

# THE FUTURE SOCIETY AS SEEN BY BLACK PEOPLE'S CONVENTION

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*(This is the first of a number of articles dealing with a kind of society that BPC envisages. This particular article scans the total policy outlook; subsequent articles will deal in depth with particular aspects of that policy).*

At the heart of the BPC policy outlook is the constant reminder that we are striving for the attainment of an open society.

This is an important point of departure because the implicit claim by the Black Consciousness movement is that none of the white political parties and organisations can by themselves and on their own manage to bring about the envisaged open society. So tied are they to the consideration of colour, ethnic grouping and other manifestations of irrational prejudice that they see the future either in terms of a false multi-nationalism or a pretence of geographic or ethnic federations, all of which have in common the preservation of power in the hands of those who are white and those who have money.

The best of the white formulas, emanating from the Progressive Reformists, has at its heart the creation of a dangerous coalition between the white "haves" and an upper crust of black "haves", against the interests and aspirations of a multitude of black "have-nots" who form 95% of the black majority.

This is what makes it impossible to move away from the present closed, balkanised and segmented community that constitutes the present South African plural society to a truly open society belonging to all citizens of the country.

## Egalitarian

The Black Consciousness movement has often stated that it is fighting for an egalitarian society. This term is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as "asserting the equality of mankind". This is a value-laden expression which feeds our faith hope for the future. It is now to us in this country used as we are to a completely amoral political system based on the exploitation of man by man on the basis of skin colour.

The term egalitarian when used to describe a political system implies:

- all sane persons shall be eligible to participate in the making of the laws under which they live, through the people's National Assembly which shall be a body constituted of elected representatives of all people.
- all people shall be equal in the eyes of the law irrespective of colour, religion, status in life, or other considerations.
- all citizens shall be protected from exploitation of one by the other, and some by the others.

Used in this context therefore the term "egalitarian society" implies a radical departure from what we are used to in this country. It means total blindness by the State and its organs to colour as a factor in deciding a man's fate and judging a man's ability. In such a society there cannot be recognition of minorities because this is symptomatic of the sickness of using skin colour to place a man in a specific social box. Neither will the State tolerate anybody who tries to turn the clock back by fighting for narrow "nationalism" in a way that defeats the pursuit of an egalitarian society.

In the new society to be created, a guarantee of the rights of man will form an integral part of our legal system. The Universal

Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations will be observed and respected. Born, as we have been, out of centuries of denigration, dispossession, oppression and exploitation, we shall constantly demonstrate our abhorrence in any form of oppressive and exploitative measures, through rigorous attachment to a system that enshrines basic human rights.

Flowing from this it becomes obvious that the economic system to be followed will not countenance exploitation of any segment of the masses for the benefit of greedy and capricious individuals. We have declared ourselves in favour of the promotion of communalism which has at its heart a profound spirit of sharing. The practice whereby the wealth of the country is locked in the hands of a very small greedy minority, will receive attention. Unbridled capitalism has its days numbered throughout the world and there will be no exception in the future of Azania.

A proper redistribution of the wealth of the country also implies that those who have been living on an artificially high standard because of exclusive privileges and opportunities, must be prepared to suffer setbacks in the interests of the national good. We believe that it is much better for many to make definite progress, though at a slow pace, than for a few to advance by leaps and bounds, at the expense of all. This will be the guiding light in economic planning for the country in years to come.

We do not see our country entering into alliances with either the East or the West. We regard non-alignment as an essential part of our overall freedom and sovereignty. We shall carefully shy away from imperialist forces either of the old stock or new. Nonetheless, we shall join forces with the rest of the Third World in their struggle to break away from imperialist control by the big powers.

As people building a new society, we cannot but be aware of the important role played by education in creating proper values and a new outlook. The essence of our educational system will be the promotion of self-reliance, a high level of critical awareness, proper understanding of the community and its problems and a sense of positive identity amongst as many of our people as possible. To get ourselves out of the present quagmire, such an educational system will also need to be pruned to work for the destruction of racist, tribalist, sectionalist, imperialist and exploitationist notions. This is especially necessary because of the long standing prejudices that have been entrenched in the minds of our people in this country. The duplication of languages at all levels of general education will need to be replaced by a concentration on one international and one vernacular language selected after careful research.

For the creation of a broadly based mental development, comparative environmental studies covering economics, geography, history, political and constitutional structures will form the major content of instruction at an early stage. Humanities, including social anthropology, sociology and elementary community development, and basic sciences including maths and natural sciences will also form part of the early syllabuses.

An elementary education will be free and compulsory for all

citizens and will be followed by specialisation introduced at the minimum effective level. Learning facilities and teacher training will receive priority consideration in order to create the best atmosphere for the learning process. A programme of **rapid elimination of illiteracy** will be designed and implemented for the adult population. Education will take up the greatest percentage of the national budget, and not defence of an immoral system as is currently the case.

There will be no "national church" in our country though there will be **complete religious tolerance**. We cannot countenance a system whereby everybody is free to establish his own personal church hence churches will be encouraged to establish a permanent Council which shall regulate the recognition of churches and the day to day work of churches.

The State will contribute largely to the training of ministers and will work with the envisaged Council and ensure that ministers receive adequate training in social work to be able to contribute to the social welfare and community development programmes of the nation.

In the field of defence it will be expected of every sane and adult person to form part of the **National Defence Force**. There will be no

use of national territory by foreign forces. Our guiding defence policy will be one of **peaceful collaboration** with all nations of the world on the basis of the principles of mutual respect, national sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-aggression and non-interference in domestic affairs, and peaceful co-existence.

#### **Acceptability**

In all its forms therefore the future State envisaged by the BPC will seek to derive prosperity from the acceptability of its maintenance by the greatest number in the population. Coersive measures and dictatorships thrive in situations where those in power are aware of the non-acceptability of their authority and what it stands for to the majority of the people they govern. Inflated defence budgets are a measure of the lack of popularity of a government both internally and externally.

Our greatest asset will be a basic morality in our everyday operations, and flowing from that a persuasive influence on the minds of the people to support what we stand for. This we believe is the greatest insurance policy that any government may have in order to insure its continued acceptability to the people.