

Why the boycott must stay 1
WHY was the cultural boy cott ,
initiated and what did it hope to -
achieve? a

' The broad objectives of the cul-
tural boycott were - and remain
- the isolation of the apartheid
regime and its allies and to deny
them any recognition in the inter-
national community of nations.
- Without being boastful, the role
played by the ANC in bringing
about unity in sport, for example,
and assisting the possible re-
entry to international sport in the
foreseeable future, cannot be
underplayed.

Far from being prescriptive
anti meddlesome, our role has
i been to facilitate unity and to
rescue talks from breaking down.
Given this background and,
record we are confident we
should not waver on the criteria
for readmission.

Liberation

The policy of the cultural boy-
cott was reviewed continuously
over the yeazs. In May last year,
in Los Angeles, a symposium on
uCultural and Academic Links
with South Africa" resolved that
the cultural boycott of SA was to
continue with undiminished
effort until real and fundamental
chang e was in place. It called also
for the setting up of a non-sectar-
ian, national arts and culture
body.

It was left to the artists, cultur-
al workers and the liberation
movement to work out the details
of how these could be realised.
The result was, among others,
to stick to certain terms and
0 All visits should be by invita- .
tion, sanction or consultation a
with the liberation movements
cultural workers and community
organisations;

OVisiting artists should
contribute to community pro-
jects;

0 They should run skills work-
shops for local artist:

OThey should host benefit
coucerts and share bills with
local artists

.Shows should be accessible
to the disadvaaitaged communi-
. ties.

OUPA RAMACHELA, the ANCis expert
on the cultural bpyeott, defends the
controversial policy

These, theh, are the facts. The
impression is daily created in the
papers that there's confusion and
disagreement.

Indeed, it would not be correct
to claim that the parties are
agreed on every aspect, but the

picture painted by the papers is giggly exaggerated.

The differences, in the main, revolve around the ways of implementation before the non-sectarian national body is in place. The impression is also created that the ANC approves applications on its own and for motives. Nothing is further from the truth. Insufficient exchange of information with other parties might occur now and then, but the ANC's Department of Arts and Culture does not work alone. All applications first go to the artists themselves and only then come to the DAC with their recommendations.

This procedure is correct in that it 'is the artists themselves who know - it is their field. The ' DAC is not a creative structure but an administrative one.

It may well be asked: why au'i this interest in the am by a department of a political movement? Is this not meddling and censoring by so-called ticultural commissars"?

The answer is simple: apartheid culture still exists. It was decreed and implemented by apartheid politicians; cultural institutions within this country are still politicised; we still have no less than 13 racially and ethnically constituted departments of arts and culture.

Cultural activity must be depoliticised. Culture must revert to serving the entire people without regard to partisan views save democratic, non-racial, non-sexist principles. A non-sectarian art and culture body and arts foundation must emerge.

We are strong advocates of this LL! ii /'99\$/Mza5/3/ for we believe all South Africans are producers of culture".Until such time this is achieved we'll not surrender to entrenched apartheid culture which cannot be destroyed without conscious and steadfast struggle The rat is wishful thinking.

There are two sides of. the arguments doing the rounds:

0 One holds that we should revert to the old form of boycott which others have referred to as a blanket boycott.

0 The second holds that we should just do away with this policy and not set conditions for visiting artists.

We believe it should be neither of the two. We cannot go back to our original position: the victim must not be made to suffer in the

same way as the culprit - ie
apartheid. We must start
addressing the inequalities now.
Yet, at the same time, apart-
heid is not dead. The legacy of its
inequalities will not evaporate
with the advent of a democratic
order.

34B? Ramachela is dire
e to Research in the
Amngmnment of Arts
and Culture.