

"NO NORMAL SPORT IN AN ABNORMAL SOCIETY"¹ - SPORTS ISOLATION AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICAN SPORT, 1980-1992

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There has always been the misperception that separate development in sports in South Africa was initiated by the introduction of apartheid as government policy in 1948. On the contrary, apartheid in South African sport had been practised long before the apartheid policy legalised separate development at all levels of South African society. Only since 1948 the practice of sport was governed by laws, whence a close correlation between sports and politics in South Africa developed. Since 1948 South Africa's position was unusual and perhaps unique in that sport became the object of civic struggle in the name of social justice, involving not just players, but the whole population.³

The use of boycotts as a strategy to bring about change has been subjected to considerable analysis and controversy, particularly in South Africa, but regardless of one's position on the issue, there can be little dispute today that the initial causes of isolation were justified: there were apartheid and racism in South African sport.⁴ Organisations such as SASA (South African Sports Association - 1958), SANROC (South African Non-racial Olympic Committee - 1962) and SACOS (South African Council on Sport - 1973) were established as resistance groups against discrimination in South African sport. The aim of these organisations was to fight apartheid in sport and to promote equal sporting opportunities for all South Africans. In co-operation with other anti-apartheid movements, they used the strategy of sports boycotts to precipitate change in the South African society. Later their mandate changed to a far more radical perception of equal political rights for all South Africans.⁵

¹ A slogan used by the South African Council on Sport (SACOS) in its struggle against apartheid in South African sport.

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³ R Archer and A Bouillon, *The South African game. Sport and racism* (London, 1982), p. 302.

⁴ B Streek, "Illusion and reality in South Africa's sport policy" in *South Africa International*, Vol. 16, No. 1, July 1985, p. 38.

⁵ G Kotzé, *Sport en politiek* (Pretoria, 1978), p. 38.

After apartheid in sport had been legalised, many non-white South Africans became symbolic victims of a racial policy. Basil D'Oliviera, Sewsunker Sewgolum and others became the unfortunate symbols of hope that some day normalised sporting relationships with the outside world would become a reality. Throughout the 1970s, the ideological struggle between the establishment and the anti-apartheid organisations intensified, causing South African sport to sink deeper into isolation. Apart from rugby and cricket,⁶ by 1980 South African sports had been barred from international participation by agreements on and boycotts of South African sport.

The sports policy of the National Party government during the 1980s

The South African government was very slow in reacting to the growing sports boycott. During the 1970s, a number of initiatives were launched, but to no avail. It was not until the advent of the Botha administration in late 1978 that a more concerted response to the boycott began to emerge.⁷ The National Party (NP) government entered the 1980s under a cloud of foreign and internal pressures. The 1976 Soweto unrest, the death of the black leader, Steve Biko, in police detention, the Angolan civil war, the arms embargo against the country, the Gleneagles Declaration of 1977 and the persistent apartheid ideology of the Nationalist regime ensured sustained foreign political opposition.

The 1977 Gleneagles Declaration⁸ had serious repercussions for South African sport. The Gleneagles meeting of Commonwealth heads of government agreed to "vigorously combat the evil of apartheid by withholding any form of support for, and by taking every practical step to discourage contact or competition by our nationals with sporting organisations, teams or sportsmen from South Africa".⁹ For years to come, politicians would look at the small print and find something that justified their lasting posturing, while sportsmen were helpless.¹⁰ Rugby was the one sport that was not really influenced by the Gleneagles Agreement, because New Zealand and the United Kingdom continued to approve rugby tours to the Republic.

⁶ Rugby and cricket were seen as predominant "white" sports which kept their international participation alive during the 1980s by arranging rebel tours to the country.

⁷ J Davies, "Politics, sport and education in South Africa" in *African Affairs*, Vol. 85(340), July 1986, p. 351.

⁸ The formal name given to this declaration is the 1977 Commonwealth Statement on Apartheid in Sport. N McFarlane, *Sport and politics. A world divided* (London, 1986), p. 110.

⁹ McFarlane, p. 110.

¹⁰ M Procter, *South Africa. The years of isolation and the return to international cricket* (Durban, 1994), p. 70.

To convince international opinion that South African sport was prepared to integrate racially, the autonomy of sports bodies was "guaranteed" by the government, who claimed that it would not interfere with sports, except to maintain public order and uphold the overall policy of apartheid.¹¹ Associations of different races were therefore allowed to establish links with one another, provided they respected the laws regarding segregation. "Reforms" and all, the sports policy during the 1980s was wholly compatible with the general policy of the regime.¹² Under PW Botha's leadership separate development remained the key word; it was simply sweetened for public consumption. According to the Botha administration, the sports issue no longer existed, because the term "multi-nationalism"¹³ had resolved it once and for all.

The Human Sciences Research Council's investigation into South African sport

The South African government came to realise that positive steps were needed to redirect South African sport, otherwise sports isolation in this country could lead to political turmoil, and negative consequences for the NP. Early in 1980, Punt Janson, the Minister of Sport, therefore issued a mandate to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to investigate the structure of South African sport.¹⁴ The fact that sport and sporting relations were accepted as the first research programme under that plan was clear evidence of the importance attached to sport as an individual social activity in this country.¹⁵ In 1982, the report on the HSRC's research project on South African sport was submitted to the government. Although various areas of inequality in South African sport were highlighted in the report, most white sports people in the country saw the report as "heralding a new era of hope and fulfilment of their aspirations".¹⁶ The HSRC recommended changes to legislation confronting non-racial sport in the country, and that the principle of sports autonomy be maintained and promoted. In addition to the HSRC report, the government reiterated the fact that "there was no racial discrimination in South African sport".¹⁷ The HSRC report and the government's reaction to the recommendations paved the way for the NP's policy on sport during the eighties.

¹¹ Archer, p. 304.

¹² Archer, p. 304.

¹³ The "multi-national" sports policy allowed the different racial groups in South Africa - whites, Africans, coloureds and Asians - to compete against each other as four separate "nations" within the country, but only in major international events with foreign participation. P Hain, *Sting the beloved country. The struggle for the new South Africa* (London, 1996), p. 90.

¹⁴ L Gordon et al., *Survey of race relations in South Africa, 1980* (Johannesburg, 1981), p. 585.

¹⁵ DJ van Vuuren et al., *Change in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1983), p. 250.

¹⁶ Van Vuuren et al., p. 251.

¹⁷ Statement made by the Minister of National Education, Dr Gerrit Viljoen, in April 1983. C Cooper et al., *Survey of race relations in South Africa, 1983* (Johannesburg, 1986), p. 638.

