

STAMPING OUT RACISM IN FOOTBALL

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This briefing provides background to the issue of racism in Scottish football and on the role of the 'Show Racism the Red Card' campaign, for a Member's debate in the Chamber on Tuesday 18 May 2004, on motion S2M-1214 in the name of Bill Butler MSP.

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S2M – 1214: STAMPING OUT RACISM IN FOOTBALL

The motion for debate before Parliament on Tuesday 18 May 2004 in the name of Bill Butler MSP is:

Stamping out racism in football: That the Parliament condemns all racist incidents in and around football at every level; welcomes the work of “Show Racism the Red Card” in spreading the message amongst players and fans that racial discrimination within the game must be stamped out, and considers that the 42 Scottish Premier League and Football League clubs should sign up to the UEFA Ten Point Plan which sets out a framework for action to challenge racism in football.

ANTI-RACISM CAMPAIGNS BY FIFA AND UEFA

There are a number of anti-racism campaigns currently operating in football at world, European and national association levels. At a world football level FIFA (2001) issued an ‘anti-racism resolution’ as part of the organisations wider [Fair Play](#) initiative. The resolution issued in July 2001 called for a wide range of actions to be taken by a variety of stakeholders in football. The FIFA resolution is detailed in Annex One.

In 2002 UEFA issued a ten-point plan to tackle racism in football. The plan which was compiled in conjunction with the pan-European ‘[Football Against Racism in Europe](#)’ (FARE) network is as follows:

1. Issue a statement saying the club will not tolerate racism, spelling out the action it will take against those engaged in racist chanting. The statement should be printed in all match programmes and displayed permanently and prominently around the ground.
2. Make public address announcements condemning racist chanting at matches.
3. Make it a condition for season-ticket holders that they do not take part in racist abuse.
4. Take action to prevent the sale of racist literature inside and around the ground.
5. Take disciplinary action against players who engage in racial abuse.
6. Contact other clubs to make sure they understand the club’s policy on racism.
7. Encourage a common strategy between stewards and police for dealing with racist abuse.
8. Remove all racist graffiti from the ground as a matter of urgency.
9. Adopt an equal opportunities’ policy in relation to employment and service provision.
10. Work with all other groups and agencies, such as the players union, supporters, schools, voluntary organisations, youth clubs, sponsors, local authorities, local businesses and police, to develop pro-active programmes and make progress to raise awareness of campaigning to eliminate racial abuse and discrimination.

Source: UEFA (2002)

At present only one Scottish professional football club, St Johnstone FC, have signed up to the UEFA ten point plan (Herald 2004a) although Scottish clubs that Show Racism the Red Card (SRTRC) have been engaged in dialogue with have shown a willingness to implement the plan. All 92 professional clubs in England have signed up to the plan. However in the view of SRTRC the UEFA ten point plan on its own is not sufficient to tackle racism in football. SRTRC commented:

“SRTRC welcome the wholehearted support Scottish clubs and footballing authorities have given our campaign this year. However we must ensure the scenes of racist abuse we have witnessed at Scottish grounds, both large and small, are not repeated again next year. The UEFA ten point plan is a good starting point particularly point seven of the plan. A clear agreement must be established between the police, stewards and the club as to the course of action that will be taken against those engaged in racist abuse at games. This agreement must be seen to be implemented and should be widely publicised so all supporters know the consequences they will face if they break the law in this way. Many clubs have made good progress on this issue in the last few years and all SPL clubs SRTRC have met have shown a willingness to implement the plan. Supporters also have a role to play in this. Fans, the vast majority of whom are not racist, have a responsibility to be self-policing to some extent. They have a duty to create an environment that makes it clear that racism is not welcome at their club” (Personal Communication with SRTRC, May 2004).

SHOW RACISM THE RED CARD

The Show Racism the Red Card campaign (SRTRC) is an anti-racist charity which was established in January 1996 with the aim of using professional footballers as anti-racist role models. The aim of the campaign is to combat racism through anti-racist education. The campaign has engaged footballers and managers, and has harnessed the high profile of these role models, to combat racism. For example, the response of Henrik Larsson with regard to his experience of racism both in football and society more generally, for the Show Racism the Red Card Campaign, are displayed in Table One.

