.

Yours sincerely,

E.R. Marlin,
Senior Director

Mr. V.R. Hicks,
UNHCR Correspondent in South Africa,
P.O. Box 672,
JOHANNESBURG

Geneva, 16 March 1963

Dear Mr. Hicks,

ALL STAR FESTIVAL is a beautiful and up to now, at least in Europe, most successful scheme, but it does not leave one much time for such things as private correspondence. I am awfully sorry that I could not yet find the time to give a personal reply to your letter of 25 Feb. in which you brought up the question of your trip to Europe and its possible consequences for your work for the UNHCR. In the meantime you have received Mr. Marlin's letter (which I had drafted, as you will have understood). I do hope that this solution is acceptable to you and that the work in South Africa may continue.

the S.A. Government

But let me, first of all, tell you: welcome in Geneva. At long last, the famous trip will take place and you will see more of the old continent than many Europeans, myself included! I hope so much that you will have a very interesting time and that this will be a most precious souvenir for you and your wife for the rest of your lives. I am not quite sure that I will still be here next year when you will come, but my colleagues will, in case I should be in some other part of the world, extend you a most cordial welcome.

I must say that the studies of your daughter have been most successful and it seems that she quickly develops as a kind of mathematical genius. My most cordial congratulations and all the best for a glorious future! Her parents must be very proud.

What you write about the attitude vis-à-vis the UN in your country as far as the Government is concerned and the fact that they are able to distinguish the humanitarian aspects of the others, is certainly encouraging. We would be very interested to receive a copy of any statement which may be issued to this effect.

We understand that the Rhodesias will coordinate their ASF-campaign with that of your country. Did you know that?

P.S. I attach a copy of a recent press-release on ASF, but assume that you do not yet want to start publishing such news.

*With many cordial greetings,
Always yours
M. Deane*

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

AIRMAIL

Ref: 23/2/1.

To: UNHCR Correspondent in South Africa.

From: V. Tedesco. *V. Tedesco*

Subject: "Old Believers" - Receptions at Durban and Cape Town.

1st April 1963.

1. Belated, but no less appreciative, thanks for sending us further details on the receptions accorded to the "Old Believers" while passing through Durban and Cape Town.

2. May I also ask you to [convey to the Rev. Basil Brown, Secretary of the Christian Council of South Africa, to the members of the National Council of Women, and the Cape Town Branch of the Refugee Organization our very best thanks for the detailed report provided on the reception accorded to the "Old Believers" in Cape Town and for the excellent arrangements made.]

File
100/11

RECEPTION OF "OLD BELIEVERS" IN CAPE TOWN
DECEMBER 27, 28, 29 1963

Arrangements had been made for a joint deputation representative of The Christian Council of South Africa, the National Council of Women, and the Cape Town Branch of the Refugee Organisation to meet the "Old Believers" when the ship arrived in Cape Town on December 27th, and this was duly done.

Difficulties were experienced with interpretation. The ship arrived 12 hours sooner than expected, but an appeal for Russian interpreters in the press received a ready response, and when these 4 families were transported round the Peninsular on a sight-seeing tour on Friday, 28th - the bus being provided by the good offices of the Mayor of Cape Town - we were accompanied by no less than four interpreters. The Group was entertained to tea by the three Organisations mentioned above, and were delighted with the very warm reception they received while in town.

As a result of the publicity given to their arrival, a number of Russian speaking people in Cape Town spent a good deal of time on the boat with them, and many items of clothing were gathered together, so that they were able to leave with quite a lot of items in their wardrobe.

I personally went down to see them off on the Saturday morning and found that they had been very happy with all that had been done for them here in Cape Town.

44-1682

HCC/1/VRH/EW.

10th April, 1963.

Mr. Harold J. Laite,
P.O. Box 3137
CAPE TOWN.

Dear Mr. Laite,

RE: "OLD BELIEVERS" - Reception
at Cape Town.

I have been requested by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva to "convey to Rev. Basil Brown, Secretary of the Christian Council of South Africa, to the members of the National Council of Women of South Africa, and the Cape Town Branch of the Refugee Organisation our very best thanks for the detailed report provided on the reception accorded to the "Old Believers" in Cape Town and for the excellent arrangements made".

