

*'Hain stopped play': the triumph of the
Stop the Seventy Tour campaign*

Candidate Number: 863684

Word Count: 11,827

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Chapter One	10
Chapter Two	19
Chapter Three	28
Conclusion	35
Bibliography	37

List of Abbreviations

AAM- Anti-Apartheid Movement

CP- Callaghan Papers

MCC- Marylebone Cricket Club

SACA- South African Cricket Association

SAN-ROC- South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee

STST- Stop the Seventy Tour

TNA- The National Archives

‘The Government have come to the conclusion, after reviewing all these considerations, that on grounds of broad public policy they must request the Cricket Council to withdraw their invitation’.¹ So wrote James Callaghan, then the Home Secretary, to Maurice Allom, chairman of the Cricket Council, regarding the planned tour of a South African cricket team to Britain the following month. In one fell swoop the sacred line between politics and sport, doggedly upheld by ministers and sporting governing bodies alike, was severed. For the MCC, it was the final nail in the coffin of a tour they had stubbornly championed for over a year. For Callaghan and the Wilson cabinet, it drew a line under a storm that had been brewing for months and, albeit briefly, had threatened to seriously overshadow their election campaign. However, for Peter Hain, the chairman of the ‘Stop the Seventy Tour’ group, it was the culmination of several months’ hard campaigning which had begun on 10 September the preceding year in the White Swan pub on Fleet Street. What had started out as a small, concentrated group of young activists voicing their rejection of South Africa’s racialist selection policies had captured the attention of the public on an unprecedented scale, ultimately forcing the intervention of a Home Secretary who was in many ways socially conservative. The campaign has been called the most successful mass action of post-war Britain; on one level, it is hard to argue with this statement.² Hugo Young, political editor of *The Sunday Times*, wrote how ‘other pressure groups which have toiled for years against such bottomless social evils as bad housing and poverty must look with envy on this extraordinarily swift international triumph’, and indeed such immediate satisfaction was and remains rare for activists.³ This then begs the question; what made this particular campaign so successful?

That press conference in the White Swan officially announcing the formation of the group involved a plethora of organisations: the Anti-Apartheid Movement, CHURCH, the International Socialists, the Movement of Colonial Freedom, the

¹ TNA PREM 13/3499 - James Callaghan to Maurice Allom, 21 May 1970.

² S. Stevens, ‘Why South Africa? The Politics of Anti-Apartheid Activism in Britain in the Long 1970s’ in J. Eckel & S. Moyn (eds.), *The breakthrough: Human rights in the 1970s* (Pennsylvania, 2014), p. 210.

³ D. Humphry, *The Cricket Conspiracy* (Nottingham, 1975), p. 7.

National Union of Students, the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SAN-ROC), the United Nations Student Association, the Young Communist League and the Young Liberal Movement, to name but a few. The overwhelming watchword was youth; this was a movement born out of the heady days of student protest at the end of the 1960s, when students were heralded as ‘a new social force of incalculable significance’.⁴ At this conference, they collectively issued a warning to the cricket authorities that, on the basis of South Africa’s racist selection policies, they would work tirelessly to organise mass demonstrations and disruptions throughout the following cricket season. In order to indicate the impact this would have, they were to demonstrate at a Springbok rugby tour that winter, giving a glimpse at the chaos to come. Louis Eakes, chairman of the Young Liberals, said at the conference ‘if the tour is not cancelled, Lord’s could become next summer the Ulster of the sporting world.’⁵ These words were to ring in the ears of the rugby and cricket authorities as STST launched their systematic attack on the rugby tour.

From the moment that the first match, scheduled to be held in Oxford, had to be moved to Twickenham due to the threat of disruption, demonstrators hounded the tour both on and off the field. The weapons of protest varied; from establishing mass presences at the grounds in order to run onto the field of play, through to throwing dye onto the South African players to symbolise a multi-racial team and even hijacking their bus as it left the team hotel. During the tour over 50,000 demonstrators turned out, requiring 20,000 police to contain them, resulting in over 400 people being detained and over 200 arrests.⁶ Once the rugby players had headed home attention turned with full force to the cricket tour the coming summer, which the authorities had insisted on several occasions would still go ahead. Increasingly severe warnings were issued from the STST camp concerning the upcoming matches, with media speculation rife as to the

⁴ G. Stedman-Jones, ‘The meaning of the student revolt’ in A. Cockburn & R. Blackburn (eds.), *Student power: problems, diagnosis, action* (Penguin, 1969), p. 25.

⁵ C. Stokes, ‘Springboks facing chaos’, *The Guardian*, 11 September 1969, p. 11e.

⁶ C. Warren, ‘Most of Springboks wanted to go home by Christmas’, *The Times*, 29 January 1970, p. 10c.

scale of the planned disruption. Planned protest was escalated to biblical levels with the news that one individual, a Mr David Wilton-Godberford, was threatening to unleash thousands of locusts onto cricket fields across Britain, stating that ‘it takes 70,000 hoppers 12 minutes to consume 100 cwt. of grass. The crack of a solid army of locusts feeding on the grass will sound like flames.’⁷ But even the echoes of Exodus were not enough to shift the intransigent Cricket Council, who refused to give in to what they viewed as ‘mob rule’ by a minority, and maintained the dogmatic line that politics had no place in sport. After months of heightened tensions, worries about a deterioration of race relations in Britain and the alarming threat of a boycott of that summer’s Commonwealth Games by a multitude of countries, Callaghan eventually decided to intervene and request that the Council cancel the tour.⁸

The campaign was a welcome injection of interest in the anti-apartheid cause, which, after an surge of support in 1960 in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre, had somewhat lost momentum in the ensuing years.⁹ Following the cancellation, one journalist predicted that ‘Peter Hain may go down in history as the man who made apartheid a national issue in Britain.’¹⁰ A slightly galling statement for those in the Anti-Apartheid Movement, who had been working since April 1960 to do just the same, but nonetheless one which carries a grain of truth. Most importantly, STST built on the work that had been spearheaded by SAN-ROC since 1962, of adding momentum to the sporting boycott of South Africa. This had emerged as part of a wider campaign to impose not just sporting or cultural sanctions, but also economic, military and diplomatic, on the republic in order to express international abhorrence of apartheid and, it was hoped, force a change in policy. Crucially, it was one of the few ways that individual nation states could exert pressure on the regime. The sports boycott was aimed

⁷ ‘Student threatens Springbok tour with locusts’, *The Daily Telegraph*, 11 May 1970, p. 15a.

⁸ For a full account see P. Hain, *Don’t Play with Apartheid: The background to the Stop the Seventy Tour campaign* (London, 1971).

⁹ R. Hyam and P. Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok: Britain and South Africa since the Boer War* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 317.

¹⁰ C. Ford, ‘Hain stopped play’, *The Guardian*, 23 May 1970, p. 11a.

at influencing the opinions of the white South African elite; with one in every four belonging to a sports club, and rugby in particular holding a 'semi-mystical' status, it was believed that effecting sporting isolation would intensify conflict within the country, adding a greater urgency to internal pressures for change.¹¹ SAN-ROC had already had a considerable impact, forcing the exclusion of South Africa from the Olympics in both 1964 and 1968, eventually resulting in the International Olympic Committee's announcement that it would become the first nation to be expelled from the movement on 15 May 1970.¹² In targeting cricket and rugby, STST was attacking two of the last remaining sports to maintain contact with South Africa, and it did so by introducing a new dimension to the boycott movement; direct action.

In her seminal discussion of direct action in 1973, April Carter observed that it was 'a popular but somewhat ambiguous term.'¹³ The same remains true today; it has evolved far beyond her discussion of its role as a challenge to liberal democracy to become more closely associated with militant anarchist movements.¹⁴ Falling mostly under the broader umbrella of non-violent collective action, it distinguishes itself from symbolic forms of protest through its emphasis on forcing concrete change, be that through noncooperation, obstruction or defiance. Sidney Tarrow has written widely on 'cycles of protest', in which social movements learn from one another: the development of direct action, with its roots in the anarcho-syndicalism of early twentieth century industrial action and the Gandhian non-violent tradition is certainly an example of such a phenomenon.¹⁵ In his discussion of contentious politics he identifies three basic types of

¹¹ R. Archer & A. Bouillon, *The South African game: Sport and racism* (London, 1982), p. 1. For a discussion of the sporting boycott see A. Guelke, 'The politicisation of South African sport' in L. Allison (ed.), *The Politics of Sport* (Manchester, 1986), pp. 118-148, and R. Nixon, 'Apartheid on the Run: The South African Sports Boycott', *Transition* 58 (1992), p. 68-88. The case for the effectiveness of sanctions is most effectively put in M. Orkin (ed.), *Sanctions against Apartheid* (Cape Town, 1989).

