

BLACK PEOPLES CONVENTION

1972
18



B. P. C. ORGANISATION.

It is important for all of us involved in B.P.C. to understand its organisational structure in order to better appreciate our individual and collective role in the whole organisation. With this understanding we could from time to time examine the effectiveness of the structure of our organisation and make necessary adjustments and changes wherever the need arises.

There, we shall discuss: (i) the constitutional structure of the organisation and
(ii) organisational progress.

(i) Constitutional structure and implications:

The National Congress, which meets annually and consists of the National Executive Committee and delegates from Branches, is the highest and most authoritative policy making body. The National Executive Committee, which is elected annually by the National Congress, regulates the affairs of the organisation according to the policy and mandate given by the National Congress. Branches, which are established mainly by the National Executive Committee, promote the interests of the organisation on a local level. They are organs through which the general membership of the B.P.C. organisation can frequently engage themselves in the activities of the organisation on a local level in a concerted manner.

Some implications of the above structures are that:

(a) The National Executive Committee has to take decisions on a day to day basis within the frame-work of the guide-lines provided by the National Congress. These decisions differ in complexity importance. The probability exist, though small, of situations arising which might be too complex to be handled by the National Executive Committee (NEC) alone. The B.P.C. constitution provides for the calling of a special National Congress (NC) to decide the issue, which exercise is both cumbersome and expensive. It would thus appear that the provision of another body, more representative than the NEC, could avert the calling of the NC in cases not complex enough to demand the attention of the NC.

(b) The NEC can by and large maintain contact with the general membership at the NC once a year, otherwise through the National Organiser's visits. This situation is far from being satisfactory. It implies that Branches and the NEC can only deliberate about the struggle together once a year. Since the struggle is on a day to day basis, interaction between the NEC and Branches should be as regular as possible.

(c) Branches in different parts of the country can only meet once a year at Congress.

The situation is again not satisfactory. There should be regular contact among Branches to ensure co-ordination of ideas and action. It is also important for the familiarisation of people from different regions in order to facilitate co-operation and good working relationships.

(d) In the event of the incapacitation of the NEC in one way or the other, the organisation would find it difficult to get the situation under control with the present structure. It would appear as though some provision has to be made to obviate this difficulty.

The provision of some measure to cope with the difficulties above will be examined below.

(ii) Membership drive:

Since its launching 10 months ago, the organisation has established a total of 8 Branches viz. Johannesburg Central, DON, Springs, Daveyton, New Brighton, Zwelitsha, Merewent and Kwa-Dlangezwa. Attempts are being made to establish others at the following places: Natalspruit, Tembisa, Atteridgeville, Mamelodi, Kagiso, Kroonstad, Welkom, Bloemfontein, Mdantsana, Duncan Village, Umtata, Newcastle, Ladysmith, Pietermaritzburg, Durban ghettos, Mara, Mafikeng, Kimberley and the Cape Town ghettos.

The established Branches appear to reach saturation point at a membership of between 25 and 50. This seems to be attributable to the complacency our Branches assume after the attainment of Branch status, which situation is far from being justified assuming that the ideal situation would be recruitment of all Black people in the country into the movement. Thus, the attainment of Branch status should be a spur to our Branches to strive harder for membership, rather than being considered the end-point.

Membership drive should be one of the issues considered in our planning session during the present sitting.

Definition of the National Council

A few deficiencies were discussed elsewhere in this paper concerning the organisational structures we have. We now consider the creation of a body that would:

- (i) Involve less expenses and efforts to meet than the NC.
- (ii) Be more representative than the NEC.
- (iii) Bring about regular contact among B.P.C. Branches all over the country.
- (iv) Bring about regular contact between the NEC and the general B.P.C. membership.

This body shall be called the National Council and shall:

- (a) Consist of the NEC and chairmen of Branches.

(b)/ Meet.....

- (b) Meet at least twice a year.
- (c) Resolve matters referred to it by the NEC.
- (d) Discuss any relevant issue (s) affecting B.P.C. .
- (e) Review B.P.C. progress through NEC and Branch reports.

The NEC shall be responsible for convening the National Council meetings. A petition signed by at least 40% of the B.P.C. Branch chairmen requesting a National Council meeting and presented to the Secretary-General will be entitled to such. In the event of the incapacitation of the NEC, any Branch Chairman can convene a National Council meeting.

(Presented by Mōsibudi Mangena at a meeting of the NEC and chairmen at a meeting of the NEC and Chairmen of B.P.C. Branches held in Braamfontein on the 9th June 1973).