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**STEVE BIKO RETURNS: THE PERSISTENCE OF
BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS IN AZANIA (SOUTH
AFRICA)**

**THESIS SUBMITTED FOR DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work and ideas contained therein are wholly mine and original.

I declare that full referencing and acknowledgement has been done on ideas and thoughts that do not belong to me.

I am also aware of the University's policy against plagiarism.

Kenneth. M. Tafira

September 2013

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my late mother...you are living and you are watching MaNdlovu.

To Azanian youth trapped in the township struggles and trying to make a meaning of it...hold up.

To Grandpa, VaChimusoro Kenneth, this is for you; your wishes are fulfilled

To the Great Spirit that dwells in water, Njuzu, I am eternally grateful for the gift and the honour

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Kutenda kwakiti kuri mumwoyo (Gratitude of a cat is in her mind).

Abstract

Steve Biko returns and continues to illuminate the postapartheid social order. His contestation by various claimants for different reasons shows his continuing and lasting legacy. However he finds a special niche among a disenfranchised and frustrated township youth who are trapped in township struggles where they attempt to derive meaning. More important is why these youth who neither saw nor participated in the struggle against apartheid are turning to an age old idea like Black Consciousness in a context of the pervasive influence of non-racialism, rainbowism and triumphalism of neo-liberalism. The realisation is that a human-centred society with a human face which Black Consciousness practitioners advocated and strove for is yet to be realised. This shows the anomalies and maladies of a postcolonial dispensation where ideals, principles and teleology of the liberation struggle are yet to be consummated. Thus Black Consciousness as a node in a long thread of black political thought in the country; and as a spirit, will always be both an emotion, and a motion that finds a new meaning with each generation.

List of Acronyms

ACU	African Christians Union
AME	African Methodist Episcopal
ANC	African National Congress
ANCYL	African National Congress Youth League
APDUSA	African Peoples Democratic Union of South Africa
APC	African People's Congress
APLA	Azanian Peoples Liberation Army
ARV	Anti-Retroviral
AWB	Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging Webblad
AZANYU	Azanian National Youth Union
AZAPO	Azanian Peoples Organisation
AZAYO	Azanian Youth Organisation
BCP	Black Communities Programmes
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
BHM	Black History Month
BPC	Black Peoples Convention
CBM	Consultative Business Movement
CCB	Civil Cooperation Bureau
CE	Critical Ethnography
COD	Congress of Democrats
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COP	Congress of the People
COSATU	Confederation of South African Trade Unions
CPC	Coloured Peoples Council
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa
CST	Colonisation of a Special Type
CYL	Congress Youth League
DA	Democratic Alliance
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DLF	Democratic Left Front
DP	Democratic Party
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
FET	Further Education and Training
FNB	First National Bank
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
HRC	Human Rights Commission
ICD	Independent Complaints Directorate
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPID	Independent Police Investigations Directorate
JMC	Joint Management Committee
JSE	Johannesburg Stock Exchange
KZN	Kwa-Zulu – Natal
LP	Labour Party
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MKWVA	Umkhonto weSizwe War Veterans Association
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
NACTU	National Council of Trade Unions

NDR	National Democratic Revolution
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NFT	New Frank Talk
NGK	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk
NHI	National Health Insurance
NIC	National Indian Congress
NIA	National Intelligence Agency
NP	Nationalist Party
NPC	National Planning Commission
NUMSA	National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa
NUSAS	National Union of South African Students
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress of Azania
PASMA	Pan African Students Movement of Azania
POPCRU	Police and Prisons Civil Rights Unions
PYA	Progressive Youth Alliance
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SAB	South African Breweries
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADF	South African Defence Force
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SAIC	South African Indian Congress
SAIIA	South African Institute of International Affairs
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SANCO	South African National Civic Organisations
SAP	South African Police
SASCO	South African Students Congress
SASM	South African Students Movement
SASO	South African Student Organisation
SASS	South African State Security
SAYRO	Socialist Azanian Youth Revolutionary Organisation
SBF	Steve Biko Foundation
SOE	State Owned Enterprises
SOPA	Socialist Party of Azania
SNI	September National Imbizo
SSRC	South Africa Students Representative Council
SRC	Students Representative Council
StasSA	Statistics South Africa
SYP	Siyapambili Youth Pioneers
TBVC	Transkei Bophuthatswana Venda Ciskei
TCE	Transvaal College of Education
TEC	Transitional Executive Council
TIC	Transvaal Indian Congress
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDF	United Democratic Front
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UP	United Party
WHAM	Win Hearts and Minds
WHO	World Health Organisation
YCL	Young Communist League

YWCA
ZANU
ZANLA
ZAPU
ZIPRA

Young Women's Christian Association
Zimbabwe African National Union
Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
Zimbabwe African Peoples Union
Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army

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Introduction

Black Consciousness (BC) is a historical idea rooted in the colonial encounter between Africans and colonisers. Although BC has come to be associated with Steve Biko, it is a consummation of a long tradition steeped in the desire by colonised Africans to liberate themselves. It is a strand; a node in a long thread woven through different historical epochs in Azanian resistance struggles. It is my intention to trace this idea. More important is the question why certain ideas persist throughout history, refusing to be buried but like a spectre or ghost of the past returning to haunt the present. I realise this is a monumental task to undertake or even a mammoth question to ask and answer.

In this thesis I seek to answer the question why should certain ideas like BC persist through history, even when they are pronounced “deceased.” Interestingly some of the contemporary BC-oriented youth neither saw nor participated in the struggle against apartheid (as seen in BC youth formation Blackwash). I trace the development of political lineage of BC in Azania from early African nationalism of the mission-educated elite, Ethiopianism, Garveyism to BC in its contemporary forms. I also argue that ideas travel; that while Africans were transported as human cargo into the New World, they came back into the continent in the form of an idea – Pan-Africanism. It is from these ideas that the political subjectivity of black South Africans was firmly entrenched. I also make comparative analyses with developments in the US in the 1960s and 1970s and how they were diametrically reinforced by BC in Azania. BC resurgence in postapartheid South Africa will also be compared with the revival of Black Nationalism in the US in the early 1990s. Here the hagiography of black icons (especially Malcolm X) and rap culture is important; similarly the mythologising of Steve Biko and his contestation by various

sectors of the black Azanian community makes a rich basis for comparison.

I now turn to the development of African forms of political protest and resistance. Azanian history is a history of black resistance to white conquest and domination (Fatton 1986) and nativist and nationalist political resistance arose out of political domination especially in states like South Africa which have emerged from settler colonialism whereby domination created antagonism between coloniser and colonised (Nolutshungu 1982: 205). I believe it is proper to locate the rise of African political consciousness in resistance, which begins soon after the colonial encounter seen at the arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck in 1652. However, it is outside the scope of this project to analyse these early resistances, which Hosea Jaffe (1952) in his work has extensively elaborated. Incidentally, it is the memory of these that would provide an inspiration and serve as political fodder for later struggles.

The first African newspapers, albeit mission-controlled, were John Tengo Jabavu's *Imvo Yabantundu* (Native Opinion) formed in 1884; Alan Kirkland Soga and Walter Rabusana's *Izwi Labantu* (Voice of the People) in 1898 ; and FZS Peregrino's *South African Spectator* which reported struggles of black people throughout the world, especially in the US (Walshe 1970; Fredrickson 1995). The first African political organisations were *Imbumba Yama Nyama* (Union of Africans) formed at the same time as the Afrikaner Bond in the early 1880s (Kuper 1969; Halisi 1999); the South African Native Congress (1898) and the African Peoples' Organisation whose membership was mainly 'coloured'(1902). With the hope of British victory in the Anglo-Boer war, many Africans hoped that the Cape's non-racial electoral system would be extended to the larger South African society. Instead there was white settler political accommodation rather than extension of political rights to Africans. The

Cape liberal idea became a basis for black protest and political mobilisation (Walshe 1970; Odendaal 1984). The South African National Native Congress (SANNC) was formed in 1912 by mission-educated African elite and petty bourgeoisie that did not commit to Ethiopianist ‘Africa for Africans’ despite its all-African membership. Instead its official goal was a common democratic society where Africans, whites, coloureds and Indians would be equal and sought “liberation from prejudice and discrimination through non-confrontational means: publicising of black grievances, lobbying or petitioning of public authorities and legislative bodies and support of legal challenges to discriminatory laws and policies” (Fredrickson 1995: 125). The SANNC however changed its name to pan-African sounding African National Congress (ANC)¹ in 1923 but didn’t wholly embrace Garveyism which was current during that period. However, some ANC members like Josiah Gumede in the Transvaal subscribed to Garveyism. James Thaele in the Western Cape, who himself had been educated in the US where he fell under the influence of du Bois and Garvey’s ideas, was known to be an ardent supporter of Garveyism (Walshe 1970 [1987]; Hill and Pirio 1987; Lodge 1990). Thaele also published the *African World* modelled on Garvey’s *Negro World*; Clements Kadalie’s populist Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) was also a supporter of Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and the ICU newspaper, *The Black Man* and its successor *The Workers Herald*, featured Garveyism.

The Garveyist, “Africa for Africans” movement which can be historically linked to Ethiopianism was in many ways conjoined with black Americans (Hill and Pirio 1987).

¹ ANC’s alliance with the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) which was formed in 1921 was an adoption of working towards an independent native republic and then a workers and peasant republic; that South Africa was a colonial situation and socialism would be achieved through two stages: a) a national democratic revolution b) a socialist revolution. This was to inform CPSA and even ANC policy for a long time in the years that followed (Callinicos 1988; Lodge 1990).

Garveyism played a crucial role in the historical consciousness of resistance which was to be manifest in Lembede's Congress Youth League in the 1940s. In the post First World War years Garvey's ideas were gaining currency in the country and developing into a full, mass nationalist movement whose adherents adopted the slogans "*Amelika Ayeza!*" (Black Americans are coming!), "*Afrika Mayibuye!*" (Let Africa be restored to us!), and "Africa for Africans!" implying that they saw Garvey and his supporters were coming to liberate oppressed black South Africans (Hill and Pirio 1987). Garveyism was actually a form of Black Consciousness which had long been part of the African response to colonialism. Although Black Nationalism wasn't exclusive to a particular social class, it was nurtured by a growing common racial identity and historical experience of subjugation and citizenship denial (Kuper 1969; Halisi 1999).

These ideas were to find firm footing in the 1940s especially in the writings of Anton Lembede who initiated the ANC's Congress Youth League (CYL) in 1944. In fact Lembede is considered the first to construct the philosophy of African nationalism in Azania (Edgar and Msumza 1996; Karis and Carter 1963). The CYL's manifesto, co-authored by Lembede and Jordan Ngubane, was to rethink Black Nationalist theory and practice. It advocated an African consciousness and upliftment, a belief in African spirituality, self-discovery, shedding of inferiority, self-reliance and cultural uniqueness as a basis for opposition to white supremacy (Fetton 1986). Lembede believed that Africans were not bound by language, colour, geographical location or nationalism but by a spiritual force called "Africanism" (Edgar and Msumza 1996) which is a higher self-realisation and self-expression of the African spirit. His African nationalism was based on: "Africa is a black man's country; Africans are one; African leaders must come out of Africans; cooperation with whites may

only happen if separate²; destiny of Africans is in national freedom; national progress and advancement; socialism after national freedom and our motto is: Freedom in our Lifetime” (Edgar and Msumza 1996: 21; Halisi 1999). Lembede believed that before waging the struggle against white domination, Africans had to turn inward and discover themselves; shed inferiority; improve their self-image; rely on their own resources and write and mobilise as a national group around their own leaders. Finally he called for closing of ranks, unity and standing together of Africans (Edgar and Msumza 1996).

This new generation of Youth Leaguers (that is Lembede, Ngubane, AP Mda, Zeph Mothopeng and others) also opposed the ANC old guard’s conservatism and trusteeship (Gerhart 1978). Theirs was a confrontational and direct approach. The CYL was calling for action and mass organisation. Indeed the Alexandra bus boycott of 1940 and 1945, the Soweto homeless’ movement of 1944 to 1947 led by Sofasonke Mpanza and the 1946 workers strike, all amidst the increased frustration of urban working class as a result of widespread poverty (Lodge 1990; Posel 1991), were conditions that demanded a mass movement. As a result the ANC adopted a Programme of Action in 1949 calling for civil disobedience, strikes, boycotts and stay-at-home (Fatton 1986). By also clamouring for national freedom, political independence and self-determination, the Congress began to assume a new spirit of militancy and aggressiveness (Gerhart 1978). This culminated in the 1950s defiance campaign signalling ANC’s new approach to struggle.

²Lembede associated Marxism with the white SA Communist Party which he saw as perpetuating white paternalism and he rejected communism as conflicting with nationalism. He believed Europeans, could only be invited after freedom has been attained, and inter racial cooperation could only be possible when Africans had reached self-confidence and unity/cohesion.

The ideas of Lembede had an effect on some of the Youth Leaguers following his demise in 1947. AP Mda who succeeded him as president of the Youth League and others like PK Leballo and Robert Sobukwe formed the Bureau of African Nationalism (BAN) as a “watchdog” overseeing the Defiance Campaign, ensuring that non-Africans would not reinterpret goals and methods adopted in the Programme of Action. Leballo and his associates were in opposition to the alliance policy which they saw as collaborationist and advocating non-racialism. They secretly referred to themselves as the Africanist Central Committee (CenCom) and in 1954 published a journal called *The Africanist* which became a focal point for African nationalism and criticism of the ANC’s policy of multi-racialism. Since the first issue of *The Africanist* in November 1954 to the founding of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) in 1958 and to beyond the Sharpeville massacre, multiracial political cooperation was to be one of the most divisive issues in South African black politics (Gerhart 1978: 151). The Africanists argued that white liberals and white radicals shared the same underlying attitude toward African political initiatives: that neither was willing to allow Africans to chart their course for fear that Africans would see all whites as enemies (Gerhart 1978; Hlisi 1999). The Africanists maintained that all whites including liberals and radicals desired to maintain the status quo because they were beneficiaries of an exploitative social system. White radicals, they said, saw nationalism as anti-white, black supremacist, and equal to Afrikaner racism which, however, was premised on perpetuating subjugation. African nationalism, Africanists claimed, was a liberation ideology. Indeed Africanism and Marxism were at polar opposites – the former emphasised race consciousness while the latter, a class analysis. The Africanist position seems to be vindicated by the uniqueness of the historical experience of black people as the downtrodden.

By 1958 the Africanists broke away, denouncing the ANC's adoption of the Freedom Charter³ which defied the principles of African nationalism embodied in the 1949 Programme of Action (Anthony Marx 1992). In April of 1959 on Van Riebeeck Day the Africanists formally became the PAC at a conference held at Orlando Community Hall in Soweto. Slogans like "Africa for Africans; Cape to Cairo; Morocco to Madagascar; imperialists quit Africa and *Izwe Lethu iAfrika* (Afrika is our land), Azania we will take with a bazooka"⁴ were heard (Gerhart 1978; Kunnie 2000). The formation of the PAC coincided with Ghana's independence in 1959 and the breakaway party drew heavily on Nkrumah's Pan Africanist ethos.

In 1960 the PAC launched the Anti-Pass Campaign, that led to the Sharpeville massacre where sixty-nine African protesters were killed by apartheid police and hundreds injured; while in Cape Town 30,000 people led by Philip Kgosana marched against pass laws. Thereafter PAC launched an armed wing, POQO (in Xhosa, meaning 'We Africans stand alone'); modelling itself on Kenya's Mau Mau, 250 men with *pangas* went on a rampage in the Eastern Cape, attacking a police station and killing two whites (Wilson 1991; Kunnie 2000). However it was PAC's PK Leballo's political naivety at a Maseru press conference that led to a raid of the party's offices, confiscation of membership lists and rounding up and arrest of hundreds of PAC supporters and sympathisers (Gerhart 1978; Fatton 1986; Lodge 1990). The ANC for its own armed struggle launched *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK -Spear of the

³The Freedom Charter drafted on 26 June 1955 where ANC, SA Indian Congress (SAIC), SA Coloured Peoples' Organisation (SACPO) and Congress of Democrats formed an alliance. The Charter espoused non-racialism and its goal wasn't socialism but class collaboration and alliances. Following the Charter, ideological conflict emerged leading to the breakaway PAC in 1959 (Fatton 1986).

⁴ These words have translated into an emotive liberation song, which I have heard sung on many occasions by social movements.

Nation) and both POQO and MK had distinct approaches and different ideological inclinations. While POQO desired to maximise white civilian deaths in a terror campaign, MK used sabotage with limited loss of life and in 1963 MK cadres were arrested in the Rivonia suburb of Johannesburg leading to the Rivonia trial where they were sent to prison for life. This effectively marked the end of African political protest, creating a political vacuum until the emergence of the South African Student Organisation (SASO)⁵ and Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement in the late 1960s (Gerhart 1972; Mngxitama, Alexander and Gibson 2008).

This thought persists into the postapartheid as purveyed by township youth. Chapter 1 looks at the BC movement as both a politico-ideological thought and a philosophy. It links BC to erstwhile black radical thought in a political lineage linking the New World and the country. Chapter 2 traces the fortunes of BC after the 1976 upheavals and how that affected BC ideological thought at the same time contributing to its marginalisation in mainstream politics. Chapter 3 examines the genesis of BC postapartheid especially through Blackwash, a BC youth movement based in Soweto who are the primary focus of my study. It analyses BC politico-ideological thought as propagated by youth who are both within and without the movement. Since Blackwash is a youth movement Chapter 4 interrogates the concept "black youth" and the reasons why this youth comes to subjectivity and what spurs their agency. Chapter 5 traces a historical construction of blackness in Azania and elsewhere, where comparisons are made on the inherent instability of the term "blackness" itself. Chapters 6 and 7 follow debates among contemporary BC youth on the role of the middle class; culture and history in black struggles for liberation. Chapter 8 traces the history of collaboration, complicity and "selling-out" in South African historiography. The impetus comes from

⁵SASO broke away from the mainly white NUSAS in 1968 and was officially inaugurated in 1969.

allegations by contemporary BC youth that the postapartheid nation is a “sell-out” arrangement. Chapter 9 proposes that rather than selling-out, the betrayals of liberation may better be understood as stemming from the process of decolonisation itself. Chapter 10 examines “The Nation” as it was and is propagated by different black protagonists. “Azania” is used interchangeably with “South Africa” throughout this thesis, the former as an appellation used by BC proponents and Africanists to refer to the latter. Chapter 11 views symbols and symbolism in the postcolony as integral in a normative vision of the nation and how it had to be imagined.

This thesis holistically examines black political thought and themes around it. It is a totality that seeks congruence of different strands of thought which are bound together in different chapters. One particular issue may appear in one chapter and in another, albeit in a different form depending on the theme addressed in that context. Thus I implore the reader to read all the chapters if they are to realise a complete perception of the issues arising.

Methodology

Although the primary focus of my study is Blackwash, a BC-oriented youth movement based in Soweto (see Chapter 3), this thesis deals with a great deal of issues pertinent to BC and the country’s politico-ideological landscape. I have used Critical Ethnography (which I discuss below) and Situational Diagnosis as overriding methodologies of my project. The latter, borrowed from medical terminology, is in sync with BC youth postulation that the postapartheid situation hasn’t lived up to the historical expectations and aspirations of the people. My analysis has looked at the life story and social dynamics of a situation through eliciting opinions, popular knowledge and practices. The method involves definition and redefinition of research questions as required by the shifting socio-cultural and socio-

economic framework of the study as well as field data collection, analysis, presentation and conceptualisation of findings. I intended to achieve this through in-depth conversations and listening. The latter involved opening my ears to political and social discourses of participants. Being naturalistic, autobiographical, in-depth, narrative and non-directive, informal talks are modelled on the conversation, a social event that enables people to talk about sensitive topics (Holland and Ramazanoglu 1994: 135). These conversations with BC youth were centred on themes like culture, Black Consciousness, Pan Africanism, socio-economic conditions in contemporary society and politics.

My project has demanded phenomenological and historical approaches since it sought to understand the underlying structure and essence of my participants' experience. The analytic methods oriented me to an in-depth and reflective study of experience(s) as they are lived and as they relate to the ontological predisposition, and thus directing my interpretation of the whole social experience. I have also employed the grounded theory approach which involves naming, coding, looking at field notes for indicators of events, comparing consistencies, differences, gaps and classification of conversations in terms of key concepts which are mainly developed through the research work itself (Abramson and Mizrahi 1994; Baxter, Hughes and Tight 2001). By building on the cyclical and spiral perception of the research process, concept development, data collection and analysis took place in close conjunction.

Observing that a huge amount of discourse pertaining to Blackwash and contemporary black thought has been happening on Internet sites, especially Facebook and online newspapers and often commentary sections, blogs and other self-publishing sites, I spent a considerable amount of time exploring this medium. I have also made good use of archival records, newspapers and other historical information of interest. Historical and archival records have

actually helped in the empirical foundation of my project. Documents related to my research were read to construct either social realities, versions of events or the cultural contexts (written ideas and issues) in which they occurred.

Coming back to Critical Ethnography: in the past fifty years anthropology has undergone major changes, defined by a theoretical eclecticism, borrowing from ethnomethodology, Marxism, feminism, phenomenology, cultural studies, semiology and postmodernism (Rosaldo 1989, 1993; Fabian 1983 [2002], 1991; Jordan and Yeomans 1995; Marcus and Fischer 1999). There has been a concurrent concern with reflexivity, a recognition that the researcher and researched are part of the social and everyday world under investigation (Jordan and Yeomans 1995). The emergent ethnographic research approach has emphasised history and politics in contexts of oppression and inequality based on westernisation, media imperialism, commodification of culture and differences of class, gender and race (Rosaldo 1993). Anthropological research has shifted from structures to theories of practice and exploring structure and agency. This means that the researcher's own subjectivity⁶ takes into cognisance human diversity, historical change and political struggles. Ethnography as an anthropological practice can't be separated from the historical context from which it emerged (Leclerc 1972; Asad 1973; Asad and Dixon 1985; Taussig 1987; Fabian 1991; Jordan and Yeomans 1995). Said (1989, 1993) in particular has been most rigorously critical of anthropology for its connection to colonialism/imperialism and its representation of the Other. On the other hand, the postmodern twist in the "new ethnography" involves the understanding of understanding, requiring that textual analysis be done without a prescriptive

⁶Rosaldo (1989, 1993) argues that ethnography is a subjective undertaking and cites examples of Geertz's

typewriter incident in Java, Sean Briggs' antics among the Eskimos and Dorrine Kondo's conflictual emotions among the Japanese as showing power dynamics, inequality and play of emotions.

project of human emancipation (see also Agger 1991). Interpretive approaches like phenomenology, hermeneutics and constructionism are seen as lacking political commitment and may serve right-wing, racist tendencies and ignore historical, material and social aspects of subjects (Eagle, Hayes and Sibanda 2006).

At the conferences of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) in the late 1960s debates arose on the ethical and political responsibilities of the discipline (Bunzl 2002). Rooted in political and cultural power structures of colonialism, anthropology could no longer be immune from political influences and critics like Bob Scholte (1970, 1971, 1972), Dwyer (1979) and Rabinow (1979) were arguing against a Weberian value-free and neutral science. For Rosaldo (1989, 1993) dismantling objectivity enables the social analyst to become a social critic. Writers like Fabian (1983) criticised the positivist aspect of anthropological methodology where critical reflection was absent in social and cultural contexts and the Other was denied an opportunity to act and interact with the researcher. With this advocacy, Fabian argues that dialectical anthropology can never claim the political innocence of positivist epistemology, opining that “social realities and social theories are, or ought to be mediated by social praxis” (Fabian 1991: 65). This formed the basis for a new critical anthropology that was “politically relevant, morally responsible and socially emancipatory” (Bunzl 2002: xxi). World events of the late 1960s – that is, the anti-colonial independence movements, the Vietnam War, civil rights and student movements – were crucial in inaugurating and developing this nascent form of critical thought.

Furthermore cultures of people of the world need to constantly be rediscovered because culturally they are always re-inventing themselves, especially in postmodern/postcolonial conditions and this requires ethnography to develop new narratives to reinvest the discipline with the notion of “critical tradition” (Fabian 1991). This means social theory becomes

historicised and politicised. The result is an internal challenge to existing paradigms and what they embody. Huspek (1994) makes three propositions: ethnography should show sensitivity to the meanings and significances of the Other through genuine dialogue, self-reflection and ideological critique should be a central aim of the analysis.

Critical Ethnography (CE),⁷ which I consider a radical form of hermeneutics with its roots in educational anthropology, is understood as a “form of knowledge production which supports transformation as well as interpretive concerns” (Simon and Dippo 1986: 195; see also Rosaldo 1989, 1993; Jordan and Yeomans 1995). Simon and Dippo (1986) argue that it’s inadequate for anthropology if it fails to specify practices and points of view of people and make them topical. Similarly Fabian argues that the relationship between people and societies that we study, anthropology and its objects, is inevitably political (2002: 143). The attraction that CE has for the Marxist tradition is that: it explores social relations and practices of contemporary hegemonic capitalism that are operative in everyday life; with a unique capacity to get close to sites of exploitation and oppression. CE also gives the researcher firsthand experience and is thus compatible with non-positivist epistemology detached from the Weberian tradition of value-free science (Rosaldo 1989, 1993; Jordan and Yeomans 1995; Eagle, Hayes and Sibanda 2006). Consequently, CE should not only engage in observation of practices but in the dissemination of useful knowledge within the research site as well, and delving into popular forms of social consciousness and political action (see also Back and Solomos 1993). CE seeks to valorise subordinate knowledge and perspectives excluded and marginalised from official discourse and these need to be included in social analysis (Rosaldo 1989, 1993; Herzfeld 2001). This means neither ethnographers nor their subjects hold a

⁷ Eagle, Hayes and Sibanda (2006) call these standpoint methodologies which include Marxist, feminist and black scholarship.

monopoly on truth. This however doesn't mean a critical ethnographic project should exempt those we study from critique or even romanticise the oppressed even though we need to denounce oppression (Fabian 1991). The implication is that the ethnographic vision should be intersubjective, incorporating a hermeneutic praxis which breaks the western hegemony of analysis and replaces it with an anthropological knowledge that is a product of a dialogic process which is communicative (Hymes 1972; Rabinow 1977; Dwyer 1979; Crapanzano 1980; Tedlock 1979; Tsing 1993; Appadural 1996; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Fabian 1983 [2002]).

An elaboration of Critical Ethnography is that it's a project (Sartre 1963) which is an activity determined by real and present conditions which makes it pedagogical and political, while assessing society as structured by inequalities and dominated by a hegemonic culture (Brodkey 1987). CE reconstructs and appropriates method to make it a distinct form of cultural politics; providing a criterion for investigation, ideas, questions and procedures that define how ethnography becomes a productive apparatus. Simon and Dippo (1986) write that for ethnographic work to become critical it must: define one's data and analytical procedures that are consistent with the project and must be situated in the public sphere so that it enables transformation and a critique of oppressive and inequitable conditions (Giroux 1983; Marcus 1986). Finally it must address its limits, that as a form of social practice, it is regulated by historical relations of power and existing material conditions. In emphasising history and materiality, CE does not relegate history to the periphery or as "background data" (Simon and Dippo 1986: 198) but rather retains it as an integral part of the specific analysis. Indeed history is fundamental and indispensable for my project.

One reckons that the peculiarity of each particular project demands its own methodological

predisposition. Mine follows what I call a Historico-Contemporary Analysis (HCA). This approach looks at how historical political thought has evolved through different historical periods and how it is expressed by contemporary protagonists. The overriding theme of my project is blackness; blackness is both a historical and a constructed phenomenon. It would be fallacious and egregious to discuss it without delving into history and as Magubane (1996: 370) observes: “Our present reality is made up of the descendants of the beneficiaries of conquest as well as the victims of dispossession and the descendants of slaves and indentured labourers. In South Africa the past is never past; it is active in the present. Our present condition is a consequence of the actions of the past. Any attempt to forget the past will not cure our condition.”

There is recognition that CE has made substantial contribution to the production of theory (Jordan and Yeomans 1995). The paradox is that while it has achieved some respectability and is now part of the qualitative tradition in universities, it remains to be seen whether it has made some impact beyond academic institutions. Secondly, while critical ethnographers claim a bottom-up participant observation, they nonetheless come from ivory towers of academia. Thirdly, the expectation that all scholarship should be an unbiased account of events is difficult for researchers using CE to meet (Brodkey 1987). The belief that scholarship and advocacy should be kept distinct makes CE academically suspect. To breach this problem Brodkey (1987) suggests that critical ethnographers should write narratives that are consistent with critical theory and convince others to treat them as critical ethnographic narratives. Further the only way to fight hegemonic discourse, according to Brodkey, is to teach ourselves and others alternative ways of seeing the world and to discuss what is it we understand by theory, research and practice. Critical ethnographic narratives would then acquire the status of authoritative discourse and enable them to enter into academic record.

Coming to South Africa, the fall of apartheid and the ushering in of a new political dispensation had a profound effect on South African anthropology, throwing the discipline into disarray (Gordon and Spiegel 1993; Coplan 1998). First, there was the positivism of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) often a state instrument. Second, the parochial nature of South African anthropology mainly as a result of performances of the apartheid-era *volkekunde*, its cultural boundedness and cultural relativism, meant that South African anthropology could not develop an approach of its own (Gordon and Spiegel 1993). Positive developments were, on the other hand, seen in anthropology's challenge to apartheid and isolation of *volkekunde*⁸. The publication of the mainly poststructuralist *South African Keywords* in 1988 was a welcome development as it sought to deconstruct concepts like “culture”, “tradition” and “ethnic group” as used by apartheid machinery in the development of its ideological state apparatus (ibid).

Looking into the future, Gordon and Spiegel argue that anthropologists must assume an oppositional stance to the status quo; the continued professionalization of the discipline must not be inhibited by ideological and institutional conditions and it must be considered relevant by both its practitioners and the society that supports them (Gordon and Spiegel 1993: 98-99). For Coplan (1998), South African anthropology must be in touch with broader visions, policies and local perspectives and practices. Further, he writes that there is a need to address internal dilemmas of the discipline's theory and practice and proposes new intellectual strategies to deal with epistemological and methodological issues that shape our interventions. Although the “expose anthropology” of Gordon and Spiegel (1993) is defined by a stance on political economy, a thought that is welcome, it hasn't theorised the

⁸The Association for Anthropology in Southern Africa (AASA) formed in 1987 opposed the *Vereeniging van Afrikaans Volkundiges* (VAV), i.e. Association of Afrikaans Ethnologists formed in 1977.

epistemological and political foundations of the discipline and any anthropological study has to grapple with the fundamental question of power and its representation (Vawda 1998). In 1978, Owusu opined that the conflicting interests between western and African anthropologists and the continued quest by Africans for economic, social and political emancipation would determine the future of African anthropology. Jansen van Rensburg (1998) concurred that this view is applicable to contemporary South Africa.

Consequently, my theoretical ambition in undertaking this project has been heightened as I make representations of social, political, economic and cultural realities of postapartheid South African society through a critical narrative. This is however not a call to dismantle metanarratives but rather for their reworking and reappraisal. This is being cognisant of the awkward and brutal facts characterising the world today. I would like to end this section with Fabian's (1991: 261) dictum that "every particular project needs to be judged, not by its theoretical and methodological merits, but also by its political impact" and "an anthropology which understands itself as critical and emancipatory must continue its fight, even if it fights with its back against the wall" (Fabian 1991: 261).

The nature of the research poses problems in regards to the "field". The "field" and ethnography are inseparable in anthropological tradition and are a distinguishing factor of the discipline. Ethnography is synonymous with the "field", a physical and social locality where participants are domiciled, where the research project itself is animated. However the "field" becomes blurred as the world moves towards globalisation especially the advent of Information and Communication Technology. While I have grounded my research in the "actual" physical field, that is the area around White City and Central Western Jabavu in Soweto which are Blackwash's stronghold, in order to understand the lived experience of my

participants, I have also taken into account the fact that South African society is caught up in a globalised world defined by the ascendancy of ICT. The implication is that both the 'urbane', or those considered 'sophisticated', and the less so are transporting their discourse online, especially social networks, where a rich trove of information is existent. Thus we have to follow them there. For this reason, I have used Facebook conversations as a method; I know most participants and have held extensive discussions with them in physical person; others I don't and had to follow them online. If the ethnographer is dealing with articulate, well-spoken, well-read and well-informed participants, he or she is always kept on his/her toes; his/her approach to textual and current issues is constantly appraised and his/her analysis has to be always sharpened. As this happens, the researcher is a perpetual student. His participants are his tutor and more importantly he undergoes an intense, sweat-breaking workout. Other social actors are discoursing in the media, in commentaries, analyses and opinion columns which opens "fields" (in the plural rather than singular) for study. Further if one's project is tending towards thematic content and discourse analysis like mine it implies that the different themes addressed in the project demand their own set of methods, which may in some instances overlap: ranging from conversations, textual, archival, electronic, observation and document analyses. One will observe that my chapters are predicated on different methods depending on the theme addressed therein.

As my experience shows, one may be caught in a dilemma when there is factional infighting in a movement. One has to tread carefully and not be seen to take sides. The position may further be complicated when one is asked to provide advice or assume leadership, while at the same time remaining a researcher. However my project has helped me develop intellectually through a dialogic praxis I had with my participants, from who I have learned invaluable lessons and whose social world I shared.

Chapter 1

The Black Consciousness Movement in Azania

BC is just a node in a long thread of black radical thought beginning with resistance to colonial conquest and diametrically tied to black struggles in the African continent and the New World. At the turn of the twentieth century Henry Sylvester Williams, a Trinidadian lawyer and Pan-Africanist, was practising in South Africa; the 1919 Pan-Africanist conference and the 1945 Manchester conference also had immense influence on the country's Pan-African thought (Snail 2007). BC in Azania was inspired by the Ethiopian religious movements, African religious-political thought and prophecy, the writings of Negritude proponents like Leopold Senghor and Aime Cesaire, and anti-colonial literature by Albert Memmi and Frantz Fanon among them. The BCM also borrowed from anti-colonial struggles in Africa, as well as the Black Power movement in the United States, which gave oppressed blacks a new meaning (Snail 2007; Mngxitama, Alexander and Gibson 2008), especially the militancy of Eldridge Cleaver, Stokely Carmichael [Kwame Toure] and Paulo Freire (Moodley 1991). BC emerged in the mid-1960s to fill the political vacuum left as a result of the banning of the PAC and ANC whose leadership had been detained, sentenced to lengthy jail terms while others went underground and into exile. BC introduced new dimensions to the struggle by openly defying the system and the new black activists sought to displace the white left from black politics (Gerhart 2008; Mngxitama, Alexander and Gibson 2008). The seeds of BC began to grow with black students who were the most educated of the oppressed class; these students were part of NUSAS which contained white critics of white supremacy. At the NUSAS conference in 1968 Steve Biko and other black students identified both white leftists and liberals as part of the very system when they experienced what they

considered to be white liberal paternalism and *baaskap* (white supremacy), thus leading to a decision that blacks should be at the forefront of their own struggles. Through the University Christian Movement (UCM) they read Paolo Freire, Liberation Theology and African communal life (Alexander 2008). The result was the South African Student Organisation (SASO) formed at Marianhill and officially inaugurated at Turfloop (now the University of Limpopo) in 1969; SASO would provide a blueprint for an incipient philosophy of Black Consciousness. The SASO resolution 42 of 1971 states that:

SASO is a Black student organisation working for the liberation of the Black man, first from psychological oppression by liberating himself from inferiority complex and secondly from the physical one accruing from living in a white racist society.

There are strong resonances here with the PAC of the late 1950s. Announcing the Status Campaign in 1959, Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe called for mental revolution to reverse the inculcation of inferiority in the African psyche by which the white, foreign ruling minority “has educated the African to accept the status quo of white supremacy and black inferiority as normal.” The task of the Africanists, according to Sobukwe, was to exorcise the slave mentality and infuse into him a sense of self-reliance and desire for more “self-government [than] the good government preferred by the ANC.” He adds that Africans must assert their personality and not beg the oppressor to treat them courteously. The people must be reminded that they are men and women and must resist and resent being called “kwedini”, “mfana” or “moshemane”⁹. Acceptance of indignity, insult, and humiliation is unfathomable. Freeing the mind will free the body and “once white supremacy has become mentally untenable to our people, it will become physically untenable too and will go.” Sobukwe goes on to say those who criticise Africanists' concern with status and not the African economic plight assume that the African is an economic animal and not a human being: “Those who have been

⁹ These are Xhosa, Zulu and SeTswana words for boy, respectively.

'herrenvolkenised' by their Herrenvolk environment expect us to be lick-spittles in order to get more crumbs from the oppressor.”

The SASO policy manifesto defines BC as an attitude of the mind, a way of life. The black man was implored to reject all value systems that make him a foreigner in the country of his birth and reduce his basic human dignity. The concept of BC implies awareness by black people of the power they wield as a group, both economically and politically and hence group cohesion and solidarity are important facets of BC. BC therefore is an inward looking process meant “to look at ourselves and see ourselves, not in terms of what we have been taught through the absolute values of white society but with new eyes. It is a call upon us to see the innate value in us, in our institutions, in our traditional outlook to life and in our worth as people.”¹⁰

SASO rejected white liberal ideology and white liberal multiculturalism and formed an independent political ideology to liberate blacks from mental submissiveness. They critiqued white liberalism; espoused black solidarity and recognised that blacks were an exploited group. This was to lay the basis of the BCM principle of self-organising and exclusiveness. Of course there are precedents that can be traced to early Pan-Africanism, Garveyism, Lembede's brand of African nationalism, the PAC, and Black Nationalism in the US. Carmichael [Toure] and Hamilton (1967) had advocated that black people must lead and run their own organisations, must come together and do things for themselves to achieve self-identity and self-determination. “Black Man, You are On Your Own!”, a popular BC cry, was a riposte to white liberalism which BC saw as an obstacle to independent black initiative

¹⁰ “Understanding SASO.” Discussion document by Steve Biko, for SASO Formation School,

Pietermaritzburg, December 5 – 7 1971.

(Nurina Ally and Shireen Alley 2008). During the BPC-SASO Trial, Biko explained that on campus some students were sceptical of whites' attachment to non-racialism; black students felt whites were satisfied with the status quo and were not going to assist completely in moving away from this situation to one of non-racialism. Seemingly, this position had been espoused earlier by the African Nationalism of the PAC which originated in the Congress Youth League in the 1940s which rejected collaboration and alliances with whites. It promoted African cultural identity, autonomy and independence in charting the way forward for the struggle. As a result it was an ideological assertion of defiance (Fatton 1986). BC vehemently opposed white liberals' proposal of integration which they saw as assimilation; and Biko rejected integration and called for separation, as this was practically the only means to achieve freedom. The belief in inferiority of blacks led even white liberals to believe that blacks can't alone formulate opposition to apartheid without "white guidance and trusteeship" (Biko 1987). It was for this reason that the BCM rejected collaboration with whites, including liberals and radicals. Biko never made a distinction between the "white liberal establishment and white radicals who he saw as the same thing" (Nurina Ally and Shireen Ally 2008). In the essay, "Black Souls in White Skins?", Biko questions the sincerity of white left/liberals and their propensity to lead blacks, which is compounded by blacks' own inferiority complex:

Thus adopting the line of a non-racial approach, the liberals are playing their old game. They are claiming a 'monopoly on intelligence and moral judgement' and setting the pattern for the realisation of the black man's aspirations... white liberals stand with either foot on each side and are not wholly committed to black man's cause. They vacillate between the two worlds, verbalising all the complaints of the blacks beautifully while skilfully extracting what suits them from the exclusive pool of white privilege (1987: 21).

Biko further indicts white liberals in these words:

We are concerned with that curious bunch of nonconformists who explain their participation in negative terms: that bunch of do-gooders that goes under all sorts of names – liberals,

leftists etc. These are people who argue that they are not responsible for white racism and the country's 'inhumanity to blacks'. These are people who claim that they too feel the oppression just as acutely as the blacks and therefore should be jointly involved in the blackman's struggle for a place under the sun. In short these are the people who say that they have black souls wrapped up in white skins... the integration so achieved is a one – way course, with the whites doing all the talking and the blacks the listening... The biggest mistake the black world ever made was to assume that whoever opposed apartheid was an ally (1987: 21).

Note here the similarities with the PAC-aligned Potlako Leballo's article in *The Africanist* of December 1957, where the Africanists were decrying Congress' multiracial alliances:

The Congress leadership, because it interprets the struggle as one for democracy and therefore a political struggle, designed to remove legal restrictions, recognises the foe as the present National government and accepts and treats everybody opposed to the Nationalist government whatever his motives as an ally.

Leballo criticises the ANC for making a “catastrophic blunder by accepting foreign leadership by the whites” and sarcastically asks, “How can we have leaders who are also led?” Apparently, this was in response to the elevation of Joe Slovo in 1954 to chairmanship of the ANC Commission of Inquiry into disputes involving ANC policies. PAC meetings¹¹ also denounced multi-racialism for blinding one from facing the enemy and recognising the white liberals who hang out with Africans as of the same ilk as Verwoerd,¹² although they act as “good white man – *umlungu osithandayo*.” Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe, while answering a question in *The Africanist* of January 1959 with regard to all whites as oppressors, said:

We regard them all as shareholders in the South African Oppressors Company (Pty) Ltd.

There are whites, of course, who are intellectually converted to our cause, but because of their

¹¹ Notes taken by an African police constable at a PAC meeting held at Bunga Square in Langa, Cape Town, February 14 1960, by B/D Const L.Jubase - Carter/Karis Collection, University of the Witwatersrand.

¹² Verwoerd is considered the architect of apartheid.

position materially, they cannot fully identify themselves with the struggle of African people. They want safeguards and check-points all along the way, with the result that the struggle of the people is blunted, stultified and crushed.

Biko and the BCM's assertion that race is at the core of apartheid South Africa has been however contentious in the struggle against apartheid. Regardless, the argument by BC has been that whites had overwhelmingly voted for the NP government in almost every successive election and help the racist government to retain power, the same government that maintains repressive legislation that facilitates black oppression, poverty, deprivation and self-alienation. Biko, during the SASO Trial explained:

Some may vote one way, some another, but all of them belong to an electoral college, if one may speak in those terms, of the whole society, which is jointly responsible for the government that does all these things, or that makes all these provisions applying to Black people. And in this sense therefore they lose the natural right to speak as co-planners with us in our way of determining the future... they define themselves in other words as the enemy... therefore we believe that in all matters relating to the struggle towards realising our aspirations, whites must be excluded.

Biko further stated:

There are those whites who will completely disclaim responsibility for this country's inhumanity to the Black man. These are the people who are governed by the logic for four and a half years but by fear at election time. The NP has perhaps many more English votes than one imagines. All whites collectively recognise in it a strong bastion against highly played up 'swart gevaar'. One must not underestimate the deeply embedded fear of the Blackman so prevalent in white society.

Biko asserted that whites knew well that their actions to blacks incited anger but their insecurity didn't outweigh their greed for power and wealth so they responded to black rage through an interaction between fear and reaction. This is what makes meaningful coalitions between Black and White totally impossible and "also this is what makes whites act as a

group and hence become culpable as a group!” (ibid)

A similar thought is seen in Malcolm X (1965 [2005]) who opposed integration as a smokescreen that confused the truer wants of a black man. It is probable that BC adherents were familiar with US Black Nationalist literature which was supposed to be banned and censored. Note similarities here with Malcolm X's opinion that Black Nationalist organisations should be all black because whites wanted to join to salve their consciences by “visibly hovering near us, they are 'proving' that they are 'with us'” (Malcolm X 1965 [2005: 494]). Sincere white people wanting to “prove” themselves should do it not among black victims but in their own home communities where their white counterparts practiced racism. For Malcolm X white membership renders black organisation less effective: “[E]ven the best white members will slow down the Negroes' discovery of what they need to do, and particularly of what they can do – for themselves, working by themselves, among their own kind, in their own communities” (1965 [2005: 495]). Malcolm further notes that whites, because of their money and resources, will end up controlling the organisation even if they put black faces up front. This view was taken up by the Black Power movement and articulated by Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Toure) and Charles Hamilton who, writing of white American liberals, state:

For black people to adopt their methods of relieving our oppression is ludicrous. We blacks must respond in our own way, on our own terms, in a manner which fits our temperaments. The definitions of ourselves, the roles we pursue, and the goals we seek are our responsibility (1967: ix).

Toure and Hamilton see Black Power as part of a new consciousness to counter racism. It calls for black people to unite; to build a sense of community; to define their own goals; lead and run their own organisations, which enables them to convey the revolutionary idea and do things for themselves, and “help create in the community an aroused and continuous black

consciousness that will provide the basis for political strength” (Toure and Hamilton 2000: 239). In addition, this “is a call to reject racist institutions and values of this society... the fundamental premise of Black Power then is, 'before a group can enter open society, it must first close its ranks’” (Toure and Hamilton 2000: 238) [note the similarities with Lembede's formulation above and Azanian BC)]. Toure and Hamilton further point out that Black Solidarity is necessary in bargaining from a position of strength in a pluralistic society:

The point is obvious: Black people must lead and run their own organisations. Only black people can convey the revolutionary idea - and black people are able to do things for themselves - in the past, white allies have often furthered white supremacy without the whites involved realising it, or even wanting to do so. Black people must come together and do things for themselves. They must achieve self-identity and self-determination in order to have their daily needs met (Toure and Hamilton 1967: 34).

They argued that because of the fundamentally racist nature of American society the concept of group strength for black people must be articulated, not to mention, defended. No other group would submit to being led by others: “Italians do not lead the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. Irish do not chair Christopher Columbus societies. Yet when Black people call for black run and all-black organisations, they are immediately classed in a category with the Ku Klux Klan” (Toure and Hamilton 1967: 35).

Since its inception, BC was a programme for cultural and psychological emancipation from white hegemony, espousing a black philosophy of pride, embodying ideals of Negritude and Christian liberation theology (Fetton 1986). Initially while cultural, it transcended to the material conditions of black life, class struggle and abolition of oppressive racial structures, and following Lembede, revolution would happen if black people removed from their intellect the mental and cultural inferiority imposed by colonialism. It was therefore a weapon for the oppressed to challenge white supremacist ideas and assert self-humanity, making it in

the process a philosophy of praxis. For Mabogo More:

BC was a response to a white consciousness that sought to appropriate and dominate the consciousness and thus the freedom of black people. It was and still is a struggle for a new consciousness, a reawakening of self-consciousness, re-appropriation of Black self-consciousness from the clutches of an appropriative and dominating white consciousness, a rediscovery of a black self which lay buried beneath white consciousness imposed on blacks by cultural, political, economic, linguistic and religious domination (2008: 50).

The Black Peoples Convention (BPC) formed in June 1972 served as a political extension of BC. It meant to unite, solidify and strengthen black resistance and black people with a view to liberating them from both psychological and physical oppression. It also considered those blacks who were not students or those who would outlive their membership of SASO which was basically a student movement. In this way it aimed at expanding the BCM work beyond student and youth activities (Wilson 1991). The BPC policies were the ideological bases for the BCM. Membership applied to blacks who subscribed to its principles, aims, policies, goals and philosophy.

1.1. Existentialism and Humanism in Black Consciousness Philosophy

BC was a response to white consciousness that sought to appropriate and dominate the consciousness and freedom of black people (More 2008: 50). The BC Movement which Biko founded was powerful because it established self-consciousness as a force for revolution (Turner and Alan 1999). For this reason BC has widely been recognised as an existential, humanist and even phenomenological philosophy outlining that individuals and communities choose either freedom or enslavement, and that to overcome fear the oppressed have to confront their oppressors (Halisi 1991: 101; Moodley 199; Oliphant 2008; More 2008; Ally and Ally 2008). The Black Theologian, James Cone (1970) sees BC as the black community

focusing on its blackness in order that black people may know not only why they are oppressed, but also what they must do about that oppression.

Presently I will look at the idea and political lineage of Black Consciousness as espoused by Fanon and Biko and Cabral. The impact Fanon had on the development of BC ideas is acknowledged (Sadique Veriava, oral communication) and it is important to place some of his ideas here, while Cabral lends a theoretical and practical appendage to the existential, lived experience and response of the black oppressed to oppression. What I have written down is my interpretation, understanding and derivation of meaning from these writers' work.

1.1.1. Frantz Fanon

The structure of colonial society, which Fanon sees in Manichean terms, makes it both possible for "Negroes" to have an inferiority complex and to ensure its perpetuation. Colonial society makes life difficult for the Black man because of the colour of his skin which acts as a measure to torment and deride him. Under conditions of exploitation, the oppressed don't need to read or analyse Marxist dialectics but their conditions of existence are enough to give them no choice but to fight. Fanon proposes that consciousness be infused into them because the foundation of one's freedom derives from one's self; cajoling them into a position where they have to make two choices: passivity or action directed towards the source of that inferiority complex – which are the colonial social structures. In colonial ontology, in the white man's eyes, the "Negro" has no ontological existence. Since the violence of colonisation was to dehumanise the colonised, these conditions are enough to irritate him and one can imagine his fury (Sartre 1961). Fanon recognises and shows that colonial violence is not just violence but a re-creation of human hood (Sartre 1961).

The white world puts barriers on the Negro's involvement and participation in society as an equal and as a full citizen, leaving him with no choice but to shake off his inferiority and take action. In Hegelian terms, it is this failure of the colonialist to recognise the colonised that requires the latter to make efforts to make themselves known and recognised:

What! When it was I who had every reason to hate, to despise, I was rejected? When I should have been hugged, implored, I was denied the slightest recognition? I resolved, since it was impossible for me to get away from an *inborn complex*, to assert myself as a BLACK MAN. Since the other hesitated to recognise me, there remained only one solution: to make myself known (Fanon 1967: 115).

However the tragedy is that the oppressed allows his being to be determined by others which is contradictory to his inner self/being. In Fanon's existentialism, a failure to act against the white man is a feeling of non-existence; black existence is achieved through an actional consciousness that propels oppressed blacks to realise their humanity through struggle. One sees the Hegelian-Marxist-Engels axis in Fanon's conception. Departing from Hegelian idealism, though his (Hegel) conception of history was dialectical, it was still idealistic; the materialist conception of history explains man's consciousness by his being instead of his being by his consciousness (Engels 1975: 72). In Hegelian dialectics, a being has to be recognised by another being for them to realise their human worth. There should be absolute reciprocity and prevention of that reciprocity means depriving the other of their being. To accomplish that recognition means to acknowledge their human reality and this cannot be one-sided but mutually reinforcing. When this is not fulfilled conflict is inevitable until reciprocal recognition is realised. Although deepening the Hegelian concept of self-consciousness, Fanon critiqued Hegel's "reciprocity" because there can be no reciprocal relationship between slave and master (see also Turner and Alan 1999). By representing colonialism and nationalism in their Manichean contest, Fanon made this the foundation of revolutionary action (Said 1993).

In Fanon's humanism, man should affirm and acquiesce to love, life, generosity and say no to degradation, scorn of man, exploitation and say yes to freedom (Fanon 1967: 222). Fanon's humanism, differing from Freud, Marx and Nietzsche, is about real humanism by which "national consciousness transform[s] into social and political needs" (Said 1993: 324 -325). Apparently Fanon had read Lukacs (1968) who shows that the effects of capitalism are fragmentation, reification and dehumanisation (Said 1993). Martin (1999) also notes that Fanon can be said to be a Marxist in the sense that he accepted Marx's analysis of society which he elaborated to suit his geographical and historical context. For Fanon reification and dehumanisation of colonisation could be overcome when the colonised adopt self-consciousness and form a common bond to foster self-liberation. Actually colonialism doesn't entirely succeed in dehumanising the oppressed; there is still a semblance of some humanity in him that allows him to assert himself (Sartre 1961). This revolutionary self-activity, if necessary has to be eked out with a certain measure of violence, which is not violence for its own sake but a re-creation of humanhood (Satre 1961). It becomes therefore a duty to end colonialism and Fanon insists that we must all strive to liberate humankind from imperialism and that we must all write our histories and cultures (Said 1993). Thus in the conclusion of the *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon calls for a new humanism, a creation of a whole and new man who colonialism had dehumanised.

1.1.2. Steve Biko

Biko (1987) saw apartheid as oppressive and evil, intertwined with white supremacy and capitalist exploitation, the concomitant results being deprivation and the hindrance of black emancipation through spiritual decay. The purpose of white domination, according to Biko, is to make blacks subservient, largely through the education system. This is a process of dehumanisation where the black man loses his manhood. To remedy this, there is need for

revitalisation, giving life to the black man's "empty shell", to infuse him with pride, self-realisation and dignity and "pump back life in his empty shell, reminding him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth" (1987: 29). For Biko consciousness is an inward looking process, which defines the idea of Black Consciousness. During the BPC-SASO Trial, Biko explained that BC refers to the Black man and to his situation. What he says I think has an enduring importance that rings true even in contemporary society and it is apt to quote him at length:

I think the Black man is subjected to two forces in this country. He is first of all oppressed by an external world through institutionalised machinery, through laws that restrict him from doing certain things, through heavy work conditions, through poor pay, through very difficult living conditions, through poor education – these are all external to him – secondly and this we regard as the most important, the Black man in himself has developed a certain state of alienation. He rejects himself, precisely because he attaches the meaning white to all that is good – and he equates good with white. This arises out of his development from childhood. When you get at school for instance, your school is not the same as the white school, and *ipso facto* the conclusion you reach is that the education you get there can't be the same as what the white kids get at school. The Black kids normally have got shabby uniforms if any... You find for instance even the organisation of sport (these are things you notice as a kid) at white schools to be so absolutely so thorough and indicative of good training, good upbringing. You could get in a school 15 rugby teams. We could get from our school three rugby teams. Each of these fifteen white teams has got uniforms for each particular kid who plays. We have got to share the uniforms amongst our three teams. Now this is part of the roots of self-negation which our kids get even as they grow up. The homes are different, the streets are different, the lighting is different, so you tend to begin to feel that there is something incomplete in your humanity, and that completeness goes with whiteness. This is carried through to adulthood when the Black man has got to live and work (1987: 101).

By adopting the slogan "Black is Beautiful" the aim was to instil humanity in the black man,

who has to look at himself as adequate, as a human being and challenge the negation of the black. BC therefore was about bringing a black man to the realisation of a being and “at the end of it all, he can’t tolerate attempts by anybody to dwarf the significance of his manhood” (Biko 1987: 68). Through BC, consciousness of the self means removal of all notions that imprison the mind. From this surmise, Biko declares that “at the heart of this kind of thinking is the realisation by the blacks that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed” (1987: 68).

BC conscientises black people with reference to the conditions in which they live so that they can grapple with their problems; with a mental and a physical awareness of their situation to find solutions they can provide for themselves. During the BPC-SASO Trial, Biko noted:

I think the central theme about Black society is that it has got elements of a defeated society. People often look like they have given up the struggle. Like the man who was telling me that he now lives to work, he has given himself to the idea. Now, this sense of defeat is basically what we are fighting against; people must not just give in to the hardship of life. People must develop hope. People must develop some form of security to be together to look at their problems and people must in this way build up their humanity. This is the point about conscientisation and Black Consciousness.

Here one can observe the similarities with Sartre's existentialism:

For it is necessary to reverse the common opinion and acknowledge that it is not the harshness of a situation or the sufferings it imposes that lead people to conceive of another state of affairs in which things would be better for everybody. It is on the day that we are able to conceive of another state of affairs, that a new light is cast on our trouble and our suffering and we decide that they are unbearable (cited in Bourdieu 1977: 74).

Real black people are those who refuse to submit to the white man. For this reason blacks begin to realise the need to rally around the cause of their suffering which is their black skin.

Their poverty is directly related to their blackness and “because of tradition forced onto the country, the poor shall always be black people” (Biko 1987: 63). Biko agrees that the colour question was originally based on economic reasons. The economic privileges comfort and security that arose from this for generations has made all white people to believe in the inferiority of blacks. While the race problem started from the economic it has therefore become a problem of its own. Biko firmly believed that what made apartheid South Africa a racist society were the racist attitudes and beliefs that view black as inferior, reinforcing the institutionalised anti-black racism.

1.1.3 Amilcar Cabral

In the aftermath of colonial armed conquest there was complete destruction of economic and social structure of African societies. These developments were tied to racial discrimination and contempt of Africans, who were forced to labour for little or nothing and treated like chattel (1969, 1980). Colonialism usurps fundamental rights, essential freedoms and human dignity and leads to other social malaise. Internal conditions and daily realities of people's lives are enough to cause them to aspire for national liberation and to seek liquidation of colonialism. However that struggle is both part of a larger undertaking whose teleology is the abolition of colonial rule in the whole of Africa and dismantling of capitalist colonialism and imperialism. The fight for liberation has in the end positive results as it raises political awareness, national consciousness, political thought and action of the masses. It also intensifies a sense of unity of all Africans thereby erasing differences fostered and cultivated by colonialists.

The principle of the struggle is of and for the people themselves who must wage and own it and reap its rewards (as they do its whirlwind). The basis of the struggle is the realisation of

their dreams, aspirations, and of justice and progress as a whole, not of a few groups and individuals. Ultimately the liberation struggle enables sub-human beings engendered by colonialism to be fully human.

1.2. Black Theology

I intend to begin with the mid nineteenth century where a new modern political consciousness arises – in the church. The church or to be precise, the black church, divinity, religiosity and spirituality are inseparable from black struggles for liberation. I have noted that liberation songs in Azania have the same emotive spiritual intonation as church hymns or “Negro spirituals.” The struggle for racial freedom in the country has always and often taken a religious form (Roux 1948: 143). We can say early Pan-African discourse on liberation emanates from the mission-educated elite who themselves were avid Christians. The origins of African political consciousness in Azania can be traced to the first half of the nineteenth century (Walshe 1970 [1987]. At the same time there was large-scale secession from mission churches that led to a proliferation of African Independent Churches. The major grievance was discrimination, racist ideas and condescending paternalism that infected the missionary establishment¹³. The first African mass movement was a religious one called Ethiopianism (Roux 1948). Nehemiah Tile is seen as the pioneer. After a dispute with white missionaries (Wesleyans) he resigned and formed the Tembu National Church, thereby setting precedence for a slew of breakaway churches that followed. Reverend Mokone Mangena broke away from the Wesleyans in

¹³ Some of the secessions were: P.J. Mzimba, from the Free Church of Scotland to Presbyterian Church of Africa (1898) in the Free State; Zulu Congregational Church from American Congregationalists in Natal (1890s); Nehemiah Tile from the Methodists to Tembu National Church (1883) in Thembuland in Transkei; Reverend Mangena Mokone (1893) from Methodists in Kilnerton to Independent Ethiopian Church (which was later incorporated into the AME in 1898).

1892 to form the Ethiopian Church which later combined with the African Methodist Episcopal. Most of them had a black version of Christianity and these are the roots of Christian Pan-Negroism, or Ethiopianism, which rose from religious separatism (Fredrickson 1995; Walshe 1970; Comaroff 1985; Mutero Chirenje 1987).

Another significant influence was a Christian tendency in the United States, arising from the antebellum black experience (Fredrickson 1995), and different in ways of worship and interpretation of biblical text¹⁴. This laid the foundation of black American cultural nationalism (Fredrickson 1995: 61). These pioneer Black Nationalists inspired black American emigrationists, Pan-Africanists and the “Ethiopian” movement among black Christians in Azania. The Ethiopian prophecy was an inspiration to US independent black churches of the late nineteenth century in working towards redemption of Africa. The relationship between the Black church and Black Nationalism is, according to Essien-Udom (1962), fourfold: the church is the best and most successfully organised Negro institution in the US; it provides the widest community for Negro participation; it embodies the race's desire for independence from white leadership and control and was important for the evolution of Negro leadership and authority in the community; the church leaders were the earliest spokesmen for Negro advancement and the fact that “the Negro minister does not depend on white support for his income has also been a great asset. Economic independence from white support is important for the style of leadership of Black Nationalists.” (Essien-Udom 1962: 25) And finally the church was the most important centre for social life for its members.

¹⁴The biblical text, Psalms 68:31, “princes shall come out Egypt, Ethiopia shall soon stretch her hand unto God”, was used by these early Ethiopianists.

During the last quarter of nineteenth century, black American churches sponsored about 76 missionaries to Africa. Bishop Henry. M. Turner of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) and an advocate of radical black separatism and emigration to Africa forged links between US black Christianity and the separatist movements in South Africa. In particular, a visit by a US singing group, Virginia Jubilee Singers, to South Africa in 1890 helped to link South African Ethiopianism to US African Methodism. Turner himself visited the country in 1898 and as a result AME left a permanent imprint in South Africa and as the South African Native Affairs Commission report of 1905 shows, the AME and AIC were being treated with suspicion by whites (Fredrickson 1995). The new religious movements were met with scorn, especially the African Christian Union (ACU) of the 1890s (Roux 1948) which Jabavu's *Imvo* denounced for its racial exclusiveness. The ACU, founded by American Negro Joseph Booth, had in its manifesto calls to unite Christians of the African race and for the establishment of skills and industrial missions, a demand that Africans be accorded the same rights and privileges as Europeans and finally a declaration “to pursue steadily and unswervingly the policy AFRICA FOR THE AFRICAN, and look for and hasten by prayer and united effort the forming of the AFRICAN CHRISTIAN NATION by God's power and in His power and in His own time” (cited in Roux 1948: 93).

The Ethiopian church and its clergy were indeed involved in protest organisation between 1902 and the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 and were also active in the foundation of the South African National Native Congress in 1912. After the 1920s the Ethiopian churches didn't exactly decline with the proliferation of separate churches like the Zionist and Pentecostal churches that eschewed political activity and concentrated on healing and religious ecstasy (Comaroff 1985). All the same Ethiopianism contributed to black politics and helped in the inauguration of the liberation movement because it contained seeds of a radical Africanism that emerged in later decades, which echoed that Azania belonged to

the black man and is not a multiracial country.

Historically, religion or the church has been central in black struggles for liberation. Black Theology (BT) like Ethiopianism which originated with the African Diaspora, struck a deep chord in Azanian politics of liberation. For instance, Biko used BT to make a connection between apartheid and Christianity and the support the Nederlandse Gereformeerde Church (NGK) gave to the institutionalisation of apartheid. Biko also critiqued the English speaking churches for opposing apartheid while discriminating against blacks and privileging whites in their own structures and liturgy. In fact the mainstream dominations have a history of supporting structures and instruments of conquest and enslavement. Preaching submissiveness, respect and deference for authority – obedience not liberation – they distorted Christ's teachings and linked him to the oppressor (Fatton 1986). BT as a spiritual dimension of the BCM (Mothlabi 1984) acted against the spiritual enslavement of black people, freeing Christianity itself from its oppressive role, and making it a theology of the oppressed and a theology of liberation (Moore 1974; Fatton 1986). It contends that Black people, who believe in the wholeness of life, are essentially religious (Mafungo n.d.) such that no distinction need be made between “secular”, “church” and “world” – blacks look at life in its totality and wholeness¹⁵. Western religion categorised black religion as heathen, oblivious to the fact that the “religion of [the] black man was an everyday affair, intimately integrated with the cultural patterns of the societies concerned” (Mafungo n.d.) It encouraged mutual respect and believed in the good nature of man. Christian missionaries then came with a religion that threatened one with doom or salvation. With the aid of the Bible, “the black man was framed, then blackmailed” (ibid). Whilst he was still confused they stole the land right from under his nose and “the missionaries were certainly thorough in their job. Full

¹⁵ Manas Buthelezi at Black Theology Conference, Edendale YMCA, Pietermaritzburg 13 – 16 February 1973.

marks to them!” (ibid) As a result the black man lost his self-respect, self-confidence and respect for his culture and “he became ashamed of himself for ever having been a pagan;” whilst believing in the Christian “stronger God” he didn't realise that it was actually an economic situation. By welcoming the 'new' religion he was submitting himself to subjugation – economically, politically, religiously and socially and “for the first time he was introduced to the concept of slavery. [The] brainwashing had been a major victory for the imperialists. And for the black man he paid dearly for it” (ibid).

BT also negates the white Christian view that ancestor worship is a superstition, asserting instead that Christianity must adapt to peoples' cultural situation (Biko 1987). BT seeks to remove the spiritual poverty in black people since preachers always encourage blacks to find fault in themselves, making them gullible to the Bible and therefore distracting them from the struggle (Biko 1987). BT identified Jesus as on the side of the oppressed and his relevance to human liberation, particularly black liberation. BT then sees Christ as a man with a message for the oppressed and himself was a liberator and an existentialist. BT pioneer James Cone (1970, 1986) has forcefully argued that the Christian gospel is a gospel of liberation. BC and BT are conjoined on terms that the biblical God is involved in human liberation and the liberation of the oppressed and God is a fighter for justice (Biko 1987). A well-meaning God can't allow His people to continually suffer. The task is to give the biblical message a new meaning and direction that makes it relevant to the people (ibid). Contrary to the view that all authority is by divine predestination, Biko insists it is a sin to allow oneself to be oppressed. The BCM recognised BT as a liberation theology steeped in material and existential circumstances suffered by blacks. Thus, BT is a genus of BC and “is part and parcel of the BC family as a deliberate response to the continuing oppression and exploitation in our

country.”¹⁶ For Cone BT articulates and acknowledges the significance of the black presence in a hostile white world (1970: 53). It is a reflection of black experience and seeks to find and redefine the relevance of the Christian gospel in their lives. Importantly as Fatton (1986) notes, BT's moral and political ethic stemmed not only from African religious tradition but from material and cultural roots of black people as well. Therefore the revolutionary agency of BT lies in the fact that black people will be liberated, not by the goodwill of white people but through their own self-activity and self-initiation (Cone 1970).

By the late 1980s, although BT was alive and developed, it hadn't become a political weapon and property of the struggling masses. Apparently unable to break with imperialist Christian values and using the same models and principles of articulation as white theology, which has led to the reproduction of dominant ideological forms, “BT has become an opiate of the masses.”¹⁷ For having a non-ideological stance and being removed from the material realities of the masses, it lost its material force. Even Archbishop Tutu would say “Botha is my brother whether he likes it or not” (cited in Mosala 1987). In contemporary society there is a proliferation of “prosperity gospel” stripped of radical content, which emphasises “good life” on Earth, tithing, and that conditions of black people are due to the Devil's antics. It remains to be seen whether Black Theology will re-emerge as a force in black struggles. This is against a backdrop of an escalating increase of both Islam and prosperity gospel in black communities, a scenario conjoined with trenchant poverty. Interestingly, while churches in Europe struggle to attract congregants; in Africa, western religiosity is expanding in leaps and bounds.

¹⁶ Azanian Socialist Review, Special Edition, “Reconstruct for a Socialist Azania”, Harare Consultation of the BCM (A), 19 – 21 May 1990.

¹⁷ Itumeleng Mosala, “Black Theology: Opiate or Material Force?” Frank Talk Volume 2 September 1987.

1.3. Race and Class

The beginnings of the modern industrial economy in South Africa are traced back to the discovery of diamonds and gold in the nineteenth century, which changed social and economic relations (Frederickson 1981; Cell 1982; Padayachee, Vawda and Tichmann 1985). It also led to large-scale proletarianisation, urbanisation and unequal incorporation of different sections of the population into capitalist relations of production. From the beginning, the gold mining industry was characterised by a division of labour on the basis of skills which coincided along racial lines. Copious literature on this subject exists (Davies 1979 [2001]; Magubane 1996; Proctor 1979 [2001]; Johnstone 1979 [2001]; Bonner 1979 [2001]; Simons and Simons 1983, 1969; Davies 1979 [2001]); Du Bois 1933, 1971; Roediger 2007; Stadler 1987; Crush, Jeeves and Yudelman 1991; Frederickson 1981; Fatton 1986). I do not intend to delve extensively into the relationship between race and class except to say that it has been and remains contentious in the black struggle.

In an interview with Gail Gerhart in 1972, Steve Biko argued that white liberals and white leftists are the same because of their adherence to the white value system. They adopt a class analysis because they don't want race to distort it:

“A number of whites in this country adopt the class analysis, primarily because they want to detach us from anything relating to race. In case it has a rebound effect on them because they are white. This is the problem. So a lot of them adopt the class analysis as a defence mechanism and are persuaded of it because they find it more comfortable. And of course a number of them are terribly puritanical, dogmatic and very, very arrogant. They don't quite know to what extent they have to give up a part of themselves in order to be a true Marxist.”¹⁸

¹⁸ Gail Gerhart interview with Steve Biko, 24 October 1972

The BC critique fueled new analyses. Later writings attempted to relink race and class to the capitalist economic system and white domination (Wolpe 1988). In the 1970s Marxist literature in South Africa argued that racism was beneficial to the development of capitalism; Alexander (2002) reiterated that the colonial history of the country is one of institutional racism and its relation to class exploitation. Racism, Marxists held fast, could only end with the dismantling of capitalism.

Marxism, Robinson (1983: 2) contends, is a western construction, that conceptualises the human development and experience of European people. In claiming a world historical view, Marxists have mistaken its universality, and applied it to non-western social formations and Third World liberation struggles. Cox (1964) critiques Marx and Engels for their partial conceptualisation of capitalism which didn't fully acknowledge the historical forces which had created black objectification. Observing the radical black intelligentsia in the New World, Cox argues that although these black ideologues, in realising the effects of imperialism and capitalism saw the solution as lying in class struggle. This conception was insufficient. The insistence on class struggle risks falling into the same racist schema that sees non-western people as "a people without a history" (Cabral 1979: 124). For Cabral, those who say the motive force of history is class struggle have to re-examine this assertion in view of the characteristics of colonised people under imperialist domination. The question is whether history begins only with the appearance of classes, and whether agrarian and pastoral societies are factored out of this "history."

White radicals maintain that racial oppression is no more than an aspect of class oppression, that colour discrimination is only another aspect of working class exploitation, and the capitalist system is the common enemy of white and black workers alike and that the struggle

should be for the working class as a whole (Magubane 1996). The colour line is subsumed into class and it is assumed that strategies designed for a white proletariat can be a blueprint for blacks. Sivanandan (cited in Magubane 1996) argues that it is difficult to accept class analysis *per se* in South Africa. He argues that an abstract class analysis not only liquidates the national question but ignores critical differences in the exploitation of black and white workers which are due specifically to racism. White Marxists are critiqued for their failure to understand that Africans suffered compound exploitation, first under slavery and secondly under colonialism. Their experience of suffering was therefore total and devastating, making a mockery of white workers' exploitation (Magubane 1996). According to Sartre (cited in Magubane 1996), Marxists failed to see how imperialism had perverted white working class consciousness. Nationalist aspirations of the colonised are not an epiphenomenon of capitalist development and can't be wished away with slogans like "black and white unite and overthrow capitalism" (Magubane 1996: 5). However, class analyses can't be rejected in favour of race as this would misunderstand the history of racism and how "it came to be constituted as an objective reality" (Magubane 1996: 361).

The *Communist Manifesto*, Eurocentric in its approach to analysing class struggles in European history, outlines the emergence of the modern bourgeois society from the ruins of feudal society. It then established "new classes; new conditions of oppression; new forms of struggles in place of the old ones." Society was thus split into two antagonistic classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat (Marx and Engels 1964: 2). Marx and Engels further argue that, "of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product" (Marx and Engels 1964: 20). But who is the proletariat? Engels gives a more concerted definition:

[The proletariat] is that class in society which lives entirely from the sale of its labour and does not profit from any kind of capital; whose weal and woe, whose life and death, whose whole existence depends on the demand for labour, hence on the changing state of business, on the vagaries of unbridled competition. The proletariat, or the class of proletarians, is, in a word, the working class of the nineteenth century (1975: 67).

