

Letters to Newspapers re Natal Union & C.N.O. sent along with this on 11/9/59
M. G. P. S.S.
To all Regions - Posted
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TO ALL REGIONS
AND NATIONAL COUNCILLORS.

The Magazine Editor wished to publish an article on the Sash attitude to an Economic Boycott. No one seemed to know for sure why the Sash attitude is what it is.

Mrs Stott, who does not pretend to be a writer, has tried to put down the suitable points for such an article.

Please comment and add constructive suggestions. Urgent.

Because I believe that the end never justifies the means, it seems to me wrong to support or undertake an economic boycott of so-called Nationalist firms.

Firstly, in my opinion it is not fair to allege that any one large Company is Nationalist-controlled. Shares are bought by people of widely differing political points of view, their main concern being a good investment. The employees in any good concern are chosen for their ability and not for their political views.

If a boycott were successful, it is natural, therefore, that Nationalists and non-Nationalists alike would suffer. Further, it seems to me that the first people to be dismissed in the event of the Company being affected would be those whose non-Nationalist views were known. Again it is inevitable that, if these Companies are paying more than the minimum wage rates laid down by the Government, that one of the first steps they will need to take is to reduce the wages paid to employees.

Secondly, if people condone the boycott of others, they have set a precedent for making it permissible to have themselves boycotted. I believe that it is not desirable in this country to adopt any methods which will further emphasise the group or racial differences which exist or bring about ill will between the races. Nevertheless, one cannot but see that the Government themselves are responsible for this boycott, because of their legislation which deprives people of the right to live with their families, the right to carry on businesses, and denies the non-Whites any politically effective methods of bringing about a change of Government or a change of laws - has provoked the non-Whites into adopting this kind of method. This Government, while being very keen on legality, has nevertheless outlawed most methods of bringing about reforms usually accepted in democracies; parliamentary representation is denied; strikes and other methods of collective bargaining, and passive resistance campaigns are not permitted; one cannot avoid assuming that as soon as political leaders seem to be gaining a following, that they are banned: even when the "crime" for which it seems obvious they have been banned - is the perfectly legal one of suggesting an economic boycott. A Government, in my view, cannot expect its laws to be respected when they are not based on morality or the good interests of the majority of the population.

Therefore, while one may be opposed in principle to economic boycotts, especially when they not only effect those who are directly responsible for the injustices - one cannot help thinking that they are justified if there is no other method of preventing the government's oppressive laws.

If a man attacks you in order to rob you of your wife, your home, or your business, the Law considers you are justified in shooting to kill if you have no other method of stopping the person from his purpose. It seems to me that this Government is, in fact, robbing thousands of urban Africans of the right to have their wives with them, many Africans and Indians have been robbed of their right to live in their existing homes, Indians have been robbed of their right to continue their businesses. In such circumstances, it seems to me that these people are justified in devising measures which are likely to curb the Government. One should be grateful that they can find methods other than violent ones. My objection to the boycott of certain firms is based on the fact that these firms are not responsible for the Government and that, if every employee in them - Nationalist and non-Nationalist - voted against the Government and expressed their views, it would not make one jot of difference to the Government's power. The only kind of boycott that seems to me politically moral is one such as that from which the word "boycott" got its name; one where the people adversely affected themselves refuse to work for, or co-operate with or purchase from those directly responsible for the injustices from which they suffer.

IMPORTANT: So far resolutions for the National Conference have only been received from Cape Eastern Region. Please remember to send your resolutions in by the 15th September.