Since the late 1970s, the government intensified steps to change the face of apartheid in sport. Legislation permitted clubs and sports associations regularly to participate in multiracial competition, dropping the requirement for international competitors.¹⁸ These changes were not enough to satisfy hardened anti-apartheid supporters. Since their claim had shifted from equal opportunities for all in sport to political equality for all South Africans, only the abolition of apartheid was acceptable to them. What angered the protesters of apartheid in sport even more was the fact that the South African Defence Force (SADF) and the South African Police (SAP) featured prominently in South African sport.¹⁹ The reason for their anger was the fact that the SADF and the SAP were regarded as the sword of the apartheid regime in their fight against black "terrorism" in South Africa.

Foreign investigation into South African sport

The NP continuously remarked that it had granted autonomy to sports organisations as early as the mid 1970s. Streek reiterated this fact in saying that by 1985 there was much less political and government involvement in sport than 15 years earlier. However, He dismissed the argument that there was no political and governmental interference in South African sport as "patent rubbish".²⁰ The NP's policy on sport during this period is a good example of Streek's argument.

In January 1980, two foreign groups investigating apartheid in sport visited South Africa. The group from the British Sports Council was led by Dickie Jeeps; and the French government delegation by Bernard Marie. The Jeeps Commission, which included Basil D'Oliviera, met with some opposition groups such as SANROC in Britain, as well as most black organisations in South Africa. This commission held meetings with cabinet ministers, sports administrators and officials. They also paid a call on different sporting venues and universities, attended various sporting events and visited some townships. Hassan Howa, president of SACOS, initially refused to meet the commission as he was opposed to any sports link with South Africa as long as apartheid existed. However, he eventually did meet the commission, saying afterwards that he found Jeeps biased, already favouring "white" South Africa.²¹ This is a clear indication of the strong mutual mistrust among black and white sports people in South Africa.

¹⁸ B Kidd, "The campaign against sport in South Africa" in *International Journal*, Vol. XLVII (4), Autumn, 1988, p. 658.

¹⁹ Many SADF and SAP members were selected for provincial and national teams in various sports. S Ramsamy, *Apartheid. The real hurdle. Sport in South Africa and the International Boycott* (London, 1982), p. 77.

²⁰ Streek, p. 36.

²¹ *The Star*, 16 January 1980.

The report of the Jeeps Commission praised the progress made towards sports integration in South Africa. According to the report, almost without exception, sports administrators in South Africa had condemned apartheid and pledged their belief in sports integration. The report recommended an end to sports isolation, stating that international sports bodies in those sports which were integrated should visit South Africa, see the progress made and pressure for those sports to be given clearance internationally. The commission categorised South African sport as follows:

1. Those sports whose administrators had done everything they could to integrate and who had won government concession. These sports included cricket, soccer, athletics and paraplegics, and in the opinion of the commission, had met international requirements;
2. sports in which a start had been made towards integration but on which pressure needed to be exerted; and
3. sports whose administrators needed to be given every incentive to move towards integration. The commission felt that if recognition was not given to those sports that had integrated, the danger of a backlash from segregated sports existed.²²

The commission's report was criticised heavily by various organisations. Peter Hain said that some members of the commission seemed blind to the fact that their report confirmed just how racist South African sport was.²³ From within the commission, the report was criticised for "betraying an unconscious bias in favour of the South African establishment".²⁴ Some members of the commission who criticised the report were later invited by SACOS to return to South Africa and undertake their own investigation, but the South African government refused them visas.

The French investigating team visiting South Africa comprised eight members of parliament and three sports administrators. Chairman Bernard Marie said in his report that certain South African sports such as soccer, athletics, boxing and fencing had met the requirements of international demands since they appeared to be fully integrated. The French report strongly opposed boycotts and sanctions and asked for the re-evaluation of the South African issue. It was recommended that France postpone any resumption of relations at international level with non-integrated sports (rugby, cricket and tennis) in South Africa. The resumption of

²² Gordon et al., p. 596.

²³ *The Star*, 11 March 1980.

²⁴ Gordon et al., p. 596.

relations with the integrated federations was strongly recommended. This should only take place after verification by the competent national and international sports organisations that segregational sport measures no longer existed in these federations. The French anti-apartheid movement, supported by all its international counterparts, heavily criticised the report, condemning the commission of being biased in favour of the apartheid regime in South Africa.

The role of the National Party in the control of South African sport

Throughout the 1980s, South Africa's general isolation from world sport continued, although the Jeeps and Marie Commissions initiated renewed global interest in the South African situation. The government, although constantly denying any involvement in domestic sports administration, played an important role in the sports-political dualism during the 1980s. It is alleged that the Broederbond, the nucleus of the NP's decision-making processes, also played a role in this process. During the 1980s the Broederbond made various attempts to control South African rugby by trying to move its members into key positions within the predominantly white South African Rugby Board (SARB).²⁵ This led to strong conflict between the government and Dr Danie Craven, President of the SARB. Throughout his lifetime, Craven was frequently quoted as being in strong opposition to the ideas of involvement of the Broederbond in South African sport.

The NP continued to play an important role in determining policies to control South African sport. In 1982, differences within the NP and Broederbond concerning the admission of coloured schoolboys to the Craven rugby week, contributed to the split in the National Party.²⁶ This split in the NP and the formation of the Conservative Party (CP) as a result was a serious drawback to the government. Not only did the CP deprive the NP of potential voters in future elections, but it also left a permanent rift in the NP and the Broederbond on issues regarding power sharing with other race groups.

The government could not keep up with the sports administrators' struggle to normalise sporting links with the outside world. Powers from within the government and the Broederbond tried to slow down the pace at which sporting bodies and administrators tried to adapt in order to be in line with international recommendations.²⁷ This led to strong mistrust in the government and further weakened the fragile links between sporting bodies and the government. A new political dispensation, set into motion by the government in 1983, widened the rift

²⁵ C Cooper et al., *Survey of race relations in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1983), p. 647.

²⁶ P Dobson, *Doc. The life of Danie Craven*, p. 134.

²⁷ H Gerber, *Craven* (Cape Town, 1987), p. 267.

even more. The exclusion of black South Africans from this new political order was the main reason for its failure to excite anybody outside the governmental ranks. Not even the Nkomati peace accord with neighbouring Mozambique the following year could convince any non-Nationalist in the country that the NP was really starting to move towards democracy. During the 1980s, political unrest against apartheid grew to such an extent that the NP had to implement far-reaching measures. The government announced a state of emergency in order to control massive unrest and protest against apartheid legislation during the late eighties. That led to more extreme action from anti-apartheid movements abroad and intensified the struggle in South Africa.

