CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

on physical culture
at the edges of empire

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Editor

Chapter 6

Re-engaging non-racial sport: The Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA) and the school sport movement in the Western Cape, 1956-1994

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Introduction

“People always queried, why was it that Western Province became so powerful in sport? Or, ‘why was it that this [the Western Cape] became the heart of SACOS [South African Council on Sport] in fact?’ It was because of the influence of the Western Province Senior Schools’ Sports Union, because of the influence of the Teachers’ League, the teachers in the Western Province. And, no matter how many, how much, people would like to deny it that was the fact of the situation... the Teachers’ League was very much a powerful force... within the schools.

Meyer 2005¹

The above assertion by Peter Meyer, a prominent school sport organiser and educator at Harold Cressy High in Cape Town, draws our attention to the undervalued if not unrecognised contributions of politically and socially conscious teachers within the non-racial school sport movement² in the Western Cape during South Africa’s apartheid years. It also points to a much-neglected area of scholarship on how teacher activists sustained over a period of four decades mass-based school sport in socio-economic poor and under resourced areas. Meyer’s comment, moreover, focuses our attention on the organisational and pedagogical work of a relatively small group of politically oriented Teachers’ League of South Africa (TLSA/League/Teachers’ League) educators who operated outside of the

1 Peter Meyer was the coordinator of the Western Province Senior Schools’ Sports Union (WPSSSU) from the 1980s until unity in school sport during the mid-1990s. He was neither a member of the Teachers’ League of South Africa (TLSA) nor the New Unity Movement.

2 The non-racial school sport movement emerged in the mid-1950s and encompassed primary and high schools servicing the disenfranchised communities. Its founding, history and significance in the Western Cape (and nationally) is central to this chapter and assessed in broad strokes hereafter.

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more mainstream anti-apartheid politics represented by the Congress Alliance or Congress Movement,³ specifically the African National Congress (ANC). In highlighting these issues, this chapter explores how a section of school teachers collectively established and shaped non-racial school sport and the broader anti-establishment sport movement over a lengthy period of time.

The impact of the present day political, social and economic context on the writing of the history of sport education within South Africa (SA) cannot be down-played given the upheavals in academia since 2015, and in its wake the accompanying developments in resistance studies and therewith the growth of knowledge production in physical culture amongst other disciplines. These dynamic relationships have not only sharply foregrounded debates on decolonisation and post-colonialism, it has also generated renewed interest in the National Question⁴ (Webster & Pampallis, 2017; Cleophas, 2018:148-164). Crucial to these sometimes-robust debates has been the revisiting and retrieving of local, regional and national histories, which has to a large extent been neglected. Central to this oversight, has been sharp ideological differences and tensions that led to the misrepresentation and falsification of South African historiography (Alexander, 2013:20, 176-177). A casualty in this political discord, includes the contributions of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) and related organisations to the liberation struggle (Parry, 2004:192; Hendricks, 2010:3-4). These ideological disputes permeated SA's transition of the 1990s with the dawn of the new democracy and continued into the new millennium where the ANC narrative on struggle has remained dominant (Alexander, 2012:41-46; Parry, 2004:190-193). While the hegemonic position of the ANC within the liberation movement has to a significant degree slanted the documenting and writing of SA history, it has in recent times been more openly challenged, notwithstanding earlier attempts to do so by the authors cited above, amongst other writers and scholars.

The publication, *The Unresolved National Question in South Africa: Left thought under apartheid* (Webster & Pampallis, 2017), attempts to address the above-mentioned proclivity towards the ANC by giving space to a range of left persuasions which had during and before the apartheid years engaged the vexing issue of the 'National Question'. The re-emergence of rival ideological perspectives to that of the Congress Movement, particularly since the #FeesMustFall protests, attests to this defining moment in the reengagement and rewriting of SA's multifarious history of organisations within the liberation movement. The TLSA, League or the Teachers' League's contribution to the development of resistance politics in school sport within the Western Cape and SA more generally is integral to this

3 The Congress Alliance (CA) or Congress Movement constituted those anti-apartheid organisations which subscribed to the Freedom Charter and a multiracial outlook. These organisations included, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), South African Indian Congress (SAIC), Coloured People's Congress (CPC), South African Congress of Democrats (COD) and the African National Congress (ANC). The ANC was the leading organisation within the CA.

4 There are many perspectives within the liberation movement on the definition of the National Question. The author endorses the perspective that theoretically, at least, The National Question encompasses the endeavour to achieve the 'basis of national unity' (No Sizwe 2013:6). More specifically, that the emerging South African nation would need to be united on all levels of the social formation, including the economic, cultural and social (Vally, Ramadiro, Duncan 2012:10).

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hidden history.

A brief history of the TLISA

Formed within the political milieu of the early 20th century, the TLISA was a product of the African Political Organisation (APO), founded in 1902. The APO (later renamed the African People's Organisation) principally sought to eliminate the colour bar from the 1909 constitution and in doing so gain re-admittance of blacks into white parliamentary politics. It was from this political and strategic vision, concomitant with the franchise, that the TLISA was inaugurated on 23 June 1913 at the Training Institute in Queen Victoria Street, Cape Town (Adhikari, 1993:24, 25; Lewis, 1987:75).

From the start, the TLISA was shaped by a mix of political and socio-economic factors that were not only uniquely South African, but also international. This multiprong influence becomes more evident later. An amalgam of factors would accordingly impact the organisation at different times in its historical development. Initially an accommodating and reformist organisation, the League published its official organ *The Educational Journal* from May 1915 onwards to keep members updated on developments in education. To further entrench its identity, the organisation adopted the aphorism 'Let Us Live for Our Children' in 1918, a motto that remained inscribed on the cover of its journal to encapsulate the vision and philosophy of the TLISA at different periods in its history. This distinct inscription, as with the organisation's journal, remained a distinguishing feature of the League.

From the late 1930s and into the early 1940s, a split developed within the TLISA when socialist elements of the New Era Fellowship (NEF), a leftist-oriented discussion group founded in 1937, and the Workers' Party of South Africa (WPSA), formed in 1935, which had links to the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky, became increasingly active in the TLISA. The upshot was that by 1945, with a national membership of 2,000, the TLISA united with a wider grouping of organisations that constituted the federated NEUM or Unity Movement.⁵ Thereafter, the League's professional and political outlook would be tied to that of the Unity Movement and its Ten-Point Programme (TPP) of full democratic citizenship rights for all South Africans, as well as the policy of non-collaboration.