¹² R. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid: a history of the movement in Britain, 1959-1994: a study in pressure group politics* (London, 2005), p. 96.

¹³ A. Carter, *Direct Action and Liberal Democracy* (Oxford, 1973), p. 3.

¹⁴ See D. Graeber, *Direct Action: An Ethnography* (Edinburgh, 2009), especially pp. 201-239 for a discussion of the links between anarchism and direct action.

¹⁵ S. Tarrow, *Power in movement: social movements and contentious politics* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 141-160; for the development of direct action see Carter, *Direct Action and Liberal Democracy*, pp. 3-17.

collective action; violence, disruption and convention. Direct action sits firmly in the central category of the three. It is not totally removed from violence, as when destruction of property and the clashes that can emerge between protestors and police are considered this line becomes somewhat blurred, however as Carter observed ‘emphasis on violence cannot be taken very far without abandoning direct action altogether in favour of more specifically violent styles of resistance or rebellion’.¹⁶ The dominance of global neoliberalism and its challenge to state-based democracy has shifted the focus of theorists of civil resistance towards the further potential held in transnational movements, and caused Carter to rethink her original work.¹⁷ However, she maintains forty years on that we cannot understand or study direct action in isolation from the campaigns in which it is used; in many cases action is specific to the situation.

For here is where STST can illuminate what contributes to a successful direct action campaign. It is by no means a completely comprehensive example; Gene Sharp, in his classic exposition of the varying methods of non-violent action, outlines 198 different methods, of which a mere 18 can be identified in STST’s campaign.¹⁸ Its resounding success, however, means that it remains a pertinent one. For Hain, the campaign was ‘something of a social and political phenomenon in the way it gathered such force in so short a space of time.’¹⁹ This, if anything, merits close analysis of precisely what direct action contributed to the campaign, particularly considering current literature is adamant in its insistence that it was the ‘grass roots agitation and demonstration [that] forced the cancellation’.²⁰ Kevin Jeffries has recently argued that party politics in the run up to the General Election did more to force the situation,

¹⁶ Carter, *Direct Action and Liberal Democracy*, p. 22.

¹⁷ A. Carter, *Direct Action and Democracy Today* (Cambridge, 2009).

¹⁸ G. Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston, 1973), pp. 109-445.

¹⁹ Hain, *Don’t Play with Apartheid*, p. 152.

²⁰ B. Murray, ‘The Sports Boycott and Cricket: The Cancellation of the 1970 South African Tour of England’, *South African Historical Journal* 46 (2002), pp. 248. See also R. Holt, *Sport in Britain, 1945-2000* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 162-4; J. Williams, *Cricket and Race* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 53-75; B. Murray & C. Merrett, *Caught behind: race and politics in springbok cricket* (Johannesburg, 2004), pp. 117-145; R. Lapchick, *The politics of race and international sport: the case of South Africa* (Connecticut, 1975), pp. 154-80.

particularly with reference to the 'law and order' debate into which the Conservative party absorbed the threatened protests.²¹ However, we can go much further to examine precisely what direct action contributed to the overall campaign, as well as looking to the external political factors at play beyond the debates it raised over the maintenance of law and order in Britain. In 2007, the organising committee of the Oxford University Project on 'Civil Resistance and Power Politics: Domestic and International Dimensions' drew up a list of seventeen questions for further exploration, the second of which asks;

To the extent that a non-violent movement was able to operate effectively, was this in part due to particular favourable circumstances in the overall power situation, both domestic and international? How important are methods of civil resistance as opposed to the conditions within which it operates?²²

STST will be used here to shed light on this question, through a thorough examination of both the campaign itself and the political manoeuvring that took place in the months leading up to Callaghan's intervention.

In order to gain a full picture of the campaign, and to be able to dissect it to establish the role its direct action tactics played, wide ranging research was undertaken. Peter Hain's personal account of the campaign, *Don't Play with Apartheid*, published a mere year after its completion, provided a wealth of insight and immediate reflection from the man who played such a central role in its construction. The National Archives and the records of the MCC were consulted for clues as to the impact of the campaign on the decision-making of the authorities, and the memoirs of those involved likewise gave invaluable insight. The Anti-Apartheid Movement archives and interviews they conducted reveal both the campaign's relationship with the umbrella movement and the personal motivations of the protestors; these too emerge from *Cricket Conspiracy*, a pamphlet containing verbatim transcripts from Hain's trial in 1972 for conspiracy to incite violence in the demonstrations. Together, alongside the wealth of publicity received by the campaign, they lay bare the stark limitations of direct action protest in

²¹ K Jeffries, *Sport and Politics in Modern Britain* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2012), pp. 105-16.

²² A. Roberts and T. G. Ash (eds.), *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present* (Oxford, 2009).

Britain at the dawn of the 1970s; despite their Herculean efforts in forcing the issue back into the public eye, eventually more traditional lobbying on both an internal and international scale took over, and thus the cancellation of the 1970 South African cricket tour did not hinge on direct action alone.

Chapter One

*We were not content to stand idly by any longer. We chose militancy. And it is because of this that we won.*¹

These words by Peter Hain, written less than a year after his victory, clearly reveal his personal emphasis on direct action as the key to his group's success. Stop the Seventy Tour came to be defined by its militant tactics, which were seen by contemporaries as the lynchpin of the movement, and certainly were what came to differentiate it as a distinct, separate group under the broader umbrella of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. It represented a departure from more traditional picketing and protest marches, instead focusing on actual disruption of matches and the tour in general. As the tactic which lay at the heart of STST, it merits considerable analysis to reveal what it actually contributed to the campaign and why it was so passionately advocated by the group.

The adoption of direct action tactics was, for Hain, rooted in the disillusionment of the radical youth movement following the anti-war protest on 27 October 1968 in London. After over 100,000 people had taken to the streets to protest the Vietnam War 'the authorities woke up to find the system still there and the war in Vietnam ground on.'² This was a turning point, representing the exhaustion of the tactic of mass, symbolic demonstration around which the whole movement had been organised, and laid bare the necessity for more explosive protest methods. Ernest Rodker, an activist who cut his teeth on the Committee of 100 and was present at the early meetings of STST, reminisced in 2013 how he thought 'it was taken for granted that we should not just be writing letters and trying to see principal officials involved in the tour...doing disruptive

¹ Hain, *Don't Play with Apartheid*, p. 200.

² P. Hain, *Radical Regeneration* (London, 1975), p. 4.

activities was sort of in the general discussion.³ Christabel Gurney, then editor of *Anti-Apartheid News* and another who was involved in the early protests, recalled how ‘all of that was tremendously motivating and, you know, it was slightly risky because you were liable to get arrested but in a way it was kind of, you really felt part of a big campaign.’⁴ The adoption of direct action was, then, based on more than its inherent effectiveness but also on its ability to galvanise a generation of activists who wished to see more than symbolism in their protests. This was particularly pertinent to sports apartheid protests in Britain, which up until that point had been saturated with symbolism and little action.⁵ The deputy president of Leicester University Student Union, Gerrard Murray, revealed his frustration at this when he said ‘I know that you don’t go with 3,000 people marching down the road thinking you are going to stop a rugby tour. You don’t stop it that way.’⁶ Direct action provided fresh motivation for those wishing to see positive action, and was therefore perfect for rallying activists to STST’s cause in its fledgling days.

It was also a reaction, in Hain’s words, to the ‘stubborn intransigence of the cricket authorities’.⁷ At the press conference announcing the campaign its secretary, Hugh Geach, circulated a letter appealing for support. He wrote how ‘pressure and PA representations have been tried on the MCC but so far all seems to have failed...the MCC is at the moment continuing with its pig-headed attitude and is allowing the invitation to the South African cricket team to stand.’⁸ As April Carter has pointed out, STST was using much the same arguments as the Suffragette movement used half a century earlier to justify their action; it was the only way to force the relevant authorities to take notice.⁹ In short, it was an argument of necessity. The idea was to pose a

³ Interview with Ernest Rodker, 9 August 2013 [<http://aamarchives.org/file-view/category/77-ernest-rodker.html>] (29 December 2015), p. 2.

⁴ Interview with Christabel Gurney, 16 October 2013 [<http://aamarchives.org/interviews/christabel-gurney.html>] (29 December 2015), p. 2.

⁵ P. Hain, *Sing the beloved country* (London, 1996), p. 50.

⁶ Humphry, *Cricket conspiracy*, p. 81.

⁷ Hain, *Don’t Play with Apartheid*, p. 124.

⁸ Stokes, ‘Springboks facing chaos’, p. 11c.

⁹ Carter, *Direct Action and Liberal Democracy*, p. 56.

challenge which simply could not be ignored, and over the coming months they were certainly to follow through on this mission statement.

