



OFFICE OF
THE DIRECTOR

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

WASHINGTON 20547

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October 17, 1969

Dear Mr. Diggs:

On behalf of Frank Shakespeare who is out of the country on an overseas trip, I wish to thank you for your letter of October 3 relaying Mrs. Suzman's observations concerning information about American race relations available in South Africa, as well as conveying your thoughts on programming in Africa. We, of course, recognize the continuing need to publicize U.S. progress in race relations. Racial progress in America and the relevance of this experience to South Africa are among the basic themes propounded by our post in South Africa.

Getting positive information about U.S. race relations to large segments of opinion moulders has been one of our main concerns in counteracting South African exploitation of negative aspects of the situation in America. Under the Educational and Cultural Exchange Program, which USIS administers in the field for the Department of State, we provide opportunities for South Africans of varied persuasions and racial groups to observe our search for a workable, multiracial society and to become familiar with our successes. Among people who recently have had this experience was M. T. Moerane, editor of The World, whom you met during his tour of the U.S. Similarly, the editors or assistant editors of the three South African newspapers with the largest circulation--two of them Afrikaans papers--have visited the United States under comparable programs.

In South Africa itself, a number of approaches are used to reach people who influence public opinion in all of the racial groups. A weekly American News Digest and the periodic America Reports containing important speeches or policy explanations are sent to approximately 1500 key figures such as cabinet and parliament members, university faculty members and student leaders, labor

The Honorable
Charles C. Diggs, Jr.
House of Representatives

leaders, business executives and members of the media community. The publications also are supplied to libraries. (As a member of parliament, Mrs. Suzman would regularly receive these publications at her office, or at home when Parliament is not in session.) Two quarterly publications, Student Newsletter (1500 copies) and Labor Newsletter (1000 copies), go to appropriate people in these fields plus key informational and governmental figures. These local USIS post publications contain material in Afrikaans and include articles on civil rights and economic progress of Negro-Americans.

Agency-produced publications distributed in South Africa also feature civil rights advances in the United States. One hundred twenty-five copies of Topic, our prestige magazine especially produced for Africa and featuring articles by and about outstanding black Americans and Africans, are distributed. The Agency's scholarly publication, Dialogue, is sent to 500 selected members of our target groups. One issue of Dialogue contained passages from Martin Luther King's Stride Toward Freedom and another concerned James Baldwin and summarized The Fire Next Time, both of which books are banned in South Africa. Samples of Topic and Dialogue, as well as other publications are enclosed.

South African Government censorship laws and the recent trial of a newspaper editor are quite possibly responsible for a degree of recent press circumspection in using some of our material. There have been indications of the possibility of a South African Government move to widen the Publications Control Board's censorship powers.

Nevertheless, our post in Johannesburg, the country's press capital, continues to operate a relatively active press program and does achieve placement of materials dealing with race relations in the U.S. This is mainly in the English-language press, and particularly in the non-white press. However, the Johannesburg Star, the largest South African daily, also uses our material. It recently carried a photo of Mayor Charles Evers taking his oath of office.

The South African Broadcasting Corporation has largely restricted its use of our materials to coverage of our space program and foreign policy statements by prominent members of the American Government.

Our principal broadcasting approach to South Africa is, of course, the Voice of America. VOA English broadcasting available to South Africa totals eleven and one-half hours per day and reception is generally good. The broadcast mix includes six hours daily of programming which is especially targeted to black Africa. VOA presents the overall picture of race relations in America, both the problems and the progress.

USIS film programming embraces a variety of subjects including films on U.S. racial progress. Our film showings are organized both outside and within our centers.

A review of our efforts to achieve an understanding of our progress in race relations would not be complete without mention of our multiracial cultural and informational events presented in our Johannesburg and Capetown Centers as well as in officers' homes. Our centers are among the limited number of places in the Republic where blacks and whites gather at the same time and thus bear concrete testimony to our policies. Those who have lectured on the race situation in the United States in our centers include American exchange professors and black Africans returning from visits to the United States. Mrs. Suzman herself has lectured in our centers where audiences usually are made up of an even mix of whites and non-whites and often include professors, government officials and professional people. In Johannesburg the USIS auditorium was used for a concert before a multiracial audience by South African colored jazz pianist Dollar Brand after the government denied him a permit to play before white audiences in Johannesburg's largest auditorium.

Since Mrs. Suzman did raise the matter, our three officers in South Africa will certainly see to it that she and other people with similar views obtain a greater amount of documentation on American racial progress.

With respect to your final suggestion, I can assure you that the effect of USIS activities in other African countries is under constant evaluation. In one form or another, all posts have as a main objective the publicizing of racial progress and their reports indicate the efforts they make to carry out these objectives. In Washington, the Agency produces material in each medium to support the African posts in this endeavor.

In view of your great interest and knowledge of this situation, your suggestions always will be welcomed and given my particular attention.

Sincerely,



Henry Loomis
Acting Director

Enclosures:

1. Dialogue (Two issues)
2. American News Digest (Four copies)
3. Labor Newsletter
4. Student Newsletter
5. Topic