

**THE  
BOYCOTT  
as Weapon of Struggle**

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## **THE BOYCOTT AS WEAPON OF STRUGGLE**

Since the first days, in 1943-44, when the All- African Convention, the National Anti-C.A.D. and the Non-European Unity Movement adopted the Boycott slogan, the enemies of the Movement have alternately sneered at it, pretended to adopt it in order more effectively to debase it and render it ineffectual, and, finally, they have misrepresented it to the people with the express purpose of making it appear meaningless and ridiculous.

This vicious attack upon one of the most potent weapons in the armoury of the people struggling for liberation came from the intellectuals. The most interesting feature in this "struggle" of the intellectuals against the people's Boycott weapon is that it has thrown into one camp elements of the most diversified political outlooks: intellectuals who proclaim themselves as internationalists; rabid African nationalists, or more simply, ardent tribalists; doctors and professors who mouth democratic phraseology but secretly harbour a nostalgic hankering for the return of the idyllic days of barbarism; Ghandi- ists, and now the latest adherents of Ghandi-ism in its grotesque cubistic or (is it) dadaistic form, called Dadoo-ism - all of them have formed a tacit united front in their self-appointed task of not only besmirching the people's Boycott slogan and laughing it out of court, but rendering its application impossible. Be it noted that, while all of them are opposed to the Unity of all Non- Europeans, preferring to remain in their respective racial pens, they are nevertheless united on this issue. Their common hostility to the people's weapon is so strong that it cuts across the artificially-created racial barriers and brings them together.

This situation makes it necessary to explain the meaning of the Boycott weapon, its effectiveness and its proper use. It is also incumbent on us to show why the intellectuals are mortally afraid of it. For their attitude towards it has its roots in the historical setting of the political and social structure of South Africa.

### **OUR STRUGGLE IS NOT UNIQUE**

The struggle of the Non-Europeans of South Africa for liberation is not unique in its general form. Every aspect of it has in some form or another been experienced by other peoples of the world during some stage of their development. The South African economy with its inherent contradictions, the unequal distribution of wealth, the existence of lavish wealth side by side with extreme poverty - is centuries old in Europe. The herrenvolk disease that riddles the political, economic and social structure of our country, has also been known in Europe and Asia. Indeed, it has cost mankind millions upon millions in human lives. The struggle of the oppressed in this country is similar to the struggles of all the oppressed people throughout world history. It is part and parcel of the struggle of mankind in its long and arduous march towards progress.

Now man has forged weapons of struggle in this process, such as the strike weapon, the boycott, etc. But each of these has its proper time and place. We do not choose our weapons at random. The oppressed people in each country are faced with particular conditions that dictate which weapon should be used at a given time. In fact, it is an important part of the art of leadership to know which of these many weapons to use at any given moment. This implies a thorough examination of the existing situation and the historical past of the objective as well as the subjective conditions. The Non-Europeans in South Africa at this stage of development are not called upon to traverse an entirely new terrain in which they have to forge entirely new weapons hitherto unknown to mankind. What may be unique in the situation is a new (different) combination of forces which calls for an adaptation, or in some cases a modification, of the old methods.

To give just one example of the different rates of development of the various countries, a factor that may give rise to qualitative differences, we may mention the position in South Africa itself. Here we find the relics of barbarism co-existent with the last word in modern technological advancement; we find social institutions, such as the relics of pre-feudal times, tribalism, side by side with the most up-to-date machinery for the extraction of gold in the mines. There are relics of feudal and tribal relations in the midst of industrialism. This fact gives rise to a strange phenomenon, namely, in South Africa the foremost industry, the very fly-wheel of the economic structure, is dependent upon migrant labour; heavy industry is dependent on peasant labour, or more correctly speaking, the labour of a landless African peasantry. It is not necessary for our purpose to elaborate on this peculiar situation, arising out of what may be called a telescopic development. All we want to bring home is that these particular conditions have to be borne in mind when we consider the form and method of struggle. When, for instance, we think of the trade union problem, the peasant problem, the relation between the workers and the peasants, and finally, the National Problem, these objective conditions invest the situation with what may be called a unique quality. It is in this sense, and only in this sense, that there is a uniqueness in the problems of the Non-Europeans in South Africa. Nevertheless, the struggles of the oppressed in South Africa are basically the same as those of all the oppressed throughout the history of mankind. It is a struggle at this very moment convulsing Asia, Europe, the Middle East, North, Central, East and West Africa - everywhere where people are striving to throw off the yoke of oppression.

### **THE NATURE OF SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY**

The need for the use of the Boycott weapon at this stage of our development must be seen as arising out of the objective conditions of South Africa. It is dictated by the living realities of racial oppression facing the Non-European in the so- called Union of South Africa. Now these conditions have a past. They have grown logically out of the past, which must be examined if we are to understand the present.

We do not intend to give a detailed history of the past. It is necessary simply to indicate in broad outline the stages of conquest and the problems that arose at each stage. First the White invaders had to defeat the inhabitants and confiscate their land. This they did by force of arms, in a protracted fight lasting over 200 years. This conquest was not effected without the assistance of the persuasive tongues of the missionaries, who gave able assistance to the conquerors by a judicious use of indoctrination at strategic times and places. Having acquired possession of the land, the invaders had then to establish themselves and organise their way of life. Thus in the southern part of Africa there existed side by side two incompatible systems: tribalism and capitalism. (Actually there was a third, the feudalism of the Dutch, which was nearer to tribalism, and is of no consequence for our purpose.)

This new social system could develop only at the expense of the tribalism of the original inhabitants. Industry required a certain culture for its growth and this had to be provided by the local population. This involved not only forcing the inhabitants to supply all the labour required, but something much more than that. It meant creating a new market by creating new needs, new tastes, new desires on the part of the dispossessed tribalists. In short, it meant creating a new outlook and a new way of life. Tribalism had to be burst asunder and overthrown by a money economy.

Obviously, at this stage of conquest, where the two mutually incompatible systems are fighting it out, the military machine is ineffectual and has to recede into the background while other agencies come to the fore. Not that the use of brute force is ever completely superseded, but it is convenient at certain stages to sheathe the naked sword. Now was the time for the missionary to come forward with his secondary function; he had to educate the people, i.e. cultivate in them the new needs and desires which were necessary to industrialism. The new proselyte had to cover his body before the newly discovered god. Mission schools were planted all over and as there were not enough White missionaries to go round, they had to train young Africans as teachers to carry their message among their own people. These schools were centres of indoctrination acting as a disruptive force within the various tribes. Each Black teacher presented himself before his pupils clad from head to foot in the products of the new industrial system and from his mouth issued forth those solemn injunctions which have since become so familiar to us:

on humility (turning the other cheek to the hand that smote it); honesty (after you have been robbed of all you possessed); love thine enemy (provided you don't expect it to be reciprocated); faith and hope (provided you wait for your reward in the next world). And finally, the "dignity of labour" (by which is meant only the most menial tasks, and that only when performed for the benefit of the White employer).

Of course our teacher had to teach also the rudiments of the three Rs, in order to fit the prospective labourer for his task in the industrial machine.