For this was a central tenet of the effectiveness of direct action; that it could not be ignored. Its application to the field of sporting protest was new and, as such, newsworthy, and even in the early stages of the campaign this became startlingly evident. Before the STST committee was formed, the Young Liberals, including Hain, had piloted the tactic at the tour of the Wilfred Isaacs XI, a privately sponsored cricket tour of a South African team in the summer of 1969. Despite their relative inexperience, they managed to disrupt the second match at Oxford, running onto the pitch and halting play for over forty minutes, until it was eventually abandoned for the day. This small protest still received extensive media coverage, even meriting a front page headline in *The Times* with a large accompanying photo of the event.¹⁰ It was a telling sign of things to come, and as the campaign took off it would capture the headlines at every turn. When the threat of disruption at Iffley Road forced the opening match of the rugby tour to move to Twickenham, the news was carried on the front page of every national newspaper, and in ‘all but one it was the lead story’.¹¹ Subsequent demonstrations in Swansea and Aberdeen received similar coverage, and as the sensational case of the threatened locust plague proved even the threat of action could elicit a frenzied response from the media.¹² At a time when anti-apartheid activism had hit a lull in Britain, this was a welcome injection of publicity which thrust not just racist selection policies, but by association the whole issue of apartheid, back under the noses of the British public.¹³ It is indisputable that this was as a result of the militant tactics of STST; the symbolic

¹⁰ ‘Race protest halts cricket match’, *The Times*, 9 July 1969, p. 1; see also ‘Oxford match will be played’, *The Guardian*, 9 July 1969, p. 17.

¹¹ Hain, *Don't Play with Apartheid*, p. 130; see M. Dowdney, ‘Plan to Storm the Springboks’, *Daily Mirror*, 5 November 1969, p. 1; ‘Coach trips to Springbok protest’, *The Times*, 5 November 1969, p. 1; ‘S. Africans’ game today at Twickenham’, *The Guardian*, 5 November 1969, p. 1.

¹² ‘Student threatens Springbok tour with locusts’, p. 15; ‘Plan to disrupt cricket tour with locusts’, *The Times*, 11 May 1970, p. 2; ‘Locusts to help cricket protests’, *The Guardian*, 11 May 1970, p. 18.

¹³ For the necessity of such an injection, see S. Stevens, ‘Why South Africa?’, pp. 206-8 and also C. Gurney, ‘The 1970s: The Anti-Apartheid Movement’s difficult decade’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35 (2009), pp. 471-87.

protests they had come to view as ineffectual certainly would not have garnered them anywhere near as much publicity. At a conference on Racialism in Sport on 30 November 1969, Denis Brutus, president of SAN-ROC, noted that ‘the present scale of protest and debate is unprecedented on this question: and it is certain that this will grow in the future’.¹⁴ Herein, then, lies the first and probably the most important contribution of direct action to the campaign.

This elevation of STST to ‘a household term’ was not merely a result of the extremely visible nature of the protest, but also due to its controversial nature.¹⁵ In setting down his thoughts on direct action tactics in 1975, Hain wrote of the importance of ‘polarisation’, recasting the issue into one in which it would be impossible for observers to ‘sit on the fence’.¹⁶ This was certainly the case with STST; Callaghan observed that the tour was ‘one of the few issues of recent times where public opinion has been divided right down the middle’.¹⁷ In stopping the Seventy tour, however, it was not so much the issue of racialism as the methods of the protestors that sparked the greatest debate. Whilst the negative implications of this in detracting from the message of the campaign will be discussed later, it is worth noting that the old adage of ‘no publicity is bad publicity’ may perhaps be pertinent here. In addition, the nature of direct action requires a protestor to put themselves on the line, in many cases legally and even physically, over a matter of conscience. This did not go unnoticed by many commentators, and there was a recognition that for so many to care so much, here must be an issue worthy of attention. For every derisive letter in *The Spectator* dismissing the ‘world-shattering issue of whether we should play a game of cricket’ there were articles encouraging demonstrators to ‘go on making their presence felt’ as ‘a tribute to the

¹⁴ MSS AAM 1450- SAN-ROC position paper for 30 November 1969 Racialism and Sport conference.

¹⁵ Hain, *Don't Play with Apartheid*, p. 11.

¹⁶ Hain, *Radical regeneration*, p. 121.

¹⁷ P. Evans, ‘Cancel the cricket tour—Callaghan’, *The Times*, 22 May 1970, p. 1b.

strength of feeling in Britain about apartheid in sport.¹⁸ On a more superficial level, the militant tactic allowed journalists to use the kind of sensationalist language that grabs headlines — ‘To the barricades at Lords’ and the like — which combined with the moral dimension of the protest lent the campaign a distinctive media appeal.¹⁹

This appeal was enhanced through clever cultivation of relationships with the media by Hain, and his personal role should not be underestimated. Gordon Winter, a freelance journalist, remembered how he was ‘a very cool, articulate, independent, reasonable man’, and that ‘you phoned Peter and you got what you wanted.’²⁰ There was a distinct fascination with the man who was spending his lunch breaks at university in a phone box talking to the press, which, combined with his personal awareness of how to manage the media effectively, helped hugely in sustaining interest. The fact that it was against him alone that a private prosecution was brought following the campaign’s success, for conspiracy to force cancellation by unlawful means, highlights the impact he had as a figurehead for the campaign.²¹ Brutus called him a ‘dramatically effective’ campaigner, and even those within the cricketing establishment, against whom he was working, conceded that he was ‘extraordinarily articulate’ for his age.²² Whilst the direct action deployed by STST was in itself newsworthy, the skilful management of the press by Hain elevated the publicity they received. As he himself wrote, ‘the image of the campaign is created principally through press relations’, and his cultivation of relationships with the media played a central role in the successful publicising of STST’s cause.²³

¹⁸ L. Weidberg, ‘Cricket, lovely cricket’, *The Spectator*, 9 May 1970, p. 631a; ‘Apartheid on the run’, *The Guardian*, 6 November 1969, p. 10a-b.

¹⁹ ‘To the barricades at Lord’s’, *The Guardian*, 13 February 1970, p. 10.

²⁰ Humphry, *Cricket Conspiracy*, p. 49.

²¹ MSS AAM 1436 - ‘The Queen vs. Peter Hain’ charge for offences, Autumn session 1971; MCC/CRI/5/2/54 - Francis Bennion, ‘Why I am prosecuting Peter Hain’.

²² D. Brutus & B. Lindfors, *The Denis Brutus tapes: Essays at autobiography* (Oxford, 2011), p. 29; J. Bailey, *Conflicts in Cricket* (London, 1989), p. 59.

²³ Hain, *Radical Regeneration*, p. 124.

Crucially, however, the sum of the contribution of direct action to the campaign was not publicity alone. Unlike most symbolic protest, marches and petitions being the most pertinent examples here, it does not rely on sheer numbers to make its point. The actions of one person in causing disruption can be just as fruitful as the actions of many, and as such it afforded a significant amount of autonomy to local groups and individuals. In fact, STST explicitly encouraged this, and a memorandum issued by the committee in London read:

Avoid like the plague: formal bureaucratic and time wasting procedures like Executives, standing orders, sub-committees, complex voting procedures. STST needs commitment, ideas and the minimum of formal organisation.²⁴

This indicates awareness of their greatest strength, which was the spontaneity of many of the acts of their members. By their nature, cricket and rugby tours are nomadic, and the ability of small local groups to cause disruption without necessitating the transportation of large numbers of people around the country was vital. These local groups demonstrated to a degree a level of formal organisation; communications to the central London committee came on personalised letterheads for each group and relayed their campaigning and fundraising efforts.²⁵ However, action could still be taken independently by individuals both within these local groups and without any formal association. William Laithwaite, when giving evidence at Hain's trial, described how he painted a red 'AA' on his shirt and invaded the field of play at one of the Springbok games in an impromptu act, only engaging with STST after he had done so.²⁶ In his analysis of social movements Tarrow emphasises the 'delicate balance between formal organisation and autonomy' necessary to sustain them; the individualistic nature of much of the direct action allowed this to be maintained.²⁷

²⁴ MCC/CRI/5/2/53 - Memorandum to local STST groups, 5 May 1970.

²⁵ MSS AAM 1436 - Ruth Addison (Secretary of STST Huddersfield) to STST National Committee, 3 June 1970; MSS AAM 1436- Jenni Whittam (Secretary of STST Bassetlaw) to STST National Committee, 1 June 1970.

²⁶ Humphry, *Cricket Conspiracy*, p. 77.

²⁷ Tarrow, *Power in movement*, p. 137.