May I add my own personal thanks for the wonderful co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

V.R. HICKS.
SECRETARY.

HCC/1/VRA.

18th July, 1963.

Mr. E.R. Marlin,
United Nations,
Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees,
Palais des Nations,
GENEVA.
Switzerland.

Dear Mr. Marlin,

I must apologise for the long delay in replying to your letter ref. 2/5/24/4 GEN of 11th March, 1963. The subject matter of your letter has been very much to the fore these last months.

I do want to clear up a personal aspect which affects not only my connection with the High Commissioner's Office, but also with the World Council of Churches Service to Refugees, and the National Organisation in South Africa. Consequently I am sending a copy of this letter to Miss Margaret Jaboor, WCC., and to the Chairman of our Executive Mr. P. van Wyk, with whom my trip to Europe has been fully discussed.

In considering the effect of my absence on the future activities of the Organisations concerned, I have tried not to leave the impression, "what happens while I am away;" in other words that I assume my services will be required when I return, but rather that suitable arrangements should be made for these activities to continue when I go off, and if on my return I am needed, then I shall be available. I would not like to see that which I have helped to build up, fall away just because I shall be away on an extended visit to Europe and the U.K.

Irrespective, therefore, of whether I am invited to take up my existing duties on my return from Europe or not, I would, in view of past associations and my continuing interest in the work of refugee relief, like to make as much personal contact as possible with the people concerned in this great work. Personal discussions could throw light on many of our problems and thus a better understanding of mutual interests could surely result.

/Our

Our trip is a holiday trip embracing a stay of at least two months in London where our son is a practicing architect and our youngest daughter will be undertaking research in Mathematics at London University.

At present the trip is provisionally planned along the following lines:-

My wife and I are travelling by Italian line, Europa, to Venice where we arrive on 30/3/1964, with our car. The car journey from Venice will be Northern Italy, Southern Switzerland, Italian, French and Spanish Mediterranean Coast, through Spain to Paris, Holland and U.K. The return trip is through Belgium down the Rhine to Switzerland, Western Austria, Italy, down to Brindisi, Greece and return to South Africa.

Our visit to Geneva is at present planned for the return portion of our journey, but as we shall be at Lugano on the forward trip I am considering a change in plans, so that we visit Geneva on this forward trip, i.e. about the end of the second week in April. By so doing your office would be able to advise me where and from whom, along our route I shall gather the most useful information.

I have noted your suggestions for "overnight watchman" while I am away. It is a matter of concern to both Mr. van Wyk and myself. He will not however be able to fulfil the function you suggest in your letter. I can assure you however that the matter is receiving serious consideration and we are sure someone will be found - someone acceptable in Government circles.

I shall be pleased to have your views and guidance as soon as possible.

With best regards,
Yours sincerely,

V.R. HICKS.

18th July, 1963.

Dr. V.A.M. Beermann,
c/o Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees,
Palais des Nations,
GENEVA.
Switzerland.

Dear Dr. Beermann,

I must offer my sincere apologies for the long delay in replying to your letter of 16th March. Thank you for all the sentiments expressed therein.

I am attaching a copy of my reply to Mr. Marlin. As you will see, my absence affects three organisations so I really have to put on my thinking cap!

You say in your letter that you may not be in Geneva next year when we come around -- we are indeed distressed to hear this. You will let me know whether in our wanderings round Europe we shall be in your vicinity.

I am writing to you officially re all Star Festival etc.

Best Regards,
Yours sincerely,

V.R. HICKS.

UNITED NATIONS

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR REFUGEES



NATIONS UNIES

OFFICE DU HAUT COMMISSAIRE
POUR LES RÉFUGIÉS

Télégrammes : HICOMREF

Téléphone : 33 10 00 33 20 00 33 40 00

Palais des Nations
GENÈVE

2/5/24/4/GEN

30 July 1963

Dear Mr. Hicks,

Thank you for your letter dated 18 July 1963, the contents of which I have noted with interest.

With respect to your change of plans to visit Geneva on the outward journey, I should be grateful if you would confirm, about a month before your departure from South Africa, the exact schedule for your visit here. We shall on your arrival be pleased to suggest suitable contacts in Europe whom you may wish to see personally in the refugee field and, secondly, to discuss in more detail the general position both in South Africa and Europe.