### **PROBLEM OF GOVERNMENT**

As capitalism won the battle over tribalism, as the whole of the Non-Europeans were becoming encompassed by the new social system, the problem of government became more acute. Capitalism had taken over the territory, but the people had not yet been integrated into this system, which has its own logic in the regulation of relations between man and man. Before the Whites had arrived in this country there had been orderly government within the respective tribes. The central authority was invested in the chief and his councillors, who derived it from the sanction of the people. But now the old forms of governing, to which the people were accustomed, had been destroyed and the tribal bonds broken. This had been dictated by military needs; during the period of military conquest it had been a matter of prime importance to break the power of the chief, who was the rallying-point of resistance. But the very efficiency with which the military machine had smashed the chieftainship and the authority of the chiefs presented the Whites with the problem of governing the people they had conquered. The lack of cohesion made government well-nigh impossible and anarchy threatened to become the order of the day.

The rulers were faced with a problem which was all the greater because they had decided to keep the power of government exclusively within their own hands. This very exclusiveness, however, separated the governors from the governed. It drew a line of demarcation between them, which was reinforced by the natural antipathy between conqueror and conquered and the difference in language and outlook. Between the White ruler and the ruled there existed a yawning gap. Obviously some channels of communication had to be established in order to maintain control. But how could they control a people if they had no channels of contact? The only centres of authority that the people knew were the chiefs and councils familiar to them in their tribal life.

Failing the only sane policy - to the rulers anathema - of integrating the people into the new system of government on an equal footing, they were left with only one alternative, namely, to create chiefs who would constitute the channels of contact they needed. This placed the rulers on the horns of a dilemma. For to resuscitate chieftainship was to run the danger of summoning up the memory of the heroic resistance of the recent past and provide the vanquished with a new rallying-point.

### **POLICEMEN-CHIEFS**

The dilemma was resolved by the creation of Policemen-Chiefs. Once more it was the missionaries who came forward to assist and evolve this diabolically clever idea. Policemen-Chiefs. It was a hybrid conception partaking of tribalism and capitalism and deliberately calculated for the deception of the people, while at the same time it met the requirements of the rulers. In the official designation, which is for public consumption, the stress is on the second part of the double-barrelled word. i.e. Chief. But in actual function the stress is on the first part i.e. Policemen. The new

creatures of the protagonists of the new system were to be paid a fixed wage by the Government. They were to be its paid servants and were to be responsible, not to the people, but to the Government, their master.

The wily missionaries, however, who had lived amongst the people and made it their business to have a thorough knowledge, not only of the customs and traditions but the very moods and dispositions of the people, felt that this would not be sufficient. They feared that, despite all these safeguards, there was still a danger that one or other of these creatures might discard the regalia of a synthetic chief and assume the stature of a real chief, rallying the people once more in a desperate attempt to overthrow the rulers. Thus a system of headmanship was carefully worked out. Each Policeman-Chief was surrounded by a troupe of headmen, each of whom was responsible, not to the Policeman-Chief, but to the Government. In this way the whole of the so-called Reserves was infested with an army of these Government creatures who vied with one another in serving their masters. In them the Government had a band of willing and efficient agents for controlling the African masses. All the laws and regulations which it pleased a tyrannical Government to make, were energetically carried to the people through the channel of these agencies. The Policemen-Chiefs and headmen were the first effective instruments for the domination of the African people.

One has to imagine the situation at the time when this scheme was set afoot, to realise the jesuitical cunning of it all. The people, while they were forced to live and work within the Colony, nevertheless remained aliens in the country of their birth. They had still to be broken in. Wherever the people were, they were subjected to a close surveillance. Every few square miles throughout the whole Colony had its inevitable headman who snooped and pried into their most intimate affairs. The Policeman-Chief himself was subjected to this all-penetrating scrutiny. If he held court, the very next day the authorities were fully acquainted with the details of it. All the goings-out and the comings-in of the people were under close observation. If a traveller, according to time-honoured custom, sought shelter for the night with one of the villagers, the next morning the magistrate knew about it. If a group of men were sitting of an afternoon, peacefully sipping their beer and discussing some ancient marriage law or fine point of custom, the long ears of the magistrate took it in; he knew not only who were there but what each one said. The whole scheme created an atmosphere of fear in which the people felt they were being spied upon and all that they did or said or even thought, was known. The authorities traded on this and took care to create the impression of an almost supernatural omniscience. And the more the people were gripped by this all-pervading fear, the more the headmen strutted amongst them, puffing out their chests, full of the sense of their own importance. In such an atmosphere it is easy to imagine how the people could be dragooned into accepting any law or scheme imposed by the Government, even though it was obvious that it was diametrically opposed to their own interests.

### **INTELLECTUALS AS SECOND AGENTS**

As the country developed, capitalism disrupted tribalism and swallowed up feudalism, industry grew and towns sprang up all over the country. The sons of the Dutch feudalists drifted into the cities and there either invested their capital in industry and commercial ventures or took up jobs as foremen and overseers. With all this expansion Africans in their thousands were absorbed as labourers for the various undertakings. From the time of the tragedy of Nongquase, the National Suicide, a rapid development of the Colony took place. Cheap labour was abundant; European farmers prospered; export trade in skins, hides and other agricultural products increased many times over. Later, diamonds were discovered, to be followed soon afterwards by the opening up of the gold mines. These two discoveries revolutionised the life of the colonies in southern Africa. It accelerated the land-grabbing and precipitated the Boer War. The sham of respecting territorial boundaries and the independence of small states was dropped. Britain had to organise a unified economy for the whole of southern Africa; she had to establish a network of communications linking up the diamond and gold mines with the coastal towns. At the same time many subsidiary industries sprang up and thousands of miles of railways were built.

This colossal expansion could only be done by harnessing a vast army of the dispossessed. It could not be carried out without the cheap labour of the conquered Non-Europeans. All this reinforced the disruption of tribalism and shattered the last remnants of the tribal unit.

As the people became absorbed into the new system, the hold of the Policemen-Chiefs over them was necessarily loosened. Even the migrant labourer who returned home from time to time came back with a new outlook. He no longer accepted the old traditions that gave the chief power over him. During his sojourn in the mines, the towns and the White man's farms he had learned to fend for himself as an individual. He no longer thought in terms of the tribe, but of the welfare of himself and his family. Large numbers severed the tribal bonds and settled in towns and peri-urban areas, while new generations grew up without any knowledge of the tribal life. Once more a new problem of maintaining control over the Africans arose.

Obviously the Policeman-Chief could not cope with the new situation. His usefulness as a means of domination was becoming ineffectual since the younger generation had no room for him in their outlook. Besides this, the new conditions deprived him of a satisfactory milieu in which he could still assume the guise of a chief, and thus more fully exposed his real function as policeman. So a new method of control, a new instrument of domination, had to be found. The eyes of the rulers now turned seriously towards the African intellectuals. And who could be more suited than they for the desired purpose?

Side by side with the tremendous expansion of industry and commerce, there was another development taking place in the field of education. A new "class" had emerged, namely, the intelligentsia. This section of the population, though small in number, had begun to exercise an influence out of all proportion to its size. It was able to speak the language

of the rulers. These intellectuals were regarded as knowing the ways and customs of the White man and able to find their way about in the intricacies of the new system. Thus the people looked up to them for guidance and reposed their faith in them. It was this circumstance that made the rulers turn to the intellectuals as a means of controlling the masses.