The benefits of this localised action are best illustrated through two groups that formed during the campaign. The first is the ‘Fireworks Day Committee’, which was integral in ensuring that the opening shots fired by STST hit their target — its members were responsible for the transferral of the first match of the rugby tour to Twickenham from Oxford. John Sheldon, treasurer of the committee, recalled in 2000 how alongside just two others he mobilised Oxford colleges to take up their ticket allocations for the game, distributed whistles and prepared the ‘thousands’ of students they had recruited for a mass pitch invasion.²⁸ Whilst their plans never came to fruition because the authorities caught wind of them, in Hain’s eyes they managed to force a victory before the match had even begun, and the headlines generated by the match’s movement signified STST’s first media coup.²⁹ Reflecting on the organisation, Sheldon noted how ‘it certainly was not a formal network, the network all worked off pieces of paper.’³⁰ They had not coordinated their plans with Hain and the STST committee, but taken the initiative themselves on hearing of the cause. That such a large victory of the campaign in its fledgling stages was brought about by this autonomous local mobilisation is telling of the wider contribution it made to the effectiveness of the movement.

If Sheldon’s committee was an isolated incident, the ‘inner action group’ formed to work on direct action beyond the invasion of rugby pitches was a sustained example of the impact a small group of individuals could have. Rodker was part of this smaller circle, and participated in activities such as the glueing of Springbok players’ hotel room doors, and an attempt to break in to Lord’s cricket ground in order to play a ‘multi-racial’ game of cricket.³¹ The latter was particularly significant for the publicity it gained in the interim period between the two tours; as there were

²⁸ Interview with John Sheldon, 28 March 2000 [<http://aamarchives.org/interviews/john-sheldon.html>] (29 December 2015), p. 4-5.

²⁹ Hain, *Don't Play with Apartheid*, p. 130.

³⁰ Interview with John Sheldon, p. 5.

³¹ Interview with Ernest Rodker, p. 4.

no matches to disrupt, a concrete example of STST's intent complemented the threats of action they were issuing for the summer and generated headlines during a quiet period.³² However, in Rodker's words they 'weren't particularly concerned about publicity. Our aim was to harass, as it were, the South African authorities.'³³ This is revealing of another advantage offered by direct action; the psychological impact it had on the players against whom STST were demonstrating. The group realised the potential for this halfway through the rugby tour, announcing in December that they intended to 'follow their every movement' in order to continually hammer home their disgust of the selection policies which had brought those players to Britain.³⁴ Reflecting on the tour, the South African captain Dawe de Villiers acknowledged the impact this had, describing the 'unnerving effect' of the demonstrators, and the Rugby Football Union's liaison officer for the team, Stanley Couchman, noted how 'they became very strained, particularly the young members of the team.'³⁵ This certainly contributed to their abysmal touring performance, which saw them leave without a single test match victory. In effecting such profound impact on the players themselves, this inner action group was hoping to force a longer term change in their outlook as sportsmen. For as much as the campaign's immediate aim was to get the tour the following summer cancelled, it had its root in abhorrence of racist selection policies in international sport. Targeting the Springbok players as individuals provided yet another way to drive this point home, and was done in the hope that they would carry the message back with them to their superiors. Thus direct action was not just contributing to the short term aims of the campaign, but also to its broader message.

For Hain and the other Young Liberals, however, direct action represented something far greater than a form of protest. As Hain argued, 'direct action is the

³² D. Malcolm, 'Demonstration c. and b. out of Lord's', *The Guardian*, 21 April 1970, p. 7.

³³ Interview with Ernest Rodker, p. 4.

³⁴ M. Dean, 'Springbok campaign changing', *The Guardian*, 24 December 1969, p. 4.

³⁵ Humphry, *Cricket Conspiracy*, p. 37-40, 45.

other side of the coin of direct democracy'. In other words, it represented a step towards the participatory politics that the so-called 'Red Guard' of the Young Liberals wished to see implemented in Britain.³⁶ They wished to mobilise people around single, usually local, issues to give them the experience of achieving concrete change for themselves. It was hoped this would spark a broader trend of mass participation in decision making, rather than leaving it to professional politicians.³⁷ This concept of 'community politics' was deeply embedded in the STST campaign; from its encouragement of autonomous local action to the emphasis it placed on 'commitment, action and impact [as] the language of the campaign'.³⁸ For a group who were only just beginning to articulate this idea, STST represented a solid working model for the broader system they wished to see implemented, and reflected their deep belief in the power of local movements to effect change.

John Arlott, a widely respected cricket commentator and a strong advocate of the cancellation of the 1970 tour, wrote in *The Guardian* midway through the rugby tour that 'the demonstrators, by their action against the Springbok rugby tour, in a few months have achieved more than the cricket officials have done by 15 years of polite acquiescence.'³⁹ Clearly, there is much to be said for the effectiveness of direct action in furthering the cause of STST. Aside from the significance it carried for those young radicals wishing to see participatory democracy become the norm, it allowed for disparate, small and localised groups to have a real impact and, of course, brought the movement the publicity so needed for any protest to be heard. It was a breath of fresh air, lending new life to anti-apartheid protest in Britain and certainly deserves credit for this. However, it was not without its pitfalls, and as we shall see by no means did it form the lynchpin of the campaign's success.

³⁶ Hain, *Radical regeneration*, p. 110.

³⁷ For the origins of this concept see J. Meadowcroft, 'The Origins of Community Politics: New Liberalism, Grimond and the Counter-Culture' in *Journal of Liberal Democrat History* 28 (2000), pp. 3-9.

³⁸ MCC/CRI/5/2/61 - Memoranda to local STST groups.

³⁹ J. Arlott, 'Progress—but only into a cul-de-sac', *The Guardian*, 19 December 1969, p. 17a.

Chapter Two

*It is the Home Secretary's specific responsibility to preserve individual liberty under the law, yet he has capitulated to mob rule and thus taken the first step on the road to anarchy*¹

Victor Goodhew's damning indictment of Callaghan in the House following the tour's cancellation would seem to place huge emphasis on the role of direct action in forcing the government's hand. However, his statement is more revealing about the negative implications direct action had for the campaign, as his characterisation of the protestors' actions as 'mob rule' was hardly atypical. For a central problem with utilising a controversial tactic was just that; that it was controversial. Whilst Hain's emphasis on polarising opinion brought vocal and emphatic allies to his cause, it also alienated a large body of opinion who, despite a moral opposition to apartheid, could not find it in themselves to condone tactics which they saw as bordering on violent. Goodhew's words also reveal another, unforeseen pitfall of direct action; its resultant appropriation by the Conservatives into their wider smear campaign over 'law and order' against the Wilson government. Images of protestors clashing with police provided the perfect fodder for their accusations over rising crime rates, and when the government finally intervened to request cancellation, condemnation focused tightly on issues of policing. This diverted much of the publicity away from the issue at hand— racialist selection and apartheid— and was an unwanted intrusion into the campaign. Whilst the focus of STST on direct action undoubtedly gave them an edge as a protest movement and brought a wealth of benefits, it was in many respects a double edged sword.

¹ *Hansard*, 5th series, 1970, dccc. 1717.

David Graeber has written that direct action, at its core, involves ‘insisting on acting as if one is already free’, and is fundamentally a confrontational rejection of state hierarchy that ‘falls short of outright military insurrection’.² It was its confrontational nature that provoked such a strong reaction from many quarters of the British public, and in the eyes of many rugby and cricket fans a minority group were imposing their will over a perfectly lawful pastime. In a letter to *The Times*, one E. F. G. Haigh implored the authorities to stop ‘thousands of...citizens from being deprived of an innocent summer pursuit by a small minority of barbarians’, and this reduction of the protestors’ cause to one of mere barbarism was characteristic of the antagonistic reactions against the campaign.³ In the same letter, Haigh refers to the ‘thugs and hooligans who attach themselves to any cause which gives them an excuse for vandalism’; clearly, the group’s disruptive methods were preventing many from engaging with the issues against which they were protesting. This strong reaction was exemplified in the fund launched by various MCC members to maintain the controversial tour, which after five days received nearly 3000 letters containing nearly £15,000 in support.⁴ The letters reveal a deep disregard for the demonstrators, one referring to them as ‘maniacs’, another, claiming to ‘abhor apartheid as much as anyone’, was ‘contributing to prevent this threat to personal freedom in this country’.⁵ One supporter of the MCC even went so far as to express the opinion that ‘to cancel the S.A tour would be the greatest threat to “freedom” since Hitler came to power.’⁶ Hyperbolic expressions aside, the demonstrations had clearly provoked a significant backlash. Richard Crossman, Secretary of State for Social Services, was of the opinion that ‘there is no doubt whatsoever that the demonstrators have terribly damaged their own anti-apartheid cause. They have strengthened racialism and

² Graeber, *Direct Action*, pp. 204, 207.

