

**BRITISH SPORTING RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA:
the Enforcement of the Gleneagles Agreement**

**Memorandum from the Anti-Apartheid Movement to the
Minister of Sport**

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INTRODUCTION

The tours to South Africa by the two international football teams, one Rugby Football and the other Association Football, each comprised of significant numbers of British players, following the tour by leading English cricket players this Spring, are ample evidence of the need for the strengthening and strict enforcement of the Gleneagles Agreement by the British Government. Indeed, these tours are themselves only the tip of the iceberg if one considers the full extent of continuing British sporting relations with South Africa. We understand, for example, that there are two touring cricket teams in Britain currently, the Kingsmead Mynahs and the second from Namibia. South Africans also competed recently in both the Henly Regatta and at Wimbledon. South African disabled athletes are also due to compete in the International Stoke Mandeville Games this month. It is now over five years since the Commonwealth Heads of Government adopted the Gleneagles Agreement in which, *inter alia*, they:

"accepted it as the urgent duty of each of their Governments vigorously to combat the evil of apartheid by withholding any form of support for, and by taking every practical step to discourage contact or competition by their nations with sporting 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."

Moreover, and of even greater significance, the British Government, as a signatory to the Gleneagles Agreement, gave an undertaking that:

"there were unlikely to be future sporting contracts of any significance between Commonwealth countries or their nationals and South Africa while that country continues to pursue the detestable policy of apartheid."

The failure of the British Government effectively to implement the Gleneagles Agreement has led to growing scepticism concerning the real objective of British policy and it is increasingly threatening British participation in international sport.

We believe that the British Government has an urgent responsibility to adopt all necessary measures to end British sporting relations with South Africa.

British Policy

Commonwealth leaders are increasingly questioning the extent to which Britain is seriously committed to Gleneagles Agreement. It is worth recalling the statement made by the Vice President of Nigeria, His Excellency Dr Alex Ekwueme, in addressing an Anti-Apartheid Movement Conference in London this March:-

"Five years ago, all the countries of the Commonwealth met and discussed the problems created for the Commonwealth by apartheid in the matter of sporting relations. Consistent with the noble traditions of the Commonwealth a consensus was reached resulting in the Gleneagles Agreement that member countries of the Commonwealth should sever sporting links with South Africa.

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"Cutting South Africa off from international sporting contests would at least emphasise her moral isolation and could induce her to take the first steps towards the abolition of apartheid which has made her a pariah in the international community. We are not satisfied that Britain has tried hard enough to discourage sporting links with South Africa. Today, as we deliberate on apartheid, top British cricketers, some of whom have represented England in world-class cricket, are giving succour and entertaining the white apostles of apartheid on the cricket test grounds of South Africa! How will history remember Gleneagles? Is it a venue into the coffin of apartheid; or is it a venue where some 'smart' members of the Commonwealth used a form of words to deceive their colleagues and to buy time for apartheid?"

The Government has given numerous signals which have been interpreted as a desire to normalise sporting relations with South Africa. These included the Sports Council's Fact-finding Mission to South Africa and the ambiguous nature of its report, the Prime Minister's refusal to condemn the cricket tour to South Africa in the Spring and the Government's opposition to the United Nations Sports Register.

These developments, in particular, have created an atmosphere in which it is perceived by many in Britain and in South Africa that the British Government's opposition to sporting contracts is aimed solely at deflecting international criticism, rather than at securing the effective implementation of the Gleneagles Agreement. This has had the effect of detracting from the efforts which have been made on occasions by Ministers and officials of the Department to prevent particular sporting visits to or from South Africa. We believe this situation must be urgently rectified by a much clearer explanation of British Government policy and firm action to enforce it.

Sporting Visits from South Africa to Britain

There continues to be a large number of sporting teams visiting Britain from South Africa. Such visits have been organised clandestinely, creating deep divisions in sporting organisations at local and national level, and can promote racial conflict within Britain. It is clear that the Government's policy of refusing grant aid to competitions in which South African's are participating has not in itself been a sufficiently effective measure.

The Movement believes that the Government should make use of the legal controls which it has, by terminating the "no visa agreement" between the United Kingdom and the Republic of South Africa, and by pursuing a policy of refusing visas to members of South African sport teams or bodies, as well as individual sportsmen and women from South Africa or Namibia who are entering the United Kingdom to compete in sporting events. This would represent the most effective means by which the Government could enforce the Gleneagles Agreement in relation to sporting visits to Britain. The British Government would be following the example already set by the Netherlands and France, who have recently terminated "no visa agreements" with South Africa, and it would be consistent with the policies of many Western Governments, e.g. Denmark, Iceland, Japan etc.