As you indicate that Mr. van Wyk will not be able to take over the functions of the Office during your absence, I am looking forward to hearing further from you when a person has been selected to be proposed to the High Commissioner. We would be happy if you could attach a curriculum vitae.

With best regards.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "E. R. Marlin".

E. R. Marlin
Senior Director

Mr. V. R. Hicks
UNHCR Correspondent for South Africa
304 "Dunwell"
Jorissen Street
Braamfontein
Johannesburg
South Africa

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES
BRANCH OFFICE FOR THE UNITED STATES

HAUT COMMISSARIAT POUR LES RÉFUGIÉS
DÉLÉGATION POUR LES ÉTATS-UNIS

UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK

TELEGRAMME: HICOMREF
TELEPHONE: PLAZA 4-1234
EXT. 3673

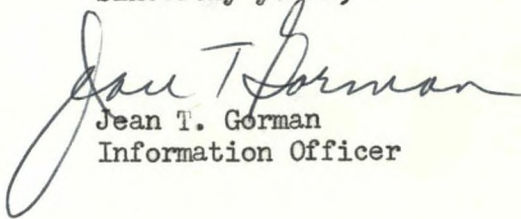
7 August 1963

Dear Mr. Hicks,

Just a brief note to let you know we yesterday had the pleasure of a visit from Miss Sally Kussel, of the National Council of Women (South Africa).

We briefed Miss Kussel on the activities of our Branch Office in the United States and hope we have provided her with all the information she required. We found her a most charming visitor.

Sincerely yours,


Jean T. Gorman
Information Officer

Mr. V. R. Hicks
UNHCR Correspondent
in South Africa
P. O. Box 672
Johannesburg, South Africa



44-1682

HCC/1/VRH/EW.

22nd November, 1963.

Dr. V.A.M. Beermann,
c/o Office of the High Commissioner
for Refugees,
Palais des Nations,
GENEVA. Switzerland.

Dear Dr. Beermann,

This letter to you is long overdue and will therefore have to deal with quite a number of matters. But firstly I want to thank you for your letters and good wishes recently received.

Generally, we have been going through a difficult time these last months. The attitude and opinions so vehemently expressed by members of the United Nations of the policies of the Government of South Africa have found strong reaction from all sections of the community. The public have, in their objections to outside interference in the affairs of the country, shown no desire or intention of discriminating between the politics of the United Nations and the humanitarian endeavours of its Agencies. It has been of no avail to point out that during the time of greatest criticism and condemnation, the State has indicated its sympathy for the work of the Agencies by making payment to the funds of UNHCR and ICEM. In my personal discussions with a senior official of the Department of Foreign Affairs I have been reassured of the Department's interest in this humanitarian work and also that they were aware of the problems facing Refugee welfare work in South Africa.

The most significant feature, and one which has seriously impeded fund raising appeals, has been the reluctance of prominent people to associate themselves with any bodies that may have ties with the United Nations and its agencies.

All this opposition affected most seriously both "All Star Festival" sales and appeals by the National Committee for funds.

The confused thinking by the "man in the street" was clearly indicated on the occasion of the recent street collection in Johannesburg by the National Committee. This appeal was held on the 22nd October last. Collectors,

and here/

Dr. V.A.M. Beermann,

22nd November, 1963.

and here I am only quoting the reports from senior and responsible collectors, in some instances V.I.P's, were subjected to remarks such as - " You are collecting to assist so-called refugees who have escaped from custody to avoid prosecution," "You are assisting to drive the white man into the sea" - "The High Commissioner is assisting the saboteurs from South Africa".

It is clear that the word "refugee" has lost its original meaning, since the escapees from goal who have managed to cross the border into neighbouring areas are referred to in all sections of the daily press as "refugees". You will appreciate that these attitudes make it extremely difficult for the South African organisers working for refugee welfare to make any progress in their efforts, until such time as we are able to win back the confidence of the public, in the sincerity of our work.