It is pertinent to ask: how did the old intellectuals come to play the role they did? This might be answered by another question: how did the first generation of intellectuals look upon themselves? From the early days when they were converted to Christianity they accepted the new system with all its modes of life, of social organisation and of thought. Capitalism was correctly seen by them as an advancement over tribalism. In it they saw a vista of progress opening up before them and from that time on they decided to do all they could to bring their people within the orbit of this new civilization. They saw themselves as men with a mission. The missionaries had introduced them to the rudiments of education; they had learned to read and write; through books they were brought into contact with a new world, new realms of thought, new experiences, new possibilities of development. The doctor-missionary demonstrated to them the superiority of medical science over witchcraft, of knowledge over superstition. In the new foods they tasted and the new garments they bought from the trader, they had evidence of superior methods of production. In the weapons of the White man, the gun and the powder, they had had convincing proof of greatly superior techniques. For had not gunpowder vanquished the assegai?

In the eyes of the intellectuals, then, the missionary was educating them and helping them to bring their people into the civilization which created all these things with the express purpose of enabling them to enjoy the fruits of such a civilization. They were not to know all the complex forces at work in capitalism, forces that had produced the missionary himself and made him come to their country. They were not to know that the missionary himself was an instrument in the hands of the industrialists and merchants of Britain, of that process of colonial expansion that was undertaken, not for the benefit of the inhabitants, but of the mother-country. He was allowed to come out and preach "the vengeance of the Lord" and "the rewards of the hereafter" only because such preachings were eminently suited to facilitating the task of the British soldiery.

If they knew none of these things, how were they to know that the three Rs and the whole system of education given them by their "benefactor" were not at all for their benefit but were the requirements of an industrial system? It was only much later, towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, that government commissions began to state explicitly the aims of the so-called "Native Education": "To equip the Native for a more intelligent comprehension of any industrial work set before him." And again: "A Native who can read and write is of greater economic value to the community." In this context "community" must be taken to mean commerce and industry.

How were the African intellectuals to know that the preachings of their White missionary "friend" concerning "brotherhood in Christ", "equality of all men before the Lord" and other Christian doctrines were honoured only in the breach by the rest of the representatives of the new system? To the intellectuals of a dispossessed people this new religion was attractive because it gave comfort and consolation to a destitute people. All the graces and humanitarian virtues were extolled in its preachings and they nourished the illusion that the new system was identifiable with these virtues. Capitalism seemed to them like the promised land. So to this task of leading their people into the promised land they bent all their energies. This explains why the old intellectuals were ready to co-operate with the missionaries.

Their co-operation was made all the easier because the authorities gave the educated Africans preferential treatment. They were granted the franchise and were made, nominally at least, the equals of the Whites. They were free from the burdensome pass-laws. Let it be said that the old intellectuals did not regard this as a bribe intended to be enjoyed by the few. They regarded it as an inherent right of all those who had accepted the new mode of life and they were spurred to work all the harder to bring their people to the same standard of education as themselves in order to qualify for those rights. Many of them made considerable personal sacrifices for the community, a circumstance that earned them the respect of their countrymen - who had every reason to be suspicious - and gained them the following of the masses. In a word, the old intellectuals regarded themselves as torch-bearers and not traitors.

It was because of the tangible benefits which they believed would accrue to the whole population, that the old African intelligentsia accepted the fateful pact which started a chain of collaboration with the missionaries, and later with the liberals - a collaboration that was to cost the Non-Europeans of South Africa so many lives and bring in its trail untold suffering, humiliation and degradation.

As the system of capitalism unfolded, however, it became abundantly clear that the promises of salvation were a delusion and a snare. The educational system itself was not designed to liberate the people, but to enslave them. Now a new crop of intellectuals sprang up, with a totally different outlook, and corruption set in. If the old African intellectuals who collaborated with the missionaries can be excused because they were unaware of the pitfalls involved, the same cannot be said of their successors. This new generation was fully aware that the few privileges they enjoyed were offered to them as bribes in order to separate them from their people. By this time a pattern of racial discrimination had clearly emerged and was crystallised in the so-called Act of Union, which glorifies herrenvolkism and extols racialism as the very foundation-stone of the South African State. All the Acts that reached the statute book thereafter were simply the working out of a clearly evolved plan. Year after year the African intellectuals could see unfolding before their very eyes a whole series of legislative measures that were grinding their people ever more ruthlessly and reducing them to a state of unmitigated servitude.

The new generation of African intellectuals were self-seeking imposters who inherited the prestige and traded on the good name of their predecessors. They knew that the narrow margin of privilege separating them from their more

unfortunate brothers was granted them at the price of collaboration with the White agents of oppression. The whole process of reducing the Black man to his present position would have been impossible without the help of these intellectuals. It was they who shackled the mind of the people and led them into bondage.

Before we elaborate on how this was done, let us pause a while to answer certain accusations often levied against us: (a) a reactionary desire to return to tribalism; (b) ingratitude.

As to the first accusation: no one in his senses would seek to glorify the so-called idyllic days of barbarism. We recognise that in the march of man's progress, capitalism, in spite of all its attendant evils, represents a tremendous advance over tribalism. Tribalism, as a famous anthropologist has put it, "is the highest or the upper stage of barbarism. To it belong the Greeks of the Heroic Age, the tribes of Italy shortly before the foundation of Rome, the German tribes of Tacitus (the historian) and the Norsemen of the Viking age." It would be as ridiculous for us to wish to return to tribalism as for the South African herrenvolk to pine for the days of their tribal forbears on the plains of Europe, the Huns, the Goths and the Vandals who smeared their bodies with ochre.

At this early period of his development man is a prey to the forces of nature. In his ignorance he bows down before these unknown and uncontrollable forces which appear to him like so many mighty gods, gods of sun and moon, of thunder and lightning, whose caprice it is to bring the flood or the scorching drought, the rich harvest or the years of famine. Before the blind rage of these unknown forces man prostrates himself in fear. Who, then, would wish to return to such a state of barbarism, to such a shackling of the mind and spirit? The very essence of man's progress is precisely his gradual conquest over the forces of nature. His present socio-economic organisation itself presupposes a certain measure of control. Slowly man has risen from a state of helplessness to a position where he is to large extent able to manipulate and control these forces and harness them to his needs. He has painfully risen from his prostrate position, so that a poet could say of him:

"What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! ... In apprehension how like a god!"

Here man is so conscious of his triumph over nature that he puts himself at the centre of the universe. And now when he is standing on the very brink of social upheaval, on the historical threshold of new conquests, when he will begin to fulfil his potentialities and assume a more complete mastery over nature and his material circumstances - with such a prospect before him, how can he cast a lingering eye on his former state of ignorance and fear?

Now as to the second accusation that is frequently levied against us: that the Black people are ungrateful to the Whites for bringing them Western Civilization.

In the first place, there is no such thing as "Western Civilization". It is a mischievous catchword, a shibboleth employed by the herrenvolk to exclude all but themselves from enjoying the fruits of civilization. There is only human civilization, which is the sum total of knowledge and techniques slowly acquired by man in the course of his development throughout the ages. Peoples in different parts of the world have come into contact with one another, mainly through trade and conquest, and have communicated their techniques from one to the other. For example, the knowledge of astronomy came to Europe from Babylon; the invention of figures from Arabia, the art of writing from the Sumerians and the Egyptians, the alphabet from the Phoenicians. The ancient civilizations of Asia, in China, India, Babylonia, Assyria, Persia and in North Africa, which flourished while the peoples of Europe were still sunk in barbarism, laid the foundations of modern civilization. Each of them made their contribution to the sum total of techniques, science, art, religion. The civilization of Greece, which owed a great deal to those of Mesopotamia and North Africa, later spread to Rome and thence to northern Europe, to the so-called "Western Nations" of Europe. Once the peoples of Europe became civilized, they in turn made their contribution to the body of knowledge accumulated through the ages. Civilization as we know it to-day is thus the property of mankind. It is the heritage of all men.

