

"Star" 26/2/1975

Bram family 'are making capital'

John Patten, Political Correspondent
CAPE TOWN — The Minister of Justice and Prisons, Mr Kruger, said today he considered the family of life prisoner Bram Fischer were not prepared to give the security undertakings needed for his parole.

Family: we're outraged

Bram Fischer's son-in-law, Dr Tim Wilson, described Mr Kruger's remarks about the family's attempts to secure his release as an "outrageous and serious allegation."

Replying to Mr Kruger's statement that the family were not prepared to give a security undertaking, Dr Wilson said:

"We do not know what he means. What undertakings does he mean? He has never told us.

"In any case, Mr Kruger has all the power. What undertakings can he need from us that he cannot deal with himself?

DEPLORABLE

Dr Wilson said it was deplorable that Mr Kruger did not intend dealing with the family any more.

"We have been asking him to release a man who is dying of cancer of the hip, brain and spine. We want him home before he dies.

"How much longer does he want to wait? Until Bram is in a terminal coma?

"What does Mr Kruger fear from a bed-ridden man in this condition?"

Dr Wilson made it clear that attempts by the Human Rights Committee to hold mass meetings calling for Fischer's release had nothing to do with the family.

"I am convinced that these people are more interested in putting the Government and me in a bad light," he said.

"They appreciate Fischer is in hospital in the best circumstances and that they cannot improve on them."

In future he would no longer heed the family's representations, but would continue to consider any other requests on merit.

He would take his decisions mainly on medical evidence.

Mr Kruger said he was getting reports on Fischer's condition from the H F Verwoerd Hospital every few days. Up to a week ago, he was receiving daily reports.

According to the latest reports, the doctors thought they had found the seat of the primary cancer and had prescribed a course of therapy. This would take a certain time.

Mr Kruger confirmed that he had received a letter from the family this week, but it had arrived a day after it had been published in the Press. He was not prepared to negotiate this way.

He assumed there was a link between the banned meeting of the Human Rights Committee calling for Fischer's release and the publication of the family's letter — which he described as "disrespectful and full of allegations" — before he received it.

Among those due to speak were four ex-detainees — Mrs Helen Joseph, Lilian Ngoyi, W B Ngakane and Dan Bate-man. Mr Kruger was surprised that the Rev Beyers Naude of the Christian Institute should find himself in such company.

THAT'S NO REASON

"RAND DAILY MAIL" 27/2/1975
THE FISCHER AFFAIR reveals distressing aspects of Mr Jimmy Kruger's thinking.

Last month one of his reasons against releasing the dying man was that Fischer got the Lenin Prize (years ago and publicised at the time). Now he has turned down another appeal for freedom and it seems what helped make up his mind this time was that Mrs Helen Joseph would have spoken at the now-banned demonstration in favour of the release. Mrs Joseph's house-arrest order was suspended and then allowed to lapse after she was operated on for breast cancer in 1971.

So Fischer's activities were highly prized by the communists and people can recover from cancer. But what has that got to do with it? Bram Fischer is dying and bulletins from Mr Kruger's own Department of Prisons do not indicate otherwise.

The argument for Fischer's release is simply that, too ill now to be a danger to the State, he should be allowed to spend his last days with his family. Mr Kruger chooses to reject this. But the illogicality of some of his arguments for doing so does not inspire confidence in him as Minister of Justice. Is that how he reasons when he decides on bannings and arrests without trial?