Table One – Henrik Larsson’s Response to the Show Racism the Red Card Campaign

Q. Henrik, did you experience racism while you were growing up in Sweden?

A. Yes, in school I experienced some racism, because back then it was unusual to have a black kid at school, I was one of the few.

Q. How did you feel?

A. At first I didn't understand what they meant because there were words I had never heard before. Then I started to understand what they were saying and I started to stand up for myself.

Q. Is racism a big problem in Sweden?

A. I think that it is becoming better, because when I was young there was a lot of it, not only against black people but against foreigners who had come to Sweden to work, because they had trouble in their own countries. I think that it's about to change, I hope so.

Q. Have any of you encountered racism in football?

A. You always have something, If somebody calls me a nigger I just shake my head. I look at him and say, you are not really right up here, to say something like that, it's crazy.

Q. Do you have a message for Celtic fans?

A. Of course you can't like everybody, that's impossible; but in terms of colour, to not like somebody because he or she has a different skin - that's stupid. You have to look beyond that because as a human being you have to experience the person from the inside first.

Source: Show Racism the Red Card Campaign web-site.

Further information on the Show the Red Card Campaign can be obtained from their web-site which can be accessed at:

<http://www.srtrc.org/campaign.htm>

The Campaign is linked to other anti-racism in football campaigns based in the UK including:

Kick It Out – <http://kickitout.org>

Football Unites, Racism Divides – <http://www.furd.org>

The Show Racism the Red Card Campaign (SRTRC) has appointed a Development Officer in Scotland with the remit of working with school children and football clubs in order to disseminate the anti-racism message as well develop links between the football clubs, football authorities and local authorities with regard to tackling racism in football. The role of the officer includes supporting the development of educational materials for schools, posters and an anti-racism video featuring top stars from Scotland. The post is funded jointly by the Scottish Executive, UEFA, Scottish Football Association (SFA), Show Racism the Red Card and Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS). The Scottish Executive (2003) has provided £75,000 for the post between 2003 and 2006. At the launch of the new post the Deputy Communities Minister, Mary Mulligan, commented on the role of the post as follows:

“Nobody should suffer because of their race, nationality or beliefs. Racism must not be tolerated. We support this high profile campaign because it will educate and influence attitudes in young people. It complements our own 'One Scotland. Many Cultures' campaign which highlighted the problem of racism in Scotland, particularly since one of the key targets for the next phase is raising awareness in young people.” (Scottish Executive 2003)

However the use of public funds to support the post did not meet with universal approval when the creation of the position was first announced. For example Bill Aitken MSP questioned the use of public money in establishing such a post commenting:

“The fact of the matter is, this is just another time when public money is being used for one of those politically correct notions that the executive follows from time to time. Of course we all condemn racism in sport and we recognise it's a problem down south but I don't think it's the most pressing issue in Scottish football.” (BBC 2003)

RACISM IN SCOTTISH FOOTBALL

There is a long history of footballers from ethnic minority backgrounds playing football in Scotland. For example, Andrew Watson¹ was capped three times for Scotland between 1881

¹ Further information on Andrew Watson can be accessed at:

<http://www.archives.gla.ac.uk/gallery/awatson/default.html>

and 1882, and is now believed to have been the first black football player to represent his country. However the last twenty years have seen a significant increase in the number of footballers from ethnic minority backgrounds playing in Scotland following the increasing globalisation of the game, the impact of the Bosman ruling² and the popularity of the game amongst players whose families emigrated to the UK from the Commonwealth following the Second World War³. There have been some prominent racist incidents in Scottish football notably when Mark Walters joined Rangers and Paul Elliot, Celtic, in the 1980s.