As we, the Non-Europeans of South Africa, are part of humanity, we claim this civilization as our natural heritage. We do not need to be grateful because modern civilization found its way back to Africa through the agency of the White man. The Englishman would think it just as absurd if he was expected to bow down in gratitude to the Italians, whose forbears extended the Roman empire northward to the land of the Teutonic tribes. It is in the very nature of things that accumulated knowledge should be passed on, not only from generation to generation, but outwards to every corner of the earth wherever men live. Its very survival, as well as that of man himself, depends on this never-ceasing process of expansion and continuity. It is a natural law of man as a social being.

Whoever seeks to arrest this process is guilty of doing an unnatural thing. He is breaking a moral law of humanity. From this point of view, the suggestion that the Non-Europeans should be grateful to the Whites for their so-called "Western Civilization" is more than absurd. The idea of "gratitude" is a herrenvolk conception. It comes from an attitude of mind that seeks to separate and exclude us from the rest of mankind. We have nothing to be grateful for. On the contrary, we have every right to condemn the herrenvolk for denying us the full benefits of civilization. It is an act of immorality to withhold the fruits of civilization from the Black section of the human race.

We might add that the whole idea of coining the ridiculous phrase "Western Civilization" (a chimera which they so fanatically seek to preserve) is an attempt to justify their immoral practices. No one can deny that every day of our lives since the advent of capitalism in this country, we have been creating civilization. But the herrenvolk presumes to regard us as too uncivilized to enjoy the products of our own creation. It is common knowledge that the whole edifice of the South African state with all its wealth and well-being, could not have been built without our labour. In every field of

South African life a Black man's labour is indispensable: from the production of food in the fields, the building of roads and railways, the loading and unloading of goods at the docks, the extraction of gold from the mines, to the manufacture of industrial products and their distribution; from the building of their towns, their very homes, to the tending and rearing of their children. How monstrous, then, is this idea of the Black man's ingratitude!

### **THE ROLE OF EDUCATION**

To come back to the question of how the intellectuals were enlisted in reducing the people to slavery and maintaining domination over them.

First of all it must be clear that education played a very important part in this process. During the early stages of conquest when the two systems, tribalism and capitalism, co-existed as separate entities, education had been used (as we have already indicated) to break up the tribal unit from within. First of all the christianised African was indoctrinated with new ideas and separated off from the life of the people. He was taught to think like his mission teachers, to have their outlook and point of view. In other words, a wedge was driven between him and his people. His aspirations, to all intents and purposes, became those of his White tutor. They were diametrically opposed to those of his Black brothers who were resisting the aggressor. So successful was this plan that when wars broke out, the African evangelists and teachers either stood out or in some instances assisted the Whites by giving them information concerning the doings of the people, their plans and military dispositions.

After the military conquest, when Black and White were now living within the same capitalist system, another phase of education was put into operation. At this stage it was necessary to create a dividing-line between the master-race and the dispossessed Africans. Hitherto the aim had been to draw them into the new system; they were encouraged to adopt the European mode of life, with its individual enterprise, its professions, its manners and modes of dress. Every means had been employed to absorb them into capitalism. African and White children attended the same schools and used the same desks. But then it became necessary to call a halt to this process. In the eyes of the rulers the Africans were threatening to become too completely integrated into the new system. If their development were allowed to go too far, they would be crowding into the liberal professions, they would be going in for their own enterprises and a class of Black property-owners, business men, industrialists etc., would arise. This would not only rob the White rulers of the labour which the Africans were originally intended to supply, but something else would be involved. This class would become serious competitors of the White minority, not only in the business field, but what is more, in the political field. This class in the very nature of things would proceed to lay claim to political power. Such an eventuality had to be arrested at all costs. What better means than to arrest the mind itself? And what better instrument than the very system of education that had set the African on the road to these aspirations?

Insidiously in the schools the germ of inferiority was implanted in the mind of the Black child. In the history-books, for instance, his forbears were painted as loafers, thieves, scoundrels and cowards, until he learned to be ashamed of them. He was taught to "know his place" in society; he had to see himself as "different" and he had to "develop along his own lines", so that by the time he grew up he was conditioned to accept an inferior position, politically, economically and socially. And it was a Black teacher who had to implant all this in his mind.

By this time there was a clearly defined educational policy. There were two educational systems, one for the White child and one for the Black. No longer could the Black child sit side by side with the White child in the same school. The Education Department was hard put to it to evolve a system known as "Native Education", that would be in keeping with the requirements of the State policy. The Black child had to develop muscle rather than brain; he had to receive manual instruction rather than training in the liberal arts. And religious instruction had a primary place in this scheme of "education".

A tremendous amount of energy and money were expended by the State to devise a method of depriving the African population of proper education. Commission after commission was set up for the express purpose of finding reasons for taking education away from the African child. After solemn deliberation, each Commission in turn would come out with a long treatise based on pseudo-scientific arguments purporting to prove that sound educational theories demanded that the Black child must have a special kind of education. Theories about different environments, aptitudes, and mental capacity were roped in to prove their point. And all that this long rigmarole really amounted to was finding a theoretical covering for a plain matter of robbing the African child of his right to education. He had to be excluded from a system of proper education, which was reserved for the White child only. We do not here stress the general impoverishment of segregated education: the lack of schools and equipment, the lack of adequately trained teachers and the discrimination against them in pay, etc., which was part of a deliberate plan.

As early as 1860, Sir Langham Dale, Superintendent of Education had stated:

"The education of the poorer classes must be suited to their circumstances, and to the sphere of life in which they have to earn their living. A new element of labour must be introduced into these schools."

This was later formulated as follows:

"The education of the White child prepares him for life in a dominant society and the education of the Black child prepares him for a subordinate society."

From that day to this the policy has been religiously followed by the rulers.

The process of arresting the mind was thus a task that was specifically assigned to the Education Department. But to understand its full import it must be seen against a wider background, as part of a whole machinery of State where each department has its specific function, but all are designed to a common end. In other words, the problem confronting the herrenvolk was how to arrest the natural development of the African people within the capitalist system. A Department of State was specially created, called the Native Affairs Department. Within it there is a permanent Commission whose function it is to work out a comprehensive scheme for the control of the African people. The Department as a whole puts into effect the plans of the Commission through its network of offices spread throughout the country. The whole African population is governed by Proclamation decided by this Commission and signed by the Governor-General, who for this purpose is designated as the "Supreme Chief of Natives". All the Acts exclusively affecting the Africans are hatched in this Department: the Urban Areas Act, the Pass Laws, the Poll Tax, etc. At the same time there is the Department of Labour which in its turn works out what is known as the "Native Labour Policy". This involves working out ways and means of arresting the natural development of the African people in the field of labour, preventing them from acquiring those skills and techniques which would enable them, like all other workers, to fill any position from the simplest manual work to the highest skilled job. For instance, it is the policy of the Department of Labour that is responsible for the Apprenticeship Act which discriminates against the Non-Europeans and the Industrial Conciliation Act which outlaws African Trade Unions.