Engels (1975) argues that it was only Marx who showed the historical interconnection of the capitalist mode of production and its determination of a specific historical period where its essential character, which had been hidden before, is laid bare. This was done through the discovery of surplus value – the appropriation of unpaid labour is the basic form of capitalist production and exploitation. Even if the capitalist buys the labour power of his worker at the full value it possesses as a commodity on the market, he must still extract more value from the worker than he pays in wages. This surplus value accumulates in the hands of the possessing class. Engels argues that with the Marxist discovery of the materialist conception of history and the revelation of the secret of capitalist production through surplus value, socialism became a science. The materialist conception of history starts with the principle that production and the exchange of things produced is the basis of every social order; that in every society, the distribution of wealth and the division of society into classes are dependent on things produced, how they are produced and how they are exchanged. Therefore the causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought “not in the philosophy, but in the economics of each particular epoch” (Engels 1975: 74). When the capitalist mode of production transforms a great majority into proletarians, it creates a force which leads to its own destruction. In this way, “the proletariat seizes state power and to begin with transforms the means of production into state property” (Engels 1975: 43). It then ends itself as a proletariat and therefore ends all class differences.

While the state is a representative of the dominating class, “as soon as class domination and

the struggle for individual existence based on the anarchy of production existing up to now are eliminated together with the collisions and excesses arising from them, there is nothing more to repress, nothing necessitating a special repressive force, a state” (Engels 1975: 94). In a “free people’s state” the state isn’t abolished – it withers away: “[I]n proportion as the anarchy of social production vanishes, the political authority of the state dies away. Men at last become masters of their own mode of social organisation, consequently at the same time masters of nature, masters of themselves” (ibid). The proletarian revolution solves the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production through seizure of public power and with this power transforms the social means of production. It frees the means of production from their previous character as capital and gives them a social character and the different social classes become anachronistic. Socialism isn't an accidental discovery by a certain intellect or genius but is the necessary outcome of the struggle between two classes produced by history – the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Engels concludes that the task of scientific socialism is the accomplishment of the historical mission of the proletariat; the historical conditions, the nature, the conditions and character of the proletariat emancipatory act comes from the consciousness of this class which is “destined to act.” I have quoted/discussed Engels at length here to serve as a backdrop to AZAPO's “scientific socialism” which I discuss below and in subsequent chapters.

Gramsci (1971) in revising Marx argues that mechanical conception of historical materialism assumes that every political act is determined by economic structures and therefore is real and permanent. Economism (in the classical Marxist sense) reads economic foundations of society as the only determining structure of that society. This approach tends to see all other dimensions of the social formation as having no other determining or structuring force of their own right. The approach, to put it simply, reduces everything in a social formation to the

economic level and conceptualises all other social relations as directly and immediately “corresponding” to the economy (Gramsci 1971). Stuart Hall (1982, 2002) follows this up. He makes a distinction between the economic and the sociological: the former refers to economic structures and processes which determine the structures of social formations; the latter reads race/ethnicity as social and cultural features of these social formations. However, Hall (1982) argues that race relations are of course directly linked to economic processes starting with colonialism, conquest and mercantile domination. But there appear to be factors outside the economic sphere which reproduce such social formations. While it is partly true that racial terms signify the processes where dark people were turned into coerced labour, “any reductive use of racial categorisation and subjugation should be rejected” (West 2002). For West racial definition and discourse have always followed a set of independent logics related to and intersecting with economic, political, legal and cultural considerations. Nevertheless, Hall doesn’t wholly dismiss the economic deterministic approach because it gives us a theoretical point of departure.

Although the Marxist theory of class formation posits that wage earners would in the long run be able to develop a common class consciousness that transcends racial and ethnic lines (Wieviorka 1997), in South Africa the workforce had been fragmented by racial and ethnic affinities, thereby proving to be an enduring and durable source of division and antagonism. Afrikaner nationalist ideology, for example, propounded that labour being a divine will of God, the relationship between the worker and the capitalist had to be harmonious (O’Meara 1979). The emergence of ethnic and racial groups and antagonistic consciousness are products of structural relations of inequality that inscribe the experience of everyday life (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992). Marxist theory posits a structure that is too rigid and cannot account for how dominant political groups not only reflect economic interests but are carriers

of prevailing cultural conditions as well, and are guardians of racial and ethnic identifications. The unity of the working class as a social movement is incapable of unitary, collective behaviour and action (Wieviorka 1997; Tafira 2010). Decades ago, Wolpe (1976) had written that racial divisions amount to nothing more than the fractionalisation of the working class, common to all capitalist modes of production. In South Africa “white labourers are quite as racist as the employers and managers and very often a good deal more” (Mannoni 1964 cited in Fanon 1967: 40). Marxists of the Communist Party, according to I.B Tabata (1988), denied the agrarian and the national problem by arguing that the liberation of South Africa (being a highly industrialised country) lay along the road of other industrialised countries, and that the task of the militant was to organise the working class to lead a proletarian revolution. This policy of the Communist Party, Tabata argues, was an attempt to bring non-white labour under its control, leading to reformism and economism. It didn't account for the political and economic realities of the South African situation and communists failed to note that “the white workers in South Africa bear the same relation to the disenfranchised black workers as the Roman proletariat bears to the Roman slaves.”

Wolpe (1988) an avowed Marxist, did critique the Marxist insistence on race as an epiphenomenon of class. Economic reductionism sees capital and labour as unitary and classes as homogeneous, and the relation between them as an undifferentiated relation of exploitation, that is, the division between those who own the means of production and those who don't. This view then sees all relations as homologous and that there are objective class interests which govern all social relations. Wolpe proposes the rejection of the opposition between race and class and advances the view that race, under determinate conditions, may be interiorised in class struggles at both political and economic levels. In this regard the view that racism is always functional to capitalism has to be appraised. The Marxist analysis is hinged on the concept of capital accumulation and relations between capital and labour.

However the concept of class excludes non-economic relations. The problem with this view according to Wolpe is that politics, culture, religion and so on, which are non-economic in form and nature, do really influence or give rise to racism. Racism is so interwoven in the fabric of society that its survival doesn't merely depend on capitalist social relations of production *per se* (Biko 1987). While exploitation and domination had racial dimensions that cannot be explained in capitalistic terms, race was rather a means of mobilisation to defend white privilege and supremacy. Capitalism did not only reduce blacks to objects of exploitation in relations of production, it generated a white ethos that says blacks are culturally and morally inferior as well (Fetton 1986). As a result racism is important to white hegemony and racial practices codify an inherent privilege of white South Africans. The latter assertion was explicitly pronounced pre-1994, but the nature of race and racism has drastically changed since then. Looking at recent social formations, racism has re-organised and re-articulated with new relations of production (Hall 2002), a subject matter I will return to in subsequent chapters.

Conclusion

Developments in postapartheid South Africa have had ramifications on race and class. As the country began opening up to the world, accelerating the globalised movement of commodities and information, the migration of black African immigrants increased. This has exacerbated competition for employment between the locals and the new arrivals, who employers exploit at the point of production as cheap labour, taking advantage of their undocumented status. This is compounded by COSATU's apparent inability to unionise immigrant workers. This situation has identified immigrant workers with specific socio-economic functions, namely in the performance of undesirable jobs vacated by indigenous workers in the transitional reorganisation of production (Hylland Erikson 1993; Miles 1993;

Tafira 2010; Hlatshwayo 2012). Immigrant workers thereby come to constitute a “lower stratum” of the working class which becomes fragmented. Conflicts between immigrant and domestic working classes take the form of anti-immigrant racism and rioting (Hylland Erikson 1993) and the kind of pogroms seen in May 2008. Nonetheless, the black working class remains central to the country's economy; early morning and evening trains are packed with black workers and South African capitalism has always benefited from that labour. The mining and other major industries continue to be characterised by migrant labour as revealed by the thirty-four black workers murdered in Marikana on 16 August 2012.

Chapter 2

BC and its fortunes after 1976

The lasting impact BC had on the political and revolutionary struggle cannot be understated, its challenge to white supremacy by raising a consciousness of resistance being the spark that lit the 1976 Soweto uprising (Fatton 1986; Turner and Alan 1978; Marx 1992). BC however was seen as counter-conscious, having a tendency to psychologism, or as a counter-ideology inclined to provoke moral anger (Hirson 1978; Mafeje 1978; Webster 1985; Fatton 1986; Hirschmann 1990; Marx 1992; Alexander 1979, 1991, 2008; Gibson 2004). The same criticism was made by Sartre on Negritude in his essay “Black Orpheus” (see Fanon 1967; More 2008) where he views Negritude as retrograde, regressive, an anti-racist racism. Fanon’s riposte is that Black Consciousness is immanent, necessitated by the white man’s injustice. He criticises Sartre for denigrating the Negro’s being and repudiating his blackness. Similarly Senghor like Césaire (1972) and Irele (1971) defends Negritude, opining that it is neither racialism nor self-negation but affirmation of one’s being, the African personality. Both Fanon and Biko applaud Negritude because it enables blacks to find meaning and self-worth in an anti-black world (Wilderson 2008). Negritude and Pan-Africanism therefore aid in reconstituting blacks’ subjective integrity (ibid). Similarly, Toure and Hamilton (1967) argue that the racial and cultural personality of blacks, their integrity and pride, must be preserved in the face of an anti-black assault. Richard Wright (cited in Robinson 1983: 435) stresses that it is not the prerogative of black intellectuals to surrender the cultural heritage of their people, which is the emergent revolutionary consciousness of Black Nationalism. Issues emerging in this chapter follow up on those raised in the latter part of the last. Here I extrapolate these as regards to the BCM of the 1980s.

The emergence of BC posed a threat to white intellectuals who faced a prospect of irrelevance in the struggle (Ally 2005). Thus the white left had to protect their intellectual and political identity. Until the coming of BCM in the late 1960s, the dominant ideology in liberation movements was multi-racialism which was propagated by the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) and SACP (Alexander 2002). BC's politics of race was a directly polar opposite to the Marxist class analysis which avoided all talk of race. White radicals then challenged BC by reducing race to an "epiphenomenon of class struggle" (Nolutshungu 1982) and viewing it as a "false consciousness" (Ally 2005) with the same ideological resonance as white racism. Race was therefore deliberately suppressed in the debates of the white left because, as Ally observes, of the racial composition of the intellectuals (who were white). The denial of race by the left is seen by Hassim and Walker (1992) as "dangerously self-serving for whites". In the end, Ally argues, the intellectuals reflected power rather than rejecting it. Their insistence on proletarian agency as a class could not explain the revolutionary consciousness that had formed in the process of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist and nationalist struggles, whose resistance had beginnings remote from Marxian theories of revolution (Robinson 1983). Further, aspects of Black Consciousness were unaccounted for in the Marxist explication of the historical social formations of the modern world. BC as a lofty expression of outrage is, "most certainly informed by the Africanness of consciousness – some epistemological measure culturally embedded in our minds which deemed that the racial capitalism we have been witness to was an unacceptable standard of human conduct" (Robinson 1983: 442).

Robinson argues then that "the idiom of revolutionary consciousness has been historical and cultural rather than the 'mirror of production'" (1983: 324). For Richard Wright (1953), Marxism was profoundly theoretically limited, having failed to come to terms with

nationalism, consciousness, racism, western civilisation, industrialisation in black history and that it was susceptible to abuses for narrow political interests. Wright assigns the role of blacks to the base of a materialist dialectic – Black Nationalism is then a product of both capitalist development and accumulation and its system of exploitation (Robinson 1983). In criticising Marxism, Robinson reviews Wright's critique:

As a theory of society, he found it dissatisfying, indeed, reductionist. By itself it was insufficiently prescient of the several levels of collective consciousness. As an ideology, he recognised that it had never transcended its origins. It remained an ideology for the working classes rather an ideology of the working classes. However as a method of social analyses he found it compelling. He had not abandoned the conception of the relations of production as a basis for critique of capitalist society nor the importance of class relations of production. Still, critique of capitalism, was only the beginning of the struggle for liberation (1983: 434).

The debate of race and class is not only confined to South African social formations, and is reflected elsewhere as well. The American Communist Party saw the absence of class consciousness and the presence of racial consciousness among blacks as both an ideological backwardness and a potential threat to the integrity of the socialist movement itself (Robinson 1983: 301). Blacks with nationalist ideology were characterised as bourgeois reactionaries. Marxists argued that “American racism did not justify the programme of Black Nationalism. European immigrants with other than Anglo-Saxon origins were also targets of racist abuses and discriminations. Racism, then, was merely an element of ruling class ideology, white 'chauvinism' its political position. Thus, the social context of Blacks was adapted by ideologues in the socialist movement to the social experience of European immigrant workers.” (Robinson 1983: 301)

For Nolutshungu (1982) white Marxists didn't concede that BC was structurally determined and in that context was appropriate. BC was an important development in Azanian politics

because it questioned the nature of the country's oppositional politics, its relation to South African society and its capability for protest and rebellion. After all racial consciousness has been part of the country's political terrain and integral to the relations of domination and the division of labour.

Following the Soweto uprising of 1976, and the subsequent murder of Steve Biko, BC organisations were banned. With most of the leadership and adherents arrested and jailed, thousands of youth fled the country to exile and swelled the ranks of the ANC, thus changing the latter's fortunes militarily and politically¹⁹. From the late 1970s onward BC was being influenced by Marxism and the idea that the South African social formation was one characterised by "racial capitalism" became the dominant analysis. In 1978, BC supporters formed the Azanian Peoples' Organisation (AZAPO), an offshoot of the Soweto Action Council, which had been formed at a meeting in Chiawelo five days after the October 1977 crackdown. AZAPO incorporated class analysis without departing from a BC framework, arguing that race was a "class determinant" insofar as white racism had relegated all blacks to the lowest social class. The aim was to establish a "non-racial" and socialist workers republic, involving the black working class and a leaning towards anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism (Hirschmann 1990). In this analysis all blacks were workers regardless of their origins or occupation and all whites were the exploiting class (Karis and Gerhart 1997). Seemingly the change in focus may have had its roots in 1976. A speech by Diliza Mji in July 1976 at the SASO General Students Council in Hammanskraal indicates that the struggle be seen in class terms and not in colour only. He argued that skin colour had become a class criterion and for BC to survive as a viable philosophy and continue to articulate the aspirations of the people,

¹⁹ It must be noted at this juncture the ANC was operationally weak and was greatly boosted by the events of 1976.

it had to start interpreting the situation from an economic point of view. The BCM recognised that racism and apartheid were sustained by capitalism and that the liberation of black people therefore implied abolition of capitalism itself. Similarly Callinicos (1988) observes that since the development of industrial capitalism led to racial domination, national liberation should be a socialist revolution led by the black working class to uproot apartheid.

BC adopted a materialist conception of history and began to analyse the South African problem in class and economic terms rather than cultural and racial ones. Lukacs (1968) contends that economic factors are not concealed behind consciousness but are present in consciousness itself; economic factors are thus decisive in workers' struggles. Because they are a vital component of the class struggle, the consciousness of the proletariat will determine its actions and when capitalism gets into crisis, "the fate of the revolution [and with it the fate of mankind] will depend on the ideological maturity of the proletariat, that is, on its class consciousness" (Lukacs 1968: 70). However, Lukacs opines that while there may be a division between economic and political struggle, it is in the nature of the economic struggle to develop into a political one and vice versa.

By the end of the 1980s the BCM used less of race and more of class in their analyses, while white radicals put the Marxian theories into practice and succeeded in setting up the grass-roots trade union movement (Nurina Ally and Shireen Ally 2008). Gibson (2004) argues that during the 1980s BC should have returned to its humanist roots instead of attempting to broaden its ideology with a fusion of scientific socialism, racial capitalism²⁰ and class analysis, phraseology that were now commonplace and fashionable. Post Biko activists didn't

²⁰ The term was incorporated into BC analysis at the formation of the National Forum in 1983. Racial capitalism was identified as the enemy.

take black radical thought and its ideology seriously and instead sprinkled it with some class analysis in deference to Marxism and consequently failed to attract militants to the workers movement where the situation needed a deeper understanding of the mind of the oppressed to recapture Marx's humanism (Gibson 2004). Thus they couldn't take note of Fanon's injunction that BC was an absolute rather than a "passing stage". This was a failure because by taking on board the narrow concepts of scientific socialism, it could not work out the ambivalence, ambiguity and incompatibility of these with BC. In the 1980s and following AZAPO's Marxist-Leninist tendencies, black became "the substance rather than subject of revolution" and just a "phenomenon of material conditions" (Gibson 2004: 20). One is led to recall Robinson's observation regarding black radicalism and the need to formulate its own independent trajectory:

The experimentation with western inventories of change, specifically nationalism [that is bourgeois nationalism]²¹ and class struggle is coming to a close. Black radicalism is transcending those traditions in order to adhere to its own authority (Robinson 1983: 451).

Although BC began to apply a Marxian analysis and saw race as a class determinant, according to Hirschmann (1990) it remained weak organisationally and failed to make contact and impact among the workers and could not do mass mobilisation. The BC-influenced youth and workers couldn't find confluence and a common strategy for emancipation and this affected the potential of the Soweto uprising and later struggles from becoming a revolution (Hirson 1978; Fatton 1986). Furthermore white intellectuals who had been left out by BC, used their intellectual bases in colleges, universities, trade unions and publication boards, and financially supported and strengthened non-racial groups opposed to BC. The BCM thus became stifled by white radicals who wielded financial power; even international agencies including the communist bloc didn't support movements that

²¹ My emphasis

emphasised the significance of colour (Mazwai 1987; Wilderson 2008). Movements associated with BC and their kindred the Africanists complained of bias by the anti-apartheid movements towards the Congress alliance; the Australian Bureau of Southern African Affairs (ABOSA) was criticised for determining who should be supported in Azanian struggle.²²

There is a belief that the liberation movement took a liberal multi-racial course and less of an independent, workers' one because the ANC had been manipulated and controlled by the SACP (Halisi 1999). A similar observation is made by Wilderson (2008) who describes a Tripartite Alliance gathering chaired by Ronnie Kasrils in Johannesburg in June 1992 where out of a hundred or so delegates, five to ten were white or Indian. He saw the expression of Charterist and white dominance: “faces contorted by smiling teeth and knitted brow, solidarity and anxiety; faces pulled by opposing needs; the need to bring the state to heel and the need to manage the Blacks, and it was this need which was looking unmanageable” (2008: 96). According to Wilderson, despite a huge presence of blacks, the black body was especially absent. For many it was difficult to separate the worker and the black – for Marxists and Charterists black suffering was predicated on economic exploitation and not on anti-blackness: “As a Marxist, Ronnie Kasrils could not imagine a fundamental difference between the worker and the Black. Kasrils could think historically, politically and economically, but not ontologically. Or maybe he did know the difference, as we knew it intuitively and was compelled all the more to manage it.” (2008: 100) Wilderson goes on: “It may seem sacrilegious to accuse white anti-apartheid charterists of anti-Blackness” (2008: 101) and “...to imbue them, or the structure of feeling through which they conducted their political life, with the same anti-Blackness that they fought against appears, at first blush, to

²² Khehla Mthembu (AZAPO President) “BC: Class, Capitalism and Colonialism in Azania”, Ikhwezi Number 18 October 1981.

impose upon them an injudicious form of double jeopardy. The record, however, indicates that anti-Blackness cannot be disentangled from the story of their political ascent.” (2008: 100) The aftermath of that meeting was Kasrils leading the ill-fated march in Bhisho that ended in massacre. Many consequently doubted the “Leipzig option” as a struggle method and therefore the massacre hurried the impetus to the negotiating table.

By the 1980s there was a proliferation of organisations sympathetic to the ANC and the Freedom Charter especially those falling under the United Democratic Front (UDF) who inflected new ideas and strategies, displacing BC as a result. In the beginning of the 1980s, “Charterism” was generally understood to endorse multi-racial struggle in addition to alliances across social groups and classes in which whites could join as participants and even as leaders (Lodge and Nasson 1991). In this period the ANC-SACP Marxism represented a brand of revolutionary multi-racialism; the ANC and their allies recruited BC-oriented youths and BC leaders into their ranks²³ and the ideology in black politics leaned towards a non-racial direction (Halisi 1999). For Gibson, “it is shocking to reflect how many founding leaders of BC²⁴ [as well as, of course the UDF, COSATU and the ANC] have 'sold-out' their principles for power, privilege and money” (2008: 130). Gibson further avers, “Today these betrayals make even clearer the need to focus on the dialectic of ideas and objective conditions and on the relationship of intellectuals to mass movements – of cognition and material life - rather than the psychobiography of individual personalities. I think that the larger issue at stake in my analysis of BC from 1977 to 1987, therefore, was the problematic of comprehending the degeneration of BC not only as a betrayal of principle but in terms of

²³ Azania News Volume 26 Number 6 October - December 1990

²⁴ Some of the characters once associated with the BCM and crossed to the ANC are Jackie Selebi, Dikgang Mosoneke, Mosioua “Terror” Lekota, Matthews Phosa, and the late Sicelo Shiceka among others.

the logic of that betrayal” (2008: 130).

Although AZAPO tried to fuse revolutionary socialism with black republican thought, it could not however compete with the ANC and its allies. Marxist, liberal and left critics who believed in the superiority of revolutionary Marxism espoused a coherent alternative to BC and managed to win former black nationalists to their side (Marx 1992). Maphai argues that ideological coherence isn't always necessary for political support as was the case with AZAPO who “since its adoption of scientific socialism seem[ed] to spend more time making sense of this ideological position than fighting apartheid... Grass-roots support is likely to go to organisations that are active, and this has been the major strength of the UDF.” (1994: 130)

By emphasising “psychologism” which implied that it is through conscientious proselytising that black people would be liberated, BC was seen as a transitory movement seriously lacking strategies on analysing class, race and the economy (Hirson 1979; Gerhart 1978; Fatton 1986; Hirschmann 1990). However there is a contention that BC cannot be a “passing stage” but is an absolute (Fanon 1967) steeped in the lived experience and existential world of black oppression (Gibson 2004). In Hegelian, Marxian and Fanonian terms dialectic moves, it isn't static; there's positive and negative progressions, and contradictions that a movement has to face, and so as not to degenerate it must avoid retrogression (Gibson 2008).

Neither could BC formulate a revolutionary programme with a sustained analysis of the political economy and capitalist relations of production, nor could Black Communalism offer ideas of social transformation which were not reformist (Alexander 1991). Alexander has been sharp in his critique of BC and raised a number of points: by glorifying the ghetto, BC reinforces the established order of racial oppression and exploitation; it is not the white man

but the system that oppresses blacks – even black people like bantustan leaders also defend the system; BC assumes that all liberals are white without acknowledging the existence of black liberals; it fails to recognise, by pushing the “Buy Black” campaign which is meant for private gain, that black people can also be exploitative. And finally, Alexander contends, imperialism in Vietnam, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola was defeated from joint efforts of black and white people. The BCM has also been criticised for retrogression and an inability to see racism in class context (Alexander 1979; Webster 1985): while Biko's analysis stopped at Hegel's thesis-antithesis, his historical analysis lacked the depth and force of Marx's historical materialism (Pityana 1991). However it is trite to dismiss BC as lacking praxis: it had a pervasive ideological impact and was a revolutionary consciousness tool (Fatton 1986). This is being cognisant of the importance of ideological diffusion which disarticulates and displaces hegemonic and racist structures, replacing them with new revolutionary awareness: “The making of a revolution requires not only organisation but also a process of ideological diffusion whereby the hegemony of the dominant classes is disarticulated and ultimately displaced by a new philosophy of emancipation” (Fatton 1986: 125). BC provided an ethico-political position to an oppressed class struggling to reaffirm its humanity through active participation in the demise of a racist, capitalist society and from 1976 it provided a platform for an erosion of white supremacist ideas a la Gramsci's war of position (Fatton 1986). After all, a revolution worth its name has to begin with a revolutionary consciousness. Wilderson vigorously defends BC and argues that:

Steve Biko and BC weren't victims of contradictions internal to the logic of their discourse, my critique notwithstanding. BC didn't peter out, it was drummed out. Biko wasn't a victim of his thinking, he was a murder victim. And given the conditions under which BC was elaborated – between cross-hairs and without sanctuary – it's remarkable that it survived for as long as it did and that its message was potent enough to spark the 1976 uprising, replenish the rank and file of the ANC and stiffen the ANC's resolve to fight as it had never before. An

ANC that would betray the mandate it might have never re-secured were it not for Biko and BC (2008: 113).

Conclusion

Ideas are spirit. They have an enduring capacity to withstand history and a refusal to die once they are etched in the psyche of the people throughout changing political and socio-historical epochs. The relationship between political and ideological thought and history are Siamese twins. They find resonance with each generation at each socio-historical juncture, where they are passed on; as each generation recedes, another succeeds and carries on a particular political and ideological tradition. These are the issues I raise in the next chapter. Let us talk of tradition here, which I think is best to understand this phenomenon. Tradition can be understood as the persistence or continuation over time of a particular way of doing things, a manner of thinking, speaking and writing about something or other (Berki 1977: 22). Tradition, in the political sense, as accepted rules of a group of people or ways in which they come to learn their activities and express their emotions, is indeed carried over time by each generation. It means determinate, enduring existence, the concrete living out of history. There are also symbiotic expressions that derive inspiration from both history and the present, including symbols, signs, gestures, words and gesticulations. All form an intellectual and political identity; forms of thought and content of ideas are patterned out in the present. Since tradition is explicated in the mould of history, one's analysis would be inadequate if it doesn't delve therein:

History is more than the record of how man became what he is; it is involved in man's present conception of what he is; it is the largest element in his self-knowledge (Plamenatz cited in Berki 1977: 22).

Revolutions and social change, according to Berki (1977), can be seen as part of the tradition of a community; radical changes and innovations are always defined in terms of an existing

tradition and “revolutions, however fanatical, never really demand the subversion or alteration of a whole tradition” (Berki 1977: 23). The next chapter then, examines the continuation of a political idea that has played an important role in the Azanian liberation struggle, albeit in its postapartheid manifestation.

Chapter 3

Black Consciousness in the postapartheid Era

From 2007 onwards there has been a resurgence of Black Consciousness in Azania mainly purveyed by township youth in the form of Blackwash, a BC youth movement. More intriguing is that older BC formations like AZAPO and their ideological kindred PAC and the Socialist Party of Azania (SOPA) have been carrying on the black radical tradition. Why then the need for movements like Blackwash? Indeed many commentators have written off BC as an irrelevant political, cultural and social ideology mainly because of the triumphalism of the ANC's non-racialism and the poor parliamentary showing of AZAPO and PAC in the post-1994 elections. For example in the 1999 elections, AZAPO got 17,436 votes (0,18%), while in 2004 it garnered 0,1% of the vote; SOPA in the 1999 elections got 5,780 votes (0.06%) where it contested three provinces: Free State, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). SOPA's national publicity secretary Ashraf Jooma said the party did not participate in the elections for results but to build their profile and “put socialism back on the agenda.” Like AZAPO, they have blamed lack of resources which parties like the ANC and DA have. Both raise funds from like-minded parties overseas and from membership. An AZAPO veteran told me that they boycotted the 1994 elections but participated in 1999 where they had a budget of R1-million while the ANC had R100-million.²⁵

Although “racial nationalism” has in postapartheid South Africa been eclipsed by the ANC's liberalism, it continues to enjoy popular appeal (Halisi 1999) despite black republicanism and

²⁵ Conversation with Sadeque Variava, 14 October 2011

multi-racialism polarising black political thought in the country. Even though AZAPO and PAC have fared poorly in postapartheid polls and even now face oblivion and irrelevance, Black Consciousness is too integral a part of South African black political thought and heritage to be summarily dismissed by scholars (Halisi 1999). Issues concerning Africa's liberation struggle, the national question, teleology of liberation, the ownership of resources and the production of public knowledge have still to be revisited (Mignolo 2000; Ndlovu – Gatsheni 2009). The resurgence of black radical thought is etched in the historical context and is embedded in black liberation thought. Instead of dismissing these as “fake ideologies” (Mbembe 1992, 2001; Appiah 1992), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009) and Parry [(1994), who calls for two cheers for nativism] argue that there's a need for proper historicisation and conceptualisation of the emancipatory nationalist agenda carried over from the liberation struggle. These critical voices, however, seem to be swallowed by the triumphalism of neo-liberalism and the ethos of bourgeois liberal democracy and globalisation. A further complication is the postapartheid non-racial approach where talk of blackness and BC is subjected to liberal assault and intolerance. The subaltern epistemic knowledges (Mignolo 2000) tell us of the unfinished business of liberation from colonisation, neocolonialism and hegemonic imperialism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009). Although these positions are under attack from neo-liberal discourses which seek to destroy, bury or dilute them, they show recurrence through various forms, like Afro-radicalism, cultural nationalism, and nativism (ibid). For Kunnie (2000) the reason why BCM is never mentioned by many critics of the country's reality despite its historic role in the black struggle is because BC is black-led and uncompromisingly socialist in orientation. Many accept the view that BC is marginal in the Azanian struggle and “is engaged in regressive, reactionary politics because it is realistic in its objectives and is essentialist in outlook “(Kunnie 2000: x). Kunnie argues that this shows the depth of racist ideology and triumphalism of the imperialist world in

determining who represents the legitimate aspirations of black people in Azania, and “then dictating the contents of liberation so that they are considered both 'realistic and pragmatic’” (2000: x).

In the new South Africa, there's on-going controversy between non-racialism and race consciousness as strategies for liberation (Halisi 1999). Biko and his associates played a crucial role in reshaping Azanian society by pursuing strategies of struggle based on republican traditions of African resistance. In this respect, back in 1999 Halisi projected that the legacy of Biko and BC thought would continue to influence the evolution of postapartheid South Africa. At the dawn of postapartheid in 1993, Adam and Moodley wrote that, supported by a number of influential opinion makers, clerics, trade unionists and at universities, BC endures as an alternative vision than an active political movement. They predicted that:

Although the activities of the ANC continue to dominate press coverage of events in South Africa, the ideals of BC and Africanism, represented by PAC and AZAPO, respectively, may well develop into the prevailing black outlook in post-apartheid South Africa, as they had been in early 1960s and again during the Soweto upheavals in 1976. At present PAC and AZAPO have only minority support, but their non-compromising stance may force the ANC into policy positions which it might not take in the absence of a serious challenge from a left Africanist flank (1993: 104).

According to Zeleza (2003: vi), among many scholars especially in the North, and some in the South, nationalism is derided or distrusted for its alleged primordial pathologies while no attempt is made to distinguish the problematic and projects of nationalism; between repressive nationalism of imperialism and the progressive nationalism of anti-colonial resistance; and between the nationalisms that have led to colonial conquest and genocide and those that have sought decolonisation and emancipation for oppressed nations and

communities. Again no distinction is made between struggles for domination and liberation, between the reactionary, reformist or revolutionary goals of different nationalisms. Zeleza further defends (Black) Nationalism against critics who argue that it was an elitist project as if subalterns didn't have material aspirations of their own. It is true that the nationalists were concerned about their specific societies as they were about Pan-Africanism and other internationalist movements. This is unsurprising since imperialism was experienced at local, regional and international levels. In this regard Black Nationalism in Azania or elsewhere is confronted with the enuresis of globalisation. It may be opportune to talk of Black (Inter) Nationalism where local struggles by black people have to be interlinked with international ones where blacks have undergone similar experiences. It is true that Black Nationalism in its different manifestations has arisen from, and continues to germinate within this context. Contemporary BC adherents have indeed focused their attention not only on the local but the global machinations of capitalist imperialism that have significant influence on the South African political economy as well as interlinking with resistances on the continent and the Diaspora. Pan-Africanists face a dilemma, however, in that Pan-Africanism demands an African consciousness and an African loyalty while each Pan-Africanist must concern himself with the freedom and development of his own nation (Nyerere 1968). An important achievement of the black radical tradition of course is internationalisation in the form of Pan-Africanism, which is, Black Internationalism or Transnationalism (Bogues 2011). All forms of Pan-Africanism are rooted in nationalism but its nationalism is an international nationalism.

Coming back to globalisation, the struggles are cultural as much as they are political and economic. Nabudere (2000) contends that globalisation is first a cultural project and then a political and economic one. There is a general agreement from a wide spectrum of

protagonists, from the left, the nationalists of the South and the neo-marxists that there's nothing new about globalisation: it's still the same age-old world capitalist system “with its insatiable capacity for conquest, domination, exploitation, and the production of inequalities, disorder and crises” (Nabudere 2000: 13). Globalisation, they aver, is merely a polite way of saying imperialism, or the world capitalist system, or western modernisation, in these neo-liberal times. Contemporary globalisation might be different in manifestation but it's the same in its fundamental structures: “in my view, the term globalisation is best understood as the expansion of global capitalism that is subject to age-old processes and patterns of capitalist accumulation with all their social and spatial inequities and divisions of labour” (Nabudere 2000: 14). African postcolonial states have in conjunction with multi-lateral institutions adopted economic policies which are against the interests of their people and “like their colonial counterparts, African postcolonial states continue to play the role of postcolonial governors over their populations in the interests of international financial capital and those of a small comprador local component whose interests coincide with those of the global financial oligarchy” (Nabudere 2000: 41). According to Nabudere, the process of economic globalisation is leading to new forms of cultural and ethnic confrontations where the local and western cultural and civilizational hegemony is being challenged by those cultures and traditions it sought to suppress. This confrontation takes the form of cultural and ethnic revivalism and consciousness “which is a form of cultural and political identity against a failed national development” (Nabudere 2000: 53). The emergence of new forms of knowledge that have been subalternised in the past five centuries requires building strong macro-narratives that are not world or universal perspectives but a radical departure from global designs inclined towards a different logic told from multiple local histories (Mignolo 2000).

With globalisation and the similarities in the black experience in Africa and the New World where Africans and people of African descent share a common destiny (Bogues 2001), we see a single black collective even in its multiplicity, that smothers nationalisms: “Harboured in the African diaspora there is a single historical identity which is in opposition to the systematic privations of racial capitalism. Ideologically it cements pain to purpose, experience to expectation, and consciousness to collective action. It deepens with each disappointment at false mediation and reconciliation, and is crystallised into ever increasing cores by betrayal and repression” (Robinson 1983: 451). Because racism is part of the superstructure of white capitalist world in colonies and abroad, the Black found himself in the same predicament with all Africans “at home and abroad.” (Rodney 1981) All forms of blackness including Pan-Africanism are not simply a unity of colour but of a common condition and one that retains its validity because the dominant groups in the international political economy continue to define things in racist terms. Black radicalism is a negation of western civilisation that is woven into the interstices of European social life as an African response to its oppression and human exploitation. Rooted in Africa's historical experience, “the [black radical] tradition will provide for no compromise between liberation and annihilation.” (Robinson 1983: 452) It constitutes a rejection of European racism by the disengagement of black communities from white power, as seen in the actions of the maroons and their reconstitution of free communities in the mountains. Escaped slaves who succeeded in establishing free black communities gave moral strength to those left in slavery and captivity. Blacks also resisted by using so-called “weapons of the weak” like arson and destruction of work tools, and less overtly waging ideological and moral warfare through *obeah*, voodoo, Islam and Black Christianity. These induced charismatic expectations, socialising and hardening themselves and their young with beliefs, myths and messianic visions which would allow them, someday, to attempt the impossible (Robinson 1983: 444).

A similar view is shared by Dyson (1995) whose observation of the African-American situation shows that the black radical tradition has a cultural and racial precedent rooted in African-American heroic traditions where during slavery heroes were those who resisted racial dominance through insurrections, rebellions and running away. In this way they acquired mythical status and ever since, these heroes have helped preserve the collective memory of black culture against selective memory which urges reconciliation, de-politicisation and amnesia and consequently keeps blacks outside the mainstream consciousness. The black radical tradition persists in responding to continued threats posed to African people in a modern world system and is buttressed by imperatives of broader collectivities where “particular languages, cultures and social sensibilities have evolved into world-historical consciousness” (Robinson 1983: 451).

The “motion of motions”, that is, the movement of ideas which is the foundation of the black radical tradition (Bogues 2011), will continue to illuminate and enliven Biko's ideas in the postapartheid South Africa. Taking a cue from the Gramscian formulation that ideas “have a centre of formation, of irradiation, of dissemination, of persuasion” (Gramsci 1971: 192), ideas are structural and epistemological; they are not transformed or changed by replacing one or a whole conception of the world with another but a mode of thought is internally reworked and transformed. For Gramsci old alignments are dismantled and new ones affected, that is, there is always an articulation and dis-articulation of ideas. However using the travelling theory (Mignolo 2000; Said 1999), ideas and theories do travel in whatever language they are dressed in. The task of local participants is to force the arrived theory to adapt, or to propose resistance, revolution and radical social transformation. Thus, while Africans were captured and taken to the New World against their will as human cargo, they did return to the continent and established a metaphysical presence through an idea: Pan-

Africanism and black radical thought (one may think of du Bois, Henry Sylvester Williams, Holy Johnson, Edward Wilmot Blyden among others) which would inspire anti-colonial struggles in Africa. African-Americans in particular provided Africans with a means of thinking through the diverse meanings of blackness (Zine Magubane 2004). It is little wonder then that groups with a BC persuasion like Blackwash should appear on the political scene, albeit on the other side of the Atlantic.

Coming back to old BC adherents like AZAPO and its breakaway offshoot SOPA and their ideological kindred, the PAC, they have all fared badly in the postapartheid parliamentary elections. If the popularity of an idea or even ideals is to be measured by the electorate's inclinations to vote for an organisation which embodies that particular idea, then we can say with high confidence that BC has passed its sell-by date. Or we may, to be blunter, say BC has been carried in a casket and gravediggers have dug a pit six feet deep and buried it there with an ominous sign, "REST IN PEACE". Such a conclusion would be false because BC is a spirit, an idea that continues to live on: to be succinct, an idea as a spirit cannot be killed; an idea can be resurrected and propelled forward by township youths, many of whom never saw or experienced apartheid. This is seen in the form of Blackwash and other youth formations that subscribe to BC ideals.

If Azanian black youth are returning to the "buried" ideas of Black Consciousness in a postapartheid social order, young American blacks since the early 1990s have been increasingly incorporating ideas by black struggle icons like Malcolm X into their daily consciousness (Dyson 1995). The emergence of strong Black Nationalist sentiments among young blacks is a revolt of the idea of "fitting in" (West 1994). Black Nationalism in all its varieties rests on the fact that white America has consistently refused to accept the humanity

of blacks. The early 1990s saw the resurgence of Malcolm X and his cultural rebirth. His ideas on Black Nationalism appealed to many blacks who when he lived either ignored or despised him (Dyson 1995). His appeal is strongest among black youth of ages 15 – 24 who find him a figure of epic racial achievement (Dyson 1995: 82). There is also rap culture that has elevated him as a cultural hero with many seeing him as the original MC²⁶. The hip-hop culture, either, the politically conscious or hard-core gangsta, espouse the same rage and social conditions which Malcolm X spoke of and his voice is sampled in numerous rap songs. Again it shows the resilience of rap music, a black art form, itself:

The obstacles that rap has overcome in establishing itself as a mainstay of American popular culture connected primarily to its style of expression and its themes provide a natural link between Malcolm's radical social vocation and aspects of black youth culture. The similarity between aspects of hip-hop culture and Malcolm's public career [for example, charges of violence, the problems associated with expressing black rage and experience in the ghetto, the celebration of black pride and historical memory] prods rappers to take the lead in asserting Malcolm's heroism for contemporary black America (Dyson 1995: 82 - 3).

Dyson further observes that, “Malcolm is the rap revolution's rhetorician of choice, his words forming the ideological framework for authentic black consciousness” (1995: 85). Dyson's perception is important, it needs more liberal quoting:

Malcolm's phrase: 'no sell-out, no sell-out, no sell-out,' remains useful in this contemporary consciousness... Malcolm's defiant expression of black rage has won him a new hearing among a generation of black youth whose embattled social status due to a brutally resurgent racism makes them sympathetic to his fiery, often angry rhetoric. Malcolm's take no prisoners approach to racial crisis appeals to young blacks disaffected from white society and alienated from older generations whose contained style of revolt owes more to Martin Luther King Jr's non-violent philosophy than to Malcolm's advocacy of self-defence (1995: 87).

²⁶ MC or Master of Ceremonies is synonymous with rap culture

Malcolm's, like Steve Biko is in Azania, style of publicly saying what other blacks fear to say and only do in private, in addition to his combative assertiveness, endears him to black youth finding ways to articulate anger at the permanence of American and South African racism. Biko's philosophical praxis which he lived is shown in the findings of the inquest into his death, which determined that he was involved in a scuffle with the security police and it took several big men to subdue him. One incident recounted by Donald Woods (1978: 106) during a police search on Biko's house which needs extensive quoting, relates Biko's encounter with the security police:

“Once he admitted them to his house – several of them, led by the notorious Warrant Officer Gerhardus Hattingh – and when they were inside the house, Warrant Officer Hattingh made the mistake of producing a revolver. In a flash Steve gave the firearm a karate-type chop while, with the other hand, wrenching the weapon from Hattingh's hand. “No guns in this house!” he said, handing it back to a shaken Hattingh. Somehow he got away with it – on that occasion. Once during one of his spells in detention, he was put in an interrogation room, in a chair in the middle of the room, with seven Security policemen standing along the walls all around him. Hattingh entered the room, walked straight to where Steve was sitting, and slapped him hard across the face.

“What happened then?” I (Donald Woods) asked.

“I hit him right against the wall”, Steve replied. “Bust his false teeth.”

“Then what?”

“He went straight out of the room. I had the feeling that he didn't know what to do, or how to react, so he just went out – presumably for further instructions from his superiors.”

On a later occasion the same Hattingh tried to assault Biko in detention, and Biko held him at arm's length, saying: “Stop this, Hattingh! I don't want to hit an older man.” Hattingh apologised - “Sorry, Steve. I lost my temper” (cited in Woods 1978: 107).

Malcolm X critiqued the non-violence of civil rights movement associated with King and advocated self-defence in the face of violent racist assault and denounced black liberal bourgeois protest which encouraged white cooperation to secure feeble gains. He famously said: “Be peaceful, be courteous, obey the law, respect everyone but if someone puts his hand on you, send him to the cemetery.”²⁷

Malcolm's undying magnetism is that there is a pervasive feeling in black communities that 'we have not overcome'; for ghetto kids who have not been touched by the minimal post-civil rights gains it's like we are still 'where we were'. Malcolm's legacy, like Biko, is his passion for black history, cultural and racial consciousness. The rapper KRS-ONE says: “Black children will come to know that they have come from a long race and line of kings, queens and warriors, a knowledge that will make them have a better feeling of themselves” (cited in Dyson 1995: 92).

3.1. Blackwash

Blackwash emerged in 2008. It is a blacks-only youth movement based in the Johannesburg township of Soweto. An article by Lindy Mtongana which appears in the RNW Africa Desk on 19 April 2011²⁸ says:

In South Africa, a radical black youth movement is gaining ground. Blackwash addresses the ruling ANC's failure to improve the conditions of black people in South Africa, 'Coz 1994 changed fokol!'

In an interview Lubabalo Mgwili said, “For me the biggest problem was them (ANC)

²⁷ Someone posted this quote on Facebook, May 21 2012.

²⁸ “Coz 1994 Changed Fokol, Black Movement Aims for Dictatorship of the Masses”.

<http://rnw.nl/africa/article/black-movement-aims-dictatorship-masses>

accepting the 1994 settlement and the constitution that came with it. There's nothing to celebrate in the post 1994." Ncebakazi Manzi explains: "Our assessment is that black people have accepted that this is a white country. They have accepted that they must live in filth and squalor (for example Alexandra) and yet if they walk just ten minutes they will arrive in Sandton, the richest suburb on the continent. Blackwash is about the historical advantage that white people have accrued for themselves through violence. And how, in protecting the interests of white people, the ANC allows for this quiet violence to continue." Mgwili added, "Blackwash is a blacks-only movement. We are not interested in organising with whites. They should organise themselves. White peoples' suffering, whether it is homophobia or whatever, calls for a crisis, but the suffering of black people has been normalised and that is why black people have to organise on their own. The one thing that black people share, that white people can never have, is their black skin, which has become a cause for their oppression." The article continues to say that Blackwash aims to achieve a dictatorship of the masses in which people make decisions through processes of direct democracy and wealth is transferred to the people. Lucy Holborn of the South African Institute of Race Relations is quoted in the article as saying although Blackwash is exploiting the frustrations of black youths, racial ideology is "just as dangerous as extreme right wing sentiment and it is based on racial stereotypes that are becoming increasingly irrelevant as racial integration and mixing increases around the world."

Blackwash outlines its mission as:

Blackwash is a blacks-only movement. We stand for liberation of black people who want to be liberated. We will fight for this dream by any means necessary. We understand that the main force we are pitted against is white supremacy. We carry the spirit of Haiti's slave revolt of 1804. We shall walk as we talk. We shall make our own mistakes, learn and improve on our practice. We stand, ultimately, for the love of black people and the end of our suffering. **Vuka**

Darkie Coz 1994 CHANGED FOKOL!)

One pamphlet reiterates:

Blackwash is a youth radical Black Consciousness formation for Blacks ONLY! We believe that Black people are still suffering under a black government. We hope to educate one another so we could put an end to our suffering! We are currently based in Soweto and wish to upgrade and spread radical Black Consciousness to black youth from all parts of the country.

VUKA DARKIE COZ 1994 CHANGED FOKOL!

The movement also lays down what they call six minimum points:

- a. We stand against patriarchy/sexism/misogyny
- b. We stand against white supremacy
- c. We stand against capitalism
- d. We reject tribalism and narrow tribal identities
- e. We reject African colonial borders. Africa is one but Africa is not for everyone. All settler colonialists must be vanquished (including Arab settlers).
- f. We reject cultures and religions of subjugation (we embrace both culture and religion which are instruments of resistance/liberation/black theology).

Blackwash has as its compass a document containing a set of guiding principles and a foundational ideological exposition called “The Blackwash Dream – We Fight For It Now.”

According to the document, white supremacy, whose foundation is capitalist domination, oppresses and generates sub-oppressions in the black community; so if black people fail to fight these oppressions, including at an interpersonal level, they are complicit in the white supremacist project. Blackwash defines the Black Condition (I will extrapolate more on this in subsequent chapters) as a situation whereby black South Africans are pushed into marginality, into bad living conditions and substandard education inherited from the apartheid Bantu Education system, and therefore are disillusioned with the post 1994 government. To

quote **The Blackwash Dream** at length, it describes the Black Condition as:

Currently a disaster zone. However, it's neither a god given situation nor a natural affair. We have arrived here because of systematic brutalisation to create South Africa's white modernity. Our country's relative 'modernization' or development is harvested from violence against blacks and sustained on the same logic and practice. But the violence has become normalised, it's a way of life, hence the eyesore of Alexandra lives side by side with the splendour of Sandton the richest suburb on the continent as if these disparities are natural. Black poverty lies side by side with white wealth created from exclusion and impoverishment of blacks. To escape we adopt a white attitude, we become half-white to continue sucking the blood of black people. Our relative comfort is brought in the sweat and at times blood of the many excluded. To succeed is to sell-out. We are not against comfort and success but we say look how these are achieved. Meritocracy and hard work are lies to blind us from the truth of how exploitation and exclusion lies at the heart of success under the anti-black capitalist reality of our time. We are all implicated. The system gives us a little to take so much from us and our people. It bribes a few with shiny things to keep the many outside and hoping.

Although the anti-colonial struggles are inspirational, black people find very little to celebrate in the postcolonial dispensation. Africa remains unfree and its leaders have themselves become black colonisers, in the process betraying struggle luminaries like Thomas Sankara, Patrice Lumumba, Steve Biko, Robert Sobukwe and others. The implication is that the anti-colonial struggles have to be started all over again. This is in realisation of the dire objective conditions black people still find themselves in even with the celebrated “independence.”

The postcolonial condition in Azania and its schemes to delude the black masses, according to Blackwash, is seen in its chimerical attempts to “whitewash” history and thereby absolve age-old “sins” and atrocities committed against black people by “relying on our chosen group amnesia to the truth” and “the power lies in South Africa's ability to choose to forget that, at

best, this land remains dis-indigenous to black people.” The ideological weapons at the disposal of the postcolonial state are trained on the erotic imagination of the masses. This, amidst crass inequalities, involves *kwaito* music and entertainment to divert anger and stunt the growth of consciousness of the masses.

The document ends with the movement's signature slogan: “Vuka Darkie Coz 1994 Changed Fokol” that literally translated means “Wake up Black man, post-apartheid South Africa didn't bring any changes.” One pamphlet explains the logic behind the slogan:

- Since 1994 the ANC government has only given back 6% of the land to blacks. 16 (18 at the time of writing this thesis) years of ANC rule whites own more than 80% of the land! It will take us almost 60 years to buy back only 30% our land, which was stolen from us by force of arms by whites!
- Blacks own about 5% of the wealth listed in the Johannesburg Stock Exchange that means more than 90% of the listed wealth is in white hands (5% is for BEE people linked to the ANC!)
- Since 1994 more than a million black farm workers have been evicted from South African farms. That is why we see the growing of squatter camps in many towns. We are squatters in our own country!
- Under the ANC government we have seen educational genocide against black learners. Only about 20% of those who started school in 1998 passed matric in 2009. Of the 1998 cohort a million black learners drop out of school before matric. In white schools a whopping 97% passed with university entrance. The schools have no equipment; teachers are undertrained, overworked and underpaid. SA is not a poor country!
- Our government is wasting more than R30 billion on the 2010 FIFA World Cup! The only people who are going to benefit from the World Cup are FIFA!
- Now the ANC is raising electricity costs so that it can get billions of Rands through Hitachi

and Chancellor House.²⁹ This is day light robbery! It's not enough that they steal from the people through the tenders now they are pick-pocketing the nation! The black youth is the most affected by the ANC government neglect!

Despite its four years of existence, Blackwash remains embryonic, without a fully developed theoretical and ideological position, except the BC philosophy and Biko as its compass. This largely is because of a myriad of complex problems besetting the movement, which I will discuss later on. There have been some few programmes which they have embarked on but have since been suspended because of intra-organisational differences and contractions. When I began this project I expected to see and report on the progress the movement is making in the communities. Of late my hopes have been quashed by increasing infighting and squabbling which have threatened the very survival of the movement. My report on the movement will thus be largely focused on these arguments and disagreements. However below are some of the programmes the movement has embarked on before relations among the members were strained.

3.1.1. Political Education

Political education classes, public lectures mainly by Andile Mngxitama and monthly workshops were held in Soweto as part of a broader objective of conscientisation. For some two years political education classes were held fortnightly at Soweto's Moletsane High School. The school has a history of resistance and in the 1970s was a hotbed for Black Consciousness activism and hugely contributed in the 1976 Soweto Uprising. I attended two such classes which dealt with classical black radical texts like Frantz Fanon's "Pitfalls of National Consciousness", Amilcar Cabral and C.L.R James among others. Common themes

²⁹ Chancellor House is ANC's investment arm.

which were covered include service delivery protests and if they indicate potentiality for revolution; understanding power (inspired by C.L.R. James' texts); and ideology and the ruling class (mainly from Althusser). The classes followed a year long curriculum designed to insert various themes related to liberatory and radical black theory. Each class attracted up to fifty exuberant youths, with some as young as ten, others were in primary or high school and tertiary students and young adults. A Blackwash facilitator would lead and set the motion for discussion of the texts which participants would be expected to have read beforehand. The participants would then be divided into smaller groups with instructions to discuss certain themes related to the texts. After a while the groups would reconvene and a general discussion would be held. It was at one of these political education classes that I first heard the term “sell-out” (ostensibly with reference to Fanon's “Pitfalls of National Consciousness”) where there is serious indictment of the postcolonial dispensation that betrays the ideals of the anti-colonial liberation struggles. What struck me most was the high level of intellectual engagement by the youth who exhibited lofty awareness of current affairs and their own objective conditions. Although Blackwash has considered reviving the classes to run concurrently in all national provinces, developing a national curriculum, training of facilitators especially university students and the appraisal of medium of facilitation and translation has been stalled, as I indicated earlier, by contestations within the movement.

3.1.2 Film Screenings

Film screenings of “Thomas Sankara: The Upright Man” amongst others were held mainly at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) where Blackwash has a base largely consisting of Wits students. These were always followed by a discussion on the themes these films raise. One pamphlet for example, dated 15 October 2010, advertising the screening at the university, gave this background: As more and more South Africans realise that our politicians care very little about the Black majority, we look at the life and ideals of the late Thomas Sankara, former

president of Burkina Faso. While in power, he carried out revolutionary programmes including reducing salaries of state ministers to the equivalent of teachers' pay and also ensuring that they drive the cheapest cars on the market. Because of his commitment to liberation, Sankara was assassinated on 15 October 1984. Join us as we celebrate his life and draw inspiration from him for our own country.

Ostensibly the September National Imbizo (SNI) which I discuss below derives its inspiration from the Sankarist project.

3.1.3 Bua Blackwash Bua

Bua Blackwash Bua is a Blackwash radical counter cultural mass conscientisation publication for the purpose of “blackwashing the masses through written word.” It follows the realisation that the ideological content of a publication is fundamental for its success as much as its presentation and the strength of the movement itself (Gramsci 1985). The publication, again like other projects has been stalled because of among other things prohibitive production costs. The last edition was sometime in 2010. The publication offered a space and a political platform for young black radicals to engage with ideas, themes and issues affecting black people in general. Lately there has been talk of setting up an editorial collective and resuscitating the publication. However Mngxitama objected to the idea saying, “...I suggest we finalise the huge political and ideological problems Blackwash is faced with. Can you imagine a person with anti-Blackwash *mala-mogudu* BC³⁰ sitting on the editorial committee of Bua Blackwash?”³¹

The “soul” of the project, however, is captured in the editorial of the edition of August 2010:

³⁰ Mngxitama has constantly referred to a grassroots BC approach as “mala-mogudu BC.” *Mala-mogudu* (tripe) is a popular township meal associated with being black and poor. I will analyse these contestations later in the chapter.

³¹ Facebook post, 26 April 2012.

When they tell you are free and still live in shacks - Bua!

When they say it's a new dawn and you still have no land - Bua!

When they say better life for all yet you still have *fokol* - Bua Blackwash!

When they promise you land and give you *nada* - Bua!

When they preach reconciliation, rainbow nation but not justice – Bua!

When they twin tower shower you fabricated notions of equality, unity in diversity *ke maka* -
Bua Blackwash Bua!

When they free your children only to enslave them again – Bua!

Black kids caged in factories of slavery we call schools – Bua!

Feeding young minds with historical lies from their deliberative amnesia – Bua Blackwash
Bua!

Bua in trains. Bua in buses. Bua in villages and townships Bua.

Bua until parliament trembles. Stop only when true freedom comes.

Bua Blackwash Bua!

3.2. Black Socialism

If revolutionaries are critical of the hitherto existing material and objective conditions and the socio-political and socio-economic ordering of present society, it is always an outstanding habit that they propose a post-revolutionary alternative. Black Socialism is a phrase I have heard discussed, peremptorily in Blackwash although no theoretical exposition on this important theme in black radical thought is yet to be extended. I attended a debate organised by, and between the Young Communist League (YCL) and Blackwash Wits at the University of the Witwatersrand entitled “Is Communism a Viable Strategy for Distribution of Wealth in South Africa?” A Blackwash representative, quoting Frank Wilderson, talked of the inadequacy of class analysis and that a white person can't be part of the black struggle because of the privilege of their skin. The subjective experiences of black and white workers are different. Although the Marxist application may be correct, he said, it is inadequate. BC

adherents talk of Black Consciousness while communists hanker on worker consciousness based on the wage and work. BC isn't inclined to work but wants to own the whole chain of production for collective ownership and collective redistribution of wealth. Still citing Wilderson, he said the suffering of blacks has no analogy. Blackness occupies a symbolic field and whiteness another and a white hobo is more important than blacks. Black people are still oppressed, he said, because wealth still benefits whites. He explained that Blackwash is anti-capitalist; it advocates for redistribution of wealth and for Black Socialism.

Let me deviate a bit and compare the speaker's input with what Lorenzo Kom'boa (2011) has said about the US. He argues that the use of dogmatic definitions of “scientific socialism” or “revolutionary communism” is based on Eurocentricism. Blacks are then expected to embrace the “socialist” values of the settler/conqueror culture rather than “socialist” values rooted in daily and cultural black realities. Kom'boa calls leftists in the US “Marxist missionaries” coming into black neighbourhoods preaching the gospel of Marx while the main enemy is the racist authoritarian state and its supporters. At the workplace blacks are “last hired, first fired”. White co-workers are generally afraid of blacks mainly because of fear of competition. Unions are soft on racism. This makes sense since unions in the US are running dogs of capitalism and apologists for management despite their militant rhetoric. Many white workers are supportive of racist Republican politicians like presidential candidate Pat Buchanan who promised to protect their jobs. Kom'boa gets harsher in his critique: “[T]he wannabe rulers of the Marxist/Leninist white left ‘vanguards’ who only see the fascists as competition in their struggle to see which set of ‘empire builders’ will lord over us; the ‘good’ whites who regulate us to the amerikkkan left plantation of ‘the glorious workers state’, or the ‘bad’ whites who work us as slaves until half-dead and then laugh at us as our worn out carcasses are thrown into ovens, cut up for ‘scientific purposes’ or hung from the lamp posts and trees. You people have yet to show me the qualitative difference(s) between a Klan/Nazi style white supremacist

dictatorship and your concept of a ‘dictatorship’ of the proletariat” in the context of this particular country and its notorious history” (2011: 21).

He goes on to say the “dictatorship of the proletariat” doesn’t guarantee equality to blacks: “give us one good reason to believe that you people will be any different from these previous and current ‘benevolent’ leaders and political institutions if by some fluke or miracle you folks stumble into state power?” (2011: 22). Kom'boa is afraid that judging by the general attitudes and theories expressed by “your members and leadership, we can rest assured that it is virtually guaranteed that the spirit of 'Jim Crow' can and will flourish within a white-led Marxist – Leninist 'proletarian dictatorship in the US” (2011: 22). The danger of a working class revolution in the US is the continued domination of non-white people by white “revolutionary leaders” and a “left wing [white supremacist] government. Ultimately there may be two choices: either continued repression of non-white people or there may be a grassroots-based revolution rooted in anti-authoritarian political ideas that are culturally relevant to each ethnicity of the poor and working class population.

A similar view is shared by an anarchist article online.³² The historical argument that the factory will create a revolutionary proletariat or is a source of social mobilisation has proved to be false. It asks: “how can workers alone, in tightly managed workplaces and offered only the choice of alienated labour or enforced leisure, ever be capable of carrying through a libertarian revolution?” Industrial development has simply led to managerialism, technological control of the workplace – managing the unmanageable – and to social compulsion or catastrophe. However it remains true that the social revolution can't be won outside the struggle at the point of production and the seizure of the means of production; struggles in other areas can't be relegated to a secondary role because all struggles within

³²“The Role of the Revolutionary Organisation”, <http://www.fed.org.uk>.

capitalism are intertwined thus creating a making the creation of a “libertarian front” essential. Urbanization continues to create a vast, displaced, hungry, dispossessed and desperate underclass across the globe. The underclass and the youth, rather than workers themselves, have become increasingly important as drivers of change as seen by the Arab Spring and the London riots in 2011. The article also adds that socio-political ruptures are being led without a revolutionary left, which duplicates ruling class values in their authoritarianism, high degree of centralisation, worship of hierarchy and the “sheep-like submission of the rank and file to an omnipotent and all-wise *leadership*.”

Coming back to the individual from Blackwash - he argued that the primary responsibility of every revolutionary is to liberate black people, the end of that liberation process being Black Socialism. Critiquing the Tripartite alliance in the same forum, Mngxitama said on the brink of the revolution in the early 1990s Mandela told people to lay down arms and both the ANC and SACP voluntarily chose to maintain a racist status quo and were at the forefront of theorising compromises. They sat at the negotiation table and “sold out fundamental economic issues and were bent on deracialising capitalism.” SACP secretary general Blade Nzimande and other communists are in a capitalist government defending white capital interests and that should be rejected. Communists cannot *toyi -toyi*³³ for free education because the SACP is in power and has influence on policy decisions. He further said that there are two South Africas, one that is complicit with the white bourgeoisie and the other that is the poor black majority. The YCL representative said in South Africa it's mainly black workers who are producers of wealth, who operate the machine at the point of production and whose surplus is appropriated by the capitalists. On the question why black people are still oppressed, she said it's because of the capitalist drive to exploit people in the quest for profit.

³³ *Toyi-toyi* is a popular South African protest dance.

Again, workers are equally exploited irrespective of colour. In South Africa blacks are not oppressed because they are black but because they are workers and workers all over are exploited in a similar manner. Black capitalists are seen to be as exploitative as their white counterparts, so capitalism is colour blind. She gave the historical example of consumer boycotts in the country which the black petty bourgeoisie saw as a way to enrich themselves by charging exorbitant prices; and that they were indeed incorporated into the system. She said the myth of African Socialism was long exposed: there is only one solution and that is the one proposed by Marx.

Black Socialism is a terminology expressing an old idea theorised by early Pan-Africanists. Among the first to propagate the idea of African Socialism was Edward Wilmot Blyden. According to Blyden (cited, in Hollis. R. Lynch, 1971), the family is the basic unit of African Socialist society, which is then linked to the extended family, clan, community and the society at large. Property, that is, land and water is accessible to all. In this society nobody is in want of work, food or clothing. The native laws and institutions prohibit cooperation with anyone intent on appropriating anything for their own use and benefit from profits accruing from joint efforts. Laws and justice are known to all members and administered by chiefs in the presence of a whole people who are jointly and severally the guardians and preservers of peace. Social life is communistic or cooperative: “All work for each, each works for all” (Blyden in Lynch 1971: 163). Blyden applied an organic hermeneutic approach in analysing the African society. The cooperative principle, he averred, the African learns from the animal kingdom especially insects, and particularly termites which construct elaborate termitariums or “bug-a-bug hills”. This idea of residence, he argued, might have inspired the architects of the Pyramid of Cheops in Egypt. Blyden went on to explain and clarify this concept in more detail:

It is from this object we gather that the industrial system of the African is derived. It is cooperative not egotistic or individualistic. We, and not I, are the law of African life. Indeed the word civilisation, invented by the Romans, has its root in this idea. They adopted the maxim of Marcus Aurelius who said, 'That which is not in the interest of the whole swarm is not for the interest of a single bee.' The word civilisation derived from two Latin words *cum* and *eo*, means together or going together. This is the idea that underlies the efforts of the better class of socialists in Europe – a socialism which says – not all yours are mine, as a dominating and exclusive principle, but all mine are yours... (1971: 167).

Through their socialistic and cooperative way in all material things, the African system avoids such European social ills like starvation, neglect, prostitution and so on. The main business of tribes and families cooperating is to provide sufficient food, clothing, shelter and all conditions for a reasonably comfortable life for all. This is a result of collective ownership of all land and water and equal accessibility to these natural objects for man, woman or child. Blyden adds, "When the full meaning to the life of the African of the two conditions we have mentioned above, as regards land and water, is understood, then it will be realised why the African everywhere fights for his land when he will hesitate to fight about anything else" (1971: 168).

The communistic order in Africa isn't by accident, Blyden argues. It is borne out of centuries of experience steeped in philosophy and logic as expressed by striking proverbs that chastise individualism and meanness. Blyden concludes that the individualistic system is antagonistic to the African because in Africa there's neither proletariat nor exploiters; it is why the "native" is seen by the unimaginative European as "lazy."

This early theorising by Blyden was taken up decades later by thinkers of the Negritude movement especially Leopold Senghor and Aime Cesaire, Anton Lembede, W.E.B. Du Bois, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere and the Black Consciousness Movement in Azania.

Lembede recognises that “Bantu” society is fundamentally socialistic where there is no individual ownership of land or landlords and land was understood as collectively owned. He goes on to say, “Socialism then is our valuable legacy from our ancestors. Our task is to develop this socialism by the infusion of new and modern socialistic ideas.”³⁴ Du Bois in an article entitled “A Nature for Pan-Africa, Freedom, Peace, Socialism” in the *National Guardian*, lays the theoretical underpinnings of African Socialism: Pan-African socialism seeks the welfare state in Black Africa. It will refuse to be exploited by people of other continents for their own benefit and not the benefit of the peoples of Africa. It will no longer consent to permitting the African majority of any African country to be governed against its will by a minority of invaders who claim racial superiority or the right to get rich at African expense. It will seek not only to raise but to process its raw material and to trade freely with the entire world on just and equal terms and prices.

In a speech delivered by his wife Shirley at the All-African Peoples Conference in Accra on 22 December 1958, Du Bois says: “But what is socialism? It is a disciplined economic and political organisation to which the first duty of a citizen is to serve the state; and the state is not a selected aristocracy, or a group of self-seeking oligarchs who have seized wealth and power. No! The mass of workers with hand and brain are the ones whose collective destiny is the chief object of all effort.”

The speech went on to say that while the West is governed by corporations, individual capitalists and trade union leaders, “on the other hand, the African tribe, whence all of us are sprung, was communistic in its very beginnings. No tribesman was 'free'. All were servants of the tribe of whom the chief was father and voice.”

Nyerere attempted to put into practice the idea of African Socialism through *ujamaa*. Nyerere argues that socialism involves building on the foundation of the past and building the present to our own design and modern Africans are not divorced from their ancestors in socio-

³⁴ This article appears in *Inyaniso*, February 1945.

economic organisation and religious facets of society: “We have deliberately decided to grow, as a society, out of our own roots, but in a particular direction and towards a particular kind of objective. We are doing this by emphasising certain characteristics of our traditional organisation, and extending them so that they can embrace the possibilities of modern technology and enable us to meet the challenge of life in the twentieth century” (Nyerere 1968: 2).

Ujamaa is an African word which emphasises African-ness of the policies intended to be followed. It also means family hood, “so that it brings to the mind of our people the idea of mutual involvement in the family as we know it” (1968: 2). The Arusha Declaration of 1967 defines the three basic principles of *ujamaa* as: love (respect); property (that is, all basic goods held in common and shared among all members of the unit). No-one could go hungry while others hoarded food; none could be without shelter when there is space; the economic proportion of one could not exceed that of others; although economic inequalities existed they were mitigated by family or social responsibility and could never become gross and offensive to the social equality which was the basis of social life; and finally, the obligation to work and only by the universal acceptance of this principle could the above be possible.

A socialist society sees man as the purpose of all social activity and the purpose of society is the furtherance of human development. By man, it means all human beings, “male and female, black, white, brown, yellow; long – nosed and short nosed; educated and uneducated; wise and stupid”; strong and weak; all these and all other distinctions between human beings are irrelevant to the fact that all members of society – all the human beings who are its purpose - are equal” (1968: 4). A society isn't socialist if in its organisation or practice it discriminates or allows discrimination because of parentage, place of birth, appearance, and religious belief and so on. In such a society there cannot be existence of racialism, tribalism or religious intolerance. Under socialism there can be no exploitation of one man by another, “there will be no ‘masters’ who sit in idleness while others labour on 'their' farms or in 'their

factories' (Arusha Declaration 1967, Nyerere 1968: 6). Society has a duty and a right to prevent exploitation arising from individual ownership of the means of productive forces and exchange; the tools of production and mechanisms of exchange are firmly under control of the people with public ownership of the key points of the economy. Public ownership is through the instrument of elected central or local government, or cooperatives: “the essential point is that no individual or group of individuals will be able to hold to ransom either the society as a whole, or other individuals, by means of their exclusive control of an instrument which is necessary to the increased well – being of the community” (1968: 7 -8).

Work and commitment to work are central in such society: “A socialist society therefore will consist of workers – only of workers. Every member will contribute, by his work, to the total of wealth and welfare produced by the society, and he will receive a return in proportion to his efforts and his contribution to the well-being of the community” (1968: 5). Work and duty to society are an obligation, thus under socialism there could not be a group of “permanently unemployed”, so everyone has to be a worker implying a worker is anyone who works.

Nyerere further observed that although socialism is an international and a universal concept it must relate to Tanzanian context, geography and history. The universality of socialism doesn't mean a single, worldwide uniformity of social institutions, social habits or language but differences between societies reflect the manner of their development and their historical traditions. In arguing that socialism had to be tailored in lieu of the level of productive forces of a given context, Nyerere critiqued traditional socialists especially those from the West:

There is, however a tendency, an apparent tendency among certain socialists to try and establish a new religion – a religion of socialism itself. This is usually called “scientific socialism” and the works Marx and Lenin are regarded as the holy writ, in the light of which all other thoughts and actions of socialists have to be judged (1968: 14),

and these proponents, “talk and act in the same manner as the most rigid of theologians...

indeed we are fast getting to the stage where quarrels between different Christian sects about the precise meaning of the bible fade into insignificance when compared with quarrels of those who claim to be the interpreters of Marxism – Leninism!” (1968: 14). However the works of Marx and Lenin are useful because they thought of the objective conditions of their time and we can learn of their methods of analysis and their ideas but it “it is of no part of the job of the socialist in 1968 to worry about whether or not his actions or proposals are in accordance with what Marx or Lenin write, and it is a waste of time and energy to spend hours - if not months and years – trying to prove that what you have decided is objectively necessary is really in accordance with their teachings” (1968: 15). African problems cannot be solved according to what priests of this “new theology” of Marxism contend because Africa’s conditions are very different from those of the Europe in which Marx and Lenin wrote and worked. To talk as if Marx invented socialism is to reject both the humanity of Africa and the universality of socialism. Marx did contribute a great deal to socialist thought but socialism did not begin with him nor can it end in constant reinterpretations of his writings. Traditional Tanzanian society, Nyerere argued, had many socialist characteristics and this provided a basis on which modern socialism can be built and to reject this base is to accept the idea that Africa has nothing to contribute to the march of mankind; it is to argue that the only way progress can be achieved in Africa is if we reject our own past and impose on ourselves the doctrines of some other society. Nyerere further argued that if “scientific socialism” meant anything, it is that the objectives are socialist and one applies scientific methods of study in working out the appropriate policies. If the phrase does not mean that, then it simply traps the unwary into denouncing their nature. A real scientific socialist would begin his analysis of the problem of a particular society from the standpoint of that society. As for Tanzania he would have to note the existence of socialist values as part of his material analysis; would have to study the effect of colonialism on social organisation; and “he could

well finish up with Arusha Declaration and the policies of ujamaa!” (1968: 16). Therefore the contemporary socialist has to think the best way of achieving ends under present conditions; how to organise society, solve a problem, and effect changes in a manner that fulfils the requirements of man. Rodney (1972) concurs. The insistence on an African identity is a worthwhile corrective not only to bourgeois cultural imperialism but also to dogmatic expositions by self-styled Marxists and scientific socialists. Identification with the particularity in Africa is as essential as appreciating the universality of scientific method. Rodney argues that when the doctrine of *ujamaa* postulates an African path to socialism it affirms the validity of scientific socialism, in spite of the lack of any declaration to this effect by Tanzanian leadership and in spite of deliberate efforts to distort both *ujamaa* and scientific socialism so as to present them as fundamentally contradictory. It is not my intention here to analyse the successes or failures of African Socialism but I am interested in the idea as a concept, as a philosophy and a political thought. It’s worthwhile, however to repeat Rodney's (1972) view that the error of most authors is to fail to differentiate between form and substance and “the substance of *ujamaa* is its stand against imperialism, against racism and against exploitation of all kinds; and (to put it affirmatively) it stands for the emancipation of the working population of Africa and for the remodelling of the society along lines of socialist equality and socialist democracy.” (1972: 63).

