

ACCESS - Minutes of the First General Meeting

- held in the Hardin Room, Church Center for the UN  
777 UN Plaza, New York City; May 25, 1977
- Rich Lapchick, Executive Director of ARENA served as  
Acting Chairperson

1. Discussion of goals and objectives

There was total agreement that ACCESS had two primary focus centers:

- a. Total isolation of South Africa in sport by 1980, as part of the general international campaign to isolate South Africa in all areas.
- b. An end to all US sports competition with South Africa as ACCESS' contribution to this goal.

There was also discussion of whether we should use moral arguments solely or should practical arguments for an end to competition be introduced. Such arguments would include the fact that by continued competition with South Africa, we jeopardize sports contacts with all of black Africa (there was an OAU resolution to this effect last spring). It was agreed that both types of arguments could be used, but the moral arguments were strongly preferred, especially in light of the more broadly justice-based motivation of several members. This, it was agreed, is no problem as ACCESS looks at sport as a mirror of society and is but one method of attacking apartheid.

2. Discussion of means to achieve these goals

There was a lengthy discussion of the means to be used to achieve the objectives of ACCESS. Several areas were agreed upon:

- a. Educational campaigns: Since the South African issue has only recently received wide coverage, the US public is largely ignorant of apartheid in general, and of the sports issue in particular. One of our tasks will be to present programs of an educational nature that can be sponsored by regional groups around the country. Several members of the group, including Brutus and Lapchick, could be available to speak on the issue, with any proceeds to help in funding ACCESS.
  2. Under this category, the public should also be made aware of the fact that while many countries state their opposition to apartheid, not all of them have taken any action, even in less controversial areas such as sport, to demonstrate their opposition.
  3. Lists of nations that still compete with South Africa will be prepared for distribution; also lists of sports bodies still competing. It was pointed out that the International Lawn Tennis Federation is the only international federation that has reinstated South Africa after suspension. The role of the US member of this group will receive ACCESS' full attention.
- b. Presentations to sports federations competing with South Africa: Coalition members will be part of delegations visiting such sports federation to plead the case for isolation of South Africa
- c. Letter writing campaigns to:
  1. sports feds competing with South Africa: it was suggested that well known athletes and sportswriters join ACCESS in this endeavor. It was further suggested that athletes could sign pledges of support of common goals. It was also proposed that church groups be approached to endorse such statements. It was accepted that the list of coalition members of the national group is open to expansion for similar national groups that support the principles of ACCESS. Other groups to be approached on this could be educational and union organizations.

2. government officials: the whole matter of involving US government bodies and committees, and of getting legislation in support of non-racialism in sport was raised. The group, however, felt this would be a slow and largely unrewarding process. It was accepted that letters should be written to well known government leaders in the hope that they might make statements in favor of our position. Names mentioned were President Carter, Andrew Yound, Dick Clark, Charles Diggs, Sec. of State Vance, Attny Gen Bell, etc. The President's Commission on Olympic Sport (and its members) should be lobbied. It was decided that ACCESS should attempt to have a delegation heard by the Commission. The US Olympic Committee should be approached for presentation via the President's Commission (It was their Chairman who led the fight to punish the African nations that withdrew at Montreal).
3. letters to the editor: specifically on the sports issue
4. to individual sportspeople competing with South Africa
- d. Media Work
  1. It was strongly felt that attempts should be made to constantly keep the issue before the eyes of the public through media contacts made by ACCESS, coalition members and regional groups.
  2. Periodic press conferences will be held centered around major sports figures who adhere to our goals and objectives.
- e. Non-violent, direct action demonstrations where teams and individuals representing South Africa actually get to play in the US. This was the most widely discussed topic as a clear definition of what this meant is so crucial. All felt the demonstrations should be within the law - to do otherwise would seriously reduce our credibility. Activities would include picketing, leafleting, urging spectators to boycott, & holding rallies. It was felt that care would have to be taken not to provoke spectators since by their nature they are a captive audience and could be more explosive than a crowd passing demonstrators in the street. It was recognized that groups outside of the coalition might take actions beyond what ACCESS was prepared to do.

### 3. Discussion of potential targets

All accepted without hesitation three certain targets:

- a. South African teams competing in the US - top priority
- b. US teams competing in South Africa
- c. US individuals competing in South Africa

There was a great deal of discussion about a fourth target - individual South Africans playing in the US. This group was broken into two categories: those who officially represent S. Africa (they should clearly be targets) and those who are competing solely as individuals. There was much give and take on this issue. A consensus was reached that when people from the latter group were playing in the US, the occasion would be used to raise the issue while direct action would be withheld. The only exception to this could be tennis events since it is in tennis that S. Africa still has strong support, led by the USTA. Therefore, it was decided that Forest Hills would be the site of the first US demonstrations, - not against the South African competitors themselves but mainly against the USTA. It was also pointed out that even these S. Africans come here with the written sanction of the all-white governing bodies in S. Africa and this issue could also be raised.

The individuals might be asked to take a position on apartheid.

A calendar of events between the US and S. Africa would be prepared to help the coalition in its planning and in setting priorities. The matter of secondary boycotts of nations that compete with South Africa was raised. Our position is one of support for the Supreme Council of Sport in Africa and the OAU on this matter. However, our focus is on a boycott of US- S. African sports events.

It was stressed that sports boycotts have been the only historical means by which the S. Africans have made any changes in apartheid sport. Even with the grudging changes that have come, there is no integration of sports clubs and Prime Minister Vorster has stated publically that this will never be the case while the S. African Information Department propagates the myth outside the country that this is already the case.

e. The final target would be US multinational corporations that sponsor segregated sporting events inside South Africa. There was agreement that we should inform the American public about this situation. Further action was put off to later date.

4. Evaluation process

- a. Meetings of coalition members: such meetings will be held on a quarterly basis, alternating between New York and Philadelphia. Because our first target is Forest Hills in August, it was accepted that we meet in New York in mid-July so we can plan activities. A date will be announced shortly
- b. Executive Committee: Rich Lapchick was chosen as Chairperson of ACCESS. He will work with a seven person executive consisting of himself, Jim Bristol, Dennis Brutus, John Dommissie, Ray Gould, Jewell Gresham and Melba Smith/Mia Adjali (one of the two from United Methodist Church, Women's Division of the Board of Global Ministries).
- c. A committee of John Dommissie, Ray Gould and Rich Lapchick was chosen to write by-laws for ACCESS.
- d. The coalition members present formally ratified the creation of ACCESS

5. Fund Raising:

It was agreed that coalition members would work to raise as much money as possible to fund the operations of ACCESS.

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The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 after having begun at 10:10AM.  
Members present were: Rich Lapchick, Dennis Brutus, John Dommissie,  
Cary Goodman, Ray Gould, Jewell Gresham,  
Gene Jones, Pam McAllister, and Melba Smith.  
Observers were: Eleanore Shivirry (BWA) and Millard Arnold  
(New York attorney).