Thus it can be seen that there is a tremendous amount of energy being spent in each of these Departments of State. This whole machinery is being directed towards one single end - the complete frustration of a whole people and the unnatural stunting of their development. Africans often pour out their wrath against the Native Affairs Department, regarding it as if it was the chief culprit. They forget that it is only one Department in a whole machinery of State. Consider the Education Department, whose true role is often misunderstood and whose importance in this whole scheme is often underestimated. As a Department of State, it too, fulfils a very particular function. In its field it has to work out schemes that are in keeping with the over-all policy of State. Just as there are "Native laws" and "Native labour", so there is "Native education". These three are inter-related. The power of this last - of the system of "special" education - to make possible the application of the whole "Native" policy, defies description. It prepares the soil for the acceptance of bondage. From the very outset it takes the mind of the child and moulds it to its purpose; it creates the attitude of mind that accepts inferiority and segregation; it conditions the young mind to acquiesce in occupying a subordinate position in society.

The effect of the so-called "Native Education" is not limited to creating a pre-disposition in the minds of those who have attended school. It is more far-reaching than this. It produces a section of intellectuals who become the human agency for the dissemination of those ideas of inferiority amongst the people - a section from which the leadership is drawn.

This picture of "Native Education" would not be complete without mentioning another point that demonstrates the thoroughness with which the scheme was devised. All the channels leading to the liberal professions that would enable the Africans to earn an independent livelihood, were closed. Consequently every educated Black man had to depend for employment on a State Department, as a teacher or a clerk.

### **POLICEMEN-INTELLECTUALS**

We have said that the whole process of reducing the Black man to his present position would have been impossible without the help of the intellectuals. It was they who led their people into bondage.

As the position of the Whites in this country was becoming stronger, that of the Non-Europeans was deteriorating. The pattern of South African society had fully emerged and segregation was being rigidly enforced in all spheres. Politically the Non-Whites were being reduced to a voiceless people; economically they were in a state of destitution and were by law relegated to the performance of unskilled labour; residentially they were being crowded into Reserves and locations. The cleavage between Black and White was complete. The breach was open. It was a situation which might well stir the people to revolt, and in fact there were sporadic disturbances. It was at this point that the intellectuals demonstrated their usefulness to the rulers. It was necessary to embark on a scheme for disarming the people intellectually. This was the more easily done because the mantle of leadership had fallen on the new generation of intellectuals who, as we said, were still trading on the prestige of their predecessors. The people looked up to them to lead them in the struggle.

The intellectuals were faced with a grave decision to make. They had a choice of two things: to place themselves at the head of their people and launch a struggle against the Government, or to side with the rulers against their own people. If they went with the people they would be denounced as radicals and unreasonable. They would earn the frown of their masters and lose their little rewards for services rendered, those marks of approbation and all those intangible favours that are so comforting to a "good boy". If on the other hand they openly joined the rulers they would lose their position as leaders of their people.

It was the liberals who came to their rescue and helped them out of their dilemma. As masters of diversionary tactics the liberals threw out the meaningless slogan: "Development along their own lines." The African intellectuals seized upon this as a means of saving their own face. They turned the attention of the people away from the conflict and diverted their energies into useless channels. Now they were fully aware of the treachery of the slogan. What else could it mean but cutting the people off from the body politic and leading them down into serfdom?



But, alas, the people themselves did not know. To the vast majority of the illiterate masses groaning under the conditions of serfdom, "development along our own lines" meant escaping from the clutches of the White man and taking the road that led to salvation. To the semi-literate, with their minds already prepared by the small dose of "Native education" they had received, the slogan pointed the road to a supposed independence from the yoke of the White man, to a Utopia of an independent Black State. It was only the small minority of intellectuals who were aware of its true meaning.

For them the prime motive was the desire to escape, as a privileged few, from the rigours of oppression. Although segregation spelt frustration and stagnation for the rest of their people, it offered the so-called "elite" the possibility of fat jobs - jobs that would only be open to them in segregated spheres. They had visions of themselves in the sphere of education, for instance, receiving professorships and inspectorships in "Native" colleges and schools; in segregated areas they visualised themselves as running big businesses, freed from White competition; there would also be plenty of jobs for them as petty officials. In short, this small "elite" would be free, like their masters, to batten on the masses. It was the dangling of this miserable bribe before their eyes that set the intellectuals along the tortuous road of collaboration, the road that led the African people into a political desert.

From this time on, the intellectuals, locked in an unholy embrace with the White liberals, dragged the oppressed into futile ventures, and thus demonstrated their usefulness to the rulers. The masses had been gathering their forces and a head-on collision was imminent, but the intellectuals stepped in and deflected them from their course. Henceforward, in pursuing this chimera of "developing along our own lines", they were not simply following a road away from the true struggle but were actually engaged in forging the chains of their own enslavement.

When Rhodes came out with his infamous Glen Grey Act in 1894, it was the intellectuals who now cajoled, now dragooned the African people into accepting the Bungas, those toys of government for a child-race. When this system was seen to work effectively, it was the intellectuals who were employed to carry it to the urban areas where Location "Native Advisory Boards" were established to keep the urban Africans from clamouring for direct representation in city and town councils. When Hertzog and Smuts passed the notorious Slave Acts of 1936-37, it was the intellectuals in collaboration with the White liberals who turned the people from the course of struggle into the acceptance of the glorified Bunga, the Native Representative Council (N.R.C.). It was the intellectuals who proceeded to embroil them in working a complete system of dummy councils and dummy elections.\* And the more they pursued this policy of "developing along our own lines", the more they entrenched in the minds of the oppressed the idea of the inferiority of the Black man. In this sense it can be said that it was the intellectuals who policed and dragooned the African people into accepting a subordinate position in society.

(\* For a fuller account see *"The Awakening of a People"*, ch. 4 and ch. 10.)

To get an idea of the police-function of the intellectuals, we have only to visualise what takes place to this day. Dotted all over the country in the so-called "Native Reserves" are the Resident "Native" Commissioners' offices. These are the centres of administration. It is here that the people have to come for their allotments of land and get permission to buy cattle; it is from here that they have to get their passes to go and seek work; it is also here that they have to pay their taxes and the inevitable fines. In short, these offices are the centres of control over the lives of the people. If you have the time to spare, if you have a heart of stone and nerves of steel, go one day and stand at the entrance of any of these offices. There you will see how these Black pseudo-intellectuals behave towards their own people. There you will see the powerful combination of the policeman-chief and headman and the policeman-intellectual at work. All day long the impoverished peasants stream in to settle their many problems. The headmen bring in from the villages men and women charged with breaking one or other of the many regulations. As they enter, the clerks and interpreters bark their orders. All day long you hear the voice of the White master issuing through the Black mouth. How enthusiastically these pseudo-intellectuals bully and badger the people has to be seen to be believed. To the people the administrative offices become a symbol of tyranny before which they tremble in fear, filled with a sense of their own inferiority. There is no need for the White master to assert his authority; these Black agents before whom the people cower, do the job all too well.

But that is not all. A fuller picture of the function of the policeman-intellectual emerges when we depict the structure of South African society. On top sits the White ruling minority; at the base is the vast majority of the Non-European masses and sandwiched in between is a thin layer of intellectuals, who are the purveyors and transmitters of herrenvolk ideas to the people. They are the connecting link between the ruler and the ruled. In fact, they are the most useful instruments of ruling. Consider what a problem any Government would have to rule the people without their assistance. Language alone stands as a barrier between the Government and the people. Any law in any society is a law because of the consent of the people. Without their consent the law is not worth the scrap of paper it is written on. To get the consent of the people is the very crux of the matter. Here in South Africa the task of procuring this consent, even though given grudgingly, is the function of the literate and therefore vocal section of the Non-Europeans. The various Governments in this country have been able to rule the Non-Europeans largely by virtue of the co-operation of the intellectuals, who have to make the most obnoxious laws palatable to the people. In this way the intellectuals stand guard over the population as policemen in the interests of their masters.

