

LOS ANGELES TIMES Sunday, November 30, 1980
Letters From Travel Readers
Compiled by BILL PEEPLES

Dissent on South Africa,

Having grown up in Durban, South Africa, I read most Steve Libby's article ("Surfing Rides High in Durban," Nov. 9) with interest. Having spent much of my boyhood in the 1930s, surfing at the North Beach, I agree with Libby's praise of the superb waves, but wonder why he made no mention of the one feature of the South African surfing scene that would immediately strike.

The beaches are rigidly separated by "racial" categories, and those areas described by Libby are reserved, by law, for the exclusive use of "persons of European descent. The other three racial groups, as defined by the government-Bantu, Indians and Coloureds-do have their own beaches. However, these are located toward the mouth of the Umgeni River, in areas which we used to regard as both dangerous and poor for surfing.

I realize that your Travel section (which I read regularly with pleasure) inevitably deals with countries that have flawed human rights records. And many countries have much worse records than does South Africa, but S.A. is unique in having a legally perpetrated and comprehensive system of racial discrimination. The effects of this are such that I doubt if the "non-European" residents of Durban would see it as a "handsome sophisticated ... friendly city." Remember, they cannot enjoy the elegant trains, the inexpensive hotels, the delicious breakfasts.

All in all, this superficial and misleading article was not up to your usual high standards.

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