British Sporting Visits to South Africa

It is recognised that, short of fundamental change of British policy towards South Africa, it is more difficult for the Government itself to control visits by British sportsmen and women to South Africa. However, most international and national sporting bodies operate their own rules and regulations and have a range of sanctions which they can enforce against players who breach these rules and regulations. Thus, national and international sporting organisations are in a position to discipline their players if they so wish. There have been several well-publicised cases in which such disciplinary measures have been taken or threatened.

The Government, if it believes it has "the urgent duty" "vigorously" to take "every practical step" should seek the endorsement of the Gleneagles Agreement by every national sporting organisation in the United Kingdom and the introduction of disciplinary powers in relation to any breach of the Gleneagles Agreement by individuals or groups of players belonging to that national organisation. Should any national sporting organisation refuse to adopt such measures, then the Government should, through the Sports Council and/or otherwise, withdraw recognition and all forms of financial aid to that sport, both nationally and locally. We are convinced that this measure would have a major impact on sporting organisations in Britain, would be welcomed by those national sporting organisations which have a long history of refusing to collaborate with apartheid sport and yet face the risk of international isolation because of the actions of a small minority and, finally, would demonstrate very clearly the seriousness of the Government's commitment to the Gleneagles Agreement.

In addition, the Government should give serious consideration to the activities of South African corporations and others who are deliberately seeking to undermine Government policy. We believe that such activities represent a serious threat to democracy within Britain and therefore call for effective responses. In particular, we believe that in the case of South African Breweries, the sponsors of both the cricket and soccer tours, the Government should consider banning the importing of their products into Britain and should seek the support of other Member States of the EEC for similar action.

Finally, we believe that the television and broadcasting authorities have a responsibility to act within the spirit of the Gleneagles Agreement. Whilst respecting the independence of both the BBC and IBA, we believe the Government should discuss with them their role in promoting breaches of the Gleneagles Agreement by televising or broadcasting them, especially when this involves financial contracts. There have been instances in which it could be argued that the BBC and IBA companies have actually assisted in financing breaches of the Gleneagles Agreement.

Conclusion

We believe that a very serious situation now exists in relation to the Gleneagles Agreement. Failure by the British Government to take effective action at this stage could well lead to Britain's exclusion from future Commonwealth Games and other international sporting arena. If it is impossible for the people of the Commonwealth to gather together to compete in sporting activities, this surely does not augur well for the Commonwealth as a whole.

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By signing the Gleneagles Agreement, the then Labour Government accepted a serious responsibility; by endorsing the Gleneagles Agreement at the Melbourne Summit, the Conservative Government re-affirmed its acceptance of this responsibility. We therefore hope that your Government will give serious consideration to the recommendations listed below.

Recommendations

- (a) The Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government, should make a clear and unequivocal statement endorsing the Gleneagles Agreement and Government Ministers should be seen to be much more active in securing its strict enforcement.
- (b) The Government should immediately terminate the "no visa agreement" between the United Kingdom and the Republic of South Africa, and then pursue a policy of refusing visas to South African sports teams and individual sportsmen and women visiting Britain to participate in sporting activities.
- (c) The Government and/or Sports Council, as appropriate, should circulate all national sporting organisations to advise them of the Government's commitment to the Gleneagles Agreement, recalling previous advice which has been circulated and, in particular, requesting national sporting organisations themselves to endorse the Gleneagles Agreement and to adopt effective measures against their players who are in breach of the Gleneagles Agreement.
- (d) Government funding and other forms of recognition and assistance should be withdrawn from national sporting organisations which refuse to endorse the Gleneagles Agreement and/or refuse to take effective measures against their players who act in breach of the Agreement.
- (e) The Government should investigate the activities of South African Corporations and Nationals which seek to undermine British Government policy in support of the Gleneagles Agreement and, in particular, should consider the possible banning of products of South African Breweries and its subsidiaries and discuss with EEC countries similar measures.
- (f) The Government should discuss with the BBC and the IBA their responsibilities in relation to the Gleneagles Agreement.
- (g) The Government should review its opposition to the United Nations Sports Register with a view to co-operating with the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid.
- (h) The Government should more actively seek support for the Gleneagles Agreement amongst sporting organisations and the public as a whole.