³ E. F. G. Haigh, ‘South African Cricket Tour: Threat of Hooliganism’, *The Times*, 5 February 1970, p. 9a.

⁴ MCC/CRI/5/2/53 - ‘The 1970 Cricket Fund’ press release.

⁵ MCC/CRI/5/2/58 - M. Bird to S. C. Griffiths, 12 February 1970; MCC/CRI/5/2/53 - C. M. Falconer to 1970 Cricket Fund, 17 May 1970.

⁶ MCC/CRI/5/2/58 - S. N. Howell to S. C. Griffiths, 18 May 1970.

turned sportsmen against them'.⁷ This was clearly not an uncommon view, and a perhaps unavoidable consequence of their controversial tactics.

This strong reaction was, in part, due to a degree of disbelief that the demonstrators could feel so strongly about an issue that many viewed as far removed from their immediate lives. Haigh's belief that the demonstrators were merely attaching themselves to a cause that gave them an excuse to run riot is indicative of this, as is the accusation levelled by Wilf Wooller, secretary of Glamorgan County Cricket Club and described by Hain as an 'arch enemy' of the campaign, that the protestors were being paid.⁸ Christabel Gurney has said that 'I do think that anti-apartheid was a sort of case study of what can be done where people act in solidarity with people who are struggling a long way away, for no obvious personal gain.'⁹ Ronald Inglehart's identification of the post-war generation's shift to post-materialist values is surely evident here, and this bred a fundamental lack of understanding in the motivation of the young activists.¹⁰ This was exacerbated by the distinct lack of overlap between the demographic of the protestors and the sports fans in whose domain they were protesting. Whilst their dismissal in the pro-government South African newspaper *Die Beeld* as a 'bunch of Left-wing, workshy, refugee long-hairs' was evidently heavily skewed, it was not entirely unreflective of sentiments back in Britain.¹¹ In a letter to *The Sunday Times* the chairman of Gravesend Rugby Club suggested that the 'long-haired louts of uncertain gender that invaded the pitch at Twickenham...should be washed, shaved and cropped'.¹² This difference was even acknowledged by those within STST; Hain wrote how demonstrators 'cut their hair and shaved their beards to look like rugby supporters', and Gurney mentioned how her

⁷ R. H. S. Crossman, *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister* (3 vols, London, 1975-7), iii, 846.

⁸ Hain, *Don't Play with Apartheid*, p. 153. Wooller would repeat these accusations several times over the course of the campaign, insisting as late as Hain's trial three years later that this was the case; Humphry, *Cricket Conspiracy*, p. 60-1.

⁹ Interview with Christabel Gurney, p. 2.

¹⁰ R. Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: changing values and political styles among Western publics* (Princeton, 1977).

¹¹ This statement was reprinted in 'S. Africa baits Wilson on 'lawless mob'', *The Guardian*, 10 November 1969, p. 1b.

¹² Hain, *Don't Play with Apartheid*, p. 153.

disruption of the Wilf Isaac's match at the Oval was 'the only time I had been to a cricket match.'¹³ If the tactics adopted in the campaign were what instigated strong reactions against it, these differences served to widen the gap in understanding and damage the image of the campaign in the eyes of those within the sporting establishment.

More significant than the public backlash was the reaction of the cricketing authorities, for whom every demonstration seemed to bring even greater resolve to host the South Africans. As Jack Bailey, assistant secretary to the MCC, remembers; 'we were fighting for the world of cricket as we knew it; for the right to play cricket under the law of the land.'¹⁴ They saw their traditional institution as under attack from outsiders, and rushed to its defence with relish. Twice, meetings of the Cricket Council Emergency Executive Committee were held to discuss the future of the tour and twice they voted to maintain it. The first of these meetings came on the 12 February, following their sending a deputation to the Home Secretary on the 29 January to discuss the policing of the matches. At this first meeting, the prospect of shortening the tour to ease the burden on police was discussed, and following a vote in the Executive Committee it was drastically cut from 28 matches to 12, all of which were to be held at 'defensible' grounds.¹⁵ The second came on the 18 May, when opposition to the tour had reached crisis point, in which the chairman Maurice Allom stated that the decision was 'the most important... that the Council would ever have to take.'¹⁶ Still, the Council voted 18 votes to 8 to sustain the tour, with the qualifier that all future tours would be suspended until the South African team was selected on a multi-racial basis. An acknowledgement, then, of the demonstrators' cause, but a clear intransigence when it came to the current tour. They were holding firm to their belief that maintaining sporting contact with South

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 137; Interview with Christabel Gurney, p. 2.

¹⁴ Bailey, *Conflicts in Cricket*, p. 57.

¹⁵ MCC/CRI/5/2/54 - Minutes from a meeting with the Home Secretary and MCC, 29 January 1970; MCC/CRI/5/2/53 - Minutes from a meeting of the Cricket Council Emergency Executive Committee, 12 February 1970.

¹⁶ MCC/CRI/5/2/53 - Minutes from an emergency meeting of the Cricket Council, 18 May 1970.

Africa, rather than imposing sanctions through isolation, was the best way to implement change; the 'building bridges' argument. In a pamphlet released to defend the tour, the MCC wrote that 'it is felt that encouragement, not isolation, is what is needed to ensure that further progress can be made', and this was indignantly repeated time and time again in the face of protests.¹⁷ This was indicative of the feelings not just within the cricketing establishment, but its wider community; a poll conducted in January of the Cricketers' Association, the trade union for county cricketers, saw 124 votes in favour of the tour and 28 against it, with only 3 of the latter group objecting on moral grounds.¹⁸ Billy Griffiths, the secretary of the Council, had written to Hain in September 1969 warning him that 'the explicit threat of physical interference with play will hardly win the hearts or minds of the Council', and this was to prove accurate.¹⁹ As a frustrated Callaghan wrote to Harold Wilson, 'some members of that body would die in the last ditch rather than call the tour off', and the confrontational protest methods used by STST certainly contributed to this attitude.²⁰

Where much literature on direct action focuses on the line between violence and non-violence in demonstration, Hain and STST sought to negate this debate entirely, firmly committing themselves to a non-violent campaign. Owing to the confrontational nature of the protest this proved to be impossible in practice, and provided further fodder for opponents of the demonstrations. Hain himself acknowledged this, reflecting that 'one of our failures, and one of the opposition's few successes, was that the public distinction between militant non-violence and violence became very blurred.'²¹ Nowhere was this more evident than at the Springbok match in Swansea on the 15 November, where demonstrators, police, and rugby fans clashed in a brutal manner. Geach was dragged off the pitch by his genitals by one over-zealous steward, and the committee

¹⁷ MCC/CRI/5/2/53 - 'Why the 70 Tour?' pamphlet.

¹⁸ Williams, *Cricket and Race*, p. 67.

¹⁹ MCC/CRI/5/2/53 - S. C. Griffiths to P. Hain, 14 September 1969.

²⁰ TNA PREM 13/3499 - J. Callaghan to H. Wilson, 30 April 1970.

²¹ Hain, *Don't Play with Apartheid*, p. 199.

called immediately for a public enquiry into the day's events. Regardless of where the blame lay for the violence, the damage was done, and accusations of 'mob rule' and hooliganism would be levied for the remainder of the campaign.

The situation was also not helped by the decentralised nature of STST. For whilst this was clearly one of its greatest assets, it also meant that the committee could not control what was done in its name, even if it crossed the explicit lines they had set for themselves. On the night of the 19 January, fourteen of the seventeen county cricket grounds around the country were broken into, pitches dug up and weed killer sprayed over the outfield. In causing extensive property damage, the unknown group of demonstrators— responsibility was never claimed by any group— had crossed the line into 'violent' protest. Despite insisting even two years later that he thought it was 'morally wrong, and I stress morally wrong, to dig up cricket grounds', Hain's group were tainted by association with the acts.²² The leading article in *The Guardian*, one of the more sympathetic broadsheets to STST, best highlighted the damage done:

They are wrong because the right to protest does not encompass the right to shove one's views, however sound, down the throats of others and to interfere with their freedom. They are self-defeating because they will make it more difficult for people like David Sheppard to increase the numbers of cricketers opposing apartheid. To put out of use grounds on which immense care is lavished is a spectacular, but not an effective way of making the anti-apartheid case. Peaceful demonstration is harder and less spectacular, but has more long-term effect.²³

Whilst Hain later came to see the raids as bringing more benefit than harm to the campaign, he based this on the fact that it was at the next meeting of the Cricket Council that the tour was reduced to matches at the more defensible grounds.²⁴ In his eyes, the message they had sent to the Council was more important than the increased alienation of many within the cricketing community that it brought. However, points of discussion for their meeting with Callaghan drawn up before the raids took place show that this reduction of the tour was already on the cards, and was not altered significantly by the

²² Humphry, *Cricket Conspiracy*, p. 71.