The TPP included the right to the franchise, education (which encompassed free and compulsory schooling for all) as well as social equality (of 'race', class and gender), amongst a range of basic demands (see Hendricks, 2018:119). The strategy of non-collaboration, on the other hand, aimed to break the 'slave mentality' of the oppressed in order for them to politically assert their humanity (Drew, 1996:16-17). Non-collaboration in this context meant unequivocally, 'the refusal by the oppressed black population to work the instruments of their own oppression; that is, segregated and inferior political institutions'. An outflow of

5 The NEUM comprised the All African Convention (AAC), Anti-Coloured Affairs Department (Anti-CAD), and the Anti-Segregatory Committee (ASC). These formations were established in 1935, 1943 and 1945 respectively. The TLISA formed a central part of the emergent Anti-CAD.

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this strategy was the political tactic of the boycott, a key method of struggle which the NEUM-TLSA deployed to expose perceived collaborators, and to make unworkable what they considered to be 'bogus' bodies and institutions, amongst other ruling class stratagems. Ambivalence around the definition of non-collaboration caused intense debate within left circles at the time as to what the differences and similarities were between the latter policy and the 'boycott', and what this uncertainty meant tactically and strategically for the struggle to liberate SA from racial oppression and class exploitation (Alexander, 1989:187-90; Davids, 1951:21-51; Giyose, 1988: 13-14, 32, 34).

The dissemination of ideas

Given the racial pattern of organising at the time,⁶ the NEUM organised itself along federal lines. As the AAC, Anti-CAD and the ASC represented mainly the 'coloured', 'African' and 'Indian' sections of the population, the NEUM embarked on the strategy of focusing on 'political matters and common disabilities' in an attempt to unite the separate 'racial' identities imposed on the black population by merging their struggles (Jaffe, 1953:19; Tabata, 1982:26). Furthermore, the federal structure provided a ready-made mass-based constituency. Its leadership sought through this coalescing process to fundamentally alter people's racialised thinking. Here, political education was viewed as indispensable 'practical work' and integral to transforming people's consciousness. The political and pedagogical role of the teacher within the NEUM's emancipatory equation was deemed pivotal (Ramsdale, 1946:4), since, for the Unity Movement, teachers were the carriers – the 'vectors' of progressive anti-segregatory ideas. Although seemingly top-down, the teacher's task was to 'build the nation' through the practise of eradicating prejudice that divided people, while concurrently instilling the notion that 'all people belong to one human family and are of the same quality.' (Kies, 1962:34). This universal non-racial worldview would remain a central tenet of the Teachers' League.

Within the NEUM, the League rapidly established fraternal relations with like-minded teacher organisations nationally, in particular the Cape African Teachers' Association (CATA),⁷ a teacher affiliate of the AAC. The AAC, or the Convention, was established in 1935 in reaction to the Hertzog Bills,⁸ and constituted a broad front of African organisations that included the APO, ANC and South African Indian Congress (SAIC). By 1943, however, the AAC leadership had fallen under the influence of the left-wing WPSA elements, resulting in the radicalisation of

6 The NEUM comprised the All African Convention (AAC), Anti-Coloured Affairs Department (Anti-CAD), and the Anti-Segregatory Committee (ASC). These formations were established in 1935, 1943 and 1945 respectively. The TLSA formed part of the emergent Anti-CAD.

7 The Cape African Teachers' Association (CATA) was established in 1921. CATA was radicalised in the late 1940s by younger teachers when it affiliated to the NEUM.

8 The Hertzog's Bills evoked widespread condemnation from sections of the black population, spurring opposition to the proposed legislation. It comprised two parliamentary bills, the Representation of Natives Bill and the Native Trust and Land Bill. The first bill halted the Cape African franchise and called into existence a Natives Representative Council (NRC) with advisory status on so-called Native issues. The second restricted African landholding rights to scheduled areas.

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the CATA leadership by 1948. The outcome of the alliance between the TLSA and CATA was the formation of the Cape Teachers' Federal Council (CTFC) in 1951. These political realignments sought not only to undermine the racial sectionalism of the time, they opened new oppositional possibilities for the teaching corps in the 1950s.

The aforementioned ground breaking developments would mark South African education, politics and cultural history in very distinctive ways at the time, resulting in the immediate dismissal and banning of leading TLSA and CATA teachers by the apartheid regime. The effect was the disintegration of the CTFC by the late 1950s. In the face of this onslaught, League teachers looked to alternative strategies to further their political and pedagogical goals, and many joined a range of similarly oriented civic bodies.⁹ These included the education fellowships, Parent, Teacher Associations (PTAs), the NEUM's trade unions and the school sport movement.

The result of these localised interventions was that in a short period, the ideas of the NEUM became markedly widespread in the Western Cape and further afield. By the 1950s, for example, it could be plausibly stated that the rudiments of a non-racial and non-collaborationist outlook had permeated many Western Cape schools and community structures reserved for the disenfranchised. This development was prompted by various forms of organised resistance to the raft of pre-1948 segregatory and later apartheid legislation. Indeed, the presence of the Anti-CAD, TLSA, CATA, PTAs, education fellowships, and other affiliates of the NEUM, such as the Society of Young Africa (SOYA)¹⁰ and the Cape Peninsula Students' Union (CPSU),¹¹ testified to the growing potential of the NEUM's pedagogical and political ideas in the region, despite differences existing between and within these bodies (Hendricks, 2010:64-67).

Considering the political atmosphere, fuelled as it was by debate and discussion, it was not coincidental that a counter-culture embedded in disenfranchised communities would arise. Frank van der Horst (2006), a prominent sports activist, recollected:

This was the rich tradition where I came from. We stayed in Cape Town, interacted with the All African Convention, Society of Young Africa, lived in the milieu of the Anti-CAD and the TLSA in Cape Town, and were sustained ideologically by the All African Convention; it was virtually an interactive process all the time. And we got involved in debates and went to the New Era Fellowship every Saturday night, to go and engage in debate. To us who were new at the time, it was a tremendous learning experience ... they really provided a stimulating intellectual and political climate...

