

SACOS introductory Address, Extended Executive Meeting, Cape Town, 3 May 1997

"South Africa with its glaring inequalities is still an abnormal society. The poor are getting poorer and the rich richer. It is still true that there can be no normal sport in an abnormal society. It is, however, not beyond human enterprise and dedication to devise a system of sport provision and management to suit South Africa conditions and circumstances. It requires vision and a serious intention to pursue real change and true transformation which does not mean moving the furniture around in the same room. ...It is fashionable to talk of consultation, participation and community involvement but little is done to make them a reality. Our model is the one presented by establishment sport. What is needed is the adoption of new values and aims and objectives. Instead there is co-option and the reinforcement of a traditional system of values. We frequently refer to "establishment " sport and it is interesting to note the definition of the Concise Oxford dictionary of the Establishment: '(a) social group exercising authority or influence and generally seeking to resist change'. Establishment sport is in its very nature elitist and commercialised to the extent of being classed as 'big business' with an overlay of racism. ...This is a good time to go back in time to the 'unity' process which history will pinpoint as the time when the sport struggle really started in South Africa. Non-racial sport was co-opted via a process curiously termed 'sports unity' as it was everything but that. SACOS officially opposed the unity process and the manner by which 'unity' came about. ...on 21 January 1995, SACOS released a Statement withdrawing from the interim Olympic committee of South Africa (which became NOCSA). ...The SACOS definition of non-racialism is not yet accepted nor practiced by most of the 'unified' sports bodies. Sport has not become more accessible to the majority of the disadvantaged. On the contrary, the dispensation has seen the demise of organised sport in many areas from within the ranks of the oppressed majority. ...Rugby can be taken as a prime example of the issues at stake in the sports wars which are raging."