SPORT, DISABLED PEOPLE AND THE FIGHT AGAINST APARTHEID

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"Africans want a just share in the whole of South Africa. They want security and a stake in society...... We also want equal political rights because without them our disabilities will be permanent."

Nelson Mandela
1963 Trial
Closing Speech
SURELY THE PARAPLEGIC SPORTS SCENE CAN'T HAVE BEEN WOUND UP? I thought, as I scanned the local paper for results, personalities etc, at the time of the International Stoke Mandeville Games. If you live in Scotland and compete internationally at any sport you get Scottish coverage. Nothing, even in the SIA NEWS - in spite of requests.

Understanding came when I received a copy of the conditions which must be signed by each international competitor. Aspirant international competitors would be unlikely to be selected if they had already contravened any of these conditions. The conditions include the following:

"I agree not to impart to the news media, television, radio or other bodies any information particularly in respect of the GB Team performance, the personal details of any team member or any matter....

"I also agree that any request made of me on the above shall be referred to the GB Team Manager. This paragraph also applies to any professional or non-professional bodies engaged in research.

Alas, it is simple. Notices of the BPSS (British Paraplegic Sports Society) AGM are not circulated. There is little knowledge of who is on the Executive. There is little knowledge of whether the Executive is appointed or elected. If they are elected, elections and nominations are not publicised. Within BPSS there is no "Right of Appeal" as exists in every able-bodied sports organisation, consequently competitors are afraid to protest.

BANNED FOR LIFE

I listened to Sir Ludwig Guttman (deceased) upholding the right of South Africa to compete in international paraplegic games. I distributed a leaflet on apartheid in health care in South Africa. One spinal unit in South Africa - for white people only, patients, nurses, doctors, must only be white. Black patients go to a general hospital for blacks. Coloureds (Indians, Chinese, mixed) go to a general hospital for coloureds. A black doctor wishing to specialise in spinal injuries had to come to Britain as he was not allowed, by law, to practise in the "White only" unit in South Africa. I felt that these facts should be made known. I was BANNED from all paraplegic sports for life. There was no right of appeal.

SOUTH AFRICA: BASIC FACTS

POPULATION

29 million. 11% white - 89% Black divided by government into:
3% 'Asian'
6% 'Coloured'
80% 'African'.

HEALTH

Average life expectancy 68 years for Whites
53 years for Blacks
Average child deaths 3 per hour from malnutrition
(Sunday Tribune: 1976)
15,000-30,000 per year from malnutrition
(S.A. Dept. of Statistics: 1974)
(This figure does not include those who die from related diseases such as T.B.)
The Gleneagles Agreement

Whatever YOU, personally, may feel about the participation of South Africa in sports, one fact is clear. The current policy for able-bodied sports in Great Britain is that it obeys the ruling of the United Nations and the Gleneagles Commonwealth Agreement that South Africa is not to be recognised for sporting purposes. SPORTSPEOPLE are not permitted to represent Great Britain, England, Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales in any competition where South Africa is competing.

The only conclusion one can reach is that the spinally injured are not considered SPORTSPEOPLE. They are just "the disabled". They do not truthfully wear their country's colours. They are only allowed to do so because as "the disabled" they do not, somehow, really count. This is insulting to the quality of the sports, the commitment of the competitors and to the hard work of the coaches, escorts and organisers.

Power To The Spinally Injured

SPORTSPEOPLE among the spinally injured ARISE! Lift up your heads. Announce to the Press - including SIA NEWS - the pride of your achievements. PUBLICISE the shameful conditions you have been asked to sign. UNITE! Act as a team! The Spinal Injuries Association has shown what can be achieved when the management of an organisation is in the hands of the consumers - the spinally injured. Let the sportspeople turn to the able-bodied sports organisations, and, as the women control the Women's Amateur Athletic Association, let the spinally injured gain control over their sports.

