

Thompson, Richard. *Race and Sport*. London: Oxford University Press, 1964. Pp. 73. Paperback. \$1.75.

Demonstrations, U.N. Resolutions, even riots have become common elements in the fight against the apartheid sports practices of the Republic of South Africa. The thrust of those fighting apartheid has been the expulsion of South Africa from the international sports community. Over

the past few years, pressure against South Africa has escalated to include secondary boycotts and demonstrations against nations or individuals maintaining ties with South Africa. The African effort to expel New Zealand from the 1976 Olympics because of its rugby tour of South Africa that year, and the recent demonstrations against South Africa's participation in the Davis Cup matches are prime examples.

Richard Thompson's *Race and Sport* provides an interesting background study of the race-in-sports conflict, but it is sadly dated. The text is four-teen years old and has not been revised. The South African sports policies he outlines and draws his judgments from have been changed. At the time of Thompson's writing, the government forbade inter-racial and integrated sports to South African nationals competing at home or abroad, and held visiting teams to these rules. These policies have been liberalized. Integrated teams may now represent South Africa internationally. At both the national and local level, inter-racial teams compete, and South Africa no longer dictates the racial composition of visiting teams.

But there is value in becoming familiar with the earlier conditions. It was their harshness which catalyzed the problem South Africa now faces in international sports.

Thompson focuses his work on the policies then in force in South Africa and the response of other countries and sports federations to those policies. He argues that the problem lies not in the policies themselves but rather in the "determination of countries and sports bodies to retain their links with white South Africa despite the incompatibility of its racial policies with the ethic of non-racial sport." (P. 32)

This statement is important and central to his theme. It establishes first the basic point anti-apartheid groups make: that race separation in sports is against the ethic of sports. (This creates a question for future research: when did the nonseparation of races in sports become an ethic? When did the various sports federations adopt these ethical policies and what led to them?)

It establishes secondly the method to be used: isolation—quarantine. And since the cause was ethical, the method was righteous. Moreover, simple argument had won the anti-apartheid forces nothing. Only strong protests had achieved the victory of South Africa's suspension from the Olympics in 1964. Naturally, the clamor came for more protests, more demonstrations, greater isolation.

Thompson's belief that the problem lies in the reluctance of the white nations to isolate South Africa leads him to deal with an area generally overlooked in other works on the subject—why are these nations reluctant to boycott South Africa. He sees two reasons, one cultural, the other philosophical. The cultural reason is kinship, borne of national, political, linguistic, even blood ties. The philosophical reason lies in the very nature of sport itself; is the playing field the place to practice politics? Shouldn't sports be somehow beyond that? And probably there's a third reason, a feeling that in this world of sovereign states constantly preaching that sovereignty, isn't what South Africa does internally South Africa's business. In essence South Africans are being asked to disobey their own government. And if New Zealand, for example, recognizes South Africa and carries on political and commercial business with that country, why should not her sportsmen behave in like manner.

Thompson does not make these points as his own or defend them. He states them, to explain his thesis. Indeed, his whole tone is scholarly, unemotional analysis. And this is its real value: a thoughtful exploration of the beginning of the problem of South Africa in sports—a problem which the sports world cannot ignore. But it is a shame the book has not been updated—a lot happened in those fourteen missing years.

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