

CORRESPONDENT IN REPUBLIC OF  
SOUTH AFRICA  
U.N. HIGH COMMISSIONER  
FOR REFUGEES  
P.O. Box 672, JOHANNESBURG

44-6901

HCC/1/VRH/EW.INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM.

18th February, 1963.

TO: High Commissioner for  
information Dr. Beermann.

FROM: Correspondent: VIVIAN R. HICKS

SUBJECT: 'Old Believers' - receptions at Durban and Cape Town.

You have already been advised of the reception accorded the Old Believers at Durban. I have just received a report from the Rev. Basil Brown, Secretary of the Christian Council of South Africa and in order to keep records complete I now forward a full report on the receptions with which the Old Believers were greeted at Durban and Cape Town while en route to Brazil.

DURBAN: The Old Believers families arrived in Durban a few days before Christmas 1962. A committee under the Chairmanship of Miss H. Pollak organised a welcome for the travellers. Miss Pollak reported as follows to Dr. Beermann:-

- "A" (1) After arrival, Members of the Committees and particularly the Business and Professional Women's Club and S.A. Association of University Women, went aboard with large quantity of good clothing, etc. We had made arrangements for an interpreter, a former Imperial Russian Opera Singer. After distribution, drive in Durban and environs in private cars - also in afternoon.
- (2) Sunday - party at home of Mrs. Chaplin - distribution of individual personal gifts to each Member. I had a letter (not from Mrs. Chaplin) telling me the Old Believers were deeply moved "blessed us all several times" and sang their blessing in Russian.

The Special Representative in Hong Kong, Mr. Anthony W. Clabon, received the following letter from Mihail and Nadejda Martushev:-

"We have pleasure to inform you that we have arrived in Durban. We were met by Miss Chailim with some other ladies and they took us in the town and brought us back. We had a most wonderful time and were very happy. The next day they took us again and we had an excellent lunch and also received many presents from them, and we all thank them very much.

During our voyage the sea was quiet and not much waving. Therefore, we are all feeling very well and healthy and now only left 15 more days to end our journey.

We all thank you very much for all your kind assistance and wish you the best of luck".

Cape Town/



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CAPE TOWN: The Old Believers families arrived in Cape Town on December 27th, 1963. The Rev. Basil Brown, Secretary of the Christian Council of South Africa, in co-operation with the National Council of Women, and the Cape Town Branch of the Refugee Organisation organised a reception for the refugee families. Mr. Brown reports as follows:-

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".

The Cape Times of 28 December 1962 carried a report of their arrival. The report read:-

#### RUSSIAN REFUGEES IN CITY

A group of 18 men, women and children, White Russian "Old Believers", refugees from Hong Kong, arrived in Cape Town last night in the Dutch ship Ruys on their way to Brazil.

Their resettlement in Brazil was made possible by the money collected in South Africa during World Refugee Year. Arrangements are being made to entertain the group while they are in Cape Town and to provide them with things they may need.

The problem last night when the Rev. Basil Brown, secretary of the Christian Council of South Africa went to welcome the refugees was that they could only speak Russian and nobody could interpret. He was therefore unable to find

out/



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out their needs.

ISRAELI HELP.

Anybody who speaks Russian and who is prepared to act as an interpreter to-day should get in touch with Mr. Brown at 77-3910 as early as possible.

A Cape Times reporter who visited the group later in the evening found an engineer from an Israeli ship who was able to speak Russian.

Through him he was told that the group are farmers and intend farming when they reach Brazil".

A 7½" x 5" photograph accompanied the report. Copy of this photograph is attached for your records.

The Executive Committee of the S.A. National Committee for WRY has expressed its appreciation to all organisations for their co-operation in welcoming the travellers to South Africa and giving publicity to their arrival.



**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*

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