Personal Note

The National Council for Civil Liberties advised me to seek legal advice with regard to the ban imposed on me. Eventually I received the following letter "... I am glad to say that Counsel has now advised that you have a case which is worthy of taking to Court and I have therefore sent the papers to the Law Society to get the certificate extended to enable proceedings to be commenced against the British Paraplegic Sports Society." This letter was forwarded to the British Paraplegic Sports Society. At their next Executive Meeting the ban on me was removed.

Maggie Jones

Disabled anti-apartheid athlete is banned

By Patrick Ralston

A disabled South African athletics player has been banned from participating in the World Cup of Athletics. The ban has been imposed by the British Paraplegic Sports Society, which is an organisation that has refused to take part in events involving South Africa.

The athlete, Thabo Mokoena, was one of the top performers in the recent Paralympic Games. He had been selected to represent South Africa in the World Cup of Athletics, which was due to take place in Britain. However, the British Paraplegic Sports Society has refused to allow the athlete to compete.

The ban has been imposed due to the athlete's participation in events involving South Africa. The British Paraplegic Sports Society has stated that it will not accept athletes from countries that have been suspended by the Paralympic Games.

The decision has been met with widespread criticism, with many people questioning the fairness of the ban. The athlete has said that he is disappointed by the decision and that he will continue to train and compete.

The ban has been described as a setback for the athlete, who has been hoping to improve his performance and to compete at the highest level.

The incident has also highlighted the ongoing controversy surrounding the participation of South Africa in the Paralympic Games. The country has been suspended by the Paralympic Games, and its athletes have been banned from competing in events involving South Africa.

The ban has also raised questions about the role of the British Paraplegic Sports Society in the anti-apartheid movement. The organisation has been a prominent voice in the movement, and its actions have often been seen as a symbol of the struggle against apartheid.
SOUTH AFRICA AND ITS INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS

In the modern world all states are influenced by events in other parts of the globe. This is nowhere more clearly seen than in the international links between Britain and South Africa. British investors have vast amounts of capital invested in the mines and industries of South Africa. In addition the two countries are firmly tied by very many years of mutual trade. Britain therefore depends on South Africa as a place for investments and as a market for exports. In return South Africa is an important source of foreign profits and raw materials, as well as some manufactured goods.

Multi-nationals

Multi-national companies invest capital wherever it is profitable to do so. The British companies transfer their money to South Africa because apartheid ensures that low wages are paid to black workers in South Africa. The South African State controls these workers so that their wages always remain low and profits high. What may not be appreciated is that British firms which have companies both in South Africa and Britain will (a) shift production to South Africa where they can use cheap labour, consequently making British workers redundant, and (b) be inclined to introduce the South African way of controlling workers into their British companies so that similar profits can be created in this country, consequently worsening the standard of living here. These economic links with South Africa therefore directly affect British people by increasing unemployment and worsening living standards.

The Gold Chain

Britain, too, is dependent upon South Africa for mutual trade. Trade locks the two economies together so that any disruption in production in one country has an immediate effect upon the economy of the other country. This is particularly true of South Africa's gold production. Western economies depend upon South Africa's steady supply of gold to ensure the smooth flow of world trade. Threats to this gold supply threaten world trade.

The Smouldering Rebellion

The apartheid slave-like conditions in the mines are designed to prevent any strife occurring in the gold mining industry. However it is these atrocious conditions and low wages both in the mines and through South Africa that lead to periodic uprisings.

The rebellion in South Africa has been smouldering for some time - in fact it is a way of life in that country. From time to time it explodes as happened in the Soweto uprising of 1976 when hundreds of schoolchildren were killed by the South African police. This internal conflict is bubbling over into neighbouring countries - the most recent example involved South African troops invading and killing people in Lesotho. The South African racists have been involved directly, or indirectly by fermenting dissident groups which it pays and arms, in Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland. There can be no doubt that as long as the vicious apartheid system continues to exist black South Africans will oppose and fight against their oppression and they will be supported by the immediate surrounding black states. Racist South Africans will find that they have to increasingly intervene in these 'front-line' states in order to maintain their present apartheid state. As the conflagration spreads the major powers inevitably become involved (as they have already done). Britain, too, will find itself caught in the web of this conflict and the possibility of racial wars on a world scale seems increasingly likely. Undoubtedly such racial wars will worsen the racial conflicts that already exist in this country.