The campaign against apartheid in sport in South Africa, 1980 - 1990

The sports boycott was one of the most overt of the sanctions enforced against South Africa.²⁸ It had an enormous impact on most South Africans and on balance should be rated a success by its protagonists. The western world could not afford to cut off trade with a wealthy country like South Africa, so there were never any full-scale trade and economic sanctions to set alongside the ban on sporting connections.²⁹

The campaign against apartheid in sport was not isolated. It was supported by various organisations and individuals throughout the world. Due to the banning order on organisations such as the African National Congress (ANC) and most of its leadership, the campaign was primarily orchestrated by exiled South Africans abroad. For these organisations, sport was regarded as an important catalyst for change as well as an arena where the dynamics of apartheid's fracturing politics could be contested.³⁰ By the early 1980s, the non-racial sports organisations in South Africa, under the umbrella of SACOS, were becoming more assertive and confident that world support was turning away from rather than in the direction of white-dominated bodies governing sports in South Africa. Ongoing racial tension in the country, including police brutality during the mid-eighties, elicited growing support for all organisations fighting apartheid in South Africa.

Since the passing of the Gleneagles Agreement in 1977, Commonwealth countries intensified their campaign to isolate apartheid in sport. Only two countries, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, had at certain stages refused to intervene directly to stop their national teams from maintaining sports links with

²⁸ T Koenderman, *Sanctions. The threat to South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1982), p. 231.

²⁹ Procter, p. 81.

³⁰ Hain, p. 151.

South Africa.³¹ This proved that the struggle against apartheid in sport was a very successful operation during the 1980s. Various organisations, internally and abroad, campaigned this struggle against apartheid in South African sport.

Internal resistance against apartheid in sport

The main thrust of resistance against apartheid in sport within South Africa originated in SANROC, SACOS and later the National Sports Council (NSC - formed in 1989). The leadership of SANROC was banned and harassed in such a way that, like the ANC, it could no longer operate legally inside the country.³² SANROC was forced into exile, where it still campaigned for, among other things, the rights of South Africa's black sportsmen and sportswomen.

The South African Council on Sport (SACOS)

Under the slogan of "No normal sport in an abnormal society",³³ SACOS took up the challenge of changing South African society from within. The task facing SACOS was never easy. In certain western countries and in certain sports (notably rugby), the official federations had partially succeeded in making headway against international criticism.³⁴ Nevertheless, SACOS undoubtedly had some international success. SACOS's principal weapon against apartheid in sport was the international boycott of South African sport and the widespread indignation which sports apartheid aroused throughout the world. They refused to separate sport from society as a whole and unconditionally rejected the NP's sports policy. In declaring their solidarity with the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa, SACOS stated that it "rejects all forms of racialism in sport and accepts a complete moratorium on all sports tours to and from South Africa until all the trappings of apartheid have been removed from South African sport".³⁵

The strategy of the non-racial movement under SACOS had put them in direct conflict with the government's policies and the white or "multinational" sports federations in South Africa. Although the government never had direct contact with SACOS, it was acknowledged in parliament that this organisation might hold the key to South Africa's return to international sport.³⁶ Frequent conflict between the

³¹ Ramsamy, p. 62.

³² The fact that sports officials too were victims of the police state contradicted the claim that sport should be divorced from politics. Hain, p. 46.

³³ Hain, p. 154.

³⁴ Archer, p. 305.

³⁵ Ramsamy, p. 14.

³⁶ JPJ Smit, *Die ontwikkeling van die Suid-Afrikaanse sportbeleid en sy politieke implikasies, 1948 - 1979*, p. 166.

NP and SACOS was based on two totally opposing policies and views on South African sport. The NP saw SACOS as an "unholy rebel organisation trying to undermine South Africa in the international sports arena".³⁷ The SACOS president, Hassan Howa, was consistently denied a passport by the government to travel abroad. Other allegations against SACOS were the intimidation of both players and administrators of the various sporting bodies, its insulting of all foreign bodies investigating South African sport and its refusal to accept any form of governing body in South African sport. Hassan described these allegations as a government attempt to identify a scapegoat for its failures in trying to lift the ban on South African sport.³⁸ The government accused SACOS of being linked to overseas organisations such as SANROC and the Supreme Council of Sport in Africa, which were working against the South African government.³⁹ SABC TV and *Die Burger*, an Afrikaans newspaper in the Cape, claimed that SACOS was aiding and abetting Communism.⁴⁰ It was also alleged that SABC TV had put a ban on the coverage of sports events organised by SACOS. Howa denied any association with Communism and said that if members of SACOS were given passports to go overseas, it would not have to rely on other organisations to represent non-racial sport abroad.

SACOS was seen as a serious threat to the white Olympic Council⁴¹ and it had geared itself to become a real force in South Africa. Due to the nature of its opposition towards white sporting bodies, white South Africa regarded SACOS and its affiliates as "politically motivated" and a "nuisance".⁴² SACOS task forces categorised all South African sport into two groups: SACOS-affiliated sports and SACOS non-affiliated sports. It was stipulated in the SACOS constitution that no SACOS-affiliated sporting body was allowed to practise "double standards" in non-racial sport in South Africa.⁴³ This was done to isolate white sporting bodies and unite black sportsmen and sportswomen in the struggle against apartheid sports. The "double standards" policy of SACOS created some controversy, leading to numerous meetings to clear all misunderstandings in SACOS-affiliated sports concerning the violation of this policy.⁴⁴ In 1989, the separation between the affiliated and non-affiliated sports was so radical that Sam Ramsamy said SACOS

³⁷ Rapport, 13 January 1980.

³⁸ M Horrell, *A survey of race relations in South Africa, 1979* (Johannesburg, 1980), p. 593.

³⁹ *The Star*, 10 January 1980.

⁴⁰ *The Cape Argus*, 10 January 1980.

⁴¹ Ramsamy, p. 14.

⁴² Ramsamy, p. 15.

⁴³ The resolution concerning "double standards" stated that a sportsman/woman registered to an affiliate of SACOS in one code of sport (e.g. football) cannot register to a racial unit in another code of sport (e.g. athletics). Ramsamy, p. 15.

⁴⁴ Gordon et al., p. 599.

affiliates should get international recognition, while the non-affiliates had still to bear the brunt of apartheid.⁴⁵

In its struggle against apartheid sports, SACOS received strong support from politicians and anti-apartheid activists in South Africa. Joint ventures with banned organisations and individuals strengthened the organisation in its fight against discrimination in sport. In 1987 Reverend Arnold Stofile⁴⁶ was made patron of SACOS for the role he had played in disrupting the 1981 Springbok rugby tour to New Zealand and his assistance in preventing the 1985 All Black tour to South Africa.⁴⁷

Internal problems weakened SACOS to such an extent that it was unable to stop most of the rebel tours⁴⁸ to South Africa. Led by a coterie of coloured intellectuals, SACOS had few links with civic groups in the townships or the black trade unions. In the late 1980s, SACOS was divided by different views within the organisation and some affiliates saw a need for the establishment of a new organisation.⁴⁹ Although SACOS was divided from within, it achieved much in disrupting the government's sports policy and creating an alternative in fighting apartheid in sports.