²³ 'Not Cricket, Not good sense', *The Guardian*, 21 January 1970, p. 10a-b.

²⁴ Hain, *Radical Regeneration*, p. 126.

events of 19 January.²⁵ The main achievement of the raids, then, was a public outcry at the destruction of many beloved cricket pitches, widening the gap between STST and the community they were attempting to influence.

STST's militant reputation also led to their cause being taken up by the Conservatives as part of their wider campaign over law and order. Called 'a favourite political football of the Conservative Opposition' by Wilson, this campaign had been heating up in the run up to the General Election, with Shadow Home Secretary Quintin Hogg accusing the Wilson administration of 'presiding...over the biggest crime wave of the century'.²⁶ Callaghan was bombarded with questions in the House by the Opposition over the role of the police in controlling demonstrations, and accusations that he was failing to preserve the lawful right of citizens to watch cricket in the face of hooliganism.²⁷ He also came under heavy fire for the general inefficiency of the police service, and in light of the concern over rising crime rates the protests were seen as symptomatic of a much larger issue. The problem was exacerbated by the Conservative party's close links with the MCC; in a letter to Griffiths, William Rees-Davies asked 'would it help you if I got together a group of Tory MPs quickly to meet you and some members of your committee to see how we can best help', in contrast to the 103 Labour and Liberal MPs who came out in support of cancellation.²⁸ When Wilson appeared on the television programme 'This Week' and expressed the view that 'everyone should be free to demonstrate against apartheid', Edward Heath quickly countered by explicitly backing the tour and denouncing Wilson's words as incitement to violence.²⁹ This appropriation by the Conservatives of STST into their law and order campaign drew

²⁵ MCC/CRI/5/2/54 - Memorandum to the Home Secretary from the Cricket Council, 29 December 1969.

²⁶ H. Wilson, *The Labour Government 1964-1970: a personal record* (London, 1971), p. 772; L. Chester, 'Callaghan: The Politics of Fear', *The Sunday Times*, 22 February 1970, p. 11.a.

²⁷ *Hansard*, 5th series, 1970, dccxcv. 1438-41.

²⁸ MCC/CRI/5/2/54 - W. R. Rees-Davies to S. C. Griffiths, 22 April 1970; MSS AAM 13 - Annual Report September 1969/August 1970.

²⁹ TNA CAB 164/674 - Verbatim transcript of an interview with H. Wilson on 'This Week', 17 April 1970; Wilson, *Labour Government*, p. 784.

much of the publicity away from the issues that Hain and his colleagues wished to focus on. In a letter to *The Guardian* on 30 April, Hain bemoaned how ‘it [was] becoming increasingly obvious that the issue is losing out to the ‘law and order’ controversy’, and that their campaign against racialism had ‘become a Conservative Party showpiece’.³⁰ Brutus also criticised the manner in which ‘protest is still being misunderstood and misrepresented— particularly in light of the role of the police’.³¹

In instructions issued to local STST groups ahead of the upcoming cricket tour, the central London committee were explicit:

KEEP TO THE ISSSUE- “APARTHEID AND SPORT” and refuse to be publicly committed on specific tactics. Don’t be sidetracked into useless questions like the length of demonstrators’ hair, “law and order” and “vandalism”.³²

A clear acknowledgement, then, of exactly where their direct action tactics were hindering their efforts. Whilst the group are certainly proof of the wealth of benefits direct action can bring, so too do they highlight its double-edged nature as a protest weapon, and illuminate the ways in which it can sidetrack a campaign.

Goodhew’s accusation that the cancellation of the cricket tour represented the first step on the road to anarchy was explicit in describing Callaghan’s intervention as a reaction to the threat of direct action in the coming months. However, in spite of the lengthy debate it raised over the competence of the police, it is worth asking how intimidating the warnings STST issued really were. Callaghan’s assertions that the police service were fully prepared for the onslaught the tour would bring may have been received sceptically by the Cricket Council, but they did contain considerable truth.³³ The Metropolitan Police Special Branch were fully informed on STST’s plans, and provided fortnightly updates on developments in their strategy.³⁴ The Cricket Council, too, had

³⁰ P. Hain, ‘A bumper from the Tories’, *The Guardian*, 30 April 1970, p. 12a.

³¹ MSS AAM 1450- SAN-ROC position paper.

³² MCC/CRI/5/2/53 - Memorandum to local STST groups.

³³ Bailey, *Conflicts in Cricket*, p. 61.

³⁴ TNA MEPO 31/30 - Special Branch reports on the South African cricket tour.

their own information sources on the group's proposed actions, and had secured assurances from the Chief Constables responsible for each test match location that they were fully prepared for any disruption the demonstrators might bring.³⁵ When they approached Callaghan initially to discuss the tour, their main concerns focused on who would pay for the manpower required, not that such manpower would be available and competent.³⁶ The idea that the threat of action was what caused the cancellation is undermined by the willingness revealed in the correspondence of the Cricket Council to weather the oncoming storm, and by the reluctance of the Wilson government to provide further ammunition for the Opposition's campaign against them. Whilst there were obvious reservations about the risk of violence brought by demonstrations, and this anxiety certainly heightened tensions around the tour, as we shall see, the cancellation by no means hinged on this anxiety alone, and Goodhew's words prove to be a remarkable simplification of the issues at hand.

³⁵ MCC/CRI/5/2/61 - Communications relating to ground protection.

³⁶ MCC/CRI/5/2/54 - Minutes from a meeting with the Home Secretary and MCC, 29 January 1970.

Chapter Three

*'The opposition to the tour was now taking on a life of its own and STST to some extent took a back seat to the high-level pressure that was being exerted'*¹

This was how Hain described the two months leading up to the cancellation of the 1970 cricket tour, the culmination of his own campaign. The 'broad public policy' on which Callaghan requested the Cricket Council withdraw their invitation to the South African Cricket Association included more than just the threats of disruption issued by STST, and here even Hain himself acknowledges that by this stage the issue had grown far beyond his hands. If direct action, or the threat thereof, was not in itself enough to stop the tour, then questions remain over Callaghan's motivations in intervening. His reasoning to the Council encompassed the threat to race relations in the era of Powellism and, crucially, the threatened boycott of the upcoming Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh that summer by a growing number of nations. He also had the weight behind him of considerable public opposition to the tour from a number of well-respected figures, whose vocal objections to the apartheid regime were often accompanied by a denunciation of the militant protests that had taken place. Groups distinct from STST were pursuing more traditional lobbying routes in order to negotiate with both the Cricket Council and the Government, and their role has often been neglected in discussions of the tour's cancellation.² Ultimately, close scrutiny of the events leading up to Callaghan's intervention reveals the superseding of the threat of future protest by other, more pressing concerns for the Wilson government.

¹ Hain, *Don't Play with Apartheid*, p. 178.

² Jeffries, *Sport and Politics*, p. 116.

It is worth pausing here for a moment to consider the relationship STST had with the wider Anti-Apartheid Movement. There is a very simple point to be made that, in 1969, anti-apartheid sentiment was not emerging out of a clear blue sky, and the AAM had been in action for nearly ten years when the STST committee was formed. The new group were therefore building on the existing groundwork that had been laid by the AAM over the past decade. Their relationship was a complex one. The dividing line between them proved to be the latter's tactics, which many in the AAM felt too controversial to associate themselves with, however there were still factions who advocated strongly for more direct protest. This conflict of attitudes is best represented in the strategy paper published in *Anti-Apartheid News* by Peter Hellyer in June 1969. Hellyer called for the expansion of the movement towards more militant tactics, explicitly calling for direct action. However, he also warned against extremism for fear that it would sever the movement's ties with the Labour and Liberal parties, and ruin their public image as a non-violent organisation. Interestingly, he even predicted the benefits that would be gained from a breakaway group such as STST, which would be affiliated but distanced enough to be free to pursue more controversial modes of protest.³

His warning against extremism was clearly heeded by the national committee, and at their meeting two months later it was decided that the backlash against militant demonstrations would be too great to sanction them.⁴ At the annual general meeting on 26 October 1969 a motion was proposed suggesting that the AAM, 'in the event of the MCC not withdrawing the invitation' to the South Africans, would 'regard disruption of the matches as entirely justifiable.'⁵ This was amended to 'if it does not withdraw the invitation the matches will inevitably be disrupted', with a note in the handwriting of the secretary Ethel de Keyser that the 'new form put forward incorporated the committee's

³ MSS AAM 2200 - *Anti-Apartheid News*, June 1969.

⁴ MSS AAM 43 - National Committee minutes, 2 August 1969.