The Black Consciousness Movement of the 1970s followed this thought, albeit through the concept of Black Communalism. Since most of what they said is very similar to the above, it is not necessary to repeat it all except briefly. They argued that BC stifles the individualistic tendency inculcated by the legalised racism and the capitalist system. An article called “The Repugnant Elements in the western culture” (n.d) notes:

Capitalism by its very nature hoards the wealth of a country in a few limited hands. In order to maximise profits and minimise outlay, the capitalist harnesses the poor people and

euphemistically calls them workers when they are in fact slaves. Remuneration of these slaves is nothing more than a pittance that is calculated to keep only the body and soul together in order that the slave can return to work the following morning.

It adds:

We further regard communism, socialism and other related economic systems as the results of a white man's frustrations in his capitalism and therefore just as unacceptable as capitalism that has given birth to them. Black people must have an economic system which is an answer to the ills of capitalism and that is communalistic economic system.

The communalistic system of yore ensured welfare for all; traditional, indigenous values show that extreme richness and poverty was unknown and “sharing was at the heart of our culture. A system that tends to exploit many and favour a few is as foreign to us as hair which is not kinky or a skin which is not dark.”³⁵ A black man as an individual “belongs”, he doesn't exist in isolation, “he does not speak in terms of ‘my’ but in terms of ‘our’; he says, ‘yikithi laphaya’ (that is our home) and not ‘that is my home.’”³⁶ The basic structure of society is the family, the extended family, the tribe, the nation and society and “it is evident that in such a philosophy every man is your bother and cannot be used for private gain of another; on the contrary everyone and society itself is under obligation to ensure that every member shall be provided for” (ibid). The Mafikeng Manifesto adopted Black Communalism as BPC's economic policy³⁷. It explained Black Communalism as a modified version of the traditional African economic lifestyle which is geared to meet the demands of a highly industrialised and modern economy. It advocates sharing of property, wealth, services and labour and that land be owned by all the people with the state entrusted with its control.

³⁵ “Understanding SASO”. Discussion Document by Steve Biko, for SASO Formation School, Pietermaritzburg, December 5 – 7 1971

³⁶ Report on The Black Communalism - Our Philosophy Commission (n.d).

³⁷ Statement of Economic Policy debated at a symposium of the BPC, May 31 1976.

During the BPC - SASO trial, Biko elaborated this position:

In African society we did not believe in apportioning land for part ownership by individuals. The land belonged to the tribe, and was held in for the tribe in trust by the chief...now we are advocating Black Communalism, which is in many ways similar to African Socialism. We are expropriating an essential tribal background to accommodate what is in fact an expanded economic concept now.

As shown in chapters one and two, by the 1980s BCM shifted from this position and adopted scientific socialism as a mode of analysis. As for Rodney (1975) it seems he renounced his earlier position regarding African Socialism. He writes that Marxism is relevant to non – western societies because they have been incorporated into the world capitalist system of production. Therefore African people in the Third World have a vested interest in scientific socialism, which needs to be adapted to context though, because it offers them a weapon of theory, tools and ideas to dismantle the capitalist system and the imperialist structure. Rodney critiques Nkrumah and Padmore who in finding an alternative to scientific socialism, that is through Pan African Socialism, inevitably turned out to be another branch bourgeois thought. When I talked to Sadeque Variava, a founding member of AZAPO, he told me South Africa has all the features of an advanced, industrialised capitalist formation which necessitates application of scientific socialism. Gwala's (1981) appraisal of BC is that the scope of the liberation struggle had to be widened beyond social and cultural identity towards a firmer base. BC could not remain static, it had to outgrow its cultural overtones and embrace pressing issues – it would follow a “path leading to National Consciousness with class identity as alternative to the flippant middle class oriented separatist line (Gwala 1981: 233) and there had to be a natural development towards class identity within the struggle. For Gwala, African Socialism was halfbaked and unscientific in today's world of advanced technology and planned economies, “to me African Socialism had to the pattern I was then watching in Natal, that of a tribal chauvinism being moulded in the name of black cultural

identity and self – reliance” (1981: 235). It is for this reason that the BCM adopted scientific socialism and AZAPO hasn’t since departed from that position. As for Blackwash it remains to be seen how they intend to develop the idea of Black Socialism.

3.3. Contradictions, Contractions and Contestations among BC Youth

As I mentioned above, when I embarked on this project I had high hopes of reporting on the progress Blackwash is making in the black communities. These hopes were heightened by the excitement I saw from township youth who attended political education classes and public lectures. My disappointment is that the movement hasn't put their ideas into practicality and has instead expended most of their energies and time on internal wrangling. My treatment of the movement then is more about narrating and analysing these disputes. The decision to form the September National Imbizo ((SNI) in 2010 [which I discuss below] precipitated widespread dissension and dissatisfaction and further deepened and sharpened the divisions. Many questioned the rationale to form another movement when Blackwash itself was embryonic and trying to find its feet. Yet there are also other grievances I discuss below. Matters came to a head at the SNI gathering in Durban in 2011. Participants were divided into commissions to discuss various themes. Among them was an open commission. It is here that many who were grieving about formation of SNI congealed their disdain and expressed their frustrations. Interestingly there were attempts to censor and occlude this commission by “senior” and more intellectual activists who I suspect were strong advocates for SNI. Many reasoned that this conversation was important because it was useful in sorting out issues that divide the movement. One participant put it, “it seems the enemy has infiltrated us but we should leave united not fragmented because Jacob Zuma will have another round at us.” There were also concerns regarding age, between the “seniors,” who are older and the younger members. Some felt it seems there is now a generation gap because Blackwash is

primarily a youth movement. There is now a tendency by the older generation to impose their will on the aspirations of the younger. It seems only a few number of people are dominant while the rest are silent. However, some comrades felt that the age factor alienates older people. We will discuss this in the next chapter. In the meantime, below are some of the views opined by those in the open commission. Most people in the townships are familiar with Blackwash as a contemporary movement expressing the age – old BC idea that reached its zenith with Biko and others. Of course BC has never departed from the psyche of the people, so when Blackwash emerged onto the scene, it elicited fervent excitement. Ironically many people were surprised that gradually Blackwash receded into silence when it remains important that a political base be established in the communities. Establishing a political base goes beyond talk which should be congealed into praxis; as someone put it, “otherwise talking and talking without putting that talk into practice will make people think we are looking down at them.” There was widespread concern with a “culture of talking” in the movement without establishing a physical presence in communities; the conscientisation programme couldn’t be complete unless, “we go to the community and identify with its needs.” Grassroots issues should be addressed and considered as of practical importance. This includes establishing community development projects. When activists do things on the ground, it’s a way of spreading consciousness. In this process the people take ownership and make decisions for and by themselves. With education and right ideas, people will get increasingly attracted to the movement; for this reason activists have to do a lot of field work. After all for ideology to be effective it has to be manifest in practicality. Furthermore any programme, event or project to be done, it must be made clear to the people that it is theirs and the movement's initiative.

Participants noted that Blackwash was behind formation of the SNI. Initially, the idea was to

make SNI an annual event that would remain as such, but now there was on one hand confusion about the relationship between the former and the latter; and on the other energies have been split between the two. The reasoning behind formation of SNI was that it would act as a “magnet” to attract those blacks 'intimidated' by Blackwash's radical left politics, but this has complicated the former's politics because liberal blacks have wormed their way into it. Many familiar with the matter sensed dishonesty and betrayal when the link between SNI and Blackwash was not denied, nor that it was an initiative of the latter, and claimed an “information gap” regarding the matter. Instead it was argued that Blackwash was only asked and agreed to host this initiative, started by people who were not members of Blackwash. Mngxitama said the history of SNI dates back to April 2010 when he started it as a Facebook conversation, and it was suggested that it be held in September. The present feeling, according to Mngxitama (who is the prominent individual in movement and a public persona), is that some think SNI owes Blackwash and Blackwash has no right to “come here and disturb the programme of SNI, a totally independent and autonomous movement and that no political and non – political formation can stake a claim to SNI.” Some opinions were that the division enables external forces to enter and there was need to clarify that SNI is not a movement. After all if there are two organisations, how can comrades multi – task and maintain that relationship and where do their allegiances lie? The consequences of SNI being a movement in itself, has been that there have been no commitment to Blackwash and as a result the movement has suffered, its growth stunted, its cohesion dissipated and its very survival endangered. At the time of the first SNI in Soweto in 2010, Blackwash had had a couple of propositions to strengthen itself. Now at a time when the movement was trying to find its feet and learn from its mistakes, of which it didn't have adequate time to do so, SNI came along and it seems there is another organisation being created. One comrade, a foundation member of Blackwash, said that originally the decision was to have SNI as a

platform for black people to air their views, but it seems SNI has stolen the eye of Blackwash and “doesn’t know what’s happening.” It had been made clear at the inaugural SNI meeting in Soweto 2010 that it would remain just an event. She didn't, however, decry SNI and its politics because the only politics that are relevant to black people is politics of revolution. She further said revolutionaries shouldn't compromise that much just because certain politics seem to be “black, radical and conscious.” Some comrades felt this should be the last conference of SNI because if it continues to be dominated by middle class tendencies it will derail attempts at mobilising at community level. There was concern that most ideas that have hitherto been revealed out show the dominance of a few people while the rest are silent; thus the urgency to go back to the roots and wean out an elitist approach. The discomfiture seemed to emanate from a perceived dominance of the SNI by the middle class, who have compassed it towards 'liberal reformist politics.' Quoting and preaching black radical literature couched in obscurantist language is self-defeating. The challenge is “how to bring Fanon to the level people can understand.” However before embarking on community mobilisation, activists have to do deep soul searching and self – introspection. References were made to the 1970s BC, whose adherents invested a lot of time on political education among themselves before going out to the people. It seemed SNI had become a forum for hangers on who are now “compromising our revolutionary programme,” and a platform for people who don't have revolutionary commitment. The proposition earlier on about SNI contesting elections was amazing and surprising to many people. This opinion stems from the proposed SNI mobilisation of ten thousand people to march to parliament in September 2012. Emphasis should be on the masses and it is them who will decide whether they want go to parliament or if they are inclined to, “burn it down”. The same person strongly felt marching to parliament, “is out of order.”

The conversation veered to the need to resuscitate Blackwash as a matter of paramount

importance. This is because it seems SNI has hijacked Blackwash and from now on, “we need to go back to the Blackwash direction,” and let people know about the identity and ideology of the organisation and its principles. This means an inalienable need to go back to the source, as one activist elaborated:

What does it mean to be Blackwash? It means adopting radical politics meaning while you were brainwashed now you are blackwashed. When you are blackwashed it means you are steeped in black radical politics rooted in the people, not just going around in a t/shirt.³⁸

Some felt the politics should be taken to the poor working blacks because “after all the middle class doesn’t need conscientisation because they don’t have many problems to worry about.” The problem may have emanated from the “flat structure” of Blackwash which said “we don’t want anyone to lead us”, therefore certain individuals quietly labelled themselves leaders. Others felt an alliance between Blackwash and SNI can't be tenable because it would be uneasy one reminiscent of strange bedfellows like the ANC/COSATU/SACP Tripartite alliance. The consequence is abundance of misunderstanding and friction in this relationship.

When most people got attracted to, and joined Blackwash, it was a radical organisation and by forming SNI the intention was not to abort Blackwash but it seemed to be the case now. Questions rankling in most peoples' minds were: if SNI was an initiative of Blackwash, when did this split occur and why? If it wasn’t a split, why there wasn't enough honesty to tell the people that this is a platform formed by Blackwash. Most people didn’t know that it was a Blackwash baby informed by the movement's politics, and currently Blackwash was now taking a back seat. Even on SNI t/shirts which some were wearing there was neither Blackwash name nor insignia. Someone emphasised this point and said:

It is not like Blackwash is a first born child feeling disgruntled when a second child is

³⁸ Some participants were putting on SNI t/shirts with name and logo.

born and is no longer getting attention from the mother.

Another mistake is that Blackwash became an intellectual base for SNI and the confusion was furthered when even some Blackwashers thought SNI was a movement on its own; the overlap in affiliation to both organisations was also fuzzy and misty as some Blackwashers were also active in the SNI. Initially it was agreed that only three Blackwash representatives would be involved in the SNI and not all Blackwashers; apparently Blackwash people are the SNI people and active in it. In this regard clarification would be needed on the role of Blackwashers in the SNI, that is, when does one belong to both organisations and how do they account to the other? Those who were new learned of Blackwash on the internet but couldn't connect Blackwash to SNI. On the misty relationship between the two, someone said:

I am a victim of propaganda from both Blackwash and SNI. I thought this conference would be radical now it seems like a tea conference.

Every movement needs funding to sustain itself and its programmes. There were deliberations on the need for resources but there were varying opinions on how to obtain them. Many thought the question is how to get the movement forward in terms of resources and it's fatalistic to get support from capitalists. This was in response to someone who talked of empowering people economically through establishing cooperatives, initiating companies and getting money from the government, "We don't need money from the government, we don't need money from *igebengu*³⁹, and we should be self-funded." The general agreement was that the movement should be self – funded because, "the revolution is our responsibility – politically, financially, ideologically and thus the need to take ownership of the revolution."

At the end of the *imbizo*, SNI properly formalised itself into coherent structures, with a

³⁹ Thugs

National Coordinating Committee, and had a succinct direction moving forward, while comrades who had been together in Blackwash emerged from the gathering with deeper fractures. However disgruntled Blackwashers formed a caucus before leaving Durban and deliberated on resuscitating and revitalising the movement and agreed on a meeting in Mangaung, Free State in October 2011.

The Mangaung meeting was meant to clarify the role of Blackwash Vis – a – Vis the SNI and the contention that had grown after SNI Durban. The meeting also sought to probe ways to tighten Blackwash ideologically, politically and organisationally. Blackwash Free State had convened a prior meeting and took a position that since SNI had become autonomous, Blackwash must also be independent although as a matter of principle it may support any other social movement with similar goals including the SNI. They had realised that Blackwash didn't have any qualms in supporting the black cause but the movement wouldn't be accountable to SNI. Nevertheless some needed clarity as to the purpose, and an in - depth understanding of SNI. Mngxitama elaborated that Blackwash was formed in 2008 by four women as a counter – cultural movement, for example, disrupting messages like *amakipkip*⁴⁰. After a year there was an agreement that there was need for expansion, since it was based in the Johannesburg CBD. He said that the SNI started as a Facebook discussion on his Facebook wall. The idea was then brought to Blackwash and since Blackwash's radical politics had to permeate society, the SNI was the right platform because it could attract those blacks who would find Blackwash politics unpalatable. On this point someone said to use SNI to recruit people is disguised cowardice, Blackwash politics have to be taken to the people in their pure form. Mngxitama reiterated that Blackwash and SNI had, and were always been de-linked. He attacked the organisers of this meeting because they were preoccupied with promoting factions and organising meetings and caucuses behind other

⁴⁰ *Amakipkip* is a youth fashion label

people's backs and were responsible for disrupting the SNI Durban. This was in reference to the SNI Durban's last day where a meeting was caucused aligned on the basis of those who support Blackwash and SNI respectively. On this concern someone opined that the reason the Durban caucus was held was to extricate Blackwash from the confusion that had ensued as a result of SNI. Some Blackwashers had been reluctant to participate in SNI activities and that was an indicator of the level of dissatisfaction. The major grievance was that Blackwash had been neglected in favour of SNI. Those who advocated expending more energy on reviving Blackwash were called by Mngxitama, labels like "plotters" and "agents". The severity of disagreements and deterioration of personal relations included former comrades no longer sharing same residences. Someone gave a reminder that it is vital as comrades to have trust and love and that an independent opinion should not be called plotting. For those present it was inconceivable that as brothers and sisters in struggle they could label one another "plotter", "agent" or "reactionary". It showed there was a limited space of engagement, leading to the conclusion that one is a plotter, if their view strays from the norm. It also indicated that for a while all were not walking in the same direction.

Some said they were openly against the SNI from the very beginning because of its inability to propagate Blackwash politics while at the same time Blackwash's growth was being stunted. On the other hand SNI's campaign that politicians must use public amenities was mere 'cheap politicking.' The "broad church appeal" and open door policy of SNI left it susceptible to hijacking in addition to making it a reactionary and counter – revolutionary process. The concern was that SNI would be open to forces that don't have black interests at heart, since those people lack the necessary political education and are not committed to radical politics like Blackwash's which desires a radical revolution against white supremacy. The result would be that Blackwash would expend time and energy dealing with these instead

of building the movement. The feeling was to call for an agreement to bar Blackwash from involvement in the SNI until the former had become operational; otherwise efforts would be spent on SNI whereas it would be opportune to be identified as Blackwash even though not necessarily SNI. In this sense there would be need to establish where one's loyalties lay – Blackwash or SNI. Since Mngxitama was adamant that the two are separate organisations, it was suggested that a memorandum of understanding be drafted spelling out how the two will relate to each other.

As a revolutionary movement championing the cause of the people, it was proposed that Blackwash establish a physical presence and a firm community base. The Free State Blackwash, for example, had solely existed in tertiary institutions where continuity could not be guaranteed once the students graduated and move up into middle class echelons. Blackwash Wits has remained an academic, intellectual kind of BC which hasn't been able to link itself with broader community struggles. It is only recently that it has finally involved in the Wits workers (cleaners and grounds-persons) concerns who for a while have been subjected to racist maltreatment on campus,⁴¹ struggles Blackwash had hitherto not been involved in. As regards to Johannesburg, concentration and focus had been shifted to an academic institution, where all Blackwash meetings were held, neglecting Soweto where the masses are showing “hunger” for BC but are discouraged by a lack of organisation. The significance of a political base should not be under – emphasised; the movement needs to extend beyond itself. One lesson is that people are not swayed by talk. While continuous talking is important as a political process, talking and doing have to run concurrently. Township peoples' attitudes, it was noted, is that they listen and then that would be it; they

⁴¹ I refer to the “Occupy Senate Concourse” and hunger strike by Wits students in support of 17 dismissed chefs. Others supporting the campaign were the SRC, ANCYL, YCL and SASCO.

have to feel affined and bound to the movement through the work it does with them. One critique is that the movement has been labelled a talk shop; the activists themselves are looked down upon by the people because they are seen as best at talking and least on action. Political education which had been going on had to be augmented with practical conscientisation that goes hand in hand with projects whose importance need heavy emphasis. The proponent of this idea elaborated thus:

For example when we buy school shoes for a child, we tell them why they don't have shoes; when they are worn out we tell them why they can't have another pair. This is not reactionary – projects and politics have to run together.

A reference was made of the SNI organised “Alex to Sandton” march on 16 June 2011 which attracted less than a hundred people, most of whom were outsiders. It indicated lack of Blackwash presence in the communities. One way would be community projects (projects, programmes of action and activities) to help the communities identify with the movement. By doing projects, activists would be educating the people to shed a dependency culture and making them believe in doing things for themselves. There are similarities here with what Malcolm X said about self – reliance. The black man can never become independent and recognised as a human being who is truly equal with other human beings until he has what they have and do for himself what others are doing for themselves (Malcolm X 1965: 382 [2007]). BC activists in the 1970s stressed building and encouraging secondary institutions in the community run by the people themselves covering all fields of black community's social life – education, social, economic, religious and so on.⁴² The idea of self – reliance and community development has always been part of Black Nationalism. In the 1970s, BC gave community development a new focus as a strategy for development (Ramphela 1991). The

⁴² “Understanding SASO.” Discussion Document by Steve Biko for SASO Formation School,

Pietermaritzburg, December 5 – 7 1971.

inspiration of course came from Nyerere's self – reliance and *ujamaa* as a development philosophy, using traditional structures of “economy of affection” which stresses support, communication and interaction by people connected through blood, kinship and community (Hyden 1980 cited in Ramphela 1991). In the Azanian context it was compatible with the concept of *ubuntu* which was central to black social relations. In developing critical awareness into social relations, BCP were meant to break dependency on hand – outs from privileged whites and translate into programmes of awareness and liberation emphasising self – reliance, projects initiated, development directed and implemented by blacks themselves. BCP projects which included health, education, leadership training, publications, home industries, and child care were symbols of hope which would empower the people to liberate themselves. However like Nyerere's *ujamaa*, BC activists took for granted that the community was willing to cooperate for common good without regarding internal differentiation within them and a propensity by blacks to exploit each other (Ramphela 1991). The meeting encouraged activists to identify issues/problems in their respective communities and work out how to solve them. The proponent of this motion emphasised that this is not new; it has been done before by past movements and has been part of BC tradition. University students, for example, can help tutor high school students or mentor post matriculants. Each street and family could be asked to contribute some amount to help matriculants and students in need. Other activities would include a membership drive even in high schools; if they go to college and graduate they would have to be compelled to come serve the movement and the community. Since many blacks are church goers, the potential of that institution had to be exploited, where Christ should be seen a radical. As there are many black professionals, a community data base of skills has to be drawn up.

However some like Mngxitama opposed the idea saying BCP and Black Panther community

projects in the 1970s failed and activists should study how and why these could not become a reality. Again the concern is that these pander to capitalist whims and tendencies inimical to a revolutionary programme.

Blackwash used to have a working committee, whose flat structure however debilitated functions of the movement. It was proposed that an internal organisational reworking had to be deliberated. Firstly, active participation in the community with the aim of getting numbers into the movement requires binding people into the Blackwash idea. This could be facilitated through membership forms followed by creation of a database of members who could contribute financially. Hitherto Blackwash had operated without any clear criteria of binding members, neither a set of policies nor guidelines for code of conduct. As a result high turnover ensued, some brilliant minds coming and then getting lost to the movement. The move for internal organisation would help reinforce discipline. A code of conduct which would be articulated succinctly and clearly on the membership form would also ensure censure, allegiance and reprimand of those who fail to execute their duties.

At the close of the meeting it was agreed on a central national and provincial administration. A National Working Committee, consisting of provincial representatives, was appointed. Finally the movement would have a form of a structure which would tread carefully between hierarchy and flatness.

Subsequently there was a realisation that the movement was taking a new direction and no one could claim to be a figurehead. The cult around one or a few persons had debilitated the movement and occluded independent and creative thinking; thereby the movement was in a long while moving in a losing direction and the youthful township activists felt they were being misled. One issue of dissatisfaction in particular was the clout the “middle class”

leadership had not only on the movement but on others affiliated to it. At one meeting I attended in Soweto, someone expressed disdain at “middle class” sensibilities of a “middle class” Blackwasher who is a university student, who barred a fellow activist from the township from visiting her home because, “what would my mother say of a character like 'X?’” Apparently she regarded this “X” as not presentable in terms of accoutrement, refinement and civility.

A follow up meeting was held in Soweto in December 2011 to concretise and put into practice the issues raised in Mangaung. This included drafting of a constitution. For the first time the movement formalised itself. Plans for structures like home cells, regions, a Provincial Working Committee, a National Working Committee and a National Disciplinary Committee were set up, with the ultimate policy and decision making body being the Annual National General Meeting (ANGM). A constitution was also drafted. The proceedings of the meeting also adopted a statement which has been called the “Soweto Manifesto”, outlining and addressing the openly strained relationship between Blackwash and SNI. It's worthwhile to quote it at length:

In accordance to the resolutions taken in last year’s SNI regarding the nature of the relation between both organizations, Blackwash accepts the understanding that it 'initiated and gave rise to SNI but the former is autonomous from the latter.' What the policy-meeting sought to make clear and implement, both on a constitutional and a policy level, was the organizational implication this autonomy held on Blackwash in particular. And so the following areas were recognized as aspects needing attention in the quest to finally bring conclusion and clarity to the issue. We accept that Blackwash and SNI are two autonomous organizations and for reasons to be expressed in later points, joint membership in both organizations shall translate as a transgression in accordance to point – of the code of conduct and section – of the constitution.

1. Blackwash sympathizes with SNI as it does with any other black social movement. SNI expresses the same ideology as we do and further identifies itself as an organization orientated in nothing but the emancipation of the black masses. On this ideological front Blackwash

recognizes and appreciates a unity between the two organizations.

2. Having said that however Blackwash sees a fundamental difference between the movements on an organizational level. We find the implementation and the directed energy of the ideology differing insofar as Blackwash sees the revolution built primarily on a grass root level, completely rooted in the communities and organizing that space as our core political base. Blackwash believes itself to be in tune with the peoples' pulse, and to lose sense of this pulse is a ready forfeit of Revolutionary struggle. This pulse requires that you organize your way and means of struggle to fit its call and its rhythm. A staggering majority of our people in the deep of struggle are located in many township and rural settlements, festering scars of colonial conquest in our homeland. Must Revolutionary movements not position themselves in these spaces where there is an obvious abundance of us? And should our struggle be based there, we need be careful not to dance in tune with the rhythm of our people.

However while the Blackwashers were treating the resuscitation of their movement with urgency, the above Statement led to even further contractions and ructions, with some Blackwashers not recognising the meeting, which reached a zenith at the ANGM in Welkom in April 2012. At that point the movement had clearly coalesced into two camps. I deduced that this had to do with ideological and political differences between those who favour an elitist middle class approach and those who support grass-roots organising. Of course there is a personality factor which added to these constraints. I will return to these matters later. Prior to the Welkom meeting which I could not attend due to unforeseen circumstances, I met one Blackwasher who told me the “founder” members were attending the ANGM with the intent of disrupting it and reclaiming the movement because they felt it was now being misrepresented. One should note that some Blackwashers in the Free State also belong to Pan - African Student Movement of Azania (PASMA), a student movement affiliated to the PAC. One such Blackwasher posted on Facebook that he wouldn't be attending the Welkom meeting because, “I have already been told by Andile Mngxitama to leave Blackwash and focus my backward politics on PASMA and PAC. So I do not want to drag Blackwash down, its owners and copyright holders. I won't be compelled into disrespecting PAC or PASMA

just to impress people renowned for killing movements. So I can't be there as a matter of principle unless Blackwash gives a clear position with regard to us backward cadres of PAC.” He added, “Lastly it has been hugely insinuated that I joined PASMA NEC to achieve a certain Blackwash ideological objective, a claim that has endangered my life and those of PASMA cadres who are in Blackwash. I can't deal and operate in such an environment. Did Blackwash deploy me to PASMA?”

The “founders” regarded the “Soweto Manifesto” as a “reactionary” document drafted by “reactionary” elements and demanded an apology be made to the SNI. Such contrition was however refused because there were no grounds soliciting such atonement. One word that has since emanated from this debacle is the intention by “founders” to “purify” the movement. I am not sure what “purify” means, but metaphorically it had the same resonances as Stalinist *gulags* where undesired elements were purged *en masse* or Nazi Germany where some were subjected to a night of the long knives.

The aftermath of Welkom deepened further the divisions. Acrimonious conversations and vituperative exchanges on Facebook revealed fissures that bordered on hatred which ran short of murder. The grass-roots camp was labelled “reactionaries, agents, bloody *askaris*, and counter – revolutionaries⁴³”. Earlier on Mngxitama wrote on Facebook⁴⁴ that he started political education classes in Soweto but Blackwash comrades don't recognise how capitalism works in the oppression of blacks so he had decided to start online political education classes. Later on⁴⁵ he wrote with a tinge of cynicism:

Time for self-criticism. I Andile Mngxitama thereby wish to declare that I have failed

⁴³ These are some terms used by Mngxitama on *Facebook*

⁴⁴ On 10 March 2012

⁴⁵ Posted on *Facebook* on 12 April 2012

Blackwash comrades, more so those who attended the Political Education classes that I undertook in Soweto for more than a year. I have failed these comrades badly; they don't know anything about the basics of capitalism, which makes them dangerous to black people! As a self-correction I hereby commit myself to prepare a class which can be shared electronically with all and linking this to the Blackwash dream. Anti - black radical who doesn't know the mechanisms of capitalism is dangerous to the black revolution!

Clearly the “middle class” and “grass-roots” camps were at loggerheads. The former mystified its accusations on the later through terminology that shrouded the underpinning ideological and political differences. The other camp charged that their elitism made them indifferent to the need to go back to the roots and be with the poor blacks. They responded by critiquing the grass-roots camp for promoting '*mala – mogudu* BC'. It is not succinctly clear what this means but considering the nature of this discourse, it refers to disdain and contempt for poor township blacks who are avid consumers of *mala – mogudu* who Mngxitama calls “ghetto reactionaries.” Another issue is that the other is seen as being faithful to social media where a huge amount of conversation takes place while neglecting grass-roots organising and mobilising. The grass-roots camp, as a result, began to increasingly question the effectiveness of Facebook organising as a medium, insinuating that it's negative as far as grass-roots mobilisation is concerned. The other had been for a long time speaking of *Facebook* and the cell - phone as the “new AK 47”, of course as a result of the Arab Spring. Ironically both Blackwash and SNI have been on Facebook for a couple of years. One Blackwasher questioned this:

Where are the organised and conscientised masses? I can't see anything AK 47 about Facebook. Malcolm X, the BCM, and the Black Panther movement all filled halls with multitudes of people without Facebook. How did they do this? It's because they were in the community as part of the community in that the community was the actual movement not the revolutionary organisation. Your Andiles of this world are lazy revolutionaries validated by

white spaces that are fascinated by their intellectual radical stances; the same way they are entertained by a monkey reading a good book.⁴⁶

The same individual was concerned with the apotheosis of certain black revolutionaries to god status, whose opinions are regarded as carrying divine ordinances, added:

I wish to speak of the disregard political gods such as Andile [Mngxitama] and his followers have towards other views. Just because we don't agree with your power models doesn't mean we are sell-outs...then they say some Blackwash comrades had that we should fast for Andries Tatane (sic). The god and his angels laughed at this, which is fitting all the meat, tobacco and alcohol they consume. Flesh oriented individuals fail to understand that what was taken from us is more than just flesh, it was also our spiritual constitutions, our cultures, thus our souls...fasting is not reactionary, it is a revolutionary act.

A similar view was also posted on Facebook:

...we have retired from the revolution, we are visual revolutionaries who have become politically degenerated Facebook radicals, who are experts in cabals and cliques instead of being a united movement to bring about true freedom in our country, we shy away from any form of engagement in real issues but more than welcome character assassination among ourselves, we have been tamed by infiltration.

There were further accusations of nameless Blackwash Facebook page administrators blocking certain Blackwashers. Mngxitama's riposte was to scream: “fucking *askaris* and agents!” At the time of writing this thesis (mid - June 2012) there was another Facebook page called Blackwash 2012 started by the other camp. When I met Mngxitama a year after the SNI debacle he told me the original idea was to make Blackwash a student wing and SNI parent body just like SASO – BPC. I found this extraordinary because this was totally not the intention for setting up those movements according to my impression and others well acquainted with this history.

⁴⁶ This message was posted on Facebook on 14 May 2012.

Apparently the fissions between the two camps, which I see as based on irreconcilable and hardening politico-ideological differences, buttressed between two diverging approaches, cannot be in the near future reconciled, the question is “Where Do We Go from Here?” Since the Welkom meeting, the “grass-roots” camp has coalesced into Blackwash Movement with an ideological impetus based on “Black Power Pan – Afrikanism” that marries BC and Pan – Africanism. Participants subscribing to this ideological perspective reason that “you cannot be BC if you are not Pan – Afrikanist and vice – versa.” They add that “while BC is yin, Pan – Afrikanism is the yang that breathes from the same lung.” They opine that while BC speaks to the distinctiveness of the black problematic, Pan – Africanism focuses on the comprehensive aspect of the problematic. As part of reorganisation they are making calls for lost members to reconcile with this new ideological approach. Since these developments have come towards the end of my project, I will be keeping track of the Blackwash Movement. As for the SNI which had precipitated the division and strained relations between former comrades, we will come back to this issue.

3.3.1. Where Do We Go from Here?

In 1967, during the height of the Civil Rights struggles in the US, Martin Luther King delivered a speech called “Where Do We Go from Here?” I am rather fascinated by its title.

Here are a couple of my reflections:

Love. These four letters look simple and innocent or even trivial. The word is laden with an enduring power that can change society and establish firm social and personal relationships, while cleansing them of colonially engendered trappings of self – hatred, disunity and selfishness. As Cornel West (1994: 29) points out, since nihilism in the black community may be difficult to eradicate, it can be cured by self - love and love for others which are “both modes towards increased self – evaluation and encouraging political resistance in one's

community.” Love, which should be firm love, has to form the very foundation, and the basis of any revolutionary activity. Let me say no revolutionary can prosecute and execute a revolution without being driven and inspired by love...love for humanity. Even extremes of revolutionary activity that include violence are a lofty expression of love. A love for the love of humankind, that is. One sees bitter hatred seeping into a movement, where comrades who are supposed to be brothers and sisters turn into incorrigible verbal and physical sparring partners. The reason is those protagonists may not have an ounce of love in and unto *themselves*. To expect them to love others is too much a request. They may only be preoccupied with narcissistic and futile pursuit, that is, the business of loving themselves and only themselves. Consequently they can't love humanity, whatever talk they exercise regarding human problems may risk descending into hypocrisy. The movement not only gradually recedes into oblivion and death but certain individuals also show utter contempt for poor working blacks who are in need of proper theoretical, political and ideological guidance. It's not very hard to tell, hatred coupled with middle class comfort may make one completely lose agency. This sentiment is captured by an old BC adherent, Mafika Pascal Gwala, who back in the early 1980s observed a certain trend in BC:

I have seen many a young man walking up the escalator of BC; their lifestyle - snobbery; their practice - collecting jazz and dashikis for boasts; their goal – bourgeois status; their sentiment – black identity , and some, 'individuals and groups in the name of BC were riding on affluence and smiling all the way to the bank (1981: 233).

In the early 1970s the BC adherents realised that BC, though emanating from students, ran the risk of remaining elitist if it wasn't rooted in the community. Even if it were students driving it, it has to find popular grass-roots support.⁴⁷ Temba Sono, SASO president at the

⁴⁷ “Understanding SASO”. Discussion Document by Steve Biko for SASO Formation School,

Pietermaritzburg, December 5 – 7 1971.

time, said these important words which are relevant to contemporary BC activists: “The strength of SASO doesn’t lie in campuses where intellectual ideas come under academic titration but in the community.”⁴⁸In fact SASO's approach was a departure from the impersonal, bureaucratic and bourgeois type inherited from western based student organisations. The realisation was that BC is a way of life that must permeate through society and be adopted by all. The 1970s BC activists understood that for the theory of BC and Black Power to be successful and effective it had to be adopted by a larger population. BC then understood the deleterious effects of education among activists which would alienate them from their people. To solve this, “the black intellectual must review all the factors which alienate him from the black community, i.e. must readjust himself, totally integrate his whole personality to the accepted values, norms, beliefs and prejudice of his community. He must get off the high pedestal from which he addresses the community and get to work at and among the people, rather than pull them or drag behind them.”⁴⁹ The same person adds, “he must always be aware that in 'taking the message to the people', he is not telling them anything new – something they neither know nor understand. But he is merely articulating their everyday feelings and aspirations.” The black intellectual and his message should not be passed to another intellectual but must be taken to the man in the street. The neglect of grass – roots by contemporary BC led one activist to say, “It’s now about cappuccino sipping meetings with no action.” Following his troubles with Nation of Islam, Malcolm X knew where his constituency was:

I knew that the great lack of most of the big named 'Negro leaders' was their lack of any true rapport with the ghetto Negroes. How could they have rapport when they spent most of their

⁴⁸ Temba Sono, “Presidential report”, SASO July 1972

⁴⁹ “The Movement in Relation to the Black Community”, by “Black Student Leader”, SASO Newsletter May/June 1975.

time 'integrating' with white people? I knew that the ghetto people knew that I never left the ghetto in spirit and never left it physically more than I had to. I had a ghetto instinct; for instance, I could feel if tension was beyond normal in a ghetto audience. And I could speak and understand the ghetto language. There was an example of this that always flew to my mind every time I heard some of the 'big name' Negro 'leaders' declaring they 'spoke for the ghetto black people' (1965 [2007: 421]).

Love goes with empathy. After four hundred years of slavery, colonialism, dispossession, nihilism and psychological incineration, black victims of such perpetration are visible in the townships, farms and rural areas. Any engagement with them has to factor in these concerns. Love is also accompanied by unity. The old adage, “united we stand tall, divided we fall”, remains more relevant than ever. There have been suggestions for unity in the movement, a proposition denounced by some that there can be no “unity for unity's sake.” I have noticed that Black Nationalists are the most disorganised, disunited people and have leadership that has an erotic lust for power. This is a question that has always thrown me into a quandary. Black Nationalists are expected to be the most advanced and more conscious sector of the black community; we expect them to know the inner workings of white supremacy and the intricacies of black oppression. Apparently they seem to be the “hardest hit” victims of colonialism and white supremacy despite their pretensions. I seriously think they need thorough self – cleansing and self - introspection, and as the Africa proverb say: “before you see a particle in my eye, look at the bigger one in yours.” Contemporary activists who shun lessons from history have to go back and learn. The PAC spent most of its revolutionary life on character assassination, squabbling, fighting one another, eliminating each other and so on such that the struggle suffered. It was only with the release of John Nyati Pokela in early 1980s that a semblance of sanity prevailed. By then the PAC had lost ground in the struggle to the ANC and charterists. History cannot forgive the authoritarian and power obsessed earlier leadership; time lost in that endeavour has never been redeemable and PAC has never

fully recovered. There is a lot Blackwash has to learn from this piece of history.

Nearly a century ago Marcus Garvey gave this injunction: “Don't agonise, organise!” The movement has to have the capacity to organise in the communities. But I find it inconceivable for such an undertaking to realise fruition if an unorganised movement attempts to organise unorganised masses. The first step has to begin in the movement itself; which has to internally tighten itself theoretically, organisationally, politically and ideologically. Some people are attracted to the organisation for a number of reasons: are its policies clear, succinct and coherent? Does its vision, mission and objectives resonate with would be followers? What are its values and does everyone abide with them? Is it embarking on *tangible* actions, for some would like to see the actual work the movement is doing. Does it have mechanisms for discipline? Indeed Blackwash has made efforts towards these, as indicated above, but have been stalled by the infighting. Let me add that the system is much organised, that's why it manages to survive and reinvent itself. A revolutionary movement has to be better organised if it is to successfully execute social change. I have noted, for example, that social movements' meetings start two hours or more behind schedule. In contrast capitalists start theirs right on time. It seems for the former there's no urgency at all. Another matter of concern is the need to survive, so many activists have to go to work rather than pursuing the revolutionary vocation full time, who Gramsci calls the 'occasionally revolutionary' as opposed to permanently revolutionary (1971: 122). Revolutionaries have to treat the exercise of struggle as a *business* - implying that they are in a business of revolution; whose success or failure depends on amount of time, dedication, commitment and discipline invested therein. Talking of discipline, in a bourgeois society it is central and it endeavours to keep it together (Gramsci 1971). While this society is authoritarian and mechanical, socialist discipline is autonomous and spontaneous. Bourgeois discipline on citizens makes them subjects; the

discipline of a Socialist Party makes the subject a citizen. Since bourgeois society's main characteristic is discipline, then discipline must be met with discipline. Gramsci elaborates:

And whoever is a socialist or wants to become one does not obey; he commands himself, he imposes a rule of life on his impulses, on his disorderly aspirations (1971: 32).

Let me add that in bourgeois society discipline and organisation are fundamental, the main reason why this society is highly organised. A revolutionary movement would be sleeping off a heavy dream if it fathoms tackling a capitalist system if the movement itself is not better organised.

I think Amilcar Cabral's assessment of the revolutionary organisation remains one of the most poignant and outstanding. I would have to quote him liberally. In a movement we see that some individuals are indifferent to, and brook no criticism. This leads to a political cul – de sac. They cannot delineate between constructive and destructive criticism; they are full of self-importance and they feel they own the revolution. This also goes with reluctance to appreciate differing opinion (s). Such individuals' response is to attack those who disagree with them, bawling out politically unpalatable names like “reactionaries” or “agents.” A spirit of fear ensues, the younger comrades cannot independently express their opinion, and they have this awe of the “leader (s).” Cabral says:

Develop the spirit of *criticism* between militants and responsible workers. Give everyone at every level the opportunity to criticize, to give his opinion about the work and the behaviour or action of others. Accept criticism, wherever it comes from, as a contribution to improving the work of the Party, as a demonstration of active interest in the internal life of our organisation (1979: 246).

Cabral further notes that criticism must be followed by self - criticism. Self – criticism helps one in analysing one’s work, faults, weaknesses and strengths. While it is not penance, self – criticism “is an act of frankness, courage, comradeship and awareness of our responsibilities,

a proof of our will to accomplish and to accomplish properly, a demonstration of our determination to improve constantly and to make a better contribution to the progress of our Party” (1979: 247).

Practice of revolutionary democracy is an indispensable element of a movement, for it also allows different opinions to be debated upon, agreed on or disagreed without compromising the integrity of the movement. For Cabral revolutionary democracy:

Demand that we should combat opportunism, tolerance towards errors, unfounded excuses, friendships, and comradeship on the basis of interests opposed to those of the Party and the people and the obsession that one or other responsible worker is irreplaceable in his post. Practice and defend the truth and always the truth in front of militants, responsible workers, the people, whatever the difficulties knowledge of the truth might cause. Revolutionary democracy demands that the militant should not be afraid of the responsible worker, that the responsible worker should have no dread of the militant, nor fear of the mass of the people. It demands that the responsible worker live in the midst of the people, in front of the people and behind the people... (1979: 249).

Under revolutionary democracy, power comes from the people, that is, the majority, and no one is afraid of losing it. The leader must “be a faithful interpreter of the will and aspirations of revolutionary majority and not lord of power, the absolute master who uses the Party and does not serve the Party. In the framework of revolutionary democracy, we must avoid demagogy, promises we cannot keep, exploitation of the people's feelings and the ambitions of opportunists....we must constantly increase the strength of the people, advance bravely for the conquest of power by the people, for the radical transformation (at the base) of the life of our people, for a stage in which the weapons and means of defence will be entirely in the hands of the people. Do not be afraid of the people and persuade the people to take part in all decisions which concern them – this the basic condition of revolutionary democracy” (1979: 250).

Cabral argues for the best among the people to lead the organisation, “step by step we have to purge the unworthy elements from our Party, the opportunists, the demagogues (deceivers of the people), the dishonest, those who fail in their duty” (1979: 250). However there is a danger in this assertion. When a movement is wrecked by infighting, this would lead to self – righteousness which could be used by different factions to eliminate their opponents.

When a movement degenerates, it is indicative of a crisis in leadership. Even though it professes an anarchist flat structure with no pronounced leadership structures, we see an individual or individuals who implicitly wield all the power. There have been allegations that these personalities influence decisions and surround themselves with loyalists who they keep pleased through a client – patronage network. In most instances such personalities claim the foundation of the movement, which they treat as a private company in which they are the majority shareholders. As one Facebook user put it:

We must never privatise BC. The problem is there are people who think no one can speak on BC or mention Biko or Fanon. That's dangerous! They think they have the birth right to BC.⁵⁰ They are indispensable or as Cabral (1979: 96) calls them, the “Irreplaceables.” They have a sense of entitlement, inflated egos and are consumed by paranoia because their minds tell them, “I started this thing.” They are afraid of losing power that comes from being “the founder.” One serious handicap of these self – anointed and self – righteous “leaders” is they blare their horns in middle class spaces; their primary audience is not the poor black masses but whites, where they put a political grand posturing in a language shrouded by populism. They regard themselves as the intellectual revolutionary vanguard of the movement, something not very divorced from the pretensions of white liberal left towards the BCM itself. They are in contempt of poor blacks trapped in townships and informal settlements;

⁵⁰ Facebook post, 15 February 2012.

they are reluctant to go and organise and mobilise there. If they understand revolutionary democracy, they distort it to suit their narrow and selfish interests.

By engaging philosophically with the masses, there is a constant reminder to remain in contact with the “simple” and “only by this contact does a philosophy become 'historical', purify itself of intellectualistic elements of an individual character and become a 'life’” (Gramsci 1971: 330). In other words there must be a philosophy of praxis, which though polemical and critical in its guise finds roots in the masses, and socio – political activity, thought and action are reciprocally determined. Let me add also the following quote:

With its clear understanding of hierarchical society, the concept of self – organised society and authoritarianism, the revolutionary organisation is well placed to resist 'revolutionary' parties based on authoritarian notions of power and elitism. It will be a struggle at the grass-roots, a war of ideas and tactics against authority and bureaucracy, using revolutionary anarchist theory and practice.⁵¹

More important is the concept of collective leadership, which Cabral defines as leadership by a group of persons and not by one person alone or by some persons. Questions are asked jointly, decisions arrived at as a collective, each has an opportunity to think and act, has responsibilities and capacity for initiative. Cabral calls for combating the spirit of the “big man” who is like a traditional chief, boss or foreman, at the same time opposing some being vassals and subjects. In the township there is a conveyor belt of talent, of articulate, thoughtful and well – spoken young activists, who have to be nurtured for leadership positions and empowered to take initiative rather than responsibility being a burden of college or the university trained. In Gramscian sense all men are philosophers and potential intellectuals by virtue of having an intellect and using it, even if they are not intellectuals by social function, therefore all are leaders.

⁵¹ “The Role of Revolutionary Organisation”, <http://www.fed.org.uk>.

Critiquing Kautsky's treatise on social democracy, Gramsci (1971) derides its tendency to see the relationship between workers and intellectuals in mechanistic terms with intellectuals providing theory and ideology and often leadership for a mass base of “non – intellectuals.” But non – intellectuals don't exist. Since each man carries an intellectual activity they are philosophers: organic intellectuals. Nonetheless the level of consciousness and capacity for leadership among the masses varies. The task of a movement is to work incessantly to raise the intellectual level of the populace, “giving a personality to the amorphous mass element” (Gramsci 1971: 340). This includes cultivating intellectuals from the masses. In order for the masses to challenge the existing order, they should not depend on intellectuals emanating from the middle class, they must create organic intellectuals of their own, because (as I show in chapter five) dependency on the middle class for leadership has as a historical fact led to struggles and revolutions being aborted. The activist must also re – live the demands of the masses; should be a collective thinker and must elaborate a collective doctrine in the most relevant fashion. But this mass creation can't happen arbitrarily, “mass adhesion and non – adhesion to an ideology is the real critical test of the rationality and historicity of modes of thinking” (Gramsci 1971: 341). However, as per my observation, the intellectuals in the traditional sense happen to lead a movement and exercise social and political hegemony. The rest in the organisation give consent, because either they don't believe in their own organic intellectualism and capacities or the prestige these intellectuals enjoy by virtue of their level of educational achievement, class status, thorough articulation and/or even fame. Such a situation is untenable though. The rank and file don't always remain passive, their capacity to critique leadership increases at particular times and they desire to direct a movement towards a certain political, theoretical and ideological pedestal. Sometimes certain social classes (who have hitherto been providing leadership) get detached from the rank and file when these particular men, the charismatic “men of destiny” (Gramsci 1971: 210) who constitute,

represent and lead them, are no longer recognised. Here a “crisis of authority” ensues which consists of the old dying and the new failing to be born (Gramsci 1971: 275) thus a variety of morbid symptoms appear. At this juncture important questions that concern the movement are its capacity to, in Gramscian words, “react against the force of habit, against the tendency to become mummified and anachronistic” (1971: 211) and whether it can adapt itself to new tasks and a new direction. But the rank and file, who happen to be under – resourced may be dismissed and derided and could be seen by the intellectuals as intellectually incapable of interpreting neither canonical texts nor the hitherto pertaining socio – political conditions.

A similar situation is pertaining in Black America. Cornel West (1994) questions why black America hasn't produced leaders of quality and calibre of past black leaders. The answer may be the emergence of a new black middle class with “its content and character, aspirations and anxieties, orientations and opportunities” (West 1994: 54; see also chapter five of this thesis). Despite the leap in quantity of this class there has been a dearth of quality and it's the opposite of their predecessors. This contemporary middle class leadership, “is more deficient and, to put it more strongly, more decadent” (ibid). This class came of age in the late 1960s with the economic boom and rise of mass culture while the civil rights movement led to black Americans benefiting from the economic boom, who got “a small, yet juicy piece of the expanding American pie” (ibid). This achieving class entered into a culture of consumption and made “status an obsession and addiction to stimulation a way of life” (West 1994: 55). The wane in leadership is because of lack of a vibrant tradition of resistance passed on to new generations which means there's no nurturing of a collective critical consciousness while today's black middle class is a matter of professional consciousness, personal accomplishment and cautious adjustment (West 1994: 57). West provides an example: the dress worn by Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jnr (that is black suits and white shirts)

showed their seriousness and commitment to black freedom while today's politicians' tailored suits symbolises their personal success and achievement and having “made it” in America. The post-civil rights era shows the politicians lack of authentic anger and genuine humility. The anger of Malcolm X *et al* in their tone and speech fuelled their boldness and defiance. West says, “In stark contrast, most present day black political leaders appear too hungry for status to be angry, too eager for acceptance to be bold, too self – invested in advancement to be defiant” (West 1994: 58). West goes on to conclude that in front of black audiences, their bold rhetoric is “more performance than personal, more play-acting than heartfelt” (ibid). A similar observation is made by Reed (1998) who notes that this originates from a black elite with a “highborn sense of duty” and a responsibility to guide the rank and file; these middle class “race leaders” who were prepared to accept the burden of speaking for the mute masses, “thus the old quip that any black person with a clean suit and five dollars in his pocket imagined himself a Negro leader” (Reed 1998: 185).

3.4. The September National Imbizo (SNI)

Above we have made several references to the SNI, which has been the cause for much discontent and disgruntlement in Blackwash, in the process threatening to drag the movement down. On the last weekend of September 2010, a three day gathering called September National Imbizo (SNI) was held at a community hall in the Soweto Township⁵². Its banner showed the “three patriarchs of Azanian struggle”: Biko, Sobukwe and Tambo whose vision and ideals have been betrayed in the postapartheid era. I was struck with amazement why Tambo, associated with BC’s bitter opponents the ANC, and often accused by BC and Pan African activists of ordering their elimination in the 1980s, would be venerated by the SNI. Convened and organised by Blackwash (to my understanding then) it brought together

⁵² Soweto (South West Townships) is a sprawling Johannesburg ghetto.

individuals, organisations and groups from all over the country who subscribe to or sympathise with the BC philosophy. On the second day of the *imbizo*⁵³, I noticed about four white participants, although Blackwash and other groups are intent on blacks only membership and participation. The facilitator on the day announced that after lunch, the participants would be divided into various commissions with various themes/topics to ponder on. The white participants were requested to form their own commission and discuss how “white people should recompense or pay restitution to the wealth they had taken from blacks over the years.”

After lunch only one white participant was left. He attempted to join a commission that was overwhelmingly black. His intention was met with resistance and debate about he should be allowed to join ensued. In the end it prevailed that the majority of the participants objected to his presence. Ultimately he left the gathering altogether and never came back again for the rest of the *imbizo*. The following day which was the last, after rigorous debate, among the resolutions was that whites should not and were not welcome to participate in the SNI activities since it was a blacks’ only gathering.

The gathering deliberated on themes like economic justice, the state and democracy, contemporary struggles, participation in voting, and presented itself as an “anti – politics political movement.” I am not sure what this means, though. I suspect it's about critiquing the traditional mode of operation of political parties. Subsequently while Blackwash was stagnating the SNI was making remarkable progress: formalising itself through well-defined structures, setting up a Facebook page, a vibrant web address and an email newsletter; doing fund-raising activities; having a media team and pamphleteering in a number of events and

⁵³ An *imbizo* is a Nguni word for a gathering where issues are discussed

launching a publication called “Vuka Darkie.”

There is one important thing I would like to point out about the SNI. It seems to me it has taken an ahistorical stance and has gotten obsessed with the “mis – rule” of the ANC, neglecting the historical demands of the masses. Whatever condition the black masses have found themselves are not only a mirror of the postapartheid period, they are an apartheid condition. Thus an analysis that focuses largely on the postapartheid government risks ignoring the enduring effects of apartheid in the postapartheid era or even the hand of white supremacy itself in engendering these.

The SNI's position has been that nearly two decades into the “so – called democracy,” there are problems bedeviling the black communities – crumbling healthcare, a dysfunctional educational system, police brutality against blacks, an enduring institutionalised racism and ANC government's failure to return the land to black people. Not even nationalisation could solve national problems because according to SNI, nationalisation would serve the interests of the political elite, given the pervasive venality and rapacity of the black elite. State owned enterprises haven't ameliorated the plight of the people either and are infested with endemic corruption. Driven by BC philosophy, SNI proposes as a panacea, a set of actions it calls “The Peoples Manifesto.” The document contains guiding principles of the movement and is invoked regularly by its adherents. The spirit of the manifesto is outlined as thus:

The Manifesto is a key document to unify our people to raise their critical consciousness and sense of ownership of the country. It's only when our people see politicians as servants who must serve us that they will demand accountability from public servants and politicians. The campaign will also build a new movement for a peoples' democracy towards true liberation. In short, the manifesto says what is good for President Zuma and Premier Zille is good for the ordinary persons. The Manifesto is a tool to build this movement of a people to foster a new culture of accountability, dignity and equality. The SNI manifesto is inspired by Thomas

Sankara and undertaken in the memory of Andries Tatane!

(For an in-depth analysis of Thomas Sankara's career in Burkina Faso, see an article by Amber Murrey: “A Reflection of Sankara’s Speech, 25 Years Later.” (<http://pambazuka.org/en/category/features/83074>).

Some BC adherents have critiqued the document and the campaign as reformist, that narrows the historical demands of the masses and that activists can't be reformist with the system. SNI's argument is that the Manifesto is like a movement that challenges the ANC. It is not an end but a means to a revolution because it gives people a much larger sense of entitlement and raises their level of demands. The question of parliamentarism is contentious: some think the parliament and contesting elections is no option because communities should be centres of power. Secondly the decision would be inimical to the historical BC stance of non – participation and non – collaboration in institutions that oppress people and that the postapartheid parliament and institutions do not work in the interests of the people either. The other view which defends SNI's stance makes inferences to successes of the Venezuelan and Bolivian models where leftist government have made huge strides in improving the lives of their people. It also invokes the Bolsheviks. Let us examine it. Lenin (1970), in responding to the Rosa Luxembourg school that stated “parliamentarism is obsolete”, argued that participation in bourgeois parliamentary elections took into account the existing conditions and examination of how far the masses were prepared (ideologically, politically and practically) to accept the soviet system and to dispense with bourgeois democratic parliament. The Bolsheviks did participate in the Russian bourgeois parliament, the Constituent Assembly elections in September and November 1917, which was a question of tactics, which proved to yield invaluable political results. Lenin argues that participation a few weeks before the soviet republic did not harm the revolutionary proletariat but actually helped it to prove to the backward masses why such parliaments deserve to be dispensed with, helps their

successful disposal and helps make bourgeois parliamentarism “politically obsolete” (1970: 54). The debate between Eduardo Bernstein and Luxembourg posed the question: reform or revolution? Reformists believe a conquest by a social democratic majority in parliament leads directly to the gradual “socialisation” of society. Bernstein's opinion is that capitalism is unlikely to be in decline because it has shown a greater capacity for adaptation as capitalist production becomes more and more varied. Luxembourg argues that Bernstein's position is both utopian and reactionary, the socialist movement is not bound to bourgeois democracy, and on the contrary the fate of democracy is bound with the socialist movement (Luxembourg 1970). Reformists, instead of looking for establishment of a new society, they stand for modification of the old society; favour the method of legislative reform rather than conquest of political power and social revolution. Thus “our programme becomes not the realisation of socialism, but the reform of capitalism; not the suppression of the system of wage labour, but the diminution of exploitation, that is, suppression of abuses of capitalism instead of the suppression of capitalism itself” (Luxembourg 1970: 67). However, Bernstein may be vindicated because socialist revolutions since the inception of capitalism are counted by fingers.

The success of the Bolshevik approach will however depend on the revolutionary conditions hitherto pertaining. It remains to be seen to what extent Azanian masses' consciousness can provide an impetus for radical social change.

The SNI has launched “The Politicians and Public Servants Use Public Services Campaign” which was supposed to culminate in a march by 10 000 people to parliament in Cape Town in September 2012. It would demand that the National Assembly enact into law the demands of the campaign that all politicians and public servants use public amenities. Discussions I had with some activists reveal a naivety of this approach because the masses can only march to

parliament under determinate conditions, with an intention of “storming parliament and taking over.” Such an event occurs on the eve of a revolution or announces a revolutionary scenario whereby the masses are in a position of “no retreat, no surrender.” One participant told me SNI's biggest “success will be its failure”. It remains to be seen if her words are prophetic. Meanwhile by the time of submission of this thesis, there were ructions in the SNI as a result of sexual misdemeanours of some leading male figures with female colleagues. The decision by some members to drag SNI into the newly formed Malema's political party EFF has led to further divisions.

The SNI has proposed a people centred democracy where every single person can have meaningful participation in the affairs of the country: “For example in a country like ours where more than 70% of people have cell phones, we must use SMSes to vote on important matters such as healthcare, education, appointment of important persons such as the chief justice, land expropriation, nationalisations, awarding of mining rights and tenders beyond a certain amount.” SNI finds fault in the current system where 400 people have to represent 50 million people who have to wait five years to vote in or vote out a representative. For SNI voting has to be a daily occurrence.

Lack of grass-roots mobilisation is reflected in the marches the SNI has so far participated in: “Welcome to Hell, South African Townships march” annually held in Cape Town and organised by Black Theologian, Pastor Xola Skosana. During the past two years it has attracted barely two hundred people, the 2012 one drew about fifty people. The SNI organised “Alex to Sandton – Hell to Heaven” march also was met with apathy, the majority of participants were from outside Alexandra despite the depressing social conditions in Alexander which would be a natural catapult for mass action. This indicates the movement's lack of organisational presence and community absence.

3.5. Hagiography and Biko's Contested Legacy

Many people call themselves Biko, a popular Facebook moniker for many young blacks, or evoke his name, something that makes him an icon and shows his relevance and powerful legacy, even if he is not owned by one individual or group. The name of Biko as a “master – signifier” is put to strategic use by various diverse interest groups (Hook 2011). This means his legacy is alive though contested and has become a part of the popular imaginary of a given culture.

Biko's name has also been appropriated internationally: Afro – Space radio station, popular songs, research institutions, as logo of apparel and so on. Biko valourised in rap songs of US artistes like, for example, Dead Prez and Reks. There are similarities with icons in the US like Malcolm X and Martin Luther King. The increasing iconisation of both Biko and Malcolm X, for instance, has captured global imagination. Their historiographical representation is a contested terrain by different sections of the black communities both in the US and Azania⁵⁴. There has been increased marketing of both Malcolm and Biko in business endeavours, branded in baseball caps (in the case of Malcolm X), T/Shirts and popular culture.

Mngxitama, Alexander and Gibson (2008) identify at least three points of contestation in regards to Biko's hagiographical representation: first the expression by the black business class, who have made a claim to white wealth, usually through BEE. The corporate BEE also talk of “Corporate BC” (Veriava and Naidoo 2008: 234) and now it seems his memory is mobilised to support it. There are some BC oriented sections whose commitment to capitalism contradicts against leftist BC approach. These claim blacks are mired in poverty

⁵⁴ Mngxitama has argued that SASCO/PYA have no theoretical and philosophical basis to appropriate and claim Biko because of ANC's “anti – black” policies.

because economic opportunities are closed to them because of their colour. Therefore to redress this, blacks should be players in the economy and are entitled to partake in, and share fruits and benefits of capitalism itself. Secondly the invocation of Biko's memory by state – linked political and bureaucratic classes who share a lot with the business class, where in a sense, “Biko’s thought has been reduced to slogans on T/Shirts weaned of all radical content as a philosophy of black liberation, and images of Biko have come to adorn glossy magazines and fashion houses” (Mngxitama, Alexander and Gibson 2008: 18). Biko's name has been made fashionable including in upmarket places like the Zone in Rosebank where expensive T/Shirts with his face are sold (Veriava and Naidoo 2008). The increasing interest in Biko and Fanon especially in academic institutions is, according to Mngxitama, to “decaffeinate” them, making them appear less radical.⁵⁵ At Universities of Cape Town and Rhodes there are Steve Biko Students Union and Steve Biko Lawns; at Wits there is a Steve Biko Centre for Bioethics. I attended the launch of the centre at Constitution Hill in 2008; 90% of attendants were white, in tailored and designer suits; I was the only one who looked odd, “scruffy” in jeans and T/Shirts and unkempt hair. Invocation of his name in these institutions may not mean there are a radicalised student and academic cohort. Veriava and Naidoo are poignant in this analysis:

Biko is “big” in Rosebank. So “big”, in fact, that one can't help but be reminded of Walter Benjamin's warning: 'not even the dead will be safe if the enemy wins. And the enemy has not ceased to be victorious (2008: 234).

Veriava and Naidoo argue that the struggle is to reclaim Biko from those who want to use his name for neo – liberal purposes, “a Biko reduced to a footnote in the speech of the magnum leader and profoundly worn by the kids of the rich” (2008: 234). Biko may be an icon of today's black middle class who don't understand his thesis on the struggle and experience of

⁵⁵ Mngxitama, “Fanon on Blackness”, WISER, University of the Witwatersrand, May 31 2012.

oppression. The irony is they do mimic white society which Biko counterpoised.

If there are claims that Biko and his legacy has been commercialised, the Steve Biko Foundation (SBF) may be deemed complicit. The SBF was founded in the late 1998 by Biko's son Nkosinathi following a speech by Nelson Mandela at the erection of Biko's monument, a national project, in the Eastern Cape. Although I could not get an interview with Nkosinathi, the foundation's communications officer told me an idea came to sustain Biko's legacy because his vision was not being fulfilled nor his ideas commemorated. To preserve the history of Biko's ideas, memory and heritage, projects like Steve Biko Centre which is a memory and heritage bank, were initiated. The SBF has branched to international dialogue series, public lectures, the annual Steve Biko memorial lecture, seminars and the journal Frank Talk is published as a periodical. The latter is meant to serve as a platform for discussion and debate for not only professionals but laymen as well. The SBF hosts talks all over the country on themes like education, Black Theology, youth and state of the nation and works closely with the Robert Sobukwe Memorial Trust and international organisations like the Steve Biko Cultural Institute in Brazil. In the Eastern Cape schools they have programmes on history which they do in conjunction with the Cape Town's Baxter Theatre. The arts and culture programme hosts the annual Ginsberg (Biko's home town) Easter festival and heritage trail, through poetry, fine art, storytelling, dance and popular music to “resurrect the spirit of Africanness, *ubuntu*.” Ironically the SBF has departed from the revolutionary agency of BC. When I went to the SBF offices, the walls of the boardroom were littered with framed certificates of awards like Vodacom 2006 journalist of the year at the national awards ceremony awarded to Biko as a national winner in the category lifetime achiever, 29 October 2006. Below the certificate were sponsors like Southern Sun, Johannesburg Stock Exchange and South African Airways. Another one shows a lifetime achievement award as community

builder of the year sponsored by Sowetan, Old Mutual and SABC. The SBF official explained that the foundation is more liberal and realised it has to work with the system of the day. When I asked on the concern that Biko is now being commercialised, she said the SBF has to finance its programmes and projects so it has to work with the systems available. Although it receives funds from donors and corporates, it remains an independent organisation and doesn't allow funding politics to compromise its work, the officer declared. Neither is the foundation preoccupied with criticising the government; instead it is there “to build the consciousness of the people.” The official said SBF's stance is “what can we do to keep Biko's memory alive; it doesn't take the government alone to do it so we need to hold hands with all sectors.”⁵⁶

There are similarities with icons in the US like Malcolm X and Martin Luther King.

In 1970 the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations donated \$15 million to “moderate” black organisations, giving people grants, fellowships, scholarships, seed money for black owned business (Roy 2012). In the 1960s the corporates were diffusing the black civil rights movement and successfully transformed Black Power into black capitalism. According to Roy, the foundations and corporates “worked hard to remodel his (King) legacy to fit a market friendly format”. The Martin Luther King Jnr Centre for Non – Violent Social Change got an operational grant of \$2 million from Ford Motor Company, General Motors, Mobil, Western Electric, Proctor and Gamble, US Steel and Monsanto. The King Library and Archives of the civil rights movement and some of its projects are working closely with US Department of Defence, the Armed Forces Chaplains Board and so on. The corporates have also co – sponsored the Martin Luther King Jnr Lecture Series called “The Free Enterprise System: An Agent for Non – Violent Social Change.” On the Martin Luther King weekend

⁵⁶ Conversation with SBF's Communications Officer, 02 April 2012.

there is increased marketing and advertising. Recently JP Morgan Chase partnered with the King Centre in Atlanta and launched a website with an aim of, “preserving the inspiration and sharing the passion of Martin Luther King Jnr” (Raiford and Cohen 2012).

The fourth aspect is, according to Mngxitama, the living Biko finds meaning in everyday struggles by the black majority who haven't seen significant changes in the postapartheid era. First there is the radicality of movements like Blackwash, discussed above. Secondly although the death of Biko is signalled in every BEE deal, in every jingle using “black soul” to sell the latest commodities and in every T/Shirts, Veriava and Naidoo believe it's not all gloom and doom because, “Black is also alive – in every refusal to pay for water or electricity, in every land occupation, in every march and everyday act of resistance against today's logic of neo - liberalism and the rule of the market; is alive in the spirit of resistance and refusal, the spirit of rebellion against that which we are taught to believe is natural and unchangeable” (2008: 248).

Mngxitama⁵⁷ has also added a fifth one which is represented by old BC parties like AZAPO which he calls a party of commemorations. AZAPO outlines the Black Condition as:

Despite the fact that we are indigenous and the vast majority in this country of our fore bearers, we are at the bottom of the pile in every sphere of life. We are indeed in bad shape and some of the statistics below testify to that: blacks own less than 13% of the land; blacks control only 2% of the economy; less than 1% of all chartered accountants are Black; only about 1000 out of 26 000 medical doctors are Black; 13% of all lawyers in this country are Black; 15 million of us are jobless; 7 million Blacks are homeless; 80% Blacks have no tap water in their homes; 60% of us have no access to electricity; over 75% of Black families live below the poverty datum line, and finally Blacks are synonymous with negative

⁵⁷ Mngxitama posted this on Facebook.

things like *mikhukhu*⁵⁸, street kids, car jacking etc.⁵⁹

It adds “when you see a shack, you know a Black person lives in it. You do not have to ask. We know that when people call for the death penalty for criminals, they are in fact saying: hang these Blacks. We know when it's said matric results are bad; it means Blacks are failing matric...we are our direct inheritance from colonialism and racist oppression.”

AZAPO has programmes like “Stretch the Rand Campaign” which is only a synonym for “Buy Black.” The campaign calls for blacks to keep money in black hands through mutual support and increased economic solidarity. The party says the campaign is “a huge psychological and material step to launch us on to the road to progress and collective dignity.” Recently there has been intimation on starting community projects which the BCM did in the 1970s.

Nonetheless support for AZAPO, their offshoot SOPA and their ideological kindred PAC have been parlous. At 2012 June 16 commemoration at Regina Mundi church in Soweto, there were suggestions of unity but deep ideological differences among the three may hinder such an effort. All three have blamed marginalisation and limited resources for their degeneration but organisational incapacity may well be the cause.

Maphai, writing nearly two decades ago, may have been right after all in saying: “...in the near future it is unlikely that ideological considerations will play a major role in the nature and size of support which an organisation can draw” (Maphai 1994: 130) and that people will support an organisation for different reasons. From the 1980s through to the postapartheid, internally and externally ANC has monopolised the struggle and BC has since stood little chance of surviving postapartheid South Africa in any organisational form. Charterist

⁵⁸ Shacks

⁵⁹ Available at <http://www.azapo.org.za>

organisations had by then and presently dwarfed AZAPO, taking all the initiative, enjoying larger support and virtually reducing AZAPO to an organisational disaster. Maphai was a little optimistic though, asserting that BC will survive but AZAPO as an organisation is beyond its usefulness, “people need concrete political and economic power, not some nebulous psychological liberation” (Maphai 1994: 133). Seemingly AZAPO hasn't consummated their ideological postulations in any coherent organisational form. The old BC parties are subjected to derision by contemporary young BC adherents who regard both PAC and AZAPO as moribund, struggling on “a deathbed”, are in a “comatose”⁶⁰ and are incapable of igniting change for black people, with PAC now a “support group.”⁶¹ Others think AZAPO, just like ANC and DA, doesn't have the interests of black people at heart; that the present AZAPO should completely distance itself from the legacy of Biko and “...just tell me one thing the current AZAPO has done in defence of black dignity and advancement of peoples' lives.”⁶² Mngxitama also wrote, “AZAPO is the cultural desk of the ANC! The ANC uses the ‘struggle’; AZAPO uses ‘Biko’, and the DA uses, ‘clean audits’. They all believe in the same thing. I won't be voting AZAPO *ek is nie maal nie*. Those who vote ANC and DA know that their hands are covered in blood. Their parties shoot to kill and have given blacks ‘cabriolet toilets’, that's how much they care.”⁶³ Mngxitama also detests AZAPO for its “quasi-Marxist” tendencies. Some conversations call for dissolution of PAC and AZAPO who should put their efforts in building a united Azanian Front; while others opine that these parties should move with the times; while they were relevant then, they need to repackage their offering (philosophies, policies, solutions) so as to appeal to the common person.

⁶⁰ I heard this from someone during the ‘Alex to Sandton - Hell to Heaven march’, 16 June 2011

⁶¹ Comment from one participant, SNI Durban, September 24, 2011

⁶² A post on Facebook, 18 May 2011

⁶³ Posted on Facebook, 18 May 2011

However one individual defended the party: BC for AZAPO is a value and a value that needs to be protected by all forms of manifestations and BC has its own practice under AZAPO.⁶⁴

This sentiment is echoed by someone who wrote:

AZAPO defended the BC philosophy; if it wasn't AZAPO Biko would have been forgotten...we must never privatise BC. There are people who are intolerant when others speak on BC. That is wrong! We must embrace the philosophy and help spread it. We must never give up on the unity of the BCM formations, SOPA, AZAPO etc.⁶⁵

I think contemporary youthful BC adherents must be wary of the acerbity of their critique of AZAPO, SOPA and PAC because these are naturally their potential strategic allies which they may call upon at a future occasion. Alienating them would be a signal of political naivety and immaturity.

The fate and fortune of BC formations in their different manifestations isn't predicated on the inadequacy of the idea, which I think is potent and responds forcefully to the historical and contemporary conditions of black people; rather there are different factors which I have highlighted in this chapter that hinder the consummation of the idea into praxis. Politics of course is concerned with disagreements (Berki 1977); it's about ways to deal with these: dissolution, arbitration or renouncing politics altogether. BC formations have to make a choice. Ultimately I think it's about self – introspection and deep soul searching. Berki makes an important point; it's worthwhile to quote him at length:

We could indeed - if I may be permitted the use of a few somewhat quixotic analogies – see the study of the history of political thought as an experience resembling that of a middle aged individual who has decided to turn the pages of his diary written some twenty years before.