9 By the latter half of the 1950s, the authors of *The Educational Journal* began to increasingly remain anonymous. They no longer penned their names to articles written for the journal or used pseudonyms for fear of government reprisal.

10 SOYA was formed in 1951 as a discussion and debating society for youth and migrant workers in the NEUM. For insight into SOYA, see Drew, 1991:483-492.

11 The CPSU was based in the Western Cape, with a handful of young NEUM activists its main driving force. It brought out *The Student*, which it published throughout the 1950s. Along with SOYA it folded by the early 1960s under state repression.

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The launch of the ANC's Freedom Charter (1955) and the formation of the breakaway Pan African Congress (PAC) in 1959, added to the political ferment of the period, which penetrated, in turn, schools and parts of the teaching fraternity receptive to these ideas.

School sports', the fellowships or cultural societies and the civic movement were key areas where TLSA activists became increasingly prominent after the organisation went underground in the early 1960s; specifically in the wake of the Langa-Sharpeville¹² upheavals, the subsequent state of emergency, and the banning of political organisations, as well as leading cadres, during the 1960s. Although the League was not overtly involved in these initiatives, its members were at the forefront of shaping the anti-establishment policies of these organisations. These teachers' political work, specifically their non-racial and non-collaborationist worldview, extended well beyond the classroom, in keeping with TLSA thinking.

More widely within SA sport, too, a discernible political voice had emerged by 1959 in the form of the South African Sports Association (SASA), which was followed in 1963 by the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC). While SASA campaigned for equal non-racial representation in sport and initiated the call for the isolation of South African sport (Archer & Bouillon, 1982:191), SANROC with Dennis Brutus at the forefront, a former teacher and TLSA member, profoundly unsettled white South African sport. SANROC's central campaign encompassed isolating South African 'white-only' sport through an international boycott with the idea of having it expelled from the Olympic movement. It immediately drew the wrath of the state, and its leadership – facing banning orders, imprisonment and harassment – were forced into exile. In 1967, SANROC re-emerged in London. There it became the bane of South African establishment sport, as it quickly organised a strong anti-apartheid network in support of its objectives.¹³ By 1970, after an extended battle with the international sporting community (Archer & Bouillon, 1982:192-194; Booth, 2003:479, 480), SANROC, succeeded in having South Africa expelled from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) (Naughton, 1997: 138). Thereafter, the boycott of apartheid sport gathered immense worldwide support, headed by SANROC and later, from 17 March 1973, its internal wing, the South African Council on Sport (SACOS).

The emergence of non-racial primary and senior schools sports

A product of the ferment of the 1950s and early 1960s was the formation of an

12 The PAC-led anti-pass law demonstrations of 21 March 1960 in Sharpeville resulted in the killing of 69 people and the injuring of 180 others. In Langa, Cape Town, violence erupted at the police station, with an undisclosed number of people killed and many others maimed and wounded when the police opened fire on the crowd. To stop the rebellion spreading, the apartheid regime declared a state of emergency and mass meetings were prohibited. In April of that year the ANC and PAC were banned, and many political activists arrested and banned.

13 Brutus was the chairperson of SANROC. Other members included Samba Ramsamy, Chris De Broglio, John Collins and other South African expatriates.

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independent school sport organisation, the Western Province Senior Schools' Sports Union (WPSSSU) in 1956. Key sports organisers who had overlapping membership and links with the League pioneered the formation of the non-racial school sport movement under the banner of the WPSSSU.¹⁴ Western Province Schools' Sports Board (WPSSB), which organised sport for primary schools, was also established in 1946.¹⁵ Similarly, in the Transvaal and Eastern Cape, League figures were instrumental in the formation of the Transvaal High Schools' Sports Association (THSSA) and the Eastern Province Senior Schools' Sports Union (EPSSSU), in 1959 and 1965 respectively¹⁶ (Rathinsamy, Braam, Thompson & Sallie, 2004:8; Cleophas & Van Der Merwe, 2009:708). Similar events were happening in Natal. These developments culminated early on in the formation of the South African Senior Schools' Sports Association (SASSSA) in March 1961 (Rathinsamy et al., 2004:9), comprising units of the Western Province, Natal and Transvaal.¹⁷ The South African Primary Schools' Sports Association (SAPSSA) was eventually also established in 1965, consisting of twelve affiliates (Wilson, 2004:17).¹⁸ Once established, SASSSA and SAPSSA grew exponentially, with other provincial units joining soon after, attracted by the success of organised school sport (South African Council on Sport [SACOS], 1988:4). At its height, SASSSA boasted a membership of twelve provincial units, offered its affiliates five multi-coded tournaments annually, and catered for 18 codes of sport (Rathinsamy et al., 2004:9).

According to Archer and Bouillon (1982:230), by the 1970s, SAPSSA and SASSA represented, conservatively, 200,000 schoolchildren throughout the country and because of their multi-code (sport) character,¹⁹ promoted inter-school contact that ensured the survival of non-racial values. The TLISA's influence within school sport was tangible, as a key aspect of SASSSA embodied challenging racist policies in education, consistent with the TLISA and CATA's mission to capture the 'minds' of the youth (SACOS, 1988:4; Petersen, 2005:121). Not overtly political, given the repressive climate, the emergent sport movement adopted an implicit non-racial outlook and therewith rejected 'racial' categorisation (Van der Horst, 2006; Jethro, 2012). By the mid-1960s, in roughly a decade, the basis for an anti-establishment, non-racial mass-based schools sport movement had been established nationally.

14 Henry Hendricks, better known as Harry Hendricks, a member of the TLISA, was WPSSSU first president. Other TLISA members included Johnny de Bruyn, Richard Rive, Roland Palm and others (Cleophas & Van Der Merwe, 2009:708).

15 The first South African schools' athletics championships was held in Kimberley in 1954. The success of the event motivated the high schools and primary schools to organise separately, resulting in the formation of the WPSSSU, and a year later the WPSSB (Blows, 2006; Jethro, 2012). Hendricks (2010:73) lists the founding high schools of WPSSSU.

16 Reggie Feldman and Harry Hendricks were two prominent TLISA members involved in organising schools sport in the Transvaal and Eastern Cape.

