

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE IDEOLOGY OF

### BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS

Having gone through the ideology of Black Consciousness we need to have a look at the practical implications of this ideology. To me it appears a few basic steps need to be followed.

1. Directive politics - briefly this implies an infusion of a new direction in the formulation of the black Resistance.
2. Infiltrative politics - this involves direct engagement with groups that do not necessarily subscribe to the ideology of Black Consciousness but are sufficiently receptive to this type of influence as to warrant attention.
3. Orientation projects - employment of the various parameters of our cultural make up in an attempt to bring about the real self in us. This will entail attention being paid to things like religion, education, culture etc.
4. Self-reliance projects - promotion of the corporate personality type of approach to problems affecting groups of people.

These steps mentioned above are but a few that one can think of. It is important that whenever a new ideology is adopted by a group of people, its validity should be tested by the degree to which it can find application amongst people in the given situation. We must at all times remember that Black Consciousness is not being imposed by us on an unwilling people. We are in fact interpreting a situation in which we are participants and have come to the conclusion that this is the most relevant approach that we should adopt.

### DIRECTIVE POLITICS

When we took up this philosophy we were aware of the existence of other approaches to the same problem. We rejected these but must still accept that there is competition. Our people are still continually being misled. In this step therefore, we imply a spelling out of the new direction that we believe blacks should embark on. Under it I want to enumerate some sub topics but before I do so I wish to state that black consciousness must be tackled by its advocates as a religion. We believe in it, we think it is right, we envisage it carrying us forwards the realisation of our goals hence we must

propagate it as much and as far afield as possible.

- a. VOCALISATION : We still need to spell out our approach on each and every platform we get. Here one must observe that instances like mass meetings on campus, mass meetings in towns, letters to the press, discussions at popular congregation spots, leaflets etc. are all the kinds of platforms we should grab as fast as they come.

One may observe here that we need a group of disciplined protagonists. There is nothing that kills an idea more effectively than the inadequacy of protagonists of the same idea. People who hold different views from yours may hate your guts but they should be made to say at all times that you <sup>are</sup> a disciplined group that is consistent and serious about its mission.

In vocalising and popularising the idea of black consciousness your aim is to give people a faith in themselves and their struggle. That hope must be sustained as an active hope. It must compel them to do things for themselves in the belief that we all share i.e. that so doing is the initial step in self rediscovery and the drive towards attainment of our goals. We must never allow people to cultivate a passive hope that God will one day come down to solve problems. God is not in the habit of coming down to earth, and solving people's problems.

Each one of you must set out to create a task force in his environment. Teach yourself to take five people at a time, to speak to them about Black Consciousness in very great detail and then send -ing them off to do the same thing with another five. This is a kind of evangelism that must work in converting people to the truth. This is how we develop a disciplined and thoroughly trained front. We need this front almost as badly as the colonialists needed missionaries. The dice is heavily loaded in our favour because we are not merely talking about one's soul but we also include bread and butter issues.

- b. ORGANISATION - We have said that group solidarity is an important facet of Black Consciousness. People can never learn to demonstrate solidarity unless there is a group with which they identify. The importance of organising people into groups becomes relevant here. In any situation in which a <sup>group</sup> is involved, a common factor

in which the group is all interested can always be isolated and identified. Once this is done people must be organised to promote themselves as a group in terms of the common factor so isolated. The importance of this is not so much in ameliorating people's situations individually but much more in demonstrating to them the strength of group action. Any group action designed on a small scale must therefore, be calculated to succeed, otherwise it may have the effect of dampening down the people's solidarity.

There are many examples here of groups situations that can be exploited but the most classical one is the worker situation. When workers demand wage increments and achieve their goal through group action the success thereof lies in their group strength.