He will read these notes with mixed feelings. He will venture an indulgent smile here and

⁶⁴ Posted on Facebook, 15 February 2012

⁶⁵ Posted on Facebook, 15 February 2012

there, will feel ashamed at certain points, angry and frustrated at others, wistful at the passing of his youthful innocence and fantasies, and yet at the end, as likely as not, he will still take heart from the fact that he is at least able to read his diary, and that not every ambition he had in the past has ended in complete failure. In some little way at least he will probably be a “changed” man: his problems will not have disappeared and his personality will remain basically the same, but he might very well be able to bring fresh energies and resources to deal with situations as they arise thenceforward (Berki 1977: 38).

Chapter 4

Youth Politics, Agency and Subjectivity

I have heard from someone asking whether Blackwash is just youth politics or something seriously revolutionary. Since the majority of Blackwash membership and affiliation is those categorised as youth, I have in this chapter examined the concept “youth”, more importantly “black youth”. BC has since its inception been synonymous with the young. That tradition has persisted. I seek to understand factors that propel youth agency and subjectivity; the strengths and limitations of confining agency to a single age category. Indeed Azanian youth are the most betrayed given their role in fighting apartheid to a standstill, while their older comrades arrogated themselves leadership positions in politics and the economy. This youth has been termed the “lost” generation and later on “kwaito” generation. In the contemporary many are talking of “m-xit”, “amakipkip”, “skinny jeans” generation and “izikhotane” who are said to be preoccupied with diversions and are in pursuit of hedonistic pleasures. This view, I contend is a misconception because there are spaces that give rise to a conscious township youth that reads voraciously, that is abreast with current affairs and is in possession of radical literature and material. It is this youth that is a purveyor of BC ideas.

“Youth” as a social construction linked to age originates from relationships of economic production, legal relations and cultural particularities (Hall 1976; Durham 2000; de Boeck and Honwana 2005; Comaroff and Comaroff 2005; Abbink 2005; Bayart 2006; Christiansen, Utas and Vigh 2006) and are made by historical circumstances (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001, 2005). In the immediate postapartheid period, youth included diverse classes of freedom fighters, students, workers and even criminals and “in this story, it is true, not all young blacks are youth. But all youth are black and male” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2005: 24; see also Seekings 1996). Thus we see a construction and stereotypification of a “black

youth”, a “lost generation” regarded as a menace, excluded from mainstream society with poor future prospects (Marks 2001: 6; McLaren and Dantley 1990; Seekings 1996; O’Brien 1996). Azanian youth are trapped in deprivation, lack of opportunity and skills and are caught in a kernel of frustration. Although young people constitute the majority of the population, they are always at the margins of society and political, socio – economic and cultural spheres (Seekings 1996; Abbink 2005; de Boeck and Honwana 2005). Comaroff and Comaroff (2005: 21) use the term “alien – nation” to describe marginalization of youth from the normative world of work and wages. The best word to describe them is: underclass, a continuation from apartheid to postapartheid where social and economic conditions created a disadvantaged class of black youth (Seekings 2003). For the Comaroffs (2005: 24) youth is a collective term denoting “a faceless mass of persons who were underclass, unruly, male, challengingly out of place – and at once physically powerful and morally immature, always liable to seize the initiative from their elders and betters.” The underclass, seen in behavioural terms, is “a set of pathological social attitudes, actions and activities” of which the outward visibility is race (Goldberg 2000: 238). It has come to signify not only the unemployed but also the permanently unemployed and the unemployable. It describes a state of mind and a way of life and is as much cultural as it is an economic condition. It is linked to a poverty of culture rather than the culture of poverty where the social conditions of the poor are blamed on themselves. In racist schema idleness, laziness and sloth is a central idea of representation be it on the street, by the police, in the media, at school and other institutions. These conditions lead to the rise of counter – cultures which may take overt resistance or ideological forms and oppositional in stance to dominant values and institutions (Clarke et al 1976). These counter – cultures induce “moral panic” in moral guardians of culture including parents; as marking a “crisis of authority” and youth are viewed as the symptom. Therefore they become a scapegoat. The Comaroffs see the youth as a 'counter – nation' with its own illegal economics

of ways and means to spaces of production.

The problem of youth and youth problem are worldwide phenomena, although race continues to be a factor. The ILO warns of a “scarred generation” of youth facing a “dangerous mix of high unemployment, increased inactivity and precarious work” in developed countries and persistent high poverty in the developing world.⁶⁶ In 2012 close to 75 million young people were out of work and 40% of jobless are the youth.⁶⁷ In Britain, the older British are seen as the gilded generation who saw a life of rising prosperity, abundant welfare and soaring house prices; in contrast today's youth scour the streets for non – existent jobs and are called the “jinxed generation who will be poorer than those born in the 1950s and 1960s.”⁶⁸ Some argue the bigger problem is in regards to equity or absence of it; the tension is intra rather than intergenerational where the inequalities are within the rising generation. Lately in Azania there have been debates about a youth wage subsidy, precipitated by high levels of youth unemployment which culminated in a DA march on 14 May 2012 demanding that government implement the policy which it says will create over four hundred thousand jobs. However COSATU's Vavi believes the subsidy will lead to old workers being retrenched and increased exploitation of workers.⁶⁹ BC adherents and Africanists condemn the youth wage subsidy as, “a sly manoeuvre and auction to pay local and multinational exploiters to further exploit Azanian Black youth in particular.”⁷⁰

⁶⁶ <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/lang-en/index.htm>.

⁶⁷ “The Youth Employment Crisis: A Call for Action.” Resolutions and Conclusions of the 101st Session of the ILO, Geneva 2012.

⁶⁸ Philip Stephens, “Enough! Baby Boomers are a Wrong Target.” Financial Times, March 27 2012.

⁶⁹ Zwelinzima Vavi addressing workers on May 14 2012 in Braamfontein, Johannesburg.

⁷⁰ Posted on Facebook by SAYRO on June 14 2012.

Youth and student activism has always been prominent in Azanian struggles. The youth constituted not only a generational but a political category (Bundy 1994). In the 1980s high school students directed their energies towards mass campaigns, service in alternative structures, participation in direct action and street combat. Although the youth had intensity, energy and creativity, they lacked the experience and sophistication which tended to triumphalism, and anticipation of imminent victory with little patience or strategic reality (Bundy 1994: 48). Nonetheless the youth represent a regenerative force and are vanguard of social change (Murdock and McCrow 1976). Others see the youth as “makers” of society through their contributions to structures, norms, rituals and directions of society; they make society a political force through resistance and resilience (Durham 2000; Diouf 2003; de Boeck and Honwana 2005). In Azanian struggles there has always been intergenerational conflict between the “youth” and the “elders”, which has been reflected in political movements (Bundy 1994; Seekings 1996; Tetelman 1998; Tin 2001). To comprehend this one has to know the working of African lineage systems which promotes an unequal relationship between a minority of elders and majority of youth, meaning only a few of the latter reached positions of social control when the elders have left the scene (Abbink 2005; Barker and Ricardo 2005; Bayart 2006). In some societies the “open” or “relative” seniority means younger members will be eventually promoted to position of seniority. The “closed” or “absolute” seniority means the younger generation is permanently denied seniority except through individual achievement, secession or manipulation of genealogy (Bayart 2006). The old, the “elders”, the ancestors and those with knowledge occupy a central place in Africa (Aguilar 2007; Rifiotis 2007). In moments of conflict, domination is maintained through threats of evoking the power of ancestors to punish the disobedient since contact with ancestors is a preserve of the elders. Therefore relations between generations should correspond with the ancestors (Rifiotis 2007). In the colonial and postcolonial eras some of

these inherited principles are maintained. It is through transmission of knowledge and laws by memory that links elderliness with power; and elderliness and ancestry are closely tied and mutually reinforce each other (ibid). In Azanian context lineage/unilineal descent groups have an apical ancestor that can be traced although they differ in generational depth and geographical dispersion (Hammond – Tooke 1974). All southern African groups are patrilineal, are governed by patrilineal descent and worship ancestors mainly through the male line so the emphasis is on male authority which is stratified into kinship and political hierarchies. These govern all social life with a strong dominance pattern: – agnation, ranking and generation are fundamental and inscribed into the moral code. The most fundamental moral principle is to show respect (*ukuhlonipha/inhlonipho*) to lineage seniors and to all members of the senior generation. This is incubated in early childhood. Children are taught absolute obedience to parents; must always use formal modes of address to them; may not interrupt while grown-ups are talking neither shout at them nor call across to them. Among the Xhosa parents whose children fail to behave well are said to feel shame (*intloni*) [Hammond – Tooke 1974: 360]. Sanctions become supernatural; misfortune will befall him who “plays the fool with the old people” (ibid). Emphasis on respect runs through all kinship and descent groups and from family to clan. Intergenerational conflict in the Azanian context begins with the encroachment of colonial, wage and migrant labour which transformed intergenerational hierarchies (Carton 1998; Barker and Ricardo 2005). Young men who were workers increasingly defied their own patriarchs and colonial laws, breaking filial obligations and customary prohibitions. In Natal the Native Code turned chiefs into “eyes and ears” of the government which made Africans “easy to govern” by promoting dependence and obedience (Carton 1998). The chiefs collected taxes and fines for the colony and helped in enrolment of young men into government public works brigades called *isibalo*. Wage labour made elders and fathers lose power to the young men who could now pay lobola without the

formers' assistance. In 1900 one male elder complained: “at public meetings of natives some young men get up and speak in English when there is no necessity for doing so, it is due to a species of pride and sense of importance” (cited in Carton 1998: 50). He saw the rift as “because the country now belongs to the new generation – *abatsha* who 'jeer at me saying we are equal now.” In politics especially, deference for elders is derided by the youth. Hitherto existing conditions radically alter these relationships. The youth no longer see it helpful to consult elders, who are compelled to “shift their ground, adapt themselves to the new situation” (Cabral 1979: 60). The Bambatha Rebellion 1906 is the first instance in the country's modern political agency that the youth came into conflict with the patriarchs. The elders lost control as young men from the anti – poll tax movement organised by Bambatha, himself a young man, hunted and killed *amambuka* [African patriarchs seen as traitors for their loyalty to the colonial government] (Carton 2000).

“Generational consciousness”, that is, differential experience between generations specific to age (Mannheim 1952; Clarke et al 1976; Murdock and McCrow 1976) best explains a succession of generations; in other words as an older generation (in this case the youth of 1970s and 1980s) progress to middle and senior adulthood, a new generation continues the struggle albeit in a different experience, a shared social situation, social conditions and development of attitudes and responses by particular close – knit “concrete groups” (Mannheim 1952). In their similarly located contemporaneous experience the youth form a common identity and affinity which is shaped by common experience, that is shared experience (of a generational unit) which crystallises into generational style different from that of the older or immediately preceding generation (Murdock and McCrow 1976; Bundy 1985). How young people see and analyse their predicament and form a political identity depends contextually (O'Brien 1996). Youth agency is a zone of powerlessness, so to study

youth politics is to study politics “from below” that is, studying the politics of the powerless (O'Brien 1996). Contemporary BC youth are just a node in a long thread of youth activism in the country. In the 1970s, the BPC youth programmes outlined the role of youth:

Young people are the bearers and perpetrators of what we hold dear: our survival as a group and our identity. In them we recognise the manifestations of our aspirations. They will be the ones who will be on the front lines of the liberation struggle. It is therefore of utmost necessity that our youth should be made the cornerstone of our programme of liberation. They are the people who are able to give our struggle its dynamism and lifeblood.⁷¹

There is always generational revival: 1960s US and Europe, 1970s BC and 2000s Arab and Azanian youth formalising themselves and actively protesting. This can be seen as a historical process that involves generational renewal, ideological renaissance and continuity and development of new ideas where political stagnancy seems to stifle any forms of youth agency.⁷² Let us consider two cases of two people who were/are youth during two different historical moments. One is a BCM founder Sadique Variava, the other is a contemporary youth. Let us call him B.

4.1. Sadique Variava

Most BC founding members were born between 1945 and 1949. Incidentally the NP came to power during this period. Thus they grew up in a world of apartheid. When the ANC and PAC were banned they were in their teens making them generational heirs to the incipient political vacuum. At that time there was a culture of fear; a pervasive informer network and every aspect of black social life was dominated by security police. Sadique, who sees himself

⁷¹ BPC Youth Programmes, n.d.

⁷² This view is also shared by Daniel Magaziner during launch of his book at Boekehuis, Auckland Park, Johannesburg, May 14 2011.

a liberationist/revolutionary, can be considered “Indian” if ethnic categorisations are used, says in political thought there is usually a continuation but there was a cut – off. However most of these youth had an idea of history of resistance either through schooling from parents or kin who were politically active in the years before and they used to hear the names of Mandela and Sobukwe mentioned indiscriminately. Sadique's family also has a long history of BC involvement. His brother Yusuf (Joe), now with Wits school of medicine, was also prominent in the BCM. Other sites of political education were sporting events, especially associated with the Unity Movement which has provided most of the vocabulary BC uses. The impetus derived from resistance to banning of non – racial sport. This was in total contrast to the school where they were forced to celebrate Afrikaner holidays like the Republic Day associated with subjugation of indigenous people. Sadique and other youth used to, a derivation and inspiration from Unity Movement tradition, boycott these holidays, and distribute pamphlets whose message was political in tone, denouncing these enactments. When a decision was taken to give the department of Indian Affairs powers to take over schooling for “Indian” children (Sadique was fourteen at that time), they used to organise marches and boycotts. Earlier on the ANC had formed alliance with Indian and coloured congresses which were all ethnic based but Sadique and others did not subscribe to that. There was no influence of a major political movement, however. The influence was from the New Left and Black Power movements especially in France and the US. Sadique after high school went on to the Transvaal College of Education College (TCE) to train as a teacher. All campuses were controlled by the Broederbond and the liberal NUSAS. Early BC proponents considered NUSAS as subversive and racist because it “poisoned minds of young blacks.” They desecrated its multi – racialism; many of their white colleagues were privileged, were children of big capitalists who were oppressing them, thus making the partnership untenable and fraught with contradictions. Sadique felt he belonged to blackness. TCE itself was pro

NUSAS before SASO established its niche there. At NUSAS conferences many blacks were afraid to talk or contribute because of an inferiority complex instilled in a racist society where to be white was equated with being human, so they could not come up with their own programmes. When Sadique went to college his reputation of leading protests had preceded him. In his first year he was elected into the SRC and that was a turning point in his life because he could now attend conferences where could assert some political influence. In fact TCE was the first SASO affiliate, the TCE's SRC constitution was thrown away, the SASO one was now the guide, and in short all campuses were now identified with the nascent black movement. He realised that black Africans, Indians and coloureds shared the same objective experience. At campuses everyone began to talk of their experiences. They began to question why collectively they were referred to as non – white and whether it was an aspiration to whiteness, so the question was “who are we”? To answer this Biko organised formation schools where leadership of all black campuses were involved and spent weekends addressing these questions. The result was if you remove white from non - white you are left with *non*: – meaning a non – person, a non – being. On the other hand white society despite its diverse ethnic/cultural groups was defined as a single white unit (even the Lebanese and Japanese were considered “honorary whites”). Another question to ponder was why they were rigidly divided by the system through giving some a few privileges. They argued that they couldn't be partially oppressed, that would be like saying “you are partially pregnant.” Then you have to be wholly so or not at all. The government encouraged white immigration to bolster white numbers and Sadique says “for whites the country was heaven, it was like the advertisement back then 'sunny skies, braai vleis and Chevrolet', this was the white experience.”

The early BC started identifying with black radical thinkers, and got hold of, and devoured the writings of Fanon, Cesaire (especially 'Return to My Native Land') Carmichael (Toure),

Hamilton, Mao and Freire, who were all big influences. This literature they discovered on their own endeavours, because under apartheid laws such reading was banned and outlawed. They overcame the dearth of available literature by “when one picks up a book, they would distribute it to one another after reading.” They began relating and translating these readings to their own experience, and started to find an anti – thesis to whiteness, which was Black Solidarity, which implied describing people beyond ethnicity, thus, creating a new people. BC adherents in those days listened to reggae, which was part of cultural movement inspiring anti – colonial struggles while the ANC people listened to classical music, a point which we chuckled about during our conversation.

Speaking about contemporary youth, Sadique says there is increasing interest in BC from youthful people; the elders' task is to inculcate a work ethic into the young because today's BC major handicap is “laziness.”

4.1.1. B.

B was born in Soweto in the years when apartheid was in turmoil. He comes from a deprived home, raised by his aunt, who struggled to provide for the household. He persevered to attend college. He went to Morris Isaacson High School in Soweto which is symbolically associated with the June 16 1976 uprisings. Morris Isaacson High School is central in Sowetan politics. A majority of Blackwashers in Soweto attended the school which has a tradition not only of excellence in academic, sporting and other extra – mural activities but politically as well. He told me that he later converted to Islam. The reason may have been spurred by material rather than spiritual deprivation. Like all contemporary religions, there are overtures and proselytising in townships by religious crusaders of all persuasions who promise converts improved life circumstances on earth just as enhanced entry opportunity into heaven-hood. B was in the faith for a while until for some reason “my eyes were opened.” There are two

explanations to this. One is the fact of a “rampant, unchecked, unparalleled and sometimes invisible racism in Islam.” Although there is a preaching with underlying positive teaching about equality of all God's human creation, “the level of hypocrisy was alarming.” B discovered “unacceptable” differences between black and Arab muslims. The former are always poor, in want and are servants of their Arab counterparts who live in opulence and privilege. B says he began reading history of islamisation and arabisation in Africa and stumbled on “some disturbing facts” where Islam is implicated in slave trade, slavery of blacks and paving the way for European slavery, imperialism and colonialism. He then decided to renounce the faith. This seems validated by Mngxitama who has consistently labelled Arabs “the first enslavers and colonisers of black people and countries in north Africa don't consider themselves African but part of the Arab world.”⁷³ Secondly a former schoolmate of his who was now involved in Blackwash politics had a major political influence on him. He recruited him to the movement and tutored him in major black radical thought.

Today's youth are reading Biko. Biko and BC itself are “hip” and “chic”, are charismatic and an “in thing.” There is a subculture associated with BC and Biko. Biko t/shirts and other inscribed paraphernalia can be seen on any given day worn by youth in unkempt and kinky hair. The contradictions are that BC somehow appeals to them even if they don't understand the underlying radical and potentially subversive message inherent in that erstwhile thought. Some youths do totally comprehend the message though and can relate it to their lived experience. B and other Blackwashers relate the “immense” interest school children have in Biko's ideas when they host presentations there. Sadique Variava also confirms that when he was invited to deliver a talk at his nephew's school project on resistance poetry; “the kids

⁷³ Andile Mngxitama at NFT “Egypt: Was the Revolution Lost?” launch, Roots Restaurant, Soweto.

enjoyed the talk on BC and I went on for three hours.”

Young people are encouraged to be always rebels, to subscribe to nonconformity, to be anti – establishment “to the core” and should always protest.⁷⁴ The realisation is the youth have a historical responsibility; should be eternal students of history, not imitators, because history “tells you why you are disenfranchised.”⁷⁵ This thought is similar to 1970s BC: SASO projected that the students (the youth) “be creators of history and not history to create you.”⁷⁶ Being creators of history means mastery of one's circumstances and one's attitude to the black community. The admonishment is “if you betray your history you will be ashes but you will be the fertiliser of the future rebels.”⁷⁷ BC youth who are recognisable by their ghetto argot, unkempt and kinky hair which some twist into dreadlocks, jeans and t/shirts are their apparel, their manner of walking ranges from street swagger, swash - buckling to a step that is confident yet militant. They have a firm belief that as young black people “we should take initiative, do it for ourselves because our elders are not doing it...we will create our own history and we will not accept what our elders say.”⁷⁸ Thus they are inspired by Fanon's injunction that every generation has a historical mission and task, either to fulfil it or betray it. They reckon young people are forthright even though they sometimes are impulsive; their stores of energy, as one participant explained, “ like a spring that never dries up but always flows” and are always poised for fearlessness and are “pissed off with talking instead of action (he coiled his fingers into a fist as he emphasised that point)”. He stressed the need to eradicate the attitude that “things will happen by themselves” without doing anything. In contrast elders are hesitant and cautious, have everything to lose, the youth have none, and

⁷⁴ Haile Gerima addressing the SNI Durban September 23 2011

⁷⁵ *ibid*

⁷⁶ “SASO on the Attack – An Introduction to SASO”, edited by Ben Langa, 1973.

⁷⁷ Haile Gerima addressing SNI Durban, September 23 2011.

⁷⁸ Contribution during an SYP debating meeting at Jabulani Technical, April 27 2012.

are a hindrance and constraint to youth agency. The struggle is always fought by the youth but it is the older people who sell – out, and they have a penchant for lying, he added. The friction also happens among an age cohort that involves older and younger youth. One participant told me, “I have a fourteen year old nephew who I caught smoking and I admonished him. His riposte was *nawe uyabhema* (but you also smoke).” This made his moralising Pharisaical. Township BC youth are not only politically aware but are also socially conscious. I attended a birthday party for the nephew of one BC youth. There was a very intoxicated man who was molesting a young woman. One BC youth said this man had to be stopped, if he wants a woman he has to adhere to proper courting decorum otherwise “if we just look and leave him behaving that way he would rape that young woman.” The BC youth approached that man and admonished him. One should note that the man was in his mid to late thirties, the youth was in his early twenties. Most BC youth are smokers but during various events involving a cohort of children and under age participants, they always do so out of sight.

One youth believes rebellion has to start in the home because the home is a microcosm of oppression and injustice. It is in the home that a youth can hone his/her agential skill and capabilities because “if you can disobey the parents, flout all the rules imposed in the home, you can rebel against the system.” The participant decries some youth (who is part of the BC collective) as “still being looked after and cared for by his mother, they should move beyond that.” The family, according to their definition, is those “brothers and sisters in the struggle”, in other words an ideological family. There used to be a talk in Blackwash about them being an ideological family; however some youth have come to believe that because the familiar has to be an admixture of both the ideological and the biological. Most BC youth don't come from political homes or homes with a political tradition. All they know about BC is gleaned

from their peers as one participant told me: “all I know I learned from the street.” Here exchanges in literature, audio - visual material and ideas happen. Contemporary BC youth are in possession of radical material most of us in academy don't possess. I could not establish how they came to be in hold of such. They are avid readers of black radical texts like Fanon, Cabral, Nkrumah, Frank Wilderson 111, CLR James, George Jackson, Khallid Muhammad, Biko, Malcolm X, Assata Shakur and du Bois. Their music is mainly conscious hip – hop by US artistes like Dead Prez, KRS ONE, Talib Kweli, Common, The Roots, Immortal Technique, Ill Bill, Diabolic, Vinnie Paz, Poor Righteous Teachers, and Cashless Society among others. They are also fascinated by the nonconformity of Nigerian singer Fela Kuti and his son Femi. They find inspiration from black revolutionaries like Robert Mugabe (because he doesn't give a fuck about the white man, someone told me, and that he returned the land to black people; the Blackwash Movement has made exchange visits with ZANU PF and the New Black Panther Party), Thomas Sankara, Assata Shakur, Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe, the Zimbabwean maverick Dambudzo Marechera, long time death row US political prisoner Mumia Abu – Jamal and the executed Troy Davis was a cause celebre. Poqo, APLA and the Black Panthers also provide a militant impetus to their struggles. All of the above are frequently evoked, and are pervasively part of facebook chatter and moniker. Their colours are the Garveyite red, black and green, although the Ethiopian red, gold and green are also favoured.

Increased importance of the market, hegemony of mass media on consumption patterns and growth of youth oriented leisure industry; arrival of mass communication, mass entertainment, mass art and mass culture creates a new youth category – the teenage consumer (Hall 1976). In South African townships there has been a new trend called *ukukhothana* (licking each other just how snakes do). Like the North American Indian

potlatch these youths (*izikhotane*) compete in destruction of material objects including burning of currency. The *izikhothane* who wear the latest fashion trends that are procured at a cost don't shy from exhibiting a conspicuous consumption even if they originate from desperately poor households. These youths are said to brook no admonishment because they will say *bhek'ndaba zakho* (mind your own business). The hysteria around consumption habits of black ghetto youth might be a result of fear that they too cannot possess the status symbols associated with whiteness, where whiteness, consumerism and identity become linked (Zine Magubane 2004). Current discussions among both the youth and the old tend to see the postapartheid youth as apolitical, who are neither conscious nor politically aware. However, to insinuate that the youth is caught in *jouissance*, consumption and hedonistic pursuits like *ukukhothana* might be a misdiagnosis. Revolts by youth in the Arab world and Tottenham riots in the UK, where experiences are not qualitatively different from Azanian youth, conditions for unrest in the country are there. According to StatsSA in South Africa 3, 3 million 15 – 24 year olds are unemployed; neither attends school nor tertiary institution.⁷⁹ All factors point towards frustration by this cohort. Azanian young people are therefore the most dangerous because apart from their large number in the population, they are the “the most betrayed people.”⁸⁰ Let us look at the Tottenham riots. From a right-wing perspective the disturbances were caused by a moral and social decline since the 1950s, multiculturalism, soft policing, family breakdown, liberal teaching, welfare dependency and immigration.⁸¹ On the other hand the causes are: an alienated youth, police harassment, unemployment, poverty, tuition fee increases and a neo – liberal economy “which allows bankers to earn bonuses

⁷⁹ StatsSA, Quarterly Labour Force Survey, November 28 2008.

⁸⁰ Haile Gerima addressing SNI Durban September 23 2011.

⁸¹ David Aaronvitch, “When Kids Go on a Power Trip”, Sunday Times, August 14 2011.

usually described as 'obscene.'⁸² The killing of Mark Duggan, a black youth, by police, was considered a racist act, and sparked the upheaval, where ten years earlier the MacPherson inquiry reported on institutionalised racism in the police. The youth went on a rampage, burned down their own neighbourhood, an indication that young people have no stake in the neighbourhood they live in and even in wider society.⁸³ The motto of most young black men, who have given up all hope of attainment in a white man's world, is "it's about the money!" Their problems are passed from generation to generation; they refer to themselves as nigga, telling the world that they were offspring of the "field negro", not the trained "house negro" from slavery days. The "field negro's" sole intent is "to escape, and maybe to cause a little damage to the master and his property."⁸⁴

4.2. Siyapambili Youth Pioneers (SYP)

SYP who subscribes to BC is a youth initiative by Sowetan youth whose primary aim is to "conscientise, empower and teach kids to fish." SYP has a project on technology and engineering in collaboration with Formula One where nine million children worldwide are participating. FI has partnered with SYP on a national level. Presently there is an F1 school at Jabulani Technical. In 2008 learners from Jabulani went to Malaysia for an international competition, where they were the only black team. So far only five black teams have participated at international events. There are also corporate sponsors like Ferrari and Anglo – Platinum. However this inclination has precipitated critiques from other BC adherents who regard SYP, given its partnership and consort with "capitalist exploiters like Anglo – Gold and Anglo – Platinum", as pandering to capitalism and its ethics.

⁸² *ibid*

⁸³ Stafford Scott, "Little Has Changed in Black Communities." *Mail and Guardian*, August 12 – 18 2011.

⁸⁴ *ibid*

Sowetan schools like Morris Isaacson, Sekano Ntoana, Naledi and Orlando High Schools have a long history of emphasis on extra – mural cultural and sporting activities including debating societies (Glaser 1994). By late 1960s some BC oriented teachers like Tom Manthata, Jack Tsotetsi, Onkopontse Tiro and Curtis Nkondo infused debate meetings with political and social themes and as the 1970s wore on debating was extremely popular in Soweto. In 1968 the African Student Movement (later SASM) emerged from school based societies and YWCA youth groups. The debating tradition in Soweto schools has persisted. Today debate and public speaking meetings are hosted and organised monthly by SYP where a range of topics and themes affecting contemporary society are a staple. Participating schools include Morris Isaacson, Jabulani Technical High School, Aurora Girls, and Moletsane among others. Themes range from Black History Month, human rights, youth, freedom and so on. Most coincide with topics associated with national holidays. The debaters/speakers are awarded with certificates of acknowledgement that contain an SYP logo. Normally the topics, as one BC participant observes, are “tough which fail even older people.” The students and the contents of their speeches show a level of advancement. Names of struggle icons like Biko, Miriam Makeba, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King and even Mandela are indiscriminately mentioned. I have heard phrases like: “every existence is an act of liberation”, “let's change the mentality of black suffering”, “brothers and sisters of Azania ...they can't control our minds”, “for a man to conquer the world he has to conquer himself first”, “people fought for freedom but are we free when our people are poor and there is a jobless youth, can we decolonise ourselves?”, “Are we free as a black nation, as a black child?” “if there was freedom why are people protesting and still living in shacks?”, “we have to take charge because the nation is ours”, “whites turned South Africa into a country of failures, made it separate from the African continent”, “we have to ask do we know our history?”, “freedom is still a pipe dream for most black South Africans” and “freedom given

ain't freedom at all.”

One can delineate two strands of thought in the students' speeches: Congress and BC influence. Some mention that there is now equality in the country as a result of peoples' struggles to realise a democratic society. The new day begins when Mandela was freed from prison, some students intimate, so we should relish this freedom and this non – racial society where if the past and the present are compared, today a black child can go to the same school as whites and “we are now taught in the same manner.” They say the government is “providing us with free stationery but we don't want to learn, we burn them, we are lazy, we want to be spoon-fed.” The other strand evokes Biko and his ideals. One participant says, “What happens to the dream when the dreamer dies? We have to live the dream of our heroes.” They note that schools are decrepit; the homes are so poor they cannot provide adequate meals which hinders capacity to acquire skills by black children; inhibits their chances to succeed and they end up trapped in cycle of poverty. They observe an increasing inequality whereby to obtain something worthwhile one has to invest a lot of struggle and pain. Nonetheless the students showed a lack of historical and thematic perception when at one meeting they were asked to distinguish between apartheid and white supremacy. None of those present could do so.

One persistent theme is the role of education in the lives of black children. Even if everybody talks of education as a precursor to success, education is not innocent because it can be a “poison” used to enhance a particular hegemonic view.⁸⁵ Education can also be used to address man and his existence holistically and can be a vehicle for social change. Education and freedom are sides of the same coin: “the definer designs a hellish environment and in turn tells you what to learn and tells black people that psychologically their minds are

⁸⁵ A speech by Itumeleng given at an SYP debate meeting

dysfunctional because of their environment.”⁸⁶

BC youth, some of whom were former debaters at school where there have been generations and generations who have been produced by that system, say it is realised debates are crucial but it is a matter of changing their orientation and content. For example instead of one team opposing or supporting a topic like “Freedom and Education”, they can just express what comes into their thought because most times a team may just oppose and say things that are contrary to their belief, conviction and conscience. Nonetheless BC adherents believe that youth associated with SYP are an important base.

4.3. Blaq Aesthetics

Back in the old days BC used to enact performances at birthdays, funerals, parties and wherever black people congregated, to spread consciousness, inspire people and infuse hope into their lives. According to BC performer Diniso Gamakhulu, that's what contemporary BC adherents should be doing because black people have “been lulled by the postapartheid liberalism.”⁸⁷ Blaq Aesthetics is a BC influenced formulation started in 2008 in Soweto as an arts collective to provide a space for township masses to engage “in arts that will stimulate them.” They run a weekly Book Club at Jabavu and Pimville libraries where they review a range of different texts. Their aim is to “take the library to the people”, and inculcate a literary tradition among the poor, which doesn't have to be a preserve of the privileged. The challenge is people don't favour the pastime of reading but the reason is “maybe there's nothing to read.” Thus they solicit books from writers associations and other sources. They organise and host regular reading and spelling sessions at Jabavu library for parents and Soweto primary school learners whose ages are 10 – 14. The children are asked to name an

⁸⁶ *ibid*

⁸⁷ He said this during a conversation I and a friend had with him in Newtown, March 5 2011.

alphabet letter and spell a word in a language of their choice but mainly it is English, SeSotho, SeTswana and isiZulu. Then there is a reading competition, the learners have to read a paragraph in thirty seconds. A third aspect is more like a quiz. At one session I attended, I observed that the children were given three simplified texts provided by the government compiled by Chris van Wyk, on Robert Sobukwe, Chris Hani and Steve Biko which fall under “Learning African History – Freedom Fighters Series”. This part of the session is called “Battle of the Books” where a judge asks the schools' representative (that is the learners) questions from those texts. Afterwards the learners question each other. This is meant to test reading speed, accuracy and competency. The sessions often assume a competitive edge; a panel of judges processes the children through elimination rounds. Winners are rewarded with books.

Blaq Aesthetics also run a “revolutionary bioscope” as means of educating and entertaining the masses. Film screenings like “Afrika yikas'lam Film Festival” held in November 2011 are a regular event. Featured film titles include “Phakathi: Soweto's Middling Class; Maafa; Apartheid Did Not Die; 500 years later; Good Hair; Roots; Sankofa; The Great and The Mighty Walk.” The screenings are followed by a discussion around themes they raise. Attendance, however tends to be apathetic. One participant explained that sometimes it's the nature of the masses not to take an active interest in educational films that are devoid of the “hu ha” associated with action movies. Poetry sessions are also held every week mostly at Credo Mutwa village. Arts performances called “TrainSpotSation” are regularly enacted in the last coach of trains that run from Naledi to Johannesburg. Apart from spreading consciousness these are meant to counter “tame and lame” messages of Christian preachers who are ever present in each and every coach. Sabar, a scintillating BC poet, announced the latest edition of “TrainSpoSation” held on 25 August 2012 on Facebook in these words:

People of the Sun, *manene namanenekazi!* Reporting live once more like it's Freedom Radio. It's only two days before the fifth instalment of TrainSpotSation, it's the Soul Train deliverance through the arts, Last Coach revolution uDarkie phez'komjaji! Remember if you gonna catch this train in the preceding stations you will find us in the last coach, you will find plenty darkies with dreads and Afros and it will probably be the loudest coach.

A play called "Train Travellers" was also enacted.

They regularly host an arts event called "LOXION CONNEXION" that has an array of poetry, music and other performances. There are also literature and theatre programmes and workshops and Blaq Aesthetics intends to participate in the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown in 2013.

Conclusion

Azanian youth are among the most disenfranchised and frustrated section of the population. The view that the postapartheid youth is apolitical and stagnant might soon be a passing phase. More youth trapped in the struggle of townships and rural areas will attempt to derive a meaning therein which will give an impetus to a sustained agency. Already there are indicators like incessant service delivery protests where youth play a prominent albeit a violent role. Unless socio - economic conditions assume a cyclical turn tending to improvement, the authorities may ignore youth agency at their own peril. Azanian youth are a time bomb. They soon may be going on a power trip. History attests to that.

Chapter 5

The Social Construction of Blackness in Azania (South Africa)

In this chapter I argue that since blackness is a historical phenomenon, it can only be thoroughly understood by analysing its historical roots. My engagement with this question hinges on how black South Africans have been brought into racial subjectivity and objectification and how this question persists even with the formal abolition of apartheid. I make four major postulations: firstly, blackness is a white creation through white anti – black racism; secondly in the process of construction of blackness whiteness was also created; thirdly I look at social suffering and the black body in the making of blackness; fourthly I analyse how black people themselves have brought themselves into subjectivity through large swathes of resistance, in other words blackness as agency. I argue that the latter explains the persistence of blackness and ideas consistent with it. Further I look at the evolution and instability of the political, racial and cultural usage and categorisation of the term blackness, which reached its zenith with the inception of BC movement. Of course blackness has not only been employed by a racist state in its social engineering but by black people themselves as a reference point for political mobilisation and as a rallying point for resistance. In addition I examine blackness in the post 1994 and how it is enunciated; this I seek to achieve by engaging with the changing nature and “invisibility” of race and racism which has been egged by the “death” of Jim Crow as seen by the incipient post 1994 society. I also make comparative analyses with political and epistemological uses of blackness in the “post racial” United States since the 1960s to the present and Britain in the 1970s and 1980s.

5.1. The Black Body and Social Suffering

According to Sartre (1973: 351) the first dimension of being is existence as in the body; second the body is utilised and known by others and third is when one is for others, the other is revealed, meaning the ontological dimension of one's body is existing as a body known by others. Relations with others arise from relations of one's body to others' body. These are not unilateral but reciprocal and moving relations. The objectification of the black body is seen in the racist gaze, which regards the "Other" as a non – being (Fanon 1990). From this gaze, "he feels the weight of his melanin" (Fanon 1967: 128). A Negro not only has a feeling of inferiority but also of non – existence. The Blackman's being is experienced through others, his blackness is in relation to whiteness and its gaze and the black body becomes a curse, attacked in several places giving way to an epidermal racial schema (Fanon 1967: 92). The Negro is determined from without, appraised from his very appearance. In white man's eyes, he has no ontological existence: on one hand his customs and the sources in which they were based were wiped on assumptions of a "superior civilisation" which imposed itself on him. The gaze and the over-determination induce power and power arouses fear which becomes part of the Negro's constitution. If fear pervades the Negro, Fanon asks "but of what is he afraid?" He answers, "Of himself." Ultimately the Negro may have to resign himself to his fate or more so to his colour. Fanon is violently opposed to this proposition: "I feel in myself a soul as immense as the world, truly a soul as deep as the deepest of rivers; my chest has the power to expand without limit. I am a master and I am advised to adopt the humility of a cripple" (1967: 125). The internal tug – of – war is intense, smothering his optimism; silence becomes his companion and he resigns to weeping.

The first encounter between whites and the African was characterised by the physiological difference of the latter (Jordan 1968); Crenshaw 2000) of which whiteness was the direct

opposite of blackness. Blackness itself wasn't enough cause for debasement; there was also the strangeness of his language, gestures, eating habits and dress. The fact that one is a Negro implies that he is an animal, is bad, mean, ugly and can entice fear in anyone he comes into sight and contact with (Fanon 1990; Goldberg 2002). The Blackman then, becomes a victim of objectification, “a slave not to the idea others have of me, but to my appearance” (Fanon 1967: 95). Sin is synonymous with the Negro as virtue is with whiteness and the Negro interiorises that, an “epidermalization” of inferiority (Fanon 1967).

The English for example, were so fascinated and impressed by the African's “deviant” behaviour that they used powerful metaphors to describe him: “brutish” or “bestial” or “beastly” (Jordan 1968). They were also compared to “orang – outang” (chimpanzee) which Africa happened to be home to and which closely resembles man (ibid). Apes were seen to be venereal and lustful as the natives. This sexual link would lead to blacks being regarded as lewd, lascivious and wanton. In the New World blacks were not only subjugated in the plantations but stringently barred from sexual relations with white women and Jordan observes, “white men extended their dominion over their Negroes to the bed, where the sex act itself served as ritualistic re – enactment of the daily pattern of social dominance” (Jordan 1968: 141). However white men had licence over Negro women who were seen to be lascivious. Having originated from hot climates, they were associated with sexual activity. Thus white men could not be blamed if they succumbed to her temptations. If the Negro woman was warmly constituted, the male Negro male was virile and lusty. Sexual intercourse with a white woman would be regarded as retributive justice. A pattern of sexual coupled with racial jealousy, fear and feelings of sexual inadequacy ensued. Little wonder the apparent use of castration and lynching as punishment on male Negroes and “it illustrated dramatically the ease with which white men slipped over into treating their Negroes like their bulls and stallions whose 'spirit' could be subdued by emasculation” (Jordan 1968: 156). This

I think is at the heart of violent racism meted on the “Other” throughout history. It is impossible to talk of racism without talking about sex: “White supremacist ideology is based first and foremost on the degradation of black bodies in order to control them” (West 1994: 122) and white fear of black sexuality is a basic ingredient of white racism (Fanon 1967; Hoch 1987). For Fanon (1967), everything happens at the genital level. In his analysis of Negrophobia, the myth of a Negro’s big penis and thus tremendous sexual powers which begets fears in white men is the basis of genital racism. The archetypal figure of the threatening super sensual dark villain or black beast is old in societies of Western civilizations and the threat of a dark villain to the white goddess features prominently in Greek mythology (Hoch 1979). Transcending to the medieval Christian theology, the devil is depicted as a super sensual and lascivious black male with a large penis capable of super masculine exertion (ibid). This villain is not only darker or black but also dirtier, hairier, ugly, dishevelled but also threatening and immoral (ibid). Thus the conflict between the hero, who defends the white goddess, and the dark villain, becomes a struggle between understandings of manhood: human versus animal, white versus black, spiritual versus carnal, higher versus lower and noble versus base (ibid).

Fanon (1967) observes that in all cruelties, tortures and beatings there are conspicuous elements of sexuality. He notes that the viewing of the Negro as a penis symbol and his lynching is a sexual revenge. In Lacanian terms this is symbolic castration – the phallus is a signifier not simply an organ of insemination but symbolises power, just like other objects and insignia it enables the subject who acquires them into position of exercising power (Žižek 2006). The penis which is synonymous with power, under these relations is all what the Negro male has. In the 1930s and 1940s there was a linking of race, libido and death in

colonialist discourses, in complicity with medical and social sciences⁸⁸. This was compounded by syphilis scares which viewed African men as voracious sexual predators; such themes “would remain a staple of the racist imagination”. In addition there was the *swart gevaar* (black peril) which was similar to fear of black men ravishing white women, in the deep American South; in fact apartheid was propelled to power by *swart gevaar*. Thus, in the American South and Nazi Germany, the fear of sexual pollution or violation by the allegedly subhuman race is close to the heart of murderous or genocidal racism (Fredrickson 2002: 120). In Nazi Germany, Jewish males, like blacks, in the racist imagination, were seen as potential seducers and violent sexual predators. The notion of the male Jew as a cunning seducer and violent rapist was the staple for Nazi propaganda, and his relationship with a German woman would pollute and contaminate the racial purity that Nazis were endeavouring to preserve (Fredrickson 2002). However, Fanon (1967), argues that the whilst the Negro was feared for his perceived large penis and posed a biological danger, the Jew was an intellectual danger, resented because of his potential for acquisitiveness and deemed to control everything including wealth and positions of power.

The missionaries did play an invaluable role in recreation of personhood and the black body, something akin to Lacanian imago, the “mirror – stage” fixation where both the missionary and the native cooperated to create a public representation of the self as a Christian convert (de Kock 2004: 127). Centuries earlier, construction of the Khoi and the San as nomads and vagrants, “who were poor, close to criminal classes and carrying disease”⁸⁹ (Zine Magubane 2004: 52) set precedence to the later work of missionaries. The colonised were seen as

⁸⁸ Hein Marais, “Making Sense of the Indefensible”, Mail and Guardian April 5 – 12 2012.

⁸⁹ This followed a trend in Europe where “vagrants” and the poor were criminalised. In South Africa, laws like Cape Vagrancy Ordinance of 1834 and The New Poor Law of 1834 were passed.

savage, a term to describe their “nature” - animal, brute, Neanderthal, bestial associated with heartlessness, unfeeling, unresponsiveness, inhumaneness, bloodthirstiness, cannibalism (Magubane 2007: 7). The “savage” had to be tamed, domesticated and civilised. Exploitation and oppression based on race required constituting the African not only as the “Other” but as species of animal. The history of formation of missionary societies coincides with British expansion overseas. One of the myths created by missionary societies is a false belief that imperialism represents the will of God to convert and save the heathens from moral depravity (Magubane 2007: 83). By 1889 American missionary societies had become established in South Africa, in Natal, Cape Colony and Transvaal. John Comaroff (2001) critiques Foucauldian and postmodern/poststructuralist/post Marxist analysis of colonial governance for insinuating that the capillary power of colonial regimes was based on inculcation of a self – regulating, self- controlled, self – motivated, legally constituted and socially individuated person. Comaroff (2001) argues this was not the task of the state alone but evangelists. The body, the physical object, becomes a social subject (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992), so those who seek to forge empires or to remake existing worlds will start by working on the bodies of would be subjects. The evangelists had an interest in the corporeality of blacks – grooming, dress and comportment was a crucial mode of colonial production. To domesticate the black body, they interfered with their cooking, hygiene, sexuality and work thus creating “free” individuals to consume and be consumed by European commodities (ibid). This individuation was accompanied by commodification and modernization which went with construction of boundaries around the body. In South Africa missionaries sought to create bounded and inward looking persons, “physically enclosed disciples who would also be colonial subjects” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992: 70). The dialectical relationship between body and space leads to embodying of the structures of the world; production of a “new man” in the process of “deculturation and reculturation” manifested through dress, beauty, physical and verbal

manners (Bourdieu 1977: 94). The imprint of pedagogy on the body makes the body to serve as memory, the mnemonic, bearing the content of culture. Central to this is *habitus* which engenders thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions which are historically and socially situated conditions of its production (ibid).

In the 1970s the BCM adopted the slogan “Black is Beautiful” as an attempt to achieve humanity. It challenged the very deep roots about the black man's belief about himself and what makes him negate himself; that he doesn't have to run away from his nature which is perfect, a state that need no modifications. Martin Luther King in a 1967 speech talked at length about the association of blackness with base, evil and ugliness, a fact repeated semantically in education and dictionaries. To counter this, the “Negro” must say to himself and the world:

I am somebody. I am a person. I am with dignity and honour. I have a rich and noble history. How painful and exploited that history has been. Yes. I was a slave through my fore parents and I am not ashamed of that. I am ashamed of the people who were so sinful to make me a slave...we must stand up and say I'm Black and I'm Beautiful.⁹⁰

Because of denigration and feelings of inferiority about their bodies and beauty whose aesthetic value was used in determining one's place in the racial hierarchy (Goldberg 2002), black people start using lightening creams, straightening devices for their hair and so on. Skin bleaching, for example, is often described as a manifestation of “colo – mentality”⁹¹ or what Fela Kuti refers to as “Yellow Fever.”⁹² Malcolm X who in his early life had conked hair which he later viewed as a big step to self – denigration, had joined multitudes of Negroes

⁹⁰ Martin Luther King Jnr 1967 speech “Where Do we Go from Here?”

⁹¹ Bibi Bakare – Yusuf “Yellow Fever, Nko?” The Chronic May 18 – 24 2008.

⁹² “Yellow Fever” is also a title of Fela Kuti's 1970's album.

brainwashed into believing that black people are “inferior” and white people “superior”:

I'm speaking from personal experience when I say of any black man who conks today, or any white – wigged black woman, that if they gave their brains in their heads just half as much attention as they do their hair, they would be a one thousand times better off (1965 [2007:139]).

In Azania the poetry of James Matthews, for example condemns blacks who attempt to escape their blackness by imitating the style of whites, as alienation and opportunism:

My sister has become a schemer and
a scene – stealer
her free swinging breasts strangled
by a bra
face smeared with astra cream
skin paled for white man's society
songs of the village
traded in for tin pan alley
“black is beautiful” has become
as artificial as the wig she wears (cited in Shava 1989: 48).

The constraints posed by the black body is an anathema (Fanon 1967), that is the major reason for laboratories designed to produce chemicals for “denigrefication” for the Negro “to whiten himself and thus throw off the burden of that corporeal malediction” (Fanon 1967: 109). Fanon declares that the black man who strives to whiten his race is as wretched as the one who preaches hatred of the white man. The Negro, a slave of the white man, a victim of white civilisation, in turn enslaves himself and aspires to whiteness in every possible manner: “out of the blackest part of my soul...surges up this desire to be suddenly white. I want to, be recognised, not as black but as white” (Fanon 1967: 45). After all he has to escape that burden that comes with being black and reach the pinnacle of humanity which is symbolically

encapsulated in whiteness. It becomes necessary to help the black man suffering from inferiority complex, liberate him, from this unconscious desire which Fanon sees as a malady. In some sense one feels pity rather than choler for him because he lives in a society that enables this condition, produces and maintains it and a pervasive belief that one race is superior over the other. For Fanon the black man should no longer be faced with the dilemma “whiten or perish” but must be aware of his existential position and if society makes it difficult for him because of the colour of his skin he has to choose action (or passivity). As a result Fanon is preoccupied with the question of how to end suffering and the emergence of a “new man” who is fully human is his concern.

The body of course is important to Fanon's thesis. When Sartre in “Black Orpheus” critiqued Negritude where Césaire 1972 [2000] advanced the notion that the idea of the “barbaric Negro” is a European invention which Negritude has to overthrow, Fanon felt insulted because Sartre reminds him that his blackness is just but a minor term: “Jean – Paul Sartre had forgotten that the Negro suffers in his body quite differentially from the white man. Between, the white man and me, the connexion was irrevocably that of transcendence” (Fanon 1990: 124). However whilst colonisation apologists claim colonisation sought to civilise, it instead de-civilises and degrades the colonised (Césaire 1972 [2000]). But colonisation also dehumanises the coloniser “who in order to ease his conscience gets into the habit of seeing the other man as an animal, accustoms himself to treating him like an animal and tends objectively to transform himself into an animal” (Césaire 1972 [2000: 41], see also Fanon 1967).

The black body was intrinsically connected to social science and knowledge production and capital accumulation. The view on black bodies enabled by racism extended the space in

which capital accumulation, growth of productive forces, and massive generation and redeployment of surplus value could take place (Goldberg 1990). Goldberg writes of the human body:

It is directly experienced; its deficiencies are immediately felt; and it's the receptacle of pleasures and pains, desires and needs. The bodies of others are observable, confronted and engaged. In other words, the body is central to ordinary experience. It offers a unique paradigm: it is a symbol of a 'bounded system' whose parts and functions are related in a complex structure, and whose substance is confined by boundaries and limits that are fragile, vulnerable and threatened. By extension, the body may be found to stand for the body politic, to symbolise society (1990: 306; see also Mary Douglas 1975).

Under these circumstances the human body is classified, ordered, valourised and devalued. Because of their difference blacks are forced to labour, alienated from their labour product, disenfranchised or restricted in their right to social entry and mobility. Concern with purity, impurity, disease, cleanliness, acceptability, inclusion and exclusion are all central to this racist imagination. The "Other" and their being are thus denied personhood, and are excluded from social benefits and social wages.

The colonial encounter itself is brutal. It uses terror which facilitates establishment of hegemony; terror which is not only a physiological act but also a social fact and a cultural construction which serves as a mediator for colonial hegemony (Taussig 1987). It leads to cultures of terror whose violence is based on and nourished by silence thus a cultural construction of evil (ibid). In Azania for example, Cecil John Rhodes is an important character in laying the foundation on the construction of blackness and the violence meted against it. As prime minister in Cape colony in 1890, he introduced the Strop Bill which permitted lashes to be inflicted on black servants for most trivial offences. The black,

regarded in beastly terms, his body would then be immune to pain or would endure it nonchalantly like a beast. The *sjambok* has ever since become synonymous with violence and brutality against the black body. This is the heart of all the inhumanity ever done to blacks. All these point towards suffering. Suffering is a social experience (Kleinman 1995). Suffering is when individuals and groups undergo and bear certain burdens, troubles and serious wounds to the body and spirit. It is characterised by human conditions like chronic illness and death, experience of deprivation, exploitation, degradation, oppression and survivor-ship. Social suffering results from what political, economic and institutions of power do to people (Kleinman, Das and Lock 1997). Racism, itself one of the many forms of oppression, is sustained by an ancient moral concept - the dualism of good and evil (Hodge 1990). Oppressors justify their actions by a belief they have more of a moral worth than those they oppress. The violence meted out to the racialised “Other” wasn't surprising: for more than a millennium the history of Europe is fraught with fratricidal warfare and its celebration, no wonder the indiscriminate violence, cruelty and brutality witnessed at the onset of the European contact with the rest of the non-western societies (Robinson 1983). In any way oppression causes suffering and threatens human survival; requires creation and maintenance of violence; and instituting mechanisms to keep people oppressed including murder and torture, psychological and economic deprivation and imprisonment. Relative deprivation reduces the economic well – being of the oppressed and restricts their means to self – fulfilment. For that reason suffering is wrong and its wrongness is derived from our reactions to pain and “pain is something we would rather do without” (Hodge 1990: 93). In a country where blackness has always been associated with poverty (Biko 1987), “to be a poor man is hard, but to be a poor race in a land of dollars [Rands] is the very bottom of hardships” (Du Bois 1999: 128). Blacks have experienced collective suffering and there continues to be a market for suffering and commodification of victim-hood (Kleinman, Das and Lock 1997).

Mortality and morbidity continue to characterise blackness – poverty, disease, hunger, malnutrition and other social malaise. These are all historical constructions. However Kleinman and Kleinman (1995) caution against privileging suffering; it can indeed inform resistance and response through grief, rage, humiliation but also endurance, aspiration, humour, irony. Importantly suffering can be a major cause for mobilisation and agential combativeness of those subjected to it.

5.2. Blackness as Labour

Imperialism and invention of race were fundamental aspects of western industrial modernity (McClintock 1995). Slavery and colonialism associated black bodies with labour and popular attitudes saw this in symbiotic relationship (Du Bois 1965; Casely – Hayford 1969; Chinweizu 1987; Zine Magubane 2004). The value of black labour in South Africa and elsewhere made the economic foundation of the so - called “Negro problem” and the role of forced labour reinforced black inferiority. The role of forced labour (*corvee* in French colonies), *isibhalo* in Azania (Carson 2000) or *chibharo* in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) whose semantic meaning has connotations of rape is important in this analysis. Since labour is fundamentally degrading it had to be the burden for inferior people (du Bois 1965) and the white man became a symbol of capital and the Negro that of labour (Fanon 1967). Colonial contact which is marked by “forced labour, intimidation, pressure, the police, taxation, theft, rape, compulsory crops, contempt, mistrust, arrogance, self – complacency, swinishness, brainless elites, degraded masses” (Cesaire 1972 [2000: 42] means no human contact at all but alienation. Alienation included a social distance from themselves, their fellow human beings, regarding themselves as commodities and regarded by the colonisers as “pure” labour (Wolf 1971: 280). These are relations of domination and submission which turn the colonising man into a “classroom monitor, an army sergeant, a prison guard, a slave driver

and the indigenous man into an instrument of production” (Cesaire 1972 [2000: 42]). So colonisation is akin to “thingification” (ibid). When the British conquered Azania they imposed a capitalist system, grabbed the land, cattle and stock, turned natives into reserves, others into farm labour and labour in capital investments in commerce and industry (Tabata, n.d.). In the formative colonial years, Anne McClintock narrates this genesis: in Natal the British (numbering in ratio one as to twenty - five) pondered how to force the Zulu from their lands and compel them to wage labour against their will. It is from this riddle that the degenerate “idleness” of blacks arose (McClintock 2000: 364) which, “of all the stigmata of degeneration invented by the settlers to mark themselves from Africans was idleness: the same stigma of racial unworth that Haggard saw as marking the Kukuana's degeneration and loss of title to the diamonds.” In fact almost all travel accounts, memoirs and ethnographic documents indicated the “sloth, idleness, indolence or torpor of natives, who the colonists claimed, preferred scheming and fighting, lazing and wanton lasciviousness to industry” (ibid). The partnership between the British and the Dutch meant a joint exploitation of blacks. The black person ceased to be just a person who is black but became a vital tool in a hoarding and acquisition race associated with colonial capitalism (Ndebele 1972). While white settlers had exterminated indigenous people in Australasia and elsewhere, the contradiction is that in South Africa black labour was indispensable, that no white person could do without a black servant (Magubane 2007). The idea of Englishness and Anglo – Saxon racial purity became entrenched with the advent of settler colonialism and imperialism. Cecil John Rhodes' ideas and activities are crucial in understanding the type of state that evolved after 1910. Young African men would be compelled to labour to enable them to pay tax. Rhodes said:

By the gentle stimulant of the labour tax to remove from them the life of sloth and laziness; you will thus teach them the dignity of labour...It must be brought

home to them that in the future nine – tenths of them will have to spend their lives in daily labour – in physical work, in manual labour...my idea is that natives should be kept in these native reserves and not mixed with white men at all.⁹³

In the aftermath of armed conquest there was complete destruction of economic and social structures of African society tied with racial discrimination, contempt of Africans who were treated as chattel and forced to labour for low wages (Cabral 1979). White civilisation according to Kadalie, a popular leader in the 1920s, is built upon the assumption of the natives forming to “all eternity” a huge labouring class, satisfied to live on the level of an animal and with little opportunities for education or advancement; and of the white man forming the aristocracy of the country, wielding all legislative power in their hands and doing nothing but skilled work, of which the natives quo natives were assumed to be incapable.⁹⁴ The economic policy was to squeeze as much labour as possible at little expense.⁹⁵ Pauperization of Africans, destruction of their society, confinement to labour reserves meant social death and it was necessary that the African people be nothing except a labour force which could be bought for next to nothing (Magubane 2007). The African is reduced to an object, classified as “idle”, “undesirable”, “and detrimental to maintenance of peace and order” and as a servant to the white man; his labour is canalised and is largely reduced to the level of a commodity (Kuper 1965: 63). There are also occupational hazards especially in mines. Black workers, in 2012 continue to face hazard, disease and death in South African mines. History does continue.

As indicated in the previous chapters, for many it was difficult to separate the worker and the

⁹³ Cited in W.M. Tsotsi, Presidential Address at Conference of the All African Convention, Queenstown, 17 – 20 December 1956.

⁹⁴ Clements Kadalie “Open Letter to Blackpool” published in the New Leader, 27 September 1927.

⁹⁵ “A Declaration to the People of South Africa from the NEUM”, Statement by the NEUM April 1951

Black. As Biko argues, “The term Black worker is a bit misleading because I think 90% of Blacks are workers. When you are talking about blacks you are talking about workers.”⁹⁶ For Marxists and charterists black suffering was predicated on economic exploitation and not on anti – Blackness (Wilderson 2008). Following Orlando Patterson's work, exploitation and alienation are not merely essential to suffering; Blackness and African-ness are constituent to slavery and racism. The black man is a victim because he is a black man and since he is oppressed within the confines of his race and because of it he must first of all become conscious of his race (Sartre cited in Magubane 2007). However Magubane's Marxist inspired position is that Africans weren't enslaved because they were black but because they could provide labour although racism derived directly from the lucrative slave trade.

5.3. Blackness and Social Science

The formation of objects was through exclusion based on difference, for example madness in Europe (Foucault 1972). The objects were framed as a result of a social science opinion which was respected and regarded in society, which was a body of knowledge and practice. All these worked together with the penal code and religious authority. There was connection between power and epistemology in naming, evaluating, recognition, signification of the racial “Other” that was denied all autonomy thus “extending power, control, authority and domination over them” (Goldberg 2000: 227). Racialised social science furnishes the grounds for knowledge used by colonial governors whose administration and governance requires less raw brute force because they have information of the “Other's” nature, character, characteristic behaviour, mind, culture, history, traditions and predictions of likely responses (ibid). Historically white supremacy has been premised on political, scientific and religious theories which relied on stereotypes, beliefs and racial characterisations of blacks which

⁹⁶ Steve Biko, BPC – SASO Trial.

made their conditions appear logical and natural and therefore rationalise their oppression (Crenshaw 2000; West 2002). The result is epistemic violence, that denies the subjects a place, silences them and “are ontologically and epistemologically and morally evicted” (Goldberg 2000: 228; see also Crenshaw 2000). The epistemological constructs are then tested in spaces of the “Other” - the colonies, plantations, reservations, puppet governments, villages, townships, prisons, ganglands, ghettos and crowded inner cities (ibid). Colonial discourse did use differences and discrimination to inform the discursive and political practices of cultural and racial hierarchisation (Bhabha 1983). According to Bhabha, the purpose of colonial discourse is to construct the colonised as degenerate on the basis of racial difference in order to justify conquest and governmentality. In modern racism the relationship between the “Other” and the State is mediated by the latter's use of knowledge and information which is employed to formulate its policies (Balibar 1991) and invokes them to legitimate and rationalise power and domination (Goldberg 2000). For example the theory of polygenism classified humanity into separate inferior/superior species. The concept of race allowed enlightenment philosophers to legitimate white supremacy using innate biological characteristics and comparative cultural anthropology thus giving racism “scientific legitimacy” (Marks and Tropic 1987; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992; Giroux 1994; Magubane 2007; Hutton 2011), while the teachings of the church provided its theological underpinning and enlightenment philosophy its intellectual justification. Those who used social science in construction of blackness in non – western societies like Azania came or were inspired from this tradition. The colonial modernities from the fifteenth century up to the globalised age have constructed an epistemology and hermeneutics that subalternises other forms of knowledge (Mignolo 2000). Said (1984) revisits questions of knowledge, power and representation in an environment and setting inscribed by strategies of power. Challenging orientalism, for example, is a reconstitution of the orient as an object. Said

critiques anthropology for enhancing European representation of the “Other.” Since classification is central to scientific methodology and scientific method, the anthropological ordering into a system of races in terms of rational capacity would establish a hierarchy of humankind (Goldberg 1990). The circumscription of European representation of “Others”, reduction of human subjects to abstract bodies had the objectifying effect of enabling their subjection to the cold scientific stare of Europeans and their descendants (Foucault 1976; Rabinow 1991; Goldberg 1990: 302). Asad and Dixon (1985; Fanon 2008) have also proposed a critique of European ethnographers and the problematic of translating/interpreting non – western representations. This inadequacy is because of the power dynamics inherent in anthropological work. Indeed anthropology is complicity in representation and racial profiling and construction of the “Other.” Ethnographic exhibitions of natives abroad and their representation added with lectures from missionaries like David Livingstone and Robert Moffat were also manifestations of power and knowledge. Anthropologists argued that enslavement of Africans was in sync with laws of evolutionary theory and natural history. By the nineteenth century the theory of the curse of Ham as progenitor of Africans was no longer satisfactory; the emergence of the new “science” of anthropology gave further impetus to racist thinking. Europe's best brains produced and cultivated the fanatical vision that humanity was made of “inferior” and “superior” races. “Scientific racism” rested on the negation of the fundamental principle of the unity of human species. It was based on false hope that “science” would eventually provide an answer that would establish the permanent subordinate status of people who were not “white” (Magubane 2007: 62). A central figure in formulating scientific racism is Robert Knox, who is a forerunner of anthropological studies in South Africa. The science of ethnology born in 1843 coincided with the interweaving with racism, for example, the interest in the Khoi and Saartjie Baartman who in 1810 was taken to

London for public display as a “Hottentot Venus” and the “first imported savage.”⁹⁷ Important to this whole scenario is the marriage between social Darwinism and eugenics. Francis Galton and Karl Pearson, fanatics of eugenics movement, which combined Malthusian theory and social Darwinism, believed that pure breeding and selected inheritance overcame moral deficiencies of the poor (Dubow 1992). According to Magubane (2007), Galton made social Darwinism and its genocidal theories fashionable and gave it a powerful political resonance:

The philosophical near – nihilism bred by the social sciences like anthropology and eugenics was ideal to propagate the ideas of white supremacy without seeming to do so. Race consciousness was sharpened among social scientists and used, like a stone with which you could hit two birds, as a weapon to neutralise domestic enemies while mobilising against the inferior other (Magubane 2007: 161).

Galton's ideas resonated with apartheid and segregation. The whole *raison d'etre* of imperialism was that of the Herrenvolk (which is inherent in imperialism), the “master race”, governing the “inferior” races. South African eugenicists derived their ideas from Eugen Fischer which would be taken up by social scientists obsessed with race – hygiene and white supremacy (Dubow 1992). There was also the role of cultural anthropology (*volkekundige*), which emerged as a form of power and knowledge (Gordon 1988), whose origins are attributed to Werner Eiselen. As an ideological formation it generated categories of inclusion and exclusion, creating a space in which blacks could be located and treated and “without mystification it established an authoritative 'regime of truth’” (Gordon 1988: 548). The *volkekundige* were intellectually shaped by the poor white problem; the central notion being not merely *ethnos* (Sharp 1981) but service to Afrikaner people (*volksdiens*). They were mainly interested in bounded cultures and asked descriptive questions like “how”, “where”,

⁹⁷ Dr James Hunt was the first president of Anthropological Society of London; Sir George Grey, governor of Cape Colony during Xhosa wars of resistance, was a member of ASL

“when” and “what” rather than “why” and failure to do that arise from theoretical tutelage derived from Muhlmann and Shirokogoroff (Sharp 1981). Anthropology and ethnography in South Africa became associated with native policy and administration where mainly Afrikaner “experts” of indigenous cultures were employed and flourished (Hammond – Tooke 1997). Gordon writes of this discipline:

Volkekundige served to facilitate the transformation of power from vulgar control to management through co-optive domination of blacks. *Volkekundige* doesn't liberate its audience from ignorance but merely gives rise to a new form of domination through social science endeavour. In the final analysis it is not a humanistic discourse but a science of social control (1988: 549 – 50).

On the other hand the English anthropologists found it easy to castigate their Afrikaner colleagues. That may seem self – righteous because English speaking founders of anthropology, their structural functionalism, conservatism, emphasis on synchronic studies of bounded societies, covert racism and work was used by segregationists and apartheid ideologues to justify their policies (Dubow 1992; Hammond – Tooke 1997). They immersed themselves in political commitments, neomarxism and development work and eschewed all talk on culture and ethnicity (Kuper 1987). However the question of ethnicity and nation has proved enduring and has come to haunt the postapartheid imagination (a subject I discuss in chapter ten).

5.4. Blackness as Agency

The question of race and racism has been central in the fight for freedom. As indicated in the last chapters, there has always been a heavy presence of Black Nationalist ideas in the country, a la Pan – Africanism of du Bois, Henry Sylvester Williams, and Marcus Garvey among others. For example Z.R. Mahabane, departs from his ANC colleagues as seen in these words:

For reasons of self - preservation, self – protection and self – aggrandisement, the white man has elected to treat the Bantu peoples of Africa as an “inferior”, or as Earl Buxton, in his presidential address at the annual meeting of the African Society in London on the 15th of March last, described our people as the “child races” of the empire. They have carried this to a logical conclusion by denying us the right, privileges and responsibilities of manhood. And thus as children we have no voice in the affairs of the country.⁹⁸

Mahabane further added that according to Bantu custom only males who haven't undergone the ritual of circumcision are called “amankwenkwe” or “maqai” and therefore treated as youth no matter their age. The black man in South Africa is treated in the same manner: “He is a political child, a political *nkwenkwe* or *maqai*...the poor black man is consequently reduced to a position of utter voicelessness and votelessness, defencelessness, homelessness, landlessness, a condition of deepest humiliation and absolute dependency.” Mahabane ended the speech by calling for a “full and free cooperation of the white and black races of the land and all classes and conditions of men.”

Clements Kadalie opined that white civilisation in Africa has been built on the assumption that the black man is inherently inferior to the white man, and that this alleged inferiority gave the white man the right to exploit the black economically and oppress him politically and socially.⁹⁹

Pixley ka Isaka Seme was one of the many different opinions in the Congress. He used to passionately talk of the need for “Race Pride” and decried the detribalised educated African who gets detached from his uneducated tribal kin. “Race Pride” was necessary in the country

⁹⁸ Rev. Z.R. Mahabane “The Exclusion of the Bantu.” Address as president of the Cape Province National Congress 1921.

⁹⁹ Clements Kadalie “Open Letter to Blackpool”, published in the New Leader, 27 September 1927.

as it was for the US Negroes where even the coloured ones regard themselves as Negroes.¹⁰⁰

In the 1930s racial consciousness was growing as expressed in articles written at the time, like this 1935 editorial:

The hour of African freedom has struck. That for which Toussaint L'Overture suffered and died, that for which Menelik, Shaka, Makana, Lewanika, Lobengula, Langalibalele and other great sons of Africa, lived, suffered and died for (this would be repeated by later generations immediately starting with Lembede). The complete liberty of Africans to shape their own destiny in their own way, has come...the dreams and prophecies of Marcus Garvey, the solidarity of Africans throughout the world is becoming a fact. And but for a few TRAITORS, Africans had reached the land of Promise – liberty, equality, opportunity and justice.¹⁰¹

The editorial urged Africans to free themselves from “manifestations of inferiority complex” which debarred them from unity and solidarity; that the African Liberator teaches them self-reliance and self – help. Progress could not be realised if Africans ape Europeans who,

Tell us that they represent the best in the race, for any ordinarily trained monkey would do the same. The slave mentality still holds our people in chains and they firmly believe that they can only exist through the good graces of their 'masters'. Before doing anything worthwhile, they must have the stamp of approval from some Europeans, otherwise they have no confidence in their work, thoughts and ideas. It is this spirit of 'defeatism and boyishness' secured as 'good servants' rather than as independents, which makes our men who represent their coats, suffer from lack of initiative, inferiority complexed, lying, backbiting, envious, backstairs -creepers and abject cringers' fight to death any and all independent ideas and actions calculated to uplift Africans without consulting the 'good master (ibid).

Anticipating the PAC and BCM decades later the same editorial accuses these blacks of

¹⁰⁰ Pixley ka Isaka Seme 1932 “The African National Congress – is it Dead?” *A Pamphlet*.

¹⁰¹ Gilbert. T. Coka “The African Liberator, Our Message” Editorial, *The African Liberator*, October 1935.

being “good boys” who are “spineless creatures” who live by deceit but “will not forever remain deceiving Africans and therefore cannot permanently impede African progress towards unity, liberty, justice and freedom.” At the same time there was a call to a “Buy Black Campaign” as “our reply to war, oppressive legislation, discrimination, injustice, pauperisation, unemployment and oppression.” Therefore “all African money must circulate through African friends” coupled with economic boycott against unjust and tyrannical employers, persistent struggle for more wages and shorter working conditions. DDT Jabavu also urged a patriotic spirit of African Nationalism by supporting “our own traders.”¹⁰² For him nationalism of Race – Pride is steeped in business and commerce, trades Africans should venture into. He makes reference to the US Negroes where they say “keep your money within the colour.”

At the same time a litany of discriminatory legislation from the 1930s was passed: Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 amended in 1937; Native Laws Amendment Act 1937; Industrial Conciliation Act 1937; Master and Servant Act; Native Labour Registration Act, 1913, redefined in 1942; the Factories Act 1941; the Gestapo Act (Unlawful Organisations Act) meant to silent opponents of apartheid; the Ghetto Act (Group Areas Act) meant to create overcrowded ghettos for Africans, Indians and Coloureds where “ghetto life will make it impossible for the Non – European to make any economic progress whatsoever. Severe unemployment and disgraceful slums will be the order of the day.”¹⁰³ Pamphlets and political speeches of the day cajoled Africans with phrases like “Tsoga MaAfrica!” (Wake up African!) The effects of discrimination which coloureds and Indians also felt spurred a need for a non -

¹⁰² “Presidential Address” by Prof DDT Jabavu, AAC, 29 June 1936.

¹⁰³ “United Anti – Fascists Rally.” Flyer Announcing Rally in Durban on May 28 1950, addressed by Dr. James Moroka.

white unity. There was a common awareness among all non – whites that they had a common enemy, the white oppressor (Karis 1973). Since the legal mechanism was integral to the racist machination, protest has always also been directed at these. The binary distinction deployed by the racist legal mechanism made the life of a Non – European very cheap; count not as people but assets and therefore the unity of all oppressed groups – Africans, coloureds and Indians was indispensable.¹⁰⁴ I discuss this below, as concerns the BCM.

