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South Africa Conscientious Objectors

PEACE SECTION

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MCC

A Christian
resource
for meeting
human
need

March 11, 1980

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I was asked by the Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section to determine the status and possible admission of South African military resisters to the U.S. (and possibly Canada). The assignment was stimulated by the focus of the New Call to Peacemaking Assembly on Southern Africa (1978).

To accomplish this task I met with various people and agencies which have been concerned and involved in this issue. This report attempts to explain the current situation, what their status actually is and what the legal, political and humanitarian implications of this issue are. MCC and other concerned agencies are free to consult the report. It is descriptive and does not reflect the opinions of MCC or any other agency. It is not for publication or greater distribution. It will be studied by MCC, Peace Section and other agencies.

Sincerely,

Robert Mossman

Robert Mossman

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PEACE SECTION MAILING
FROM URBANE PEACHEY
MARCH 25, 1980

AVENUES OF ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY RESISTERS

To gather information for this report the following people were consulted:

In Philadelphia:

Barry Sirmon-South African military resister
David Sogge
Ron Young
Jerry Herman-American Friends Service Committee
Don Morton-South African Military Refugee Aid Fund (SAMRAF)

In Boston:

Joel Avni-South African War Resisters in United States (SAWRUS)
Danny Bradlow-South African war resister
Beverly Woodward-International Seminar on Training for Non-Violent Action

In New York:

Mike Morgan-SAMRAF
Martin Johnson-South African war resister
Paul Irish-American Committee on Africa
Elizabeth Landis-UN Commission on Namibia
Klaus Feldman-United Nations High Commission for Refugees
Melba Smith-United Methodist Office for UN
Steve Thierman-Quaker Office at the UN
Mike Posner-Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights
Mike Davis-South African lawyer

In Washington:

David Martin-Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs, State Department
John Saltzburg-Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs, State Department
Charles Runyon-Legal Advisor's Office, State Department
Cameroun Hume-South African Desk, State Department
Jim Kelly-Office of Refugee Programs
John Rebsaman-Immigration and Naturalization Service
Sue Sullivan-National Council of Churches
Stephanie Grant-Amnesty International
Maurice Roberts-American Council for Nationality Services

In Congressional Offices people from the following offices were consulted:

Rep. Drinan
Rep. Holtzman
Rep. Downey
Rep. McClosky
Rep. Solarz
Rep. Maguire
Rep. Diggs
Rep. Mitchell
Sen. Tsongas
Sen. Kennedy
Jim Schweitzer-Staff on House Subcommittee on Refugees and Immigrants

In Minneapolis:

Chris Dunne-South African military resister

INTRODUCTION

A number of people have become increasingly concerned about the issue of South African military resisters. Although it appears to be a rather clear and defined topic, the actual situation is much more complex and confusing. This report is an attempt to explain simply a complex topic. I have tried to circumvent generalization and grand ideas. I have tried to report the situation realistically and to be specific and concrete about possible methods of involvement and the chances of their success.

At the moment there are at most ten to twelve military resisters in the U.S. In Britain there are well over one hundred, about thirty in Holland, a few individuals scattered in several other Western European countries like West Germany and Sweden, and about five to ten in Botswana and maybe five in Swaziland. Within South Africa itself it is difficult to determine how many people are evading conscription. The only facts available on failure to report--published in the parliamentary Hansard--are misleading as to actual numbers and to whether they are truly resisters or merely evading the draft until caught. But there is little doubt that increasing numbers of young South Africans are seriously questioning the morality of serving in the South African Defense Force and are searching for ways to protest or evade this obligatory service. For some this means assuming non-combatant service within the framework of the military, for a few it means refusing call up and facing conviction for such failure and certain incarceration in the detention barracks and for increasing numbers it means the irrevocable decision to leave South Africa and seek asylum in another country.

Obviously the decision is a difficult one for anyone to make. It means permanent exile adopting a new culture and many unknowns. There is a severe lack of information within South Africa as to the possible future elsewhere and little opportunity to find out accurate facts. And there is difficulty in even knowing how to effect the departure.