⁵ MSS AAM 14 - Motions proposed for AGM, 26 October 1969.

wording'.⁶ A clear reluctance, then, to officially condone direct action. David Lawrence has argued, using the sports boycott movement as an illustrative example, that the AAM pioneered a new pressure group tactic of 'influencing from the outside', bypassing the normal channels of political pressure through populist militant techniques.⁷ However, this works on the premise that STST was fully absorbed into the movement, whereas Roger Fieldhouse's contention that Hain's group 'exposed the fact that AAM was unsure of its attitude to such direct action' appears far more plausible.⁸

They still, however, played a 'crucial organisational role' in the wider campaign against the cricket tour, and the pressure they exerted on the government through more traditional channels of protest should not be downplayed.⁹ The AAM London office alone distributed over 200,000 leaflets and posters, and it was their vice chairman Peter Jackson who circulated the letter in the House of Commons, signed by 103 MPs, supporting peaceful demonstrations against the tour.¹⁰ The movement also wrote to Commonwealth Heads of State asking them to consider withdrawal from the Commonwealth Games in protest, and on 12 February 1970, they handed a petition to the International Cricket Council signed by over 12,000 people.¹¹ Their actions against the tour provided a clear outlet for those who felt they could not engage with STST's controversial tactics, and the petition in particular served as a medium through which protest could be registered without having to resort to more extreme measures.

Such an outlet was also provided in David Sheppard's 'Fair Cricket Campaign', launched on 3 May 1970. Sheppard, Bishop of Woolwich and ex-England cricketer, had been a vociferous critic of apartheid for the duration of his career, refusing to play against the touring South African side in 1960. Well respected in cricketing circles, his

⁶ MSS AAM 14 - Report from 1969 AGM.

⁷ D. Lawrence, 'The Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain' (Oxford Univ. M. Phil Thesis, 2000).

⁸ Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 470.

⁹ Hain, *Sing the beloved country*, p. 59.

¹⁰ MSS AAM 13 - Annual Report, September 1969/August 1970, p. 19.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

opposition to the tour carried a weight that STST could not hope to obtain. His campaign also recruited Edward Boyle, a Conservative MP, as its vice chairman, a move which signalled the weakening of the Opposition's support of the tour. The press release on the campaign's formation explicitly stated that they had 'no intention of encouraging violence to further [their] aims', and this commitment to peaceful protest allowed them to engage with both the cricketing authorities and the government in a far more amicable manner than STST.¹² They held extensive meetings with the Cricket Council in which they presented reasoned cases for calling off the tour, as well as meeting with Denis Howell, minister for sport, to report on their discussions.¹³ Sheppard described their role as being 'a pressure group which attempted through argument and persuasion to gain our ends', and they certainly proved effective in lobbying the establishment.¹⁴ Rather than deploying confrontational methods which isolated the very people they were attempting to influence, Sheppard's group worked to win over the authorities and effect change through debate and discussion, adding another dimension to the overall campaign against the tour.

Further pressure on the government was brought to bear when on the 22 April the general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, Vic Feather, called for a complete boycott of the tour by union members. This was a 'watershed' moment in the movement's attitude towards South Africa, departing from the conservative stance they had taken over the previous decade.¹⁵ Whilst he explicitly denounced the 'uncompromising militancy' of STST, he advocated for passive resistance through a boycott of matches, and the statement came amongst a wave of union action against the tour.¹⁶ On 23 March, the *Observer* chapel of the National Union of Journalists had

¹² MSS AAM 1442 - Fair Cricket Campaign Press Release, 2 May 1970.

¹³ TNA PREM 13/3499 - Memorandum by Sir Burke Trend, 5 May 1970.

¹⁴ MSS AAM 1442 - Fair Cricket Campaign Newsletter, November 1970.

¹⁵ J. Major, 'The Trades Union Congress and Apartheid, 1948-1970', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 31 (2005), pp. 477-493.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 491.

announced they were proposing a motion at the next meeting of the central London branch calling for a 'media blackout' of the tour, and whilst the motion did not carry it was still the first time in the union's 63 year history that any move had been made to restrict the reporting of certain events.¹⁷ STST was, therefore, part of a much broader picture of public opposition to the tour, and an important role was played by traditional lobbying and public calls for cancellation.

The most critical pressure on the Wilson administration came, however, from the international outcry against the tour. On the 24 March 1970 the General Assembly of the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa met in Cairo, consisting of delegations from thirty independent African states. SAN-ROC delegates Wilfrid Brutus and Chris de Broglio attended the conference as observers, lobbying behind the scenes for action against the proposed tour.¹⁸ A month later, *The Guardian* reported that the Council were threatening a boycott of the Games by 13 African countries should the tour go ahead.¹⁹ The Foreign and Commonwealth office had sent enquiries to Commonwealth High Commissioners as early as January into the possible repercussions of the tour on relations, and it seemed that their fears were being confirmed.²⁰ By the 14 May, seven countries, including Pakistan and India, had announced their intention to boycott, and the FCO believed that a further seven were on the brink of announcing their solidarity.²¹ Howell reported to the House that the threat this posed to 'the longer-term interests of multi-racial sport in the Commonwealth transcends all other aspects of the issue', and privately to Wilson expressed the opinion that 'if it becomes clear that the Edinburgh Games will be virtually a "White Games" then this might justify a dramatic appeal to the

¹⁷ P. Wilby, 'Journalists disagree over Springbok ban', *Observer*, 12 April 1970.

¹⁸ TNA CAB 164/674 - Report on General Assembly of Supreme Council for Sport, 1 April 1970.

¹⁹ 'Africans will ban Games if tour goes on', *The Guardian*, 24 April 1970, p. 1.

²⁰ TNA FCO 45/728 - Minutes of a meeting with the Home Office, 27 January 1970.

²¹ TNA CAB 164/674 - Report for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the possible boycott of the Commonwealth games, 14 May 1970.

Cricket Council.²² Coming from a man who, more than most, was insistent on the preservation of the line between sports and politics, this statement reveals the heavy concern over the threatened boycott within the Sports Council. Therefore, when Callaghan reminded the Cricket Council of their responsibility to the sporting, not just cricketing, community, he was drawing on genuine fears within the Government that the Edinburgh Games would be irreparably damaged by the tour. Howell's prioritisation of the threat to the Games over his original reluctance to approach the Cricket Council is a crucial indication of just how central the threat proved to the eventual intervention by Callaghan; this international dimension to the pressure on the tour evidently catalysed the situation.

In his letter requesting the withdrawal of the invitation to the SACA, Callaghan also referred to the potential deterioration of race relations in Britain. It was certainly the consensus that this was a very real threat; the *Daily Mirror* commented that 'at this moment there is no more inflammable issue in the world than race' and that 'the tour will harden attitudes and sharpen antagonisms.'²³ On 23 March, Jeff Crawford, secretary of the West Indian Standing Conference, announced the formation of the West Indian Campaign against Apartheid Cricket, stating that the tour would be 'an insult to every black person'.²⁴ By the beginning of May, estimates suggested that seventy per cent of Jamaicans and West Indians in London had pledged their support to STST, and young Pakistanis, West Indians and Indians across the city united to plan a march they dubbed 'explanation day', accusing the MCC of 'condoning racism and insulting the black community'.²⁵ Speaking at the Conference on Community Relations on 18 March 1970, Callaghan had affirmed his personal commitment to maintaining 'broad tolerance' in Britain; his concern for the effects the tour would have on this were not mere political

²² D. Howell, *Made in Birmingham: the memoirs of Denis Howell* (London, 1970), p. 208; TNA PREM 13/3499 - Howell to Wilson, 6 May 1970.

²³ 'Blind and foolish', *The Daily Mirror*, 11 May 1970, p. 2b.

²⁴ 'W Indies group threat to MCC players', *The Times*, 23 March 1970, p. 2b.

²⁵ TNA MEPO 31/30 - Special Branch report, South African Cricket Tour, 4 May 1970; MCC/CRI/5/2/54 - 'Explanation Day' Leaflet.

expedience but borne of genuine concern.²⁶ In spite of Conservative accusations that the cancellation boiled down solely to law and order, evidently there were serious concerns about the broader repercussions of the tour influencing the Government.