At a recent Executive Committee meeting I was requested to obtain from you the following information:-

1. Some details of how the donation of R10,000. made in 1962, was disbursed. The Committee was originally given to understand that the funds would be devoted to the resettlement of "Old Believers" from Hong Kong in South America. As far as we are aware only 12 persons have been assisted under this proposal. Can
2. Can you suggest any project in Europe affecting "Old refugees", say out-of-camp persons if there are no in-camp refugees, needing assistance. Some definite project like this may arouse the interest of a goodly section of our community.
3. Are there still "Old Believers" in Hong Kong awaiting resettlement in America, or elsewhere.

I have not been able to settle on anyone who will carry on as temporary Correspondent during my absence in 1964. I have, however, not given up hope and trust that an accepted person will become available. I am looking forward to my arrival in Geneva when I hope that we will be able to discuss our mutual problems fully. My wife and I leave Johannesburg on 1st March 1964 and we should arrive in Geneva about the end of April. I am enclosing a brief schedule of our motoring trip and from this you will notice that we start off by visiting Southern Italy, including Rome and then proceed to Spain and after the Pyrenees we go directly to Geneva. From Geneva we go to Holland, along the Rhine and thence to London. On the return we visit France and Switzerland before embarking from Venice on 24/9/64. I hope thus to gather first hand information on present day refugee relief work, and ofcourse also look

forward/
to meeting personally all those good people with whom I have corresponded for so long.

We send our best regards to you and your family,

Yours very sincerely,

NNNN

1
cap

JH

JB

TACJ1476 JIG564/UN218

JERUSALEM/ISRAEL 31 29 0535

1963 XI 29

SUBJECT TO CORRECTION 9TH ADDS

File on HCC/1

TRY

JOHANNESBURG
PHONE
22-2095

1963 XI 29

10:46

LTF

UNHCR CORRESPONDENT IN SOUTH AFRICA PO BOX

672 JOHANNESBURG

HCR 3358 HAVE SENT MESSAGE CONGRATULATIONS ON
BEHALF ALL UNHCR STAFF TO HICOM NEW YORK ON
OCCASION HIS UNANIMOUS REELECTION

JAMIESON

COL:- 672 3358

GOEDGEKEUR DEUR,
PASSED BY:
CP RO'S

ST. JOHANNESBURG
NO. 55-5083

This Form should accompany any Enquiry

POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS

10:10

~~LEDA
Jade
V. DENJAVE
DIAE
VENADAE
DENVARE~~

Hierdie Vorm moet alle Navrae vergesel

POS-TELEGRAAFDIENS



Télégrammes : HICOMREF

Téléphone : 33 10 00 33 20 00 33 40 00

Palais des Nations
GENÈVE27/3/5 S.AF.
27/3/13 S.AF.

4 December 1963

Dear Mr. Hicks,

Thank you so much for your letter of 22 November in which you give such an illuminating picture of the situation in your country with respect to arousing interest in the international refugee problem.

1. The difficulties you and your Committee encounter are well understood here; the untiring efforts undertaken are therefore especially appreciated. You and your Committee are well aware of the humanitarian and non-political approach of this Office to refugee problems, which forms the firm basis of our entire work. We realize that it is not always easy to let the public understand this approach. Nevertheless, it is the only attitude we can adopt and which will bring about positive results to the benefit of those towards whom our efforts are exclusively directed - the refugees themselves.

It is not up to us to give your Committee concrete advice as to what best can be done under the prevailing circumstances. We have full confidence in the wisdom and devotion of your group and whatever its contribution may be to the international efforts in the field of assistance to refugees, it will always be very gratefully accepted.

2. We are informed by our New York Branch Office that at the recent Pledging Conference for the Programme 1964 of the UNHCR, South Africa has again announced a contribution of \$ 25,000, half of which will have to be transferred to ICEM. This is convincing proof that the Government understands and appreciates the spirit of our endeavours.
3. As far as the desire of the Committee is concerned to receive a report on the way the contribution of R. 10,000 of the South African Refugee Committee has been spent, I have pleasure in submitting the following information.

- (a) The donation was attributed towards project FE/6.1/61 requiring a total contribution of \$ 100,000. This project provides for the resettlement of refugees from China in agricultural settlements in Latin America at an average per capita cost of \$ 420 which is shared equally between UNHCR and the World Council of Churches. To date a total of 176 beneficiaries have been settled under this project at a cost of \$ 36,960. The South African contribution can therefore be stated to have made possible the settlement of 67 beneficiaries. It was very fortunate that a group of 12 Old Believers happened to call at Durban in December 1962 and were received by Professor Pollak of the Durban World

Mr. V.R. Hicks,
UNHCR Correspondent in South Africa,
P.O. Box 672, JOHANNESBURG, South Africa.