The apartheid system of South Africa, therefore, has three effects on the lives of people in this country:

* A shift in capital investment so that British workers are made redundant.

* It encourages British companies to extend apartheid's systems of control over workers so that profits can be increased at the expense of living conditions of British workers.

* It threatens to involve the people of this country in a world conflagration involving millions of people in wars.

Vic Finkelstein
RACISM IN BRITAIN -
THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONNECTION

People ask DPAA why it is opposed to South Africa participating in sport for disabled people. South Africa is a long way from Britain, so why should we be bothered. There are plenty of problems to keep us busy here. We say that there are three main reasons to be concerned.

1) The world is a closely built economic and political system and what happens in one country must have an effect on other countries.

2) Racism is a dangerous problem in Britain. The existence of a racist state in South Africa provides an example that racists will feel worth copying.

3) Disabled people know the importance of fighting segregation. We have to be sympathetic towards black South Africans who suffer legalised rigorous segregation.

Racism Affects Everyone

If you believe it is right to treat someone cruelly because they are of a different race or colour then you would be described as a racist. In Britain only a minority (such as members of the National Front) admit to being racist. The majority would probably not see racism as having any real importance to their own lives.

It is not enough for white people to ignore the issue of racism and come to terms with the racism in our own society. Each individual is responsible for his or her own action or inaction and also for those of the society in which he or she lives. Where something can be done to defeat racism it must be done.

Stoke Mandeville

The issue of South Africa participating at Stoke Mandeville is an area where positive action can and must be taken. Disabled people and especially the athletes must face up to the issues and refuse to take part in sports meetings that include South African teams. By not doing so they are supporting racism.

How Is Our Society Racist?

It is organised in such a way that it tolerates the oppression of black people. It has many of the characteristics of the apartheid system:

* Immigration laws, which are designed specifically to keep black people out.
* Denial of promotion into positions of leadership.
* The higher proportion of unemployment amongst black people than whites.
* Consumers - Black people are not seen to exist as part of the consumer society.
* Black peoples culture and history are denied within the education system.
* Housing - Denial of equal opportunity within the area of housing.
* Justice - Systematic denial of civil liberties and rights by the police and of justice by the courts.

It is hardly surprising that these denials lead to a loss of hope and a build up of resentment in black people.

'Non-productive Bantu' are officially classified as follows:

1. The aged, the unfit, widows, women with dependent children and also families who do not qualify under the provisions of the Bantu (Urban Areas) Act No.25 of 1945 for family accommodation in the European urban areas;

2. Bantu on European farms who become superfluous as a result of age, disability or the application of Chapter IV of the Bantu Trust and Land Act No. 18 of 1936, or Bantu squatters from mission stations and black spots which are being cleared up;

3. Professional Bantu such as doctors, attorneys, agents, traders, industrialists, etc. Also such persons are not regarded as essential for the European labour market...

(Official Government circular No 25 1967)
Apartheid In Housing

In the post war years, Britain needed to swell its workforce and encouraged immigration from the Commonwealth. These immigrants ended up living in the worst accommodation in deprived inner city areas. In South Africa people who are not part of the labour force are generally made to live in the Bantustans. These are living areas out in the wilds, with only the minimum of amenities. Working black South Africans live in the poor urban areas, often separated from their families. If more labour is needed it may be found on tap in the Bantustans.

The Fight Back

There is a constantly active guerrilla movement in South Africa, which threatens to destroy the fabric of life in white South Africa. There are uprisings such as those in Soweto where many people were killed.

Racial violence in Britain takes different forms. In the areas where black and white live together there is the fear of racialist attack. It can take a more organised form in race riots which we have had in Britain since 1958. They are sometimes caused by neo-facists, while riots such as those in Brixton are explosions of anger from within the black community.

It is clearly possible to draw parallels between South Africa and Britain in their patterns of racism leading to conflict. We should learn from our knowledge of the unrest in South Africa and understand that it will harm us if we do not fight against racism both here and in South Africa.