## **THE BOYCOTT AND THE INTELLECTUALS**

From the above analysis it becomes clear that the intellectuals have now a stake in the present set-up of South African society. They have a definite function to perform. In this scheme of things they play the role of collaborating with the

oppressor in working the machinery of oppression. It is their acceptance of this function that determines their attitude to the Boycott weapon of the people. If they intend to continue collaborating with the oppressor they must view the people's Boycott with alarm. For it hits at the root of their fundamental position; it threatens their very existence as collaborators.

The Boycott is not in itself a policy. It is a specific application of the policy of Non- collaboration. It is this policy that the enemies of the Boycott slogan are mortally afraid of. When they rail against the Boycott, slander it and belittle it, they are in reality giving vent to their fear and hatred of this policy that spells death to their occupation - the policy of Non- collaboration.

Through daily hardship and bitter experience the people had at last discovered the true meaning of "developing along our own lines". It had led them, not to salvation, not to some mythical promised land or Black Utopia, but to the country of the doomed over whose gateway might well be inscribed: "Abandon hope all ye who enter here." It had led them to their present position where they are without rights and without land; where they are ceaselessly harried by the pass laws, where they are being decimated by poverty and disease. They had learned that "developing along our own lines" meant the acceptance of inferiority and segregation and that the segregated institutions created for a child-race were instruments for their own domination. Thus they resolved to reject the whole policy based on inferiority, with all that it implied; they threw off the shackles of the whole idea of the inferiority of the Black man. They embarked on a new policy based on the equality of all men irrespective of colour and race. With this clear conception they gathered their forces together, ready once again to launch a determined struggle. And once more the intellectuals were faced with a choice, either to throw in their lot with the people or with the rulers against the people.

A crisis developed in the ranks of the intellectuals and split them into two violently opposed camps. The best and most far-sighted amongst them threw in their lot with the people. They took their rightful place at the head of the people's organisations, helping them to clarify their ideas and formulate their policy, and putting the people's struggle firmly on the basis of principles. Such intellectuals brought their organisations within the fold of the people's federal bodies; the All-African Convention, the Anti-C.A.D. and the Non-European Unity Movement. Within these organisations they helped to educate the people as to the nature and origin of their disabilities and consequently the means and methods to be employed in the fight. They taught the oppressed to see the struggle in its entirety and to smash the artificial racial barriers created by the herrenvolk to separate them. This was to cross the Rubicon. This was to turn their backs on the rulers. It was to reject collaboration with the oppressor. It was to take their rightful place with their people.

But what of those short-sighted intellectuals whose vision was bounded by their own self- interest? They were left in an unenviable position, and not even the resourceful liberals could find a way out for them. They were in a quandary. The people's eyes had been opened and the issues were crystal-clear. Those who operated the dummy councils were collaborating with the oppressor; they were the enemies of the people. When they were called upon to resign from those institutions, they couldn't, for to do so was to desert their master. Thus they resorted to blatant slanders and distortions of the people's Boycott weapon.

When they try to distort the meaning of the Boycott slogan, when they shout: "The boycotters, to be logical, should also boycott the segregated schools, education etc.", it is not because they are ignorant of the true meaning of the Boycott; it is precisely because they understand it all too well. They would like to throw dust in the eyes of the people by reducing it to absurdity. Let us state again: the Boycott is directed against those political institutions that are created for our own enslavement. Nobody in his senses would advocate taking our children away from the present segregated schools, since there are no other schools they can attend. This would be worse than cutting off our noses to spite our faces. In the one instance we have no choice in the matter. We must educate our children in the cause of liberation itself; they must acquire the intellectual equipment, even though only segregated schools are open to them. But in the case of the political institutions, there is nothing to force us to operate the machinery, if we don't choose to do so. Those who operate it do so of their own free will. It is because the Boycott exposes this voluntary acquiescence on the part of the quisling-intellectuals that they direct their venom against it.

## **NEW DEVICES**

Now the normal development of capitalism itself narrows the field of operation of the type of quisling that has arisen as a result of the past. Just as the conditions which made it easy for the Policeman-Chief to exercise control over his people have gone for ever, so conditions that are changing every day with the ever- growing industrial development in this country make it more difficult for the quisling- intellectual to carry out his function. The relationship between man and man in a society based on a money-economy leaves no room for colour considerations. The day-to- day operations of an industrial economy expose the artificiality of colour- barriers. The Non- Europeans of South Africa have become part and parcel of the system in spite of the impediments deliberately placed in their way. They have come to understand the importance of political power. They realise that the root cause of their national oppression is the lack of political rights. That is why in their programme they give primary place to the demand for the full franchise. This circumstance itself makes it extremely difficult for the quisling-intellectual to re-establish himself, for it throws into bold relief the bankruptcy of his politics. It reveals the shoddiness of his master's political wares, which he has been peddling. The political consciousness of the people has been sharpened and the conflict is on a higher political plane.

The more it became evident that the Non-Europeans could no longer be fooled by the old subterfuges, the more desperate the herrenvolk became. They could think of nothing new, but had to fall back on the old and tried methods, under a new name - Apartheid. But what is their Apartheid but the old Segregation? What is the Bantu Authorities Act

but an intensification of "developing along our own lines"? What is the meaning of the findings of the Eiselen Commission on Education but the old policy of "educating the Black child for a subordinate society"?

At the behest of the new masters, the Nationalist Government, the Native Affairs Department, then, true to its traditional function, sat down to review the situation and take stock of what had been happening. And they were alarmed. The Non-Europeans had developed by leaps and bounds in spite of all the obstacles placed in their way. Drastic measures had to be taken to arrest this development. Once more all the State Departments were geared into action. The Native Affairs Department took the lead and hatched out the main plan in the form of the Bantu Authorities Act, the essence of which is to throw the whole African population root and branch out of the body politic, out of the judicial system of the country, and to entrench rule by proclamation while at the same time reducing to a minimum the need for passing the so-called Native legislation through Parliament. The second main feature of this diabolical plan is to recreate tribalism, reinstate the Policeman-Chief and plant him at the very centre of this counterfeit tribal structure, armed with all the dictatorial powers proper to a police-state.

At the same time the Labour Department has been busy. At this moment it is still thinking up its plans. We have already had a foretaste of things to come with the passing of the Native Builders Act. It might be added that here we see a new approach to the question. Hitherto the practice has been to prohibit the Non-Europeans from acquiring skills by choking them out at the very beginning by means of the Apprenticeship Act. But despite this a few had always contrived to slip through. Now the policy is to forbid those few artisans from practising their trade. For this purpose the Group Areas Act is being enlisted. They will be allowed to work only in their Group Area, i.e. the Reserves, where there is no demand for such skills.

In this scheme of things the Department of Education has an important part to play. It has already hatched out a plan that is designed to synchronise perfectly with the Bantu Authorities Act. It was the business of the Eiselen Commission to work out the plan in detail. The drastic changes recommended in the already impoverished "Native Education" are calculated to wrench the African population out of the very fibre of capitalism and thrust them back into this bogus tribalism through intellectual strangulation. The essence of these recommendations is to put African education under the control of illiterate Policemen-Chiefs who will have jurisdiction over tribal schools.