For the PAC mental revolution was central to liberation. Sobukwe and the PAC sought to exorcise the African from slave mentality and teach the people of their “African Personality.” The concept apparently has a long history beginning with early Pan – Africanists like Mojola Agbebi, Holy Johnson and Edward Wilmot Blyden who used the term at a lecture to the Young Men's Literary Association of Sierra Leone on 27 May 1893 (Lynch 1971). The term then, never meant quite the same thing as it did to later African Nationalists with whom it has been associated (Ayandele 1970). Initially it had cultural connotations. African customs and institutions not offensive to humanity should be adopted rather than abandoned as majority of educated Africans tended to do. For Blyden African personality meant that Africans must preserve the purity of the Negro race and its characteristics. He expressed the view that Africans weren't biologically inferior to other races as achievements of numerous Africans attest. He saw an African with a willingness and joy “to endure hardship, habit of thrift, and self – denial, self – control and physical strength” which enabled him to be self – reliant and self – governing; lived long; had the urge for power and force of association with others to cooperate communally; very religious; has moral fibre to resist evil and a high standard of sexual morality (cited in Ayandele 1970: 291). It was these virtues Johnson wished to see preserved. Johnson also emphasised the physiognomy of the African. He led an anti – liquor

¹⁰⁴ A Declaration to the Nations of the World”, Statement of the Non – European Unity Movement, signed by Rev Z.R. Mahabane, Dr G.H. Gool and E.C. Roberts, July 1945.

crusade, after seeing the effects of liquor on Africans. Gin bartered in West Africa in the nineteenth century was “especially a vile concoction which neither the manufacturers nor the European sojourners would taste” (cited in Ayandele 1970: 293). In contrast African beer had no deleterious effects, never intoxicating no matter the quantity taken and was no disturbance to sobriety in traditional society. He also considered that the white man and his civilisation undermined the African personality “at a time when extremely Anglicised Africans were contending that not only Africans must be ashamed of their past and culture but they must be ashamed of their colour as well” (cited in Ayandele 1970: 295). For Nkrumah African personality is a political philosophy to exorcise from Africa all forms of neo – colonialism and imperialism. For others like Senghor, it's mainly psychological and emotional, discerned in abstract philosophy, songs and poetry. The Azanian Africanists argued that man is a social being not an economic animal; thus he must recognise the primacy of the material and spiritual interests of his fellow humans and must not uphold his own interests at the expense of a fellow man and “it is only from this set – up that the human personality can be developed and that respect for it can be developed.”¹⁰⁵ 1958 was declared a “Status Year”, a battle for political, economic and social status where the PAC announced “A Status Campaign” whose first stage targeted businesses and whites who addressed Africans as “native”, “kaffir”, “boy”, “girl”, “Jane” or “John.” They asserted: “we will no longer have “Jack”, “George”, and “Nancy” etc as handy labels to be attached to any black man or woman by any white man or white woman, white boy or white girl.”¹⁰⁶ It called for boycott of all those shops, European or African that didn't comply and ends by: “Ma – Afrika is the meaning of our struggle! Mayibuye!”

¹⁰⁵ Manifesto of the Africanist Movement.

¹⁰⁶ “Forward to 1958”, Editorial by the Editor, *The Africanist*, December 1957.

The Unity Movement regarded herrenvolk ideology as infused from childhood into white people by school, church and state: “from cradle to grave, every phase of life is consciously regulated and moulded in order to preserve and perpetuate the division of the people of South Africa in to the European - the herrenvolk and the Non – European – the slave, divinely ordained to minister to all his needs.”¹⁰⁷ Racial superiority is then infused into every aspect of life in South Africa that “it has reached the very vitals, and no single phase of public or private life remains untainted by it” including liberals in the Labour Party and Trade Unions (ibid). The Unity Movement provided similarities with Nazi Germany where while the “Jew had to distinguish himself as an outcast by wearing a yellow patch, in South Africa a brown or black face makes the patch unnecessary” (ibid).

Africans were associated with a badge of slavery, the *dom pass* which is “extended from the the African male dog to the African female bitch”¹⁰⁸ and a main symbol of domination (Kuper 1965). Passes for African women, who in the eyes of the white man, is a “potential prostitute, an undesirable element – not a woman, mind you, or a mother...she is not a woman, just as her husband is not a man. If the dog, the man carries a dog-collar in the form of a reference book, why not the bitch?”¹⁰⁹ In fact the myth of racial superiority is encapsulated in the “dompass”, so the fight against the pass is to divorce the mentality that the African is synonymous with the pass: “In fact an African does not feel himself if he doesn't feel the weight of the dompass in his pocket.”¹¹⁰ In the postapartheid the pass has assumed a new social life; is a basis for exclusion and inclusion in the new nation, a factor in

¹⁰⁷ “A Declaration to the Nations of the World”, Statement of the Non – European Unity Movement, signed by Rev Z.R. Mahabane, Dr G.H. Gool and E.C. Roberts, July 1945.

¹⁰⁸ Inaugural Convention of the PAC, 4 – 6 April 1959, opening address by R.M. Sobukwe.

¹⁰⁹ Potlako K Leballo, “The Nature of the Struggle Today.” Article in *The Africanist*, December 1957.

¹¹⁰ “Launching Address”, R.M Sobukwe's final instructions, March 20 1960.

police harassment and profiling of darker blacks who are suspected to be immigrants. In short it contains the philosophical and racial trappings of apartheid.

Agency involves resistance to colonialism, colonialist ideologies and other colonial legacies (Adam and Tiffin 1991). Identity is both an affirmation and negation. Black becomes relevant to an African when he comes to contradiction with whiteness and is sharpened by continued white domination. In this regard Black or African identity becomes a weapon for emancipation (Rodney 1981). For Rodney African revolution shows that what once was a badge of servility becomes a bond of unity and a liberation tool. Garvey had contended that the black man was universally oppressed on racial grounds so any programme of emancipation must be organised around race first and race became a political entity (Martin 1999). Garvey was displeased by black people who didn't think in racial terms, the "Uncle Tom Negroes", "a yes boss negro", "a hoardi massa Negro", "a yes massa Charlie Negro" (Martin 1999: 231).

Blackness as agency may have been a response and a reaction, for response and reaction follows many varieties to racist representation of blacks. Interpellation for me is an integral part of that reaction. Language is a terrain of power and domination, compounded by hierarchical relations which also have an influence on speech (Zine Magubane 2004). Apparently writing from a Marxist influenced position, she argues that all relations including economic are expressed or have to be expressed in thought and "all economic relations have an ideological dimension, and issues of language and meaning aren't simply ephemeral or secondary" (Magubane 2004: 13). By mid nineteenth century both the British and Afrikaners referred to blacks as *kaffirs* (Simons and Simons 1983) although the term native seems to have been used interchangeably with *kaffir*. The word "Bantu" and "Bantu race" was also

used in this period. The Bantu are defined by linguistic criteria and are defined by use of the root “ntu” for human being (Seligman 1930). They are divided into tribal units with social organisation and religious system resembling each other and phenotypical characteristics ranging from black to yellowish - brown but the prevalent colour is chocolate brown, the hair is woolly and short (du Bois 1965). In South Africa the Bantu are AmaXhosa, AmaThembu, AmaMpondo, AmaMpondomisi, Ama Zulu, AmaSwazi, Bathonga, BaSotho, BaTswana (Seligman 1930). Pheko (2012) argues that Bantu is a modern application which rose when Dr Bleek a scholar of Azanian languages used Bantu as a comprehensive term for all dialects of the inhabitants of southern Africa. Just like native, “Bantu” was used by both colonial rulers and Africans themselves, the former as racial naming, the latter as self – identification and self – referential. Editorials and articles in J.T. Jabavu's *Imvo Zabantsundu* refer to Africans as Natives and the “Aboriginal population”. Even early organised African movement had the word in them – South African Native Congress (formed in 1903); South African National Native Congress later the ANC. However the South African Spectator (29 June 1901) favoured the word black because it “applies to some millions of people who count among them some of the best men the world ever produced.” Apparently it is tendentious by both colonists and early African activists to see humanity as races, probably because of the influence of polygenism.

At the AAC conference in 1936 one delegate criticised calling Africans “Non – European,” when according to him they formed the indigenous population of the African continent. He urged the convention to use the term “non – Africans” to refer to all Europeans as distinct from Africans because here they lived in Africa and not Europe where the term “Non – European” is used, which is conceivable and tolerable to strangers to Europe. However “this sign of an awakening of race – consciousness may well be discussed next year in December,”

quipped the chairperson. The Africanists insisted that black people were Africans, not Bantu as the government was inclined to use, which they promoted as part of psychological liberation:

...there are some people who believe that nothing is better unless it is brought about by a white man. These people will be slaves for good. You are Africans. You are not Bantu.¹¹¹

At the same meeting one S.T. Ngendane added, “You should be proud of being an African. This word Bantu means everybody. We are not non - Europeans. We are not Natives. We are Africans.” Leading Africanists like Sobukwe also asked, “How long shall we be called Bantu, Native, and Non- European, non – white or black stinking kaffir in our fatherland? When shall we be called sir, Mr, Mrs, Miss, ladies and gentlemen? And continue to live in squalor in townships and 'emaplangeni' (houses made of planks), starving, without rights, vote or voice.”¹¹² He reiterated that their energies are directed against a myth which goes by racial superiority - herrenvolkism, white leadership or white supremacy. For Magubane (2007) the words “native” and “kaffir” are the most demeaning in the vocabulary of colonialism and at one time “native” meant one born in bondage.

In mid 1960s “coloureds” were being urged to join the Africanists. According to Barney Desai, formerly of the Coloured Peoples' Congress, since the Khoi – Khoi (Hottentots) and Batwa (Bushmen) tribes are fore-bearers of the Cape coloured people, coloureds should recognise themselves as Africans.¹¹³ He also called on Indians and coloureds numbering two and a half million “enslaved people” to join the PAC and “for all time bury their racial tags.”

¹¹¹ A. Matrose, quoted in notes taken by African police constable at PAC meeting, Langa, Cape Town, February 14, 1960, available in Karis and Carter collection, University of the Witwatersrand.

¹¹² “Launching Address”, R.M Sobukwe's final instructions, March 20 1960.

¹¹³ Statement of Dissolution of the SA Coloured Peoples' Congress by Barney Desai and Cardiff Marney, London, March 1966.

All those who would continue with sectional and racist activity would be regarded as “enemies and traitors to the cause of our liberation.”

In the New World the term Negro which is borrowed from Hispanic languages comes from human complexion (du Bois 1965; Jordan 1968). In order to establish righteousness for the view that whites had a right to live off the labour of darker people, science, religion, government and industry were brought in and the word “Negro” was used for the first time in world's history to tie colour to race and blackness to slavery and degradation (du Bois 1965: 20). While the colonists referred to Indians as savages (reflecting their view of Indians as uncivilised) or pagans (which explicitly had a missionary urge); the colonists referred to Africans as Negroes, by eighteenth century to blacks and Africans “but almost never to Negro heathens or pagans or savages” (Jordan 1968: 95). For themselves the English used Christian, then English and free, after 1680. Taking the colonies as a whole, they used the term white, showing gradual mutation of the religious element to a secular nationality. Laws prohibiting miscegenation in the seventeenth century and migration of non – English Europeans spurred the use of “white” and “English” while a dark complexion became an independent rationale for enslavement. In the US there were problems caused by mulatto children. Since they had a taint of Negro blood they were seen as Negroes with the Virginia Assembly in 1705 defining a mulatto as “the child, grand child or great grandchild of a Negro” (Jordan 1968). In South Africa, in contrast, offspring of mixed blood were and are referred to as “coloureds”. In the 1960s black America there was a growing resentment of the word Negro because the term is an invention of the oppressor (Toure and Hamilton (1999). In the early 1960s there was no agreement on the use of the word “Negro”, some preferring “Afro – Americans”, “Aframericans”, “Africans Abroad”, “Persons of African Descent”, “Asiatics” or “Black people” (Essien – Udom 1962: 11). The Abyssinian movement in Chicago in the 1920s, a semi – religious and nationalistic group referred to themselves as

Ethiopians and not Negroes and didn't want to be associated with the inferior connotations of the term. In 1959 the New York based neo - Garveyite nationalist Pioneer Movement under Carlos. A. Cooks called for a complete abrogation of the word Negro because it is closely connected to “nigger”; which is derogatory, vulgar and offensive; it defines no man, land of origin or heritage therefore “we demand to be called, when dealing with colour, Black men and women and when dealing with race, land and heritage, Africans” (Cooks cited in Essien – Udom 1962: 41). The movement said anyone who fits into the following categories is a Negro: Caste-men – coloured people; integrationist Negroes; hand-picked house niggers; would be black; people not organised; brainwashed Negroes; Uncle Tom niggers; handkerchief head Negroes; conked head Negroes; other people niggers - stool pigeons. The creation of the Negro, a beast of burden only fit for slavery was closely associated with economic, technical and financial requirements of western development from the sixteenth century onwards. As an ideological construct it suggested no situatedness in time, history, space or ethno – politico – geography, civilisation, culture, religion and finally “no humanity which might command consideration” (Robinson 1983: 105). Many blacks began with renewed pride, to call themselves African – American, Afro – Americans or black because “that is the image of ourselves” (Toure and Hamilton 1999: 236). The argument is that the black community has to have a positive image of itself which it creates, meaning “we will no longer call ourselves lazy, apathetic, dumb, good – timers, shiftless etc” (Toure and Hamilton 1999: 236) because these are the words used by white America to describe blacks. If blacks accept this then they will see themselves in a negative way precisely the way white America “wants us to see ourselves”. Upon this realisation, “we shall view ourselves as African – America and as black people who are in fact energetic, determined, intelligent, beautiful and peace – loving” (Toure and Hamilton 1999: 237). Having defined themselves as black, they regard each other as brother/sister, “soul – brother” and “soul sister” and it shows a growing

sense of community; that blacks have a common bond not only among themselves but with their African brethren. Contemporary black youths have appropriated the historically racially offensive “nigger”, enunciated “nigga”, as a self – referential term. This appropriation has happened in Black American ghettos and is an expression of street life and has been popularised by rap music where the term has been effectively recoded in its social meaning while in the public discourse it is taboo (Lott 1994). When used in black vernacular culture, the reversal of meaning makes the term function as a source of pride rather than denigration besides being a term of defiance. The transnational commodification and global appeal of hip – hop culture has enabled the introduction of “nigga” into a global context. Azanian black youth use it among themselves indiscriminately.

The word “darkie” is mentioned in the writings of du Bois (1965: 19) and it corresponded with the religious doctrine. It also frequently features in speeches of early black American leaders from the eighteenth century. Malcolm X (1965 [2007]) recounts that when he was growing up white kids called them “nigger”, “darkie” and “Rastus”. “Darkie” is a common parlance among Azanian BC oriented youth. I am not sure how and when it got inserted into the local linguistic repertoire. It is also sometimes translated into vernacular, *mnyamane*, a reference to blackness, “in and out.”¹¹⁴ One BC participant constantly addresses me as “blackman” whenever I converse with her. I always chuckle about it. There is also frequent emphasis of the phrase “Tsoga Darkie”, an extension of the old Africanist, “Tsoga mo Afrika.”

In the French colonies and among French colonised the struggle against alienation gave birth to Negritude “because Antilleans were ashamed of being Negroes, they searched for all sorts

¹¹⁴ I heard this during one poetry performance by a BC poet, Sabar.

of euphemisms for Negro: they would say a man of colour, a dark complexioned man, and other idiocies like that” (Cesaire, interview with Rene Depestre, 1967). So they adopted the word *negre* as a term for defiance, “to some extent it was a reaction of enraged youth. Since there was shame about the word *negre*, we chose the word *negre*” (ibid). Asked whether the concept Negritude was formed on the basis of shared ideological and political beliefs, Cesaire says it was a matter of feeling, “you either felt black or did not feel black. Secondly there was the political aspect – Negritude was part of the left and liberation “placed us on the left, but both of us (Senghor and him) refused to see the black question as simply a social question.” Although some people believe the black question will disappear with change in economic conditions, Cesaire believes that although the economic question is important it isn't the only thing because blacks were doubly proletarianised and alienated – as workers and also as black. Depestre quips: “Certainly, because the relationship between consciousness and reality are extremely complex. That's why it is equally necessary to decolonise our minds, our inner life at the same time that we decolonise society.”

The inception of the BCM in the late 1960s and early 1970s saw a redefinition of the meaning of blackness. The term black has emerged from mass struggles against racism therefore it assumed its own self-identity.¹¹⁵ Of course there were problems of Indians and coloureds identifying themselves as black; it served as a political category more than a racial one. Writing of coloureds, Alexander (1989) says they were in a sense *amper baas*, almost white, not quite non – white; any threat to downgrade them to status of African peasant would be met with stiff resistance. This ambivalence made them realise that their destiny lay with the rest of the oppressed – the Africans and Indians. In the postapartheid there are debates in the BC youth on this matter, given that the Chinese successfully lobbied in the courts to be

¹¹⁵ Azania News Volume 26 Number 6, October – December 1990.

considered black, ostensibly on economic imperative (they will be eligible for BEE deals). Discussions fluctuate between “symbolic” blackness and blackness as culturally and racially defined. Others reckon that in the Indian community, for example, whiteness is central in determining privilege; darker skinned Indians are the poorest and the closer one is to whiteness the better off one is likely to be. This opinion states that whiteness thrives on skin colour. The issue of coloureds reflects a divide and rule tactic: the light skinned versus the dark skinned. All the same coloureds suffer from violent rejection of whiteness and should be seen as “just another tribe within blackness.”¹¹⁶ Coming back to the fictive kinship of black Africans, Indians and coloureds, similar developments were happening in the UK. Immigrants and descendants of immigrants of many nationalities from the Caribbean, East Africa, the Asian subcontinent, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India called themselves black (Hall 2000; Claire Alexander 2000), a racial category which Sivanandan (cited in Roediger 1992) characterises as a “political colour” of the oppressed. The reasoning was that although they had different skin colour, the social and political system victimised them. This would be the basis of unity, despite that they came from different geographical areas. Since they more or less look the same, they should identify themselves as black and “anti – racism in the 1970s was only fought and only resisted in the community, in the localities, behind the slogan of a Black politics and Black experience” (Hall 2000: 205). Black identity in Britain became a matter of cultural politics and was important in the anti-racist struggles (Hall 2000). However since the early 1980s, initiatives at building a pan – black identity and the transition from black, like in postapartheid South Africa, among British oppressed have been stalled because of ethnic particularisms and internal cultural segmentation (Hall 2000). There is also a splintering of socio – economic experience among and between these groups. This has led to erection of boundaries and oppositions between both Britain's and South African, African,

¹¹⁶ Facebook post, August 1 2011.

Caribbean, Asian and coloured communities. In Britain these are called “frontlines” (Claire Alexander 2000: 211) which suggest not only a move towards fragmentation but also mutual competition and antagonism. Today all these groups have been partitioned as objects of opposed and irreconcilable versions of cultural differences something similar to “difference – as – colour versus difference - as – culture” (Claire Alexander 2000: 221). The fragmentation of black as a political and discursive category means a retreat to naturalised and essentialised marginal identities which privilege notions of racial and ethnicity authenticity and belonging over historical and social processes (ibid). Because of this breakdown the question is : is this a question of trying to build resistance based on the “illusion” of “political colour”; is ethnic particularism a more historic if not more “relative” identity bound to outlast an invented tradition of blackness; or is it because of subversion for opportunism by ethnic leaders (Sivanandan cited in Roediger 1992)? The term black, although lingering in political circles and campaigns has been dropped including in the academy where a neo – anthropological reference to ethnicity, cultural difference and marginality is fashionable (Claire Alexander 2000). These shifts have implications for theorization of race and ethnicity in Britain (ibid).

In Jamaica 98% of population in the 1950s was either black or coloured Hall (2000). At that time Hall never heard anybody call themselves black although there were inferences to shades of colour. He asks why despite huge presence of blacks: “Black is not a matter of pigmentation. The Black I am talking about is a historical category. In our language, at certain historical moments, we have to use the signifier. We have to create equivalence between how people look and what their histories are. Their histories are in the past, inscribed in their skins. But it is not because of their skins that they are black in their heads” (Hall 2000: 204). Hall testifies that he heard Black for the first time in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement, decolonisation and nationalist struggles. Black was created as a political category

in a certain historical moment, as a result of certain symbolic and ideological struggles. The reasoning was that for centuries symbolically Black was a negative term so the feeling was “I want that term, that negative one, that's the one I want. I want a piece of that action. I want to take it of the way in which it has been articulated in religious discourse, in ethnographic discourse, in literary discourse, in visual discourse – I want to pluck it out of its articulation and rearticulate it in a new way” (Hall 2000: 204). During the process there is a change of consciousness, self – recognition and there is a new process of identification and the “emergence into visibility of a new subject: a subject that was always there, but emerging, historically” (Hall 2000: 204). In Jamaica in the 1970s black people recognised themselves as black. This was a profound cultural revolution in the Caribbean, greater than any political revolution, Hall avers.

Biko (1987) notes that the term black originates from various areas where dark skinned people were regarded as inferior: - socially, intellectually and “otherwise.” It became popularised in the US through the Black Power movement, adopted as a way to inculcate a sense of pride in black people.¹¹⁷ According to Biko, putting the term black in its right context is a “re - christening” and “we are merely refusing to be regarded as non – persons and claim the right to be called positively. Instead, adopting a collective, positive outlook leads to the creation of the broader base which may be useful in time. It helps to recognise the fact that blacks have one common enemy and defines their aspirations in fairly uniform terms. The entrenched division in the country made blacks not to work as a unity and the unity of the oppressed groups was to form a black umbrella. The BCM defined Black as those legally, politically, economically and socially discriminated against as a group.¹¹⁸ Biko

¹¹⁷ See for example Martin Luther King's 1967 speech “Where do We Go From Here?”

¹¹⁸ SASO policy manifesto, July 1971.

exhorts them:

By all means be proud of your Indian heritage or your African culture but make sure that in looking around for somebody to kick at, choose a fellow who is sitting on your neck. He may not be as easily accessible as your black brother but he is the source of your discomfort (ibid).

Blacks realised that the cause of their suffering was their black skin and relatedly their poverty. The harsh experience of black people was precipitated by their blackness and it made it hard for them to realise full humanity. The drive was to make black masses aware of their “value as God created human beings – not just 'black things' but black people.”¹¹⁹ Blacks had to rid themselves of all negative connotations associated with blackness, that is, sinful, inferior, gloomy, unattractive, and build up a consciousness of pride and dignity. The urgent task was to liberate blacks from psychological oppression, inferiority complex and physical oppression as a result of living in a white racist society.¹²⁰ BC sought to produce “real black people” who don't regard themselves as appendages of the system.¹²¹ These can hold their heads high in defiance and aren't willing to surrender. However the term black wasn't necessarily all inclusive, that is, the fact that all were not white didn't mean all are black: non – whites exist including those working the machinery of oppression, those with aspirations to whiteness but are inhibited by their pigmentation, those who don't identify with the black struggle and its attainment of total goals as black people and those who call a white man “baas” all are non – white and don't qualify to be called black.¹²² BC believed that anyone who is not white is black but “those people whose soul is an appendage of Wonderbloom, Lower Houghton, Berea or Brighton Beach are black skinned white souled lost brothers.

¹¹⁹ Report by Stanley Ntwasa on the National Seminar on Black Theology, Roodepoort, March 8 – 12 1971.

¹²⁰ SASO policy manifesto July 1971.

¹²¹ Report by Strini Moodley on SASO Leadership Training Seminar, Pietermaritzburg, December 5 – 8 1971.

¹²² Steve Biko, BPC – SASO Trial

These have sold their black souls for the 'meagre dubious returns of baaskap'¹²³ There is a political and descriptive concept black: the political definition of black is people who are psychologically and socially oppressed and who also identify as a unit in the struggle towards realisation of their aspirations. The descriptive definition is one which is based on external observations, mainly phenotypical.

The essence had hitherto been negation and nothingness. Non – white means their basic humanity lies in the essence of non – beingness, so these definitions are degrading, denigrating and blacks have complied with them.¹²⁴ The acceptance of an inferior category is a result of historical imbibing of the value system meant to deprive blacks of their being. The oppression and subhuman condition is because “we are not white...we have never denied that we are NOT white, but we have always (at least some of us) denied that we are non – whites” (ibid). The Rand Daily Mail became the first paper to switch from using the word “non - white” to “black” in 1972¹²⁵, a move followed by several publications of the liberal Institute of Race Relations. The Mail in its editorial of 15 July stated that while accepting the word black it “dissociated itself from Black Power racialism.” The Institute noted, though, that not all Coloureds and Asians and even Africans wished to be referred to as black but the consensus opinion appeared to be that this term was preferable to non – white. By 1974 the Afrikaans press and the NP had abandoned “Bantu” in favour of “black” as seen in apartheid

¹²³ Temba Sono, “Black Consciousness: Its Significance and Role in the Life of the Community”, n.d.

¹²⁴ Temba Sono “Black Consciousness: Its Significance and Role in the Life of the Community.” n.d.

¹²⁵ By August 1972 the media was forced by SASO students to drop the term “non – white”. At a congress at St Peters Seminary, the leaders asked the media not to use the term or they would be thrown out. The liberal morning daily, The Rand Daily Mail refused and their representatives were asked to leave. Their reporter Tony Holiday a white reporter as he was leaving, Bokwe Mafuna his colleague announced his resignation from the paper to some deafening applause (Harry Mashabela 1987 [2006]).

state's statutes.¹²⁶ In the 1980s the contestation between BC and multiracial movements brought the meaning of black back into contention. The NACTU congress of 6 – 7 August 1988 replaced the term black in its constitution with “African”, the reason being that black is associated with BC and therefore racist because of its exclusion of whites. However de – emphasising black has the same compromising effect as the use of non – white and non – European.¹²⁷ Apparently, “non – white” considered offensive by BCM has been intermittently creeping back into popular usage and discourse in the postapartheid era.

5.5. Postapartheid era, a post racial society?

If Marxist thinking can be seen to have class at its core, post-colonial theory sees race at its core. In the contemporary times, racial formation pits non – racialism against racial consciousness (Winant 2000). Race is central to imperialist relations and in the contestation with the African Nationalist agenda (Chinweizu 1987). The fundamental issue to be confronted in any explanation of the Black Condition has and will always be race because it was the core of humiliation and indignities (ibid). Coopan (2000) questions the triumph of hybrid identities over particularisms of race and ethnicity, class and gender, nationalism and nation, taking into account contemporary world events where continued legacies of racialised inequalities and ethnic and racial identification persist. These particularisms are far from disappearing since the formerly colonised parts of the world remain bound by constructs of race, nation and class. Coopan (2000) is sceptical on the end of racialism and the ensuing of hybridity in the form of the rainbow nation in the postapartheid. Under the ethos of

¹²⁶ The second Black Laws Amendment Act 102 of 1978, paragraph 464, “For the heading “CITIZENSHIP OF TH BANTU HOMELANDS” substitute “CITIZENSHIP OF THE BLACK STATES”; replace the word “Bantu” with the word “Black” and the words “Bantu Homeland” with “Black State”

¹²⁷ Azania News Volume 26 Number 6, October – December 1990.

rainbowism, race and racism recede to the background, become subterranean or like a snake with its head in the grass makes sibilant hisses raising it occasionally to strike. In that event some are taken by surprise or dismiss it as an isolated incident. In the meanwhile the snake reclines its head down and strikes again; the same response is elucidated and the pattern goes on. Race and racism also become like a chameleon (Goldberg 1994), changing colours to suit its purposes and environment. Those of us who have beheld and witnessed a chameleon change its colours would testify to a pleasurable sight that keeps one engaged and diverted. As the colours change we are struck with wonder and amazement but still the creature hasn't ceased to be a chameleon nor lost its capability to elongate its long poisonous tongue and strike its prey. Here I am stressing the extent to which race and racism are denied in the postapartheid. The resultant effects of race denialism are fourfold: race and racism have become invisible; discussion on racism and inequality disappears from the research agenda and debate; to speak of race in the postapartheid is now tantamount to evoking old apartheid classifications (Coopan 2000) implying it becomes criminal to talk of racism; race and racism becomes a taboo subject, those who talk of it are seen to be committing a sacrilegious act, are vilified, get a stamp of outcast stuck on their foreheads, are leprous like Lazarus and no – one wants to associate with them; silence on race absolves whites from culpability and historical complicity in black subjection and their guilt is salved by the misdemeanours of a ruling black government and finally we now live in a society where there is racism without racists. By not speaking of race or even ethnicity, Coopan (2000) argues, is to elide the apartheid legacies and committing the error of prematurely announcing the end of domination and non-acknowledgement of its contemporary traces. We see an enduring age - old accusation against those blacks who discourse on racial inequalities and racism as attempting, as one apartheid judge put it, “to create and foster feelings of racial hatred, hostility and antipathy by the

blacks toward the white population group of the Republic.”¹²⁸

The reluctance to mention, and deny race runs deep in the country's historiography – from the apartheid state, the liberation movements, academic analysts to activists. All analyses didn't engage the question of race and racism and “the unspoken omniscience of race, being everywhere visible but nowhere analysed” shows the depth of intellectual production in South Africa (Harris, Valji, Hamber and Ernest 2004; see also Roediger 1992). The reason why race was marginalised and suppressed reflected the dominant position of whites within the academia “who were uneasy engaging with a discourse and materiality in which they themselves were profoundly implicated” (Evans 1990 cited in Harris et al 2004; Posel, Hyslop and Nieftagodien 2001). As a result there was an emphasis on non – racialism expressed by the dominant liberation movement and its rejection of racism and racial discourses associated with the state and the discourse of non – racialism associated with the ANC had by the 1980s acquired hegemonic domination while PAC and BCM had counter – discourses often sources of bloody township clashes (Harris et al 2004).

The Africanists' view has always been that the oppressed associated their oppression with both the system and the oppressor perpetuating it. On being asked if the Africanists are anti – white, Sobukwe said the oppressed hate “these groups because they associate them with their own oppression! Remove the association and you remove the hatred. In South Africa once white domination has been overthrown and the white man is no longer 'white – man boss' but an individual member of society, there will be no reason to hate him...”¹²⁹ He added that they

¹²⁸ These were some of the allegations raised by the apartheid state during the BPC – SASO Trial.

¹²⁹ “The Future of the Africanist Movement”, Questions and Answers by R.M Sobukwe in *The Africanist*, Jan 1959.

don't hate the European because he is white but because he is an oppressor and “it is plain dishonesty to say I hate the *sjambok* and not the one who wields it.” Blackwash has in many circles been accused of racism; even black writers like Appiah (1990) think that Black Nationalists, by responding to their experience of racial discrimination, accept the racialism it presupposes which makes them intrinsic racists. Colour blindness has become the “in thing”; any declaration by blacks of racial identity becomes a racist act. Black experience of racism make blacks not to fully trust non blacks in fighting racism where historically the social bond among blacks has been a source of strength and hope and effective in mobilization for social justice (Shelby 2002). Although there are biologically based characteristics (phenotypes), these features are used for purposes of racial signification which is always and necessarily a social and historical process and “a racial project can be defined as racist if and only if it creates or reproduces structures of domination based on essentialist categories of race” (Omi and Winant 2002: 135). The BC riposte has always been “blacks can't be racist.”¹³⁰ This has been the Black Nationalist credo borrowed from the US especially. In Azania, in the 1970s and earlier, similar charges were made at blacks only organising that excludes white liberal tutorship. The BC in 1970s responded:

Some people who should know better do not know that powerlessness is never commensurate with racism. Without power black people can never be racists, let alone practice it¹³¹

It added that while blacks are not fundamentally racist¹³², all whites are racists whether directly or indirectly. Those who don't perpetrate it, support it by voting for the white perpetrators of racism. On the other hand, Magagula argues, no black man or government has ever legislated second class status to whites based on the colour of their skin. Black

¹³⁰ See Andile Mngxitama, “Blacks Can't Be Racist”, *New Frank Talk 2*.

¹³¹ Temba Sono, “Black Consciousness: Its Significance and Role in the Life of the Community.” n.d.

¹³² STM Magagula, “Black Power”.n.d.

Nationalism is an attempt by black people to assert themselves and declare their worth and willingness to participate in affairs affecting them. The purpose of racists is to subjugate and maintain subjugation and keep black people at the bottom but the goal of Black Nationalism is full participation in decision making processes affecting black people (Toure and Hamilton 1999). BC cannot be racism in reverse or anti – white; instead like other forms of Black Nationalism it doesn't preach hatred but love. The BC tradition has always delineated between preaching BC and preaching “hatred of whites”; and “telling people to hate whites is an outward and reactionary type of preaching which though understandable is undesirable and self – destructive.”¹³³ The goal is not domination, exclusion or exploitation of other groups but an equal share of power in society and colour shouldn't be a determinant to position or privilege (ibid). Black Nationalism is not racist because it will not manipulate laws and institutions for subjugation or maintaining of subjugation of other races or groups. After all black people “have not lynched whites, bombed their churches, murdered their children...white racists have” (Toure and Hamilton 1999: 239 - 40). Challenging the permanence of racism in South Africa is not premised on revenge but on a quest for humanity, dignity and respect which has been undermined because of the colour black. The concept sees races cooperating for the general good of all but those who see it as racism envisage conflict because “it challenges the very basis of their standpoint which is of seeing humanity in terms of digress and material achievement”¹³⁴. Magagula ends by quoting Nkrumah, that a revolutionary must discard the old social system with its concomitant dehumanising practices on black people and introduce a new social system that will treat everybody humanely and use peoples' talents for the benefit of the country. The postapartheid

¹³³ “Understanding SASO.” Discussion Document by Steve Biko for SASO Formation School, Pietermaritzburg, December 5 – 7 1971.

¹³⁴ STM Magagula, “Black Power”, n.d.

hasn't fulfilled the historical ideological position of BC which remains relevant: – the struggle against white racism in the country should be seen as a totality involving political, economic, psychological, and educational and socio – cultural.¹³⁵

Writers like Chipkin (2007) argue that in the postapartheid blackness no longer denotes a social position (in the racial capitalist relations of production) or a physical condition. Rather it designates an authentic national subject that is loyal to the state simply because that state is controlled by other blacks. However the postapartheid gives an illusion that the historically enforced racial inequalities that defined blackness have been superseded. According to Pithouse (2012) although there has been a degree of deracialisation and expansion of the zone of privilege, most (black) people remain locked out in spaces designed for them by a racist system. These are the people made poor and kept poor by racism. There has been a gross assumption that the end of apartheid has meant the end of racism. In a global political and cultural economy race hasn't receded, instead its vitality and volatility have intensified (Harrison 1995). Despite its uneven development racism is characterised by an international hierarchy where wealth and power are associated with whiteness or “honorary whiteness.” Owing to racism's persistence and ability to reinvent itself in new postcolonial and postmodern forms, including those that disguise its continued existence, some scholars (Bell 1992; Winant 1994, 2000) feel compelled to assert the rather pessimistic view that racism is permanent notwithstanding whether “races” exist or not, are ideologically marked or not (Harrison 1998). Racism assumes more subtle and elusive forms in the contemporary world. It is being reconfigured without “race” as a classificatory device for demarcating difference. All the same racism is unvarying in nature; it is essentially the same attitude expressed in differing social conditions, “that racist discourse is more chameleonic in its nature, in some

¹³⁵ BPC Press Release, January 19 1973.

ways more subtle in its mode of expression” (Goldberg 1990: ix). In the past, Goldberg aver, there had been a misconception that racism is “an ahistorical, unchanging social condition always presupposing claims about biological nature and inherent superiority or ability” (Goldberg 1990: xii). This has led to reductionist approaches. Still racism has persisted, its forms altered and its rationale and rationalisations transformed. In the US and in South Africa due to pressure of the civil rights movement and anti-apartheid struggles formal barriers and symbolic manifestations for subordination like “whites only” disappeared from the public sphere but respected “the acceptance of the rhetoric of formal equality, signalling the demise of white supremacy rhetoric as expressed by the nation's normative vision. In other words, it could no longer be said that blacks were not included as equals in the nation's political vision” (Crenshaw 2000: 620). Although there were significant gains as a result of legal reforms “racial hierarchy cannot be cured by the move to facial race – neutrality in the laws that structure the economic, political, and social lives of black people. White race – consciousness, in a new but nonetheless virulent form, plays an important, perhaps crucial role on the new regime that has legitimated the deteriorating day – to – day material conditions of the majority of blacks” (ibid). The end of Jim Crow in both the US and South Africa has been seemingly accompanied by end of white supremacy but “the white norm, however, has not disappeared; it has only been submerged in popular consciousness” (ibid). Except for vestigial pockets of historical racism, any possible connection between past racial subordination and the present situation has been severed by the formal repudiation of the old race - conscious policies. There is a thinking that race now matters less than it once did or that it is a thing of the past (Essed and Goldberg 2002). Manifestations of racism, however, remain completely articulated, deeply embedded and subtly intertwined with seemingly neutral and innocent phenomena. Essed and Goldberg argue that calls for colour – blindness or race neutrality cover the invisible hidden forms of established racist expressions and

exclusions. Martin Luther King's dream of one day Americans “not judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character” means the vision of a colour – blind society blurs realisation of an equitable one (Raiford and Cohen 2012). Since the Reagan and Mandela's era, colour – blindness and rainbowism have become an official racial ideology of both US and South African neo – liberalism and with Obama's and Mandela's election, the US and South Africa are seen as post racial societies. In this context “race no longer matters” because it has ceased to be an explicit and stark criterion for regulating social relations. Any attempt to talk of race and racism is seen as being recklessly and carelessly divisive and fostering racial antagonisms.

The existential and material condition of Azanian blacks, the Black Condition (Chinweizu 1987, which also is in the parlance of Blackwash) has provided a powerful fodder for racist imagination of black people. Note similarities with the US black experience: the enslavement and brutalisation of Africans in the New World; the subsequent exclusion for mainstream American civic, economic and social life and the peculiar content of anti – black racist ideology with its images of blacks as lazy, stupid, incompetent, hyper-sexual and disposed to gratuitous acts of violence, have combined to give anti – black race prejudice a distinctive character among American forms of racism (Shelby 2002). There are also severe social problems – joblessness, high rates of incarceration, poverty, failing schools, and a violent drug trade which plague black communities. The black angst resembles a kind of collective clinical depression; derived from black existentialism, lived experience and “ontological wounds and emotional scars inflicted by white supremacist beliefs” (West 1994) which has endured in different historical epochs. There is also a view that has underlined racist representation of blacks in a “post racial society”: that the underclass black are economically and socially disadvantaged because they haven't adopted values of hard work and discipline;

attained skills and marketable education and learned to make sacrifices necessary for success. In this contemporary society racial inferiority is re-employed to assume cultural inferiority rather than the old white supremacist notion of genetics, thus culture, not race now accounts for this Otherness (Crenshaw 2000). The racist view also characterises underclass blacks as a “problem” (West 1994), victims of self – imposed ignorance, lack of direction, and poor work attitudes. This discussion doesn't note the flaws that are historically embedded in societies structured through inequalities and cultural stereotypes where race is a decisive factor. White race – consciousness and white norm couched in reference to black cultural inferiority only furthers black subordination and reinforces the myth of equal opportunity and justifies the view that both the US and South Africa are meritocratic where nothing hinders no – one to climb up the social ladder. Claims that race is less salient than before in determining “life chances”, a non – racist or colour blind idea (Winant 2000) gets increasingly challenged. This has also been mystified by the existence of a small but steadily expanding black middle class. Thus black social misery and social suffering has been rendered invisible.

An important element of both American and South African racist schema is white privilege, itself a historical accrual. According to Robert Jensen (2005), himself a white man, the primary force that keeps white supremacy firmly in place is the material and psychological gains that come to white people which are bolstered by an ideological support system. As apartheid ended the ANC had to face and confront the legacy of vast social dysfunction and anger while the NP handed political power precisely at a time when political power had become a burden.¹³⁶ On the other hand white South Africans were relieved as a group of both guilt and direct responsibility of these problems: “From whatever perspective, whether it is that of business, of liberal values, or that of defence of 'cultural rights' which had become the

¹³⁶ Martin Woollacott, “Ironies of the New South Africa”, *Mail and Guardian*, May 17 – 23 1996

rallying cry of many Afrikaners, they can take now a critical and demanding attitude to the [new] government” (ibid). Ironically those who made the mess could now criticise those who have to try or fail to try to clean it up. The postapartheid white supremacy, Achille Mbembe¹³⁷ reckons, works on: self – absolution where white racism no longer is considered the cause of black suffering; nostalgia – some people saying apartheid after all wasn't that bad and there is no need to be ashamed of its horrific past; the ANC has decapitated the moral capital amassed during the struggle thereby absolving white guilt; the Damascus moment – certain sections of whites suddenly becoming radical democrats condemning the current government, but the question is how and why people who yesterday fervently believed in, and were apostles of racism have turned activist today and finally reverse victim-hood:- apology of racial inequality is now couched in the language of rights. Recently there has been concern for welfare and love of animals more than for black people; a scenario given impetus by rhino poaching. While most of us do indeed love animals and strive to preserve natural resources and the environment, it seems animals are dearer, more loved and more cared for than blacks. We see also another trend in racism - white flight. As upwardly mobile blacks leave historically segregated spaces into formerly white only ones, white people “flee”. They start by going to more expensive suburbs in the hope that blacks can't afford them; however some blacks follow them there. White people leave for much more expensive ones until they shut themselves in exclusive pockets called “gated communities” or in the extreme, Orania¹³⁸ or emigrate to countries like Australia on the pretext that South Africa is crime infested. Interestingly Australia's history is chequered with the genocide of indigenous people and its contemporary society is no less racist. The flight also applies to other institutions like

¹³⁷ Mbembe was speaking at “Fanon on Blackness” seminar held at WISER, University of the Witwatersrand, 31 May 2012.

¹³⁸ Orania is an exclusive Afrikaner enclave where black people are not welcome.

schools. All these indicate the extent, depth, breadth and length white supremacy has mutated. Then there is the role of emotion in bolstering white arrogance, “a kind of irrational self – confidence based on being white in a white supremacist society” (Jensen 2005: 45). Arrogance serves to keep white people from critical self – reflection. Guilt and fear also help to keep white supremacy in place. Guilt means responsibility and they don't want to own it while fear keeps them from confronting themselves and the system. Given the general norms prohibiting explicit discrimination and out-group derogation, white group members usually do not want to be seen as “racists” (Van Dijk 2002: 308). Van Dijk says of race denials:

They have a socio – political function. Denials challenge the very legitimacy of anti – racist analysis and thus are part of the politics of ethnic management: as long as a problem is being denied in the first place, the critics are vindicated, marginalised or delegitimised: denials debilitate resistance. As long as racism is denied, there is no need for official measures against it, for stricter laws, regulations or institutions to combat discrimination, or moral campaigns to change biased attitudes of whites (Van Dijk 2002: 310).

Van Dijk's words are true to South Africa and are a big intervention in the furore caused by Samantha Vice's writings on white South Africans' guilt (see <http://mg.co.za/on-on-whiteness>).

Secondly instead of facing the fact that whatever they have is unearned, what they have is the product of the work of others which is unevenly distributed they rather fear losing it. The obfuscation of the idea of race and racism is seen in the Brett Murray's “spear” painting of President Jacob Zuma. The painting is a plain case of racism and objectification of the black phallus; Murray is vindicated because of his “struggle credentials” and claims of his satirical work in the 1980s. On the other hand images of black security guards manhandling a black man who defaced the painting and “gentlemanly” escorting his white counterpart out of the gallery were widely screened.

Incipient racisms have characterised the postapartheid social formation (Tafira 2010, 2011) which is heightened by the presence of black African immigrant identities. The result has been black on black racism whose pivot is not only use of debasing racist language but violent pogroms and lynching synonymous with, and ironically at the heart of white – black racism. In societies previously structured in racial dominance (Hall 2002), like South Africa, the formerly racially oppressed imbibe the racist traits of their racist oppressors which they mete out to those who share a similar colour. Here we are talking of transferred or delegated racism. I find striking similarities between apartheid notions of the nation, ethnicity, race and discrimination and their replication in the postapartheid. There is a paucity of research on this matter though, which will further enlighten us on this phenomenon. Many elect to deny it, but there certainly are a reconfiguration of race and racism in the postapartheid, very similar to apartheid's yet with illusory changes. The apartheid project was built on race denial; rather they found it opportune to talk of culture and *ethnos*. We see the culturalism of the new racism in the post 1994, a matter of cultural difference rather than a question of hierarchy (Gilroy 1990). Then there is the connection between racism and nationalism; a concern with purity of the nation and its “children” in order to maintain its true identity (Balibar 1990). It must therefore isolate the “exogenous”, “interbred”, “cosmopolitan” elements within, then eliminate and expel them. The result is “racialisation” of populations and social groups whose collective features are deemed impure. Violent racism is transported onto intra – black populations; in the process absolving white South Africans of racism. The latter's becomes covert, invisible and masked; the former is overt and visible because it is tangible – when a “foreigner” is thrown off the train or burnt.

Conclusion

Despite the ethos of non – racialism which dispenses with race or races, black identity hasn't disappeared because “as long as that society remains in its economic, political, cultural and social relations in a racist way, to the variety of Black and Third World peoples in the midst, and continues to do so, that struggle remains” (Hall 2000: 206). Black Nationalist agitation for a “manifesto of identity” (Eissen – Udom 1962: 328) remains relevant in a postcolonial social order: the black awakening which the postapartheid had lulled back to sleep; the continued degradation of the black and his destiny as a human being, is a subjectivity that reflects the past, the present and the future. It represents a psychological and spiritual liberation of black masses from shackles of the past that at a certain historical moment are partially unfettered and quickly get fettered back again or have never been at all. These continue to haunt the present. BC can only be relevant if one knows one's historical self (Cone 1970). The present is only history in motion. However the black struggle has its own silences: blacks (Africans, coloureds, and Indians, like Asians in the UK) with their own culture as a resource for resistance which fragments the struggle; black people who don't identify with the collective struggle; the gender aspect, that is, black masculinity over black women and finally the question whether black struggles are essentialist. If so is it useful in achieving the teleology of the struggle or is it a hindrance?

All the same blackness as a political identity understands identity as complex and always historically constructed, never in the same place but always positional (Hall 2000).

Blackness as agency is always a resistance, critical and oppositional in stance. When will black and blackness cease to be black? I think when an egalitarian society is achieved, the resources of the nation equally shared among all without regard to colour and when we see a society with a human face (Biko 1987). Fanon (1967: 197) says it no better, “Yes to love. Yes

to generosity. But man is also a negation. No to man's contempt. No to the indignity of man. To the exploitation of man. To the massacre of what is most human in man: freedom.” Let us end with a 1970s BC influenced poem by T. Molewa:

Boot licking? I'm through with it

“Yes Baas?” From 1652 is too long a time

Liberals? Goddam hypocrites

Bantustans? That's paying for more oppression

White Racism? I'm gonna squash that very soon.

Chapter 6

The Black Middle Class and Black Struggles

In this chapter I examine the question about the positionality and role of the black middle class (BMC) in historical and present black struggles. This question has thrown a succession of black radicals into a quandary and dilemma. These debates have spanned generations and are as alive as they were then. Today it is still yet to be resolved. Contemporary debates among BC adherents are whether the black middle class (BMC) possesses revolutionary agency. One view which Andile Mngxitama strongly advocates is that the “coconuts are gravediggers of white supremacy.” Mngxitama and those of his ilk contend that the black middle class is close to whiteness (at multiracial schools, universities or workplace), where they experience first-hand white anti-black racism. This in turn radicalises them. This view seems to be lent credence by the fact that the black middle class has led black struggles for liberation, so the argument is the middle class has to lead contemporary struggles. The other view advocates for taking the struggle to the grass-roots; the middle class has to commit suicide as a class (Cabral 1979) if they are to positively identify with the masses and in the Gramscian view, there has to be a cultivation of organic intellectuals among the poor black masses in preparation for leadership responsibilities. In this chapter I take a standpoint and say, as a historical fact, it is true that the black middle class has led black struggles and it's also true the black middle class has betrayed those struggles. I make comparisons with similar debates in the contemporary black struggles in the US, where the post-Civil Rights era, just like the postapartheid, has seen benefits accrued in the form of an expanding but small black middle class whose social pretensions and condescension even among black leaders hinders total identification with the experience of those blacks trapped in the Black Condition. In my view it is opportune to examine the black middle class as a *class* and how

its affinity to its class position influences the manner it undertakes, prosecutes and executes the struggle on “behalf” of other blacks. I am going to trace how the BMC has developed its agency, why it decided to fight for issues cross – cutting the spectrum of black subjectivity and interrogate whether in all instances it has acted in good faith.

Early proponents for freedom in Azania just like everywhere else where black struggles have occurred were the educated strata of the black oppressed. The early mission educated elite in the country initially fought for recognition by colonial masters, incorporation and inclusion into the incipient colonial nation (Carter, Karis and Stultz 1967). Tension between the school people (*amagqoboka* meaning those who have been pierced through) and red people (*amaqaba*, those who smear) is recorded (Kuper 1965; Mayer 1968; Magubane 1968; Kunene 1968; Pauw 1974; Dubb 1974; Odendaal 1984). Unlike their illiterate or semi – literate brethren, they could use their education or ownership of property as conditions to acquire political privileges, adult suffrage and inclusion. This consisted of a “civilisation test.”¹³⁹ For them the vote was sacrosanct because “the vote made a person 'white' as much as the other way round” (Magubane 1996: 11). This dates back to the Cape non – racial franchise introduced in 1853, outlined in the constitution made in Britain to enable “the intelligent and industrious man of colour to share with his fellow colonists of European descent in the privilege of voting for the representation of the people” (Simons, n.d). The Cape franchise was to be a benchmark for which vote less blacks pinned their struggle for liberation from white domination. However, in Natal, the British excluded Africans and Indians from the franchise. This was accepted by Boer trekkers who in the 1856 Transvaal constitution article 9 stated: “the volk are not prepared to allow any equality of the non – white with white inhabitants, either in church or state” (cited in Simons, n.d).

¹³⁹ The All – African Convention Proceedings and Resolutions of the AAC, December 15 – 18 1935.

Let us put the issues we are discussing in this chapter into context. Editorials of J.T. Jabavu's first African run newspaper *Imvo Zabantsundu*, for example, mention that “natives” are the King's subjects and appealed for their consideration into the empire which has “a solemn obligations to protect the weaker races which for us ‘is a cardinal sin” (cited in Karis and Carter 1972: 63). Let us quote Jabavu at length in the inaugural edition of *Imvo* of 3 November 1884:

For over a half a century missionaries have been labouring assiduously among natives of this country, and the government has invested, and is still investing enormous sums of money with the professed object of civilising them. The result – which will ever be mentioned in these columns with gratitude – is, that a large class has been formed among the Natives which has learnt to loathe the institutions of barbarism, and to press for the better institutions of civilised life. Hitherto this newly formed class has been tossing from pillar to post, despised by its former friends of the heathen state, and misunderstood by the representatives of civilisation in this country. This uncertain drifting hither and thither of 'school kaffirs', as they are called, has given rise to some hateful comparisons as to whether 'red kaffirs' are better than 'school kaffirs.' The fact is, the so -called 'school kaffirs', or as they are sometimes called, 'educated natives', have had stirred up within them a desire for better things, and in their perhaps clumsy efforts to attain them, they have been misunderstood by their white friends. This is due to the fact that there is no touch between the great mass of reclaimed natives and those who are on the shores of civilisation.

Jabavu did oppose formation of the Congress in 1912 because of his deep faith in the Cape non - racial system. He didn't like an organisation that didn't work with sympathetic whites to exert pressure within the established parliamentary system. He also considered minister of Native Affairs, J.W. Sauer a “friend of Africans”. Incidentally it was Sauer who proposed the Natives' Land Act of 1913 which would deprive Africans of their land and become the main hallmark of African policy of the Union government (Karis and Carter 1972). The above

treatise indicates the nature of leadership that assumed responsibility of fighting for freedom in the country for generations.

There was a recognition by 1960 that the political crises following the Sharpeville massacre was caused by the government's failure to recognise the emergent urban African "that is responsible, middle class, which could be used as a stabilising influence and could cooperate with the instruments of law and order and who will accept with us the responsibility of maintaining western standards in our South African community" (Sir de Villiers Graaff, the opposition UP leader during House of Assembly debates, March 29 1960). Although the NP didn't seriously consider this proposal at that time, they later saw its intelligence and by late 1970s the liberals and the Afrikaner *verligte* were vigorous on it; by 1980s it was part of Botha's WHAM policy that consisted of co-optation and building a class of collaborators in the aspiring African middle class, African politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen to propel the machinery of their own oppression and domination. In the meantime the policy of separate development and Bantu Authorities had ingredients of germinating and fostering a BMC that would be complicit with the regime. The AAC and the Unity Movement foresaw these intentions, as promoting "a Quisling type of African teacher and trader who will be mass produced through Bantuised schools strictly controlled by government through its Native Commissioners, policemen, intellectuals, policemen - chiefs and headmen etc."¹⁴⁰ (See also chapter 8 of this thesis).

I must make it clear here that the BMC itself is not a unitary corporate entity. There is the petty – bourgeoisie comprised of traders, business people and entrepreneurs who aspire to be a fully-fledged bourgeoisie and business is their major concern. Then there is the professional

¹⁴⁰ W.M Tsotsi, "Presidential Address." AAC, December, 14 -16 1958.

class which includes intellectuals who earn their keep from salaried occupations. For the purposes of my work I have collapsed them into one class - the black middle class - despite stratification within it. They can be divided into two: the apolitical and the politicised. I am disdainful of separating them, by virtue of their shared class position which so far has interested me. Let us now look at the politicised BMC from which black leaders emanated. By 1920s a mature black petty – bourgeoisie had emerged, though caught in the contradictions of the dominant relations of production which used race as a criterion (Cobley 1990). But why would these blacks look down on their own people? Educated Africans had (s) a strong repugnance of tribal society, “a sense of cultural shame, a feeling that tribalism is a return to the past, to barbarism, to the primitive. The cultural shame derives from exposure to western civilisation and from teachings of missionaries and from formal education (Kuper 1965: 84). For this reason the BMC has become almost white: “the more he rejects his blackness and the bush, the whiter he becomes” (Fanon 2008: 2 -3). This view is extrapolated by the BC in early 1970s who warned of the danger posed by creation of a black middle class whose blackness is only skin deep, literally.”¹⁴¹ These, like their mission produced predecessors, would aspire to whiteness and assimilation, in taste, food and values. According to BC tradition these had lost their “right to blackness”, because they had become white persons in black skins”¹⁴² or what Malcolm X (1965 [2007: 345]) calls “black bodies with white heads” or black skins white masks (Fanon 1967). In Fanonian terms, there is a definite feeling of inferiority, which the BMC constantly attempts to overcome by absorbing European mannerisms and adopting a superiority complex towards their own (Fanon 1967).

¹⁴¹ “Understanding SASO.” Discussion Document by Steve Biko for SASO Formation School, Pietermaritzburg, December 5 – 7 1971.

¹⁴² Speech by Reverend Mashwabada Mayatula, First National Congress of the Black Peoples Convention, Hammanskraal, December 16 1972.

In the US, some black Americans were seeking acceptance into white society, striving to become “white middle class”, believing and behaving as if they are exempt from white contempt of their race (Essien – Udom 1962). Their world-view and philosophy can be regarded as naïve individualism. The road to success for them lies in trying to psychologically escape from their identity. Holy Johnson is even more disdainful of the educated BMC:

All educated Negroes suffer from a kind of slavery in many ways more subversive of the real welfare of the race than the ancient physical fetters. The slavery of the mind is far more destructive than that of the body. But such is the weakness and imperfection of human nature that many even those who bravely fought to remove the shackles from the body of the Negro transfer them to his mind (Cited in Lynch 1971: 228).

The effects of education on the schooled BMC meant they approached African culture with ambivalence – they were between and betwixt; were victims of western mores and norms; looked to Europe for their values and inspiration. In search of an identity, they would cleanse themselves of the stigma associated with African-ness. In reference to their snobbery, Johnson argues, they renounced their culture, denying therefore Africa an identity, self – dignity and independence. If only the elite would study their past and understand their customs and institutions they would discover endowments they should be proud of and discover that “their contempt for traditional African culture was due to a state of mental slavery” (Johnson cited in Lynch 1971: 297).

For a long time the educated BMC endeavoured to maintain a distinct identity from the uneducated. The “scuse me”¹⁴³ people or “omaBA”¹⁴⁴ were monikers used for this petty –

¹⁴³ From “excuse me” which shows politeness.

¹⁴⁴ Means Bachelor of Arts graduates

bourgeoisie who took concern with rules of etiquette and correct behaviour (Kuper 1965; Dubb 1974); in other words they were imitators of white middle class behaviour (Vilakazi 1962). They had a fondness for white sympathisers, used high flown English, their manner of dress aped the European and their relatively luxurious lifestyles all maintained a differentiation with the rank and file (Kuper 1965; Cesaire 1972; Ndebele 1972; Alexander 1979; Ake 1981; Cogley 1990: 11) which is accompanied by conspicuous consumption as an index of class. The cultural transformation of these leaders is blamed on the education value system beginning with missionaries which implant the black intellectual into a zone of alienation; his attainment and achievement provides him “refined” manners, the reason why most “educated people find it hard to communicate with fellow black people in a train, who are uneducated.”¹⁴⁵ White racism marked the landscape, the boundaries of black life, their social lives, and habits and imposed a cruel order of social and spiritual regulation leading to deracination. Social and cultural alienation would become measures of ‘civility’ (Robinson 1983: 257; Ranger 1983). However despite being educated and “civilised” they didn't escape the indignities and injustice others faced. They found themselves in an invidious, complex and precarious position. On one hand they were “aspirant bourgeoisie”; on the other they were inhibited by racist legal machinery. Although they aspired upwards they had no option but to identify themselves downwards with the rest of the underclass. Heightened fears and frustrations were constant reminders of the realities of oppression which they all shared despite differences in class position (Alexander 1979; Fatton 1986). The BMC position is not envious though, it is traumatic and excruciating. They found themselves in a space of marginality, trapped between imposed barriers on upward mobility, and their lower ranking brethren; therefore they experienced stronger feelings of unhappiness and suffering than their

¹⁴⁵ “The Movement in Relation to the Black Community” by “Black Student Leader”, SASO Newsletter,

May/June 1975.

fellow Africans; of ambivalence, antagonism and hostility towards Europeans and their laws, job dissatisfaction and inferiority in the eyes of whites (Nyquist cited in Dubb 1974). It results in what Cabral (1973) calls a “frustration complex” which infuriates them. In a racist society even the most accomplished Negroes cannot get recognition since colour is the most obvious manifestation of race; it has been made the criterion in which men are judged irrespective of their social or educational attainments (Fanon 1967). Although Fanon observes the desire for colonisers' material possessions by the colonised he also does view the colonial society in Manichean terms, as a binary antagonism between the oppressed and oppressor, good and evil. For Bhabha (1984, 1994[2004]) it is in relation to the place of the other that colonial desire is articulated. In other terms the colonial subject mimics the coloniser, there is a production of an image of identity where the subject is transformed into assuming the coloniser's image. But there is an ironic compromise:

Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognisable other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say the discourse of, mimicry is constructed around ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference (1994: 122).

The ambivalence of colonial positionality crosses the division of self/other, coloniser/colonised, therefore departing from Hegelian master/slave dialectic. The difference is produced through enunciation and difference. Rather than antagonistic it is agonistic. For this reason colonial authority undermines itself by not replicating itself properly. Colonial authority produces differentiations and individuations through discriminatory practices leading to splitting as condition for subjection. This enables colonial subjects to be under the colonial gaze which enables effective surveillance and exercise of power. Bhabha argues that the effect of colonial power is by hybridisation rather than an outright hegemonic command. In other words the tension between demand and desire in the process of identification is a “space of splitting” whereby colonial identities are transformed into multiplicity. Fanon does

mention the change in personality, a definitive mutation explainable by an “evidence of a shift and a split” (2008: 3). This identity is always constructed through ambivalence, where there is always desire and loving (Hall 2000). Bhabha has been critiqued for universalising tendencies mainly because colonial identities and power relations are analysed in semiotic and psychoanalytic terms (Loomba 1998) and for misrepresenting the anti – colonial struggle by downplaying the bitter dissent between the coloniser and the colonised (Parry 1994) where there has been a search for rehabilitation of cultural identity debased by colonialism. Nonetheless the BMC is a misfit in the borrowed European cultural atmosphere because Europeans would never accept them as equals no matter how much “they Europeanised themselves” (Johnson 1971: 297; Mangena 2001). Even though a black man can hoist himself to the level of the European, through western education and culture, he is unable to escape from his race (Fanon 1968). For me this becomes a condition for antagonism which is prodded by the desire of the subject to arrogate for themselves the positions currently a domain of those who hold material wealth.

Despite their profound cultural transformation they latched onto pre - existing cultural forms, coupled with daily experiences of racism, economic imperatives of a developing capitalist society, all which were important factors in early stirring of political consciousness and protest within the *amakholwa*¹⁴⁶ communities by end of nineteenth century (Carter, Karis and Stultz 1967; Copley 1990). This was aided by tools like being conversant with western communication skills and familiarity with western political institutions. The BMC who culturally separated themselves from the rest were able to develop their own unique cultural identity expressed as a unified and idealised form of “African culture” which by the 1930s and the 1940s would help give rise to radical political ideology of the Africanists (Copley

¹⁴⁶ Literary means believers in the Christian sense.

1990: 81). Contemporary BC debates waver between whether the BMC can lead the black struggles effectively or not. One view strongly advocated by Mngxitama (as mentioned in the introduction) is that the “coconut”¹⁴⁷ rather than the working class is “a gravedigger of white supremacy” by virtue of their closeness and contradiction to whiteness where they experience first-hand the indignities of white anti – black racism coupled with their comprehension of white culture and value system.¹⁴⁸ This in turn radicalises them more than the blacks of the township. As a historical fact most leading revolutionaries were trained by imperialists and they were brilliant revolutionaries because they acquired cultural capital from white institutions, which the poor don't have and can't. Examples of such include Fanon, Cesaire, Cabral, Biko, Sobukwe, and Sankara and so on, who “are objectively coconuts who reject coconutism (sic) and fought white supremacy.”¹⁴⁹ He adds that not all coconuts will become black radicals just as the location and village black will not join the revolution against white supremacy. Mngxitama and other middle class radicals contend that the black working class, the peasants and the poor will not and cannot lead the revolution because they just want “an RDP house and a toilet” and their demands are limited to bare minimal existence. Squatters, for example, cannot generate consciousness except “squatter consciousness.”¹⁵⁰ I found this postulation strange and extraordinary, though. In contrast coconuts’ demands are larger in scale, ambition and quantity. According to this thesis it is the revolutionary BMC that renounces their middle class tendencies that will infuse revolutionary consciousness into the masses and therefore lead the revolution. Opposing views say it’s hard to fathom and imagine

¹⁴⁷ Coconut is derision for culturally transformed blacks who like a coconut; are black/brown outside and white inside. Kopano Matlwa's book “Coconut” provides a lurid expose of the aspirations of a coconut.

¹⁴⁸ Facebook post by Mngxitama, May 29 2011.

¹⁴⁹ *ibid*

¹⁵⁰ Mngxitama during a talk on “Fanon on Blackness”, held at WISER, University of the Witwatersrand, May 31 2012.

the BMC “leaving sushi and begin burning tyres”¹⁵¹ or even getting their hands dirty and coconuts “reminds one of a house nigger during slavery days.”¹⁵² Let us quote another Facebook post in response to the view that “a movement that doesn't have a radical middle class intellectual base cannot survive”¹⁵³:

The so – called middle class is an endorsement and legitimization of the disgraceful super realities that the black world is replenished with. It is the height of superficial aspirations and ambitions of black people and a zone of socio-political and economic hypocrisy. How does this mediocre and grossly misguided epitome of 'success' and 'prosperity', so called black middle class, if there's such a thing form the intellectual muscle of the black revolution, let alone be deemed radical? Black radicalism must distance itself from reifications of white supremacy. What we should be doing is to build very strong grass-roots Black Consciousness. I mean from the root up not just the grass which is only visible sight from those sitting in Sandton¹⁵⁴ 'discussing' revolution over cappuccino and oysters.¹⁵⁵

Cesaire, in an interview with C.L.R. James in 1974, said he was a product of western education (having studied and taught Latin, Greek and French literature) whose later writings seriously indicted and attacked western civilisation.¹⁵⁶ In “Return to My Native Land” Cesaire writes that because he knew the system inside out he was better poised to work out its dismantling. Of course the intelligentsia had mastered tools of the system especially words which they used to construct new meanings, new alternatives, and new realities for themselves and for others (Magubane 1969; Robinson 1983). In the struggle against

¹⁵¹ These are some of the debates at SNI Durban September 23 – 25 2011.

¹⁵² Facebook post, May 29 2011.

¹⁵³ Facebook by Mngxitama, April 17 2012.

¹⁵⁴ Sandton is the richest suburb in South Africa and Africa.

¹⁵⁵ Facebook post by Zeer Nehanda Radebe, April 17 2012.

¹⁵⁶ C.L.R James interview with Aime Cesaire, Binghamton, New York; see also Cedric Robinson (1983: 259).

colonialism, the revolutionary petty – bourgeoisie has played a leading role (Nabudere 1981). They were the intellectual force of the struggle and were able to develop a general awareness of the exploitation and dominative implications of imperialism, an ability that inserted them into leadership positions. Under colonialism racial barriers which inhibit the development of the petty – bourgeoisie and the undeveloped political consciousness of the masses offer an opportunity for the petty – bourgeoisie to struggle against foreign domination (Cabral 1979). By virtue of its position in the colonial hierarchy this class is the first to be aware of the need to rid foreign domination, in this context it might be assumed to be “revolutionary” (Cabral 1979: 135). Nabudere (1981) equates their role and relationship with the masses with that of an advocate compelling a client’s case in which the advocate had an interest in the brief. Clearly there is Marxist influence here: Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto* (1964) regard the petty - bourgeoisie's impulse to fight the bourgeoisie for reason of preservation of their own class interests. If by chance they happen to be revolutionary it is because of their fear of descending down into the proletariat. However the later proposition poses a dilemma for the petty – bourgeoisie, after all no one likes renouncing comforts and privileges of their class. Others like Du Bois (1903) and his argumentation for the “Talented Tenth” believed the Negro race will be saved and served by its exceptional men who will guide the masses, without whom the Negro would have to accept white leadership. Cabral (1979) also believed that the best sons and daughters of the land had an obligation and responsibility in both the revolutionary party and the revolution. However C.L.R. James would wrestle with the ideological and social ambivalence of the renegade intelligentsia, the revolutionary petit – bourgeoisie, arguing that no revolutionary cadre divorced from the masses could sustain a revolution. He adds that it was only the consciousness and activity of the revolutionary masses with its own best interests that could preserve the revolution from compromise, betrayal or the ill – considered usurpation of revolutionary authority (cited in

Robinson 1983: 449).

Cobley (1990: xi) counters the argument that the black politicised leadership was “a catalogue of failure and craven compromise.” Instead he sees it as “giants” on whom communities looked upon and provided them with articulate and coherent leadership. He argues that the modern Black Nationalist struggle and much of the social and political identity of modern black communities in South Africa were built on their shoulders. However as for their political role, there has always been a suspicion that they would betray the rest of the uneducated (Kuper 1965). Kuper's study of the BMC reveal that the *izifundiswa* (the educated) and *amazemtiti* (the exempted, that is from carrying passes because of their level of education) were regarded as betrayers or likely to betray because of their association with and occupation in the white world. In the Cape the educated were called *ama – kumsha*, that is, speakers of European languages which in the mind of the tribal person are associated with deceit and almost synonymous with a turncoat, a cheat or trickster. These educated lot are to Malcolm X (1965 [2007: 345]) a modern day Uncle Tom “who doesn't wear a handkerchief on his head but now wears a top hat...he is often the personification of culture and refinement. The twentieth century Uncle Thomas sometimes speaks with a Yale or Harvard accent. Sometimes he is known as Professor, Doctor, Judge, and Reverend...a professional Negro...”

The above observations ring true in the postcolonial: the absorption of the formerly radical intelligentsia and BMC into the dominant colonial class has made them incapable of practically and ideologically leading the black majority (Bayart 2006). Instead of identifying themselves with those at the bottom of social hierarchy, the “evolues”, the “educated” and the “intellectuals” happily jumped onto the bandwagon of accumulation and power (Bayart 2006: 182). After the struggle for independence, power is entrusted into the petty - bourgeoisie

hands who follow this road: to give free rein to its natural tendencies to become “bourgeois”; to transform itself into a national pseudo – bourgeoisie, that is, to deny the revolution and subject itself to imperialist capital (Cabral 1979). This corresponds to the neo – colonial situation, that is, betrayal of the objectives of national liberation (Cabral 1979) and they would have special interests in a postcolonial set – up (Fanon 1961; Chinweizu 1987). Fanon (1961) opines that the problem of decolonisation lay in the native intellectual who had imbibed colonial culture and values and never intended to shake them off entirely. This same group, after independence uses national resources in schemes that don't benefit the people but themselves (Fanon 1961). The effects of these schemes are seen in social conditions people live under. In order not to betray the liberation objectives, Cabral suggests that the petty – bourgeoisie has to strengthen its revolutionary consciousness; repudiate temptations to become “bourgeois” and the natural pretensions of its class mentality; and identify with the aspirations of the masses. Finally it “must be capable of committing suicide as a class” (1979:136). This proposition seems unpalatable and tortuous to them, though.

In the US, the Civil Rights movement not only acted as a buffer between the white middle class audience and angry young blacks but claimed to speak for the black community (Toure and Hamilton 2000). The language of civil rights leaders was moderate and resulted in no significant gains for black masses; a language that propagated non - violence, fear of white backlash and misled some into believing that a minority of blacks could be co-opted into positions of power (ibid). The BMC could no longer be leaders of their people because they have “arrived”, that is, gained entrance into white middle class society (Essien - Udom 1962). They cannot, however take millions of other blacks with them. In the years of Civil Rights struggles Malcolm X (1965 [2007]) would observe a pattern of “house negro” and “field negro” marked by emerging class distinctions. On the other hand blacks were told that if they

worked harder they could achieve by following the protestant ethic of thrift, hard work and achievement like all other racial groups. For this reason the BMC rejects and despises the masses. Ironically they can't really be assimilated into white society, because they are confronted by what Du Bois (1903) calls "double consciousness." In the post-civil rights struggles that guaranteed right to vote, to use buses and public facilities and restaurants reserved for whites in the South, equal opportunity in education, right to economic justice, King's heirs are a blossoming BMC but are increasingly behaving like their white counterparts.