What then can be done to help these men both within South Africa to determine whether and how they should and can go and to assist them once they are here in the United States? The issue breaks down into three basic areas of concern which demand different types of assistance:

- 1) Humanitarian
- 2) Legal
- 3) Political

HUMANITARIAN CONCERNS

Humanitarian assistance should logically begin in Southern Africa: helping a South African to make his decision about his participation in the military and helping him to get out of the country and on his way to wherever he wants to go. This, however, is fraught with difficulty. MCC, because of its network of volunteers and contacts in Southern Africa, is in the best position to operate at this level. Cooperation between MCC and churches, ecumenical institutions, universities and individuals within South Africa is essential in assisting those who want to leave. Such assistance should be at the recommendation of people trusted by MCC within South Africa who are well acquainted with an individual's commitment and can attest to his sincerity as a genuine military resister.

The test of sincerity is a difficult one to resolve. How do you determine the integrity and genuineness of a person's desire not to serve in the military? There are no easy answers and it should be clear that there are no substantive criteria which can clarify the issue. Men should be given all benefit of doubt. This may put MCC in an often ambiguous position of supporting someone who has very mixed motives for leaving. It may not be simple religious pacifism. But such a clear motivation as religious pacifism should not be the sole basis for the support of someone who wants to leave.

It is very hard to be specific about determining motivation. It is not an easy decision to leave and this fact alone is a high recommendation. Reference should be made of the person's callup or induction papers. Many South African military resisters have already done some service which has awakened their conscience as to the real purposes of the military. Such consciousness may well lead to sincere opposition to the military and the fact that they were involved in the military should not be held against them.

Implicit in the commitment not to serve in the SADF is some political awareness of the situation in South Africa and the SADF's support of apartheid. But such an awareness may not be highly developed or expressed whether they have or have not served.

It should not be necessarily expected of a young man who is a product of the tightly controlled South African education system. It should be clear to those who are still in South Africa that the more political they become in overt, visible and outspoken disagreement and opposition to apartheid through whatever channels, the easier chance they will have of proving the possibility of persecution which is necessary to get asylum.

Within the South African context, then, humanitarian assistance should take several forms. Initially, it means contact with individuals and groups who can refer resisters to MCC as a source of information about the possibilities for asylum overseas, about activities they can undertake while still in South Africa to make asylum more easily obtained and about the various methods of actually leaving South Africa. These methods depend upon the individual's circumstances. Most should leave directly by air for another country if they have passport, visa and enough money. Financial assistance should be available if necessary. Those without passports or financial means should get to Botswana or Swaziland where MCC should be a source of refuge where room and board can be assured plus assistance toward leaving those countries for their ultimate destination. It should be pointed out that the longer a person remains in a third country the harder it becomes to obtain asylum elsewhere.

This discussion has covered the possibility of assisting people from within the South African context and assumes an involvement which is perhaps not yet the case. Much of this will depend upon the quality of contacts created by MCC within South Africa. There is still the problem of those South Africans who on their own initiative arrive in the United States. They arrive knowing no one or friends or relatives, etc. Their immediate needs are often acute--lodging, food, moral and psychological support and information and advice on what to do next and help in learning how to cope with and adjust to a new culture.

Crucial at this point is the assistance and knowledge he can gain from his fellow South Africans who have already been through the experience. Such contact with fellow South Africans is preferable to uninformed or naive Americans who have no experience with South Africa. All of the South Africans I talked to already in this country were quite clear on this matter. The help and support they got from each other was vital. And all were quite willing as individuals to share of their own, in some cases meager, resources. So the problem is more one of how to help the South African already here assist the new arrivals.

Although there are only about ten active military resisters in the U.S., they have split along ideological and personal lines and two rival groups now exist. SAMRAF has been operating for about two years. Its work is in three areas--casework, a national solidarity campaign, and research on militarization in South Africa. The second group, SAWRUS, arose out of some concerns and differences with SAMRAF about approaches to the issue and to individuals. SAWRUS has formulated a proposal for funding and is in the process of incorporating as a non-profit organization to assist resisters as they come to the U.S.