The National Sports Congress (NSC)

The NSC⁵⁰ was formally constituted in Johannesburg in July 1989 at a meeting called "to assist in the formation of a single mass-based sports movement representative of the people of South Africa".⁵¹ The main aims of the organisation were to-

- establish a single, unified non-racial democratic sports movement which would be part of the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM);⁵²

⁴⁵ C Cooper et al., *Race relations survey 1989/90* (Johannesburg, 1990), p. 22.

⁴⁶ Stofile was a high profile ANC member, who became premier of the Eastern Cape Province in 1996.

⁴⁷ C Cooper et al., *Race relations survey, 1987/88*, (Johannesburg, 1988), p. 277.

⁴⁸ The term "rebel" applied to sports persons who played in South Africa in defiance of their code's national and/or international controlling federation. D Booth, "United sport: An alternative hegemony in South Africa?" in *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Dec 1995), p. 121.

⁴⁹ Booth, p. 105.

⁵⁰ The NSC was officially launched as the National Olympic Sports Council. It reverted to the National Sports Council after Olympic sports had formed a new National Olympic Committee. Booth, p. 121.

⁵¹ Cooper et al., *Race relations survey, 1989/90*, p. 29.

⁵² The Mass Democratic Movement was formed in 1989 from an alliance between the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the black trade union movement, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

- encourage the formation of a single national body for each sport;
- assist communities in creating adequate sports facilities to enable each sportsman and sportswoman to develop his/her talents fully; and
- co-operate with the MDM in working for an apartheid-free society.⁵³

The formation of the NSC was claimed to be a response to the allegedly limited growth of SACOS in African townships. With the legal United Democratic Front (UDF) acting in tacit alliance with the banned ANC, the NSC was effectively the sports arm of the ANC.⁵⁴ The NSC stated that it did not wish to encroach on the terrain of SACOS⁵⁵ but wished to co-operate with it. The SACOS leadership felt that the formation of the NSC was divisive and unnecessary, since they believed that SACOS was the authentic non-racial sports body and the sports wing of the liberation movement. Fundamental differences between SACOS and the NSC could not be resolved, leading SACOS to sever its 16 years association with SANROC, which strongly supported the newly formed NSC.

Although SACOS continued to play an important role, the NSC gradually started assuming the leading position which it was to play in organising grassroots demonstrations against the "rebel" Mike Gatting cricket tour early in 1990. In 1989 it was also responsible for the protests against the tour by a World XV rugby team to South Africa. However, the tour went ahead as planned. The demonstration against the Mike Gatting "rebels" was an important turn of events against apartheid sports for the protesters as the predominantly white South African Cricket Union (SACU) abandoned the rest of the tour after only a few games had been played and started talks with the NSC with the aim of achieving the total integration of South African cricket. Since the establishment of the NSC, it played a limited role in changing the sports-political relationship, but rose to prominence with boycott action in 1989/90 after which it started playing an ever-growing role in dismantling apartheid in sport.

Both SACOS and later also the NSC had strong support from reactionary groups in South Africa. As sports boycotts were seen as the most effective non-economic sanction against the country, militant groups fighting apartheid inside the country used much energy targeting South African sport. In 1988, a bomb exploded outside the Ellis Park rugby stadium shortly after the completion of a provincial rugby match, killing two white people.⁵⁶ Before this bombing took place, most

⁵³ Dally Despatch, 21 July 1989.

⁵⁴ Hain, p.155.

⁵⁵ Cooper et al., *Race relations survey 1989/90*, p. 29.

⁵⁶ S Johns and R Hunt Davis Jr., *Mandela, Tambo and the African National Congress. The struggle against apartheid, 1948 - 1990*, p. 205.

white South African spectators had been isolated from the physical aspects of the struggle against apartheid in sport. The fact that sport had become an integral part of the target in this struggle now became a visible reality for the white public in general.

The pressure exerted on South African sports began to pay dividends. Three months after the Ellis Park incident, Dr Craven led a delegation to Harare to conclude, under the auspices of the ANC, negotiations with the predominantly black South African Rugby Union (SARU). Various individuals, political parties and anti-government and anti-apartheid organisations excelled in their aid to SACOS and the NSC in campaigning against apartheid in sport within the country's borders.

Foreign resistance against apartheid in sport

The campaign to isolate South African sport enjoyed widespread popular support. In many countries, the anti-apartheid movement organised large demonstrations against sporting events in which South Africans were involved to intensify the pressure on sports bodies and governments acting in tandem with the South African government.⁵⁷ The success of the international sports boycott and the knowledge that millions of people around the world supported the cause, greatly contributed to boosting the morale of South Africa's black sportsmen and sportswomen as well as sports administrators. Together with sports fans and ordinary people throughout South Africa, they stepped up their resistance to government sports policies.⁵⁸

However, not all sporting ties with South Africa were stopped by the Gleneagles Agreement, which was reaffirmed in the 1979 Lusaka Declaration on Racism and Racial Prejudice of the Commonwealth heads of government. Despite unprecedented pressure from the rest of the Commonwealth, the New Zealand government permitted a Springbok rugby tour to take place in 1981. That angered other Commonwealth countries, leading to intensified action against sporting links with South Africa. In New Zealand, the anti-apartheid campaigns mobilised thousands of demonstrators wherever the Springboks played. The strength and extent of public opposition in New Zealand probably put an end to any concerted South African attempt to break out of its isolation.⁵⁹ Up to 1981, South Africa had been isolated relatively successfully in all major team sports, with the exception of rugby.

⁵⁷ Kidd, p. 657.

⁵⁸ Ramsamy, p.87.

⁵⁹ Archer, p. 294.

The United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid

In October 1980 the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid (UNSCAA) announced that it would start drawing up a list of sports people who had violated the sports ban on South Africa.⁶⁰ Shortly afterwards SANROC released an unofficial advance list of sportsmen and sportswomen who had competed in sports events in South Africa. A great deal of heat was generated by this so-called "black list".⁶¹ Various countries, mainly from the African continent, banned sportsmen whose names appeared on the list from participating in their countries. The Supreme Council for Sport in Africa (SCSA) and SANROC, greatly frustrated by the active sabotage by western countries of the international sports boycott campaign, enthusiastically welcomed the United Nations' Register.⁶² The publication of the register forced many prospective sports visitors to South Africa to reconsider their position, realising that South Africa used them to advertise apartheid politics internationally. In 1987, the UNSCAA chairman, Major General Joseph Garba, stipulated four conditions for South Africa's readmission to international sport: the abolition of the homelands, a unitary education system, equal access to public and private sports facilities for every citizen, and the end of economic apartheid.⁶³ People in the field of sport now started to demand political changes before South African sport could be re-admitted to the international arena.

Foreign organisations and the boycott weapon

Frontrunners in the international campaign against apartheid sport were SANROC and its African ally SCSA. Fighting the struggle in exile, SANROC gave more than mere moral support to SACOS, other resistance organisations and later the NSC in South Africa. They were instrumental in organising campaigns and demonstrations against South African sports participation abroad. They used their global influence to gather support for their cause and assisted the anti-apartheid movements in their demonstrations. As the combined onslaught against sporting links with South Africa gathered momentum, it became increasingly difficult for South Africans to participate abroad.