How does this relate to the success of our approach therefore? The point at issue is that through our distorted past Blacks have been portrayed as a group that cannot stand on its feet. The seriousness of this charge is in the fact that Blacks actually accommodate it in their thinking. By doing things for ourselves, in small groups and large groups we are at once bringing to the fore the fact that we can be completely on our own. This then enhances group pride and is a contributory factor in ridding us of psychological oppression by ourselves through our inferiority complex. This is why SASO is hailed far and wide in the Black World as a good step. It is a timely reminder to people at large that they must take care of their own business.

PUBLICITY STUNTS: - The very useage of the term will probably evoke a negative response amongst some of you yet it remains a fundamental truth that any new idea has to be put to the public for which it was designed in as many effective ways as possible. What are publicity stunts? Briefly speaking this could be in the form of:-

Slogans - Slogan usage is an old idea in the propagation of ideologies. A slogan can help or destroy movement but one thing sure, it always manages to defuse through a community much faster than essays of explanation.

Characteristics of good slogans are that they must be short and yet carry across to the next person the basic message of the ideology they seek to popularise. Slogans like "Black man, you are on your own!" seem to do this very dramatically. Of course in

the long run the name of the organisation may itself become a slogan. SASO has by now attained this stage. The danger with names like SASO becoming slogans is that the name does not remove stereotypes where they exist. I am referring here to adverse stereotypes.

d. IMAGES - The cultivation of image that seek to strengthen the solidarity of the front is sometimes also useful as a propagating mechanism. Methods of dress have in certain parts of the world been used to propagate ideologies. Perhaps the SASO t-shirts may be looked upon as an example of the kind of image I am talking about. The advantages of an image are that it provokes questions in those who do not know about it, without necessarily provoking a reaction in those against the ideology it seeks to promote.

Both the image and the slogan-type of advertisement are but initial stages in the spread of the ideology and need to be followed up immediately with in depth explanation, recruitment and involvement of the people amongst whom the ideology is being spread. The dangers imminent in this kind of propagation are almost obvious, but one wants to dwell much more on the advantages which are equally obvious .

We see therefore, that directive politics require the dedication reminiscent of that of religious fanatics, hence the front must be manned by those extremely convinced of the righteousness of this kind of approach.

### INFILTRATIVE POLITICS

The word infiltration is perhaps not adequate in this context especially in view of its historical usage in this country, but the idea behind politics of infiltration<sup>is</sup> that out of a group of people who direct themselves to only a part of the overall goal that you share with them, you wish to make their direction much more relevant and much more in line with the kind of thinking to which you subscribe. There is in this country especially, a certain amount of lethargy, perhaps based on fear, which makes people seek to apply themselves consciously peripherally. One may condemn such people and such organisations as obscurantists, perhaps quite legitimately, but in terms of one of our beliefs that there should be totality of involvement it is in our interest to make their point of application more neutral. This is normally done by two processes:

- (A) deliberate planting of our own people in the midst of such

a group, whose responsibility it will be to bring more in line the thinking of those amongst whom they are working. These are our energy sources within this groups.

(B) Application of pressure on the group from outside by way of constructive criticism calculated to provoke some kind of reaction in the particular area of interest. Once such a debate is picked up it can be effectively steered by our energy sources who are operating as an integral part of the pressurised group. Almost essential to this kind of approach is that we should have complete insight of the group with whom we relate. It is our duty to know what Blacks are doing, how they are doing it and why they are doing it. It is also essential for us to know what the intrinsic power points are in each group.

#### ORIENTATION PROJECTS

In the main these are designed to deal, as we said, with our distorted past. We have become aware of the crippling effects of a slanted education and religion, but much more poignant is the fact that colonisation coupled with oppression cultivates self-rejection and self-denial ultimately, because of the employment of education and religion for the preparation of the colonised for more lasting colonisation and oppression. Therefore, some kind re-orientation along educational, cultural, religious and economical lines is necessary in order to break once and for all this vicious cycle.

