

GOVERNMENT POLICY ON SPORT

The Minister of the Interior announced on 27th June, 1956 that while the Government was most sympathetic towards - and anxious - to help "legitimate Non-European sporting activities", these must accord with the policy of separate development.

Whites and Non-Whites should organise their sporting activities separately, there should be no inter-racial competitions within the Union's borders, mixing of races in teams should be avoided, and sportsmen from other lands should respect the Unions customs, as she respected theirs. Within that framework, Non-White sportsmen from outside would not be debarred from entering South Africa to compete with Non-Whites.

The Government would prefer Non-White sports organisations seeking international recognition to do so through the aegis of White associations already enjoying such benefits. It would not support Non-White sporting divisions by any process of squeezing White South Africans out of international competitions. No travel facilities would be granted to people guilty of such subversive intentions.

(Note : This policy statement mentioned only sport within South Africa's borders and not sport elsewhere)

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On 9th February, 1962, the Minister of the Interior stated in reply to a question (1) :

"As far back as 1956, the Minister of the Interior, at the time the Hon. Dr. T.E. Donges, explained that the policy of separate development expressed the South African custom that Whites and Non-Whites should organise their sporting activities separately, that there should be no inter-racial competition within our borders, and that the mixing of races in teams to take part in competitions within the Republic and abroad should be avoided.

"This statement of policy has been expounded over and over again by Ministers past and present and is still the policy of the Government in matters of this kind."

(Note : In this statement, sport "abroad" was mentioned for the first time)

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On 30th March, 1962 (2) the Minister amplified this policy statement as follows :

"The South African Government could not approve of mixed White and Non-White South African teams in world sports tournaments or competitions, and conversely it could not allow mixed teams into the Republic.

"It must be understood that all attempts to evade or undermine the South African custom in neighbouring territories by inviting or inducing White and Non-White teams to play against one

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(1) Assembly, 9th February, 1962. Hansard 3 = Cols. 838-9.

(2) Star. 31st March, 1962.

another across the border (or by inviting mixed teams from South Africa) in what are clearly not international competitions organised specifically to do there, with South African sportsmen as participants, what is not permissible in South Africa itself, will be viewed in an unfavourable light.

"As regards the administration and control of sports activities, it would be in accord with the Government's policy if Non-White associations were to exist and develop alongside the corresponding White associations.

"The latter associations could then act as co-ordinating bodies between the associations at top level and serve as representatives in the corresponding world bodies.

"As regards the participation of mixed teams from the Republic in world sports tournaments or competitions, the Government cannot approve of teams from the Republic being composed of Whites and Non-Whites. And conversely foreign teams so composed cannot be permitted to enter the Republic."

(Note : Whereas the previous statement referred only to sport "abroad" this statement specifically referred to mixed sport in neighbouring territories)

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In May, 1962, a circular letter from the Department of Education, Arts and Science was sent to sporting organisations asking them to consult the Government before inviting overseas sportsmen to South Africa.

The letter read as follows (1) :

"Several cases recently occurred where invitations were extended to overseas sportsmen and sports teams to participate in events in South Africa without previous consultation with the Government.

"This department, as the department responsible for physical education, wishes to impress on your association the necessity of consulting with the Department of the Interior before extending such invitations.

"Visitors from most countries must obtain visas from the Department of the Interior. Each case is decided on its merits, and if respective hosts will, before extending an invitation, or giving publicity to a possible invitation, ensure that the persons concerned will be admitted to South Africa, they will obviate embarrassment both for the Government and for themselves.

"They may thus also save their prospective guests disappointment and the expense of preparing for a visit which has to be cancelled later.

"For these reasons, the department appeals to all national sports associations and their affiliated bodies to co-operate with the Government in this important matter, and to consult the Department of the Interior before entering into negotiations which may eventually lead to an invitation to overseas sportsmen or teams."

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(1) Star. 11th May, 1962.

In a press statement on 4th February, 1963, the Minister of the Interior reiterated Government policy which was published in the form of a nine-point summary and threatened that legislation might be introduced to enforce this policy. As he also enlarged on previous policy in some respects his statement is quoted in full from a report in the Rand Daily Mail.

- (1) In South Africa, Whites and Non-Whites must play sport separately. Whites and Non-Whites must not compete against one another, whether in individual events or as teams or part of teams.
- (2) South African sportsmen could compete outside the country's borders with sportsmen of different races who were not South Africans.

(Note : This statement has created some difficulty. It is not known whether it is intended to preclude a White and Non-White South African from entering for the same overseas event)

- (3) In sport outside the country, the Government would observe the customs of other countries. But teams and sportsmen visiting South Africa should observe this country's customs. In South Africa White should compete against White and Non-White against Non-White.
- (4) Participation in international sports tournaments or competitions of mixed teams as representatives of South Africa could not be approved.

For example, if Whites took part individually in such tournaments they must do so as representatives of the Whites of this country. The Non-Whites must take part as representatives of Non-White South Africans.

(Note : This introduced a new concept. The Minister had made this particular point in a press interview with the Transvaler a few days previously, but it had not appeared in any of the earlier policy statements.)

- (5) Invitations to South African teams from neighbouring states to take part in competitions there in conflict with the custom in South Africa and which were obviously international matches would not be regarded favourably.
- (6) It was Government policy to help White and Non-White sport associations as far as possible, but most certainly not where their purpose was to force the country to depart from the Government's policy.
- (7) In administration and control Non-White associations could exist and develop alongside the corresponding White associations.

One or two members of the White executive committee of the chief organisation could attend meetings of the Non-White organisation's executive committee when requested. They would act as a link between the committees and inform the White committee about the opinions of the Non-White committee when matters of concern to the Non-White committee were being dealt with.

- (8) If this method should appear impracticable in a particular instance, one or more members of the Non-White body could be co-opted or elected to serve on the White executive committee in an advisory capacity when matters affecting the Non-White organisation were discussed.
- (9) The White executive committees could serve on a high level as co-ordinating bodies between the association and as representatives in the corresponding world organisations.

(Note : Points 7 - 9 go into more detail than previous statements on the question of administration and control)

The Minister was also reported as saying that it was apparent from enquiries still being made that some sports organisers were unaware of the Government's policy or wilfully ignored it and continued :

"To the sports associations and sportsmen who have strictly observed the policy in the past I wish to convey my sincere gratitude that they have maintained the traditional South African way of life and I trust that they will continue to do so."

He concluded :

"I make this statement to put the policy clearly once more so that in future no excuse can be made if it is departed from.

"Any future departure from the policy by sports associations and sportsmen will be knowing and wilful and will oblige the Government to give consideration to introducing legislation to ensure that effect is given to its policy of separate development in so far as it affects sport and possibly also other gatherings."

(Note : This seems to be the first time that any threat of introducing legislation to control mixed sport had been made by the Government)

The following day, 5th February, 1963, in reply to a question in Parliament (1), the Minister confirmed his press statement and said that if in future Government policy was not complied with "whether out of unwillingness or because of the excuse that bodies are powerless because there is no legislation to give them the necessary assistance or direction", then the Government would introduce legislation "which will clearly determine this positive policy in regard to the participation or non-participation in mixed sport within and outside the country". He denied that legislation was being considered as the result of the recent win (2) by an Indian of the Natal Open Golf Championship (as had been reported in the "Transvaler") (3), but said that the matter was one of general principle and national custom.

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- (1) Assembly. Hansard 3. col. 753.
(2) See section on "Golf".
(3) 29th January, 1963.

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