⁶⁰ United Nations Centre against Apartheid, Press Release No.53/80, 24 October 1980.

⁶¹ Ramsamy, p. 34.

⁶² The register was intended to strengthen the sports boycott against South Africa, because most individuals and team sports were barred from competition in South Africa by their respective federations. Ramsamy, p. 85.

⁶³ The London Times, 18 May 1987.

In 1985, a combined anti-apartheid effort hounded Zola Budd, the South African runner, wherever she raced on her British "passport of convenience". Because of all the pressure from anti-apartheid movements, she finally gave up and returned to South Africa in 1988.⁶⁴ In Canada, the potential embarrassment of large demonstrations against South African participation in a Toronto tennis tournament persuaded the Mulroney government to end the practice of granting visas to professional South African athletes. In 1988, SANROC used its influence to have the black soccer star, Jomo Sono, banned from an international fund-raising exhibition in Zimbabwe, unleashing a fury of criticism against SANROC and SACOS.⁶⁵ This indicates that even black sports people in South Africa were not excluded from boycott actions.

Financial assistance from various European and Soviet bloc countries confirmed the strong support for the struggle against apartheid. It was estimated that in 1983 the ANC and its counterparts received \$8m from the USSR, \$5m from Sweden, and more than \$10m from the United Nations and its special agencies.⁶⁶ Large percentages of this money were used in actions against apartheid in sport. In 1987, the United Nations ratified the International Convention Against Apartheid in Sport, which had been adopted in 1985. The convention prohibited direct sporting contacts with South Africa and urged "third parties" not to compete against sportsmen and sportswomen who had competed against South African athletes. During the same year, SANROC received observer status from the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA), leaving predominantly white sports administrations very little chance of returning to the Olympic movement while apartheid was in place.

In the same year, the third international conference against apartheid in sport was held in Harare, Zimbabwe. The conference was organised by SANROC, SCSA, ANOCA, the Union of African Sports Confederations, the Zimbabwe Olympic Committee and the UNSCAA. The conference was attended by more than 300 delegates from 50 countries. They expressed their satisfaction with the progress made in isolating South Africa from international sport and claimed that South Africa was excluded from at least 90% of world sports activities.⁶⁷ In June 1989, sports ministers from 23 countries met in Reykjavik, Iceland, to discuss sports ties with South Africa. All the countries represented at the meeting committed themselves politically and morally to opposing apartheid in sport. The European sports ministers unanimously adopted a statement condemning the continuation of

⁶⁴ *Calgary Herald*, 11 May 1988.

⁶⁵ *City Press*, 22 May 1988.

⁶⁶ M Lipton, *Capitalism and apartheid South Africa, 1910-1986*, p. 347.

⁶⁷ *City Press*, 15 November 1987.

sports links and criticised countries which had not cut all sports ties with South Africa.⁶⁸ In 1988, the Canadian government decided to strengthen its sports boycott against South Africa by placing a ban on South African sportsmen and sportswomen from competing in Canada. During 1989, the Canadian government announced that the boycott would also include sports contacts between Canadians and South Africans in South Africa and in other countries.

Various foreign organisations, anti-apartheid movements, governments and influential individuals participated in the struggle against racism and discrimination in South African sports. The American Co-ordinating Committee for Equality in Sport and Society (ACCESS) under the leadership of Dr Richard Lapchick played an important role in convincing foreign sports people not to compete in South Africa. Individuals such as Peter Hain, Steve Tshwete, Dennis Brutus, Chris de Broglio and many other exiled anti-apartheid activists with global anti-apartheid movements fought the struggle for equality for all South Africans on and off the sports field.

Attempts from within South African sports to break the isolation stranglehold

During the 1980s South African sport was a battleground for the fight between establishment sport and non-racial sport. Establishment sport responded to international isolation by staging rebel tours. Rebel sport had two objectives: survival and retaliation.⁶⁹ First, the tours provided South African sports fans with international competition and helped codes to survive domestically. Secondly, they provided sports administrators, who believed that they were victims of unjustified penalties, with an avenue to disrupt world sport.

Realising that the political climate in South Africa was still disqualifying sports from international participation, sportsmen, sportswomen and sports administrators of whom many distanced themselves from the apartheid ideology, turned to internal forces in an attempt to dismantle the sports boycott. In these attempts, two sports stood out because they had been the cornerstones of the white South African sporting society. Rugby had long since become a second religion to the Afrikaner,⁷⁰ while white South Africans had made cricket their domain. During the 1980s, strong action was taken within these sports in an attempt to return to the international arena.

⁶⁸ *The Citizen*, 2 June 1989.

⁶⁹ Booth, p. 106.

⁷⁰ "Try Freedom" - Documentary on the political implications of the 1981 Springbok tour to New Zealand broadcast on SABC TV on 25 August 1996.

The status of South African rugby during the 1980s

At the turn of the decade, South African rugby was in the fortunate position that the 1970s had produced many overseas visitors. Of all South African sports, rugby was affected least by the Gleneagles Agreement, since the British Lions still toured South Africa in 1980. The turning point for South African rugby and international participation came in the form of the 1981 Springbok tour of New Zealand.

Before the tour started, it was labelled as "controversial, wrong and bad for the game".⁷¹ The regular All Black captain, Graham Mourie, in objection to the principle of apartheid, declined the opportunity to play against the Springboks. Off the field, the tour divided New Zealand into two opposing factions, those for and against the tour. During the more than eight weeks the Springboks toured the country, tens of thousands of anti-apartheid demonstrators in New Zealand battled to convince the rest of the country that sporting relations with South Africa should be severed because the players rendered assistance to and propped up the apartheid regime in the country.⁷² The protesters saw no good in sporting association; only the evil of South African politics.⁷³

The cancellation of the game against Waikato at Rugby Park, Hamilton, was a moral victory for the campaigners against the tour. On Robben Island, where a large number of anti-apartheid activists were imprisoned, the game was broadcast on the radio. The news that the game was abandoned as a result of demonstrators seizing the field was a huge victory for all on Robben Island.⁷⁴ The activists were of the opinion that a demonstration of that nature could help change the policy of the country. The rest of the tour took place against the background of demonstrations and violent conflict between an organisation known as HART (Halt All Racist Tours) under the leadership of John Minto and the "Red Squad", a specially trained arm of the New Zealand police. On its return from New Zealand, the American leg of the 1981 Springbok tour also met with stern opposition. The Stop the Apartheid Rugby Tour (SART), in co-operation with the ANC, the Pan African Congress (PAC) and the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) disrupted the tour. The demonstrations forced the test match against the American Eagles to be played a day earlier on a polo field in front of less than 100 spectators, the smallest number of spectators ever to watch a Springbok test match.