These are desperate measures in an attempt to turn the wheels of history backward. The present generation of Africans know nothing whatsoever about tribal life. They have been forging ahead organising themselves into political organisations, trade unions, peasant organisations, civic bodies, professional organisations, etc., all of which cut clean across tribal divisions. And more than that, they have reached a stage where all sections of the Non-Europeans are joining forces in the struggle against common disabilities. It is in an attempt to defeat this development that the rulers have concocted this monstrous device, the Bantu Authorities Act, with its complement, the fraudulent tribal education. The purpose of the scheme becomes clearer when it is seen as an attempt to re-establish and entrench the power of the two old agencies, the Policeman-Chief and the Policeman-Intellectual, an attempt to create conditions where these two must be at the centre of the social life of the people and, working in combination, will once more become an effective instrument of domination.

How well the whole thing was calculated comes out in the fact that the prospective holders of office are already gearing themselves to come to the assistance of the rulers. While the people are getting ready to fight the creation of the tribal authorities (Bantu Authorities Act) it is the chiefs who are standing in the way, each one hoping to be the appointed one. While the people, together with those intellectuals who are with them in the struggle, are organising their forces to resist this monstrosity of tribal education, the quisling-intellectual is sabotaging their efforts. So devoted is he to the interests of his master - or is it the crumbs from his master's table - that he is prepared not only to undermine the people's struggle, but even to wreck his own organisation.

## **WRECKING TACTICS**

It is of interest to observe the tactics of the various forces ranged against the people. In the over-all plan of the Native Affairs Department to put its "new" policy into operation, the teachers hold a key position. As a vocal section of the population they can frustrate any attempt to foist tribal education or tribal institutions on the Africans. As leaders of their people they can effectively organise resistance to any such attempts. The rulers have the more reason to be afraid of this since in the Cape Province, for instance, the African Teachers' Organisation, C.A.T.A., is already working in conjunction with the other organisations of the people. It has affiliated to the All-African Convention. It therefore falls to the Education Department to come to the assistance of the Government. Its task is to bring the teachers to heel; they must be made to toe the line.

In the preliminary skirmish, then, the first manoeuvres are being carried out by the Education Department in the form of non-recognition. It is significant that the reason it puts forward for now withholding recognition of C.A.T.A. is the fact that it is co-operating with the other organisations of the people. In this way it seeks to drive a wedge between them. In other words, it is hitting at the very source of the strength of C.A.T.A. Then, having separated the teachers from the rest of the population, and isolated them, it can proceed to wreck the teachers' own organisation. For C.A.T.A. as at present constituted, with its progressive policy, is still an obstacle to their plan. It is moving in a direction diametrically opposed to tribalism. In fact, it is so conscious of the unity of the disabilities of the oppressed that it has set the machinery in motion for establishing unity with the Teachers' League of South Africa (T.L.S.A.) a sister body of Coloured teachers, which has suffered the same fate at the hands of the Department, and for the same reason. The Coloured teachers, too, had the temerity to work with their people in the Anti-C.A.D. and the Non-European Unity

Movement (N.E.U.M.) without stopping to ask the sanction of the masters. This marks the first step towards the unity of the intellectuals irrespective of race and the larger unity of the intelligentsia with the oppressed workers and peasants. In view of all these developments it became essential to wreck C.A.T.A. and on its ruins erect tribal teachers' organisations that will conform to the tribal authorities as visualised under the Bantu Authorities Act.

What is the position of the quisling-intellectual in all this? His function is to facilitate the carrying out of the aims of the rulers. Note that he never comes out openly against the stated aims of the people, nor does he openly support the Government plans. At all times he avoids a clear statement of the problem confronting the people, for to pose the issues clearly is to force him to take up an unambiguous position. This is something he abhors. So he resorts to all sorts of subterfuges. In the present situation, for instance, he refuses to discuss the Bantu Authorities Act or the Eiselen Commission since to do so would bring him face to face with all their implications and force him to take his stand either with the people or with the Government. Instead, he takes refuge in the threadbare arguments - those inanities beloved of his breed - that his organisation is a professional body and has nothing to do with politics.

His tactic is to bring dissension within the teacher body. At first he pretends to agree with the declared policy of C.A.T.A., which demands co-operation with the other organisations of the people in the fight for full equality between Black and White. But the moment this policy is put into practice he objects. He raises a storm against the affiliation to the All-African Convention and threatens to wreck C.A.T.A. itself on this issue.

What is the explanation of this seemingly contradictory behaviour? The key to it lies in understanding the designs of the master. It might appear to the rank and file of C.A.T.A. as if the point at issue is simply whether or not to affiliate to the All-African Convention. It would seem that the affiliation to the A.A.C. is what is threatening to wreck C.A.T.A. The truth of the matter is that the Convention question is incidental to the wrecking of C.A.T.A. If they didn't use the Convention as an excuse, they might use the question of insurance or even the non-recognition of C.A.T.A. or anything else. Any issue would serve the purpose. The point is that to smash the Teachers' Organisation, as at present constituted, is of paramount importance to the rulers. And it is the task of the quisling-intellectuals to bring this about. Of course, they may disclaim any connection with the Government. They may even loudly proclaim that they are its opponents. But no matter what they say, the plain fact is that their actions facilitate the plans of the rulers.

A curious phenomenon is that all those intellectuals who are trying to wreck C.A.T.A. from within, take up a particular position in the wider field. Without fail they are to be found in the political field amongst those who support the dummy councils, N.R.C., Advisory Boards and other

27 segregatory bodies. In other words, they are to be found amongst those who are willing to serve as agents of oppression. All of them stand in hatred of the policy of Non-collaboration. They are all mortally afraid of the Boycott weapon of the people.

### **IS THE BOYCOTT NEGATIVE?**

We have said that the Boycott is not in itself a policy but a practical application of the policy of Non-collaboration at a specific time. It is particularly applicable at those moments when the quislings are engaged in the very act of luring the people into putting the noose around their neck. The boycott has the effect of not only arresting the hand that carries the rope, but of holding it aloft for all to see. The quisling is, as it were, caught in the act, red-handed. In his fury he slanders the Boycott, pours scorn upon it, reviles it. But all this vituperation hasn't worked. The people stubbornly continue to use the Boycott, for they have discovered it to be an effective weapon.

The quislings have been forced to yield ground. While refraining from openly attacking it, they now resort to sniping tactics. Their latest distortion is that the Boycott is negative. They argue that it calls upon the people to sit down and fold their arms, that it bids them refrain from action. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Of course we are by this time familiar with the meaning that these valiant Knights of Action attach to the word. To them action means throwing themselves into dummy elections; it means labouring on toy councils; it means running up and down the country inciting others to ill-considered strikes and then furiously organising Days of Mourning; it means conjuring up ad hoc bodies like Votes For All Assemblies and Joint Planning Councils; it means chasing after the Torch Commando with its twin brothers the United Party and the Labour Party. In short, to them action means any activity that distracts the attention of the people away from the main struggle, lures them out of their course and ends up by tying them the more securely to the herrenvolk parties. What a price the people have paid for these many calls to "Action"! It ill-becomes the quislings to accuse the Boycott of being negative. The truth is, it is one of the most positive weapons that the Non-Europeans can use at this stage.

When an organisation, for instance, advocates boycott, it cannot just pass a resolution to that effect and merely announce the fact to the masses. That would be meaningless. It takes upon itself the duty of going out to the people and carefully explaining to them why they must boycott a particular institution or elections to it. In this way it engages in political activity of the highest order. And this is not all. It calls upon the people to bestir themselves, throw off their lassitude and intervene in their own fate. With a consciousness arising out of a clear understanding of the issues involved, the masses take the positive step of boycotting. This is action. It is action of first-rate importance. Deliberately and with a full sense of responsibility, they do two things: they cut the strings that bind them to the quislings and secondly they intervene in the plans of the rulers. By withholding their consent they frustrate these plans, which cannot work without their co-operation.