Racist incidents at Scottish football grounds continue to occur for example, Marvin Andrews spoke at a recent Show Racism the Red Card campaign event with regard to the racist abuse levelled at Celtic player Bobo Balde by Rangers fans in a recent Old Firm game (Herald 2004b). Similar concerns have been raised by players within lower league clubs in Scottish football such as David Holdsworth of Gretna FC in relation to the racist abuse experienced by a team-mate at Scottish Third Division grounds (Herald 2004a). The SFA are aware that problems exist. For example, at the launch of the SRTRC Development Officer post in Scotland, David Taylor, Chief Executive of the SFA commented:

“This new appointment will help us to keep up the pressure on racism in Scotland, particularly to tackle the problem of supporters who racially abuse players from opposing teams or rival supporters. We are serious about this problem and I am sure that it can be tackled through an education led campaign which will use football to set a good example.” (Scottish Executive 2003)

SOURCES

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Garland, J. and Rowe, M. (2001) *Racism and Anti-Racism in Football*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Herald. (12 May 2004a) *Pitiful sign of a sad nation*. Glasgow: Newsquest (Herald & Times) Limited. Available at: <http://www.theherald.co.uk/sport/15925.html>

² The Bosman ruling refers to a European Court of Justice ruling in December 1995 which allowed footballers from any nation in the European Economic Area (EEA), could, like workers in other industries, move freely from one nation in the area to another when their contract was at an end, and in the case of football with no transfer fee attached. For a discussion of the impact of this ruling within the context of racism, see Garland and Rowe (2001) p.115-6.

³ For a further discussion on the impact of these trends see Garland and Rowe (2001).

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ANNEX ONE – FIFA ANTI-RACISM RESOLUTION

The text of the FIFA Anti-Racism resolution is reproduced below:

“The Extraordinary Congress, following the declaration against racism adopted by the FIFA Executive Committee in March 2000, and following the FIFA Conference Against Racism in Football held in Buenos Aires on 6 July 2001,

requires **all persons** involved directly or indirectly with the sport of football at all levels and in all countries to join a concerted action to exchange information and experiences in order to combat effectively and conclusively all manifestations of racism within the game, by denouncing and sanctioning all persons indulging in racism in any form

calls upon **all governments and civil authorities** at all levels to co-operate fully with the game’s authorities and to give unqualified support to these efforts

requires **football authorities** to give greater support to social groupings in introducing educational programmes and establishing a dialogue with known racism offenders for a better understanding of their motives

requires **all organisers of football matches** to impose regulations that refuse admission to football grounds to any persons indulging in, or suspecting of intending to indulge in acts of racism or related violence, and to ban all articles that convey any message of a racist content in words or in symbols

requires **competition organisers** to appoint observers for sensitive matches in order to monitor and report manifestations of racism in any form

requires **stadium stewards** to co-operate with police forces to act swiftly and decisively to apprehend and to eject immediately any persons violating such regulations

requires **match organisers** to take the necessary effective measures to ban any such offenders from attending further matches

requires **football fans** to support organisers and civil authorities in identifying and removing racist elements from spectator areas

requires **clubs** to foster a spirit of social inclusion among players by ensuring that they trust team-mates, opponents, referees, officials, spectators and all other persons, whether connected with the game or not, with respect and without discrimination as to their ethnic origin

requires **team coaches and club officials** to impose effective punishments upon players in their charge who indulge in or condone any form of racist behaviour, either on the field of play or in their public or private lives

requires **all football bodies** at all levels to ensure racial equality in the employment, appointment and election of individuals in all areas of activity and to work with ethnic groups to involve them more closely in football activities

requires **referees** to be more vigilant with regard to gestures or verbal offences of a racist nature between players and / or coaches and / or the public, and to take immediate action to punish offenders and to report such incidents clearly and fully

requires **the media** to strongly condemn all acts of racist behaviour or declarations by any persons or groups, and to refrain from reporting such behaviour or declarations in a manner that may serve to provoke confrontation, and calls upon football websites (including those of clubs and national associations) to incorporate prominent anti-racism messages on their home pages

requires **all members of the worldwide football community** to take every opportunity to maximise the social impact of football to encourage social inclusion and the elimination of racism in society

requires **all Confederations** to monitor all activities relating to the fight against racism in football and to report regularly to the FIFA Executive Committee.