⁷¹ R Palenski, *Graham Mourie, captain* (Auckland, 1982), p. 27.

⁷² M McKinnon, "Impasse or turning point? New Zealand and the 1981 Springbok tour" in *South Africa International*, Vol. 13, No. 1, July 1982.

⁷³ A Hayden, *Boots and all!* (Auckland, 1983), p. 194.

⁷⁴ "Try Freedom", SABC TV, 25 August 1996.

The year 1981 was a year of great frustration and at the end of it South African rugby found itself even more entangled in the grip of isolation and on the wrong side of a historically strong relationship with All Black rugby.⁷⁵ Internal problems during the tour dented the pride of South African rugby even further. Conflict between the only two coloured squad members, Errol Tobias, the first coloured player to become a Springbok,⁷⁶ and Abe Williams, the manager, and the tour management pointed to racism and the strong influence of the Broederbond on the tour.⁷⁷ Tension was so high that Tobias wanted to return home had Dr Craven not intervened and solved the problem.

After 1981, South African rugby would never be the same again. Although international teams from France (1980), England (1982) and South America (the Jaguars, 1982 and 1984) undertook tours to South Africa, the country was pushed aside in the rugby world and had to rely on rebel tours to participate internationally. The inaugural Rugby World Cup in 1987 and the next in 1991 took place without South Africa, one of rugby's traditional powers.⁷⁸ This was a severe blow to South African rugby and it was realised for the first time that isolation had become a harsh reality.

The Currie Cup system of provincial rugby brought some form of relief to the larger provinces, but the rural provinces were financially weakened by the lack of international rugby, which drew crowds and generated a larger income.⁷⁹ The rift between the predominantly white SARB and the SACOS-affiliated South African Rugby Union (SARU) deepened as apartheid in sport progressed. Various attempts from both sides to unite were jeopardised by politicians, political differences between the groups, SACOS and elements in government. The most dramatic attempt to break the deadlock came in 1988 when Dr Craven and Louis Luyt attended a meeting with SARU in Harare.⁸⁰ Present at the meeting, apart from SARU and SARB delegates, were ANC representatives Thabo Mbeki and Alfred Nzo. At the end of the meeting, SARU president, Ebrahim Patel, read a declaration of intent confirming reconciliation and the amalgamation of the two rugby bodies.

⁷⁵ P Dobson, *Rugby in South Africa. A history, 1861-1988* (Cape Town, 1984), p. 139.

⁷⁶ *Rugby World*, Vol. 2, No. 2, November 1994, p. 34.

⁷⁷ "Try Freedom", SABC TV, 25 August 1996.

⁷⁸ South Africa was never expelled by the International Rugby Board (IRB) - the Springboks were simply not invited to the 1987 and 1991 Rugby World Cup tournaments. *1995 Rugby World Cup Final* - official programme, p. 31.

⁷⁹ Minutes: Stellaland Rugby Union Planning Committee meeting, 12 and 13 June 1994, p. 13.

⁸⁰ The meeting took place shortly after Van Zyl Slabbert and ex-Springbok rugby captain Tommy Bedford had led an Institute for Democratic Alternatives for South Africa (IDASA) delegation to meet the ANC in Harare.

Craven and Luyt were heavily criticised by the government, the Conservative Party and the Broederbonders in the SARB executive board for attending a meeting where banned ANC members were present too. Patel and the SARU delegation were reprimanded by SACOS for deliberating with an "apartheid-controlled" sporting body. The meeting was praised by most rugby administrators, black and white. Springbok rugby players such as Naas Botha, Carel du Plessis and Wynand Claassen, as well as international rugby administrators, publicly supported Craven for taking the first positive step in uniting South African rugby.⁸¹ Various meetings would follow, attempting to promote unification and to ensure that the process remained on track.

Rebel rugby tours to South Africa

During the era of isolation of South African rugby, various rebel tours were conducted to ensure international participation for local players. The most significant of these tours were that of the 1986 New Zealand Cavaliers, regarded as the most controversial tour in South African rugby history;⁸² the South Sea Island tour in 1987; and the World XV in 1989, the latter in celebration of the centenary of South African rugby.⁸³ Following the demonstration disaster of the 1981 Springbok tour, the official 1985 All Black tour of South Africa was called off owing to a lawsuit preventing the team from visiting South Africa. The cancellation of the tour took place only days before the All Black team was due to arrive in the country. By the time the tour was called off, all the All Black equipment and gear had already arrived in South Africa. It then mysteriously disappeared from the Jan Smuts Airport before it could be returned to New Zealand.⁸⁴

The New Zealand Cavalier tour in 1986, which was largely sponsored by South African companies, was met with stern resistance throughout the rugby world. On their return to New Zealand, the players were suspended for one match only.⁸⁵ Most of the 1986 Cavaliers were therefore able to play for New Zealand in the 1987 World Cup. Shortly after the 1987 World Cup, various Australian players showed their eagerness to tour South Africa officially. However, Craven realised that the chances of being readmitted to the international scene had deteriorated with the Cavalier tour the previous year; he therefore turned down the offer.

⁸¹ Dobson, *Rugby...*, p. 166.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁸³ Dobson *The Life...*, p. 271.

⁸⁴ Correspondence with Michael Owen Smith, July 1994.

⁸⁵ This suspension was met with strong resistance by the anti-apartheid movements, because they felt the Cavaliers should be punished more severely for supporting South African rugby.

A month later, a combined team from the South Sea Islands visited South Africa, regardless of South Africa's possible expulsion from world rugby. For fear of internal demonstrations and foreign reaction, the tour was kept secret until the team's arrival in the country. To finalise the tour, a South African official, disguised as a diamond dealer, had to visit the Islands beforehand.⁸⁶ The tour led to an emergency meeting of the International Rugby Board (IRB), discussing the continuation of South Africa's membership of the IRB. After the tour, South African rugby was put on trial by the IRB and promises had to be made that no more rebel tours to the country would be organised. Apart from the World XV tour in 1989, celebrating the centenary of South African rugby, and some minor club teams visiting the country, South African rugby entered a period of total isolation in world rugby, having to rely on domestic competitions to keep the game alive.

Cricket in isolation, 1980 - 1990

As with rugby, cricket in South Africa was also divided into two groups, the predominantly white South African Cricket Union (SACU) and the SACOS-affiliated South African Cricket Board (SACB). At the International Cricket Conference meeting in 1980 the position of South African cricket was discussed. A South African delegation comprising SACU representatives was allowed to address the conference on the changes to dismantle apartheid in South African cricket. At the meeting a resolution was taken requesting South Africa to put its case in writing before the next annual meeting. The representatives also insisted that Hassan Howa, president of SACOS and SACB, should be invited to address the next conference.⁸⁷ As many times before, the South African government refused a passport to Howa, denying him the chance to put the SACB's case to the ICC.