Because of their rather bitter split, support for one or the other or both is a delicate issue for many American agencies concerned about the issue. Clearly, however, these two groups must be consulted on a continuing basis. For most resisters who come to America will go to these groups for aid and advice and they are, after all, the most vitally concerned about the issue. American agencies must decide how they will support individual resisters either through these groups, upon the advice of these groups, or because of a request from these groups. A key here is that both groups should feel free to inform agencies about each particular case as he arrives and what his situation and needs are. There must be an openness on both sides to share this information. A trust fund, set up by the churches which can be dispersed to individuals as their case merits, may be a way to assist this process. It should be made clear to SAMRAF, SAWRUS, and to the individuals that they must prove their genuineness as a resister before they can expect aid. Churches have constituencies which need assurance that they are supporting worthy individuals.

LEGAL CONCERNS

The legal provisions for immigration, refugees and political asylum are extremely complex, confusing and constantly changing. The INS makes the process a difficult one for everyone concerned. The INS offices everywhere are swamped with work and deal from crisis to crisis. Rather than clarify the case to the applicant's satisfaction they frequently delay or give a pending status rather than precise and legal positions.

There is a crucial distinction between an immigrant, a refugee and an applicant for asylum. An immigrant is someone who seeks to or move to America because of family ties, particular professional skills or for other special reasons. They wish to move permanently and to become citizens. A refugee is someone who is outside America--in a third country not their original home--who cannot go back there and wishes to come to America and wishes to stay because of a "well founded fear of persecution" if sent back to their home country. There are different legal procedures for all three cases. But the major concern is for the latter since most of the military resisters are already in this country.

The Refugee Act of 1979 was passed by Congress on March 4, 1980. This new legislation makes some major changes in the refugee/asylum procedures. Its major provisions deal with refugees. Regarding asylum, however, the Attorney General is to establish new uniform procedures for granting asylum and procedures for withholding deportation of aliens to countries where they fear persecution. It is generally believed that these new procedures will not be too different from present regulations. They will have the force of statutory law once promulgated by the Attorney General whereas before they were operating regulations of INS. It may take six months to a year or more before these new uniform procedures are known.

The key thing to remember is that asylum is only for someone already in America. Essentially, they must prove that they should not be deported because of a fear of persecution. An application for political asylum is one of the means to do this. It should be stressed that a South African should never apply for asylum at a foreign embassy (although this may change under the Refugee Act if they can prove they are a genuine refugee). A South African who wishes to leave South Africa must get a visa for the country he intends going to (except Britain). In the case of the U.S. this can be very difficult. A U.S. consular officer is legally bound to refuse any visa application which he believes is being sought for purposes of entering the U.S. permanently. A young South African coming to get a visa for a "visit" might very easily fall under such a consideration.

If he can get a visa and the U.S. is his destination, he should proceed as directly as possible to the U.S. Any stops in countries in between would make the application more difficult to prove as he would have to prove why he could not have stayed in the country of his first stop. When arriving in America he should not ask for immediate asylum, in other words do not ask at the port of entry for political asylum.

Once in America he should start the asylum application process. Opinions differ, but it is probably best to file the application before the legal time of the visit is up. In other words, if a visitor's visa is valid for three months, it would be best to file the I589 asylum form before the three months are up. But this should not be done at the sacrifice of a carefully prepared and documented application. Even so, there are legal procedures to withhold deportation which can be used if deportation procedures are initiated. The I589 asylum application should be filed with the INS Deputy Director having jurisdiction over place of residence or port of entry. The relevant sections of the INS regulation are 8C.F.R. 108.1(1978), although this will change with the new regulations by the Attorney General.

Upon submission of the application the applicant will be in a pending status which should, and this should be insisted upon although the INS is not legally bound, entitle the applicant for work authorization. The Deputy Director has full authority to grant asylum and it has been the Deputy Director who has granted asylum in all three cases where South Africans have been granted asylum (although none were granted solely on the basis of military resistance).

