

Conference Minutes

SHORT NOTES ON BLACK PEOPLE'S CONVENTION.

June?
1972

Realization.

The notion of the Black People's Convention was born out of an increasing sense of urgency among Black People in this country. It was born out of a mood and realization that all was not well in the Black man's house; and that this situation can only be corrected if we seize the challenge as it faces us. This mood and realization had been seething for the past few years and it had to surface sooner or later in some form. The problems and afflictions of our community needed a quick remedy if we were to be saved from receding into perpetual oblivion as a people.

The first step towards providing a remedy to our problems lay in our coming together. It was only as a solid unit that we could chart our course into the future.

Small beginnings.

A small group of interested men and women drawn from all walks of life, gripped by this sense of urgency and armed with sheer determination and grit, first met in a little obscure village on the outskirts of Pietermaritzburg. This was in the fall of last year (1971). They probed the possibilities of creating local points around which black people could rally to discuss and iron out their problems. After conferring for a few days these men resolved to call a national conference of all black organizations that were involved in any major or minor way in the daily lives of black people.

The conference was dated for the 17th to 19th Dec. 1971, and was to be held at the historic D.O.C.C. in Orlando, and to go under the name - National Organisations' Conference.

The D.O.C.C. Conference

This gathering was attended by a beautiful array of people from all over the country. Indeed, the response was much greater than was anticipated. There delegates ranged from Cripple Care Organisations to Girl Guide movements, from Student Movements to Worker Unions. They came from practically all over the country; Cape Town, Pieterburg, Durban, Johannesburg etc. In summary the conference was thoroughly representative.

In the initial stages the people were obviously guarded and cautious. This however was soon to be discarded as people started to gravitate to the heart of the matter.

First the talk centred around the creation of some confederate body of all black organisations which would amalgamate, synthesise and reshape the cultural values of black people; to raise people from being self-despising, self-pitying and self-hating individuals that they now are to be self-respecting and capable men. The pros and cons of this confederation were debated but no satisfactory conclusion was reached. It was quite evident that most people thought this type of organisation would merely be scratching the surface.