17 N. Rathinsamy from the Transvaal was SASSSA's first president with Feldman the secretary.

18 Initially the SAPSSA consisted of four units: Natal Indian Schools' Sports Board; Transvaal Primary Schools' Sports Board; Western Province Schools' Sports Board and the Northern Cape Schools' Sports Union.

19 Multi-code meant there were many different sports affiliated or attached to SAPSSA and SASSSA, such as athletics, soccer, rugby, netball and so forth.

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These school sport bodies ultimately became leading affiliates of SACOS – the ‘sport-wing of the liberation movement’ (Feldman, 2005). Filling the political void following the ban on the major liberation organisations’, which were forced underground to evade detection by the security forces, SACOS adopted a non-aligned identity, catering for activists from across organisations in the liberation movement. The new coordinating body gained credibility over a short period of time and once it had secured sufficient groundswell support and international recognition, SACOS adopted the more uncompromising Double Standards Resolution (DSR), prohibiting sportspeople from participating in the government’s ‘race’-based ‘multi-racial’ or ‘multinational’ sport, as opposed to non-racial sport (Petersen, 2005:125-26).²⁰ Through these means and by invoking the United Nations Glen Eagles Agreement of 1977, SACOS was able to effectively block international sportspersons from visiting South Africa (Richards, 1999:255-256).

As with the formation of organised school sport, TLSA members were central to the formation of SACOS (Van der Horst, 2006; Hendricks, 2010:77). Considering education and politics were indivisible for the League, sport and politics were inseparable for those in SACOS. As a result, both entities were well aware that sport on its own could not eradicate apartheid, and that focusing on sport *per se* meant catering for a select group only, not the majority of people (Archer & Bouillon, 1982:313). In fact, apartheid policies in themselves, by ‘racially’ separating people, politicised sport. This factor was the chief reason why South African sport federations were isolated internationally. And, it was this political reality that enabled SACOS and SANROC to sustain the call for a moratorium on all tours to and from South Africa, and for the boycott of all official government institutions to be upheld until all apartheid statutes were removed. The Dutch slogan: ‘Speel Niet Met Apartheid [Do Not Play With Apartheid]’²¹ epitomised international support for SACOS and SANROC’s campaign to isolate South African sport.

Multinational Sport and the Double Standards Resolution (DSR): from apartheid to apartheid-capitalism

In an attempt to break the sports boycott, the apartheid regime introduced its multinational policy, termed ‘normal sport’, in 1970. This extended to local school and club levels by the mid-1970s in an effort to show the world South Africa’s commitment to change. To regulate this process, the government introduced a permit system to make sport facilities accessible to the disenfranchised, most of which were located in areas demarcated ‘white’. SACOS rejected this concession, and demanded all amenities and facilities be open to all citizens (SACOS, 1981). The WPSSU and other SACOS affiliates declared bluntly that they ‘refuse to humiliate

20 SACOS gained recognition from and became an associate member of the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa, the United Nations Committee Against Apartheid and the Federation Sportive & Gymnique Du Travail. SACOS thus became the sole representative for non-racial sport in South Africa.

21 A sticker circulated in non-racial sports ranks (Author’s personal collection).

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and degrade themselves' by applying for a "racial permit to use a venue like the Green Point Stadium that is situated in a so-called 'white' group area" (SACOS, 1979:36). "Notwithstanding this firm stance, what appeared an anomaly was the WPSSSU use of the Green Point Track (also called 'The Track') for its athletics events, which at the time was covered by a permit given to the Western Province Rugby Union (WPRU), an affiliate of the non-racial South African Rugby Union (SARU).²² 'The Track' was the traditional track and field home of the WPSSSU from the late 1950s. The WPSSSU continued using it when the permit system was introduced in 1970, as all available venues were segregated or required a permit. According to Blows (2009), it was a matter of 'adapt and stay alive' (Blows, 2009). From the early 1970s, the Athlone stadium became the official venue, even though it was designated for 'coloureds' only.

Figure 6.1 Badge of the Dutch anti-apartheid sport movement.

Source: Author's Personal Collection

SACOS received huge support for its position, and in certain cases communities went as far as building their own facilities rather than request permission to use segregated ones (Van der Horst, 2006; Petersen, 2009:127, 128). Where no feasible alternative existed, however, affiliates used segregated facilities under protest (Goodall, 2004:45). For SACOS, the government's multinational policy was but a ruse, 'a repackaging of all the sport policies that had gone before' (Williams, 2005), in order to retain the fundamentals of apartheid - that South Africa comprised many nations which play sport separately (Roberts, 1988:18-21; Booth, 2003:481). It also saw the underlying dangers of the new policy, namely, to lure what it termed 'black collaborators' (SACOS, 1979:54) to participate in multinational sport in 'white' group areas in order to give legitimacy to separatist sport, and in this way make a case for breaking the sports boycott (SACOS, 1981).

Throwing its weight behind non-racial sport, the League attacked the Coloured Affairs Department (CAD) for enforcing the prohibition of mixed sport in schools (Kies, 1970:1-3). It also condemned the 'racially' motivated 1972 rugby tour of Europe, and asserted: "few sporting events have shown such scant regard for dignity and humanity as the 'Federation'²³ rugby tour of England and Holland by 'Coloured' performers" (Allen, 1972:7). To nullify the threat multinationalism posed to non-racial sport, SACOS responded with its DSR.

22 Two rugby unions with identical names - the Western Province Rugby Union - co-existed from the 1960s: the pro-establishment multi-racial body and the anti-apartheid non-racial one.

23 The South African Rugby Football Federation (SARFF) was established in 1959 as the 'coloured' affiliate of the white South African Rugby Board (SARB) and stood in opposition to the SACOS affiliated South African Rugby Union (SARU).