Before the INS can unilaterally refuse an application they must send it to the State Department. The State Department receives the application and can make an advisory recommendation on the merits of the case which is returned to the Deputy Director. Although it is not legally binding, seldom would a Deputy Director reverse such a recommendation. In the State Department the application is considered first by the Office of Human Rights Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs. It is also referred to the desk of the particular country, in this case South Africa. And it can be referred to the Legal Advisor's Office. Between these three offices the recommendation is made and then referred back to the local Deputy Director. If an application is refused, the applicant may still petition the Attorney General to withhold deportation under Section 243(h) (this too may change). In other words the case is taken to court. So far, no South African military resister has had his case rejected outright and had to take recourse to this step.

Under the Refugee Act of 1979 a refugee (and this applies to asylum cases as well) is defined as:

"...any person who is outside any country of his nationality... because of persecution or well founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion"

This is the definition as delineated in the UN Protocol and is different from the previous INS definition: "an alien would be subject to persecution."

The South African military resister must prove to the INS that he has a "well founded fear of persecution." There are no substantive guidelines for INS or State as to how this is to be construed and interpreted. All cases of refugee or asylum will be dealt with on an individual basis under the new law. There are no geographic considerations (as formerly all refugees from Middle East countries were granted admission) or political considerations (formerly all people from Communist countries were granted admission). The key issue for all cases is proving a valid fear of persecution.

This is the most difficult thing for South Africans to prove. All nations admit the right of fellow nations to legal codes with penalties for abridgement of such codes. All nations recognize the right of fellow nations to conscript people for the armed forces. Penalties meted out for failure to comply with such conscription have not been considered persecution. Prosecution for failing to abide by conscription regulations is within the legal right of a nation and is not considered in and of itself persecution. Therefore, an application based solely on the prospect of serving time in detention barracks for failure to comply with conscription laws for whatever reason is not enough to qualify as persecution by the definition.

A South African must prove that his refusal to serve in the military is a political opinion, the taking of a political stance which is a basis for persecution, or in the case of the religious pacifist, the taking of a religious position. Service in the SADF is qualitatively different than in other countries and refusal to serve is a political stance, as it is not necessarily so in other countries for two major reasons. First, the SADF is an essential enforcer of the apartheid system which has been deemed legal and a violation of human rights by all nations including the U.S. State Department in its Human Rights Reports. In addition, the General Assembly of the UN has called upon all member nations:

"...to grant asylum of safe transit to another State in the spirit of the Declaration on Territorial Asylum 69/ to persons compelled to leave their country solely because of a conscientious objection to assisting in the enforcement of apartheid through service in military or police forces..."

Secondly, the SADF is fighting an illegal war according to international law and in violation of the UN in its occupation of Namibia.

Refusal to serve in the armed forces or refusing a callup would therefore seem to be taking a political stance. It is so construed by the South African government. But it is not so clear to the American State Department. Although there is personal sympathy for South Africans in this situation, the official policy is, and in my

estimation will remain, one of not construing simple refusal to serve, in and of itself, a political stance. It's a question of standard as far as they are concerned. Why single-cut the South African military resister? How is he any different from a military resister anywhere? Or for that matter here in America where that issue has never been satisfactorily decided. Prosecution for such a stance is not persecution and it still remains for the South African to make a compelling case that it should be.

In the three cases of South Africans who have been granted asylum, all three are clear that the fact of military resistance--two left before their initial induction and one is technically a deserter--had little impact on their approval. Their asylum was granted by a local INS Deputy Director (the cases which were the first and second in this country did not go to the State Department). The political activities of the three in South Africa as students, participation in opposition politics and the fact that they had influential people--particularly in the case of the first two, a Congressman lending support to their case. All of these factors had a greater impact than the fact of their refusal to serve in the military.

So far, all resisters have received free legal aide through the Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights. This may change depending on how many resisters there are and the costs involved. Financial assistance either to the Lawyers Committee for further assistance or to individual lawyers may become necessary and could perhaps be administered or dispersed through the trust fund previously mentioned.

