

against this particular measure could be formed.

Mr. Hepple says we must be ensured of complete success before we embark on any boycott or campaign. Since when do we presuppose complete success before we embark on any campaign? If that was so we would be waiting today for the Defiance cam-

paign to start. Many similar campaigns would never have come off.

We embark upon boycotts when we are sure the time is ripe and people are opposed to the measures concerned.

Only a determined, organised and positive boycott can serve the necessary political purpose? strengthen SACPO organisation, and thus heighten the political

consciousness of the Coloured people; and secondly, prevent stooges

Let us remind people what Mrs. Ballinger said in Parliament. She said that after 20 years in parliament she had achieved absolutely nothing for the African people. And now, after all this time, the same sort of representation has to be foisted on the Coloured people.

YES!

says MYRTLE BERMAN

I disagree with the conclusion reached by Mr. Hepple in his article "The Coloured Seats: Should They Be Boycotted?" He says it would be wise for the Coloured peoples' organisations to reconsider their decision to boycott the forthcoming election. I feel that the boycott decision is a correct one.

My disagreements with Mr. Hepple stem from a different assessment of the role of parliament in the struggle for equal rights. For the Coloured people parliamentary representation, and therefore parliamentary democracy, is now a sham and an illusion. Only because it is a meaningless force is it tolerated at all by the Government. The Coloured people must look to the liberatory movement to free them from their oppression. Only the liberatory movement and its allies can effectively and consistently put forward the economic, political and social claims of the Non-European people. For this reason the government has done everything in its power to silence the peoples' organisations. They have not succeeded yet and I don't believe that they ever will. Similarly they have tried very hard to discredit these organisations — also unsuccessfully. I do not believe that an additional four government mouthpieces in parliament would be any more successful in "undermining the genuine organisations of the Coloured people."

No Real Platform

The African people have, in the past, had good and had parliamentary representatives. They have had no hesitation or difficulty in rejecting their representatives' statements when necessary. Si-

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ilarily they rejected the governing political parties' representations of their desires and requirements. I am sure that the Coloured people will not secure any major alleviation of their disabilities through parliament as at present constituted. Therefore I disagree with Mr. Hepple that if opportunists had to capture these seats "it certainly would not fulfil the real purpose of parliamentary representation, providing a platform for dissent." Parliament was never supposed to provide a political platform for the Coloured or any other Non-European people. The Coloured people in the past were given the minimum political rights that the White parties felt they could get away with. Coloured women have never had the vote. No Coloured can be elected to Parliament or the provincial council.

There is definitely some value in having an additional four sympathetic members of Parliament who would render, in Mr. Hepple's words "a worthwhile service to the Coloured peoples' struggle." However, I feel that their value is limited. A too vociferous champion can at any time be removed by the government. In fact it has the strength to remove all the Coloured and African representatives whenever it chooses. But more important, the value of the Coloured representatives must be assessed against the following factors.

Peoples' Militancy

SACPO has taken the decision to boycott the elections. Whilst I do not hold that one must always agree with and not criticise the decisions of the peoples' organisations, I do feel that a great deal of weight must be attached to their decisions. In this case, resentment amongst the politically conscious section of the Coloured people is running high. There is no doubt that these people agree with Hepple that a full-scale boycott of the elections would be a proper way to demonstrate rejection of this inferior form of representation. The SACPO decision is a reflection of this feeling. The need to capitalise on and not dissipate that mili-

itary outweighs all the disadvantages of a boycott.

Boycott Candidates

I do not dispute the validity of Mr. Hepple's arguments about the difficulty of a successful boycott and of the defeat a partial boycott would be. It is because of these arguments that I should like to put forward for consideration the tactic of putting up boycott candidates — a procedure adopted by the Irish Republic. Such candidates would give undertakings not to participate in parliamentary proceedings. They would make the minimum appearance required to retain their seats. This would prevent opportunists from gaining the seats and at the same time provide the psychological and political satisfactions of a boycott.

In the final analysis only the peoples' organisations can decide on the best boycott tactic. In this case it would depend on the degree of awareness and level of organisation of the Coloured people at the time. A 75 per cent or more complete abstention would be a victory even if four more Nationalist spokesmen went into parliament. If at most a fifty per cent boycott was anticipated then boycott candidates would be a better answer. Such candidates might get the support of those people who feel that they should vote. To get such candidates in would be a victory and the empty seats would be a permanent political demonstration of opposition.

I certainly agree with Hepple that an organised boycott requires no less activity than an election campaign. The boycott must not be allowed to degenerate into passivity.

To me there is no distinction between the proposed Union Council of Coloureds and Parliament. Both must be boycotted. Finally I would say it is the Coloured people by means of the boycott, and not as Mr. Hepple stated, Coloured representatives in Parliament who must show up separate representation for the travesty of democracy it is.