Sian Vasey

APARTHEID OF DISABLED PEOPLE

Disabled people in Britain live under what could be called a form of Apartheid. That is to say they are separated from the mainstream of society in a great number of ways. For example through lack of transport and lack of care facilities they are unable to participate. There are separate schools, separate clubs, separate housing, separate colleges, separate workplaces and separate sports. In South Africa blacks have separate schools, separate clubs, separate housing, separate colleges, separate workplaces and separate sports. It is ironic then that it should be within the area of disability, i.e. at Stoke Mandeville that South Africa and Apartheid are able to gain some measure of credibility.

Why No Outcry About Stoke Mandeville?

The general lack of protest from the media etc about South Africa's participation at Stoke Mandeville is an example of the way in which the disabled are seen as unconnected with mainstream activity. When able-bodied sportspeople attempt to play with South Africa there is usually a national outcry. Jimmy Hill for instance was forced to bring back the football team that he took out to South Africa such was the weight of public opinion against him. Public opinion, however, does not seem unleashed when disabled sport is contravening the Gleneagles agreement. It shows that the abilities of disabled sportspeople are held in very low esteem and that their sport is hardly considered to be sport at all.

"If our policy is taken to its logical conclusion, as far as the Black man is concerned, there will not be one Black man with South African citizenship."

(Dee Connie Mulder, Minister of Bantu Affairs: 1979)
subsequently learnt that this clause had been inserted after the Maggy Jones affair.

My suspicions were confirmed when I heard that a South African team would be participating in the Games. I contacted Anti Apartheid and they told me about the campaign that was underway to stop the South Africans coming.

I agreed to join in the campaign and attend a press conference to help publicise the demonstration to be held at the Games.

**July 20 1981 – Press Conference**

In terms of media coverage, the press conference at which I announced my withdrawal from the Internationals was a success. Reports were carried in The Times, The Guardian, Morning Star, Newsline and Radio 4 news. Subsequently I gave interviews with LBC, Radio Manchester and Radio Oxford.

Most of the coverage was reasonable, though The Times ended up with a quote from Joan Scruton, Secretary General of the Games:

"We do not feel that people in wheelchairs should be used as political toys."

Considering that she and the late Ludwig Guttman regularly used the Games as vehicles for highly political speeches praising South African "integrated" sport, this comment was annoying to say the least.

This inability to influence how the media presented the issues, was only a foretaste at the anger felt over the way in which the demonstration at Stoke was misrepresented.

**July 25 1981 – Anti Apartheid Demonstration at Stoke**

The right wing press pulled out every stop in its distortions of what the demonstration was about. Here as a sample is the Daily Mail's banner front page headlines about the
But pride of place for sheer nonsense must go to backwoods Tory MP, John Carlisle. The Sunday Express gave Carlisle the platform for his "Moscow-backed red agitators" line:

**RED AGITATORS BEHIND DISABLED GAMES ROW—MP**

A protest is to be made in Parliament this week about the "mean and despicable" threat by anti-apartheid campaigners to blacklist disabled games organiser Miss Joan Scruton in 70 countries.

Mr John Carlisle, Tory MP for Luton West, said that he intends to warn the Sports Minister Mr Hector Monro that the group which issued the threat was financed by Communist "agitators" from behind the Iron Curtain.

The main target for his criticism was the London-based South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee.

But, last night, it was revealed that the British anti-apartheid movement, whose most prominent member is prospective Labour candidate Peter Hain, first proposed the action against Miss Scruton.

Shattered

Mr Hain, 31, the former Young Liberal leader and now Labour’s man in Putney, West London, is holidaying on the Continent, but the movement’s spokesman, Mr Michael Terry, said: "I know Peter fully supports this blacklisting."

Miss Scruton, secretary-general of the International Olympic Games for the Disabled, which open at Stoke Mandeville, Buckinghamshire, today, was still shattered by the proposed recommendation to place her on the United Nation’s sporting blacklist unless she barred the South Africans—black and white—from the games.