POLITICAL CONCERNS

The passage of the Refugee Act of 1979 is a major milestone concerning refugees and asylum. It was a lengthy legislative struggle to obtain passage. One of the major intentions of the act is to eliminate the need for Congress to act on every particular group or category of refugees. It provides a standardized mechanism by which all people--on an individual, case-by-case basis--can be evaluated against the refugee definition and then admitted if they meet its requirements. It sets a limit of 50,000 refugee admissions although this can be increased by the President each fiscal year as he sees the necessity. The issue remains as to how these 50,000 slots will be allocated, on what geographical basis it will be done. The Office of Refugee Programs is currently in an intense discussion as to how they should be allocated which will then become the administration's recommendations. Congress--particularly the House Subcommittee on Refugees and the House Judiciary Committee--must be consulted about these allocations.

The allocations will be made on a regional basis and some people within the office are arguing for an "African line" where there has never been one before. All church agencies should be aware of the implications of this new bill for they are vast both in terms of getting refugees into the country and supporting them once inside. The debate should intensify and be subject to public pressure when the allocations are brought before the House Committee on Judiciary to follow the consultative provisions of the bill.

The bill itself will not necessarily assist the problems of military resisters. It does change the definition of a refugee to comport with the UN Protocol and this is an improvement, but the proof of "well founded fear of persecution" is still there and is the crux of the problem. Refugees, remember, are people outside of America and not in their original country. A South African who flees to a neighboring country would have to convince the local American embassy or INS representatives (and it is still unclear how all of this will happen) of his right to be a refugee under the "persecution" definition.

The best procedure still remains then for a military resister to go directly to the country where^{he} intends to stay and to do so as quickly as possible. The new Refugee Act may be a means for those who have no option except to flee to a neighboring country but at this time it is still very, very unclear as to how the new provisions will operate. For this and a host of other reasons--not the least of which being the allocations themselves--a close monitoring of how the bill's provisions are implemented and how the hearings on allocations go should be undertaken by the

Washington offices of MCC, FCNL, et al. They should lobby for inclusion of an "African line" in the allocations and call on constituents of the Congresspeople (particularly those on the House Committee on the Judiciary) to ensure adequate allocations.

The future of special legislation pertaining solely to South African military resisters is bleak for several reasons. First, the intent of the Refugee Act is to obviate the need for such special legislation. Secondly, from a global context the issue of military resistance is very, very small. There are not large numbers of people involved. Congresspeople have more important things--in their eyes-- to work on. Although there are some very sympathetic Congresspeople, none feel the issue so important or pressing as to sponsor a bill. And thirdly, the issue of military resisters should not be seen as a separate issue. It is a small part of a greater problem namely South Africa and its expense of acknowledging the real victims--the oppressed blacks--would backfire politically and be morally irresponsible.

This does not minimize the importance of continuing to educate the Congress, the public, and the church constituencies about the issue. And there are some avenues of political leverage. But realistically, probably the most expeditious way to successfully get asylum is not by undertaking a grand publicity campaign about the issue as a whole but by focusing on the individual cases. It is at the individual, case-by-case level that the decision will be made about a particular asylum application. Legal assistance and political leverage can be most effective at this specific case level.

In two of the cases where asylum was granted it was the influence of a particular Congressman that had a special impact. Political pressure upon specific Congresspeople to help specific cases may be the best method to exercise political leverage. Letters from constituents to their Congresspersons focusing on a specific case of asking their Congressperson to respond to another Congressperson to do something about a specific case would seem most appropriate. Of course, providing the Congressperson with the facts and evidence about the particular case would be the first step in this process and show the concern of church agencies.

Education about this issue as a whole, especially for the Historic Peace Churches, may best be inaugurated by reference to the cases of two clearly religious conscientious objectors now in detention in South Africa--Richard Steele and Peter Moll. Information about their cases through church periodicals can begin to explain the issue at its source. As cases arise of people needing assistance in the U.S., the churches may be more understanding and willing to respond financially and politically.