A. Education - In South Africa the architects of education are whites and their awareness over the potency of education as a conscientising weapon will always make them all the more eager to keep it beyond our grasp and control. However this does not imply by any means that we cannot seek to restore truth in the area. We should thus encourage, as perhaps one of our priorities, intensive research in how best to bring education in line with our quest for a consciousness. Topics like history should be delved in and SASO together with other groups concerning themselves with Black education must make this an area requiring urgent attention. Black experts should draw up courses for even extra curricular education of black students in fields of medicine, economy, agriculture and so on, in an attempt to make what students learn at varsity more relevant to their situation. Together with these black experts SASO should then run extra curricular classes both during term and long

holidays, catering for not only students, but also high schools and interested lay people.

### B. Culture and general Black welfare

There is no single agency in this country which has set itself the task of spelling out the Blackman's cultural understanding of himself and his environment, indeed much as we claim that we are on our own, white people write more, seem to read more and claim to know more about ourselves and all our relevant cultural aspects. It is not enough for us to claim that what they produce is false. We ought in fact to demonstrate that we are our own authorities by interpreting ourselves to ourselves. For this reason we need to establish serious -ly black facilities and resource centres through out the countries to collect, collate, disseminate and popularise aspects of our culture that reflect the real self of the blackman. These facilities and resource centres can then be used as reference points by groups that also seek to promote the same kind of attitude. Obviously this will entail a lot of research in order to have a measure of authenticity. Any innovations made must be made by Blacks to be in keeping with the changing environment and attitudes surrounding the Black man at the moment.

### C. Religion

A lot has been said and is being said about Black Theology, which is basically an attempt to examine the Black man's relationship with his God in the light of our experience. SASO and relevant Black groups must not underestimate the importance of Black Theology, for in the ultimate analysis it will be found that religion, rightly or wrongly, is a priority in the make up of most Black people. Hence, any new thinking which does not encompass this religiousness of Black people may find itself sadly lacking and unnecessarily opposed and in any case we are aware of the exploitation of the Black man that accompanies the preaching of the Christ event to Blacks and therefore this makes it imperative on our part to set the record straight. Black Theology must be expanded to something much more than a subject for discussion at quarterly seminars, it must be taught if necessary extra-curricularly at seminaries and other institutions of theology.

### D. Economy

One of the most dynamic ways of demonstrating solidarity is by marshalling the economic resources of a group, and using the pooled strength of the economy to the advantage of that group. SASO must make it her

business to interest Blacks in this type of engagement. This is obviously a very difficult area to work in because it is the primary field of interests of the colonialists and therefore is very jealously guarded. Nevertheless we must counteract the enemy's manoeuvres for indeed it is not possible to win any battle without an economic power base. Black cooperative enterprise designed for the benefit of Blacks is not an eschatological myth; it can be realised if only meaningful efforts by dedicated people can be made.

### SELF-RELIANCE PROJECTS

Projects designed to attain self-reliance are manifold but here I wish to confine myself to what is called community projects. As you know, you will be hearing a lot about community projects in the next two days, which only goes to show the kind of importance we attach to them. Let it suffice to say here that the aim of community projects is usually much broader than to improve the lot of the community. It is a physical and practical demonstration of the fact that the salvation and emancipation of a group ultimately lies in the hands of that group. Where others deny the group resources, the group must make them available; where others retard progress, the group must show a willingness to develop; where others laugh at the impotence of the group, the group must show a wonderful ability of producing something out of little. Out of all this exercise, therefore, it is almost inevitable that self-reliance and group pride will be enhanced. SASO working again with other relevant groups in the Black world must encourage the initiation of community projects.

### SUMMARY

In summary therefore one merely wishes to say that the task to which we wish to dedicate ourselves may demand from most of us a lifelong application of ourselves. Black consciousness is a serious philosophy that calls upon us to be true to ourselves practically amongst other things. That pride which at present is latent in the Black Community can only be brought to the surface through hard work, not by anybody else, but by us. When the day comes on which our goals will be attained, we shall rejoice in the knowledge that we have been the architects of our own future.