As for the black struggle in both postapartheid South Africa and post 1960s US, the opening and expanding of a BMC seem to suggest that opportunities exist but it leads to loss of collectivity among blacks. The new opportunities as a result of removal of formal barriers means some blacks enjoy some benefits not enjoyed by others (Crenshaw 2000). As these classes move to different spheres, the experience of being black becomes fragmented and multifaceted and these different contexts mean experiencing racism and oppression in different ways. This obscures the problems of lower class blacks mainly because "progress" is defined in middle class terms, further heightened by the conspicuous consumption of the BMC who "in fact have found their identity with the white middle class" (Essien -Udom 1962; Dyson 1994). Malcolm X (1965 [2007: 378]) is even acerbic: "these chosen few Negroes are more white - minded, more anti - black, than even the white man is." Some call them "middle class sell - outs."¹⁵⁷ Whilst they have economically, culturally, socially and geographically distanced themselves from the underclass, they are highly anxiety ridden, insecure and willing to be co-opted into the system (McLaren and Dantley 1990); on the other hand the underclass gets caught up in social vices which West (1988) calls "walking

¹⁵⁷ Haile Gerima, address to the SNI, Durban 23 September 2011.

nihilism.” The “bonds in solidarity in chains” which previously characterised the relationship among all blacks is no longer apparent, where the BMC once identified with struggles and aspirations of lower class blacks (ibid). Loyalty to race and unquestioning allegiance has been historically constructed as primary; those who detoured from the prescribed path were labelled “sell – outs”, “traitors” or “Uncle Toms” and those who deviated from forms of racial identity and cultural expression were called “oreos” or “incogneoes” (Dyson 1994: 235). While in the past “whites only” symbols were visible targets for action, mobilisation and organisation, their removal and end of Jim Crow has infused doubts whether there are similarities in ontological and existential experiences of different sections of blacks. The realisation is that blacks are not a homogeneous or homologous cohort. A visit to the malls one sees middle and upper class South Africans imitating western culture; “they are representatives and supervisors of globalisation, it’s not by accident, middle class Africans are soldiers of imperialism.”¹⁵⁸ As blacks are divided into classes, the BMC gets culturally estranged thus posing questions of black authenticity. The question is: are they still “real” blacks or have ceased to be so? Who are the real blacks? Does blackness has to be always associated with material want and deprivation? Collective black identity is worsened and complicated by intergroup conflicts, cultural and class differentiation (Shelby 2002). West (1994) however contends that minimally blackness means to be subject to white supremacy so blackness is a political and ethical construct, a fact which black authenticity ignores. The question then is: is there a possibility of unity between the BMC and underclass blacks? Should the BMC, given its historical role in leading and at decisive moments abandoning the black struggle be entrusted with leadership? To answer the first, one would concur with Crenshaw (2000) and Shelby (2002) that the present predicament provides few options except crafting a distinct political thought informed by the actual conditions and needs of black

¹⁵⁸ Haile Gerima, address to the SNI, Durban, September 23 2011.

people. For the second I advocate for cultivation of “organic intellectuals” to take more leadership responsibilities (see chapter 3 of this thesis), at the same time harmonising the needs of the BMC and underclass blacks trapped in depravity of townships, rural and farm areas. The reason being, that the permanence of South African anti – black racism, would ultimately enforce a unity of colour. All blacks have vested interests in racial and economic equality regardless of their cultural identification, class, gender or age though the urgency depends on experience (Shelby 2002). Caution though must be emphasised about the BMC bringing their social pretensions and condescension onto less well to do blacks. A unity with black capitalists, for example, is unpalatable because even though they experience a different form of racism in lieu of capitalist circles they cavort in, they possess vampirish tendencies not qualitatively divorced from their white counterparts. They defend a system that has fed on blood, sweat and tears of blacks. Therefore alliances with them can be limited to strategic purposes only, that is, in cases of experiential racism.¹⁵⁹ Another complication is the BMC who have rejected their black identity in favour of white persona and lifestyle but Shelby (2002) argues it would be unjustified to say these people are lost to the struggle. The class character of their culture make them exhibit their cultural prejudices; just like during the liberation struggle, the BMC regarded the liberation movement as a means to eliminate colonial oppression of their own class and hence re - establish complete cultural and political domination of the people (Cabral 1979). Black Nationalism in the US, for example, has been used by the BMC to attain privileges and ranks of power while closed off to their most desperate constituency, the poor blacks (Dyson 1995). Yet still, according to Malcolm X (1965 [2005]; see also Dyson 1995) the BMC and its haughtiness convinced him that they

¹⁵⁹ One is reminded of Jimmy Manyi's controversy resulting from comments he made about Indians and Coloureds. Attacks aimed at him took a racist and right-wing turn and as a black man he had to be defended by blacks...only at that moment.

could not be effective in achieving authentic black liberation. As for Azanian struggles, “black people are betrayed by black petty – bourgeoisie and the next leaders should not come from gated communities.”¹⁶⁰ One Blackwasher related an incident that happened in Cape Town a few years back, after a meeting in one of the city's townships. Like many aftermaths of such gatherings, there was a ritual of *shisanyama*¹⁶¹ and socialising. After a while it was proposed by the middle class clique that they go to Long Street.¹⁶² One may have to note this section of Cape Town's CBD is frequented by tourists so prices are beyond the ordinary. One also has to remember that in a movement there are the less well to do, the unemployed, the students and the like, who don't earn a regular salary. The BMC entered a restaurant/bar while the township crew was smoking outside. They were approached by a security guard who demanded to know their business in the area and suspected them of intentions to break into one of the shops. After a confrontational exchange, they finally entered into the restaurant. The BMC had ordered expensive drink and refreshment. The township crew was excluded from the merriment; seemingly there was an arrangement that each had to settle their own bill. The township crew had to return back to the township. The Blackwasher said these are indicators that show the gap and rift between the BMC “radicals” and the rest. Despite its pretensions the BMC and the rest of the blacks are, as Sabar, a scintillating BC poet, usually says, “we are all in different cabins on the same ship.”

Conclusion

In conclusion, can the BMC be trusted with the insurmountable task of leading, prosecuting and executing a revolution? It's not guaranteed. Their revolutionary agency and urgency can

¹⁶⁰ Haile Gerima, address to the SNI, Durban, September 23 2011.

¹⁶¹ Barbecue

¹⁶² The area is littered with upmarket restaurants and bars.

be stretched to certain elasticity and is proscribed within their class interests. Personally I am averse to the idea. The BMC can participate in the struggle and lend skills and support but they *should not take ownership or leadership of the struggle*. As someone puts it, “the BMC is useful to us when they reject middle class pretensions, just as the working class is useful if it rejects middle class snobbery.”¹⁶³ While it might seem injudicious to say they have a propensity for “betrayal”, as a historical fact, the BMC has led black struggles, at a decisive moment they have prevaricated and thus were not able to see it through to its logical conclusion. And history hasn't ceased to repeat itself.

¹⁶³ A contribution from the floor during SNI Durban, September 23 – 25, 2011.

Chapter 7

Culture and History in the Black Struggles for Liberation

There is no general agreement among contemporary BC adherents on the role of culture and history in black struggles. There are two contending positions. For purposes of expediency, let us call them “modernist” and “roots.” These are not a new aberration in contemporary BC thought, they are an age - old problematic who the 1970s BC proponents grappled with and could neither find a common agreement nor a similar theoretical trajectory. Contemporary conversations are not much divorced from those of yore; thus in this chapter I am not looking at repeating them at length, rather I want to use more of the textual. One which is prominent among the petit - bourgeois black radicals says black culture is anachronistic, is mired in atavism and that most black cultural practices are inimical to liberation because of their oppressive nature and history is inconsequential. What matters most is the present. This school believes in a “100% modern black” and that there can only be subscription to a single culture: “a culture of liberation”. On the other hand the other view, which seems to be inspired by early advocates of Black Nationalism, contends that culture is a tool for consciousness. The realisation is that in the New World, the racist schema denied Africans of neither civilisation nor “achievements” in science, arts or culture. African culture therefore was used instil in black people a sense of pride; that black people do indeed have a history and have throughout history exacted numerous accomplishments. In regards to these debates, in this chapter I am not seeking to define what culture is but to interrogate its role in black struggles for liberation. Neither am I intending to examine the debilitation caused by colonial western mores on Africans at great length (some of which is treated in the last chapter); rather to look at the agency of culture in black liberation.

For Sartre (1961, 1968) colonisation is an act of cultural genocide and dehumanisation. Colonial domination which leads to poverty, oppression and inhibition of culture is one single machine that is total and complete (Wolf 1972; Cesaire 1972 [2000]); Fanon 1967; Biko 1987). Fanon reckons through colonisation, which he views as a Manichean world, the “Negro” loses his culture and customs and those sources that made his being were decimated because they were seen to be in conflict with “modern civilisation.” There are efforts to remind the colonised of the inferiority of his culture. In the New World for example, slavery was justified on grounds of “Negro” heathenism; when he became a Christian, it was said he was different from white people. Afterwards the bible and science were used at the same time as anthropology to justify “Negro” inferiority due to physical characteristics (Work 1916). Through descriptions of himself, the “Negro” came to believe his inherent inferiority; to attain superiority he must become like the white man in colour, in achievement and so forth. Colonialism in perpetuating exploitation not only represses cultural life but promotes cultural alienation through assimilation (as in cases of Lusophone and Francophone colonies) whereby colonial subjects assimilate colonisers' mentality, see themselves as culturally superior to their people and look down on their cultural values.

7.1. The Modernist View

Colonisation not only destroyed structures that built African society, it also distorted the history of the oppressed through a long standing racist announcement that Africans had no history before 1652¹⁶⁴ or that that they arrived in South Africa at the same time as white people (Biko 1987). African culture was seen as barbaric, Africa itself a “dark continent”, religious practices as superstition (ibid). The colonised is “elevated” to colonisers' culture and renounces his blackness since he now regards himself through the trope of whiteness (see

¹⁶⁴ 1652 is when Jan van Riebeeck arrived in South Africa, setting a process of colonisation.

also Toure and Hamilton 1967). European culture not only strips him of his race but induces alienation as well. For Biko BC is directed to the past, to rewrite black peoples' history, to elevate their heroes and see them as a people with a positive history. African culture's most important aspect is its emphasis on man, its human centeredness, the inherent goodness of man, human relationships, group intimacy, the idea of community and eschewing of individualism which marks the capitalist ethos where people use one another to progress (Biko 1987). The prospect of rediscovering his culture gives the colonised immense pleasure and hope (Fanon 1961). In his culture he sees salvation, whereby when he was debilitated, he is now rehabilitated, is recognised and therefore he becomes somebody when he was nobody. National culture of the past legitimates these claims. Going back to one's culture is fundamental: it is a radical condemnation of the system's efforts to mentally enslave the people and repudiates colonial claims that western civilisation is meant to enlighten the natives, that their history is chequered with barbarism. If the settlers were to leave they would descend into bestiality (Fanon 1967). Intellectuals begin to search for national culture which existed in the pre-colonial and they start to shy away from western culture. They discover that actually there is nothing to be ashamed of the past which was filled with dignity and glory. Cabral (1973) advocates for a "reconversion of minds", "of mental set", a "re – Africanisation" (1973: 45), a "return to the source" which can only be realised in the course of struggle, through daily contact with the popular masses "in the communion of sacrifice required by the struggle" (1973: 45). It means concrete involvement with the independence struggle and total identification with the masses. For Fanon this is the beginning of rehabilitation. The intellectual affirms the existence of African culture and adopts the concept of Negroism as a counter to white man's inhumanity. But I see Fanon's treatment of culture as an oxymoron. Sartre's essay "The Black Orpheus" critiques Negritude as a minor term, a dialectical regression. The theoretical and practical assertion of white supremacy is its thesis,

Negritude is the anti – thesis and this value is a moment of negativity. Thus Negritude has its own roots of destruction; it's a transition, not a conclusion, a means not an ultimate end. Sartre continues and states that Negritude is an anti – racist racism. Fanon's riposte is that Sartre was denigrating his Negro being and his blackness, at a time when he is trying to reclaim his Negritude; it is snatched away by the likes of Sartre. He says, “Without a Negro past, without a Negro future, it was impossible to live my Negrohood” (Fanon 1967: 138) and “black consciousness is immanent in its own eyes” (1967: 138). Fanon accuses Sartre of liberalism, destroying his black zeal where he (Fanon) “needed to lose myself completely in Negritude”; that he (Sartre) forgets the “Negro” suffers in his body differently from a white man. Fanon's heart yearns for Negritude and is proud of being a Negro: “My cry grows more violent: I am a Negro, I am a Negro, I am a Negro...” (1967: 138). Following Senghor's and Césaire's writing on the beauty of African art, Fanon is inspired: “from the opposite end of the white world a magical Negro culture was hailing me. Negro sculpture! I began to flush with pride. Was this our salvation?” (1990: 116). As a result of discovery of a glorious culture, the “Negro” is rehabilitated, recognised, set on his feet again. The white man could not understand “the magic substitution”, “the secret”, which is necessitated by rummaging through the antiquity of the black man, a finding that takes Fanon's breath away (1990: 118). Accomplishments and achievements of blacks “exhumed from the past, spread with its insides out, made it possible for me to find a valid historic place. The white man was wrong, I was not a primitive, not even a half man, I belonged to a race that had already been working in gold and silver 2000 years ago” (1990: 118). It seems to me Fanon's response to Sartre was for political expediency. In the last chapter of *Black Skin White Masks*, he makes an about turn. Taking a cue from Marx that the revolution doesn't draw from the past but the future and it has to “strip itself of all its superstitions concerning the past”; that revolutions of the nineteenth century have to let the dead bury the dead (Fanon 2000: 199), Fanon seems to be

steeped in existentialism and the ontological present that his analysis becomes befuddled; like a well-spoken and articulate man who all along has been pronouncing sober judgements until after a seventh beer he begins prattling. He writes: “the discovery that a black civilisation existed in the fifteenth century doesn't earn me a certificate of humanity. Whether you like it or not the past can in no way be my guide in the actual state of things.” (2000: 199 – 200) He adds, “In no way does my basic vocation have to be drawn from the past of people of colour. In no way do I have to dedicate myself to reviving a black civilisation unjustly ignored. I will not make myself the man of any past. I do not want to sing the past to the detriment of my present and my future.” (2000: 201) Fanon's thesis is, even a discovery of feats and ingenuity of black people in the past, it cannot change the contemporary existential situation of the oppressed. Fanon claims “he is not a prisoner of history”, he cannot ask today's white man to answer for his ancestors' excesses committed during slavery and “am I trying to cause guilt to burgeon their souls? And grief, when they are confronted with the density of the past? I am a Blackman, and tons of chains, squalls of lashes, and rivers of spit stream over my shoulders. But I have not the right to put down roots. I have not the right to admit the slightest patch of being into my existence. I have no right to become mired by the determinations of the past. I am not a slave to slavery that dehumanised my ancestors.” (2000: 205) History therefore will not be a determinant of his actions. Rather his actions will be guided by his own impulses. For Fanon the most important thing is to fight subjugation of man by man. He seems to be easing towards conciliatory politics when he says hankering on the past hinders genuine communication between the black man and the white man. He says, “The misfortune of the man of colour is having been enslaved. The misfortune and inhumanity of the white man are having killed man somewhere” (2000: 205). I find this reasoning alarming and extraordinary. What bothers one's peace is it has been used or misused by “modernists” in their approach to black history and culture, a position that remains theoretically, ideologically and politically

inept.

Coming to debates in contemporary BC, the “modernist” group seems to subscribe to this view. Biko's formulation that modern culture should be “a culture of defiance, self – assertiveness and solidarity” (Biko 1987: 46) has lent political weight to this view, although Biko himself was a “roots” person (as I indicate below). Biko acknowledges this culture has roots in situations and experience of oppression. It is expressed in urban sub – cultures where subjects craft new forms of cultural expressions. There is, of course, mimicry and imitation of the colonisers' culture; African culture is no longer expressed in pure forms but as a hybrid distortion and deformation. One of the peculiarities of South African colonisation is that its earlier machination sought to create a detribalised native (as seen in the effects of missionary education and emphasis on western civilisation). Later on the apartheid regime with its cultural relativism, there was retribalisation where *ethnos*, culture and ethnicity were central themes in subjection, compartmentalisation and nation making (I discuss more on this subject in chapter 10). In contrast 1970s BC didn't, in its analysis factor this, probably because of its urban centeredness and ostensibly its renunciation of the apartheid project that viewed African culture as static. Rather they argued since culture and traditions are man - made, they can be changed according to whether man continues to find value in them (Ndebele 1972). Since culture is dynamic blacks must destroy old and static customs and traditions that “have made the world a zoo and museum of human evolution....almost all of the so - called tribal customs must be destroyed, because they cannot even do so little as to help the black man get food for the day” (ibid). This affirms Bhabha's (1990) and Hountodji's (1983 [1996]) view that all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. Let us quote one Vic Mafungo, who in this period expresses a similar view:

We believe that a true set of value system for blacks can be extracted from the historical

evolution of the culture of the black people and can be used in whatever innovations blacks make in modernising their culture. We reject the derogatory conception that a call for black culture implies a 'return to the bush' demand.¹⁶⁵

However BC rejected the dilution and corruption of black values because of blacks emulating whites as a result of their dominant cultural position: “whilst not rejecting all that is white, we however, condemn the escalation of the decadent subculture so common in the black urban areas as a result of economic conditions and blacks aspiring to be white” (ibid). BC believed that authentic black culture can be successfully projected through art forms, theatre, literature, music, sculpture and so on. This view, I think is fraught with contradictions and is yet to frame a coherent position on culture: in repudiating African customs it risks falling into the same racist colonial schema that viewed African culture as “backward” and “barbaric.” Some of the contributions of the “modernist” camp border on ludicrous if not simplicity. There have been attempts to call for abolition of cultural indices that mark Africans' identity like *izithakazelo*. The reasoning is they don't contribute anything to betterment of black peoples' lives. Other customs and traditions like *smanje*, *lobola* and *ulwaluko* are seen as backward, anachronistic and oppressive. It says some of the “so -called black cultures” have to be discarded because there is nothing revolutionary about them. Only those that work for blacks must be preserved. One participant intimated that he would find it highly amusing if the “modernists” would go about telling people to discard *lobola*. The risk of declaring war on the masses and alienating them is greater and more hazardous to any political project. One cannot afford this because one always needs the people. The “modernists” also say as black people there can only be a single culture, that is, “a culture of liberation” or a “culture of resistance.” Personally I think the “culture of liberation” has become common place, used to mask an inherent disdain of African culture. For me there is nothing like a “culture of

¹⁶⁵ Vic Mafungo (Black Theology” (n.d).

liberation”, there can only be a “practice of liberation” or a “practice of resistance.” The “modernist” view also rejects traditional Black Nationalist mantras like “Black and Beautiful” or “Black Pride” which were central in formulation of blackness and its agency, because there is nothing to be proud of being black if one lives in a shack, starves or is in perpetual want, they argue. Conversations on Facebook and elsewhere show a binary division on the approaches to culture, customs and traditions. The “roots” camp regards views on cultural traditions by people like Andile Mngxitama as “no better than that of born again Christians and bible wielding lunatics.”¹⁶⁶ On Facebook someone related an incident where he told his students that the idea of wearing black for women when mourning started with Queen Victoria when she was grieving her husband. His students said African culture doesn't exist, what they have is just a colonial form with certain remnants of Africa's past culture. The person wrote: “you see if you are landless and oppressed, you have no culture of your own! You just mimic and are a copycat of other peoples' lifestyles. Culture and power go hand in hand. If you are powerless you only practice an oppressed culture. In Marxist terms the economic superstructure determines culture.”¹⁶⁷ Clearly there is a heady Fanonian influence on the “modernist” camp. It is not surprising. Fanon was a Frenchman, in and out. His thinking is one hundred per cent French, which is crafted in the genealogy of French philosophy.¹⁶⁸ The same title of his book “Black Skin White Masks” may be an apt reference to him. One notes mimicry of the prevailing cultural modes which radicals employ in their theory, ideology and political practice. They seem to be vindicated by Bhabha (1994) who sees mimicry as a form of defence and a means to destabilise authority. Like Spivak (1977).

¹⁶⁶ Facebook post, April 9 2012, in response to Mngxitama's attack on African culture.

¹⁶⁷ Facebook post, June 14 2012.

¹⁶⁸ Achille Mbembe, “Fanon and the subject of Emancipation”, talk delivered at WISER, University of the Witwatersrand, April 18 2012.

Bhabha's (1994) argument is that those who oppose the dominant power on its own terms or in its own language are usually caught in its logic and thus perpetuate it. That's the reason why he calls for contiguity rather than direct opposition as the most effective position to assume, and also infiltration of the dominant symbolic orders and systems rather than rejection or reversal of the dominant (Young 2001). However, this approach renders black struggles accommodationist, conformist, reformist and contradictory because tools and trope of conceptualisation used to undermine the system belong to the very system. Advocates of this position are privileged black middle class radical elite who produce a cultural discourse that denigrates African value systems, carry cultural baggage of western culture, preserve the status quo and are not dissimilar to imperialist and racist position in regards to African culture. According to Ajayi (cited in Chinweizu 1987) those blacks who consider knowledge of the past as irrelevant can only be presumed to harbour a colonialist view of the African past. It is improbable that these middle class blacks can commit to a black struggle whilst they are dually suspended between western modernity and fear of the values and customs of their people. If they cannot adjust, profess loyalties and identify with black ethos, then despite the Black Nationalist rhetoric they spew with regularity, they certainly are black people with white souls; they are colonisers with a colonial mindset who masquerade as black revolutionaries.

7.1.1. Culture and History

All racially subjugated people have had to struggle with the dilemma of constructing a positive, valourising identity to offset the negative representation projected by racism. Black people have had to deal with an ideological assault that has historically represented them as the antithesis of civilisation, intelligence and advancement, factors claimed as constituent elements of whiteness (Harrison 1998). The racial world-view and culture of racism

suppresses the self – esteem and distorts forms of consciousness of the racial others (ibid). In the US, for example, history and the relationship between then and now reveals how African – Americans (re) construct the past through cultural politics of memory (Early 1996, Smedley 1993 cited in Harrison 1998). The sacred and profane dimensions of memory are seen as the key to identity, including the contestation by African – Americans of the Euro – American claims to superior history. This is an integral part of the struggle against racism. The dark and savage Africa is redeemed through achievements of ancient Egypt's Africanity and blackness, a place where Europeans have “recognised, admired, and appropriated as the roots of their own” (Harrison 1998: 623). The argument is the Negro had a glorious past (Garvey 1925). For Toure and Hamilton (1999: 237), it is absolutely essential that black people know their history, “that they know their roots, that they develop an awareness of their cultural heritage.” This thought places black people on the mantle of important contributions to civilisation: – invention of smelting iron; Ethiopia (the land of the sunburnt faces as mentioned by Greek writers) was the highest seat of civilisation; Axum; Kanem; Zazzau; Zimbabwe and Sudan were also great centres of civilisation; Ghana, Mali and Songhay contained schools and centres of learning and the university of Sankore at Timbuktu was famous (Work 1916; du Bois 1965; Chinweizu 1987). Let us quote du Bois:

What in our civilisation is distinctly British or American? Nothing. Science was built in Africa and religion in Asia. Was there no other way for advance of mankind? Were there no other cultural patterns, ways of action, goals of progress, which might and may lead man to something finer and higher? Africa saw the stars of God; Asia saw the soul of man; Europe saw and sees only man's body, which it feeds and polishes until it is fat, gross and cruel (1965: 149).

There has been, for a long time, by African – Americans, the importance of black history in

black struggles. Black History Month¹⁶⁹ (BHM), for example, which was started in 1926 by Carter. G. Woodson (a Howard University professor), as a more modest Negro History Week, showed a growing realisation that blacks had a history and thus a permanent place and inalienable right to US citizenship (Levine 2012). Levine argues that all modern history is black history because of Africa's and Africans' central even if it's a still subaltern role, in the history of the modern world. Articles in the *Journal of Negro History* (founded by Woodson), not only taught blacks about the commonality of their cultural DNA but forced them to confront the violence that is at the core of that shared history. There is a reminder that “black people were not just indigenous to another continent (Africa); their passage to the Americas constituted the foundation – and along with the genocide of indigenous Americans - the original sin of modernity, from which the world, and particularly Africa, have yet to recover” (Levine 2012). He adds, “our common history, whether 100 000 or 1000 years ago, is rooted in or passes through Africa.” Black history becomes a hagiography that celebrates achievements of blacks (the racial firsts) who showed that blacks are fully human and who are not inferior. However the danger with this position is it becomes a positive racial uplift favoured by conservatives including affluent black middle class. BHM in the US has become contested, one version being the corporatist which suppresses radical voices and radical visions of black people by promulgating a colour – blind society. The other counters the colour – blind theory and contends little has changed in the lives of blacks. Rather than celebrating black progress it points out the continuity of white supremacy, state violence, exploitation and disenfranchisement of black Americans (Raiford and Cohen 2012). This version is more confrontational, more collectively oriented and concerned with political urgency of the present and asks the question:

How could there still be more black men in prison than in college; if Obama marks the end

¹⁶⁹ Black History Month is celebrated all over the black world including Azania.

of racism? How could the days of plantations and ghettos be over when, according to the Pew Research Centre, the average white family today possesses twenty times the wealth of the average black family? (Raiford and Cohen 2012)

They conclude that BHM needs to retain its faith in a future beyond white supremacy and its emphasis on promoting African – American racial pride remains as important as ever. But so too does it need to stay true to Dr Woodson's larger project of educating all Americans about the truth of the country's past: – a truth including the history of slavery and sexual violence, convict leasing and lynching, segregation and hyper – incarceration. For du Bois (1965) Pan – Africa will seek to preserve its own past history, write the present account, erasing the lies and distortions about black folk. Edward Wilmot Blyden before him had indicted colonial and slave history:

A people with a passion for taking away the countries of others and dignifying the robbery as conquests; and whose systematic cruelty has been shown for ages, in chaining, buying and selling another....that the part of the man – stealer and man – seller is far more contemptible than the part of the man stolen and sold....history absolves the Negro being as 'a despised race' because his hands are free from the blood of other men. He has not in any way oppressed other races (Blyden, cited in Lynch 1971: 159 - 60).

The return to history is paramount, that is, to a history of populations long thought to be people without a past but whose past is now very much of the present (Wolf 1971: x).

Recurring questions are: is black history merely a sad prelude to the present or an on-going nightmare, of discrimination and violence? (Raiford and Cohen 2012) The answer is that the study of the past is not always mollifying; it's not only always a fountain of inspiration but a source of outrage. Du Bois (1965) recounts an incident he had with an editor when offering an article, which began with a reference to the experience of the last century: “Oh”, he (editor) said, “leave out the history and come to the present.” Du Bois says he felt like going

to him over a 1000 miles and taking him by the lapels: “Dear, dear jackass! Don't you understand that the past is the present; that without what was, nothing is? Those of the infinite dead, the living are but unimportant bits?” (Du Bois 1965: 80) In the new African renaissance, according to Nkrumah (1964), there is need to place great emphasis on history that mirrors African society, capture its experience so as to guide and direct African action and “can thus become a pointer at the ideology which should guide and direct African reconstruction” (1964: 63). In other words there should be a connection between an ideological standpoint and writing of history.

In the 1950s and 1960s it was realised that the “nationalism” against colonialism had its roots deep in the African past; and that it was only a product of a continuous process of resistance which took diverse forms, that is, armed struggle, African Independent Churches, welfare associations, strikes and so forth (Rodney 1981). In the New World black radicals were impelled to read about Africa to challenge white mythologies and racist representations of Africa's past which has been used not only to justify slavery but also to maintain segregation and oppression. American blacks in particular found themselves driven to make the most serious study of the African past (C.L.R James cited in Rodney 1981). Malcolm X (1964) has put it more succinctly:

The social philosophy of Black Nationalism involves emphasis upon the culture of the black man, which will be designed for us to connect with our cultural roots, to restore the racial dignity necessary for us to love our own kind and strike at the evils and vices that are at the centre of the moral fibre of our own community and our own society. The social philosophy of Black Nationalism encourages the black man to elevate his own society instead of trying to force himself into the unwanted presence of white society.

National culture is attached to the realities of the people and is not divorced from the struggle for freedom. The fight for liberation ensures existence of culture and the struggle itself is a

cultural undertaking (Cabral 1973). The common bond of all African cultures is the fight against colonial domination. This culture must be a popular culture that takes into cognisance diversity of levels of cultures thus making it a national culture with a national dimension (Cabral 1973). It is around peoples' struggles that African/Negro culture takes substance – not only through songs, poetry and folklore and so on (Fanon 1967). This is predicated by the need to create necessary conditions for the existence of that culture which is the liberation of the whole African continent. The value of culture in resisting colonial domination is decisive because colonialism thrives not only on material domination but permanent cultural impairment (Cabral 1973). Culture is an element of resistance because domination is a manifestation of physical, social and ideological realities of a dominated society. Cabral's argument is national liberation involves formulation by a people of their history which colonialism usurped. National liberation takes place when national productive forces are freed of colonial domination and this frees prospects of cultural assertion and cultural development. Cabral, like Fanon, emphasises that national liberation is an act of culture.

7.1.1.1. The Roots View

Let us look at the “roots” view. Culture has been central in the liberation movement (Young 2001; Oliphant 2008). An article in the SASO newsletter, for example, says SASO through its cultural committee (CULCOM) “aims at reawakening the people to the beauty of their past kingdoms so that they will be able to deal with this turbulent present and an even more unpredictable future.”¹⁷⁰ It also decries blacks reading their “history” written by other people who don't know how it is like to be black. Note that Biko (1987) had recognised that African cultural values were dissipated by Christianity, missionary education and Anglo – Boer culture which taught the black man to be submissive. The role of BC was to eradicate this. In

¹⁷⁰ “A Night of Blackness with Dashiki and Black Jazz”, Article in SASO Newsletter, March/April 1976.

order to aid the black man's consciousness, there is a need to go back and rewrite the distorted history and reproduce “our heroes who offered resistance to the white man” (Biko 1987: 93). There are similarities here with Garvey (1925) who encouraged the Negro to forget and cast behind him hero worship and adoration of other races and start to create and emulate his own: “we must canonize our own saints, create our own martyrs and elevate to positions of fame and honour black men and women who have made their distinct contributions to our racial history.” And du Bois (1965: 80) asks, “...who are we, stupid blunderers at the tasks these brothers sought to do – who are we to forget them?” Biko does argue for the return to the past. He writes, “Our culture must be defined in concrete terms. We must relate the past to the present and demonstrate a historical evolution of the modern black man” (1987: 95). My understanding is that while black people are caught and trapped in modernism, the past, unlike the position of Biko's contemporaries, still forms a cohesive part in stimulating the consciousness, subjectivity and agency of black people. Biko observed that although the coloniser “devoured our culture” and bastardised it, basic tenets of African culture have withstood this bastardisation because “we are a man centred society whose sacred tradition is that of sharing” (1987: 96). Note similarities with Cabral (1973) who observed that despite betrayal by the African indigenous elite, superiority of imperial forces, organised repression and cultural destruction, African culture and cultural resistance survived through generations. This is exhibited through freedom struggles for liberation. However, black culture has the power for innovation which enables it to be responsive to new problems and challenges as seen in the inherent creativity of black theatre, drama and music. The “roots” view realises the totality of the past, the present and the future; drawing from culture, the present generation should be makers of history.¹⁷¹ It calls for a reappraisal of language which reproduces a white supremacist vocabulary and psychological mind-set, partnered with

¹⁷¹ Haile Gerima, address to the SNI Durban, September 23 2011.

a critical evaluation of accoutrement and fashion which is promoted by global images, coupled with “watching television instead of reading about our heroes; preoccupation with television has meant we have become a sick society.”¹⁷² This culture endeavours to make people forget their pain; it therefore cannot be regarded as useful in the project of emancipation.

The cultural bases of Haitian revolution were steeped in the nocturnal rituals of repossession and repatriation done in the forests and forest spaces that cultivated a culture of freedom that enabled slaves to cope with hells of slavery and facilitated a foundation for common devotion and solidarity (Depestre 1967; Hutton 2007a; 2011). Voodoo played an invaluable role where the enslaved enacted rituals which allowed their bodies to be possessed by their ancestors and their gods, thereby becoming gods, kings and queens, sovereigns and free people at night. At midnight celebration of voodoo slaves danced and sang:

Eh! E! Bomba! Heu! Heu!

Canga, Moune de le!

Canga, do ki la! Canga! [Translation: we swear to destroy the whites and all that they possess; let us die rather than fail to keep this vow (James 1980: 18). Although slave owners tried to stamp this song and voodoo itself, it was futile and quixotic because for over two hundred years the slaves sang it at their meetings. One such ritual was conducted by a voodoo priestess (*mambo*) and a priest (*oungan*) of the snake cult. The rituals required oaths, sanctioned with the will of God, encoded the virtue of silence and “sometimes a vase, containing the still warm blood of a goat, will seal on the lips of the participants the promise to suffer death rather than reveal anything, and even to administer death to whomsoever may forget that he had solemnly bound himself to the oath” (Pick 1994 cited in Hutton 2011: 547

¹⁷² Haile Gerima, address to the SNI Durban, September 23 2011.

– 8). Further, the rituals shaped and engendered a radical anti – slavery ethos in the agency of the enslaved and a culture of respect, discipline, cohesion, trust, community, security, viability that became an organisational basis of the Haitian revolution (Hutton 2011). Invocations were also made to the patron God of the revolution, Mbumba (*Nzambi Mpungu*) urging him to destroy white oppressors (*mundele*) and their black supporters (*bafioti*) and these became the invocations and chants of the revolution. The *bafioti* were regarded as mentally enslaved, their physical person zombified. Those who sided with Napoleon's counter revolution were “black skin white heart”, “Uncle Toms” whose mental enslavement was a category of blackness (Hutton 2011). For Rene Depestre the Haitian revolution was a confirmation and a demonstration of the concept of Negritude and quips, “our national history is Negritude in action.”¹⁷³

In reference to the role of ancestors in Zimbabwean war of liberation, Nabudere (2011) observes that new concepts of analysis such as Marxist categories must take into account real traditional and spiritual forces existing in a community. Many young guerrillas came from Christian homes or urban areas; some received political education in the socialist bloc and would have hardly likely to be sympathetic to spirit mediums playing a role in the struggle (Lan 1985). But guerrilla commanders were pragmatic, they planned to lay a durable foundation of long term cooperation with the peasantry; certainly they knew the role of mediums in the 1896 First Chimurenga, of Nehanda, Chaminuka and Kaguvi¹⁷⁴ who all formed part of the Second Chimurenga's¹⁷⁵ spiritual guidance. Mediums wielded power and

¹⁷³ An interview with Aime Cesaire, conducted by Rene Depestre, at the Cultural Congress of Havana, 1967.

¹⁷⁴ The three are the most prominently and revered national spirit mediums in Zimbabwe who are attributed to the success of Zimbabwean anti – colonial wars.

¹⁷⁵ Means Insurrection, refers to anti – colonial liberation struggles in Zimbabwe.

authority and helped in recruitment; guerrillas offered land, to be returned to its original and rightful owners, which struck a shared vision and aims between the former and the latter. There were, of course, rituals, lore and spiritual guardianship guerrillas were compelled to observe, that ensured their survival and success. Some “modernists” may view this as superstition, but this was the pragmatic reality of the Zimbabwean struggle, which is a legend even today. Activities of the guerrillas show that old set of categories survived not as a blunted relic of the past but as an attempt to make the world new (Lan 1985). Taking the Zimbabwean example into account, Nabudere calls for the need for a hermeneutic dialogue between tradition and modernity, between the past and the present. It is improbable ZANU/ZANLA/ ZAPU/ZIPRA guerrillas could have succeeded if they had blindly adopted Marx’s faith in the future communist society and “banished the past” in their practice by disregarding the role of ancestors (Nabudere 2011). Lan further queries the “modernist” view:

If to be revolutionary means to make a complete break with the past then it cannot...nor can it elsewhere. A total break must always be perceived as chaos. Without guidance from the past, how can we know what changed, what has stayed the same?
(1985: 226).

This doesn't deny the fact that concrete realities must be factored in. It happens that some beliefs and superstitions may hinder progress of the struggle. The struggle as a process, does “process” all caught in it. Gradually beliefs and convictions naturally change; some may even recede into oblivion, not by compulsion but by a natural synthetic progress. For example Cabral (1979: 59) relates, “....many of us believed that we should not install ourselves in certain bush areas because they belonged to *iram* spirit. But today thanks to many *iram* spirits of our land, our folk understood, and even the *iram* understood, that the bush belongs to man and no – one is afraid of the bush any more. We are even well established in the Cobiana bush, the more so because that *iram* spirit is a nationalist. It 'said' openly that the Portuguese had to go away, had no right to be in our land”.

The devastating historical experience which African people have gone through under colonialism, shows the continued preservation and use of their cultural heritage to resist, survive and withstand the ravages of western imperialism and postcolonial neocolonialism (Nabudere 2011). Even though colonialists used some aspects of African customs and traditions to enforce colonial rule, this didn't subdue the people entirely or destroy African traditions and customs completely. They used those resources of their spirituality and culture to adapt, modify practices and resist negative colonial impositions. Used in this way tradition and culture proved to be a revolutionary resource which enabled African people to reassert their humanity, integrity and dignity. Nabudere argues that the use of culture and tradition was part and parcel of the human struggle for self – preservation, self-identity, self – representation, liberation and freedom (2011: 160).

Conclusion

One's conception of the world is derived from the present and historical reality (Gramsci 1971). Just like philosophy cannot be separated from history of philosophy, nor can culture from the history of culture. Gramsci argues one cannot have a critical and coherent conception of the world without having a consciousness of its historicity. This is a fact that contemporary BC adherents have to acknowledge. They need to craft all their programmes, political, theoretical and ideological positions on the basis of “pulse of the people.” They need to constantly feel what that pulse is like on each and every day. Rather than imposing prescriptions on the people they have to engage hermeneutically with them, understand them, dialogue with them and learn from their practices. That is the hallmark of an authentic and true revolutionary.

Chapter 8

Collaboration, Complicity and “Selling – Out” in South African Historiography

Present discourses among BC adherents infer to the postapartheid social order as a “sell - out”. In this chapter I trace the etymological, ideological and political roots of the term “sell – out”. I argue that this is a complex, multidimensional term, whose usage and meaning is contingent to prevailing socio - political conditions of any given time. In its universality it transcends space and time but finds acute expression in South African political historiography. Since collaboration and “selling – out” have defined South African liberation politics, I find it opportune to ask and seek answers to these questions: who is and what are the dimensions of a “sell – out”? What is that they sell? What is the morality behind the allegations?; why are black people penchant on “selling – out” their own kindred? Why do people engage in “selling – out”, collaboration and complicity? Who has the power to label another a “sell – out”? Hopefully at the end of this presentation some light will be shed on these theoretical dilemmas. This chapter is not meant to be a historical narrative *per se*; rather it attempts to show the historical development of a character called “sell – out” as it insinuates itself in South Africa black political history. In this chapter I haven’t separated “sell – out”, complicity and collaboration. I will show how all these sometimes are difficult to study as distinct, “standing alone” but that they intersect and converge in different historical epochs. Present and emerging postcolonial theory points to complicity, which is yet another form of collaboration by postcolonial native elite where colonial economic, cultural and political structures framed by colonial masters remain. Therefore I seek to interrogate this concept and how it has defined contemporary postcolonial relations. I make a large claim and declare that: in history there is always a “sell – out”. As a historical phenomenon, this character is also universal, appearing in different socio – political and socio – economic

contexts, contingent to hitherto existing conditions. In South Africa, as I will show, selling out and collaboration, have been complex, contested and debated. My methodology in preparing this presentation relies on a substantial amount of archival research. I have dug deep into history, where seemingly yellowing and rusty pages presented voices that speak from the nether world; the ageing pages, I found to my confounding astonishment, were actually breathing with life; voices that I found speaking from the past, not forgotten and buried but implications for the present. I have also benefited from numerous interviews with a cross – section of participants – the youth, the middle aged and old “war horses” who were in the thick of the struggle against apartheid.

8.1. Collaboration and Complicity in South African History

During the eighth Xhosa War of Resistance (1850 – 1853) which was the longest and bloodiest, the Xhosa faced threats to their land, independence and an impending doom from the colonists. Only a “miracle” could save them from this apocalypse. Given this state of affairs, where the “Bantu”, beaten by guns, horsemen and superior fire-power of the Europeans turned to the spiritual world for help (Roux 1948: 43). On a particular day in 1856 in an area inhabited by the Xhosa, a young girl called Nonqawuse was coming from drawing water from Gxara, a small river east of the Kei. According to legend, she met the spirits of the dead, who happened to be the mortal enemies of the white men, who had come from the sea to aid the Xhosa in driving the English from the land (Roux 1948, see also Peires 1988). Her uncle Mhlakaza delivered the prophetic message to the paramount chief, Sarili. The spiritual orders required that all cattle were to be killed and eaten. In addition no – one was to cultivate the land. The reward for observance of these strict injunctions was a punitive measure by the gods taken on the white man; the sky would fall and crush the white people and all the blacks who had not obeyed the spirits.

The aftermath of this “prophecy” was that between 25 000 and 30 000 out of 150 000 Xhosas perished as a result of cattle killing and a resultant famine. A mass exodus ensued; thousands reached the Cape colony and offered themselves as labour where they were given food, shelter and work. According to Roux (1948: 47), Nonqawuse and Mhlakaza had indeed effectively solved the labour problem of the colonists. The military might of the Xhosa was broken and it would be a generation before they would be able to fight again. While Mhlakaza is believed to have died of starvation, Sarili and Nonqawuse fled to Bashie. While no attempt was made to arrest Sarili, Nonqawuse was sought by a group of Africans and handed over to the authorities. She was however released shortly afterwards, changed her name to Victoria Regina and retired somewhere near present day Port Elizabeth. The story of Nonqawuse is subject to controversy and debate. On one hand she is likened to Joan of the Arc; a prophet of Xhosa nationalism while on the other she may have colluded with the British. The latter claim is lent credence by the fact that the Cape governor, Sir George Grey, whose earlier career had taken him to Australasia and had studied the “superstitious” mind of the Native, could have used Nonqawuse to solve the debilitating labour woes the early colonists faced.

Collaboration and “selling – out” has a long, unique and peculiar thread in South African history; immediately beginning with colonial contact. According to Hosea Jaffe (1952) the first “traitor” to Africans was Krotoa (Eva), who was an intermediary between her uncle, Autchumao (Herry) and Jan Van Riebeeck, of whom she was also employed as a translator. Eva acted as a go – between in peace negotiations which followed the KhoiKhoi wars and persuaded them to part with their cattle for the sake of “peace”. She also tried to prevent the KhoiKhoi from joining, and receiving rebellious and runaway slaves. Eva became a factor in Van Riebeeck's divide and rule strategy and reliably she became an instrument of the Dutch

East India Company. She later married a Dutchman, Pieter Van Meerhof in 1664 in a glittering ceremony complete with pomp and entertainment. After the couple's death her children were taken to Mauritius to be brought up as "Europeans". Eva is said to have lived and died despised by both the Khoi and the Dutch. According to Jaffe (1952) she is said to be the first African "Quisling" because she was Van Riebeeck's "eyes and ears".

During the intervening years there is evidence of African chiefs who collaborated with the invading European armies leading to large scale loss of land. But for the purposes of this chapter, I will fast track the history to mid nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Missionary activity which worked in tandem with the colonising forces, had by nineteenth century succeeded in establishing churches and schools in many parts of South Africa. It is from the latter that the first African educated elite emerged (Fredrickson 1995; Walshe 1970; Comaroff and Comaroff 1986; Mutero Chirenje 1987; see also the Introduction and chapter 6 of this thesis). These elite are historically important because they are the first to challenge the colonial status quo.

In this history one important and prominent figure I would like to make reference to is John Tengo Jabavu. Jabavu who was behind the Native Electoral Association in 1884 would for the next thirty years lead progressive Africans in the Cape. In 1887 Jabavu led an unsuccessful opposition to the Parliamentary Voters Registration Bill which denied Africans the vote by defining qualifications for the franchise. Thus throughout the history of African protests, the question of the franchise would assume a central role (Karis and Carter 1972). The likes of Jabavu were not radical; instead they preached loyalty and subordination to superiors. These postulations he published with rigour and vigour in his newspaper *Imvo Zabantsundu*. Simons and Simons (1983: 116) observe that men like Jabavu and Dr

Abdurrahman¹⁷⁶ were great among their people; they faced racial discrimination in their endeavours. Though unwilling, and perhaps unable to alienate themselves from the poor and oppressed, they didn't escape from compromises that are forced on leaders without power who seek to reform but never overthrow an evil social order. Although the Cape liberalism declined and racial discrimination spread, leaders like Tengo Jabavu still maintained faith in white patronage, a belief that proved futile. Tengo Jabavu opposed the forming of South African Native Congress (later ANC) in 1912 because of his deep faith in the Cape non – racial system. He also didn't like an organisation that didn't centre on working with sympathetic whites to exert pressure within the established parliamentary system, so he formed the South African Races Congress. In 1913 the new minister of Native Affairs, JW Sauer, proposed the Natives' Land Act of 1913, building on proposals outlined by his predecessor JBM Hertzog. The law would become the main hallmark of African policy of the Union government (Karis and Carter 1972: 63). Ironically Jabavu in his newspaper's editorial considered Sauer a “friend of the Africans” and on his death he gave him a glowing eulogy. Jabavu's actions in supporting the white government; defending the 1913 Land Act; and later supporting the Native Affairs Bill in 1920 were some of classic acts of complicity. When he stood against the incumbent Walter Rubusana in the election for Tembuland provincial Council the African vote was split. The election was won by a white candidate, A. Payne (1004 votes to Rubusana's 852 and Jabavu's 294). This betrayal ended his political career and as a result Africans would not again have their own representative. Simons and Simons (1983) observe that although there was a streak of Uncle Tom in Tengo Jabavu, he wasn't a white man's lackey. However looking at the man's career one can detect the roots of complicity which would be a recurrent feature in South African black politics.

¹⁷⁶ Dr Abdurrahman was the leader of the African Peoples Organisation.

On 25 November 1925 Hertzog made a speech in the Orange Free State town of Smithfield where he outlined the “solution” for the “Native Question”: removal of all Africans from the common voters roll; white representation of “Natives” in parliament; delimitation of land within the framework of Native Land Act and establishment of a partly nominated, partly elected “Native Councils”. The Hertzog Native Bills first formulated in 1926 and referred to a Select Committee in 1927, sought to abolish the Cape African vote completely. To “compensate” that, a second Bill would promise “Natives” a certain measure of representation by white senators; the third Bill would be an amendment of the Natives’ Land Act of 1913, called the Native Land and Trust Bill which proposed to set – up a board of trustees in which “natives” with money could have access to a total of 12% of the land.

These preceding developments culminated in the formation of the Non – European Conference on 23 June 1927, which assembled in the City Hall in Kimberley calling for a closer cooperation among Non – Europeans and between Europeans and Non – Europeans and opposition to Hertzog's proposals. In January 1930, Mveli Skota, ANC's Secretary General, moved a motion for an All African Convention to fight for rights and liberties of Africans. African political organisations throughout the country agreed to work together and convened an All – African National Convention (AAC) whose inaugural meeting was held on December 16, 1935 at Bloemfontein. While over 400 delegates assembled there was, in views of those participants, “only one outstanding traitor”: the Reverend John Dube who publicly declared himself in favour of the Bills. But who cared for Dube, some delegates asked? He was known to be a “government man” (Roux 1948: 296). While the radicals and communists rejected the Bills and called for militant action, their efforts were rebuffed by conference leading heads that were moderates and were inclined for negotiation. Despite protests the Hertzog Bills were nonetheless passed into law in April 1936, at a joint session of both

houses of parliament, by 169 votes to 11. A Native Representative Council (NRC) was also to be created with twelve elected Africans, four Africans chosen by the government and white Native Commissioners under the chairmanship of the secretary for Native Affairs.

The AAC again met in June 1936 to deliberate on unity by African organisations in opposing the Native Representative Act. However it was yet to be seen whether the Convention would have nothing to do with the new law or use the Native Representative Council as a platform to demand an extension to the franchise and a vote for all South Africans, black or white. The AAC sought a policy of “political identity” and “full partnership” devoid of dominance by one racial group over another. The Africans, though, were ready to accept a “civilisation test”¹⁷⁷ as a qualification for the franchise. At the meeting ANC’s Dr AB Xuma (who would later on become ANC president) was optimistic the “Bantu” would reach a higher stage of civilisation and begin to behave with proper decorum. This prompts De Kock to state:

In view of the rapacious political thievery South African blacks were subjected to, such sentiments do indeed sound quaint. Here we see a paradox typical of early African Nationalism: the response to segregationist pressure is seemingly dressed in a language of complicity with colonial, “civilising discourse.” (De Kock 2004: 122).

De Kock (2004: 123) further notes:

On the surface we have an emergent African nationalist discourse framing its ideals in what post-colonial theory would regard as language of complicity. Here is a genuinely representative post-colonial ethos, not driven by self – serving elitist or bourgeois sell – outs that seemingly ask to be measured by the standards of imperial “civilisation.”

One contentious question was whether the African organisations would participate in the elections of members of the new NRC. Despite rejection of the Bills by many in the AAC,

¹⁷⁷ The “civilisation test” consisted of “educational or property or wage qualification, as a condition for the acquirement of political privileges” (Prof DDT Jabavu cited in De Kock 2004)

including in the discussions of the United Transkeian Territories General Council (the Bunga); most AAC members acquiesced to Professor DDT Jabavu's call to use whatever means and platforms to air their grievances. The Convention agreed on participation and many Africans associated with the AAC including the ANC, members of the Left and the Communist Party, leaders of Location Advisory Boards, and the Transkei Bunga, in June 1937 ran for NRC elections and later on became councillors. While the AAC gathering in 1935 rejected the Hertzog Native Bills, the 1936 conference steered by leaders bent on assuming leadership and directing the movement along innocuous lines led to a “compromise” where the leadership without reference to the people who sent them agreed to the Bills on the liberal premise that “half a loaf is better than nothing.”¹⁷⁸ One major weakness was that the masses entrusted their allegiance to intellectuals as their spokesmen and leaders based on their personality and prestige. Indeed the highest political honour for African leaders in the late 1930s and 1940s, according to Tabata, was to be labelled an “NRC.” Therefore in the absence of principle there were no checks and balances which gave leeway to opportunism. As a result the spirit and resistance on the part of the African people which had manifested itself in the first AAC conference now gave way to compromise and collaboration.

The AAC which since its inception had allowed all non – whites to be members became dominated by coloured and black African radicals in the Cape. On 16 December 1941, IB Tabata while addressing the AAC conference criticised the ANC for not wanting to be part of the AAC which would unite all political organisations and therefore become an African parliament. Tabata blamed the leadership for failing the masses. The masses had now realised that they had to rely on themselves because the firm intentions of the white rulers

¹⁷⁸ W.M. Tsotsi, Presidential Address at Conference of the AAC held at Queenstown, 17 – 20 December 1956.

was to keep them under perpetual servitude. It was imperative that all factional divisions and differences be wiped out in an effort for unity against a common enemy. Taking an audit of the AAC's six years of existence, Tabata observed:

....we can see two distinct traits in the Convention: knavish submission to the ruling and fear for their own people. In order to retain the goodwill of the authorities the leaders must see to it that the people do nothing that will really improve their lot, or challenge the status quo. For it is their political task to bring conciliation between the oppressed and the oppressor, not conflict. It's their task to bring about the acceptance of oppression, not the determination to overthrow it.

Tabata critiqued the leaders for trying to make the AAC innocuous by engaging in negotiations with the prime minister. He saw parliamentary representation as a "fraud" and the Convention was obliged to tell the people that they had nothing to expect from this sham representation because it wouldn't change their material conditions "whether they elect these three members or the other three, they will not get higher wages or land or houses or education, but they will remain slaves as long as they accept and submit to this slavery legislation." He criticised the NRC and white liberals like Ballinger and Molteno:

I maintain that one has to be in the skin of the oppressed to feel and suffer as an African does, if he wants to represent him. This representation therefore is a farce. Even if there were, not three white representatives of six and half million Africans, but thirty, it would still be sham representation.

Tabata went on to say that while "parliamentary representation is a sham, the NRC is worse. It is a complete dud. It is neither native, nor representative nor council...and besides it presents such a sorry spectacle, that it is today the most humiliating insult for the Africans. They robbed us of our land and of our rights. They shouldn't mock us by forcing twelve men to play the role of jesters who kiss the whip that is lashing us." As a farce, it was only "providing many jokes for the oppressors: the Pondo chief asking for an aeroplane ride...or

A.M. Jabavu showing his appreciation at sitting in Pretoria City Hall where no native has ever put his foot.”

Some coloureds in the Cape had, early in 1943, rigorously opposed the establishment of the Coloured Affairs Department (CAD). As a result they formed the Anti - CAD linked with the AAC into a federal body called the Non – European Unity Movement (NEUM) which condemned all forms of participation in segregated forms of representation. The AAC therefore proposed for a federal body including groups like coloureds (under Anti – CAD) and Indians (under the South African Indian Congress) which would unify all Non – European peoples in the struggle against segregation. The Convention then decided: against trusteeship and segregation; the struggle by oppressed groups in South Africa, the black Africans, the coloureds and the Indians was identical in aim and methods. By December 1943 the AAC and the National Anti – CAD had coalesced into the Unity Movement which adopted non – collaboration and boycott as a basis for struggle. Of course boycott and non - collaboration would inform the methods of struggle until the 1980s. NEUM leaders didn't advance traditional working class methods of struggle but adopted “non – collaboration” as their slogan (Hirson n.d). They rejected “dummy bodies” like NRC, CAC, native representatives, township advisory boards, the Bungas and any other body set up to “advise” on events in the Reserves. Any person who cooperated with these institutions was a “quisling” who should be personally boycotted. Boycott itself has been borrowed by generations of activists; the word itself originating from Captain Boycott who oppressed and exploited peasants in Ireland. Ultimately he was completely isolated and ostracised and eventually forced to capitulate. Boycott which has been employed for three centuries was used by the country’s activists to describe non – cooperation today.¹⁷⁹ This came against a

¹⁷⁹ Duma Nokwe, “Next Stage in the Struggle for Power.” New Age November 9 1961.

background of a litany of discriminatory laws in the 1930s: the Native Urban Areas Act, 1923 amended in 1937; Native Laws Amendment Act, 1937; Industrial Conciliation Act, 1937; Master and Servants Act, Native Labour Regulation Act, 1913 redefined in 1942; the Factories Act, 1941 and the effects of discrimination which black Africans, coloureds and indians felt spurred a need for a non – white unity. The CAD which Prime Minister Jan Smuts set up in 1943 to perform advisory functions with twenty coloureds appointed by government galvanised coloured leaders opposed to this racially discriminatory institution which they saw as similar to the Native Affairs Department. Thus there was a common awareness among all non – whites that they had a common enemy, the white oppressor (Karis 1973).

On 26 August 1943, a manifesto was adopted by the AAC declaring: “For eight years we have been developing on our own lines. For eight years we have been fooling around with dummies, with meaningless mock elections and mock councils. And have we got more land today, more jobs for our thousands our young men? Are we better off? Appeals to rulers have not worked, they are fruitless and only give the impression that African grievances are being voiced and they are being represented, more importantly, and they 'lull us to sleep'. In this light it is no use appealing to the government because it's not an African government but a white man's government, as is the parliament, the law courts and other institutions.” African representation in the NRC was seen as a 'farce and a mockery' where three whites represented eight million Africans, while two million whites were represented by one hundred and fifty.¹⁸⁰ In this regard the representation was sham because it ensured that the interests of white “aristocracy” were served without interruption or opposition from African representatives; it fooled Africans to believe that they were being represented and to live in the hope of justice. African representatives “have been sent to parliament not to see justice,

¹⁸⁰ IB Tabatha, “The Agrarian Problem”, Address to Society of Young Africa, May 1954.

but to make laws to suit the mine – owners and big farmers, to force the Africans to to the mines and the farms as cheap labour.”¹⁸¹

In the meantime, in 1947 Prime Minister Smuts met with some NRC members¹⁸² to deliberate the earlier adjournment of the NRC in protest to lack of consideration of their resolutions. Smuts’ proposals included giving a measure of responsibility and authority to the NRC and strengthening it including devolution so that “leaders of our Native people would get proper training in the management of their own affairs.” Secondly he proposed to make the NRC an all – African body, with own organisation and own staff. Thirdly with the flocking of Africans to urban areas, Smuts reported on establishment of Local Advisory Boards and Native Advisory Boards in townships and locations. In response, Prof Z.K Mathews expressed the need for cooperation between the government and the people and that can be done “by giving us a greater measure of recognition in the various councils of the state.” Chief Poto added: “The African people I like to think are like the English people – they believe in loyalty to their government and to their chiefs.... in course of time the white people realised that they could not effectively govern the Native people except by making use of their Native Chiefs.” He winded up this speech by encouraging the government to give more responsibility, powers and authority to the chiefs in their areas of jurisdiction. While the National Party initially didn’t follow Smuts' policies, they indeed formed the letter, spirit and content of apartheid ideology. In response to Smuts' proposals, ANC's AB Xuma observed that while these seemed generous, they in actual fact meant Africans had to “administer their

¹⁸¹ ibid

¹⁸² Present at the meeting were Chief Mshiyeni ka Dinizulu (Natal); Chief Victor Poto (Transkei); Chief Maseramule (Transvaal and OFS); RV Selope Thema (Transvaal and OFS); Paul Mosaka (Transvaal and OFS) and Z.K. Mathews (Cape).

own domination, discrimination and oppression under a cloak of giving Africans responsibility and participation in the administration of their own affairs.” Xuma further remarked that “this is a false position created because there is no such thing as Native Affairs apart from South African national affairs.”

IB Tabata's letter to CYL's Nelson Mandela in 1948 reveals the contradictory nature of CYL and Congress politics. For Tabata a political organisation needed to stick to its principles and should seek to unite oppressed people by following a course of non – collaboration with the government: “I am totally opposed to any organisation whose policy is to collaborate with the government and disunite the people.” Tabata detailed conditions necessitating the formation of the AAC which was the need to unite all African people. However the ruling class sought to destroy that unity by “finding a willing stooge in the person of the late Dr Dube....he was the first to break away from the Convention, and with him practically the whole of Natal. The white press acclaimed him as a great statesman, a moderate, a practical politician and in fact an epitome of all virtues. They crowned him with a halo of greatness and conferred a doctorate on him. It was Dr Dube that led the Zulus back to tribalism where they still stagnate today.” Tabata continued by saying others in the Congress like Thema and Xuma followed suit, breaking the Congress away from the Convention: “ the white press picked him up (Xuma), built him up as a great leader, a great champion of the cause of African people.” The disunity in African politics, fostered by the oppressors, threw Africans back to the pre AAC era of sectional, factional and fratricidal strife. The policy of the Convention was to reject the superiority of the white race over the black; to denounce trusteeship and all its implications like segregation, sectionalism and tribalism and this policy the Convention follows without any “concessions, compromises or deviations.” In contrast, the Congress did all the opposite, Tabata averred. Her policy has been to fall in the hands of the government either by siding

directly with the government against the people or by sowing confusion among the people¹⁸³. Tabata, in the letter, was dissatisfied with CYL's political posturing, who on one hand spoke the language of modern, progressive, independent intellectuals that reject inferiority, while on the other as members of the ANC they accepted inferiority and trusteeship with all its political manifestations, i.e. segregated institutions like NRC, Advisory Boards, the Bunga and others. For this reason the CYL became “political Januses” with two heads facing in two different directions at one and the same time. Finally Tabata warned Mandela that a young man entering politics must “establish the habit of basing his actions on principles. He must be ready if necessary to swim against the stream. Thus armed, he is protected against the temptation of seeking popularity and ephemeral success.”

In the following two years efforts were made to foster unity especially the AAC and the Congress. Given the deterioration in African life, deprivation of political rights, education, restriction of movement and lack of employment, frustration had been running high among Africans and “has undermined any confidence Africans might have had in the justice of most white men.”¹⁸⁴ Therefore, there was need for unified action by Africans, the first step being the unification of the main African political organisations – the ANC and the AAC into an All African National Congress, with a common programme and common principles. On 16 – 17 December 116 delegates representing the ANC and 30 the AAC and other 50 unattached descended on Bloemfontein to moot this idea of unity. AAC's Tabata placed the conditions for which the AAC would agree to unity, including the acceptance of: AAC/NEUM ten point programme; federal structure of the Convention; the principle of unity of all Non – Europeans

¹⁸³ Many Congress leading members were part of government's institutions like the NRC and Location Advisory Boards.

¹⁸⁴ “A Call for African Unity”, Statement signed by Xuma, Jabavu, Moroka, Matthews, Bokwe, Godlo, Mosaka, Baloyi, Champion, Selope Thema, Ntlabati and Mahabane, all Congress leading members, October 3 1948.

and most importantly the policy of “non – collaboration with the oppressor.” The latter reference was made specifically on bodies like the Bunga and the NRC. Tabata ended by saying: “we must say we do not want separate institutions. We want to go to the only councils recognised in the land – parliament, provincial and municipal councils.” After long and rigorous debate on what constituted similarities and differences between the two organisations, CYL’s AP Mda said: “non – collaboration with the oppressors was the principle to base the national struggle. The Ballingers and the rest of them must have no place in our midst.” S. Sayiya from AAC Cape Town announced that if ANC people who were members of government's institutions were sincere they should resign immediately. Of course such an action would not be possible. In the follow up meeting of the National Executive Committees of the ANC and AAC on 17 – 18 April 1949, Tabata once again reiterated that as a basis for unity, they should reject inferiority and institutions created for an “inferior” race, and demanded full democratic rights and only those institutions recognised in a democratic government. By non – collaboration, Tabata, meant “unwillingness on our part to work with those institutions which were created for our own oppression. A collaborator was one who voluntarily supported and worked with political institutions created for the oppression of the black man. We should support the freely created organisations of the people. That was what we meant by non – collaboration.” A vigorous discussion followed these postulations. J.B. Marks felt it would be wrong to stigmatise as collaborators those who didn’t agree with non – collaboration at this stage; Selope Thema, supported by Marks, was sceptical of the Convention's position on boycotting of government institutions. He asked the delegates whether they believed they could tell Transkei people to abolish the Bunga of which there was a resounding, yes! Some believed they could fight through this institution, that’s why the government was afraid of the NRC! Selope Thema further argued that the Bunga had done a lot for the people including giving bursaries and planting trees: if he was to go to his own

area, Pietersburg and tell the people not to have anything to do with the Bunga they would take him for a madman: “If we sit in our own homes and cry 'don't collaborate!', the people still accept these things.” R.M. Canca, in explaining the meaning of collaboration, said the laws weren't enough – institutions had to be created to foster a mental attitude of acceptance of the laws and these were the NRC, the Bunga and Advisory Boards: “A collaborator was one who contested in one of the above institutions. He was one engaged in a mental swindle. He knew participation in these institutions could not free the African, yet he pretended it could.” Tabata added that people were suspicious of government institutions but it was the intellectuals who went to them to seek for votes; therefore the intellectuals must agree on non – collaboration: “we must create such an attitude of mind as will make these institutions stink in the nostrils of the people. The people will follow if the leadership gives expression to the aspirations of the people.” Dr G.H. Gool from NEUM supported these sentiments, saying the government would always find Quislings to sell the people and therefore those who participated in those institutions should be nailed as traitors. The question on non – collaboration would defeat any attempts on the proposed All African National Congress unity. Some felt the ANC was inimical to that idea for fear of being exposed as collaborators, meaning “at the same time they would be committing themselves if they accepted non – collaboration and they didn't want to commit themselves.”¹⁸⁵

Following the NP victory in 1948 elections, the Unity Movement definition of a collaborator shifted, which was in sync with the racist “Herrenvolk” policies of divide and rule. The Unity Movement called these characters “Quislings (mainly from the activities of Norwegian Vidkun Quisling during World War Two), misleaders and cranks” whose work is synonymous

¹⁸⁵ Review of the AAC/ ANC National Executive committee meeting, in the minutes of the Annual Conference of the AAC, December 1949.

with that of “gaolers, chaining their people but in indirect ways which the people don’t see.” Although their work was similar to gaolers, it was different because of its subtlety and indirectness but all the same similar because they fastened chains on the people. These people were always those in prominent positions who play “tried and tested leaders who work themselves to the bone in the service of the people. They prosper and profit on misery and oppression of the people with some 'making it their only profession, while some work it as a sideline.”¹⁸⁶ These work the machinery of oppression, that is, the NRC, the CAD, the Asiatic Advisory Boards, the Bungas and the Advisory Boards: “Now the name by which these persons are known throughout the world is - QUISLINGS”.¹⁸⁷ The force for destruction the Quislings are capable of can’t be underestimated because they have a destructive agency that causes confusion and hinders progress and is deleterious to building of unity and the nation. The main preoccupation of “Quislings, misleaders and cranks” was to preserve the status quo. The question of status quo had high political significance because: “is it to be based on the principle of complete freedom from all national oppression and on demands for full and equal democratic rights, or is it to be based on bargaining for the amelioration of conditions, on bargaining for some concessions and crumbs?” (ibid) The Quislings in the DF Malan’s machinery were seen as ready to sell Non – Europeans for a few promises and a few crumbs: “Let them realise that all the shouting for the status quo, for the two – thirds majority to change the constitution and for round table conferences is the forerunner to coming betrayals and sell – outs” (ibid).

The formation of the Congress Youth League signalled a new era in African nationalist politics; those were young men whose patience was running out because of old timers' faith

¹⁸⁶ Z.R. Mahabane and G.H. Gool: “A Declaration to the People of South Africa”, 1951.

¹⁸⁷ “A Declaration to the People of South Africa from the NEUM”, Statement by the NEUM, April 1951.

in trusteeship and the *hamba kahle* (go slow) approach to the struggle; leaders who were ready to compromise after they had been “flattered by taking tea with the rulers.” This new generation of Youth Leaguers (that is Lembede, Ngubane, AP Mda, Zeph Mothopeng) also opposed the ANC’s old guard’s conservatism and moderation (Gerhart 1978). This was a confrontational and direct approach. The CYL was calling for action and mass organisation. Indeed the Alexandra bus boycott of 1940 and 1945; the Johannesburg squatters’ movement of 1944 to 1947 and the 1946 workers strike and increased frustration of urban working class as a result of widespread poverty (Lodge 1990; Posel 1991) were conditions that demanded a mass movement. As a result the ANC was compelled to adopt a Programme of Action in 1949 calling for civil disobedience, strikes, boycotts and stay at home. By also clamouring for national freedom, political independence and self-determination, the Congress began to assume a new spirit of militancy and aggressiveness (Gerhart 1978). This culminated in the 1950s defiance campaign signalling ANC’s new approach to struggle.

The period 1950 – 52 saw the ANC adopting a militant approach and abandoning moderation, encapsulated in the Defiance Campaign (Karis 1973). Although the Congress had a long history of multiracial cooperation dating back to the 1920s, in the 1950s, there was alliance with the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), white and coloured groups, therefore making communist influence a recurrent theme for propaganda especially among the Africanist strand which though minor, had deeper roots in the history of black political thought (Gerhart 1978; Fatton 1986; Lodge 1990; Halisi 1999; Edgar and Msumza 1996; Karis and Carter 1963; see also chapter ten of this thesis), and would contribute to the split leading to the formation of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). An editorial in the journal, the *Africanist* of December 1955, criticised the ANC for serving the interests other than those of Africans, calling them “lackeys, flunkeys and functionaries of non - African minorities, stooges and

careerists.” For the Africanists the ANC should be rid of foreign domination because African nationalism was the sole ideological basis of African liberation. The Africanists argued that “we have consistently condemned collaborators who postpone our day of liberation by supporting dummy institutions – Advisory Boards, Bungas, Verwoerd School Boards and etc.”¹⁸⁸ Thus national oppression couldn’t be challenged unless African people obtained the self-confidence and subjective liberation espoused by African nationalism. Sobukwe would stress that Africanists differed with others on the term “cooperation” which for them was only possible among equals, “there can be no cooperation between oppressors and oppressed, dominating and dominated. That is collaboration, not cooperation and we cannot collaborate in our own oppression.”¹⁸⁹ He criticised the ANC leadership for lacking clear ideological and political direction by regarding collaboration and cooperation as synonymous.

8.2. Homelands and Collaboration

Immediately after coming to power the NP government passed a number of discriminatory legislation¹⁹⁰. In 1951 the NP government passed the Bantu Authorities Act which abolished

¹⁸⁸ “The Future of the Africanist Movement”, questions and answers by RM Sobukwe in *The Africanist*, January 1959.

¹⁸⁹ “The Future of the Africanist Movement”, Questions and Answers by R.M. Sobukwe in *The Africanist*, January 1959.

¹⁹⁰ Among the legislation introduced was the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act (1945) which tightened control of Africans, regulation of contracts, regulation of influx and conditions of residence, prohibition of African acquisition of land except from other Africans; Population Registration Act (1949) to control access and flow of labour, it also defined and classified racial categories; the Native Abolition of Passes and Coordination Act (1949) which mandated Africans to carry a reference book, establishment of labour bureaus to direct Africans to white employment; the Group Areas Act (1950) which promulgated residential segregation and forced sale of property by one designated racial group to another deflated or inflated rates and this created conditions of poverty and overcrowding; the Urban Areas Act (1952) which subjected urban

the NRC and set up a hierarchical system of tribal authorities composed of government approved chiefs and advisers. A letter written to the “secretary” of the ANC in response to an earlier letter to the prime minister by Z.K. Matthews regarding threats for defiance and civil disobedience, dated January 29 1952 and signed by M. Aucamp, private secretary to the prime minister stated that peace and goodwill lay in the acceptance of separate population groups with opportunities for self-development in service of its people. The Bantu Authorities Act was designed to “give the Bantu people the opportunity for enlightened administration of their own affairs in accordance with their own heritage and institutions, adapted to modern conditions.” The letter further stated that while the government was not prepared to grant the Bantu political equality within the European community, it was only too willing to encourage Bantu initiative, Bantu service and Bantu administration within the Bantu community, therefore allowing the Bantu full scope for all his potentialities. It also said: “The prime minister has instructed me to urge you to let wise council to prevail and to devote your energies to constructive programme of development for the Bantu people. This can be done by using the opportunities offered by the government for building up local Bantu government and administration.” In 1955 the Transkei central representative body, the Bunga, accepted the Bantu Authorities system, “designed by Pretoria to bolster the conservative position of government paid chiefs” (Karis and Gerhart 1997: 222).

In October 1958 Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd said “clear contact with chiefs” was the Native Affairs Department (NAD) official reasoning. He had brought the Transkei chiefs (Botha Sigcau, Victor Poto, Wabana Makaula, Sabata Mtirara, Kaizer Matanzima, Sandy Majele and George Moshesh) to Pretoria to tell them of the plans to do away with Native Representatives in parliament and how in future, chiefs along with their tribal headmen

areas to influx control.

would act as mouthpieces of African people as well as oiling the wheels of the Bantu Authorities system.¹⁹¹ This was the main item on the agenda; another was Verwoerd's advice to chiefs to deal with “agitators.” Earlier in January 1958 among the Bafurutse, three pro government *indunas* and the sister of the local puppet chief were killed and several houses “including the chief's house and his 'posh' American car were set alight.”¹⁹² The peoples' anger was a result of deportation of their chief and issuing of passes to women. The local chief said the root of the problem was “agitators” coming from Johannesburg to incite the people. Coming back to Verwoerd and the Transkei chiefs, it was reported the chiefs were treated to red carpet entertainment with “a programme fit for important visiting statesmen. Luxury buses took them on sightseeing tripsto African townships, and the chiefs were housed in the posh residency specially built in Vlakfontein for visiting chiefs.”¹⁹³ The Transkei chiefs were the first to be called to Pretoria because they had accepted the Bantu Authorities Act. In January 1959 Verwoerd announced that it was time for “natives” to be placed towards self – governance in their own areas – the Bantustans which were provided under the Promotion of Bantu Self – Government Act of 1959¹⁹⁴ (which was an extension of Bantu Authorities Act). The Act recognised eight Bantu “national units”, based on ethnicity in which tribal representatives (ambassadors) would be links between a national unit and its members working in urban areas (Karis and Gerhart 1997). The policy of homelands was aimed to reinforce divisive tribal identities and make them the basis for a system of patronage easily manipulated by the government (Karis and Gerhart 1997). In the Bantustans, the government offered jobs or cash to Africans who performed useful roles in the coercive state apparatus

¹⁹¹ 'Verwoerd Tells Transkei Chiefs: Native Reps Will Go. Secret Talks on New Machinery of Consultation,'
New Age, October 16 1958.

