

Genesee Ecumenical Ministries

17 Fitzhugh Street

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Report of Conferences Held in  
Washington, D.C. on June 25, 1981 by  
Members of Rochester, N.Y. Group Denied  
Visas by the Republic of South Africa

Despite efforts extending over a period of nearly eighteen months a group of Rochester, N.Y. clergy and academics were not allowed by the Republic of South Africa to visit that country. Their first trip scheduled for July-August 1980 was aborted when the visas were not granted in a timely manner and subsequently denied. Again in May 1981 the visas were not granted by the scheduled departure time even though extended planning in consultation with the South African Embassy and New York Consulate had taken place over the previous four months.

Attached is a list of the Rochester area residents who were to have made the trip under the sponsorship of the Genesee Ecumenical Ministries.

In an effort to register their continuing concern about U.S. relations with the Republic of South Africa, conditions in southern Africa, and the right to travel as a sine qua non of informed citizenship, six members of the eleven person group spent a full day on June 25, 1981 in Washington visiting U.S. Senators, Representatives, State Department officers, church organization leaders, and an aide at the South African Embassy.

Below are listed the Congressional offices visited and the principal persons contacted:

Representative Barber B. Conable, Jr.  
Senator Nancy Landon Kassebaum (staff) *Paul Christiansen.*  
Senator Paul E. Tsongas (Chris Chamberlin)  
Representative Howard Wolpe (Johnnie Carson)  
Representative William H. Gray III (Singleton B. McAllister)  
Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (Tom Melia)  
Representative John J. LaFalce (Susan Lubick)  
Representative Frank Horton (Michel Burgin)  
Representative Walter E. Fauntroy (Steve Harblitz)  
Representative Ronald V. Dellums (Staff)

Group members had extended discussions with Congressmen Conable and Wolpe, a brief conversation with Senator Tsongas, and helpful meetings with senior aides in the cases of the other Senators and Representatives noted above.

In all instances the group expressed their concerns and views on matters relating to South Africa. These may be summarized in the following points:

1. That the State Department and Congress

do everything feasible to encourage and promote freedom of travel and reciprocity in visa courtesies for law-abiding U.S. citizens who seek reliable information on world affairs as a basis for intelligent participation in the democratic process of foreign policy development.

2. That the Clark Amendment be retained in U.S. foreign aid legislation for the immediate future in order to assure the so-called Frontline States and the Organization of African Unity that the U.S. Government has no intention of destabilizing Angola and is genuinely supportive of an independent Namibia.
3. That the Rockefeller Foundation-funded study South Africa: Time Running Out be thoughtfully considered by President Reagan, Secretary of State Haig, and the Congress in constructing foreign policy for southern Africa.
4. That all U. S. Government leaders be unequivocal and persistent in their condemnation of apartheid and vigorously reject blandishments to tolerate South Africa's practice thereof on the basis of tortuous arguments relating to minerals, strategic military advantage, or other presumed short-run benefits to American government, business, or individuals.
5. That the U.S. demonstrate its profound opposition to apartheid to the extent possible by legislation, executive orders, resolutions, and other means; actions to be encouraged include sanctions, embargoes, disinvestment, divestment, and similar measures.

Representative Wolpe complimented the group on their concern regarding American policy in Africa. He stated that he would welcome the cooperation and support of Congressional colleagues in effecting legislation which responds to the realities of Africa and the legitimate aspirations of African people. Representative Conable expressed his willingness to help in any way possible.

Group members were encouraged by their Washington visit. Congressional leaders and their staff assistants showed much interest in the visa matter and related issues. They appreciated the opportunity to hear our views. They urged us and other citizens with interests in U.S. policy toward South Africa to communicate with them. The importance of grass roots activity in the legislative process was underlined.

*R. McK*