But despite the threat and the prospect of facing a hostile demonstration today, the woman who has spent most of her life helping the country’s disabled, said: "If a lame animal..." I have spent the past 20 years building up this major sporting event for the disabled and refuse to allow it to be ruined by political wrangling."

Mr Carlisle said: "I am utterly appalled that a group of left-wing troublemakers should try and disrupt these games, which are doing an enormous amount of good for the disabled people of the world."

It is to raise the issue during a debate he is mounting on the Gleneagles Agreement on sport with South Africa in the Commons on Friday.

He said: "I am utterly disgusted with SANROC’s behaviour. It is like kicking a lame animal."

Mr Carlisle added: "Their leaders are known to regularly attend conferences in Moscow. I intend to expose the fact that they are also largely funded by Eastern bloc countries."

"But most of all, I want to make it clear that they are extremists who, far from attempting to create racial harmony, are hell-bent on destroying it."

Observer

But SANROC’s chairman, Mr Sam Ramsamy, a South African-born teacher living in London, dismissed the alleged Communist links as “pure fabrication."

He insisted that his group received all its finances from this country, most of it being provided by the World Council of Churches.

Mr Ramsamy admitted that he had been to Moscow, but purely as an approved observer at the Olympics with representatives from other sports organisations.

Mr Terry also defended their action against Scruton, saying: "What we want to do is to disrupt these games, which are in clear violation of the principles of Gleneagles."

"About 45 people, half of them disabled, demonstrated outside the Stoke Mandeville stadium over the inclusion of a team from the apartheid republic at the Olympic Games for the Disabled."

"It is interesting to note the portrayal of Scruton as a cross between Joan of Arc and Mother Theresa. Carlisle leaps to Scruton’s defence against the "left wing troublemakers" and compares their behaviour to "kicking a lame animal." What is Carlisle getting at here? In typical patronising fashion he is portraying disabled people as lame animals, dumbly suffering and in need of protection by the likes of him."

1982

The 1981 Demonstration was a success in terms of the number of people there and the coverage it received, but the South Africans still came to Stoke. A group of us after this experience decided to set up 'Disabled People Against Apartheid' to co-ordinate the campaign.

After a series of letters, Minister of Sport, Neil Macfarlane, eventually confirmed that the Government accepted that theGeneagles agreement applied to the Stoke Mandeville Games. The only paper which mentioned this was the *Morning Star:*

**Question of apartheid**

**MINISTER of Sport Neil Macfarlane is to be asked to explain why Prince Charles, royal no. 2 and future head of the Commonwealth, was at the opening of the International Stoke Mandeville Games yesterday when there is a South African team taking part.**

In a recent letter to the organisation Disabled People Against Apartheid, Macfarlane confirmed that the government accepts the Gleneagles agreement drawn up by Commonwealth leaders and which discourages links with apartheid sport.

The DPAA’s central co-ordinator Brenda Robbins said yesterday: "What we want to know is what was the future head of the Commonwealth doing opening these Games which are in clear violation of the principles of Gleneagles."

"About 45 people, half of them disabled, demonstrated outside the Stoke Mandeville stadium over the inclusion of a team from the apartheid republic at the Olympic Games for the Disabled."

Anti-apartheid forces are claiming considerable success in their campaign against South African participation at Stoke Mandeville. Canada, Canada, Ecuador, Kenya, Philippines and Sudan are all believed to have withdrawn over the apartheid issue and possibly India, Bangladesh and Malaysia as well.

Because of these absentees there are only 500 competitors at this year’s Games compared with 800 last year.

Sunday Express 26 July 1981
The furore created by the 1981 campaign, as the above article pointed out, had considerable success. Nevertheless Prince Charles was still allowed to open the Games and the South Africans still came.

Elsewhere, except for coverage in local papers, the only national coverage was one line the in Guardian and short but predictably antagonistic articles in the Express (headline "Disabled Sport hit by the Left" 17/7/82) and the Telegraph.

Condescending Attitudes

Much of the press has a condescending attitude to people with disabilities. The difficulty of demonstrators who are themselves disabled is coped with by ignoring the fact or, as the Express did this year, portray them as helpless dupes of the Left:

"The militants... have set aside funds to ferry in disabled people who will not be taking part in the Games, to demonstrate alongside members of the Anti-Apartheid movement." (Daily Express 17/7/82).