¹⁹² “New Zeerust Clashes: Four Killed, People Determined Not To Accept Passes,” New Age January 2 1958.

¹⁹³ Ibid

¹⁹⁴ The Act also removed representatives of African in parliament, a provision of 1936.

and this spread after 1961. The policy ran parallel with training of black university students, aimed at producing a black middle class that could be co-opted into the government's machinery of domination; employed as teachers, clerks and Bantustan bureaucrats, of which this domination would be manned by blacks themselves. After 1976 and Steve Biko's death in 1977, the government, despite increased repression, also considered co-opting an expanding black middle class, which would however be subordinate to Afrikaner domination. The government, nagged by white liberals and the Afrikaner *verligtes* (the enlightened), was attempting to build a class of black collaborators in the aspiring black middle class, politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen to prop up the homelands and urban councils. This would be a buffer class linked to separate institutions in the South African polity. This strategy was, however, not new although the NP government had over the years not been explicitly inclined to it. During parliamentary debates in 1960, the opposition United and Progressive parties had noted that an African middle class could be used as a safety valve, only if urban Africans were given outlets to channel their views. Sir de Villiers – Graaff, a United Party leader, opined that the current crisis (as a result of Sharpeville massacre) was caused by government's failure to recognise the emergent urban native, that is a responsible middle class which could serve as a stabilizing force and could cooperate with the instruments of law and order. For de Villiers – Graaff, this class could own their own property and “will accept with us the responsibility of maintaining western standards in our South African community.”¹⁹⁵ Indeed many black people would be incorporated into the echelons of Bantustan programme; a number of commercial institutions were set up: the Black Bank, Bantu Investment Corporation (BIC), Xhosa Development Corporation (XDC), National African Federated Chamber of Commerce (NAFCOC) etc. This class would of course align

¹⁹⁵ House of Assembly debates, March 29 1960.

itself with imperialist interests.¹⁹⁶

After the Rivonia trial and the impending African political lull, Africans were faced with the question whether or not to participate in the state institutions and be seen as “collaborators”. Some saw working within the system of homelands as a way of undermining the system from within and used that as a stepping stone towards liberation. In early 1962 Tabata¹⁹⁷ observed that Verwoerd’s attempt to create Bantustans was to mould “Tshombes” and “Kasavubus”¹⁹⁸ who would be used against black masses. Just like elsewhere in Africa colonial rulers didn’t have to employ military force as such but use of collaborators – chiefs, headmen and elders who were brought into the neo – traditions of subordination and “this collaboration was in essence a very practical affair of exchanged benefits” (Ranger 1983: 229). On the other hand imperialism used intellectuals who are after “crumbs” and want to attach themselves to liberals and for Tabata the liberals are creating the “exempted native.” In the early 1970s there were debates in the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) whether to work with people like Chief Gatsha Buthelezi. Though he looked like the best of the homeland leaders, (Biko 1987), the BCM rejected him and those of his ilk. In December 1973 while on a visit to Dar -es – Salaam, Buthelezi was jeered by Tanzanian students who beat the roof of his departing car¹⁹⁹. In May 1976 on his arrival to accept an honorary degree at University of Zululand, students stoned his car and shouted “Sell – Out! Sell – Out!”²⁰⁰ At the funeral of PAC leader Robert Sobukwe in the Eastern Cape in March 1978, he was heckled by groups of

¹⁹⁶ Speech by Diliza Mji, President to General Students Council of SASO, Hammanskraal, July 1976.

¹⁹⁷ IB Tabata “The National Question” at National Conference of the Unity Movement of South Africa, January 1962.

¹⁹⁸ These were Congolese leaders who collaborated with Belgian imperialism.

¹⁹⁹ East African Standard 15 December 1973.

²⁰⁰ Sunday Express May 9 1976

youth who called him a stooge and a sell – out (Pogrund 1990). In early 1974 the Council of Ministers of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) adopted a declaration describing homeland leaders as “puppets” and rejected the so – called independent homelands. BC denounced the homelands as “tribal cocoons”; OR Tiro in his graduation speech at University of the North on 29 April 1972 was even more scathing, referring to blacks in the administration committees as “white black men” and “our so – called leaders have become the bolts of the same machine which is crushing us as a nation”; while the South African Students Movements newsletter of April 1973 quipped: “there's an illusion that Buthelezi will free black people, with his 'tricks' he manages to confuse black people.” The BPC observed that since the jailing of true leaders in the early 1960s, “we have been the sad, silent witnesses of the greatest selling – out by persons chosen by the white racist system to be our 'leaders'. The actions of our 'so -called leaders' made it easier for the white government to control and manipulate us.”²⁰¹ The posturing of homeland leaders like Buthelezi of course showed the depth of imperialist influence on South African politics. The apartheid government sent bantustan leaders to the west to “cheat” and sell apartheid to the outside world. In a speech in the late 1980s, AZAPO's Nkosi Molala said:

When the regime's intransigence repelled such (imperialists) efforts, imperialism shifted its influence to black politics and here it unearthed Gatsha Buthelezi whose qualities matched its requirements. He was black, fluent, politically astute, and influential, his rhetoric was anti – government and he had a modicum of support. Imperialism set out to deliberately increase his stature and with it, his influence and support. Gatsha's Zulu impis are today an intractable and murderous machine.²⁰²

The criticism of Buthelezi was sharp and poignant. Mapetla Mohapi, a 1970s BC adherent,

²⁰¹ Black Peoples Convention, n.d.

²⁰² Nkosi Molala, “The State of the Nation”, Presidential Address to the Ninth Annual Congress, Harare

Consultation of the BCM (A), 19 – 21 May 1990.

spared no kind words:

Most of these so – called leaders deceive a lot of people especially outside South Africa by their fraudulent behaviour. People like Gatsha Buthelezi for example are very dishonest and deceitful. Chief Gatsha is a man who has accepted to be called a Zulu leader by the racist system ...he is a person who doesn't believe in BC yet often uses Black Power fist during moments of excitement when he addresses people as he did at the Umtata summit meeting of these bantustan leaders.²⁰³

Mohapi further called Buthelezi a government stooge, a big fraud, a tool for division and a reactionary who was misleading black people with “false hopes and vague promises.”²⁰⁴

The BC tradition was an extension of the 1930s Unity Movement and AAC policy on non – collaboration in the structures of black peoples' domination. Although the inception of the CYL pushed the old guard from politics of negotiation, adding a new militancy, the PAC pushed ahead with that combativeness; it was the BCM that added a new political complexion by saying one cannot talk liberation with the master.²⁰⁵ The BCM as a policy, stated: “we shall operate outside the white government created systems, structures and/or institutions and shall not seek elections in these”²⁰⁶. Section 3 of BPC constitution barred members from seeking election into government created institutions and system created platforms. It further stated that:

The miserable rule of all the Bantustans, the CPRC and the SAIC are in fact a bluff as they can never have any political and economic viability. The real power in these reservoirs of

²⁰³ Mapetla Mohapi, n.d.

²⁰⁴ “Group Accuses Chief”, *Daily News Reporter*, 14 April 1975.

²⁰⁵ Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu, “Black Consciousness Movement of South Africa.” Speech given to the Assembly of the IUEF held in Geneva, November 22 1976.

²⁰⁶ Speech by Rev Mashwabada Mayatula, First National Congress of the Black Peoples' Convention, Hammanskraal, December 16 1972.

black cheap labour is in the hands of well trained and experienced officials of the department of Bantu Administration and Development, Coloured and Indian Affairs Departments....non – white Chief ministers and CEOs or so -called prime ministers are Quislings and sell – outs...the non – white national leaders of the Stans, some of them highly learned chiefs, have been turned into puppets of officialdom. They have become employed by supporters of the old imperialist maxim of divide and rule.

The Bantustan governments were powerless because they could be unquestionably vetoed by one white cabinet minister of Bantu Affairs Department; the main objective of Bantustan philosophy was to trap all blacks into a network of migratory labour and oppressive pass laws. The BPC saw government created platforms as products of white racists, fostering divisions among blacks, diverting the aims of the struggle, tribalistic and meant to bolster the white regime that created them and were, “designed to cheat the black man into participating in his own oppression because of built in safeguards that make it impossible for any black person using them to liberate himself,” and “they are designed such that those black people who participate in them are the ones who soil their hands by doing dirty work designed and planned by white racists.”

The BC definition of a sell-out/collaborate became ingrained in the meaning and construction of blackness; those collaborating with the system renounced their blackness, therefore, they became not blacks but non – white (Biko 2004). During the BPC-SASO trial Biko elaborated this (see chapter 5 of this thesis). In 1970 Biko would write of “Judases” and urged activists “never to ignore the Judases for they are an extension of the enemy into your ranks.”²⁰⁷ It was also Faustian in that those personages lost their black soul by making deals with an evil system.

²⁰⁷ Steve Biko “Who is Black?” SASO Newsletter, September 1970.

There remained a problem of permanently urbanized Africans, despite government's notion that they would return to their "ancestral" lands. Though there were forced removals, still it was infeasible, so the government devised a compromise solution: construction of a local government system linking all urbanized Africans with their designated homelands overseen by a collaborationist "councillors". Like in the homelands, the government was to create an overt apparatus of control in urban areas using black surrogates to minimise potential opposition. After the NP came into power the older township Advisory Boards²⁰⁸ created in 1922 were gradually replaced by elected Urban Bantu Councils (UBC) under African chairmen²⁰⁹. The first UBC in the country resumed work on 1 September 1961 in Daveyton; its task was removal of people not lawfully resident in area; regulation of entry into an area, maintenance of good order, control and management of community guard and management and control of the "Bantu Town."²¹⁰ In Soweto, the Soweto Advisory Board was replaced by the UBC in 1968, elected on an ethnic basis. In time this would be counter-productive because these would be popular targets of reprisals by their own communities. There was widespread contempt towards the UBC councillors, in the Orange Free State they were called "castrated Boers" and elsewhere were called "Useless Boys Clubs" (Mashabela 1987; Karis and Gerhart 1997). When the 1976 riots broke out, youth anger became directed at symbols of apartheid: systems of Bantu Education; the government's Regional Administration Boards and black collaborators in the Urban Bantu Councils and homelands governments. By 1976 the ineffectual UBC was highly unpopular; their powers were only advisory, their advice largely ignored by the government. When in April 1977 the West Rand Administration Board

²⁰⁸ These were created by the Stallard Commission tasked in solving the urban migration of Africans

²⁰⁹ This was provided for by the Urban Bantu Councils Act of 1961 with the object of "integrating the urban Bantu into the systems of government of their homelands" (David Welsh 1971)

²¹⁰ "First Urban Bantu Council for Daveyton – Advisory Board Assists at its own Funeral!" *New Age*. August 10 1961.

(WRAB) hiked rents in Soweto, the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC) which had replaced the South African Students Movement renewed its campaign against collaborators and this fight was intertwined with issues of rents and evictions which the UBC were suspected of fermenting. Fliers distributed by the SSRC²¹¹ in the wake of Soweto uprising warned people of “false leaders who always run in the dark to sell – out...they are tools and stooges of the oppressive system.” A press release by Khotso Seathlolo on 29 October 1976²¹² rejected the Transkei “independence “ on 26 October and regarded Matanzima²¹³ “ a betrayer of black people's political aspirations by selling - out our birthright to the white minority government.” In its vituperative tone, the statement further criticised all homeland leaders and described them as: “political cowards, stooges and puppets who could not hold their own fight and defend their birthright. They are sell - outs that were just too ready to capitulate to the oppressor and collaborate with the exploitative, oppressive and suppressive system. They shall go down into the annals of black history as Judas Iscariot who sold the black nation down a political drain.” However, on 11 June 1977, police broke down a meeting of the SSRC and detained the attendants under Section 6 of Terrorism Act. It gave rise to suspicions that the movement might have been infiltrated and “it was an open secret that the police had since the previous June been anxious to get, hook or crook, knowledgeable people especially among students themselves, to work for them” (Mashabela 1987: 129).

Reform initiatives were laid out after 1976 to legitimate apartheid. The 1979 Riekert Commission recommended that permanent African urban residents be recognised and that the Verwoerdian approach was anachronistic. The commission recommended that government

²¹¹ To All Residents of Soweto, Hostels, Reef and Pretoria”, Flyer in English and Zulu by Soweto Students Representative Council, Sept 7 1976

²¹² Press Release by Khotso Seathlolo, Chairman of SSRC, October 29 1976

²¹³ Transkei leader

planners put forward a set of legislation based on selective incorporation. In the 1980s prime minister's P.W. Botha's government outlined a strategy to “Win Hearts and Minds” (WHAM) as part of a total strategy of reforms and repression. Many activists were identified and there were mass detentions. However the government also used covert operations including “dirty” tricks a hidden war against opponents; this included planting of informers in opposition movements.

Constitutional proposals were made in 1981 in a referendum for a constitution that would create a tri – cameral parliament to include coloureds and Indians, in which elections were held in August 1984. The dilemma for blacks was whether to accept second class forms of political representation created for them or boycott these dummy institutions even though there would be collaborators (Gerhart and Glaser 2010). Under the same proposals were the Koornhof Bills – the Black Local Authorities Act (1982) intended to confer increased powers to township community councils to manage electricity, water, garbage removal and health services. Since the state was parsimonious and wasn't obliged to finance black areas and local municipalities, the black authorities were hiking rents leading to widespread anger (Gerhart and Glaser 2010). The Vaal uprising which erupted on 3 September 1984, the day the tri - cameral parliament opened was caused by rent hikes and general hardship and suffering. The area (Sebokeng, Sharpeville, Boipatong, Bophelong, and Zamdela) was under a black local council, Lekoa municipality. Most public buildings, shops and homes of councillors were burnt; several perceived collaborators including the deputy head of the Lekoa council were murdered. The Vaal uprisings sparked protests against collaborationist councils elsewhere including stay - away by workers in Soweto and KwaThema demanding that black councillors resign (Gerhart and Glaser 2010). Attacks on perceived collaborators and boycott of their shops subsequently led to hundreds of councillors to resign.

In the late 1980s one could see that the old strategy of non – collaboration and boycott was being implemented as one of the bases for struggle. Many, including the United Democratic Front (UDF) formed in early 1980s in response to Koornhof Bills, regarded participation in the municipal elections of October 1988 as “giving puppet structures a new lease of life”.²¹⁴ Therefore boycott of dummy structures was a “strategy geared to building a united opposition and a move towards one person one vote.” The Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference flyer of July 1988 noted that the Bantu Administration Boards were unpopular and rejected because: they didn’t have real power to change things; there was increased hardship for residents through rent hikes and evictions; couldn’t do anything without government approval and were used by corrupt councillors for personal gain. The elections were seen as a modified form of apartheid and the church regarded apartheid as a sin so “we as Christians have to avoid sin or collaboration with sin.”²¹⁵

The BCM did have campaigns which were part of the cultural boycott against artists performing in South Africa. Black Americans in particular were severely admonished. Those who were oblivious of the unity and solidarity in boycotting apartheid South Africa were portrayed as opportunists and collaborators with the oppressors (Shava 1989). Thus while Percy Sledge, known for his *dashiki* and Afro, came to the country, and performed in segregated white audiences, was subjected to severe criticism and Nina Simone, who declined to play in the country was, venerated. The spirit of the attack is expressed in James Matthews' poem:

Say Percy dad,

You run out of bread that you have got to

²¹⁴ “Municipal Elections”, Paper by Titus Mofolo, June 1988.

²¹⁵ “Municipal Elections”, Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference Flyer, July 1988.

come to sunny South Africa to sing soul
in the land of your fore – fathers?
Well, Percy dad,
you are not doing me a favour by
performing for the 'black is beautiful' scene
when other soul brothers, pinky
have to stand in the rain outside
say, Percy dad,
will you tell Nina Simone back home
that you, a soul singer, did a segregated act
or will you sit back flashing silver dollar smiles
as they cart the loot from your Judas role to the bank (cited in Shava 1989: 92).

8.3. Categories of a Sell – Out/Collaborator

8.3.1. Impimpi/Mthengesi/Mdayisi

Mthengesi/Mdayisi is Nguni words associated with selling. The term *impimpi* has a long history in South Africa black politics. Its origin varies, though. Some of my participants think it comes from Zulu/Xhosa *impempe* (whistle) and that it might have its origins in the mines. The *baas -boy/ induna* employed by gold mine management was an African tasked with blowing a whistle to gather workers or for announcement of important mine communication. Once a whistle was blown there would be commotion and haste as all employees scrambled to their positions. The *baas - boy* was also a link between workers' social life and management and was also tasked with monitoring and control, and ensuring loyalty and discipline. So *impimpi*, from *impempe* resonates with the effect the whistle has in every aspect on peoples' social lives. An act of spying and informing is synonymous with the whistle because it leads to discomfiture and unease in a given populace.

One opinion is the word might have originated in prison. This view is corroborated by Van Onselen's account (1982). Joseph Silver, an early Johannesburg bandit at the turn of the twentieth century was, among many of his criminal career, a pimp. *Impimpi* might be an English misnomer for pimp, associated with people who snitched on Silver, who at the time of his arrest was one of Johannesburg's most wanted men. Gang activity has long been part of South African prison life. One participant told me that another name for *impimpi* is “Big Five”, a prison number gang responsible for maintaining order and observance of prison rules; the “Big Five” also collaborate with prison authorities in ensuring adherence of this decorum.

In the wake of political upheavals of the late 1950s and early 1960s, Security Police became ubiquitous and fear became pervasive: “discussing politics even among close friends became a high risk activity. Informers were everywhere.” (Karis and Gerhart 1997: 17) Police had intelligence on all people going into exile, their families and political prisoners released from prison were closely monitored. By mid 1960s security police were using bullying tactics to arrest and harass opponents inducing widespread anger and fear. There emerged a pervasive presence of police informers on university campuses, in welfare and religious organisations and in township shebeens. In African homes politics became a taboo subject as parents tried to protect their children. Apparently the government had no difficulty in recruiting informers and the popular presumption that spies were everywhere pervaded the atmosphere. Some of those arrested would be asked to become informers or would do so as a result of torture. Increased repression demanded a change of tactics; opposing movements could no longer hold public meetings, rallies and conferences and leaders could no longer be publicly elected or openly hold office. Secrecy and discipline became imperative. Government informers hitherto not significantly a problem, though a nuisance, now became a real threat endangering

the success of all Africa political initiative and security of leaders and their followers. It's also possible that the liberation movements were infiltrated from the very top; the South African security establishment had information on operations beforehand which compromised the lives of those undertaking them and may also be one of the reasons why the liberation movement could not inflict a military defeat on the apartheid government. A report by "General Tobetsa" on an unsuccessful Umkhonto WeSizwe²¹⁶ mission in the late 1980s shows that when the group was captured, the security police told them: "your commanders outside the country are working for us, they are getting money from us; they have big stomachs because they are eating money; some of them are members of Special Branch." The report also says the Boers had more than ten thousand photos of comrades outside the country, with correct information on where they were: "they once asked me who I think Chris Hanani is working for. I said for the people. They laughed. They then asked me about Bra A. I said something to answer. They said his name is Lombard (Lambert) Moloi, he is working for us, *maan* and he is giving the money to his wife in Lesotho." The police also possessed knowledge of different structures of MK and ANC and other political structures, their heads, deputies, secretaries and so on.

The sin of selling – out was as dark as wolf's mouth. Labels like *impimpi/mthengesi/mdayisi* had negative connotations, because the general feeling among the oppressed masses would be: "you pretend to be one of us, then like Nicodemus in the dark you go to collaborate with the enemy; you are using us, you come to our meetings, steal our documents and documentary evidence and record our talk and then sell us."²¹⁷ In Cervantes' *Don Quixote*,

²¹⁶ ANC military wing; this account is retrieved from Gerhart and Glaser (2010), available in Carter/Karis collection, University of the Witwatersrand.

²¹⁷ Conversation with Mondli Hlatshwayo, 29 July 2011.

Cara was the nickname for Count Julian's daughter, who, having been ravished by King Roderigo, helped bring the Moors into Spain. Her true name was Florinda but because she is blamed for Spain's betrayal to the Moors, the name isn't given to girl children but "bitches".

There's evidence of attacks on perceived collaborators from the late 1950s. The Pondoland Revolt against Bantu Authorities in 1960s showed mass popular anger against those who collaborated with the government (Mbeki 1964): "The Pondos found that news of their meetings was reaching the magistrate's ear and that their new found unity was being undermined from within by government agents. Drastic action was taken against these informers; their huts were fired, and many were forced to flee from the area. Between March and June, 27 kraals were reported to have been burnt down" (ibid).

Poqo²¹⁸, a PAC offshoot in the early 1960s, which was determined to smash white rule, targeted African collaborators and informers for death. The group was also incriminated in the murder of chiefs and headmen in Transkei during 1962 - 63 and also attempted to assassinate Kaiser Matanzima (Karis and Gerhart 1997).

In Transkei, Spiegel (1992) reported that the police maintained an extensive network of village based informers who used this resource now and then during local level political struggles. In Matatiele the informer network was so dense that in the early 1980s one in four hundred could be an informer. Informers were feared because of their ability to bring misery and make life unbearable to those who crossed their paths; other informers thought they could use their office as a prerogative to intervene in other peoples' domestic squabbles which Spiegel calls "informer terrorism".

²¹⁸ Poqo means independent or standing alone and used in everyday speech by Xhosa speaking people to describe anything that is clear, pure, independent or autonomous (Black Star May 1963).

However, in urban areas like Soweto, the office of an informer demanded absolute secrecy because of a volatile political environment, coupled with pervasive police brutality, repression and disappearances. Informers thus were virulently hated, detested and loathed and most often they met a violent and miserable death. By the 1980s people's alternative forms of justice were now prevalent; prosecution and exacting of judgement on perceived informers was the office of "comrades" (*amabutho*²¹⁹) who executed informers by necklacing²²⁰. However the brutal method of necklacing was described by the Pan – Africanists who argued it fulfilled the enemy's divide and rule tactics and it engendered black on black violence.²²¹ PASO identified with PAC's slogan "war against the enemy – Peace amongst Africans. The necklace has proved a successful onslaught against our people whilst there is yet to be found even one 'necklace' victim amongst the ranks of the oppressors". It's probable most innocent people became victims of the label "sell – out", a very subjective accusation that may not be proved; one that results from personal conflicts.

In the 1970s SASO drew up a set of measures to counter informer pervasiveness: "workshopping" of spies, a thorough investigation of suspects and use of suspects' associates to ferret out informers; using incriminating evidence as a bait; establishing a screening committee at all levels to reduce "informer consciousness" from peoples' minds and avoiding one becoming "informer conscious", roughing them up until they confessed and exposing infiltrators to the public.

²¹⁹ Warriors in Nguni languages

²²⁰ Neck lacing involved putting tyres around a victim's neck, dowsing them with petrol and setting them alight.

²²¹ The Voice of the Africanist Student Volume 1, Number 1. This publication was the official organ of the Pan – Africanist Student Organisation of Azania.

Once one was labelled a “sell – out”, it was a Sisyphean task to exonerate one's name and was equivalent to witchcraft accusation. Just like in witchcraft where criminality is illuminated, people who behave unacceptably are seen as inhuman, are animals; those who turn against their kin are dogs and those who are cunning, dishonest and untrustworthy are called snakes (Evans – Pritchard 1937; Niehaus 2002). Witches are seen to lack “maitshwaro” (calculated conduct); they succumb to their desires, in this case greed, and totally dominated by cravings for food, sex, money and revenge. In witchcraft there's pervasive fear and widespread suspicion, largely the occupation of bewitching others just like the office of an *impimpi*. There is latent power crafted around secrecy and the capacity to ruin, wreck and bring misery to other peoples' lives. Witches and *impimpis* bring pollution and pollution beliefs reinforce cultural and social structure in a given social order and transgressors are punished by attacks, sanctions etc (Evans – Pritchard 1937; Douglas 1975). The community is imagined to share a common culture so it presses for conformity to norms and values. In “tribal” societies, for example, certain classes of people are liable to be classified polluters. In some societies elite possessors of esoteric knowledge are charged with knowing too much and misapplying it for their selfish ends (Douglas 1975). Therefore sorcerers' lore is seen as destructive as the science of military, business or chemical weapons. In some societies paupers and second class citizens can be accused of pollution and are excluded from benefits and privileges of the community. The difference with informers is that they do materially benefit from their trade and can as a result prosper. Integral to the whole business is gossip, allegation and accusation (Ashforth 2004). Niehaus (2002) argues that evils of sexuality and sexuality of evil associated with witchcraft in the Lowveld, were part of the general moral system where “gossip, repressive sanctions and violent forms of punishment unified these moral beliefs and mobilised popular sentiment against both sexual transgressors and assumed witches” (Niehaus 2002: 274). However all these happen in a context of domination,

subordination and power. Gossip itself is facilitated by long residency for generations, as Ashforth's study on witchcraft in Soweto shows, where there's a "meddling of individual fates into the life of a community that creates dense networks of suspicion animated by memories of past suffering" (Ashforth 2004: 64). Knowledge of who was a witch filters through generations making it difficult how they came to know. Niehaus' (2002) study in the lowveld reveals that population removals by apartheid regime, combined with migrant labour system which generated inequality which bred feelings of envy and resentment, increased tensions among neighbours and escalated witchcraft accusations. During the anti – apartheid struggle witchcraft accusations got political overtones with comrades at the forefront of witch-hunting. In the Green Valley during 1986 and 1987 comrades killed thirty six suspected witches in the wider Mapulaneng area (Niehaus 1995). This was a quest for political legitimacy, through witch-hunting, comrades sought to eliminate evil and prevent future occurrence of misfortune. During the Zimbabwean liberation struggle, those who worked for the state or in farms were branded. Attacks on sell – outs who betrayed the armed combatants, the comrades, and the long established fear and hatred of witches were bound together (Lan 1985). Again the guerrillas' alignment with lion spirit mediums, the *mhondoro*, who in Shona cosmology typify the ideology of descent; those who opposed the guerillas the representatives of *mhondoro* and allied themselves with the white government were seen as traitors to their own people, their own *rudzi* (means kind, type or blood) [see Lan 1985]. In effect, "they would have taken sides against the *mhondoro* and the only person who would do such a thing is a witch" (Lan 1985: 168). Those identified as witches were people believed to be politically untrustworthy or treacherous, acting against the interests of the people as a whole. As a result sell – outs were called witches, showing the extent the guerillas and nationalist leaders had identified with *mhondoro*. Anyone who opposed the benevolent and altruistic *mhondoro* and their protégé for selfish and individual reasons was placed in the

category in which ancestors are opposed to – the witch (Lan 1985: 170).

8.3.2. Askari

The term *Askari* originates from East and Central Africa to refer to black policemen/soldiers in the employ of colonial governments. The King's African Rifles were called the Askaris (Rodney 1974). The West Indian Regiment used by the British during the Second World War had Indians and Africans, with Irish and British as officers and were also used to protect British interests in the West African coast. Rodney also reports that the West African Frontier Force was in 1894 joined by the West African Regiment to suppress the Hut Tax war in Sierra Leone.

In South Africa, *Askari* refers to black policemen and “turned” guerrillas captured in combat. The police used torture and harsh interrogation techniques which aided in coercing some guerrillas to cooperate, to defect or to be “turned” (Karis and Gerhart 1997). During the TRC deliberations, Joe Mamasela, a notorious black policeman in the 1980s, who was once an activist in SASM, became a police informant in 1979 while in jail awaiting trial for housebreaking and theft. Mamasela's story is littered with inconsistencies; it's difficult to coherently thread it. He claims he was persuaded by a security policeman to “combat terrorism”. He infiltrated the ANC in Botswana although he claims to have joined the ANC in Botswana in 1977 where he received training in intelligence. In 1981 he was arrested by security police and after assault he turned: “so I had to break and I merely confirmed what the police knew. Just like my president Mandela. He confirmed in court about Rivonia Trial but because he was a leader it is fine; when Mamasela does the same thing under duress it's called selling – out. It's double standards!” (Cited in Krog 1998: 173) So Mamasela was recruited by a Major Kruger to become an *askari*. They didn't recruit just anyone: – one had

to have special qualities needed, a particular knowledge and intelligence. The first recorded case of a “turned” activist is that of Bruno Mtolo who during the Rivonia trial emerged as a leading state witness, ready to implicate people even those suspected by police and to volunteer huge amounts of information. Mtolo had been part of an early MK sabotage squad, and apparently had become disillusioned with his comrades. Leonard Nkosi, part of MK's Wankie Campaign, was captured in 1967, and he told the police everything they needed to know, gave evidence in trials, joined the police and was the first to be killed by the ANC. In fact one of the major MK operations was attacks on collaborators including black policemen, homeland and council officials (Race Relations Survey 1988/1989). By the late 1980s and early 1990s hit squads going by the names of Joint Management Committees (JMC's), *Askaris*, Zebra Force, Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB) were composed of personnel including active and non – active members of SADF, deserters from the liberation movement and former members of security forces in Namibia, Angola, Mozambique and Rhodesia.²²²

8.3.3. *Amagundwane* (Rats)

Amagundwane (rats) are overt sell – outs who usually are strike breakers. These are mainly associated with the trade unions. So called *amagundwane* because just like rats they either operate at night and their actions are both visible and invisible or like rats they blow breath where they bite. Apparently this character gets insinuated into the South African political scene after trade unions were allowed to operate from 1979. In the 1980s they became prominent, either as strike breakers or snitching at shop – floor to management. Most *amagundwane* became victims of neck lacing punishment or sound beating from both “comrades” and *o Siyayinyova*.²²³ They are intensely detested because during mass stay –

²²² Azania Combat, (Official Organ of APLA), Issue 2 Number 11 1990.

²²³ *Siyayinyova* didn't have any particular political allegiance as such, they were township lumpen proletariat

aways they would go to work, therefore breaking the spirit of unity, while benefiting from whatever little gains a strike action brings.

8.3.4. The Vigilantes

The urban vigilantes which arose after 1985 state of emergency employed killings, arson, stoning and other forms of violence. This coincided with the army's occupation of townships since vigilante groups received money and equipment from the JMC that had been set up by the securocrats (Lodge and Nasson 1991: 167). The leadership of most vigilante groups consisted of municipal councillors, black policemen and traders as well as members of their families. They included *Amasolomzi* (Ashton near Pietermaritzburg); *Amadoda* (Cape Town) and the *Phakathis* (Welkom in the Orange Free State) [Lodge and Nasson 1991]. The vigilantes had a patron – client relationship between leaders and followers and had a strong antipathy towards the youth who called themselves comrades. In the Vaal, Krog (1998) reports, based on evidence of the TRC, of existence of the A – Team who were anti – UDF, worked with police who at night would deliver booze to their houses. The team wore their names on their chests, carried hammers, *pangas* and guns. In KZN the *amabutho* wore balaclavas and colourful overalls, used knobkerries, spears and axes and worked with Inkatha and SADF. Krog reports that their rituals were steeped in tradition; before going for their victims they drank and splashed on war potions to make themselves invincible and didn't talk of killing but of “removing obstacles” or “purifying the fields” (Krog 1998: 46). They would remove body parts of victims to brew a concoction to cleanse themselves of murder. Their operational tactics resembled Vlaakplas²²⁴ – drinking, choosing a victim, arming themselves

who would join any commotion and cause destruction. *Siyayinyova* has many interpretations but may mean to “kick ass”

²²⁴ The farm was notorious for tortures and murder of anti – apartheid activists.

and getting together as they make a big kill. In Crossroads, Cape Town, men associated with Johnson “Nobs” Ngxobongwana identified themselves as *Witdoeke* meaning white cloth because the vigilantes were identified by white head clothes or *bandanas*. This wasn't new in Cape Town; migrants wore them during the conflict between hostel dwellers and township youths in 1976 (Cole 1987). Ngxobongwana, their leader from 1986, recruited an army of “elders.” The older people, the “fathers”, sought to instil discipline in the area and get rid of comrades. They acted as a “third force” always with the explicit and overt support of the police; they attacked known opponents, activists and those who participated in stay – aways and strikes. Most vigilante groups were the *amagoduka*²²⁵; migrant labourers who argued that they were in the city to work and support their families back in the rural and therefore politics was not their priority. Of course there was friction, tension and conflict between them and township residents because the former always collaborated with the brute police force. Many recent arrivals had with them material and ideological linkages with rural areas; the new consciousness was infused with old notions and beliefs where neo – traditional structures served to perpetuate these (Cole 1987). Steve Jacobs' short story, “A Day in the Life”, in Staffrider of 1987 details out the activities of the *Witdoeke* who burned people's homes as told by the character Gibson:

The *Witdoeke* are like Judas, betraying their own people. The government gives them guns and money to attack their brothers and burn down their houses. But we will have revenge.

Witdoeke operating in Crossroads in May and June 1986 forcibly removed 70 000 people from surrounding squatter settlements and had the support of SAP and SADF; they curtailed the support bases of UDF affiliated organisations in the area, therefore returning political control to local state (Cole 1987). Crossroads, once a symbol of defiance against apartheid removal strategies, now became a symbol of right wing vigilante and black on black violence.

²²⁵ Means those who will return back to where they came from, that is the rural hinterland.

According to Lodge and Nasson (1991), the vigilantes were powerful allies of the South African state and could cripple or root out radical opposition groups more effectively than could the police.

A new task force created by SAP the special constables (nicknamed *kitskonstabels* by residents) was a new devolution of SAP to ensure maintenance of law and order. The new recruits consisted of former *witdoeke* and comrades; they were legally armed with sjambok and guns and were mandated to deal with trouble makers in townships. However they came under attack from residents and comrades and “placed alongside community councillors as sell – outs and symbols of black oppression (Cole 1987: 154). Cole adds, “The tragedy is that most of them, like the 'witdoeke' are merely pawns in a game whose ground rules are ultimately controlled by the South African state.”

8.4. Why do People Sell – Out?

First there is the economic imperative. At a time when black people were politically and economically disenfranchised, the occupation of informing or snitching was lucrative. It's probable that many black people earned a living selling – out even if it entailed unpalatable consequences to those they informed on. In the 1970s the BC had observed the deleterious effects of informers:

When we tried to effect change in our society for good of all, we have 'faceless informers' who should have been part of us but because of the divisive nature of white power, these villains earn their living selling their brothers and sisters to the very enemy we want to destroy/remove.²²⁶

However there are contradictions as reported by Harry Mashabela, who was a Star reporter

²²⁶ STM Magagula, ‘Black Power’ (n.d.)

during the 1976 Uprising. During the upheaval, students led by Tsietsi Mashinini burned policemen's homes in Soweto. Harry Mashabela reports: "They singled out security police sergeants Caswell Mokgoro, Benjamin Letlake and a CID policeman known as Hlubi. Their homes were set alight with petrol after family members had been cleared out." (Mashabela 1987: 100) Police put a price on Mashinini's head offering a reward of R500: "However R500 might have become a magic wand in a society wallowing in poverty and teeming with informers. Wouldn't some residents who knew have been tempted to tell the cops?" (Mashabela 1987: 100) Mashabela's analysis is that the events seemingly had knitted Soweto together; a solid spirit of unity had filtered into the community and Mashinini's comrades ridiculed police and their reward. In Zimbabwe, the Rhodesian state used to issue powerful propaganda and offered huge rewards of up to \$5000 for information leading to capture or death of a "senior terrorist leader" (Lan 1985: 165). However the authority and the claims of loyalty to the community were powerful counters against treachery.

The office of a sell – out involved a deal, Faustian, one might say. The sell – out would be obliged to provide correct information which was nonetheless verified, they spied on people, stole documentary evidence including minutes of meetings. Since the performance of Judas two millenniums ago, can one then suggest that human beings are venal? Under revolutionary conditions were everybody would be expected to at least participate in some way, why do we find counter – revolutionaries?

Secondly, the process of colonisation did a large scale mental damage to black people. Those who collaborated with the system or sold out were victims of psychological and mental colonisation; they were people who didn't have faith in black agency and self – rule and pandered to white colonising ethos. Certainly they didn't buy into the idea of revolution nor black majority rule. Writing of Uncle Tom, Oliver .C. Cox, describes him as a passive figure;

he is so thoroughly inured to his condition of subordination that he has become tame and obsequious (Cox 1951: 91). In Richard Wright's story "Fire and Cloud" the Reverend Taylor suspects Deacon Smith to be an informer in his church:

He reached the bottom of the slope, turned into a cinder path, and approached the huts. N Lawd, when Ah do try and do something mah own folks won't stan by me, won't stick wid me. There's old Deacon Smith a-schemin n a-plottin, just a-watchin me lika hawk, just a-waiting for me t tak mah eyes off the groan sos he kin trip me up, sos he kin run t the white folks n tell em Ah doin something wrong! A black snake in the grass! A black Judas! Thas he is! Lawd, the Devils sho busy in this world (Wright 1936: 133).

In such situations there is always the good "nigger" who is seen to be responsible for "order" in the black community and ensuring all black people know their 'nigger place.'

Thirdly, some of those who were labelled could in all probability have been innocent people who were victims of personal squabbles and political differences. Under tense revolutionary conditions it was easy to label anyone one doesn't like a sell – out. A major factor would be the element of doubt, implying trust would no longer be attaining. Or when comrades disagree on a tactic or strategy, such an environment would breed suspicions of "selling – out." The 1980s conflict between UDF and AZAPO which was based on ideological and political differences, often assumed an element of, opponents unfortunate to be caught by their adversaries and being sentenced to neck lacing on the premise of being sell – outs. Political opponents across the ANC/PAC divide and later on those sympathetic to BCM labelled each other "agents, informers and traitors." This was purely political mudslinging precipitated by differences in political opinion. This has been a trend in black politics ever since. The hardening of contesting political opinions, of course, has a long history in the country, frequently with different camps brooking no criticism. While NEUM preached non – collaboration as a struggle tactic, it descended into dogmatic frivolity which generations of

activists adopted and dragged with them into a political cul – de – sac (Alexander 1989) and thereby instead of uniting the masses into action it became divisive and sectarian within the liberation movement. Consequently some would be expelled from an organisation if fortunate enough to escape neck – lacing or for pandering to “tribalism, regionalism and factionalism and for endangering party security by being enemy agents.”²²⁷

Conclusion

I will not delve into the intricacies and complexities of the negotiations, political settlement and transition into the democratic dispensation. I have reserved that for the next chapter. The term sell – out has undergone ramifications in the postapartheid, except for snitches who point out criminals, with the changing socio – political dispensation. However there is a large presence of social movements in the country and it might be possible that spies are planted there by state security. Nowadays it is common to hear in political circles words like “reactionary”, “ultra - left”, “whistle – blower”, “counter – revolutionaries” or “agents”, which no longer cause physical harm to the addressee (except whistle-blowers in corruption cases who get assassinated) but has the same philosophical and political underpinnings as the old. This chapter has attempted to show the historical development of a collaborator/ sell – out. Non – collaboration has, in particular been an important component of the country's politics, whose origins rose from the experience of the European anti – fascist resistance to Nazi rule. Non – collaboration taught how important collaborators were to the enemy and “how the war against them had to be as hard and unremitting as the war against the Nazis and their Gestapo; how Vidkun Quisling contributed the name in South Africa” (Alexander 1989). The character “sell - out” has many dimensions and complexities that are contingent on existing socio – economic and political conditions. Collaboration and selling – out I would

²²⁷ AZANYU Media Statement 12 February 1991.

like to argue, happens in a multiplicity of sites and insinuates itself in different times though holding a common thread. I would further say that collaborators and sell – outs have many characteristics and habits; some are small scale local level snitches while others are big time collaborators earning huge rewards for their efforts. What all have in common is one trait: selling - out.

Chapter 9

Transference and Re (De) placement and the edge towards a Postcolonial Conundrum

This chapter is a follow up to the previous one. Here my analyses of the postapartheid South African society are done through lenses of postcoloniality. “Postcolonial” anthropologists can't go back into the past and do fieldwork but are increasingly turning to historical reconstruction (Marcus 1986) and “in doing so they make use in one way or another of “post-colonial theory” (Ranger 1996: 277). The message of the new anthropology and history is therefore twofold: Colonial Africa is much more like postcolonial Africa and its dynamics have continued to shape the postcolonial society. It is only when this message has been digested that we can establish what the real peculiarities of postcolonial Africa are (Ranger 1996: 280). I argue that whatever “ills” that have befallen the post 1994 social order are rooted in, Cabral and Fanonian sense, the process of decolonisation itself and the paucity of ideological thrust by the dominant liberation movement. More importantly they show the character of the leadership and its lack of ideology in envisioning a postapartheid society and reveal the weakness rather than strength of the liberation movement. Less surprising, this leadership has been trapped into venality. Erstwhile revolutionaries have turned comprador bourgeoisie complicit with both local white capital and the international financial system. Consequently the majority of black South Africans are caught in what Blackwash terms “the Black Condition”, a situation of depravity, poverty and nihilism while a few members of the black elite has managed to reap the fruits of the postcolony at the expense of the black majority.

It is not my intention to examine the events leading to the negotiated settlement that birthed the new South Africa, nor is it necessary to repeat them here. A copious literature on this

subject matter exists (Louw 1989; Philips 1989; Gelb 1991; Morris 199; Friedman 1993; Kotze 1994; Sparks 1994; Liebenberg, Nel, Lortan and van der Westhuizen; Murray 1994; Adam and Moodley 1993; Adam, van Zyl Slabbert and Moodley 1997; Waldmeir 1997; Kunnie 2000; Harvey 2001; Clark and Worger 2004; Saul 2005; Gerhart and Glaser 2010). My approach here is twofold: first to go back to the discussions by major black protagonists in the period of negotiations and examine their political and ideological positions; second to show the morbid consequences of that “betrayal” and “dreadful sell – out” (Adam and Moodley 1993; Saul 2007).

9.1. The Transference and Re (De) placement

9.1.1. The Congress' Approach

In the Congress itself major debates on why the movement was negotiating were abound. The most common response was neither side (the liberation movement and the apartheid regime) was capable of delivering a knock – out blow. Negotiations were not meant as an end in themselves but to create a process towards democratisation, and “we are negotiating in order to set in motion the process leading towards the total transference of power from a minority regime to the people as a whole.”²²⁸ The end products would of course be a government of national unity and a negotiated constitution in the Constituent Assembly²²⁹ and establishment of a unitary, non - sexist, non – racial democratic South Africa.²³⁰ Congress reiterated that it has always been ready to negotiate for a South Africa that belongs all who live in it, black and white²³¹, a transformation of the country into a united and non- racial democracy and

²²⁸ Sam Shilowa “Negotiations – What Room For Compromise?”

²²⁹ Working Group 2: ANC Proposals, Second Assignment, CODESA, March 31 1992.

²³⁰ ANC Discussion Paper on the issue of Negotiations, June 16 1989.

²³¹ See ANC Press Statement by Thabo Mbeki on resignation of van Zyl Slabbert from parliament, February 7 1986; Report by commonwealth eminent persons group on meeting with ANC representatives in Lusaka,

“this, and only this should be the objective of any negotiating process.”²³² Congress had never opposed negotiations and a negotiated settlement and “on various occasions in the past we have, in vain, called on the apartheid regime to talk to the genuine leaders of our people.”²³³ To end apartheid all people had to be treated as equal citizens without regard to race, colour or ethnicity. ANC's ally the SACP's position was fuzzy and ambivalent. On one hand it talked of seizure of political power and mass insurrection; on the other it said armed struggle couldn't be counterpoised with dialogue, negotiation and justifiable compromises, as if they were mutually exclusive categories.²³⁴ It noted that liberation struggles have rarely ended in unconditional surrender of the enemy and each struggle had to have its climax on the negotiating table, “occasionally involving compromises judged to be in the interests of revolutionary advance.”

SACP's Chris Hani viewed the negotiations a result of peoples' struggles, “to secure a negotiated settlement of the apartheid conflict. The CODESA process is a victory for our people. We believe that it is our responsibility as a vanguard organisation of the working class, together with our allies, to pursue this process with the utmost vigour” and the SACP was participating in the process to “address social and economic issues faced by the working class and to fulfil their aspirations.”²³⁵ He was echoing Mandela's speech earlier on that

May 17 1986; The Dakar Declaration, statement by participants in IDASA conference, Dakar, July 12 1987;

Speech by Nelson Mandela on the Grand Parade , Cape Town, February 11 1990.

²³² “The Question of Negotiations”, Statement by ANC NEC, Lusaka, October 9 1987.

²³³ “The Question of Negotiations”, Statement by ANC NEC, Lusaka, October 9 1987.

²³⁴ “The Path to Power”, Programme of the SACP adopted at the 7th Congress, Havana, April 1989.

²³⁵ Statement of the SACP, presented by General Secretary Chris Hani to the CODESA, World Trade Centre, December 20 1991.

CODESA was a fruit of peoples' sacrifices and struggle.²³⁶ Hanu was, however, speaking at a time when the apartheid government had not implemented the undertakings of the Groote Schuur and Pretoria Minute to release political prisoners and those on death row.

Any liberation movement has to envision a kind of postcolonial society. An economic policy has to be unambiguous and well spelt out to that end. The Congress based its economic outlook by underlining the role of business under the tutelage of the freedom charter, that is, mines and monopoly industry would come under “ownership of the people as a whole” and “all other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well – being of the people. All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and enter all trades, crafts and professions.”²³⁷ During negotiations for a new constitution, the Congress position coincided with that of the NP's call that the new constitution should promote a market - oriented economy, private ownership coupled with social responsibility; an economic system where regulation and control by government are kept to a minimum; freedom of contract; free competition; maintenance of fiscal and monetary discipline and protection of property rights in the Bill of Rights.²³⁸ The government's view was that a democratic constitution should

²³⁶ Address to CODESA by Nelson Mandela, December 20 1991. He reiterated the statement during CODESA 2, May 16 1992.

²³⁷ ANC Memorandum - Summary of discussions between certain representatives of big business/opinion makers in South Africa; ANC, “The Role of Business in South Africa's Future.” Presented at Five Freedoms Forum, July 1987; Constitutional Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa, ANC Policy Paper, Lusaka August 1988; “Business in post – apartheid South Africa.” Article by Kay Maken in TIC leaflet “Face to Face with the ANC” December 1988; Position Paper of the SACP on the First Assignment of Terms of Reference of CODESA Working Group 2; Popo Molefe, UDF secretary – general, “The Role of Business in post-apartheid South Africa.” November 6 1990

²³⁸ National Party's submission to CODESA Working Group 2, “Constitutional Principles Which Should Be Enshrined in a New Constitution for the Republic of South Africa”, February 17 1992 and “The Meaningful

ensure a stable government, prevent abuse of power and domination and guarantee equitable participation to all in every sphere of life.²³⁹ ANC's January 8th 1987 statement which followed the NEC deliberations, delivered by Tambo, called for a broad front which included business and involving black and white.²⁴⁰ The question of ideology enjoyed no priority, only a search for the broadest possible unity of the patriotic and progressive forces (including business) to overthrow the apartheid regime, mattered.²⁴¹ It affirmed that “the ANC has no intention of closing down private business, be they black or white owned. On the contrary the freedom charter recognises the importance of maintaining a non – exploitative and non – monopoly private sector.”²⁴² Congress's deliberations did put the masses into consideration in any economic projection. However its policy remained contradictory and ambivalent mainly because of Congress devotion to a *laissez – faire* society. While pledging a guarantee to free the masses from hunger, disease, ignorance, homelessness and poverty, wealth redistribution had to be subsumed under high rates of economic growth. The new democratic order, addressing the question of ownership, control and direction of the economy, had to ensure that “neither the public nor private sectors serve as means of enriching the few at the expense of the majority.”²⁴³ The movement was quick to repudiate claims that its approach was revolutionary, although it did demand immediate democratic changes; the business

Participation of Political Minorities”, February 25 1992; Opening statement by Dr Dawie de Villiers, leader of the NP delegation, CODESA 1 December 20 1991.

²³⁹ Speech by state president FW de Klerk at the First Session of CODESA, December 20, 1991.

²⁴⁰ Message of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress on the occasion of 8th January 1987, delivered by OR Tambo

²⁴¹ Letter from Stanley Mabizela, ANC representative in Tanzania to ANC president and secretary - general, Lusaka, March 7 1986

²⁴² ANC, “The Role of Business in South Africa's Future”; Report of Group B: Commission 5, CODESA

²⁴³ ANC's January 8th 1987 Statement.

community “should maintain a dynamic relationship with the mass democratic movement. Although our ideals challenge the interests of business, nevertheless an alliance between business and the mass democratic movement should be entered into” (ibid). In any case the ANC had to shed some of its radical support if it was to keep whites and business happy, said SAIIA's Gary Van Staden.²⁴⁴ The intimacy between the movement and “progressive forces” within business which needed “special encouragement” was one that would consolidate socio – economic changes in the country. The recognition was that business was crucial in eradicating apartheid and construction of a united, democratic and non – racial South Africa. Congress noted that this scenario was possible despite the close historical linkages between the colonial state and capital which resulted in white affluence and black abject poverty; even though the movement's ideas challenged the interests of business, nevertheless an alliance between them wasn't all that frictional. Nonetheless engagement of business towards opposition to apartheid was one of the major liberation objectives. This was in the long term interests of business, making a choice between supporting the forces of liberation and progress “representing the noble ideals of the democratic majority, on the one hand and being on the side of a dying and condemned system, on the other.”²⁴⁵ Ironically at this time the ANC was calling for, as a strategic task, the destruction of apartheid and transfer of power to the people through mass political action, armed struggle, international isolation of apartheid and “by ensuring the ANC plays its proper role as a revolutionary vanguard of our struggling people”²⁴⁶. A year earlier a cartoon portraying Botha and Tambo sitting together drinking tea and smoking, entitled “Could PW and Tambo soon be sharing tobacco from the same pouch?” appeared in the Sunday Times of 11 May 1986. The explanation was that the

²⁴⁴ “Can 'No -Talks PAC Put the Squeeze on ANC?” by Cassandra Moodley, Weekly Mail, April 5 1990.

²⁴⁵ ANC's January 8th Statement, 1987.

²⁴⁶ ANC Discussion Paper on the Issue of Negotiations, June 16 1989.

problem both men encountered was on one hand a hard line right Botha faced and Tambo's dilemma was criticism from young black activists who saw the ANC becoming too middle class and too elitist.²⁴⁷ On restitution of land rights, the agreement was that any person dispossessed of land after 19 June 1913 can have a claim to land restitution; when the land is in possession of a private owner and the state certifies that the acquisition is feasible then the court may order the state to purchase or expropriate that land and restore the relevant right to the claimant.²⁴⁸ However a court has to take into account the history of dispossession, the hardship caused, the use of which the property is being put, the history of acquisition by the owner, the interest of the owner and others affected by any expropriation and the interests of the dispossessed.

9.1.2. PAC and BCM Perspective

For Africanists, “a Muzorewa²⁴⁹ type of government with whites having veto powers would have been unacceptable.²⁵⁰ The reason seems Gramscian: the dominated classes are won over through concessions and compromises; they form part of the social constellation but in a subordinate role (Gramsci 1971; Hall 1996). The main objective for PAC and BCM was regaining of land. The regime couldn't be a vehicle for change but the oppressed, exploited and dispossessed African masses led by the African working class and land hungry peasants

²⁴⁷ David Willers, Sunday Times, May 11 1986.

²⁴⁸ Plenary Session of the Multi – Party Negotiating Process, Wednesday November 17 1993, World Trade Centre, Document Pack 1 -2.

²⁴⁹ Bishop Abel Muzorewa was the leader of a compromise “Zimbabwe – Rhodesia” government in 1979, many considered him a puppet of Rhodesians.

²⁵⁰ PAC vice – president Clarence Makwetu opening a joint meeting of the PAC and the American Chamber of Commerce of South Africa in Harare, November 1990.

of which the principal method is the armed struggle.²⁵¹ Whereas the ANC saw negotiations as a terrain of struggle, which it welcomed on condition that political prisoners were released, end to the state of emergency, a return of exiles, and repeal of apartheid legislation; the PAC's position was a demand for straightforward majority rule, redistribution of resources particularly land, a Constituent Assembly based on one person one vote on a common voters toll²⁵² and repeal of the five pillars of apartheid (Population Registration Act, 1913 and 1936 Land Acts on which the Group Areas Act was based, Bantu Education Act, the Tricameral parliament and bantustans).²⁵³ A more radical stance, however, stated that negotiations could only happen when the land has been transferred to its rightful owners²⁵⁴ or an even intransigent position: “we will never negotiate away the bones of our ancestors.”²⁵⁵ Compromise was off the radar until the rights of Africans were met and their birth right Azania was restored, which legitimately constituted the Azanian liberation movement.²⁵⁶ In

²⁵¹ The PAC's Second National Conference, December 7 – 9 1990, Presidential Address by Zeph Mothopeng; Jerry Mosala, Keynote Address “Liberal Capitalist Accommodation or a Black Struggle for a Socialist Transformation in Azania?” Harare Consultation of the BCM (A) May 19 – 21 1990.

²⁵² AZANYU Media Statement February 12 1991.

²⁵³ Johnson. P. Mlambo, “Negotiations With the Racist Regime?”, Speech at the Opening Ceremony at the Consultative meeting between PAC and PAM delegates in Harare, November 24 1989; Speech by the secretary for education (PAC internal) Mahlubi Mbandazayo delivered at PASO National Council Meeting in Cala June 9 1990; Minutes of the First National Congress of PASO of Azania held on October 6 – 7 1990 at Botshabelo Area, Botshabelo, Bloemfontein.

²⁵⁴ Minutes of The National Council of the Azanian National Youth Unity (AZANYU) held at Ipelegeng Community Centre, Soweto, October 28 – 29 1989; Motsoko Pheko, “On Negotiations – Is the ANC Now Following the PAC?” n.d; Interview with PAC chairman Johnson Mlambo, October 9 1989, SAPEM December 1989/January 1990.

²⁵⁵ Jefa Masemola, PAC founding member in PAC Newsletter Issue No 1 1990, UK Branch

²⁵⁶ Mark Shinnars, paper on “Women's Role in the Liberation Struggle and the Present Negotiations in occupied

fact negotiations entailed compromise. In history no ruling class has ever abdicated or relinquished its position voluntarily, it has always been forced to.²⁵⁷ A major concern was that when calling liberation movements to the negotiating table, De Klerk was in a position of power, surrounded by parties in the tricameral parliament, bantustan leaders and puppet council leaders all whose credibility was doubtful and whose common denominator was collaboration in maintaining apartheid.²⁵⁸ The PAC's ideological stance was that in any struggle the enemy must never be allowed to dictate to the liberation movement or choose their method of struggle for them. Apartheid as a crime against humanity mustn't be negotiated but eradicated "root to branch."²⁵⁹ Negotiations could only matter when the balance of forces were in African favour; it would be foolhardy to enter into negotiations when Pretoria had an upper hand; rather the position of the oppressor had to be brought to the level even lower than that of the people of Azania, a situation where its fire power is reduced significantly.²⁶⁰ At the time there was only an interaction between a superior and inferior force, a manipulation of the weaker by the stronger. In this case, none was aware of any historical precedent where an oppressive regime was invited to join the liberation movement in order to end oppression.²⁶¹ Such talk contradicted Mandela's address to the CODESA on December 20 1991 where he said it was the ANC not the government that initiated the

Azania' African Women's Congress – UNITRA.

²⁵⁷ "AZANYU Rejects Talking", New Nation August 10 1990; Robert Sobukwe, "Address on Behalf of the Graduating Class at Fort Hare College delivered at "completers social", October 21 1949.

²⁵⁸ *ibid*

²⁵⁹ *ibid*

²⁶⁰ Zeph Mothopeng , in Azania News Volume 26 Numbers 4 and 5; Azania Socialist Review, special congress edition.

²⁶¹ Azanian Socialist Review, special congress edition, "Reconstruct for a Socialist Azania", based on deliberations at the Harare Consultation of the BCM (A) May 19 – 21 1990.

negotiation process since July 1986 when he met with justice minister Kobie Coetsee and top government officials, asking that the ANC and government sit down and explore a peaceful solution.²⁶² He reiterated that since 1987 the ANC had intensively campaigned for a negotiated transfer of power. In contrast the liberation movement had a history of non – collaboration dating back to the 1940s; inviting the apartheid government to negotiate would militate against the non – collaborationist stance and would represent a bit of hypocrisy where non – collaboration had been one of the most important weapons to secure the independent solutions which the oppressed seek.²⁶³ The idea that an All – Party Congress (APC)²⁶⁴ where oppressed and oppressors meet to reconcile their differences was to a restless Africanist youth “politically misleading and counterproductive” as this would “make our people co – managers of apartheid.”²⁶⁵ The Pretoria Minute where the ANC suspended the armed struggle meaning a surrender to Pretoria, was called the “ultimate sell – out.”²⁶⁶ AZAPO, PAC and NACTU accused the ANC of being “sell – outs” for talking with the apartheid regime; after all the talks did not include land redistribution. The PAC's Zeph Mothopeng would say “slaves have nothing to gain from negotiating with their masters” and “you cannot win at the negotiating table what you didn't win in battle.”²⁶⁷ The PAC declared

²⁶² Nelson Mandela's Address to CODESA, December 20 1991.

²⁶³ “Negotiation – the Great Hoax”, Editorial in New Unity Movement Bulletin, July 1989.

²⁶⁴ The APC comprised of ANC, NP, SACP, PAC, DP, IFP, CP, LP, Solidarity, NPP, AWB, Homeland parties, TIC, NIC, AZAPO and the TBVC states.

²⁶⁵ AZANYU Media Statement, February 12 1991.

²⁶⁶ Azania News October – December 1990. At the time the regime had not repealed Section 29 of Internal Security Act nor the Pretoria Minute signed by the ANC and Government cover political prisoners and exiles of any other organisation.

²⁶⁷ Quoted in *Financial Mail*, May 4 1990.

they would not be found “within spitting distance of the negotiations table.”²⁶⁸ AZAPO urged the ANC to desist from the talks because de Klerk wanted the ANC to “endorse apartheid”; the talks had no mandate from the oppressed or addressed the genuine aspirations of the people²⁶⁹; they will serve to “legitimate the new form of apartheid being projected by the de Klerk government.” PAC's Barney Desai also critiqued the ANC for abandoning the poor and it was now a party of “radical upwardly individuals” where in a mad rush to share power with imperialism and white supremacy, the ANC/SACP had ditched its liberation baggage; both were no longer fighting on moral ground but on compromise, collaboration and capitulation.²⁷⁰ The New Unity Movement saw the negotiations as paralysing political thinking with a kind of “political drug: negotiations.”²⁷¹ It added: “for the opportunists, horse-dealers and plain sell – outs among the oppressed generously helped by black liberals and white liberals, it means sitting down with the same rulers, bluffing themselves and deceiving the masses that liberation in all its senses can be got by 'negotiating a settlement' with oppressors. This is an act of treachery and deceit...”

Mothopeng rebuffed Mandela's efforts to allay white fears because “making allowances for whites – that is compromise, appeasement...we don't believe in appeasement...we are going to recapture, to win and attain our freedom.”²⁷² The need to reach a political settlement would not liberate Africans but to liberate the European from his serious problems, without a negotiated settlement, “the European settlers and their imperialist friends are likely to lose all

²⁶⁸ “AZAPO, PAC won't be seen anywhere near the Talks Table”, *Weekly Mail*, May 4 1990.

²⁶⁹ “AZANYU Rejects Talking”, *New Nation*, August 10 1990.

²⁷⁰ “PAC Slams ANC for Capitulating”, *Cape Times*, August 15 1990.

²⁷¹ “Negotiation – the Great Hoax”, Editorial in *New Unity Movement Bulletin*, July 1989.

²⁷² Interview with PAC chairman, Johnson Mlambo, October 9 1989, SAPEM December 1989/January 1990;

“Zeph Scorns Mandela's Appeal to Whites”, *Cape Times*, March 6 1990.

or much” while accruing limited benefits to Africans.²⁷³ The forecast by the Africanists and the BCM at that time (1990) was that the settlement aimed at entrenching economic interests of European capitalists and co-optation of the African petty – bourgeoisie and elites to the side of the system or the new state²⁷⁴ with the “new South Africa” co -managed by non - racial comprador supervisors.²⁷⁵ Mosala of AZAPO captured these fears:

Comrades, let us stop deceiving ourselves. Our country is faced with the prospect of a neo – colonial sell – out solution....if change in our country is going to take the form that it looks like it is going to take, then white people will always dominate black people economically, culturally, socially, intellectually. Only a handful of black petit – bourgeoisie will benefit from the change.²⁷⁶

Back in 1961 Tabata had predicted that imperialism would use new methods, not just the bullets, that is, incorporation of a certain stratum of the colonised to be partners so that when the handover happened this group would look after the colonisers’ interests. Tabata saw the ANC as a typification and prototype of neo-colonialism who were “stooges of imperialism, stooges of South African liberals and the Communist Party which, as you know, was indistinguishable from the liberals.”²⁷⁷ This meditation followed the performance of Kasavubus and Tshombes “who are like a ventriloquist through which imperialism speaks through” (ibid). Thus political power without economic power via the redistribution and restoration of national economic resources to the African people would be meaningless. At

²⁷³ PAC Discussion Document “Proposed Economic Policy: An Exploratory Diagnostic and Contingency Exposition.” Shareworld , Johannesburg July 7 - 8 1990.

²⁷⁴ See also The Voice of the African Student Volume 1 Number 1, an official organ of PASO.

²⁷⁵ Keynote Address by Jerry Mosala “Liberal Capitalist Accommodation or a Black Struggle for a Socialist Transformation in Azania?” Harare Consultation of the BCM (A) May 19 – 21 1990.

²⁷⁶ ibid

²⁷⁷ IB Tabata addressing an APDUSA gathering in 1961.

this realisation “the ANC will discover that the European settlers, be they liberals, communists or conservatives will not be ready to part with acquired economic resources and privilege, irrespective of their political rhetoric.”²⁷⁸ The “new South Africa” would mean a shift from “a policy of racist fascism to one of normal enlightened exploitation, implying a move from explicit racial exploitation to a non - racial exploitation.”²⁷⁹ Leaving apartheid structures intact would lead to a “democratic apartheid.”²⁸⁰ However, de Klerk declared during CODESA 2: “When we say that the book on apartheid has been closed, we mean it.”²⁸¹

As the year 1990 wore on Pretoria was making overtures to the PAC to join the negotiations.²⁸² In the late 1990 there was growing pressure for PAC to enter negotiations from countries where it had representatives. It risked losing financial and logistical support if it continued to maintain its intransigent, hard-line leftist stance.²⁸³ Furthermore its supporters were questioning PAC for not participating in a process which excluded PAC members in jail or those in exile from qualifying for indemnity. The apartheid government was coercing the movement, with threats that PAC exiles and political prisoners would stay in detention and exile if it refused to compromise and enter negotiations.²⁸⁴ Government's position was that

²⁷⁸ *ibid*

²⁷⁹ Keynote Address by Jerry Mosala: “Liberal Capitalist Accommodation or a Black Struggle for a Socialist Transformation in Azania?” Harare Consultation of the BCM (A) May 19 -21 1990.

²⁸⁰ “PAC Slams ANC for 'Capitulating.’” PAC's Barney Desai quoted in Cape Times, August 15 1990.

²⁸¹ Speech by FW de Klerk at CODESA, May 16 1992.

²⁸² “Pretoria Invites PAC to Join Negotiations.” Daily Mail August 31 1990.

²⁸³ “Grassroots Backing Could Make the PAC A Major New Player”, by Adries Van Heerden, Sunday Times September 2 1990.

²⁸⁴ “PAC Told: Talk or Stay in Jail, Exile,” article by Michael Morris in Cape Argus, August 14 1990.

no other organisation would enjoy indemnity if they didn't commit themselves to the same conditions the government set for the ANC, that is, a commitment to peace and suspension of the armed struggle. Another factor was the ANC through participating in the talks would benefit from the concomitant publicity and monopolise black politics thus marginalising the PAC. Importantly the PAC, just like the rest of the liberation movement did fail to overthrow the apartheid though revolutionary means, which made negotiations inevitable.²⁸⁵ A shift had to happen; the PAC would believe negotiations are still the “right path.”²⁸⁶ Eventually the PAC renounced its earlier stance, was cajoled into the talks and became a participant at the negotiations table.

PAC's economic policies would vacillate depending on the context. For example, during their meeting with the CBM, it intimated that it accepted a democratisation and socialisation of the means of production but that system must be “redistributive, entrepreneur supportive, productive, developmental and human needs oriented, of which redistribution must preferably take place through redistribution of opportunities for entrepreneurs and advancement of black managers.”²⁸⁷

The denouement of resolution of antagonisms had to result in a “new South Africa” exactly projected by de Klerk's government:

The future South Africa needs to be built on a basis constructed by negotiation, in a spirit of give and take, reflecting the very real concerns of black and white, and

²⁸⁵ “AZANYU Attacks PAC Leader”, *New Nation*, June 15 1990.

²⁸⁶ PAC's Nana Mahomo quoted in *Sowetan*, August 1 1990, “PAC Aims to End ANC Grip on South African Politics.”

²⁸⁷ Summary Notes of PAC Perspectives and Strategies – From Proceedings of the Weekend Meeting Held between Members of the Consultative Business Movement and PAC 1991.

where the best minds seek reconciliation and compromise, leaving not winners against losers but a result in which all parties will share because South Africa will be the winner.²⁸⁸

9.2. The Postcolonial Malady

AZAPO youth wing AZAYO's president Amukelani Ngobeni has called on Mandela to apologise to the nation "before he dies" for selling out black peoples' struggle through secret talks with the apartheid government and the compromised constitution which today makes it difficult and impossible for the government to deliver services to citizens.²⁸⁹ The Nelson Mandela Foundation's spokesman Sello Hatang, in response said Mandela always maintained that "he was acting as part of the collective." However let us point briefly, a few considerations. Ndebele (2007) finds it incredulous how leaders gave up long held convictions and ideals overnight, renouncing them; at the same time their people felt betrayed and confused and anguished. He asks: "How do you turn around this way and retain credibility, of being thought to have betrayed their people, to have cowardly lost their nerve and become weak at a crucial moment" (2007: 219).

An image refers to two different things. There is the plain relationship that produces the likeness of an original, not necessarily its faithful copy, but simply what suffices to stand in for it. And "there is the interplay of operations that produces what we call art: or precisely an alteration of resemblance" (Ranciere 2007: 6). Ranciere goes on to argue that the image is never a simple reality, like cinematic images which are primarily operations and "relations

²⁸⁸ Views on a Constitution – Making Body - tabled by the South African government at CODESA Working Group 2; Speech by Dr. ZJ de Beer at the opening of the CODESA Conference, World Trade Centre, December 20 1991.

²⁸⁹ I saw this posted on Facebook, June 13 2012.

between the sayable and the visible, ways of playing with the before and the after, cause and effect” (ibid). One might insinuate that the postapartheid reflects both the former and the latter. Whilst apartheid social formation may not be exactly reproduced in the post, it does appear with some alterations and modifications which however are not poor and cheap imitations but excellent copies, showing brilliant artistry and craftsmanship. But the image is not merely a double, Ranciere argues. It is a triple. There is a different resemblance en route; the one that rejects the mirror in favour of the immediate relationship between progenitor and the engendered. This he calls hyper – resemblance. The reflection, the image, does contain the fine features of the original. One might say this imitation looks like a pirated porn DVD: the sound and image quality are near to the original, some of us are not perturbed by its slight defects because our senses are piqued by erotic arousal. The image is not a postcolonial spectre; it has its roots in the liberation struggle, in the liberation movement itself and the nature of its leadership. During the talks preceding 1994 the ANC had to present a certain image; that it wasn't inclined to annihilate whites. It had to assuage white fears, that although there was widespread anger among blacks, this would only lock the country in to the past and hinder progress forward (Waldmeir 1997). Waldmeir writes:

So in New York and Soweto, Lusaka and Dakar, South Africans met to lay the human foundations and erect the emotional buttresses for a lasting peace. In less than a decade the ANC had pulled off a monumental feat of seduction – conversion of the Afrikaner nation, liberation of the white tribe of Africa from irrational fears of centuries (1997: 64 -5).

The ANC strategy conference of 1985 sought to win as many whites as possible to its side instead of overthrowing the government²⁹⁰. The strategies involved courting businessmen,

²⁹⁰ The visiting South African delegation consisted of Gavin Relly (Anglo -American), Zach de Beer (Anglo – American'), Tony Bloom (Premier Group), Tertius Myburgh (editor, Sunday Times), Harold Pakendorf (editor, Die Vaderland), J.de L Peter Sordor (Director SA Foundation), Hugh Murray (editor, Leadership SA)

Afrikaner intellectuals and black homeland leaders and convince them to turn against Pretoria. For this strategy to succeed the ANC of course had to present itself in a particular light. Part of the image included the leadership, many of them aspirant bourgeoisie and culturally transformed individuals with acute tastes for everything western. They comprised the likes of Thabo Mbeki with his pipe smoking with which he found common bond with Anglo - American's Gavin Relly, while his comrades were avid whisky takers. Despite Pretoria's image of them as "terrorists" they were quite gentlemen to the core, urbane, with refined mannerisms and used it to suggest a cultivated reserve inconsistent with white stereotypes of "primitive" Africans. They also projected themselves as human beings, moderate ones, that is, not fanatic ideologues. One of the interlocutors of the period remembers that the pipe made Mbeki look like a "black Englishman", by which he meant, of course, that the ANC leader was a sort of "honorary white man" (Waldmeir 1997: 67). Many of the talks had "cordiality, attractive and congenial without aggression, animosity or hostility and were almost like a 'reunion'" (ibid). Inside the country since prison meetings with Afrikaners Mandela showed he was a man of moderation and flexibility, not a communist. He therefore assuaged white property owners. Although Azanians had, spent years fighting and talking about political power, the subtext of the negotiated revolution was always economic (Waldmeir 1997: 252).

Though the dismantling of colonialism in the twentieth century was a spectacular event (s) the far reaching consequences and implications has been the continued spread of imperialism (Fanon 1967; Ake 1981; Williams and Chrisman 1993; Werbner 1996) and postcolonial societies are still subject to subtle neocolonial domination (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin

while the ANC delegation consisted of Oliver Tambo, Pallo Jordan, Mac Maharaj, Chris Hani, Thabo Mbeki and James Stuart.

2007). For Ashcroft et al, postcolonial doesn't mean “post – independence” or “after – colonialism” because this would insinuate that colonialism ended. Instead postcolonial should mean the oppositional process beginning with the colonial contact.

