

12.3.1

TENNIS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

INFORMATION BULLETIN

THE BLACK TENNIS FOUNDATION

BTF - NOT OF THE PEOPLE

The Black Tennis Foundation (BTF) is NOT an organisation that had its origins IN the deprived community of S.A.; it was NOT created BY the community.

It came into being because of two men who are NOT part of the oppressed in S.A. Ashe, a citizen of the US, who some years previously wanted to throw a bomb on S.A. because of its Apartheid, joined forces with Owen Williams who is a citizen and a member of the privileged class created by Apartheid. They imposed the BTF on the community because of the needs THEY, as members of the privileged thought were important to the community. Their priorities as enfranchised citizens of their respective countries are not, CAN NEVER BE, our priorities. Whereas they enjoy the benefits of the political systems which recognise them as citizens, we are captives of and oppressed by the SA political system. Whereas they have RIGHTS because of their citizenship, we are engaged in a struggle FOR RIGHTS.

BTF - A PRODUCT OF SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT

At the time BTF was formed there was in existence the Tennis Foundation of South Africa. This foundation is closely associated with the South African Tennis Union (SATU) and, as such, actively involved in promoting the game among the privileged white section. Instead of the TFSA extending its activities to include ALL tennis players in SA, a new racial organisation - BTF - with the same aims was formed. TFSA remained a whites only foundation, and a separate one was created for the blacks in accordance with the dictates of the Apartheid system.

BTF is a product of the APARTHEID policies, and serves to strengthen and perpetuate the division of South Africans into different 'racial entities'. BTF is on the sports level what the 14 ethnic education departments (in geographic S.A.), urban/group areas and tribal authorities/tribal management committees are on other levels: instruments of Apartheid.

BTF - THE BLACK ARM OF SATU

The first chairman of the Board of BTF was none other than the President of the SATU, Mr Justice Blen Franklin. He was joined on the Board by other prominent SATU members: Alf Chalmers (former President), Louis Jansens (secretary), Owen Williams (tournament director), H. Gover and Jennifer Williams.

For the first four years of its existence these top members of SATU were party to the formulation of BTF policies. Since then some of them withdrew but, SATU is still adequately represented on the BTF Board.

This SATU has made no secret of its belief in and determination to implement Sportsapartheid. The very creation of BTF by SATU is proof thereof. SATU believes that it is possible to play Non-racial tennis while the racist Population Registration Act, the Group Areas Act, the Urban Areas Act, the Liquor Law, the Separate Amenities Act etc. restrict the freedom of movement and freedom of association of millions of blacks. SATU has blamed TASA for the restrictions that have been placed on its membership by the ITF. It has not occurred to SATU that its problem is neither TASA nor the International Tennis Federation, BUT APARTHEID. If, perhaps, it has occurred to them then SATU DOES NOT HAVE THE COURAGE TO STATE IT PUBLICLY.

BTF, through the involvement of SATU in its affairs, is nothing but THE BLACK ARM OF SATU.

But what is sickening is that they exploit the innocence of youth, the poverty that exists in these ghettos and the teachers' fear of coercion to give credibility to its parent body - Satu's arguments that sport in South Africa is non-racial and therefore SA needs to be re-accepted as a full member of the ITF.

Then, too, confining its other activities to a tribal section of the community, BTF can only extend its 'international activities for the 'benefit' of those 'races' which reside in the tribal homelands/group areas. In other words, BTF aims to involve itself according to the Apartheid dogma that in SA THERE ARE PEOPLES (different nations).

BTF APPROACH TO COMMUNITY PROBLEMS

Considering all its aspects: its creation, objectives and activities, BTF's whole approach is based on the assumption that the problems of the tennis player can be divorced from that of the community. They believe that the lack of amenities and opportunities and the restrictions placed on the movement and association of tennis players are NOT related to their status as non-citizens; this, in accordance with the contention of its first Chairman, Mr Justice Blen Franklin, that 'despite the political structure of the country it is possible to play non-racial sport'.

Our tennis problems cannot be solved at the level of tennis only. Our tennis problems are the direct result of the Apartheid system and the solution must, of necessity, be a political one.

BTF - THE HANDS THAT FEED IT

BTF exists only on charity. There can be no doubt that, in certain instances, BTF is paid for being a tool of Apartheid; it receives money because of the way in which it helps to sell Apartheid - here and abroad. A case in point, is the Urban Foundation whose sole function it is to use charity to make the ghettos livable and to make Apartheid presentable. The UF collects monies to supply such amenities and opportunities which Apartheid has denied us, amenities which we MUST claim as our RIGHT. In the very same way BTF collects monies and receives monies from, amongst others, the Urban Foundation to make life in the black ghettos 'meaningful'.