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Formulated in 1977 in the aftermath of the 1976 student uprisings, a watershed moment in South African history of resistance that ended the relative political lull stretching from the 1960s, the DSR barred non-racial sportspersons from playing multinational sport. This policy immediately opened a more uncompromising phase in the non-racial sport movement's quest to deracialise South African sport. Resonating in particular with the vociferous SACOS constituency in the Western Cape (Roberts, 1988:44; Booth, 2003:483), a region immersed in the tradition of non-collaboration, the DSR was viewed as largely the product of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and the Unity Movement's non-collaborationist influence in the sport movement (Booth, 2003:483). The Resolution drew clear lines between multinational and non-racial sport in order to clarify confusion, since, for SACOS: "many black sportspersons were fooled into believing that their struggle for non-racial sport had finally borne fruit ... lured by offers of better facilities and sponsorship ... [whilst] the conditions in the ghettos of the oppressed worsened" (SACOS, 1983:4). Proponents of the DSR were unequivocal in their opposition to people that practised, perpetuated or condoned 'racialism' or multinationalism (Transvaal Council on Sport, 1977; Roberts 1988:27). The TLSA's support in the late 1970s for the DSR, was clear:

Multi-racialism, and multi-nationalism and all the other tricks inspired by the enemies of true progress must be dismissed with the loathing they deserve. There is no reason why we should be prepared to accept anything less than the only honourable basis for sports relationships between human beings. We must proclaim and emphasise our complete lack of interest in 'gradually accustoming' the citizens to change, in 'working from within' racial bodies, and all the other excuses of those who sell out, and treat them with contempt.

Bath 1977:7

In keeping with this outlook, and within the heightened oppositional context that followed on the heels of 1976, when a range of organisations had been banned,²⁴ SACOS coined its rallying slogan 'No Normal Sport In An Abnormal Society', condensing into one phrase its refusal to restrict its actions narrowly to the interests of SACOS members. Instead, it proclaimed the willingness of non-racial sportspeople to represent the silent majority of black South Africans, whose living conditions rendered them unable to play sport (SACOS, 1981; Archer & Bouillon, 1982:312).

Connecting its agenda to the organised workers - trade union - movement, SACOS, via mainly WPSSSU and SASSSA in 1980, mobilised its constituency in solidarity with the burgeoning labour movement (Naidoo, 1983),²⁵ and came out in support of the striking Red Meat and Wilson Rowntree workers' by calling for a boycott of these products. Simba chips had experienced the same treatment

²⁴ The Black Consciousness movement was banned in 1977, along with a range of affiliated organisations and persons in the liberation movement.

²⁵ The author to the article 'Sport and the Worker', Derek Naidoo, was cited in *The Eastern Province Herald*, 24 August 1983. Neither his name nor any of the other authors appeared in the SACOS Conference booklet of 20-21 August 1983.

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the year before (SACOS, 1979:65). Williams affirmed the centrality of SASSSA to the worker solidarity campaign: "If you take the red meat boycott, you take the Simba boycott, and all the other boycotts that were being waged,²⁶ it was initiated at senior school level, where those products were sold in abundance and then carried into the home" (Williams, 2005). Actions of this nature, and the fact that SACOS only accepted funding from companies which supported non-racial sport, demonstrated its radical if not leftist orientation. These factors, when translated in financial terms however, meant limited sponsorship for the sports movement, which in turn placed immense constraints on its activities, most of which were undertaken on extremely tight and at times inadequate budgets.

Undeterred, SACOS pushed ahead with its principled agenda and intensified its politics. It amended the DSR in 1979 to include the isolation of persons serving on 'racial' organisations, most notably the Coloured Representative Council (CRC), Bantu Boards, Indian Councils, Local Management Boards and similar institutions established by the apartheid regime at local government level. SACOS branded those participating in these structures as 'collaborators and opportunists'. Similarly, the Coloured Advisory Council and Native Representative Councils in the early 1940s were denigrated by the NEUM as 'puppet' organisations – bodies that had no real power and were simply the cat's paw of government (Rensburg, 1982; Zinn, 1982). Because of its more radical stance, Norman Middleton, the SACOS president, was forced to resign owing to his membership of the CRC. The Cape Teachers' Professional Association (CTPA)²⁷ leadership who were seen to endorse 'racially' separated bodies was also singled out by SACOS as 'quislings' (Petersen, 2005:126) or 'uitverkopers' (sellouts) (Jethro, 2012). Accusations that teachers advancing SACOS politics fell foul of their own principles by occupying posts in 'racially' separatist education departments, received a curt response:

We said no, no that's different. When I work for a boss, the boss pays me, I don't have to follow the boss's dictates ... I work as an independent person. When I go away, I'm not him, I stand my own political ground and for my own non-racial viewpoint. The same with a teacher: here you are working for a boss, but you don't support and believe in the boss.

Van der Horst, 2006

This type of oppositional discourse and practice gave sustenance to the non-racial sport movement, thereby purging it of elements aspiring to be or linked to establishment sport or the government. The DSR practice spread from 1979, infusing areas of social activity where the permit system applied. Members in the non-racial fold were thus forbidden from sending their children to private 'white' schools, visiting international hotels, slated for joining and forming clubs at universities promoting multinational sport (The role of the non-racial sports person in the liberation struggle, 1983:5), while those working within organs of the regime, such as the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) (ibid) or advocates of big

²⁶ There were also the 1980 bus and schools' boycotts.

²⁷ The CTPA was formed in 1967 and claimed to represent the interests of 'coloured' teachers. It had as its central strategy to work for incremental reforms from within the Education Department as a recognised teacher organisation.

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capital – particularly the Urban Foundation (SACOS, 1981; Roberts, 1988:30), were heavily criticised. The non-racial sport movement no longer placed opposition to apartheid at the centre of its campaign but racial capitalism (Sport and the Nation, 1983; Van der Horst 2005:4-6). This emphasis on ‘class’ became an intricate part of SACOS’ policy from the early 1980s when the organisation engaged the government’s multi-faceted reformist programme (Kallaway, 1988:20; Cobbett, Glaser, Hindson & Swilling, 1985:182).

The apartheid regime’s reforms constituted two central planks. The one sought to offset the rising concerns of big capital in its push to meet the needs of modern capitalism through privatisation and deregulation, the other aimed to thwart the rising expectations of the liberation movement and its allies inside and outside the country (Kallaway, 1991:517; Alexander, 1987:84, 85). The strategy embodied a ‘carrot and stick’ approach, using repressive measures to quell unrest internally, particularly after the 1976 and 1980 school unrests, and co-option to win over sections of the disenfranchised – the aspirant black middle class – who stood to benefit economically from the reforms (Molteno, 1987; Kallaway, 1991). In education, business successfully requested the apartheid government liberalise schooling and grant ‘white’ private schools permission to admit a select few black students. By 1986, private schools could open their doors to all ‘races’ and receive financial support from the state (Kallaway, 1989:156-157).

