

# DRAFT POSITION PAPER ON THE AZANIAN SPORTS MANIFESTO

**This Position Paper was arrived at by the Black Consciousness Movement (Durban and Districts) on February 18, 1989.**

NOTING that the resistance of the dispossessed masses of occupied Azania (i.e. racist South Africa) has always taken intensely cultural forms,

AND NOTING FURTHER that sport is merely a part of culture, a part which provides a "value receptacle" for dominant social values – for qualities such as aggressiveness, competitiveness, mental and physical fitness, perseverance, patriarchy, etc,

AND REALIZING that sport is a vital component of the developing Azanian culture – a culture which fosters and strengthens the daring to break convention and the breaking of new ground,

AND NOTING the heroic sacrifices and achievements of Black sportspersons both in the national and the international arena and the promotion of the slogan "There can be no normal sport in an abnormal society",

AND EMPHASIZING that the slogan "no normal sport in an abnormal society" inexorably leads to the correct position that there can be no "non-racial sport" in a racist society,

AND UNDERLINING that the notion of "non-racial sport" is intimately linked to the notion of "multi-national/multi-racial/ethnic" sport,

AND UNDERSTANDING that sport currently represents the desperate hopes of millions of Azanians to escape from a lifetime of poverty, degradation, humiliation and exploitation – a hope which the very workings of apartheid-capitalism cruelly frustrates and dashes,

AND ESCHEWING the proclivity of

organisations engaged in the sports struggle to concentrate on the international arena and the Isolation Campaign to the exclusion of the mobilization and organization of Black sportspersons as part and parcel of the liberation movement,

## WE HEREBY RESOLVE THAT:

1. Black sportspersons in occupied Azania be organized in all-Black leagues and codes at all levels-district, provincial, national, all-African and international,
2. Black Consciousness – with its anti-racist and scientific socialist content – offers the only programme capable of linking sport to the overall liberation thrust,
3. Consistent and principled struggle be conducted against the interlinked and misleading concepts of non-racialism, multi-racialism, multi-national sport and ethnicity in sport,
4. The concept of Blackness as a uniting force among the oppressed, underpinned by the hegemony of the Black working class, is the principal weapon in the mobilization and organisation of Black sportspersons,
5. The Isolation Campaign means the isolation of *white* South Africa and implies the maximum development of the nascent Azania, else the oppressed and exploited will isolate themselves needlessly and fruitlessly,
6. Sport must be broadly organized among the Black masses and equally among Black women and men,
7. Facilities must be built and located throughout the Black

ghettos, commencing with the upgrading of existing facilities and the construction of new facilities in the areas which are most dilapidated with inadequate (if any) sportsgrounds, playgrounds, parks and recreation centres,

8. Co-operation and the learning of skills and innovations from each other be emphasized in sport, while friendly competition be given second place, enabling the masses to participate broadly thus contributing to their overall health and recreation,
9. Mass participation will be centred in the sportgrounds and playgrounds and not in the professional arena: it is in the playgrounds and sportsgrounds that the creativity of the Black masses in sports activity will be unleashed and further developed,
10. For a period of time, the Azanian state will retain, sponsor and subsidize national sports teams and even professional sportspersons but this will be given second place in terms of resources allocated and attention devoted,
11. There will be criticism and struggle against the "professional mentality", the notion that those engaged in sport as a more or less full time pursuit and subsidized to one degree or another in order to be able to do so, somehow deserve a superior social position,
12. The control of sport by capitalists and the prostitution of sport to private profit and the treatment of sportspersons as merely a means to that end will be abolished along with reactionary practices and relations e.g. the absolute authority of

coaches and sports administrators, etc.,

13. The differences between full time professional sports persons and the masses of people will be narrowed step by step: professionals will be involved in productive labour and political and ideological struggle together with the masses and will play an active role in assisting the development of mass sports activities throughout so-

ciety and in taking part in these activities together with the masses as well,

14. The Azanian state will eliminate poverty and oppression and transform all spheres, including sport, into vehicles through which the millions formerly oppressed can unite and struggle to realize their higher interests and advance humanity as a whole,

15. The Black Proletariat will develop sport to promote its outlook and values and the social and political relationships that serve its revolutionary interests,

16. The Azanian state will foster and strengthen the unity and solidarity between the masses of people in Azania, in Africa and internationally. ■

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