Jeffries' assertion that it was the announcement of the upcoming General Election that finally forced the issue does contain some merit. In Wilson's words, the Conservatives harboured some hope that it 'would be fought and won on and around the cricket-pitch at Lords', and the fact that polling day fell on the first day of the opening test match was certainly ironic.²⁷ Although fewer than one per cent of those polled in an ORC survey immediately after the election mentioned the tour as an election issue, there was still concern about the possibility of violent protests marring the day.²⁸ However, whilst it inevitably added a greater sense of urgency to the issue, its announcement did not immediately change the stance of the cabinet that they should pursue pressures for cancellation by 'unofficial means', rather than direct intervention.²⁹ The trigger for Callaghan's intervention was the announcement by the Cricket Council on the 18 May that, even after the mountain of public pressure, they were still going ahead with the tour. This was greeted with disbelief by every journalist at the press conference, and served as the final signal to the Government that the Council were determined to proceed with the tour at all costs. The 'broad public policy' on which Callaghan requested they cancel was indeed 'broad'; there were a whole host of considerations at play above and beyond the protests of the young activists in STST. By this stage, the issue had passed out of Hain and his colleagues' hands into those of the Government. Ultimately, it was the added pressure brought by the international opposition to the tour and the concerns for relations within British communities that finally pushed Callaghan to step in and cancel the 1970 cricket tour.

²⁶ CP Box 175 - Notes for Home Secretary's Speech to the Conference on Community Relations, 18 March 1970.

²⁷ Wilson, *Labour government*, p. 784.

²⁸ D. Butler & M. Pinto-Duschinsky, *The British General Election of 1970* (London, 1971), p. 141.

²⁹ TNA PREM 13/3499 - Callaghan to Wilson, 30 April 1970.

Conclusion

*I am astounded to find that the MCC have given way to the simple-minded Home Secretary. We have to go back to Neville Chamberlain to find his equal in blind incompetence*¹

A harsh judgement from George Rigby, writing to the MCC, on a decision that Callaghan had by no means taken lightly. His reference to Chamberlain demonstrates once again the lack of understanding in the older generation of the motivations of the young activists who had convened in the White Swan pub mere months before. Their campaign had grown far beyond their original vision, and deserves all the credit it has been given for putting the issue of apartheid and racialism in sport firmly on the national agenda. Whilst ultimately it took the external influence of more traditional lobbying and the fear of the repercussions of an entirely white Commonwealth Games to force the issue, this should not detract from the central role played by STST in sparking the initial wave of public opinion against the tour.

As far as the question posed by the Oxford University Project on Civil Resistance and Power Politics goes, STST firmly illuminates the importance of the conditions in which civil resistance operates. Their direct action was not, in spite of their community politics vision, aimed at changing the existing democratic framework, nor did it have revolutionary aspirations. It was targeted at forcing an immediate change in policy by the authorities, whilst galvanising a nation in support of a wider moral cause. The outcome of their tactics was not wholly positive, and in many respects alienated a large body of opinion, but they proved a rallying point for disillusioned activists and held an inherent fascination for the media. Ultimately, though, direct action alone could not force

¹ MCC/CRI/5/2/58 - G. Rigby to S. C. Griffiths, 22 May 1970.

Governmental intervention, and it took a wider spectrum of pressure to bring about the change the group was so desperate to see. Hain may, then, have stopped play, but he had considerable help in doing so.

Bibliography

Manuscript Sources

Anti-Apartheid Movement Archives, Bodleian Library

MSS AAM 13 - AAM annual reports, 1962-90, and political reports, 1992-3.

MSS AAM 14 - AGM papers, 1963-70.

MSS AAM 43 - National Committee minutes, 1960-81.

MSS AAM 1436 - Stop the Seventy Tour/Action Committee Against Racism, 1970-2.

MSS AAM 1442 - Fair Cricket Campaign, 1970-1.

MSS AAM 1450 - South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SAN-ROC), 1966-70.

MSS AAM 2200 - Anti-Apartheid News, 1964-71.

The Uncatalogued Papers of Lord Callaghan, Bodleian Library

Box 175 - Miscellaneous Home Office, 1968-70.

MCC Archives, Lord's Cricket Ground

MCC/CRI/5/2/53 - South African tour of British Isles, 1970.

MCC/CRI/5/2/54 - South African tour of British Isles, 1970.

MCC/CRI/5/2/58 - South African tour of British Isles, 1970: Correspondence.

MCC/CRI/5/2/61 - South African tour of British Isles, 1970: Ground Protection.

The National Archives, Kew

TNA MEPO 31/30 - The South African cricket team ('the Springboks') tour, June-August 1970: police arrangements.

TNA CAB 164/674 - Possible African boycott of the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh.

TNA FCO 45/728 - Reactions to and arrangements for proposed tour by South African cricket team to United Kingdom.

TNA PREM 13/3499 - South African cricket tour 1970: threatened boycott of Commonwealth Games, Edinburgh.

Printed Sources

Primary Sources

J. Bailey, *Conflicts in Cricket* (London, 1989).

D. Brutus & B. Lindfors, *The Denis Brutus tapes: Essays at autobiography* (Oxford, 2011).

R. H. S. Crossman, *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister* (3 vols, London, 1975-7).

P. Hain, *Don't Play with Apartheid: The background to the Stop the Seventy Tour campaign* (London, 1971).

P. Hain, *Radical Regeneration* (London, 1975).

P. Hain, *Sing the beloved country* (London, 1996).

Hansard, 5th series, 1970.

D. Howell, *Made in Birmingham: the memoirs of Denis Howell* (London, 1970).

D. Humphry, *The Cricket Conspiracy* (Nottingham, 1975).

H. Wilson, *The Labour Government 1964-1970: a personal record* (London, 1971).

Newspapers

The Daily Mirror.

The Daily Telegraph.

The Guardian.

The Observer.

The Spectator.

The Times.

Secondary Sources

R. Archer & A. Bouillon, *The South African game: Sport and racism* (London, 1982).

D. Butler & M. Pinto-Duschinsky, *The British General Election of 1970* (London, 1971).

A. Carter, *Direct Action and Liberal Democracy* (Oxford, 1973).

A. Carter, *Direct Action and Democracy Today* (Cambridge, 2009).

R. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid: a history of the movement in Britain, 1959-1994: a study in pressure group politics* (London, 2005).

D. Graeber, *Direct Action: An Ethnography* (Edinburgh, 2009).

A. Guelke, 'The politicisation of South African sport' in L. Allison (ed.), *The Politics of Sport* (Manchester, 1986), pp. 118-48.

C. Gurney, 'The 1970s: The Anti-Apartheid Movement's difficult decade', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35 (2009), pp. 471-87.

R. Holt, *Sport in Britain, 1945-2000* (Oxford, 2000).

R. Hyam and P. Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok: Britain and South Africa since the Boer War* (Cambridge, 2003).

R. Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: changing values and political styles among Western publics* (Princeton, 1977).

K. Jeffries, *Sport and Politics in Modern Britain* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2012).

D. Lawrence, 'The Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain' (Oxford Univ. M. Phil Thesis, 2000).

R. Lapchick, *The politics of race and international sport: the case of South Africa* (Connecticut, 1975).

- J. Major, 'The Trades Union Congress and Apartheid, 1948-1970', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 31 (2005), pp. 477-93.
- J. Meadowcroft, 'The Origins of Community Politics: New Liberalism, Grimond and the Counter-Culture' in *Journal of Liberal Democrat History* 28 (2000), pp. 3-9.
- B. Murray, 'The Sports Boycott and Cricket: The Cancellation of the 1970 South African Tour of England', *South African Historical Journal* 46 (2002), pp. 219-49.
- B. Murray & C. Merrett, *Caught behind: race and politics in springbok cricket* (Johannesburg, 2004).
- R. Nixon, 'Apartheid on the Run: The South African Sports Boycott', *Transition* 58 (1992), p. 68-88.
- M. Orkin (ed.), *Sanctions against Apartheid* (Cape Town, 1989).
- A. Roberts and T. G. Ash (eds.), *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present* (Oxford, 2009).
- G. Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston, 1973).
- G. Stedman-Jones, 'The meaning of the student revolt' in A. Cockburn & R. Blackburn (eds.), *Student power: problems, diagnosis, action* (Penguin, 1969), pp. 25-56.
- S. Stevens, 'Why South Africa? The Politics of Anti-Apartheid Activism in Britain in the Long 1970s' in J. Eckel & S. Moyn (eds.), *The breakthrough: Human rights in the 1970s* (Pennsylvania, 2014), pp. 204-25.
- S. Tarrow, *Power in movement: social movements and contentious politics* (Cambridge, 1998).
- J. Williams, *Cricket and Race* (Oxford, 2001).

Other Sources

Interviews conducted for the Anti-Apartheid Movement Archives Committee project 'Forward to Freedom'

Interview with Christabel Gurney, 16 October 2013 [<http://aamarchives.org/interviews/christabel-gurney.html>] (29 December 2015).

Interview with John Sheldon, 28 March 2000 [<http://aamarchives.org/interviews/john-sheldon.html>] (29 December 2015).

Interview with Ernest Rodker, 9 August 2013 [<http://aamarchives.org/file-view/category/77-ernest-rodker.html>] (29 December 2015).