The opening of private schools to black students was not viewed favourably by SACOS. Rather, it saw the move as a ploy to give credence to the government’s multiracial/multinational policies. The private Diocesan College (Bishops) 1982 rugby tour to Hong Kong and Taiwan confirmed for SACOS the government’s intention to use ‘mixed’ sport in private schools to break international isolation (Students at ‘White’ schools under racial permit, 1983:2). The sport organisation consequently decried parents who sent their children to these schools and declared them irresponsible ‘middle class types’ who had been taken in by the false concessions offered them at the expense of the vast majority of the poor who were denied basic human rights (Students at ‘White’ schools under racial permit, 1983:2-4).

In circles outside of non-racial sport, Randall similarly contended that private schooling was intricately tied to the system of institutional inequality (Randall, 1982:205-207). He noted that from the late 1970s, these liberal schools helped expand the power base of the middle class through broadening admission policies to blacks. SACOS, through the DSR, would debar this ‘comprador’ constituency from its ranks. As Peter Meyer explained:

It [the DSR] was mainly directed in fact at middle class parents ... because of the fact that they have a greater means [at their disposal] rather than at working class people. It was never directed at working class people, because working class people in any case would not have been able, for example, to send their children to these schools.

Meyer 2006

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SACOS dubbed parents who sent their children to private schools ‘collaborators and lackeys’ of the ruling class who created the impression South Africa was an ‘open’ society, whilst condoning policies of divide and rule that perpetuated racism (Students at ‘White’ schools under racial permit, 1983:4). Snubbing private schools proved straightforward for SACOS; penetrating the African townships was another matter. In this mission, SASSSA’s attempts at organising African schools were continually foiled (Hendricks, 2010:84), and it struggled to bypass the Department of Education and Training (DET) separatist policies, especially its prohibition on mixed inter-school competitions (Powell, 1990:64).

As the majority of SACOS affiliates refused to comply with the permit system, they remained hamstrung by state legislation. Robin April (2018:150-151), who was instrumental in organising amateur athletics under the SACOS, states that affiliated clubs often defied the apartheid laws by organising events and meetings in Gugulethu and Langa and did not apply for the required permit. Also, because of the shortage of athletic tracks, they used facilities such as the University of Cape Town’s athletics track in Pinelands. Notwithstanding its rejection of the permit system, SACOS was labelled a predominantly ‘coloured’ and ‘Indian’ sports organisation (Roberts, 1988:63; Gerwel, 1989:64). The ‘race-class’ tensions embedded in the DSR were clear indicators that the policy was a two-edged sword; on the one hand, it kept out comprador or collaborationist elements, but on the other it hindered the organising of non-racial sport. This dual feature of the DSR would eventually become SACOS’ Achilles heel.

A changing political landscape: the DSR challenged

The shifting political environment within which the TLSA, SACOS and school sport operated in the 1980s was to prove central in shaping their politics and organisational capacities well into the 1990s. Hereafter follows a brief summary of the Western Cape’s changing political landscape during the decade after 1976.

Swept along by the state’s strategy of reform and repression, the resistance movement crossed a major threshold at the start of the 1980s when a plethora of political formations cutting across ideological persuasions crystallised in the Western Cape (Lodge, 1991:199). While certain organisations emerged spontaneously after the 1976 revolts, others arose in response to the government’s Wiehahn and Riekert commissions,²⁸ and the constitutional ‘New Deal’. The latter reform sought to accommodate the ‘coloured’ and ‘Indian’ sections of the disenfranchised in a tri-cameral arrangement,²⁹ whilst the former was set up to regulate and control the expanding black working class.

On the educational front, the 1976 and 1980 student uprisings shored up a politically diverse range of youth organisations in the townships. The trade union movement was also re-ignited, rooted as it was in the worker uprisings of the

²⁸ The Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions’ reforms of 1979 granted statutory recognition to trade unions for African workers’ whereas the latter sanctioned the settlement of urban Africans.

²⁹ The new constitution extended the franchise in a tri-cameral parliament to the ‘coloured’ and ‘Indian’ populations but not ‘Africans’. This qualified franchise the TLSA rejected. (Steep, 1984:16)

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early 1970s (Hirson, 1979:122-143). By the 1980s, the organised labour movement was directed mainly through the Black Consciousness-aligned³⁰ Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA),³¹ as well as the independent Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU).³² These events led in a short period to the formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)³³ in 1985, the National Council of Trade Unions' (NACTU) of 1986,³⁴ and a spread of independent trade unions. The launch of the socialist leaning National Forum (NF)³⁵ and NUM³⁶ in 1983 and 1985 respectively, the African National Congress (ANC)-oriented United Democratic Front (UDF)³⁷ in 1983, and later the Mass Democratic Movement MDM in 1988, completed in broad strokes the liberation movement's political make-up in the Western Cape by the late 1980s.

Although the above organisations collectively opposed the apartheid regime, ideological tensions marked their political relations. Differences between socialist groupings such as the TLSA-New Unity Movement and the larger more popular UDF and MDM formations were sometimes sharp, in particular after the 1985 student uprisings,³⁸ from which the UDF gained much mileage. By 1985-1986, for example, the latter had established a firm foothold amongst the youth, whose militant actions included the contentious slogans of 'liberation before education'

30 Black Consciousness (BC) emerged in the late 1960s as a resistance movement of university students and intellectuals that rejected apartheid and white domination in all its forms. It covered many views and tendencies aligned to the liberation struggle. For the BC 'black' referred to all the oppressed people of colour; those classified African, Coloured and Indian. The BC movement was banned in 1977, along with a range of affiliated organisations and persons in the liberation movement.

31 CUSA was formed in 1979 and had as one of its largest affiliates the National Union of Mineworkers' (NUM). NUM's affiliation in 1985 to COSATU was a great loss to CUSA.

32 FOSATU was formed on 20 April 1979. At the end of 1984 the federation had a membership of 118.950 with 8, mostly industrial, unions affiliated to it.

33 The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) was established in November 1985, and constituted 34 unions with 450,000 paid-up members and 565,000 signed-up members. COSATU initially launched itself as an independent union but in July 1986 adopted the Freedom Charter, therewith indicating its political allegiance.

