

Diggs 123 F18-08-05

October 4, 1971

Mr. W. E. D. Stokes, Jr.
Thistlewood Farm
Box 864
Lenox, Massachusetts 01240

Dear Mr. Stokes:

South Africa is a racist police state where a minority of less than 4 million people subjugates a majority of over 17 million, most of whom are Black.

The white minority has exclusive political rights.

The white minority pays itself several times more for equal work than Blacks and other non-whites.

The white minority has free and compulsory public education; everyone else pays and is not subject to compulsory education.

Non-whites are confined by law to special areas for housing and excluded from 16 job categories for whites only.

Non-whites have to carry passes to move from one area to the other and are completely segregated in public accommodations, even including lining up to buy stamps at the Post Office.

I could go on and on, but perhaps these are sufficient examples to dispel your notion that South Africa is a nice little peaceful democratic country.

Now, as to the importance of a "friendly South Africa" that will "stand up with America," as you put it (That last phrase sounds like Wallace) -- I have been in the area and in the Indian Ocean around Somalia. I have been briefed this week by the military advisers to the USUN Mission. The old "communist threat" line promoted by South Africa is pretty threadbare, but I assure you there is no justification for it.

Comparing my visit with Banda's is quite interesting. The reception he got from the Black majority was far from enthusiastic, except for a few unsophisticated curiosity seekers, or South African Government stage hands. Black people hate Banda. Malawi is a South African client state. He is considered an Uncle Tom and a lackey, and is ostracized by his fellow African Chiefs of State. He holds the contract to provide about 90,000 of his people as laborers in South African mines under the most exploitive of conditions. He is moving his capitol further inland and came to South Africa with his hand out to obtain further funding for this project.

In contrast, Black people literally mobbed me in the streets, almost tore my clothes off trying to touch "our great Black friend from America." I traveled 4,500 miles within the country in 9 days at the rate of 18 hours a day. I met Blacks, whites, Indians, coloreds, students, pro-government elements, anti-government elements, American and South African business people, professionals, clergy, etc.

Banda's contacts were principally with government officials. I cancelled appointments with South African Government officials after they reneged on a commitment to allow me to visit South West Africa.

I hope this report will help clarify the misconceptions or distortions reflected in your communication and particularly that of your friend.

Very truly yours,

CHARLES C. BIGGS, JR.
Member of Congress
13th District of Michigan