

SPORT IN S.A.

(South Africa's position in international sport becomes an increasingly burning issue. In this article a contributor sets out some of the background to this controversy.)

Official South African sport is as corrupted by racialism as are the policies of the Government. Only the sporting bodies are worse hypocrites than the Government, since they pretend, for the sake of membership in international sporting bodies, that they would put sport before apartheid if only it was legal to do so.

In fact, multi-racial sport IS legal in South Africa and it is a lie to say it is not. What most people do is to confuse POLICY with LAW, so that while it is against Government policy to play multi-racial sport, it is not against the law. Bodies such as the South African Olympic Council (S.A.O.C.) play upon this confusion to create the impression overseas that they are powerless against the Government's dictates.

South Africa's position in international sport is becoming tenuous. While some overseas sports bodies seem willing to continue their support for racial discrimination, most now realise that there is a serious breach of standards—moral and sporting—in the constitution of the official South African sports associations.

The South African Olympic Committee is a case in point here. It is controlled by an all-White body with subordinate Non-White bodies. It refuses to allow any Non-Whites to participate in its national trials or championships. Instead Non-Whites are given separate competitions at separate times and places.

Yet the S.A.O.C. pretends to the International Olympic Committee that it does its best under the circumstances. The I.O.C. has ordered it to comply with the Olympic Charter regarding non-discrimination in sport, failing which it will be expelled before the Olympic Games in Tokyo in October this year.

There is every indication that South Africa will not attempt to meet the I.O.C.'s requirements. In the first place the affiliated bodies resent being told to abandon their racialist practices. In the second, the Government regards this as an issue of national pride and has indicated it would be displeased if any concessions were made.

South Africa will most probably not be represented at Tokyo. As compensation we have been given the South African Games. The White section was run in March and the Non-White in April.

The torch symbolising the spirit of these games appropriately went out before the start of the White Games.

Peter Snell, the New Zealand half-mile world champion, ran in the Games, even though he had been told this meant supporting sports-apartheid.

The Non-White Games presented a sorry picture. The athletes participated by virtue of their being sponsored by the mines.

The Indians and Coloureds have withdrawn from the soccer, leaving only the "Bantu" soccer body. This is representative of only a very poor section of Non-White soccer.

The non-racial weight lifting federation refused to participate in the Games. This has left the Games without any weightlifters of note. They were also unable to find any swimmers to take part.

All this farce has been carried through in an attempt to present a front of fair play: it is nothing of the sort.

The recognised national body in soccer is the Football Association of South Africa (F.A.S.A.) with its professional affiliate the National Football League (N.F.L.). The non-racial soccer body is the South African Soccer Federation (S.A.S.F.) and its professional affiliate, the South African Soccer League (S.A.S.L.).

F.A.S.A. practices apartheid, though it has been left with only its "Bantu" affiliate now.

It has membership of the Federation of International Football Associations (F.I.F.A.), from which it was expelled from 1962 to 1963 for its practice of apartheid.

It was reinstated last year when it assured F.I.F.A. that it was doing its best for Non-White soccer—within the limits of the law.

The non-racial S.A.S.F. stands as evidence that F.A.S.A. is willingly practising apartheid.

Members of F.A.S.A. have done everything they can to break the S.A.S.F. and the S.A.S.L.—even persuading local authorities to expel them from grounds. In the Transvaal the S.A.S.L. only have use of a ground by virtue of a petition to the Chief Justice which is pending.

The S.A.S.L. teams are very popular. They draw the biggest crowds in the country to their games. Yet they, and all the non-racial sport-

ing bodies, have the odds weighted against them.

The racist sporting bodies can count on the support of the Government and local authorities whenever they want action taken. The racist bodies have the money and other means to make it very attractive for Non-Whites to join bodies affiliated to the White organisations.

The only thing the non-racial bodies can hope for is that the international organisation will stop encouraging racial sport.

The Americans have planned a swimming team to tour here; the Welsh are sending a rugby team in May; the M.C.C. tour South Africa next summer; some European countries will receive a racially chosen athletics team in August; Arsenal Football Club will tour this winter; and all these teams will actively and knowingly be supporting apartheid in sport. The teams they play against will be racial and the people who watch them will be divided into racial groups.

While overseas sports teams continue to collaborate in this way there is little chance of apartheid breaking down in sport.

The main fight against this sports apartheid is being carried out by the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (S.A.N.R.O.C.). The chairman, Mr. John Harris, was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act in February. The previous chairman, Mr. Denis Brutus, was also banned for his work in sport.

THE REPORT OF THE U.N. COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON SOUTH AFRICA

PUBLIC STATEMENT, APRIL 21st, 1964, BY THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN, PETER BROWN

The United Nations Committee of experts which has put forward to the Security Council its proposals to help resolve the South African problem has produced a most encouraging and sensible document.

It is quite clear from its proposals that the Committee does not regard white South Africans or the industrial economy of South Africa as expendable. It is looking for ways which will make it possible for us to come together and work out together a future course which will satisfy the aspirations of all South Africans and give them an opportunity to develop together the great economic and human potential of our country.

The Liberal Party gives its unreserved support to the proposal for the declaration of a political amnesty followed by the calling of a new National Convention. To us this seems the essential first step towards building a stable future for our country on the basis of agreement between all sections of our community. Delegates should not go to the Convention to grind any particular political axe, but determined to find a solution to our country's problems which would give reasonable security to all South Africans and hope for the future to those who at present have none. No doubt there would have to be give and take on all sides, but how else will we resolve peacefully the vast problems which confront us?

The United Nations Committee has shown South Africa a way out of her dilemma. I make this urgent appeal to political leaders of all persuasions and of all groups to respond to it, to rally to the call for a new National Convention and to go to that Convention determined to find a solution. The only alternative to the holding of such a Convention that I can see is growing isolation from the world, growing violence and racial tension in South Africa and the implementation of international sanctions at some time in the future. The growing deterioration which will result from these combined pressures will lead to a new National Convention some day, of that I am convinced, but where it would then take place against a background of bitterness and resentment, a National Convention held now, after the declaration of a political amnesty, would, as the Committee says, take place in an atmosphere in which "fear and bitterness could be set aside" and a "new confidence created".

In the nature of things the first response to this new initiative must come from white South Africans. I hope for the future of us all that they are big enough to respond without unnecessary delay.