34 COSATU's nearest rival was NACTU formed in October 1986 through the merger of CUSA and AZACTU (Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions). It claimed a membership of 450,000 signed-up members. NACTU subscribed broadly to the Black Consciousness Movement not the Congress Movement.

35 The National Forum (NF) was launched 11-12 June 1983 in Hammanskraal to oppose the 'New Deal'. It comprised the Black Conscious orientated AZAPO (Azanian People's Organisation) and the socialist inclined Cape Action League (CAL). The unifying document of the NF was the *Manifesto of the Azanian People*.

36 The NUM was launched in April 1985 in Cape Town. The NUM, like the NEUM, committed itself to the Ten-Point-Programme and the policy of non-collaboration. The TLSA aligned itself with the NUM, and R.O. Dudley a former deputy head at Livingstone High school and a prominent TLSA member became its first president.

37 The United Democratic Front (UDF) was established to oppose the new constitutional dispensation and was launched in Mitchells Plain, Cape Town, on 20 August 1983 as a broad front of autonomous organisations.

38 The uprisings of 1985 came about in response to the imposition of the state of emergency in the Transvaal, Reef and Eastern Cape in 1985. The intensity of the conflict reached heights similar to 1976 and 1980. State of emergencies were imposed in 1985 and 1986.

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and calls to render the townships 'ungovernable'. In exile and consistent with its history, however, the ANC made clear its intent to negotiate (Alexander, 2002:46; Lodge, 1989:47, 48). The politics of this period culminated in the unbanning of the organisations of the liberation movement and the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990, which set the scene for negotiations between the NP and ANC,³⁹ elevating the latter to the pre-eminent position within the liberation movement. With increasing visibility and international support, the ANC experienced an unprecedented growth of membership by the late 1980s and early 1990s. Caught in the maelstrom of African Nationalism countrywide, the Western Cape, the once traditional locale of left-wing politics (Nasson, 1991:208), in particular of the Unity Movement (Nasson, 1989), had its politics eclipsed by that of the Congress Movement. These fluid political and ideological dynamics would seriously impact the TLSA and the non-racial sport movement.

Owing to SACOS and therewith its schools sports affiliates (SAPSSA and SASSSA) non-alignment policy, it became mired in the political tensions of the liberation movement, since SACOS housed members from a cross-section of political formations. What specifically caused these tensions and what were its repercussions for the SACOS affiliates, particularly the WPSSSU and WPSSB?

In terms of the first part of the question, sharp political differences surfaced within the non-racial sport movement from 1988, reaching a climax in the early 1990s around the boycott, DSR and non-alignment. At the one end, a vocal group within SACOS adhered firmly to the DSR, at the other, MDM (UDF, COSATU) members argued forcefully that the boycott of establishment facilities was stunting development in the sports organisation. Indeed, while people working in government institutions were branded 'stooges' by SACOS, the UDF declared that it wanted to 'win them over' (Booth, 2003:488). Regarding state institutions, the trade unionist Alec Erwin, delivering a paper at the SACOS second M.N. Pather Memorial Lecture in December 1987, provocatively argued that the organisation needed to become mass-based. For him, the use of multinational facilities was not the issue any longer, but rather and more pertinently, 'how' and not 'where' non-racial sport should be organised (Erwin, 1988:95). Usurping establishment institutions, not the boycott of them, would be far more effective, he suggested (Erwin, 1989:46). Roberts, (1988:42-45; 1989a:19-22) and others, such as Gerwel (1989:64), Carrim (1989) and the Natal Council on Sport [NACOS] (1989), thereafter unleashed a scathing attack on SACOS, accusing it of being inflexible, sectarian and confined to a small leadership of predominantly 'coloured' and 'Indian' members who resided mostly in the Western and Eastern Cape. Moreover, they declared SACOS policies dated, narrow, undemocratic and out of touch with developments in the workers' movement (ibid). The DSR was viewed as NUM inspired (Brown, 2005:142), tantamount to 'ultra-leftism' and not in synchrony with the broad mass democratic movement they added (Natal Council on Sport [NACOS], 1989:32; Carrim, 1989:40-42). As the MDM appeared to be at the forefront of the liberation movement, and given the fact that the bulk of SACOS sport people belonged to it, they argued, SACOS should align itself with this tendency (Carrim, 1989).

39 Negotiations had been secretly underway from the mid-1980s.

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Holding to its non-aligned position of 'a broad coalition of *pro-non-racial forces*' (Fortuin, 1989:4),⁴⁰ SACOS received the support of political organisations outside of the Congress Movement (African People's Democratic Youth Movement, 1989; Molala, 1992), particularly the New Unity Movement (NUM) (The Onslaught on SACOS and Non-Racial sport, 1988; Developments in non-racial sports, 1989; The Sports Sell-Out: Part of the Deal in the Negotiations Scam, 1990) and TLSA (Kies, 1988:9-10; Kies, 1990:12-13; Inred, 1990:6-7; Kies, 1991a:13-14). Forming loosely a united front, the pro-SACOS lobby opposed what they saw as a looming 'sell-out' in non-racial sport, fomented by the NSC. For the pro-SACOS organisations,⁴¹ specifically the TLSA-NUM, the drive for unity with multinational sport was at the heart of the NSC's formation. The NSC's agenda within SACOS added up to nothing but 'divisive white-anting' the TLSA said (Inred, 1990b: 7), and for the NUM, 'Trojan horse' tactics (NUM, 1990). For both organisations, orchestrating unity in sport had as its main intent to strengthen the hand of the ANC in the negotiations process (Kies, 1991c:14; Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA), 1992; NUM, 1992:13). Notwithstanding the growing dissension in its ranks, SACOS maintained that conditions had not altered within the country to merit a change of strategy,⁴² a perspective that resonated with the League and like-minded organisations (Inred, 1990:7, 8; Kies, 1991b:14; Kies, 1991c:14). The second part of the question posed above is now pertinent, notably: 'what were the repercussions of these tensions for SACOS and more particularly school sport?'

