

BLACK PEOPLE'S CONVENTION

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JOHANNESBURG 2001



B.P.C. LEADERSHIP TRAINING.

Every community rests on several-socio-political values and norms. Historical experience and its existential problems are also related to the above in forming the identity of each community. It is to these existential problems that we must turn to, to see the role that leadership plays.

Never before was leadership training so vital and indispensable for the Black Struggle in South Africa. Leadership, most people will agree, is an inherent quality. The B.P.C. acknowledges this indisputable fact. What the B.P.C. actually wants to do is harness and develop latent leadership qualities and direct them to the liberation struggle.

In other parts of the world the upsurge of Nationalism has resulted in the removing of the shackles of colonialism and oppression. China is a striking example of how dynamic leadership and determination of the people saw them through their revolution. Algeria too, showed how, through the determination of the Algerians, the attempt of the French to subdue that country was successfully resisted. In both cases it was evident, that there was an overt attempt to introduce foreign cultural norms, in an effort to break down solid traditional cultural structures.

The challenge faced by both these countries, in as far as experience of the oppressive hand of the coloniser goes, are in some way similar to ours. But our community is beset by other problems. Problems such as the disintegration of our community into several ethnic groups, who are made to see themselves as necessarily different from each other. And the overwhelming feeling of inferiority and mass insecurity as a result of the successful propaganda campaign maintained by the rabid Vorster regime and the weight of oppressive laws directed against the Black Community.

It is the responsibility of B.P.C. to counteract this disintegration and emasculation by harnessing and developing latent leadership qualities, and directing them towards the Liberation Struggle. Also, to discover potential leaders at all levels of the Black Community and provide them with rudimentary guidelines and opportunities for practical experience.

To be a leader of any relevant and meaningful group is, but to put your head on the block for the racist regime to chop off. This appears to be the new trend the racist government is deploying with some degree of effectiveness. Since the banning of the Pan African Congress, and the African National Congress, the Black people displaying leadership qualities, and directing these qualities towards the overthrow of racism have been banned.

It is also for the sake of filling in the gaps caused through the bannings of leaders that Leadership Training courses are of vital importance. B.P.C. in providing this training does not do so within the confines of the organisation, but includes the entire leadership in the Black Community. The demise of political organisations in the '60s gave birth to bogus "leadership" emerging, and directing the course away from the struggle, and towards pseudo-cultural and submissive organisations.

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The B.P.C. wants to ensure that even if the racist government bans it, there will still be a leadership spreading the gospel of Black Consciousness to the entire Black Community. Even if no further political organisation is forwarded thereafter, the fact there is ample leadership will ensure the perpetuating of Black Consciousness and the continued rejection of racism and the building up of a powerful front of the people to oppose the fascist system. Real cultural bodies with a leadership with direction, could then easily provide the alternative to a political organisation.

Leadership Training has the effects of discovering potential leaders, making hesitant ones realise their potential and accept the challenge. Ironically, the banning of one leader, seems to create ten new and more radical ones to take their place.

Surely in a population of about 30 million Blacks, the white minority regime cannot obliterate an entire leadership, even for lack of manpower. Above all, our population at any given time has a leadership potential of over half a million. And our population is indeed growing. By the time half a million Blacks are on the banning lists of the Ministry of Injustice, We have no doubt Blacks will be on the verge of freedom.

N.C. Manganyi observes that "the effective control of Black political initiatives since the early sixties has meant that Blacks relinquish any community orientation objectives. This destruction of community feeling was achieved by means of a number of well studied strategies. One of these has been the stifling of effective and articulate popular leadership. What became of this efforts.....was an individualism more malignant than that found within white elitist capitalist societies. The rise of the individualistic and materialistic ethic is something which is essentially alien", to what he call "being-black-in-the-world. The Call for Black Consciousness and solidarity must be considered a medium for the creative development of individual and community dignity."

Black Consciousness as understood to mean that peculiar awareness of our Blackness as constituting something positive and distinct, that group feeling bringing together the disadvantaged Blacks and moulding their psychological inhibitions of inferiority and wishing to be as white as possible, into a dynamic Black force; that rejection of whiteness as a measure of value and the restructuring of the value system.

It is the specific role of the leaders to build up our solidarity to inculcate that feeling of pride in our Blackness. The main rallying point of our Nationalism is our common experience of oppression. The individualism that is growing at the moment threatens to undermine not only our group identity, but also all the efforts that are being made to build our solidarity. This is of course one of the oppressors devices to dampen the spirit of Nationalism.

Leadership viewed against the background of these existential problems have certain moral and ethical responsibilities. It is the task of leadership to reinfuse the communal feeling amongst us. To check the rapid advancing of individualism, in essence a western behavioural pattern. Leadership must articulate the aspirations of their people in a meaningful way.