In 1983, both SACU and SACB unsuccessfully applied for affiliation to the International Cricket Conference (ICC). The powerful black cricket nations of India, Pakistan and the West Indies repeatedly blocked SACU's application in protest against apartheid.⁸⁸ After SACU's application had been turned down, Joe Pamensky, president of SACU, said that South Africa would never be re-admitted to the ICC unless appropriate political change, satisfying the world, had taken place.⁸⁹ In reaction, the white South African cricket authorities, instead of taking serious steps to get significantly closer to the black administrators and to show a willingness to follow their lead, embarked on a policy of arranging rebel tours to

⁸⁶ Interview with Willie Crowther, President of Eastern Free State Rugby, 16 March 1995.

⁸⁷ Gordon et al., p. 597.

⁸⁸ Ramsamy, p. 65.

⁸⁹ Cooper et al. *Survey of race relations in South Africa 1983*, p. 643.

bypass the boycott.⁹⁰ It made sense if they were primarily thinking of white cricket and in the short term only, but it enraged and further estranged the very people they needed to get closer to - their black South African counterparts.

Up to 1990, various foreign rebel cricket teams set foot on South African soil. In 1982, twelve English cricket players, the unofficial "South African Breweries English XI",⁹¹ secretly arrived in South Africa for a six week tour. As soon as the English tour became public, India, Pakistan and the West Indies announced that this step would complicate South Africa's future cricket relations with England. With this threat in mind, the English cricket authorities banned the players partaking in the unofficial tour to South Africa from representing England for three years. During the same season, a Sri Lankan rebel tour visited South Africa, playing unofficial tests against South Africa. With a strong financial backing, an unofficial West Indian team visited the country twice in consecutive seasons during the early 1980s. This was followed by a rebel Australian team during the 1985/86 and the 1986/87 seasons. During the second leg of the Australian visit, Omar Henry was selected as the first coloured cricketer to play for South Africa.⁹² All these rebel tours left most of the promising cricketers in the cold, because they were punished in some way or other on their return to their respective countries. However, the financial gain from the tours went a long way in easing their trauma of being banned for playing in South Africa. In 1989, the ICC agreed to take the following action against any cricketers who toured South Africa:⁹³

- Cricketers over 19 years of age who coached or played in South Africa as individuals would be banned from test matches by their national federation for four years;
- cricketers over 19 years of age who toured South Africa as members of an unofficial national team would be banned from test matches for five years; and
- cricketers under 19 years of age who played in South Africa would be banned from test matches for three years.

These steps by the ICC drastically limited the chances of rebel tours to South Africa and discouraged any contact with South African cricket at all levels of the game. In 1986, SACU launched a ten-year development programme whereby children throughout the country were taught a modified game of cricket known as mini-cricket. By September 1987, more than 10 000 children in the major African townships had received coaching in the game. In reaction, a SACB executive

⁹⁰ D Woods, *World cricket, reflections on the 1992 World Cup*, p. 64.

⁹¹ Koenderman, p. 247.

⁹² Cooper et al., *Race relations survey 1987/88*, p. 281.

⁹³ *The Star*, 26 January 1989.

member remarked: "Cricket is being used as a forceful medium of change. It is no longer viewed by Blacks as novelty but as a way of attaining a better way of life."⁹⁴ The relationship between SACU and SACB seemed to stabilise until SACU announced a planned English rebel tour to South Africa in 1990.

The Mike Gatting rebel tour, 1990

In July 1989, it was reported that South African cricket officials had planned two rebel tours of South Africa, the first of which was to take place early in 1990 after the ICC had refused to give SACU a hearing.⁹⁵ The planned tours led to widespread reaction both in Britain and South Africa. The British minister of sport, Colin Moynihan, appealed to the cricketers not to go to South Africa. The implications, should they tour there "go far beyond South Africa. All British sports could be hit (by international boycott) as well as the Commonwealth Games in Auckland (the) next year."⁹⁶ With momentous political change in the air, a sports tour had suddenly propelled itself into prominence, threatening to undo a lot of goodwill that had been carefully built up between the government and the ANC.⁹⁷

The anti-apartheid sports campaign had come full circle. Where direct action had set the seal on tours abroad, it was then about to inflict fatal damage at home. The reason: a serious breach of the boycott.⁹⁸ The British-based Anti-Apartheid Movement, the NSC and MDM supporters in South Africa, made life very difficult for the visitors before and during their visit to South Africa early in 1990. The departure of the team, under the captaincy of Mike Gatting, was delayed for several hours at London Airport after an anti-apartheid activist had telephoned a hoax bomb warning. On their arrival in Johannesburg, the team was met by several thousands of demonstrators who were kept under control and away from the visitors by strong police action using dogs, teargas and batons.

The general secretary of the NSC, Krish Naidoo, urged the rebel cricketers to cancel the tour, to which Gatting replied that the protesters would be able to express their objection to the tour peacefully.⁹⁹ A number of protests against the tour was subsequently held, the majority of which were organised by the NSC. On 14 February 1990, Dr Ali Bacher, the director of SACU and organiser of the tour,

⁹⁴ The Natal Mercury, 2 October 1987.

⁹⁵ Cooper et al., *Race relations survey 1989/90*, p. 23.

⁹⁶ The Star, 2 August 1989.

⁹⁷ During the late 1980s, PW Botha had a secret meeting with Nelson Mandela, which led to various talks between the NP and high-ranking ANC officials directed at a new political dispensation for South Africa.

⁹⁸ Hain, p. 168.

⁹⁹ Sowetan, 23 January 1990.

announced that SACU had decided to shorten the tour to show its support for the dramatic political changes announced by State President, FW de Klerk, in Parliament on 2 February 1990. Dr Bacher said that after negotiations between SACU and the NSC, SACU had agreed to cancel the second test match and to reduce the number of limited-over games from seven to four. In return, the NSC had agreed not to hold protests at the remaining matches.¹⁰⁰ Afterwards Dr Bacher said that dramatic political events had overtaken the tour, and in the circumstances a gesture of compromise was appropriate. He felt that the tour had been "divisive" and that SACU had underestimated the amount of ill-feeling that it would generate.¹⁰¹ Following the deal between SACU and the NSC to cut short the tour, Dr Bacher began to negotiate with the NSC in order to agree upon a democratic, non-racial structure for cricket at all levels.¹⁰² The talks initiated the establishment of the United Cricket Board of South Africa - the first unified sports group in the country's history.

Attempts by other South African sports people to bypass the sports boycott

In various other sports, apart from rugby and cricket, significant attempts were made to ensure international participation, even if it meant bending or breaking the rules. A large number of South African sportsmen and sportswomen left the country to further their careers abroad. Notably most of these were athletes, criticising the athletics organisations in South Africa of being corrupt and disorganised.

