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Cultural Boycott is waning — Clegg

Anthea
Johnston

The power of the anti-apartheid movement has been reduced, Johnny Clegg (below) said at the first meeting of the recently launched Music Association of Natal (M.A.N.) held in Durban last month.

Clegg told the 100 or so musicians present that he had attended the United Nations symposium on Culture against Apartheid and that "the power of the anti-apartheid movement has been reduced and a call made and a motion passed approving that certain kinds of cultural contacts are beneficial."

In practical terms it means that there will be "a selective boycott against apartheid, which gives musicians more of



a space to operate in."

It would appear that the UN and liberation movements now accept that "there is a liberation culture here, found in the songs and symbols of

funerals, trade union meetings and that there is a broad, progressive arts culture, where people are not aligned to any political movement, but to what is democratic," he said.

Clegg himself is against intervention by radical groups. "We're living through a very dark corridor in our history and I myself have fought strongly against any cultural policing by radical groups."

As vice chairman of the

South African Musicians Alliance, he sees the formation of M.A.N. as "very important, an alliance of different groupings around the country, or progressive principles and a musical forum for all concerned with the music industry."

As well as local and overseas boycott problems, the association intends to address other thorny issues. According to Clegg one of the issues is "the borderline rip-off where a

producer says to a session pianist 'We need a middle eight'. The pianist does it and the producer takes the credit."

There is also the perennial problem of an official, negotiated minimum living wage for backing bands and repeat fees for composers.

Clegg stressed that the association's aim was not "to antagonise the music industry or

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