

REBELS GO

HOMIE

—Ndabezitha Khuzwayo

Stooge George Thabe beamed smiles as he debarked from a Boeing 707 at Jan Smuts Airport from the World Cup Football tournament in Spain. Behind the smile of this soccer upstart was the thought of a cool deal clinched in Europe for a South African soccer tour by an international rebel team. Fortune had smiled on him, so he thought, for the tour would have been the occasion for piling up thousands of rands. Behind the smife of this money-grubber was also, like all quislings, a cherished satisfaction to enter his name into the good books of his masters. Little did the conspirators know what whirlwind was in the offing.

The genesis of this cursed tour was Thabe's most hurried flight to Spain under the guise of a spectator to the World Cup tournament. The air ticket cost thousands of dollars not to mention the hotel bills and general maintenance in expensive Madrid. We need not take the trouble to scratch our heads trying to find out who financed puppet Thabe. It was whilst he was in Europe that Radio South Africa beamed news to the effect that the Chairman of the South African Football Council George Thabe was having a *tete-a-tete* with FIFA officials to allow South Africa return to the fold of international soccer.

As soon as he landed on South African soil a hasty meeting was summoned by Black and White soccer bosses about the then oncoming soccer tour. The public was duly assured that the meeting was to consider the merits and demerits of the tour and decide whether to signal green or red. The truth of the matter however is that both bosses and small time gamblers were worried about the image and complexion this would lend to wrinkled sister apartheid. And not least in importance was the order and manner of sharing the spoils. It is important to note here that officials of black professional teams were not included nor consulted. Said

and done, the international side dubbed 'rebel' by our people arrived and had the type of welcome they deserve.

The international side was to play six matches after which they would return home in the money. Ardilles' fee was quoted as being as high as R500 000!

STORM

The first storm came when three Soweto based professional teams: Moroka Swallows, Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs refused to have anything to do with the rebels. The immediate sequel to this frustrative move which led stooge George to threaten the black teams was an intimate proposal coupled with some dollar flashing to Amazulu to play with the rebels. Like a one time beauty queen but shorn of appearance due to age and bankrupt in principles because of hunger, the Durban based side fell for the trick.

The prelude to the fiasco started when the people of Soweto threw their hundreds to jeer and condemn the side chanting 'rebels go home'. It was a taste of things to come. The two sides prepared to sweat it out on the Orlando Stadium grounds. Orlando Stadium which accomodates up to fifty thousand spectators breathed easily with a mean attendance of three thousand. The score board which reflected one goal for the visiting mercenaries and nil for the spineless home side bespeaks well of the two teams morale and psychological crisis. The actual performance is said to have been a grave insult to professional football. With psychological wounds plaguing their very marrows and right rejection by the people, the mercenaries had to pack and go after only three of six intended games, while Ossie Ardilles and Marious Kempes had tasted enough by the end of the first game against Amazulu and had to board the earliest flight out of South Africa.

MERCENARIES

The mercenaries had suffered casualties both in honour and name as they jumped into a Europebound BOAC at Jan Smuts with their tails between their legs.

This illustrious boycott is attestation once more to the fact that the regime is running against time. It is important to note that the three teams which rejected the comic soccer side from abroad acted with the blessing and enjoyed the solidarity of the Church, political, trade union, youth and community organisations

Soccer, lest we forget, is as popular and most appealing to black South Africans as bull-fighting is in Spain where Thabe mistook sentiment for

Africans as bull-fighting is in Spain where Thabe mistook sentiment for reality. Despite that fact, blacks acted in concert and called in one voice to reject the apartheid face-lifting tour. There is a strong and appreciable background behind this successful boycott. For as much as football is most popular by virtue of the fact that it is one of the very few recreational facilities we have access to, entry into a soccer stadium is gained through the taxing sweat of our labour. To watch a soccer match tells hard on the black man's few coins. Watching a football match also becomes a priority to many than financing bottle stores and beer halls all of which serve the same old pattern of exploiting and demoralising the black communities. The loss suffered by the SAB, the tour sponsors, is said to be up to the tune of R 1m. The SAB could underwrite such an expensive venture with ease, notwithstanding the recent strike by their employees demanding a living wage.

PRINCIPLE

It was a line of action stemming from principle more than anything else.

"We had no alternative but to call the game off. It was a call of the nation which I could not ignore", said Mr John Mabaso, the chairman of Orlando Pirates, expressing the view of his team. We cannot but commend such acts of heroism. It means that professionals, soccerites in this particular case, are fast waking up to the fact that their future is to all intents and purposes inseparably bound up with that of the entire nation. This is heeding to the late Chief Luthuli's warning when he said that a compromise with racism is always a victory for racism.

As for church, political, trade union, youth and community organisations and leaders who pressed hard for this cause, they acted in conformity with the voice of the African National Congress and the international community to boycott South African sports because of the inhuman and abhorrent apartheid policies.

For the regime, aware that sands of absolute power are beginning to shift from underneath the laager, it has engineered a vicious programme of 'removing hurtful aspects of apartheid'. Hence the international hotels, multi-racial swimming pools, mixed restaurants and all that Botha-Malan jigsaw puzzle. Behind these manoeuvres lies a concerted effort to consolidate apartheid and winning over the meek-hearted and money crazy.

For while white and black enjoy a delicious dish at Oppenheimers Carlton Centre, somewhere in the Bantustans families borrow food or feel their stomachs with water. Whilst some live in luxurious mansions and cottages others die of cholera in Nyanga and Onverwacht. Hence the call

for sacrifice and Unity in Action.

CAMPAIGNS

In this campaign to isolate South Africa from international sport and general intercourse with the forces of progress and peace. The United Nations Centre Against Apartheid continues with its October 1980 black list of those stars and sportsmen from overseas who flirt with apartheid South Africa.

Our humble and needed contribution is to take up the battle with added determination. Frank Sinatra, Shirley Bassey, the Staple Singers, Millie Jackson and boxing names as Mike Weaver, John Tate and Davey Moore should have been given the same taste of a bleeding nose. The ANC is our vanguard and unifier in this noble fight for total and unqualified isolation of the racist Pretoria regime.

Those who would like to see apartheid – acknowledged by the whole world to be a crime against humainty – to return to the fold of international soccer at the expense of the suffering majority must be exposed. The white apartheid god which feeds on black blood and sweat must duly be sacrificed on the altar of popular armed and mass struggle led by the ANC and its allies.

DAWN PolitiXword No.5 Answers

ACROSS: 1. Lionel 6. APO 8. Donors 10. Doe 11. Caesar
12. Xuma 13. SOS 15. Palm 18. Tea 19. Ton
20. Rupert 21. An 22. Lure 23. Asked

DOWN: 1. Lodestar 2. Ode 3. No 4. Encumber 5. Loan
6. Ass 7. Oarsman 9. Reap 16. Attack 17. Leon.