

211 East 43rd St. (705)
New York, N.Y. 10017
May 5, 1967

Mr. Douglas F. Roby, President
U.S. Olympic Committee
57 Park Avenue
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Roby:

We write to you about an important matter which we understand may be on the agenda of the International Olympic Committee in Teheran. A decision may be made about lifting the suspension against South Africa so that she can participate in the Olympic Games in Mexico City in 1968. We write to you because we are unalterably opposed to South Africa's inclusion in these Games in view of the fact that a racially discriminatory policy dominates South African sports.

The South African Amateur Athletic Union, affiliated with the International Amateur Athletic Federation has banned non-whites from South African championships ever since it was founded in 1895. Yet Rule 3 of the Constitution of the I.A.A.F. states that "there shall not be any racial, religious, political or other kind of discrimination in the international athletics, in relations between member countries or individuals". Because South Africa has so clearly violated this basic principle, her team was excluded from the last Olympic Games in Tokyo in 1964.

The situation in South Africa has not changed since then. Apartheid still is the doctrine imposed by the government on the people although approximately 80% are non-white. It regulates every facet of life, including sports. There have been recent evidences of the effect apartheid in sports has on participation of gifted athletes in South Africa. Ironically, Precious MacKenzie, a South African non-white, won a gold medal in weightlifting for Britain in the recent Commonwealth Games. He could not participate as a South African. Basil Doliviera, the famed cricketer is a member of the team representing England because he could not even try out for a South African team. Papwa Swegolum, who has won the Dutch Open twice, cannot compete in golf tournaments in South Africa against white participants. Hartley Davis has lifted the heaviest weights as a featherweight in South Africa, but cannot be recognized as champion because he is non-white. This is only a brief mention of the way discrimination affects sports in South Africa. The list of abuses could be further extended.

The South African Olympic Committee will make every effort to regain its status as a participant in the Mexico City competition. We are unalterably opposed to this as long as discrimination and racial segregation of any sort is practiced by South Africa. The recent announcement by the South African Olympics Council does not alter the discriminatory pattern followed by South Africa. All competition inside the country is segregated. Black and white do not compete against one another. We call on the U.S. Olympic Committee not to equivocate in any way on this fundamental matter.

At a meeting of the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa held last December 12-14 in Bamako, Mali a resolution was unanimously adopted with which we find ourselves in agreement. The resolution affirmed the decision "to use every means to obtain the expulsion of South African sports organizations from the Olympic movement and from International Federations should South Africa fail to comply fully with IOC rules". Further, the Supreme Council called its members "to subject their decision to participate in the 1968 Games to the reservation that no racist team from South Africa takes part....."

We call on the U.S. Olympic Committee to commit itself to this same position. Especially because American Olympic teams are interracial, no compromise on this issue can be tolerated.

Sincerely yours,

Jackie Robinson

(* Organizations cited for identification purposes only)

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| I.W. Abel | Pres., United Steelworkers of America |
| Arthur R. Ashe, Jr. | U.S. Davis Cup Tennis Team |
| Theodore Bikel | Actor-Singer |
| William Booth | New York City Commissioner on Human Rights |
| Roy Campanella | Retired Baseball Player |
| Mgr. Thomas J. Carey | Pastor |
| Stokely Carmichael | Chairman, SNCC |
| Ruby Dee | Actress |
| John Forsythe | Actor-Producer |
| James Garner | Actor |
| Rev. Donald S. Harrington | Minister, Community Church of N.Y. |
| Michael Harrington | Chairman of the Bd., League for Industrial Democracy |
| Julie Harris | Actress |
| Nat Hentoff | Writer |
| John L.S. Holloman, Jr., M.D. | President, National Medical Association |
| Langston Hughes | Author |
| Paul Jennings | International Union of Electrical Workers, Pres |
| Rev. Daniel V. Kilfoyle, S.J. | St. Peter's College |
| Floyd McKissick | National Director, CORE |
| Allan Morrison | Editor |
| Reinhold Niebuhr | Theologian |
| Frederick O'Neal | President, Actors' Equity |
| Rev. Benjamin F. Payton | Exec. Dir., Dept. of Social Justice, National Council of Churches of Christ |
| Oscar Robertson | Cincinnati Royals |
| Cleveland Robinson | Sec-Treas, District 65; Nat'l Pres., Negro Labor Council |
| Bayard Rustin | Exec. Dir., A. Philip Randolph Institute |
| Pete Seeger | Entertainer |
| Ed Sullivan | Television Personality |
| Percy Sutton | President, Borough of Manhattan |
| Eli Wallach | Actor |
| Buddy Young | National Football League |