Another way exists to integrate support for Peter and Richard and others in detention in South Africa and allow for political lobbying. There is in Congress an Ad Hoc Monitoring Group on Southern Africa, a loose alliance of about forty Congresspeople interested in this area. This group is launching a Political Prisoners Project in which individual Congresspeople adopt a political prisoner in South Africa and write letters of support to them and of protest to South African government officials. Inclusion of Peter, Richard and others on this list could be done if an individual Congressperson would accept them as his or her political prisoner. Letters and pressure from Washington offices could help this project.

Finally, within the political context two other things should be mentioned. With the likely advent of registration and the draft here in the U.S. the issue of South African military resisters will be more timely and relevant. Inclusion of military resisters at meetings, workshops, etc., held on the draft would be very logical and helpful to both sides in sharing information and support. There also exists a Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy whose mandate is to "provide a comprehensive review of U.S. immigration law." They will make their recommendations in March, 1981. This commission's progress should be monitored by Washington offices and their results and recommendations, especially as they pertain to refugees and asylum, should be understood and communicated to relevant parties for possible action.

* apartheid policies. To single out military resisters, who are white, at the

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

These proposals are intended to be specific and realistic. Instead of grandiose programs and projects which sound impressive but have little basis in the reality of the current situation, I have tried to be particular and deal with specific actions that can be done now or in the immediate future. The guiding principle is one of focused activity on specific cases as they arise vs. broad public movements which are easy to launch but have little impact.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

1. Historic Peace Churches (HPC) set up a trust fund for South African military resisters (consideration should also be given in including all refugees from southern Africa).
 - A. In southern Africa to be used for
 - 1) food, lodging and transport within southern Africa
 - 2) air transport to other countries outside southern Africa
 - B. In the U.S. to be used for
 - 1) food, lodging, transport and other needs for those who arrive and need aide
 - 2) HPC give donations to work of
 - a. SAMRAF
 - b. SAWRUS
 1. for individual casework
 2. for research on militarization in South Africa

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

1. HPC write letters of endorsement and support for specific asylum applications
2. HPC write letters of endorsement and support to INS and State Department for specific cases
3. HPC give financial assistance to Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights to support their work on behalf of South African military resisters
4. HPC purchase legal advice and aide--from the trust fund--for specific cases

POLITICAL ASSISTANCE

1. HPC monitor the division of allocations and implementation of the Refugee Act of 1979. Specifically:
 - A. Lobby during Congressional consultations on allocations for an "African line"
 - B. Call on Attorney General to quickly establish "uniform precedures for asylum"
2. HPC lobby Ad Hoc Monitoring Group for Southern African to include CO's in South African prisons in their Political Prisoners Project
3. HPC lobby individual Congresspersons to support specific applications for political asylum
4. HPC should continue education of constituencies
 - A. Through articles in church periodicals
 - B. Through speaking opportunities for resisters to churches and other forums particularly if these concern the American draft
5. HPC monitor the work and recommendations of the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugees
 - A. Through testimony at its hearings
 - B. Through endorsement or criticism of its final results

PEACE SECTION RECOMMENDATIONS
MAY 9-10, 1980
AKRON, PA

I. Iran

A. Background

Current events in Iran, Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf demonstrate how critical international relations in this region will be in the years ahead. Major power preoccupation with energy and military policy will obscure basic human dimensions and diminish the opportunity to relate to the people of Iran. Given the reports and experience of William Keeney and Merlin Swartz coming out of their visit to Iran, we recommend the following:

B. Recommendations

1. That Peace Section encourage contacts with Iranian students by Mennonite church and student groups related to university campuses.
2. That Peace Section staff be authorized to organize a Mennonite or historic peace church delegation for a meeting with Iranian Ambassador Farhang at the United Nations.
3. That Peace Section Executive Committee and staff be authorized to make plans for a low profile visit of church leaders to Iran sometime during the next year if and when advanced planning assures substantial contacts in Iran.