/2....

Refugee Year Committee, who took them on a sightseeing tour in Durban and arranged a Sunday party for them at the home of Mrs. Chaplin. The Old Believers were deeply moved by this reception.

- (b) There are at present only 90 refugees in transit in Hong Kong, the great majority of whom are in active processing for various destinations. They do not include any refugees belonging to the Old Believer sect. As you know, the number of refugees still on the mainland of China now stands at around 2,000, of whom the only important remaining group are the 1,400 refugees still in Sinkiang.

We have been waiting for the Sinkiang group to be given permission to proceed to Hong Kong, but so far there have been no signs of any movement from this region.

According to the Hong Kong Office the Sinkiang group is made up of some 600 Old Believers while the remainder belong to mixed sects such as the Pentecostals, Adventists and Anabaptists. Should this latter group of Old Believers, however, succeed in leaving China a number of them would certainly want to join their 1,200 compatriots already established in the two Old Believer colonies at Santa Cruz and Sao Pan Furado in the State of Parana, Brazil.

4. As far as the project for "old refugees" in Europe is concerned, we are looking into this matter and you will receive a separate letter on this subject.

5. We are very much looking forward to the visit you and your wife plan to make to Geneva in April next year. Apart from the great personal pleasure of seeing you again, I believe that it will also be highly useful for you to make the personal acquaintance of the High Commissioner and many of his collaborators. I would like you to note that probably in the period 27 April - 2 May 1964, the Executive Committee of our Office will take place. During these times, everybody is very busy, as you will understand, and it is therefore advisable that you arrive here after the Committee is over. In your letter, you write that you "should arrive in Geneva about the end of April" whilst your attached time-table indicates: Geneva: 5 - 8 May. ← correct - possibly 6-9/5
I would recommend in your own interests that you follow the time-table. Another point: have you already made your hotel reservation in Geneva? This may be difficult as there will be the big World Trade Conference taking place and hotel space is limited. Can I be of any help?

6. I do hope that you will find a solution to the problem of your replacement during your prolonged absence. Should this prove to be impossible, is there no secretary who can keep things going and who knows where to reach you during your trip?

7. Last but not least: I would now like to turn to ALL STAR FESTIVAL. Both Philips, Netherlands, and we need a number of details regarding the scheme which we have received from most countries where the record is being sold, but not yet from South Africa. I would therefore be very grateful if, as a matter of priority, you could contact your commercial partners in Johannesburg and ask them to provide Philips, Netherlands, (with a copy to you and another copy, through you, to us) with the following data :

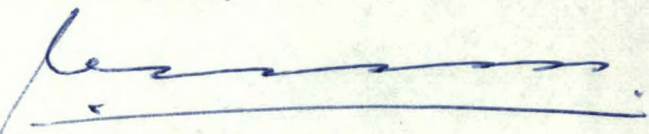
Selling price including tax;
Selling price excluding tax;
Retailers' margin;
Total cost price;
HCR profit;
Indication of how much has been reserved per record for pressing fee to be paid to Philips, Netherlands, and for copyrights, if any.
Most up-to-date number of records sold, eventually to be broken down into mono and stereo.

Last point but very important: could you please also discuss with your commercial partners when they will be able to make a first payment to Philips, Netherlands. This may probably be after they have settled their accounts at the end of the year. For your own information, we are badly in need of funds for several projects in which the High Commissioner is interested, and for that reason we are writing to our partners in many countries to make payments. Should there be any further sales in 1964, a second and final settlement can be made at a later stage. But we would like to collect any funds which we are able to obtain at this time.

8. Should we not write to each other before the end of the year, then I should like to express to you, your wife and your family, all wishes for a good and prosperous 1964.

With my best greetings,

Ever yours,


V. A. M. Beermann

Collection Number: AD1715

SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (SAIRR), 1892-1974

PUBLISHER:

Collection Funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

©2013

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document forms part of the archive of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.