Both of them are NOT concerned with the basic reasons responsible for this state of affairs. Their primary function is to disguise the effects of Apartheid - using aspirins to cure cancer.

It may be true that a few contributors have assisted BTF thinking that in so doing they are making a contribution to the welfare of the community. From the way in which BTF has used these funds it is clear that many of its projects were designed so as to boost the image of BTF or BTU.

Existing, as they do, solely on the funds they receive, BTF is not answerable to the people it serves but to the hands that feed it. In order to continue in existence they need to satisfy the sources of their funds first.

IN CONCLUSION

BTF is involved in finding short-term answers to the problems that beset tennis players in the disenfranchised section of the community. They are primarily concerned with clearing up the mess that Apartheid has created. They are involved in making Apartheid attractive, comfortable and easy to live with; making people feel that Apartheid, after all, is not so bad.

The problems of the non-citizens of SA: the poverty that exists, the amenities that are lacking, the restrictions placed upon the freedom of movement and freedom of association of the players etc. are all due to the fact that we are NON-CITIZENS in the land of our birth.

The real cancer is Apartheid; and it is the cancer that has to be treated, not the symptoms. Aspirins will temporarily relieve the pain; likewise, more and better facilities will soften the harshness of the system, but the cancer of Apartheid will remain.

BTF and TASA cannot co-exist. BTF, by its very nature, is anti-TASA, and anti-NON-RACIALISM.

BTF - BLACK TENNIS PROMOTION

It is no accident that this organisation is called Black Tennis Foundation. Its very name is proof that it is structured along racial lines and serves the Apartheid creed.

It is not a tennis foundation, but a FOUNDATION TO PROMOTE BLACK TENNIS; Tennis is tennis! Nowhere in the world, except in SA, is there such a monstrosity as BLACK TENNIS. Tennis knows no colour bar, and any organisation involving itself in this sport must do so for the benefit of ALL interested in the game.

BTF AND APARTHEID NORMS

To confine itself to criteria which Apartheid created to keep itself alive, to confine itself to black tennis, is to accept in sport that which we reject in other, more important, aspects of our lives, for example: homelands/group areas, tribal authorities/management committees, tribal education etc.

But, whereas these tribal bodies and institutions are FORCED upon us by law, BTF has FREELY decided to be tribal. And in so doing, BTF has freely become one of the tools of Apartheid which is used to oppress, to divide and rule the deprived majority in SA.

The whole concept of a tribal tennis foundation is contrary to the Non-racial principle which believes that ALL are equal in dignity and worth. It is, in other words, acceptance of the Apartheid belief that SA is the home of many PEOPLES to whom shall be given 'rights' and privileges according to 'ethnic origin'.

TASA believes in and is determined to implement the UNIVERSAL principle of Non-racialism. The language, religious and cultural differences that do exist in NO WAY alter the FACT that ALL HUMANS ARE HUMANS. Apartheid, too, selectively subscribes to this principle because they accept that ALL HUMANS ARE HUMANS AS LONG AS THEY ARE WHITE.

BTF AND APARTHEID'S CONFINES

BTF has as one of its objectives;...to promote the game at all LEVELS of the public of SA.

But, despite the high-sounding objective it has confined its activities to ONLY A SECTION of the public of SA. And that section is determined by 'race' as defined by Apartheid. And 'the levels of the public' can surely only mean those artificial levels which only Apartheid recognises.

BTF OR BTU

Another of its objectives is:...to assist club (and) provincial..... competition. In order to pursue this objective, BTF as a foundation, MUST work with an organisation whose primary tasks these are. They must co-operate with either TASA or SATU, the ONLY two such bodies, OR BTF has to assume these tasks and become the BLACK TENNIS UNION.

BTF AND INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

BTF makes provision in its constitution to become involved with international competition.

They are at present actively implementing this objective at only one level - that of supplying yellow-shirted ballboys for televised tournaments featuring international tennis players. BTF is exploiting the black ghettos, where people are herded together because of 'race' and from which they can only escape when their labour and spending power are needed. BTF uses the black ghettos as reservoirs of ballboys just as these ghettos, from Soweto to the Cape Flats, are used as reservoirs of labour.

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