The major purpose of the above initiatives would be to work on reconciliation and maintain dialogue on a people-to-people basis. The secondary intention, depending on the wishes of MCC, would be to make the kind of contacts which could lead to program involvement in poverty areas of Iran.

II. South African Military Resisters

A. Background

As a result of discussions in New Call to Peacemaking about the status of Conscientious Objectors in South Africa, Bob Mossman, formerly serving under MCC in Swaziland, was asked to make a careful study on the status of Conscientious Objectors from South Africa in Europe and North America, and their possible admission to the U.S. and Canada. On the basis of Mossman's report and staff discussions, we recommend the following:

B. Recommendations

1. That Peace Section budget supplementary assistance on an annual basis for individuals having character recommendations from MCC in Southern Africa, or otherwise approved by Peace Section and Overseas Services staff, beginning with transfer of up to \$1,000 in the 1980 budget from East Europe to Africa budget.
2. That based on counsel from the MCC (Canada) Ottawa Office, specific

candidates seeking immigration be recommended for consideration to the MCC Ottawa Office for non-monetary assistance in getting visa documentation in Canada.

3. That HPC groups including MCC and/or MCC related peace committees be encouraged to write letters of endorsement and support for specific asylum applications to immigration and naturalization service and the State Department in the U.S., or to the External Affairs Department in Canada.
4. That Peace Section make a contribution of \$300 for financial assistance to the Lawyers' Committee for International Human Rights in New York which has been providing free services on behalf of some of the South African war resisters resident in the United States.
5. That HPC groups including the U.S. Peace Section Washington Office be encouraged to monitor the division of allocations and implementation of the refugee act of 1979. Specifically, this should include support of an "African line" on budget allocations and requesting the Attorney General in the United States to establish "uniform procedures for asylum."
6. Ask the U.S. Congress Ad Hoc Monitoring Group for Southern Africa, to include COs in South African prisons in the political prisoners project, if South African COs request.
7. Commend Robert Mossman on his helpful study and recommend his report for further consideration by the New Call to Peacemaking Executive Committee.

III. Anabaptist Peace Studies in Swaziland

A. Background

The 1979 Peace Section Annual Meeting considered a Peace Studies Institute in Swaziland and asked for more consultation before proceeding with the proposal. This has resulted in a two-week peace course with South African resource plus William Keeney in Anabaptist and Peace Studies.

B. Recommendation

That Peace Section support the proposed course scheduled January 1981 as proposed by MCC Overseas Services with budget commitment of half the total cost not covered through local income.

IV. Dennis and Monica Barrett Itineration in the U.S. and Canada

A. Background

Dennis and Monica Barrett have been leaders in the Irish Peace Movement and are known to peace churches from their previous visits to North America. Alan Kreider, London Mennonite Centre has proposed a lecture tour for them to be coordinated by Peace Section:

B. Recommendation

That on the basis of commitments received from Mennonites, Quakers and Brethren, Peace Section coordinate the itineration of Dennis and Monica Barrett, fall, 1980, for three months with budget support for part of international fare and North America travel.

V. Latin America Travel

A. Background

As stated in the Annual Plan Peace Section provides staff services for the International Mennonite Peace Committee of Mennonite World Conference. IMPC is scheduled to meet in Managua and Bogota June 8-17. In addition to the IMPC meeting, Urbane Peachey and Latin America Department MCC have projected plans for in-depth discussion on MCC program philosophy and strategy in Brazil, related to root causes of injustice.

B. Recommendation

That Urbane Peachey travel plans to Nicaragua, Colombia and Brazil, June 8-27 be approved.

VI. Relationship of Peace Section to MCC Overseas Services in Europe

A. Background (from Summary of the Thomashof Consultation, Nov. 20, 1979)

A consultation about the future role of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Europe took place at the Bibleheim Thomashof, near Karlsruhe, on November 19 and 20, 1979, as a result of several preparatory talks; similar consultations preceded it in 1950 and 1967. Delegates from MCC and various North American Mennonite mission boards as well as representatives of all European Mennonite conferences and independent Mennonite Brethren congregations participated in the consultation. They met in awareness of world need and of their own spiritual need, but also in gratitude to God for the opportunities they have had for mutual assistance and cooperation.