The ability to defeat the plans of the rulers in this way has in turn a further effect on the masses. It reinforces their rejection of inferiority; it restores their self-respect and gives them a sense of their own importance; it reveals to them their own strength born of unity in action.

Another important aspect of the use of the boycott is that it is a weapon against which the rulers have no defence. If the people refuse to take part in elections to dummy councils, they can snuff out these agencies of domination, and the rulers can't do anything about it, because they can't prosecute. Let us take as an example the latest occasion on which the boycott weapon was used. When the herrenvolk took it into their heads to celebrate the Van Riebeeck Tercentenary, the Non-European Unity Movement decided to boycott it. The local Co-ordinating Unity Committee (in the Cape) launched an intensive campaign of boycott. Innumerable meetings were held all over the Cape Peninsula. The people were told the real significance of the celebrations, namely, the conquest of the inhabitants, the confiscation of their land and their economic enslavement; the rise of the herrenvolk to a position of domination with all the political power exclusively in their hands and a corresponding deterioration in the condition of the Non-Europeans. The Committee took the opportunity of reviewing the past and explaining to the people how their present plight came about; step by step it unfolded the machinations of the rulers, the methods they adopted and the agents they employed for their deception. As some of these worthies were trying to entice the Non-Europeans to join the herrenvolk celebrations, the Unity Committee found it easy to show up the role of such agents and it demonstrated how the people themselves, by their very acquiescence, are to a large extent responsible for their present position. It called upon the Non-Europeans to refuse to be a party to the celebration of their own enslavement and, by boycotting the festival, to register their protest against the whole herrenvolk policy that has denied them human rights.

There is an irony in the fact that the Van Riebeeck, whose landing on the shores of southern Africa ushered in the period of oppression of the Black man, and whose ghost was revived three hundred years afterwards as a symbol of domination, should serve as a lever to the consciousness of the people in their struggle for liberation. In the general atmosphere of herrenvolk hysteria, with their press incessantly boosting the festival, the curiosity of the Non-Europeans was aroused and the Unity Committee reached out to them and found a receptive soil for its ideas. Every man, woman and child was on the alert and each one felt that he himself had to make a decision whether or not to go to the festival. The attractiveness with which the herrenvolk press presented the show added to the conflict. Each one had to satisfy himself that his action was the right one.

It was in this way that the Unity Committee for the first time penetrated all layers of the population. The boycott had become a live issue discussed in the streets, the trains and the buses; in the classrooms and playgrounds; in the factories and the very homes of the people. Disputes would often break out between husband and wife; on the domestic hearth reasons had to be hammered out as to why "it wasn't right" to set foot in the festival stadium. Thus within a short space of time the boycott campaign brought political education to the people and lifted them out of their lethargy. It is now history that the Non-Europeans boycotted the Van Riebeeck celebrations almost completely, a fact which was a source of surprise and alarm to the herrenvolk.

Here for the first time all the Non-European sections had the opportunity of applying the boycott simultaneously. It gave them a feeling of solidarity. Throughout this whole period each one was keenly concerned with what his neighbour was doing; each group was deeply interested in the actions of the other. They felt they were acting with a common purpose. Here was unity in fact. There was a common joy in the feeling that for once they had asserted their independence as a people. And the success of the boycott gave them a sense of pride and self-assurance. The more the herrenvolk press railed at them for their "stupidity" the more they realised their own importance. Their manhood was restored. They had foiled the masters, who could do nothing about it. In other words, they had discovered in the boycott a weapon to which the rulers could not retaliate. With it they had achieved success in the narrow sphere, for of course the festival in itself was unimportant. But success begets success. There were other and more important fields in which the boycott could be applied. This was an important discovery. In the political struggle it could be employed with more far-reaching consequences.

### **WHY THE BOYCOTT?**

We have said that we do not choose at random our weapons of struggle. Each situation demands the use of a particular weapon according to the conditions prevailing at the time. Now we have shown that the herrenvolk in solving the problem of controlling a conquered people and also arresting their development within the present system, employed two highly successful methods. First, "divide and rule"; they erected barriers between the various sections and used the intellectuals to maintain these barriers. At the same time, within each section, they drove a wedge between the people and the intellectuals, who served the interests of the rulers to the great detriment of their people. Secondly, the rulers made use of the intellectuals to persuade the rest of the people to operate the machinery of their own enslavement. We have unfolded how the intellectuals were turned into effective agents for dragooning and policing their people into the acceptance of inferiority; how a chain of collaboration was started between the liberals and the intellectuals and led the people down the disastrous road of "developing along their own lines".

At the end of that road they found themselves in a state of complete disorganisation and demoralisation. There was a mass of unorganised landless peasantry who fell easy prey to recruiting agents for the mines and White farms; there was a mass of agricultural labourers living under conditions of serfdom; in the towns were hundreds of thousands of unorganised workers who had no defence against exploitation. Those few - very few - who were organised into trade unions (illegal) could not even carry out their proper trade union function. They were stifled by the encrustation of a

top layer of bureaucrats. In the political field rank opportunism had shattered and almost annihilated the organisations of the people. The few militants had become disillusioned by the irresponsible ventures of stunt-addicted opportunists. The people were left without hope. They had lost faith in leaders, and what is more, they had lost faith in themselves, in their ability to put up a struggle. This is the morass to which "developing along their own lines" had brought them. To this desert collaboration had brought them.

To get the people out of the morass it was necessary to sever the link that bound them through their leaders to their oppressors. It was necessary to cut the chain of collaboration. Here is where the Boycott proves itself a most effective weapon. It is the hammer and chisel that snaps the chain. It is in this sense that we say the Boycott is necessitated by the objective conditions in this country, that the need for the use of the Boycott weapon arises out of the living realities of a whole system of racial oppression in the so-called Union of South Africa.

Once the stranglehold is loosened and the people are free to think for themselves they can examine their position, review their past mistakes and on the basis of this choose the proper course to follow. The successful use of the Boycott weapon gives them the necessary confidence and builds up their morale. If it is used simultaneously by all sections of the oppressed - as we have depicted above - it has a unifying force. It puts them on their feet, gives them a sense of their own power and thus helps them to embark on more difficult forms of struggle. They develop self-reliance, independence and a tradition of acting in unity.

United action at this stage is directed simply at defeating the plans of the rulers. But the policy of Non-collaboration - of which the boycott is one application in specific circumstances - implies much more than this. In its larger aspect it means not only rejecting and defeating the rulers' plans for their oppression, but directing the people towards organising their own forces for a concerted struggle for liberty. In place of the herrenvolkism of the rulers they counterpose the conception of the equality of all men. At that stage their united forces will be directed towards building a society in South Africa in which all men and women, irrespective of colour and creed, shall have equal rights and opportunities. Then only will the true Union of South Africa begin to take form. This will be the Nation of South Africa.

The Boycott weapon, then, has a very positive part to play in Building the Nation. And all who oppose the Boycott stand condemned before the people as the defenders of herrenvolkism, with all the destruction that it brings in its train. The intellectuals have to make their choice: either to continue as collaborators or to take their place alongside their people, and together with them go forward to the task of Building the Nation, a Nation free from race hatred and oppression.

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