In December 1980, Willie Smit left South Africa for America as a result of the hopeless international position of South African athletics. He alleged that progress by the South African Athletics Union was strangled by the control exercised by the Broederbond over that body.¹⁰³ In doing so, Smit followed the example set by Sydney Marec, a black South African runner, who left South Africa during the apartheid era, became an American citizen and had great successes as an athlete abroad.

In 1983, Gerrie Coetzee carded an upset victory against the defending World Boxing Association (WBA) champion Michael Dokes and became South Africa's first-ever world heavyweight champion. The WBA recognised South African boxers in its rankings, although it was cautious of the sports/political conflict in the

¹⁰⁰ **The Citizen**, 14 February 1990.

¹⁰¹ **The Star**, 14 February 1990.

¹⁰² Hain, p. 169.

¹⁰³ **Sunday Express**, 17 August 1980.

country. Other boxing sanctioning bodies would not recognise South Africa before all segregational laws of apartheid had been abandoned.

The most talked about action taken by a South African sporting personality to secure international participation was the Zola Budd incident. Budd, a long-distance track athlete with exceptional talent, was granted British citizenship early in 1984 on account of the fact that her father was a British citizen by descent. As a minor she could apply to be registered under section 3 (1) of the British Nationality Act of 1981.¹⁰⁴ Budd went to Britain in an attempt to qualify for the Olympic Games in Los Angeles later in the same year. After eventually qualifying, Budd, running in the colours of Great Britain, was involved in one of the most chronicled races of all time. In the final of the 3 000 metres at the Los Angeles Games, Budd collided with another pre-race favourite, Mary Decker, forcing the American out of the race. Budd continued racing, but finished way down the field. She stayed in Britain for a few years, but under protest from anti-apartheid movements, returned to South Africa in 1988 to continue her career in South Africa.

Other athletes were less successful in their attempts to side-step the boycott. In 1987 Johan Fourie, Mark Plaatjies and Chris de Beer emigrated to Swaziland with the intention of becoming Swazi citizens in order to be able to compete internationally. After it had been announced that, under Swazi immigration laws, the three would not be eligible to represent Swaziland at the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, they returned to South Africa. In 1989, a black South African marathon runner, David Tsebe, participated in the Honolulu marathon under a false name, saying that he was a Paraguayan. Tsebe allegedly avoided winning the race and came second in order not to attract publicity.¹⁰⁵ Afterwards the organisers of the marathon said they would not have allowed Tsebe to run in the race if they had known that he was South African.

Many other South African sportsmen and sportswomen followed suit, trying to participate internationally. Many of them got away with it, but more were exposed and disqualified for being South African. The fact of the matter is that most of these sportsmen/women had no political aspirations, but merely wanted to participate against their international counterparts. This was denied them because of a policy of apartheid, which many of them could not vote against. Eventually in 1990, political change came for South Africa and for South African sports.

¹⁰⁴ McFarlane, p. 153.

¹⁰⁵ Cooper et al., *Race relations survey 1989/90*, p. 21.

The end of sports isolation: Political transformation in South Africa, 1990 and further

In his famous speech on 2 February 1990, President FW de Klerk lifted the ban on the ANC, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the PAC, thus also beginning to break down the barriers of isolation on South African sports.¹⁰⁶ De Klerk's speech in Parliament signalled the beginning of the end of apartheid after more than forty years of discrimination, segregation and second-hand citizenship for all non-whites in South Africa. Changing world politics and the strenuous sanctions and boycotts against the country had led to this speech, which brought negotiations that would yield the birth of "the new South Africa".

The political changes that followed led to negotiations in order to transform South African sport. In these negotiations the NSC played a leading role, dictating the terms of re-admission to the international arena to the predominantly white organisations. Talks between the South African National Olympic Committee and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) were followed by a second meeting in 1991. During the second meeting Keba Mbaye, co-president of the IOC and chairman of the "Apartheid and Olympism Commission"¹⁰⁷ acknowledged the reform initiatives present in South African sports. The following prerequisites were stipulated for South Africa's return to the Olympic body:

- the normalisation of all sporting groups in South Africa;
- the normalisation of relations with non-racial organisations (such as SANROC) abroad;
- re-establishing sporting ties with neighbouring African countries; and
- developing the sporting relationships with all African countries.¹⁰⁸

Negotiations with SANROC and the International Campaign Against Apartheid in Sport (ICAAS) in 1990 led to a five-man working committee being established to ensure greater unity among all Olympic sports in South Africa. At a meeting of delegates from different South African sports organisations and African countries in Harare in November 1990 it was decided that the sports boycott against South Africa should stay intact until apartheid had been totally demolished. In the light of this statement the NSC slammed the door on rebel sport and imposed a blanket moratorium on all international tours.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ *Die Burger*, 18 November 1993.

¹⁰⁷ FJG van der Merwe *Sportgeskiedenis* (Stellenbosch, 1994), p. 173.

¹⁰⁸ Van der Merwe, p. 173.

¹⁰⁹ Booth, p. 107.

For the overwhelming majority of establishment codes, the boycott ended when De Klerk repealed the legislative foundations of apartheid in mid-1991. Coinciding with the repeals the IOC and most Olympic sports lifted their boycott and the UNSCAA ended its black list of sport people who had breached the boycott. The outcome of the Gatting rebel tour led to unifying talks between SACU and SACB. Barely nine months after the end of the Gatting tour, virtually all impediments to unity were removed and the non-racial UCBSA was established.¹¹⁰ After the Harare rugby talks various meetings were held between the main stakeholders in South African rugby. In March 1992 the SARB, SARU, South African Rugby Football Federation and the South African Rugby Association united and the South African Rugby Football Union (SARFU) was formed.

The re-admission of most South African sports to the international arena was without any real problems, but the growing pains of non-racialism were clear to see. Louis Luyt's decision to play "Die Stem"¹¹¹ before the first rugby test after re-admission in 1992, while thousands of "old" South African flags were waved by the sports-mad and predominantly Afrikaans-speaking crowd of more than 50 000 people at Ellis Park, nearly derailed the unifying process of South African rugby which was still in its infancy.

The interaction between sport and politics in the South African context had gone full circle. By using measures such as sports isolation, pressure was exerted to prompt political change in the country, which in return ensured that South African sport could return to the international arena. After years in isolation South African sports had to adapt to the changing face of international sport. The South African sporting society enthusiastically returned to international sport, realising that apartheid would not have been defeated without compromising opposition, including sports isolation.

¹¹⁰ The now famous speech of FW de Klerk on 2 February 1990 took place during the Gatting tour. In the torrent of political changes taking place in South Africa the Gatting tour was becoming increasingly irrelevant. C Bryden, *Return of the prodgal. South Africa's cricketing comeback* (Johannesburg, 1992), p. 32.

¹¹¹ "Die Stem" - the national anthem under the National Party, seen by many as a significant part of the apartheid oppression.