Obviously the idea of people with disabilities having political views of their own goes against the cosy stereotype of being quiet, pitiable and worthy objects of charity.

Apartheid And Disabled People

The fight to stop South African participation in the Stoke Mandeville Games is part of the campaign against Apartheid, but it is also about the right of disabled people in any area - work, leisure, politics - to be treated like anyone else. The press caricatures of the demonstration are reinforcing stereotyped attitudes.

The DPAA campaign must ensure that it continues to get media coverage. It is important that the issues are raised and that every competitor at Stoke knows that by competing they are giving support to the South African regime. However, if past experience is anything to go on, the content of much of that coverage will often be patronising about disabled people with and a caricature of the real issues. The campaign can only be won by political and direct action, by disabled people themselves.

The press have had two images of disabled people at the Stoke demonstrations, one is of the poor competitors having to be sheltered by their able-bodied defenders from nasty agitators. The other is of the disabled people on the demonstrations as being dupes of the able-bodied agitators. The more disabled people who join the campaign against South African participation at Stoke Mandeville, the more the media will be forced to reassess its stereotypes of disabled people as passive objects of pity.

Bernard Leach
Black Disabled People

Given this apartheid policy black disabled people have virtually no chance of surviving. Many spinally disabled people in England know full well the difficulties we have in staying physically well. What chance would we envisage of surviving if we lived on the bantustans? If a spinally injured person leaving a black hospital manages to return a year later for a check-up, they are doing very well. Many never return for their check-ups. The Bantustan environment has killed them off. Black disabled people are issued with poor quality wheelchairs which break easily and have a repair service which is infrequent and unreliable. Whites on the other hand, can afford to buy better quality private wheelchairs and pay for them out of their disability pensions. Note that black disabled people receive \( \frac{1}{3} \) of the pension that is given to white disabled people.

Sport And Apartheid

The inequalities that exist in health care facilities obviously extend into the area of disabled sport. The South African Government and its ardent racists supporters are constantly trying to deny apartheid. South Africa sends a mixed team to the Stoke Mandeville Games, in that 4 or so members are black. By sending in a few token black sports people they are trying to dodge the resistance to their racist laws. The International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation (ISMGF) gives support to South Africa in is deception. Joan Scruton, Secretary General of ISMGF claims that the South African Sports Association for the Disabled, SASPD, is "completely racially integrated" and "was the first in South Africa to overcome apartheid in sport".

Token Black Competitors

What Joan Scruton fails to point out is that in 1975 the white SASPD requested permission from its government to include token blacks in their teams in order to claim that they are totally integrated. The SASPD instructed its selectors that at least 15% of the team must be black. If sport in South Africa truly integrates and selected on merit, then 80% of the South African team would be black. One white bowler who had represented South Africa at ISMGF...
The United Nations has repeatedly condemned apartheid and called for an end to all sporting and other links with South Africa. UN policy states:

"...there can be neither adherence to the principle of merit selection nor fully integrated non-racial sport in any country practising apartheid until the apartheid system itself is eradicated."

Britain and all other Commonwealth countries are committed by the Gleneagles agreement to discourage all sporting contact with South Africa. The agreement states:

"...it (is) the urgent duty of each of the governments vigorously to combat the evil of apartheid by withholding any form of support for and by every practicable stop to discourage contact or competition by their nationals with sports organisations, teams or sportsmen from South Africa or from any other country where sports are organised on the basis of race, colour or ethnic origin."

Joan Scruton and the ISMGF are totally aware of the United Nations policy, but they choose to flout it. They are also well aware that they are breaking the Gleneagles agreement, yet they still insist on inviting a South African team. Members of the ISMGF collect OBEs, CBEs etc for their work in the area of disability. The same people that receive these awards are the supporters of apartheid. We have seen how the black population is disabled by the apartheid laws. It's no accident that the same people who support the oppressive South African Government also dominate disability sport.

Brenda Robbins
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