The demise of the DSR

With negotiations for a political settlement underway, and a divided non-racial sports movement evident, establishment sports sought international readmission through forging unity with its erstwhile foe, and made overtures to the NSC, heralding it the new representatives of non-racial sport (Roberts, 1989c:4; SACOS: Western Cape 18th Annual General Meeting, 1991:15). The political climate favoured this conciliatory move, for although negotiations did not translate into fundamental change for the disenfranchised, it had altered perceptions and attitudes of people in the country. In fact, it signalled a victory for their struggles and actually raised expectations (Adam & Moodley, 1993:44-45, 219-222). The government's repealing of the Population Registration Act in 1990 and the Group Areas Act in 1991, as well as the ANC's suspension of the armed struggle, affirmed these perceptions.

Political events rapidly overtook SACOS, as the unfolding reforms spurred the international community to review its moratorium. The fact that unity in sport was yet to be achieved and apartheid remained intact were no longer key criteria for

40 SACOS maintained that non-alignment was a pre-requisite of the IOC and not negotiable (South African Council on Sport, 1991:15).

41 SACOS had the support of the socialist oriented organisations such as the NF, NUM, Cape Action League (CAL) (later to become the Workers' Organisation for Socialist Action [WOSA]), AZAPO and NACTU.

42 Not all of SACOS agreed with this perspective, and the Western Province Council on Sport (WEPCOS) executive stood down, as it believed one school of thought was dominant in the region (WEPCOS, 1991:17-18).

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isolating South African sport for international mediators such as the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA) (Memorandum from SACOS presented to the National Olympic Committee of South Africa, 1991; Goodall, 2004:92). Moreover, the National Olympic Sports Council (NOSC) (the former NSC) had aligned itself to the ANC and was seeking unity with Apartheid structures and SANROC's representative, Sam Ramsamy, a former SAPSSA official, who had switched allegiance to the NSC by the late 1980s, was promoting unity in sport (Kies, 1990:12). Business, too, played an instrumental role in facilitating unity. The coincidence of the above factors clearly indicated to the international community that the intent to unify sport was assured and in accord with talks to end apartheid. These developments rendered the sport boycott, for them, *passé*. Jean-Claude Ganga, president of ANOCA, made this abundantly clear in his categorical message to SACOS when he stated: "... the train is leaving the station and you will either be on it ... or you will be left behind" (Kies, 1991a:13). SACOS disagreed, and attempted to stave off South Africa's readmission to international sport based on what it called the need for 'principled unity' (Goodall, 2004:88)⁴³ and *de facto* unity in sport. SACOS's objections were however rendered obsolete when the IOC declared South Africa eligible to participate in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.⁴⁴ By then, according to Booth (2003:491), most international federations declared the boycott had worked and sport had triumphed over racism.

School Sport – A compromised unity

Unity proceeded on various fronts, and by 1993 nearly one hundred South African sports codes enjoyed international recognition (Booth, 2003:492). SACOS, along with the League and NUM, branded this unity 'a sham' (TLSA, 1992; NUM, 1992b:14). By then, however, most sport federations had rewritten their constitutions after making promises to assist disadvantaged sportspeople (Booth, 2003:492). The SASSSA held its last athletics event in 1994 (Mass-based school sport on its knees, 1999:28). The United School Sports Association of South Africa (USSASA), the successor to SASSSA and SAPSSA, abandoned the DSR and the multi-code mass-based participation of its predecessors, replacing it with the single-code approach of organising sport (Petersen, 2005:131).⁴⁵ Volunteerism in school sport ended, leaving many SACOS sportspeople disgruntled and embittered. The voice of a former sport teacher and WPSSSU administrator is worth noting:

Unfortunately, they chose to go the way the whites had organised, and that seriously disadvantaged black kids, in that money was an issue.⁴⁶ It

43 SACOS' stance on principled unity was premised on the notion of principles such as total equality, merit selection, democracy and accountability. Only once all the vestiges of apartheid had been removed could unification proceed, it argued.

44 South Africa also hosted the Australian and New Zealand rugby teams in 1992.

45 School athletics, for example, no longer had entire schools supporting its events. Instead, schools sent only a handful of athletes to compete at inter-school athletics meetings.

46 Under the WPSSSU all costs of athletes representing the province for the year were subsidised from the income of the inter-schools' athletics events at the start of the year, in which virtually every school participated. Students therefore did not have to pay to compete locally or inter-provincially. See also April, 2018:152.

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was left to the schools; you have a township school, a township school can't pay so you pull the kid [remove the child from participating] ... the people who had the power in USSASA were blacks who had sold out ... [we] nationalised the school ethic, [visiting athletes from other provinces stayed with families in the community]. When USSASA took over, kids were put into hotels ... the USSASA contingent were usually just white kids.

Liebenberg, 2006

Clearly, unity in school sport did not bring significant social change. With the non-racial sport movement having forfeited the boycott – the main political instrument for exerting pressure (Booth, 2003:492; Archer & Bouillon, 1982:231) – transformation could no longer be enforced. Consequently, conflict in sport, as in education, would remain unresolved well beyond the inauguration of a new South Africa and sports unity.

Conclusion

This chapter endeavoured to explore the much-neglected contribution of the TLSA as well as other anti-apartheid organisations who effectively wed sport and politics within the non-racial school sport movement. This distinctive history of sport and politics was traced from the late 1950s until the early 1990s when unity in sport was achieved as part of the country's negotiated settlement. Specific focus was given to the politics of the DSR, a brand of sport politics which sought to draw a discernible line between racist and non-racial sport in an attempt to unmask the regime's multinational sport policy that aimed to legitimise apartheid sport, particularly in the eyes of the international community. The chapter furthermore contends that while the DSR was formulated principally to unite the disenfranchised people against the apartheid regime and its sporting policies, the resolution also proved divisive for SACOS and school sport specifically by the late 1980s. This rift witnessed the emergence of the NSC in a bid to bypass the DSR and thus achieve unity with establishment sport. This development was particularly strategic as it anticipated the negotiations between the ANC and NP and the pending 'new' South Africa. The discussion lastly revealed why TLSA teachers, among many other politically and socially conscious educators within the non-racial school sport movement, were left disappointed if not disillusioned by 'unity' in school sport after 1994. Central to their grievance was that 'sport unity' arrived at the expense of children from marginalised poor schooling communities, the abandonment of the longstanding non-racial ethos of nurturing mass participation through sport, and consequently the waning of the potential for social cohesion and nation-building.

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