In the course of the consultation, which began with a review of MCC work in Europe, it became clear that all Mennonite groups in Europe support and desire further close cooperation with MCC as an arm of the Mennonite brotherhood in North America but do not see the hitherto existing approaches to cooperation as adequate throughout. MCC also is aware that new ways must be found to help one another in a brotherly fashion and to serve other people together in the name of Christ.

Item six in the summary notes agreement between European and North American Mennonites on the need for each other in exploring how they can become peace churches and make their Anabaptist contribution to a Christian peace witness in the world.

Staff has reviewed the prospect of more careful integration of North American Mennonite peace effort in Europe. Larry Miller provides background in his March 6, 1979 memo to Walter Sawatzky, November 27, 1979, January 15, and April 29, 1980 letters to Urbane Peachey.

B. Recommendations

1. That staff be authorized to join MCC Overseas Services in formulating plans for a single European administration under Overseas Services with continuing major Peace Section involvement in European peace work.
2. That Larry Miller be authorized to explore with IMO appointment of a European Mennonite for up to one year in North America for a selection of peace assignments.

Richard Steele

Mennonite
Central
Committee
(Canada)

Ottawa Office

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Ottawa, Canada
K1P 5A6

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(613) 238-7224



MCC

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March 1, 1982

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Mennonite Central
Committee

Ron Mathies
19 Morningdove Crescent
Elmira, Ontario
N3B 1E2

Richard Steele
MCC
21 South 12th Street
Akron, PA 17501

Dear friends:

Enclosed is a self-explanatory letter from Jake Epp to the South African Embassy in Ottawa about the issue of making legal provisions for conscientious objectors.

Sincerely yours,

Bill

William Janzen
Director of the Ottawa Office
of MCC (Canada)

WJ:fe
enc.

P.S. to Ron Mathies. When you were here, I mentioned that I was working on a submission about disarmament. The result is a letter signed by J.M. Klassen, which is enclosed.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

JAKE EPP, P.C., M.P.
Room 622 - CB
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6
992-4884

CONSTITUENCY OFFICE
313 Main Street
Box 2800
Steinbach, Manitoba
R0A 2A0
326-3920

O T T A W A
February 25, 1982

His Excellency John J. Becker
Ambassador
South African Embassy
15 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
K1M 1M8

Dear Sir:

During recent days, I have been disturbed by the publicity concerning the country of South Africa. As a guest of your government and your people, I was free to examine the various issues which concern the development of your country.

Any observer recognizes that serious challenges exist. I also noticed in speaking to many citizens of the Republic of South Africa that they shared a deep desire to bring about change in a peaceful and orderly manner. It is my hope that that change will result in a realization of the potential which your country has in abundance.

More specifically, I am writing to you regarding the position of conscientious objectors in the Republic of South Africa. As you know, a number of persons in the Republic have taken the position that they cannot offer military service and have requested either exemption from military service as a conscientious objector or expressed willingness to give alternate service in lieu of military training.

I recognize that sections of the Defense Act could be interpreted in such a manner as to allow for alternate service. Additionally, the Baptist Union of South Africa has passed resolutions at the 1979 Baptist Union Assembly endorsing the position I am putting forward.

His Excellency John J. Becker

February 25, 1982

You will recall that during my visit to South Africa, I had the opportunity to speak to the Christian Businessmen's Committee of which has a substantial membership among South African citizens.

I am convinced the church and its members can help with reconciliation between the various groups resident in South Africa. Allowing for alternate service would help that understanding and reconciliation. Additionally, it would be a step forward in the recognition of the rights of a minority that want to fulfil their civic duties but cannot give military service for reasons of conscience.

I would appreciate it if you could convey this message to your government and would appreciate your response as to what possible action is considered on this important topic.

Again, let me reiterate my thanks to you and your staff for the co-operation you have shown me.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED
ORIGINAL SIGNÉ
JAKE EPP

Jake Epp, P.C., M.P.
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