Eliminating the legal underpinnings of apartheid wasn't enough. The failure to overhaul and restructure the state machinery, apartheid apparatus in civil service, and the judiciary and security forces²⁹¹ means the postapartheid arrangement looks the same as the system it replaced where economic power was left in the hands of the white propertied oligarchy (Murray 1994; Nefolovhodwe 2001; Alexander 2010). White racism no longer exists as a formalised structure but white power still remains in commerce, industry and higher education where it has mutated and assumed a colour of change (Ndebele 2007). White supremacy lingers on despite blacks being incorporated into a colour blind political framework (Murray 1994) and “those who agreed at Kempton Park were too happy to be the new managers of a system they didn't create, just like all managers they are now called upon to make it work” (Nefolovhodwe 2001). Others like Kunnie (2000) opine that a neocolonial situation is existing in the postapartheid where an indigenous bourgeoisie has assumed political governance while servicing the interests of local and western capital and imperialism with the ANC acting as the “bodyguard of white supremacy” (Mngxitama)²⁹² who have “inherited the language, mindset and vocabulary of white supremacy and these are servants of imperialism.”²⁹³ In this analysis ANC is seen as the key problem, one has to “deal with it if we want to deal with white supremacy.”²⁹⁴ BC analysis of the postapartheid is “there is

²⁹¹ This resulted in the “sunset clauses” in the interim constitution which were advocated by Joe Slovo (Mayibuye, March 1992).

²⁹² Mngxitama has mentioned that in many forums. He argues that there is no way to confront white supremacy without going through the ANC, the bodyguard.

²⁹³ Haile Gerima, “Address to the SNI”, Durban, September 23 2011.

²⁹⁴ Andile Mngxitama, “Fanon on Blackness.” WISER, University of the Witwatersrand, May 31 2012.

always slave – catchers, so we deal with them as deal with the masters. There are always *askaris* who do the dirty job of whiteness. Whiteness just needs a little bit of melanin to reproduce itself.”²⁹⁵ Adam, van Zyl Slabbert and Moodley (1997) have argued that multiracial capitalism can be sold more effectively to impoverished masses than the racial monopoly of white ownership; “the ANC as the guardian and beneficiary of the system that it once denounced as irreformable represents the real miracle of the transition” (1997: 167). In fact the plan was for whites to remain in the engine room of power even if the skipper was black (Waldmeir 1997: 52). This does nothing to either erode the deeply embedded structural inequalities or remove the inherited social and economic conditions. Murray asks, “Is apartheid really dead, or will it continue to survive, tragically metamorphosed in a ghastly new guise?” (1994: 8). Analysing the 1994 deal, property rights and the sacrosanctcy of the free market, Pithouse (2012) notes:

...it was commonly argued that they were necessary to keep the goose that laid the golden egg happy. In other words, if black people wanted to stop being poor the important thing was that they should keep whites happy. And it wasn't just whites in South Africa. There were all those investors and tourists too.

Since the nationalist leaders are afraid that national liberation would lead to colonial bourgeoisie withdrawing their capital, Fanon (1961) calls this “curse of independence.”

Pithouse reasons that whites are happy to be part of the “political miracle” as long as they keep their economic power and wealth. Another reason is that there was never direct confrontation with racism and inequality.

The demand was replacement of white faces by black ones; capitalism is the system the masses knew in the modern sector, what they were fighting for was that it should be in their

²⁹⁵ Andile Mngxitama, “Fanon on Blackness.” WISER, University of the Witwatersrand, May 31 2012.

hands (Nyerere 1968). Transference of independence is mimicry of colonial dependence and independence is only a mockery (Bhabha 1994 [2004]). In Lacanian terms, mimicry is like camouflage, not a harmonisation of repression of difference, but a form of resemblance (Bhabha 1994[2004]). In the early years of independence Fanon (1961; see also Bhabha 1990) had warned of the desire and envy of the colonised that makes him fantasise the master's place. In the 1970s Biko foresaw a situation where:

At worst Blacks envy white society for the comfort it has usurped and at the centre of this envy is the wish – nay, the secret determination - in the innermost minds of most Blacks who think like this, to kick whites off those comfortable garden chairs that one sees as he rides in a bus, out of town, and claim them for themselves.²⁹⁶

As for the leadership, “they were not against capitalism; they simply wanted its fruits and saw independence as the means to that end” (Nyerere 1968: 27) and were concerned with Africanization of the capitalist economy of colonialists and knew no other alternative. Indeed independence would grant them individual wealth; they wanted what whites had for themselves and the opulence that came with it. The elite that would rise to power would refuse to radicalise the popular masses against colonialism; the reason is that they reached an understanding with colonial forces who wielded power previously (Du Bois 1965; Bayart 2006). These black leaders would become staunch defenders of capitalism, use positions of power for private gain, and their office and seniority to get capital and become capitalists. In the postcolonial there is increased wealth of a few who show off “African – owned large cars and luxurious houses, and so on, as evidence of growing prosperity and of their own devotion to the cause of national independence” (Nyerere 1968: 28). The mental conditioning and consumption habits of these elite have affinity with the western bourgeoisie (Chinweizu

²⁹⁶ Steve Biko during the testimony in the BPC – SASO Trial, May 5 1976

1987). Their common bond is liberalism, an office they prosecute with enthusiasm. Chinweizu (1987) contends that Africa's greatest problem today and its most formidable obstacle to her final liberation is the character of her elite, who Haile Gerima calls “snake oil sellers”²⁹⁷. Chinweizu avers that there is a strong quisling quality in the African elite, a tendency which is calamitous to the welfare of Africans. One should ask if they are primarily African nationalists or modern black slavers “serving the west just as the slaving elites did centuries ago” (Chinweizu 1987: 353) with strong similarities in role and actions, a connection that is reprehensible. Their policies preserve the neocolonial order; their class interests are tied to their imperialist masters and “they readily abandon the interests of their people to protect those of their class” (Chinweizu 1987: 356). The change in lives of people is negligible; instead, “there has been a change of masters, but like new leeches, the new ruling classes are often greedier than the old” (Memmi 2006: 4). For Fanon (1961) the native elite are pacifists and reformists. For me they are pacifists – apologists. All this is a negation of the teleology of the liberation struggle:

Obviously a peoples' struggle is effectively theirs if the reason for that struggle is based on the aspirations, the dreams, the desire for justice and progress of the people themselves and not on the aspirations, dreams or ambitions of a half a dozen persons, or a group of persons who are in contradiction with the actual interests of their people (Cabral 1979: 75).

National liberation of a people is the regaining of their historical personality; a return to history through destruction of the imperialist domination which they were subjected to. In a postcolonial this is yet to, or not realised and fulfilled at all. National liberation exists only when the national productive forces are completely freed from all and any kind of domination (Cabral 1979). Since imperialism usurps the historical development of the people through

²⁹⁷ Haile Gerima, “Address to the SNI”, September 23 2011, Durban.

violence, national liberation has to grant the right of the people to have their own history. Any liberation movement that doesn't consider this is certainly not struggling for national liberation because the principal aspect of national liberation is the struggle against neocolonialism. If this involves freeing of productive forces, then national liberation necessarily corresponds to a revolution (Cabral 1979: 130) and “national liberation struggle is a revolution” (Cabral 1979: 134). Fanon (1961: 39) believes that the settler never ceases to be “the enemy, opponent, the foe that must be overthrown” because he has always been part of a process of domination and exploitation. If the revolution is not realised the national liberation continues because it “is not over at the moment when the flag is hoisted and the national anthem is played...” (Cabral 1979: 134)

In most Africa countries campaigns were against colonialism and foreign domination, not capitalism. The contradictions in the struggle are that some sections of capital may shed racism to guarantee continuation of capitalism which puts the national liberation struggle into quandary: “The struggle for national liberation and against white domination is not necessarily a struggle for socialism” (Wolpe 1988: 61). Nyerere (1968), Cabral (1979) and Fanon (1961) all argue that this stems from a lack of ideological content during the liberation struggles. Ideological deficiency and total lack of ideology in the national liberation movements which is explained by ignorance of historical reality which these movements aspire to transform constitute the greatest weakness in the struggle against imperialism and “nobody has yet successfully practised revolution without revolutionary theory” (Cabral 1979: 123; Nabudere 1981). In an interview Strini Moodley captured this sentiment:

The ANC's got no ideology. What ideology has the ANC got? You can see it happening today. No, it always has been like that. The Freedom Charter is a sell – out document, it's a liberal document. It doesn't take care of the interests of the majority of the people...ANC leaders tried to convince me that 'your place is with the ANC and

with the SACP' and I told them, I'm with the BCM, and this is our policy document and I sent it to them. In it I said, 'as far as we are concerned, NUSAS, the Liberal Party, Alan Paton, and all those white people are enemies of black people'. They wrote back to me and said, 'the enemy of the NUSAS, and enemy of the Liberal Party and Alan Paton is an enemy of the ANC,' and that's when we realised these guys are going to sell us out. And the big sell – out came in 1990...the consequence of the release – Kempton Park was the biggest sell – out.²⁹⁸

The postcolonial is an illusion, reinforced and spurred by native elements controlling political or state power. The postcolony is an illusion because this class is subjected to the whims and impulse of imperialists (Fanon 1961; Cabral 1979; Gibson 1999). This pseudo bourgeoisie, however strongly nationalist, cannot fulfil a historical function; “it cannot freely guide the development of productive forces, and in short cannot be a national bourgeoisie” (Cabral 1979:129; see also Fanon 1961). Werbner (1996) calls most African countries' sovereignty “political fiction”; in Fanonian terms it's a “masquerade” based on concessions and minimal control of economic means (Ake 1981).

The postcoloniality is shaped by operations of capitalism; by ways in which global capitalism draws in local cultures and economies into its vortex (Dirlik 1994). In the postcolonial we see those who once were activists, radicals, leftists, communists, trade unionists and all sorts of that motley becoming “changed men”²⁹⁹. Of these Alexander (2010) says:

²⁹⁸ Strini Moodley interviewed by Naomi Klein, Ashwin Desai and Avi Lewis.

²⁹⁹ Trevor Manuel was chair of the IMF/World Bank board of governors in 1999 – 2000; chair of IMF/World Bank Development Committee in 2001 – 2 and co – chair of the March 2002 UN Financing for Development Conference in Monterrey; Alec Erwin was president of Trade and Development from 1996 – 2000 and helped broker the November 2001 Doha deal.

All I wish to stress here is that any blanket statement about 'sell – out' and 'betrayal' could only be made at the most general and abstract level against the background of the avowed previous ideological and programmatic positions of the individuals or groups of people concerned.³⁰⁰

These men including Mbeki's tenure in presidency are complicit with the west's globalisation agenda, when the global apartheid and economic globalisation “simply doesn't work for South Africa or Africa” (Bond 2002: 3). It shows the depth of the embourgeoisement of the liberation movement with former activists and unionists now well-endowed and well-resourced tycoons. The ANC, COSATU and its affiliates, SANCO, MKWVA³⁰¹, and SACP, have set up investment arms and their former leading activists turned into wealthy beyond imagination³⁰², in order to make capitalism work for themselves (Adam, Van Zyl Slabbert and Moodley 1997). Mngxitama has critiqued the ANC and her allies (COSATU and SACP) as being anti – black and anti – workers; because they have the means and stature to galvanise society towards black socialism but are not willing.³⁰³ The post 1994 regime is also accused of “talking left and walking right” when “black people got a raw deal and continue to languish in squalor.”³⁰⁴ These are effects of 'Mandela, Mbeki and Zuma compromising a lot.

³⁰⁰ Neville Alexander, “South Africa -an Unfinished Revolution?” Address at the 4th Strini Moodley Annual Memorial Lecture, 13 May 2010, University of KwaZulu - Natal

³⁰¹ A full page advert by Old Mutual properties about former cadres now in security business protecting Kagiso Mall, in the *Mail and Guardian* of April 19 – 25 1996 reads: “When the Soviets taught us to be soldiers, they never thought we would one day use those skills to protect capitalists', the remarkable story of former MK cadres who turned their hand to the peace and security business as told by Philemon Mamabolo.”

³⁰² In 1995 Jayendra Naidoo a former COSATU leader was appointed executive director of NEDLAC, mandated to bring together state, capital and labour in separate chambers on the labour market, trade and public finance.

³⁰³ Andile Mngxitama, post on Facebook, May 5 2011.

³⁰⁴ Posts on Facebook by Mngxitama and others, May 5 2011

White people have nothing to lose...maybe in 1994 there should have been an apocalypse.”³⁰⁵

The BC youth detect a continued imperialism in the country. Someone posted on facebook: “South Africa is not run by the ANC as some ignorantly claim. Britain owns and runs South Africa. Thanks to Rupert and Oppenheimer, what we deem 'black diamonds' or wealth is crumbs used to reward submissive blacks. Zimbabwe was once a power house, the moment they threatened imperialist interests you know what happened...you wonder why our neighbours are skeletons and we are the only 'healthy' country in the SADC region?”³⁰⁶

As for the SACP, it is accused of having sold out or having been co-opted into giving an exploitative order a humanitarian veneer, thereby strengthening capitalism rather than overthrowing it (Adam, Van Zyl Slabbert and Moodley 1997). Former union leaders like Cyril Ramaphosa have become overnight multi – millionaires. Recently Ramaphosa lost out on a prized buffalo which fetched a record R20 million at an auction, to a Free State businessman.³⁰⁷ He bid R19 million for a prized rare buffalo cow with a horn spread of 109cm. Ramaphosa, who owns a game farm near Bela – Bela, spent over R15 million on other game at the auction including R12,5 million on two pregnant buffalo cows. Despite left rhetoric, the new regime has ideologically shifted towards neoliberal market policies, showing the dictates of imperialist capital and the hold of some powerful players who the government submit to. The ANC immediately after 1994 abandoned the noble intentions of the RDP, adopted GEAR, “Growth for All” and a Thatcherite approach of fiscal discipline and Mbeki announced, “just call me a Thatcherite” (cited in Saul 2005: 41). Adoption of GEAR in 1996 implied reorganisation of the state through measures like labour market flexibility, tight fiscal

³⁰⁵ Contribution at New Frank Talk “Is Malema a Mugabe?” launch, Museum Africa, August 6 2011

³⁰⁶ Post of Facebook May 24 2011.

³⁰⁷ Isaac Mahlangu, “Moguls lock horns in record sale”, *Sunday Times*, April 15 2012.

policy, trade liberalisation, exchange control liberalisation, independence of the Reserve Bank, privatisation and restructuring of state assets and limiting the extent the state can provide essential social services (Greenberg 2004; Lesufi 2006; Van Der Waal 2008). However, ANC has defended GEAR as “a tactical detour” which “we followed by design”,³⁰⁸ necessitated by objective conditions (high public debt and deficit, low growth etc.) and subjective conditions (distrust by private capital of the new dispensation).³⁰⁹ These shifts “are deplored by the left-wing as a sell – out to the global neo – liberal agenda and praised by economic conservatives as the only sensible policy of liberation movement in government” (Adam, van Zyl Slabbert and Moodley 1997: 161). These reflect two positions: that there's no alternative to neo – liberalism and it confirms the petit – bourgeois character of the ANC leadership (Seekings 2004; Greenberg 2004; Saul 2005; Lesufi 2006; Alexander 2010). The character of South African capital has all the features of imperialism that extends its tentacles onto the continent. South African capital that has penetrated into Africa includes state enterprises like SAA and Transnet. Anglo – Gold has majority stake in Ashanti and has become Anglo – Gold Ashanti. MTN has operations in Africa, Middle East and Iran. In Iran, the company is currently embroiled in a legal and criminal lawsuit for its unethical association with the regime and dishonesty there.³¹⁰ What is unpalatable is that MTN has been providing the Iranian government confidential details of its subscribers. De Beers, SAB, FNB, Standard Bank, Nedbank and Shoprite all are present in 17 African countries. This new imperialism which is not qualitatively divorced from rapacious and deleterious western imperialism is actively encouraged by the ANC. The party's “Second Transition” document captures this:

³⁰⁸ SACP's Blade Nzimande speaking at the ANC Policy Conference, Gallagher Estate, June 26 2012.

³⁰⁹ ANC Discussion Document, “Second Transition.”

³¹⁰ Craig McKune and Sharda Naidoo “Iran Puts the Screws on MTN”, *Mail and Guardian* April 5 – 12 2012

...if Africa is set to be the new investment frontier of the world, South Africa has to position itself more strategically to take full advantage of the changing balance of economic forces and shifts in global production, answering such questions as: How much is Africa on our radar screen? How many patriotic entrepreneurs are pathfinders in the unexplored and under – serviced African markets. How many state – owned enterprises have made the continent their investment frontier?³¹¹

Recently the state has been intimating adopting the Asian developmental model to “guide national economic development through fiscal redistribution, mobilisation of domestic and foreign capital and other social partners, utilisation of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), industrial, policy and regulation.”³¹² The “development” as employed here is meant or supposed to mean improving the conditions of the poor (Van Der Waal 2008). In the postapartheid development and modernisation of the formal market economy are seen as the way to social advance. The contradiction is there is permission of international capital flows and technological advances linked to global economics with the state assisting in supporting markets to produce developmental goods and services (Greenberg 2004). The developmental model is based on the centrality of markets as constituted under capitalist relations of production and consumption. Reliance on markets means developmental goods and services must be converted into commodities and markets operate on “effective demand” catering for those willing to pay and those with resources (Greenberg 2004). The model has support of major captains of industry like First Rand's Sizwe Nxasana, who believes the state should play a bigger role in the economy to spur growth and stimulate the economy.³¹³ Nxasana supports the developmental state mentioned by Zuma in his January 8 2012 statement

³¹¹ ANC Discussion Document, “The Second Transition? Building a National Democratic Society and the Balance of Forces in 2012.”

³¹² *ibid*

³¹³ Sharda Naidoo, “Exploiting the New World Order”, *Mail and Guardian*, January 27 – February 2 2012.

marking ANC's 100th anniversary and argues that the country needs a mixed economy in which the private sector can flourish with the state actively participating in several sectors like mining and banking. Nxasana doesn't support full nationalisation though. SACP's Blade Nzimande also supports ANC's policy thrust that calls for increased state involvement in the economy and the placement of policies into practicality and radical social transformation. He observes that the first decade of freedom benefited capitalists, the second must benefit the masses and the party is concerned about “our inheritance of an apartheid economic order.”³¹⁴

The ANC's “Second Transition” debate acknowledges that having “concluded our first transition with its focus on democratisation over the last eighteen years, we need a vision for a second transition that must focus on the social and economic transformation of South Africa over the next 30 to 50 years”³¹⁵ and “concern about the lack of commensurate progress in liberation from socio – economic bondage”. The focus has been to address the triple challenges of “unemployment, inequality and poverty” which all require a radical shift in the hitherto existing approach. Leading topics include nationalisation and land reform, themes that the government is inclined to tread on with caution because they strike at the heart of South Africa's capital and social formation. The ANC has been always been at pain to assure international investors that nationalisation is not on the party and government policy radar.³¹⁶

The ANC still commits itself to a mixed economy and “de - racialisation of ownership and control of wealth.”Analysing the transition documents, scholars like Mbembe for example

³¹⁴ Blade Nzimande speaking at ANC policy conference, June 26 2012, Gallagher Estate, Johannesburg.

³¹⁵ President Zuma has always said political freedom must be accompanied by economic gains (SABC 7pm news, April 27 2011).

³¹⁶ ANC Treasurer – General Matthews Phosa reassured the international business community in a speech at the Progressive Forum in London on the 22 May 2012. in contrast NUMSA has been advocating for nationalisation of mines and banks.

note that the “second transition” is an attempt to puncture the 1994 stalemate which saw no outright winner or loser whose settlement suspended the revolution.³¹⁷ In his keynote address to the “Second Transition” conference, Zuma argued that the breakthrough at CODESA which made compromises possible were absolutely necessary because economic compromises were meant to stabilise the economy. He however reckoned that the economy remains in male white hands; the structures of apartheid are still in place and have not allowed empowerment. Zuma nonetheless remains committed to increasing partnerships with business and insinuated that “the policy conference should be a platform for networking; I have seen deals clinched here.”³¹⁸ The widespread feeling, though, is that apartheid is not over as blacks continue to be treated as second class citizens and trapped in a permanent present, where they find it hard to make it from today to tomorrow. Mbembe adds that it seems the country is going in many different directions and is wobbling in an entanglement.

The UNDP Millennium Development Goals Country Report of 2010 shows that the racial distribution of poverty in South Africa remains high. Black South Africans who in 2006 constituted 79, 4% of population and 76, 8% of households earned 41, 2% of the R747, 6 billion income; 45, 3% of that income was earned by whites who constituted 9, 25% of the population. The Commission for Employment Equity report shows a slow pace on employment equity at senior levels with blacks at top management unchanged since 2006: 3,9% are African, 4,8% are coloured, 7,5% indian and 65,4% is white.³¹⁹ The income gap has come under scrutiny. Recently Bobby Godsell, chairman of Business Leadership SA, called

³¹⁷ Achille Mbembe, addressing the “Debating the ANC Second Transition documents.” WISER, University of the Witwatersrand, May 30 2012.

³¹⁸ President Zuma, speaking on ETV 7pm news, June 28 2012.

³¹⁹ Commission for Employment Equity Annual Report 2011 – 2012.

for a commission on high pay to be set up in the country, similar to UK's High Pay Commission. At a presentation in parliament entitled "Addressing Income Inequality", he said a large part of our society hadn't benefited from any post – apartheid dividend and that is due to high levels of inequality.³²⁰ At the same meeting COSATU's Zwelinzima Vavi said income inequality and excessive remuneration were long term threats to the country's stability. In July 2011 South Africa surpassed Brazil as the most unequal society in the world. Between the second and third quarters of 2011 official unemployment level was pegged at 25%³²¹ although the UNDP puts the national average at approximately 43%, 4,4 million people are unemployed and over 3 million (6,8%) have been unemployed for a period of one year or more and 60, 2% of job seekers don't have matric.

The Trevor Manuel's chaired National Planning Commission's (NPC) vision for 2030 seeks to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality, change the life chances of the people, "that remain stunted by our apartheid history."³²² NPC's Diagnostic Report released in June 2011 highlights the country's shortcomings and achievements since 1994: adoption of the constitution, establishment of institutions of democracy, building of a non – racial and non – sexist new nation. The UNDP reports that South Africa has halved the population living below the poverty line of \$1 a day, the decline being 11, 3% in 2000 to 2, 5% in 2006. President Zuma has also hailed the country's progress in the past seventeen years while other African nations have "deteriorated after independence".³²³ At an election rally in KwaMashu, (KZN) he, however, said "we cannot solve the problem caused by apartheid in 17 years, its

³²⁰ Ann Crotty "Godsell calls for Inquiry into Excessive Pay and Income Inequality" Business Report, *The Star*, May 21 2012

³²¹ StatsSA "Quarterly Labour Force Survey: Quarter 3 (July – September) 2011

³²² National Planning Commission "National Development Plan", 11 November 2011

³²³ President Zuma, SABC 7pm news, April 27 2011.

not possible.”³²⁴The NPC identifies challenges as: a politicised public service, rampant corruption, an ailing healthcare system, substandard education for black children and continued divisions in society. It reckons that to eliminate poverty and inequality over the next two decades will require: active participation and efforts of all South Africans in their own development, redressing the injustices of the past effectively, faster economic growth and higher investment and employment, rising standards of education, a healthy population and effective social protection³²⁵, an effective and capable government and collaboration between public and private sectors.

9.3. The Black Condition

The end of colonisation brought great anticipation and high hopes (Williams and Chrisman 1993): good life, control of political, economic and cultural destiny (Memmi 2006) but these were short lived because immediately a neocolonial social order ensued. The liberation fought at a cost brought with it depressed material conditions, racism, misery, suffering, poverty, corruption and violence. All these become accepted norms;³²⁶ black suffering become normalised. Private property ownership and unequal distribution of wealth become legitimate. Many young blacks in the country feel “it’s not yet *uhuru*, the postapartheid is a twilight zone between freedom and oppression.”³²⁷ BC youth feel black people died in the struggle for continued “white man’s ownership of our resources.” Conditions for blacks haven’t qualitatively changed in eighteen years; thus there is a “need to start afresh the black

³²⁴ President Zuma, SABC 7pm news April 4 2011

³²⁵ South African social welfare system gives R100 billion yearly to 15,2 million grant beneficiaries; child grants for under 18 is 10 million and 2,5 million for over 60

³²⁶ Pastor Xola Skosana addressing the SNI Durban, September 23 – 25, 2011.

³²⁷ A contribution from the floor, during a meeting organised by DLF, Khanya College, April 2011

revolution which was betrayed.”³²⁸ Contemporary BC youths view current issues as black issues, whites even so – called poor whites don't count as a factor; in other words there is an absence of whiteness in a condition of blackness. In an anti – black world, the fundamental point is to change and end it, BC proponents say. Mngxitama proposes a radical option – since we are living in a plantation, the only way out is burning it down.³²⁹ Although colonialism brought non – western societies like Azania into the vortex of modernity, BC youth say blacks are constructed outside modernity; modernity is synonymous with humanity, humanity equates whiteness. Thus to be human is to be white. Blacks therefore have to strive for humanity by apish endeavours and mimicry of whiteness through all means possible. In Fanonian terms this condition is pathological implying a need for urgent cure.

Let us now look at the morbid symptoms of the postapartheid social order: In the Johannesburg's Alexandra Township, an old woman wept while telling human settlements minister Tokyo Sexwale, Gauteng premier Nomvula Mokonyane and former ANCYL president Julius Malema how it hurts to be loyal to the ANC while living in a shack on the Juskei River, perpetually afraid of being swept away.³³⁰ The RDP houses which Mngixtama calls “improved shacks” and “hokkies” are badly constructed and pose a hazard to occupants. They are “insulting to black people, worse than the four room 'matchbox' houses apartheid built for black people.”³³¹ These conditions are captured by this Facebook post: “The single most important contribution of the ANC in the past 17 years is its success in making blacks accept animal level existence as a right. We want an RDP house and a toilet. If I was white I

³²⁸ Mngxitama addressing the, “Alex to Sandton – Hell to Heaven March”, June 16 2011.

³²⁹ Andile Mngxitama, “Fanon on Blackness.” WISER, University of the Witwatersrand, May 31 2012.

³³⁰ Amukelani Chauke and Charl du Plessis, “Poor Township Dwellers Demand a Better Life.”

<https://www.timeslive.co.za/article/poor-township-dwellers-demand-a-better-life>. May 9 2011.

³³¹ Posts on Facebook May 9 2011.

would laugh at the kaffir government.”³³² These are symptoms of colonialism and apartheid which engendered a culture of inferiority complex among blacks in a “democratic” environment who accept inferior and substandard services; are unbelievably tolerant; are “bewitched” by democracy and the task of contemporary BC is “to raise the level of desire for real equality to realise freedom beyond a toilet and an ugly RDP house is the main job of conscientisation.”³³³ The Black Condition suggests that black people are human waste and are just appendages of society, sub - human beings politicians don't lose sleep about. The reason is blackness is considered marginal. That is why, BC observes, it is considered racist if black people congregate among themselves to deliberate issues affecting them. The situation is compounded by increasing black on black violence so rampant in townships, whose roots are steeped in colonial and white supremacist violence, because “to be human as black requires violence that includes killing each other.”³³⁴ The intermittent poverty, lack, deprivation and conditions of want produce a kernel of despair, create a sub – human and manufacture a different class of human beings. Townships are considered an epitome of the Black Condition. According to Black Theologian Pastor Skosana, “townships are nothing but glorified refugee camps, rat infested hell-holes that must be exposed for what they really are. They exist as readily available hubs of cheap labour to keep labour intensive industries going for the benefit of a few.”³³⁵

The resultant effects are decay in the black moral world; social malaise; resort to alcohol by blacks as a means to forget and escape their problems, while others engage in criminal activities. The irony is that hunger is abounding in a land of plentitude. References are made

³³² Facebook post by Mngxitama, May 23 2011.

³³³ Posts on Facebook May 23 2011.

³³⁴ Andile Mngxitama, “Fanon on Blackness.” WISER, University of the Witwatersrand, May 31 2012.

³³⁵ Quoted in, “Protest March Expose 'Lies’”, by Anna Majavu, *Sowetan*, April 7 2011.

of Cape Town which BC youth call “Kakstad” and say represents the South African reality: – white opulence alongside black poverty and penury. The ruling party, the ANC, the rapacity and venality of its leadership and rank and file gets indicted. BC proponents opine: “We say we don't want white minority rule again. We also don't want black minority rulers who come to us in the name of liberation. These people have privatised the struggle...black people have to free themselves from domination. We should roll out a programme of mass mobilisation and civil disobedience.”³³⁶

BC youth say the ANC is getting crumbs from whites, “our position is blacks against non – whites, ANC and Malema are no longer blacks because they are guards of white capitalism.”³³⁷

9.3.1. Nationalisation

One issue under discussion is reparations. It is necessitated by a history of dispossession and racism, they aver. As the talk on nationalisation gains traction in many circles, BC activists say those “who benefited from our misery, how will they pay for the damage” and “we must nationalise all sectors of the economy without compromise.” Questions posed are: what is nationalisation, what is being nationalised and what are forms of nationalisation? The meaning of nationalisation is realised when workers take ownership of those resources. There is consensus that nationalisation has to happen only under people centred governance but not under ANC rule, because the ANC and its investment wing Chancellor House “is stealing national resources which belong to the people.”³³⁸ Since ANC is committed to a neoliberal capitalist model, nationalisation cannot be done under the ambit of capitalism. Assets would

³³⁶ Pastor Xola Skosana addressing an SNI forum.

³³⁷ Contributions at Blackwash press conference, Khanya College, July 6 2011.

³³⁸ Contributions from the floor during an SNI meeting, February 19, 2011.

be transferred to the state under popular control where there is assurance that people will benefit. Some BC youth have rebuffed Malema's and ANCYL's call for nationalisation because they are agents of the elite and are committed to a current system that is implicated in corrupt activities. Malema is labelled a “liar” and a “fraud”, a “black colonialist” who understands the symbolic power of associating with Mugabe, Cuba and Gaddafi;³³⁹ his position in the ANC (at that time) made him an unsuitable spokesman for nationalisation. One participant described Malema as, “someone converting to Islam but remains Catholic saying he wants to push an Islamic agenda in the Catholic Church.”³⁴⁰ The ANC is seen as a cancer; anyone in the ANCYL must detach themselves from the organisation and be with the people, if they are to champion nationalisation. Malema and his ANC comrades live luxury lives in exclusion of the black majority; thus “when the black revolution comes, we will come for Malema and his neighbours.” However, Malema is venerated by some youths who are inspired by his fearless, militant rhetoric which they can easily identify with. Participants also call for the need to address the idea that “white people have eaten so it's our turn to eat.”³⁴¹ The ANC is critiqued for its reluctance to use its political power to transform society for the interests of the larger black population – it should have taken the land and taxed the rich.³⁴² In one of the most astounding political ironies, former fierce critics of Malema like Mngxitama have joined hands with him in the new political party, the Economic Freedom Fighters.

³³⁹ Contributions at New Frank Talk, Museum Africa, August 6 2011.

³⁴⁰ *ibid*

³⁴¹ *ibid*

³⁴² *ibid*

9.3.2. Land

The Glen Grey Act (1894) restricted ownership of land by Africans, introduced individual land tenure which broke up the collective tribal ownership and created a class of landless blacks (Stadler 1987; Chinweizu 1987). Since the labour and land question were intricately bound together, the African had no incentive to leave the land to go and work and it was necessary for colonialists to deprive him of that land (Chinweizu 1987; Comaroff and Comaroff 1997). This was consummated with the 1913 Land Act that guaranteed white ownership of 87% of the land, while Africans were pushed out of the land into wage labour. These legislations led to overpopulation, disease and unproductivity in the reserves making it imperative for the liberation movement to resolve the land question (Tabata 1945). For Tabata (1954) two main problems facing the liberation movement are the agrarian and the national questions which are interconnected and their solutions are bound together. For Tabata the agrarian problem is the fundamental question in the country, “it is the pivot and axis of the national liberation movement.” Landlessness is an instrument for economic exploitation and national oppression because it is the cornerstone of the whole economic edifice of South Africa; a situation that can only be altered by the oppressed and exploited people. Landlessness ensured the thriving of the migrant and forced labour systems on farms and mines and depressed wages (Chinweizu 1987). At Unity Movement conferences the slogan “Land and Liberty” was popular; emphasis was placed on the inseparability between the struggle for land and for the franchise. The BCM has always recognised land as “the primary means of production, thus a landless people cannot have nationhood and cannot be liberated.”³⁴³ It argued that it is unrealistic to see land outside of its political and economic history thus making liberation of the land a primary objective. The main task of the BCM was

³⁴³ Strini Moodley, “Land Distribution as an Economic Strategy” AZAPO address to NAFCOOC, July 31 1990, Durban.

to win it back for the “dispossessed blacks.”³⁴⁴ For both Africanists and BCM land is theirs by right of indigenous occupancy and by majority status. The fact that white settlers have lived here for four hundred years doesn't give them right to ownership of the land.³⁴⁵ In non – western societies like Zimbabwe, ownership rights are expressed in the ability to control the fertility of the soil (Lan 1985) and he whose ancestors bring rain owns the land thus certifying an autochthonous claim to land. Land, however, was communally shared with the chief acting as a trustee; land was a resource meant for the well – being of every member of a community. On the other hand the key tenets of capitalism views land, labour and wealth as commodities, goods produced not for use but for sale (Wolf 1971). Land is not a commodity in nature; it only becomes so or is defined as such by a new cultural system which aims at creating a new kind of economics. Wolf argues that land is part of the natural landscape, not created to be bought or sold. In most non – western societies it is not regarded as a commodity because rights to land are aspects of specific social groups and its utilisation is an ingredient for specific social relationships (Wolf 1971: 277). In a capitalist society where land becomes a commodity, that impulse had to be necessitated by stripping these social obligations accompanied by the use of force which deprived original inhabitants of their resources.

In the country there is the Independent Land Commission, and a Land Claims Court which determine claims under section 25 (7) of the constitution and in the Restitution of Land Rights Act (Jaichand 2012). A person or a direct descendant of such a person, or a deceased estate or a community or a part of a community which was dispossessed of land under racially discriminatory laws, would qualify as a claimant. In Brazil, India and South Africa

³⁴⁴ Khehla Mthembu, AZAPO president quoted in *The Star* January 21 1981.

³⁴⁵ Khehla Mthembu, “BC: Class, Capitalism and Colonialism in Azania.” *Ikhwezi* Number 18 October 1981

the state hesitates on expropriation. The law and courts are caught in constitutionalism which becomes an obstacle to land reform and land claims take very long (ibid). Other factors include the government's investment friendly policies which raise the value of land (Greenberg 2006). The willing buyer, willing seller model is done in tandem with global shifts supported by the World Bank. Land reform has thus been reduced to market based processes of deracialising land ownership without disturbing markets or political and social climate (Greenberg 2004: 17). The majority in the country is landless, that is, they don't have ownership or legal secure in their own name and some live on land "legally" belonging to someone else. The landless are not only farmworkers but workers in formal and informal employment, those who rent residential property and live in informal settlements and those in communal areas (ibid).

The dominant liberation movement (that is the ANC) never prioritised land during the struggle, which was subsumed under broader demands for political rights and non - racial participation in the economy. In fact the teleology of the liberation struggle was reduced to the right to ballot. Concentration on the urban workers' movement meant that in farms for example there was no organised challenge or popular protests against oppression where violence has always been part of social control (Greenberg 2004). In farms there is negligence which result in accidents and injuries, assaults, forced evictions, therefore labour tenants and farm dwellers are in a perpetual state of fear and insecurity. The paramilitary commando system has continued to reflect apartheid social relations. The depth of problems in farms is seen in late 2012 in violent farm workers' strikes where workers have inflicted extensive damage to property.

There is no agreement on the land issue in the ANC; the subject has been broached by the

Youth League that has critiqued the party for issuing “pacifying remarks” on land. The league's position has been to amend the property clause of the constitution and seize the land without compensation.³⁴⁶ For many the property clause is the main hindrance to land reform (Ntsebeza 2007). The dilemma of addressing the land question while recognising and entrenching land rights acquired through colonialism and apartheid as the property clause³⁴⁷ (also known as section 25) does, is a major contradiction. Secondly, in a liberal democracy, protection and guarantee of property is fundamental. Thirdly provisions of section 25 are contradictory because they protect property while at the same time making a commitment to redistribution of land and these objectives cannot be achieved at the same time. On the other hand, there is the invocation by the right – wing, of old myths of “unoccupied lands” as Freedom Front Plus Pieter Mulder’s comments show (see chapter ten of this thesis).

ANC's Mangaung elective conference in December 2012 intimated that social transformation hinges on land and that the willing buyer willing seller model should be reviewed because it distorts the market through inflated prices which frustrates redistribution.³⁴⁸ However ANC asserts this must be done in the legal constitutional framework.

BC youth demand expropriation of land without compensation. The explanation is there should be an inception of black socialism where there is equal sharing for everybody: “we

³⁴⁶ ANCYL criticised Zuma for assuring farmers that views on land were Malema's and not ANC's, while addressing farmers in KZN on May 12 2011.

³⁴⁷ The ANC Bill of Rights for a New South Africa (1993) Section 13, article 4 says: “The taking of property shall only be permissible according to law and in the public interest, which shall include the achievement of the objectives of the constitution.” ((5) “Any such taking shall be subject to compensation which shall be determined by establishing an equitable balance between public interest and the interest of those affected.

³⁴⁸ In his Keynote Address, ANC Policy Conference, Gallagher Estate, June 26 2012, Jacob Zuma also made these observations.

have no intention of enslaving white people; we want an equal claim to resources and ownership, that's what it means by expropriation without compensation. In any case history says land was taken violently. We are talking about black people having a dialogue...how they came to be into a situation they are in. it has never been about black supremacy”³⁴⁹ They are, however, not naïve about this option. They say claims that if land is taken, South Africa will become another Zimbabwe have to be challenged. They add that leaders like Mugabe and Sankara get victimised if they rock the stability of western imperialism and threaten entrenched white interests. Another argument is the ANC doesn't need a two – thirds majority to expropriate land, all what it needs is the political will. At a BC gathering Motsoko Pheko said:

Section 25 of the constitution is the same thing as the 1913 Native Land Act. For as long as we don't touch land we are not going anywhere, we must address equitable distribution of land.³⁵⁰

Another contribution was similarly direct:

In 1652 the tall bearers of western civilisation brought misery to the land, dispossessing black people through brutal force. Five white families in South Africa are rich beyond their wildest dreams, but who build railways and skyscrapers? It is the black man. Five white families can wipe out poverty in this country.

9.3.3. Education

Many in the BC believe education for black children is a disaster zone. We will come back to that. The NPC has argued that there have been strides made since 1994: in 2007 80,9% of five year olds were enrolled in early childhood development institutions; about 99% of

³⁴⁹ Contributions at Blackwash press conference, Khanya College, July 6 2011.

³⁵⁰ Motsoko Pheko, contributing to discussions at the New Frank Talk launch: “Is Malema a Mugabe?”, August 6 2011.

children complete grades 1 – 9; since 1996 the number of schools without water has decreased from 9000 to 1700; the number without electricity decreased from 15 000 to 2800; school funding policies have been pro – poor resulting in 60% of all schools being designated “no – fee” schools; the national school nutrition programme feeds about 6 million children in 18 000 schools nationwide; in historically white schools about 56% of learners are black; the race profile of higher education institutions has changed, 32% of all students in 1990 were African, by 2009 this had increased to two – thirds. The General Household Survey (2002 – 2009) shows that 15 – 20 year olds that are not functionally literate has been decreasing from 13% in 2002 to less than 10% in 2009; completion rates of primary school and higher for those aged 15 years increased from 59, 6% in 2002 to 93, 85% in 2009; literacy rates among 15 - 24 year olds has steadily increased in the past 8 years from 88% in 2002 to 29, 1% in 2009.

However the NPC acknowledges that South African children grow up lacking food and nutrition; high mortality rates in 0 – 4 age group; high levels of stunting, neglect and exposure to violence; the legacy of low quality education; lack of enough public institutions providing learning opportunities and the success rate of FET colleges is too low. As to the latter on April 5 2012 President Jacob Zuma announced that R2, 5 billion would be allocated for refurbishment and construction of new FET college campuses. He said they are important in developing technical skills useful for a strong manufacturing base and a productive economy. However, many children shun FET's because of poor quality output there.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) figures of 2011 show there are 25 000 public schools in the country, 3 5444 (14%) have no electricity; 2402 (10%) have no water supply; 23 562 (93%) don't have stocked or functioning libraries. The DBE Annual Assessment results of June 2011 show grade 3 learners' national average performance to be 35% in

literacy, 28% in numeracy; among grade sixes, languages was 28, 5% and 30% in mathematics. Despite the economic crises in Zimbabwe, the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality's 2007 report shows Zimbabwean grade sixes scored higher than South African in both maths and literacy: 507, 7 in literacy and 519,8 in maths against 494,9 and 494, 8 respectively. In comparing the two systems, Martin Prear argues that after independence, Zimbabwe focused on building new schools, providing textbooks, recruiting more teachers, treating them with respect and expanding teacher training colleges, while South Africa reduced its teachers, closed all teacher colleges and training moved to universities and unions like SADTU have more influence in the running of the educational system, to the detriment of learners.³⁵¹

Half of South African blacks of school going age live in former homelands which are suffering from a crippling education meltdown. Rural areas bear the brunt of poverty, joblessness and gross inequality where a third of the country still live. The department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation 2012 mid – term review for the priorities of government said schools in former homelands are more likely to be without books, administrators and under-qualified teachers. Some schools, especially in Limpopo, have gone half the year without textbooks. Books have been reportedly dumped or wrong ones sent to schools.

One BC adherent wrote on Facebook:

When black teachers don't teach and the ANC government pardons and rewards them as it has rewarded itself for fucking up black people since Mandela and Tutu have labelled the slave chains around our black necks as “rainbows” of this fucked up

³⁵¹ Martin Prear “Neighbourly Lessons. Why is the schooling system in Zimbabwe still outscoring the South African one?” *Mail and Guardian*, January 20 – 26 2012.

nation; we can no longer deny the need for what was aborted in 1994. Now if we are to be honest to ourselves miseducation is the greatest enemy of human progress and for 18 years. Now through miseducation, the ANC has had the black masses chasing a rotten carrot on a stick called democracy with no real gains. In 2019 ANC would have miseducated enough blacks for the ballot that they would not even need to embark on any election manifesto. Miseducation then becomes the most effective tool for counter – revolution. Halala ANC! Vuka Mnyamane!³⁵²

9.3.4. Health

According to the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), more than 37 300 doctors are registered and almost 12 300 of them are specialists.³⁵³ But it's not known how many practice in the country; it seems more than half are practising in South Africa, a disturbing fact in a country with 50 million people. In the US there are 901 nurses and 247 doctors per 100 000 people. South Africa has 393 nurses and 74 doctors per 100 000 translating into 0, 57 doctors per 1000 patients. 11 332 (30%) doctors work in the public sector, the rest in private; that is for 16% of a population that can afford private medical insurance or private healthcare. Almost 35% doctor and 40, 3% nurse positions were vacant in 2008; the country needs an additional 46 000 nurses and 12 500 doctors to treat state patients. Universities produce more than 1200 doctors annually where 2400 would suffice.

Health workers are also affected by poor working conditions which expose them to risk of contracting disease. Poor vaccination practices have been putting nurses at high risk of liver disease for over ten years, according to a study by universities of the Witwatersrand and Cape Town. Healthcare workers who work regularly with blood are exposed to Hepatitis B virus.

³⁵² Facebook post by Zeer Nehanda, February 28 2012.

³⁵³ <http://www.hpcsa.co.za/statistics>

At Charlotte Maxeke Academic hospital only about half (52, 4%) of staff and student nurses are protected; those not vaccinated said they “were not aware of the danger of hepatitis as an occupational exposure” or didn't know a vaccine was available.³⁵⁴ The tuberculosis rate among health workers in public facilities is said to be up to three times higher than of the general population, according to Stellenbosch University's Desmond Tutu TB Centre.³⁵⁵ Patient waiting areas remain overcrowded and poorly ventilated and doctors and nurses are rarely provided with masks (respirators and N95 masks). The risk of infection has also contributed to brain drain in the sector.

The Human Rights Watch report of 2011 states that 625 out of every 100 000 South African women die while pregnant or within 42 days after termination of pregnancy, compared to 14 deaths per 100 000 in developed countries. The National Committee for the confidential inquiries into maternal deaths report shows that 38, 4% of maternal deaths in the country are avoidable. The World Health Organisation (WHO) Statistics of 2009 says South Africa is one of only six African countries that made has made no progress in reducing maternal deaths by 2008. The Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) is high and increasing: it was 150 per 100 000 live births, according to the 1998 South African Demographic and Health Survey; the 2003 one has not been available. The country should attain an MMR of 38 per 100 000 live births by 2015 if it wants to meet the internationally set target (UNDP MDG Country Report 2010). The situation is compounded by the fact that mothers face abuse from nurses, which puts them and their new born at high risk of deaths or injury. Socio – economic conditions continue to be significant in the health status of the population. Data from StatsSA of November 2010 shows that heart disease, for example, is often linked to unhealthy lifestyles

³⁵⁴ Anina Minaar “High Risk of Live Disease for Charlotte Maxeke Nurses”. *Vuvuzela* April 20 2012.

³⁵⁵ Mia Malan “Medics Suffer High Exposure to TB” *Mail and Guardian* March 30 -April 4 2012.

associated with middle and upper class living standards, whereas intestinal infectious diseases such as contaminated drinking water are typically associated with poor living standards. The leading cause of death among Africans is tuberculosis followed by influenza and pneumonia and cholera.³⁵⁶

The government has unveiled plans to introduce a universal healthcare scheme, the National Health Insurance (NHI) whose success remains to be seen in alleviating the chronic problems associated with access to healthcare for the poor.

9.3.5. Police Brutality

The Independent Complaints Directorate (ICD)³⁵⁷ was established in April 1997, (now renamed the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID) from April 2012), and immediately started reporting a high rate of deaths in police custody and as a result of police action. In its first year, April 1997 – March 1998 737 people died in police hands; in March 1999 there were 756 deaths. During the 7 years of IPID there have been 4 688 deaths, an average of 56 a month.

In 2010/11 the IPID received 5 869 complaints of which 797 were deaths, 102 domestic violence, 2493 allegations of criminal offences and 2 477 misconduct cases. In 2011 the IPID recognised that the South African police was at its most violent in more than ten years. Between April 2009 and March 2010 the police assaulted 1667 people, an increase from 1578 between 2008 and 2009 and from 1380 in 2007 – 2008. In 1998 the number was 224, in

³⁵⁶ “Whites die from heart attacks, blacks form TB: SAIRR.”

<http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2012/02/01/whites-die-from-heart-attacks-blacks-from-tb-sairr>. February 1 2012.

³⁵⁷ It had the legislative mandate under Section 53 (2) of South African Police Act (1995) to investigate under its own authority any misconduct or offence allegedly committed by a member of police force; investigate any death in police custody or a result of police action.

1999, 380. Former police commissioner³⁵⁸ Bheki Cele defended the police actions, arguing that “the police should not be painted with the same brush” when “isolated incidents” of police brutality are mentioned. Cele was a strong advocate of maximum use of force and violence by police, calling the force to “arrest them (criminals), use the tools we gave you”³⁵⁹ and instructed them to “shoot to kill.” The problem has been exacerbated by the re-militarisation of police under Cele's tenure. It means the police operate under a command system where members have to comply with orders and commands even if the actions are against their moral conscience.³⁶⁰ The Tactical Response Team (TRT) known as “amabherete” (from the berets they wear) set up during Cele's tenure has become infamous in townships for its brutality. One participant related: “they just brutalise innocent people. If you are wearing a white t/shirt, they make you roll in the soil. They are a law unto themselves and get away with impunity.”

The majority of victims of police brutality remain poor blacks.³⁶¹ The Cato Manor Serious and Violent Crimes Unit in northern KwaZulu – Natal, which has since been disbanded, under the command of Major - General Johan Booysen, is allegedly to have operated as a hit squad that “executed” suspects.³⁶² They would then hold alcohol fuelled parties, intimidate victims' families and cover – up evidence. The front page of Sunday Times of 26 February

³⁵⁸ Bheki Cele speaking on SABC 7pm news following the shooting of Janet Odendaal by police outside Kempton police station.

³⁵⁹ Bheki Cele speaking on SABC 7pm news, April 30 2011.

³⁶⁰ Matsimela Matsimela, provincial secretary of POPCRU, addressing a meeting organised by DLF at Khanya College, April 17 2011.

³⁶¹ A contribution from the floor during a DLF meeting on police brutality, Khanya College, April 17 2011

³⁶² Mzilikazi Wa Afrika, Stephen Hofstatter and Rob Rose ‘We'll Come Back and Kill You’ *Sunday Times* February 26 2012.

2012 shows a picture of three policemen celebrating while at their side is Makhosazana Biyela, the widow of slain Bongani Biyela, weeping. The IPID has been probing fifty - one suspicious deaths caused by the activities of the unit.

There is a general feeling that the country has been slowly becoming a police state and entrenching a security mindset. Recently The Intelligence General Laws Amendment Bill seeks to create a single intelligence body, the State Security Agency (SSA), by amalgamating NIA and SASS and gives legal recognition to the National Communications Centre, which houses interception facilities that provide for bulk monitoring, to intercept communications with little legal restraint.³⁶³ The agency would have enhanced ability to counter those seen as “enemies of the state” and weakening of civil society. The eavesdropping centre and the government have the capacity to access one's text messages, hear one's cell phone conversations, pinpoint one's location through one's cell phone, access personal calls and land-line records and read one's emails.³⁶⁴ Over a four year period leading to 2010 the centre had legally carried out three million interceptions – phone calls, text messages and emails.³⁶⁵

Conclusion

At the time of Mandela's release the aspiration was ownership of the economy by the blacks after liberation. Yet four years later Mandela took office armed with an economic policy indistinguishable from that of any other liberal democratic leader: nationalisation was out, privatisation in, capitalism encouraged and nurtured. Thus with barely minimal changes in the economic spheres, 1994 wasn't a revolution at all (Alexander 2010). In a Gramscian

³⁶³ Drew Forrest and Stefaans Brummer “Spies Bid for New Powers” *Mail and Guardian* February 3 – 9 2012

³⁶⁴ Heidi Swart “The All Seeing Eye of South Africa's Law Enforcers” *Mail and Guardian* October 14 – 20 2011.

³⁶⁵ Parliament Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence 2009/2010 Report

sense, this was a passive revolution, “a revolution without a revolution” where a social group comes to power without rupturing the social fabric but rather adapting it and gradually modifying it (Gramsci 1971). This continues to fracture race relations in the postapartheid and haunt those who sat in the pre – 1994 negotiations. Looking at the transmogrification of apartheid and totality of white power in every social, political and economic spheres, Kunnie (2000: ix) in his book “Is Apartheid Really Dead?” asks, “Are we Black South Africans a defeated people?” and Ndebele (2007: 81) sarcastically observes, “one is compelled to ponder: we are either tragically naïve or profoundly wise.”

There is need for an integrated African economy oriented not to the whims of the economies of the west but to the needs of Africa as politically defined by African people (Chinweizu 1987). Anything short of that will be incompatible to their aspirations for political and cultural autonomy. This is because the colonial economies were not intended to respond to the national and historical needs of African people. Some propose a radical political economy which examines structures of dependency and dominance in the world economy (Lesufi 2006). It says the problems are caused by inequalities between and within nations, leading to dependency, stagnation, underdevelopment and marginalisation. This approach is guided by the anti – colonial and anti – imperialist struggles.

The BC tradition has always been that there can never be a situation where a master and slave can negotiate a change in the status of the slave.³⁶⁶ If so then the slave would do it in a position of powerlessness. Such a negotiation would be from unequal positions which result in co-option and collaboration. At the negotiations, the leaders will be “softened” and they are

³⁶⁶ Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu, “Black Consciousness Movement of South Africa.” Speech given to the Assembly of the IEUF held in Geneva November 22 1976.

calmed by ethics of forgiveness (Fanon 1961). The BCM position has been that it doesn't negotiate with anyone and doesn't expect to receive liberation on a silver platter. As Nkrumah puts it, "A revolutionary, as opposed to a reformist, is not called for amelioration here and there of social inequalities, but for a total rejection of the idea of social inequality."³⁶⁷ The victory of the ruling class as a result of negotiations is that the black classes were weakened and their historical demands defeated, which didn't find their way into the constitution (Lesufi 2006). The question then is: can a liberation movement enter into compromises? Lenin's (1970) analysis is useful here. He argues that compromises are determined by objective conditions (for example in proletarian bargaining, lack of strike funds, lack of support, exhaustion etc.) may necessitate compromises. This compromise doesn't diminish the revolutionary potential, devotion or readiness for further struggle. Then there is "a compromise by traitors who try to ascribe to outside causes their own selfishness, cowardice, desire to toady to the capitalists, and readiness to yield to intimidation, sometimes to persuasion, sometimes to sops and sometimes to flattery on the part of the capitalists" (1970: 64). So there is a legitimate "compromise" and a treacherous "compromise." For Lenin it would be absurd to formulate a recipe or general rule "No compromises!" to serve all cases. All is determined by practical questions of a political nature which happen in a separate or specific historical moment which denote whether a compromise is an impermissible one, or treacherous or opportunistic and therefore fatal to the revolutionary class. The latter seems to be agreed to by many critics who have analysed the postapartheid conundrum.

³⁶⁷ Cited in S.T.M. Magagula, "Black Power." n.d

Chapter 10

The Nation

It would be egregious to talk of blackness in South Africa without relating it to the idea of the nation. The nation stands powerful in understanding race relations in the country. In fact the concept of the nation is a historical question, expressed differently, without any agreement, by different sparring political protagonists. It is both an ideological and political question that continues to haunt contemporary society. I argue that the nation defines blackness as it has defined whiteness. Equally apartheid used it to compartmentalise blacks into “nations”, and “ethnic groups”, all euphemisms for races. In the postapartheid residues of this thinking can be seen. My major points in this chapter hinge on how the idea of the nation was articulated not only by white rulers but by black activists in different epochs and historical circumstances. Among blacks there have been polarisations and contestations on what a nation is. The national question, that is who constitutes a nation, is yet to be resolved despite efforts by the ANC to steer all towards rainbowism. This is sharply expressed by the friction between Congress' multi-racialism and BC/Africanists' brand of African/Black Nationalism. The latter has been ideological fodder for BC. The Congress vision of the nation which culminated into a post 1994 social order continues to be contested by BC adherents and Pan Africanists. Interestingly there are striking similarities between postapartheid South Africa and the “post racial” US brand of multiculturalism. In the last section I make some comparisons between the two and interrogate the notion of multiculturalism or non – racialism itself.

To put this discussion into context, post 1910 Union saw black people as analogous to factor of production, the ideological explanation being that whites were of superior civilisation and therefore were destined to rule (No Sizwe 1979; Comrade Mzala 1988; Magubane 1996). In 1948 the NP adopted as its theoretical and political position the idea of nationalities which obfuscated “race,” and shifted the racial into ethnic/tribal (Anthony Marx 1992; Mamdani 1996;

Moodley and Adam 2000) and masked underlying racist schemes and social engineering. However, the nation was not only an ideological phenomenon but was intricately related to economic and political relations. After the 1961 creation of the Republic of South Africa the main focus was the white nation and the black nation. The black nation would be composed of ten “nationalities”, a euphemism for ethnic groups. Obviously this was part of colonial codification which created tribes, following the racial thinking common in German colonial administration inspired especially by Fichteian and neo – Kuyperian notions of a nation. The most far reaching effects of European invented traditions was the belief that African old age custom had to be respected; that every African belonged to a “tribe” just as every European belonged to a nation (Ranger 1983; Mamdani 1996; John Comaroff 2001). Post war anthropology preferred “tribal” than the derogatory “savage”, so “tribes” were seen as cultural units possessing a common language, a single social system, based on an established common law based on kinship and heredity (Illife cited in Ranger 1983). Mamdani (1996) has argued that just like colonial systems of indirect rule elsewhere the NP borrowed and upgraded indirect rule, fracturing the ruled along ethnic and rural – urban lines. Following this thrust of British imperialism, “framers of apartheid were the last, not the first, and certainly not the only ones” (Mamdani 1996: 96). It is not the intention of this chapter to examine creation of the “white nation”, or how South Africa became a white man's country, rather I would like to look at “nation” from the perspective of black protagonists. This I intend to achieve through tracing political lineage of the question. More important has been the equation of nation with race, because the most characteristic feature of the colonial situation is racism which underpins all relations between the coloniser and colonised (Magubane 1996). In this chapter there is therefore an insistent inference to race.

10.1. The Unity Movement/BC and Africanist position

Ethiopianism, a crystallisation of religious and political notions associated with Ethiopia, the

only truly independent country in Africa (Ugonna 1969; Casely Hayford 1969), with its millenarian preoccupations, though not directly a political expression infused a sense of indigeneity to the African oppressed. Hayford identified Africa with Ethiopia which became a symbol of African independence, a bastion of prestige and hope to Africans at home and in the Diaspora who suffered the insult of inferiority. However the romanticism and myth shrouding Ethiopianism was engendered by a melange of emotive states of mind – frustration, hope, dream, resignation – more escapist than real (Ugonna 1969: xxiii). Ugonna argues that it's no wonder why it developed in societies with more crass racism and invidious racial antimony like the West Indies, the US, South Africa and East Africa. In its religious conceptualisation (including use of Psalm 68, verse 31 whose message gave hope to a metaphysical black heaven), freed African slaves who dreamed of going back home to Africa, to Ethiopia, to displace all foreign races and claim an “Africa for Africans.” Hayford (1969) believed that to achieve greatness Africa must attain mature nationhood. Thus the question of access to land conjoined with nation remained the central message of all black political organisations.

The Unity Movement and the AAC saw it as imperative for the oppressed Non – Europeans to wipe away factional divisions and differences and unite against a common oppressor. Their position was tethered on the premise that the struggle by oppressed groups in South Africa (Africans, coloureds and Indians) was identical in aim and methods.³⁶⁸ It envisioned an organic unity which would lead to development of a national movement, the ultimate goal being nationalism, an antithesis to sectionalism and racialism.³⁶⁹ In a country like South Africa with multi – ethnic, multi – cultural and multi – lingual populations, all should have equal right to citizenship of the country. However, the *herrenvolk*, they averred, usurped for themselves all political, economic and judicial rights, grabbed by force all the land and proclaimed themselves

³⁶⁸ “A Call to Unity”, Manifesto adopted by the National Executive Committee of the AAC, August 26 1943.

³⁶⁹ “On the Organisations of the African People”, Letter by IB Tabata to Mandela, June 16 1948.

sole owners, sole rulers, sole citizens and arrogated to themselves the nation.³⁷⁰ Against this background, the people of the nation have been constructed as outcasts. The NEUM declared that the success of *herrenvolk* had been the policy of divide and rule, “splitting the people, playing one section off against the other and fomenting jealousy and enmity by intrigues and by seeming to vary the degree to which the screw of oppression is being applied.”³⁷¹ The policy of segregation which saw a binary of white and non – white, was fundamental to the master – race creed of dividing Non – Europeans into many sections and groups, which hindered their unity as a nation. The main task of the Unity Movement therefore was one of breaking the mental rather than physical barriers of segregation.³⁷² Ultimately building a nation is crucial whereby “our thinking from now on must be from the point of view of the nation...when we think in terms of the nation we think in terms of the population as a whole.”³⁷³ However, Tabata reckoned that whilst it is true that Non – Europeans are oppressed as nationalities, in the struggle between the oppressed Non – Europeans and white oppressors, there is also class exploitation which is a fundamental form of oppression: “whilst we consider the last, we find that in the final analysis the conflict is not basically that of colour...”³⁷⁴

The roots of contestation in the Congress may have begun in the ANC's 1943 Bill of Rights which the Africanist youth found neither representing mainstream black political thought nor realities of oppressed blacks. The permanent urbanisation and proletarianisation of black workers who filled the gap of whites who went to fight in the Second World War; their subjection to similar working conditions created favourable conditions for the rise of African Nationalism and

³⁷⁰ “A Declaration to the People of South Africa from the NEUM”, Statement by the NEUM April 1951.

³⁷¹ *ibid*

³⁷² *ibid*

³⁷³ IB Tabata “The National Situation” at the national conference of the Unity Movement of South Africa, January 1962.

³⁷⁴ “Opening Address” at First Conference of the Society of Young Africa by IB Tabata, December 20 1951.

the Africanist ideology was more representative than liberalism.³⁷⁵ It is little surprising then the Congress Youth League (CYL) would emerge within these interstices. The CYL promoted Africanism whereby Africans “should strive for progress, development and national liberation.”³⁷⁶ The manifesto recognised that the white race has arrogated itself ownership of land through conquest; although the African was defeated he refused to accept his oppression. It stated that since whites see the country's problems through racial lens, “it is imperative for the African to view his problems and those of his country through the perspective of race.”³⁷⁷ For Anton Lembede it was only African Nationalism or Africanism that could save the African people because it was an antidote against foreign rule and modern imperialism. It declared that: Africa is a Blackman's country because Africans are natives of Africa who have inhabited the continent since time immemorial; Africans are one, who out of heterogeneous tribes must make a homogeneous nation; tribalism is recognised as “a mortal foe of African Nationalism”³⁷⁸; the basis of national unity is the “the feeling of nationalism within Africans, the feeling that we are Africans irrespective of tribe, economic status, class or education.”³⁷⁹ Lembede's lieutenants followed this exposition. The basis of unity, for Africanists, must be African Nationalism – the liberation of Africans as a race from European domination. They argued that Africans are a conquered race, their oppression is a racial oppression, and “in other words they do not suffer class oppression.”³⁸⁰ It says they are oppressed by virtue of their skin colour – as a group – as a nation, “in other words they are suffering national oppression.”³⁸¹ The Africanists insisted that

³⁷⁵ Henry. E. Isaacs “Black Consciousness – An Appraisal.” n.d.

³⁷⁶ Congress Youth League Manifesto, issued by Provincial Committee, March 1944.

³⁷⁷ *ibid*

³⁷⁸ “Basic Policy of Congress Youth League”, Manifesto issued by the National Executive Committee of the ANCYL, 1948

³⁷⁹ Anton Lembede, “Some Basic Principles of African Nationalism”, *Inyaniso*, February 1945.

³⁸⁰ Letter on the Youth League, from AP Mda to GM Pitje, August 24 1948.

³⁸¹ *Ibid*.

they don't hate white people and have no racial hatred, but hate white oppression and domination and recognise that all racial groups have come to stay.³⁸² Thus when national freedom is realised, a "Peoples' Democracy" would be established where all men shall have rights and freedoms merely because they are men.

The ANC had a long history of multi-racial cooperation dating back to the 1920s. In the 1950s there was multi-racial cooperation with SAIC, white and coloured groups therefore making communist influence a recurrent theme for propaganda among the Africanists, which had deeper roots in the history of black political thought (Karis 1973). The Africanists equated communism with apartheid as "two similarly vicious evils."³⁸³ It also contributed to the spilt by the Africanists who formed the PAC, drawing heavily on the philosophy of Lembede. Africanist members of the CYL who were inclined to exclusive African Nationalism were hostile to the role of non – Africans (which they expressed in both ideological and racial terms) in the Programme of Action but certain sections like Tambo, Sisulu and Mandela were accepting a multi-racial cooperation with the left. Africanist elements in the CYL found that cooperation and contact between white and Indian leaders was increasing during the stages of the Defiance Campaign and were wary that African aspirations were being subordinated, claiming that they refused "to be reduced to the level of doormats and instruments of white capitalist liberals and the Indian merchant class."³⁸⁴

³⁸² "Basic Policy of Congress Youth League", Manifesto issued by the national Executive Committee of the ANCYL, 1948.

³⁸³ "Post – Mortem on a Tragedy", Editorial on the events of May 1 by Jordan. K. Ngubane, *Inkundla YaBantu*, May 20 1950. The Africanists eschewed participation in May Day demonstrations because they didn't advance the cause of African people, instead were meant to advance the cause of worldwide communism and not that of oppressed Africans.

³⁸⁴ "The Editor Speaks: We Shall Live." Editorial in *The Africanist*, December 1955.

When he returned from the US in 1953, ZK Matthews saw African political activity in a lull. In his presidential address to the Cape provincial conference on August 15 1953 he suggested formation of a multi – racial congress of the people (COP), a campaign which would be inclusive of all races and draw up a freedom charter for a democratic South Africa. The suggestion was adopted by the provincial conference and accepted by the national conference in December 1953. The freedom charter was presented at Kliptown where whites from the COD, Indians and coloureds who were essential in staging the congress occupied prominent positions on the platform, behind which there was a large replica of a four spiked wheel representing four racial groups in the Congress Alliance (Karis and Gerhart 1997). The charter outlined a liberal bourgeois democracy whose formulations were not Marxist: the nationalisation proposed was state capitalism; wasn't a revolutionary document, moderate in tone; emphasised liberties than independence and took for granted the continuance of a multi – national rather than an essentially Negro – African state (Hodgkin; HE Simons cited in Karis and Gerhart 1997). In an article in *Liberation* of June 1956,³⁸⁵ Mandela praised the adoption of the freedom charter; the uniqueness of the event being its multi-racial nature and that it was more than just a list of demands because “the changes it envisages cannot be won without breaking up the economic and political set – up of present South Africa.” While it lists some proposed changes,

It is by no means a blueprint for a socialist state but a programme for the unification of various classes and groupings amongst the people on a democratic basis. Under socialism the workers hold state power. They and the peasants own the means of production, the land, the factories and the mills. All production is for use and not for profit. The Charter does not contemplate such profound economic and political changes. Its declaration ‘The People Shall Govern!’ visualises the transfer of power not to any single social class but to all the people of this country be they workers, peasants, professional men or petty – bourgeoisie.

³⁸⁵ “In Our Lifetime”, Article by Nelson Mandela in *Liberation*, June 1956.

Mandela adds that nationalisation of the banks, the gold mines and the land is imperative because the wealth of the country would be turned to the people. Seemingly the people he is talking about are a black petty – bourgeoisie:

The breaking up and democratisation of these monopolies will open up fresh fields for development of a prosperous Non – European bourgeois class. For the first time in the history of this country the Non – European bourgeoisie will have the opportunity to own in their own name and right mills and factories, and trade and private enterprise will boom and flourish as ever before.

On the other hand the Africanists were staunch opponents of the “multi -racial charter” which they sarcastically called the “Kliptown charter.” The charter’s preamble “South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white” would be the final bane in the already strained relations in the Congress. The Africanists saw the preamble as a claim that “the land no longer belongs to the African people, but is auctioned for sale to all who live in this country” thereby legitimising the dispossession of the indigenous people whereas the Africanists' commitment was overthrow of white domination and restoration of land to its rightful owners. The *World* of 14 December 1957 said: “The greatest sell – out of the nation, the planting of a strong but deadly schism among the Africans, thus pushing us far back from our goal, has been the so – called congress alliance.” The Africanists claimed: “Afrika for the Afrikans while the ANC claims South Africa for all.”³⁸⁶ Sobukwe, a prominent figure in the Africanist camp argued against multi – racialism because “it fosters, safeguards and maintains white interests: in addition to implying that there are basic insuperable differences between the various 'national groups.’”³⁸⁷ He added that in a government run by Africanists on the basis of African Socialist Democracy, anyone who accepts majority rule is regarded as an African. There would be no minority rights because “we think in terms of

³⁸⁶ “Future of the Africanist Movement”, Questions and Answers by RM Sobukwe in *The Africanist*, January 1959.

³⁸⁷ Inaugural Convention of the PAC, April 4 – 6 1959, Opening Address by RM Sobukwe.

individuals not groups.”³⁸⁸ The Africanists argued national oppression can't be challenged unless African people get the self – confidence and imbibe subjective liberation propounded by African Nationalism, thus the need to return to the teachings of Lembede. Africanists would not tolerate “deviationists and pacifists” because “no white man has ever impressed us, liberal democrat or democratic liberal because both are hypocrites, for they cannot accept clear cut African Nationalism.”³⁸⁹ Others in the Congress like Chief Luthuli and Matthews believed in “an all-inclusive African Nationalism,”³⁹⁰ cooperation with other sections of the population on an equal basis and “the nationalism we express is not the narrow nationalism which seeks to exclude others from South African nationhood as we are excluded today but a broad nationalism which is all inclusive, with no position of special privilege for any group as we find is the case in this country today.”³⁹¹ Senior Congress leaders, despite being tolerant to Lembede and Youth Leaguers, never adopted the view that South Africa should be politically dominated by Africans (Karis and Gerhart 1997). They only wanted Africans to have an equal place in a heterogeneous nation (ibid).

The official PAC policy was to regard coloureds as African since their geographical origin was in Africa and shared the same black man's experience of dispossession and degradation. Sobukwe personally favoured acceptance of poor Indians into PAC and was averse to the merchant class for its tendency to exploit Africans and its claims for cultural superiority. Sobukwe desecrates its identification with the oppressor while at the same time providing political leadership of Indians. The poor Indians who suffer material oppression easily identify themselves with indigenous

³⁸⁸ ibid

³⁸⁹ ibid

³⁹⁰ “Special Presidential Address” by Chief AJ Luthuli, ANC Annual Conference December 17 – 18 1955

³⁹¹ Address by Prof. ZK Matthews, ANC Annual Conference, December 17 – 18 1955

Africans and therefore could be partners in the struggle.³⁹² Thus in the late 1960s coloureds and Indians became part of the PAC.³⁹³ PAC was continental in its thinking:

Afrika is our fatherland by decree of Providence and Divine Right. We rise to give a pledge that Afrika must be freed...therefore let us turn to the graves of Afrikan martyrs, Moshoeshoe, Sekhukhuni, Makana, Tshaka and Dingani and pray for inspiration from them and those who died for us in the cause...if we betray the whole or part of our principles of African Nationalism the Gods will destroy us.³⁹⁴

Although they used “Azania” as a reference to South Africa, they saw Africa as a nation, and thereby did not recognise colonially imposed borders. In their commitment to Pan Africanism, inspired by Nkrumah’s United States of Africa and by George Padmore's assertion that the destiny of Africa is one, stretching from Cape to Cairo, Morocco to Madagascar, a desire to claim every inch, a one African nation would be one where ethnic and national groups are subsumed.³⁹⁵ The Africanists didn't subscribe to the idea of South African exceptionalism because South Africa is part of the indivisible whole of Africa. They adopted a slogan “Ma Afrika is the meaning of struggle! Mayibuye iAfrika!”³⁹⁶ Meetings would open with phrases like “Sons and Daughters of Afrika, Sons and Daughters of the Soil.”³⁹⁷ At the PAC launch words like “Cape to Cairo, Morocco to Madagascar, Azania is our land, we will take it with a bazooka” captured Pan Africanism and its sentiment. Actually these words have been turned into an emotive struggle song which I have heard sung by contemporary social movements. The PAC also adopted “Izwe Lethu iAfrika” meaning (Afrika is our nation), not only as their form of

³⁹² Inaugural Convention of the PAC, April 4 -6, 1959 - Opening Address by RM Sobukwe.

³⁹³ Statement of Dissolution of the South African Coloured People’s Congress by Barney Desai and Cardiff Marney, London, March 1966.

³⁹⁴ Potlako Leballo, “The Nature of the Struggle Today.” Article in *The Africanist*, December 1957.

³⁹⁵ Inaugural Convention of the PAC April 4 – 6 1959, Opening Address by RM Sobukwe.

³⁹⁶ “Forward to 1958”, Editorial by the Editor, *The Africanist*, December 1957.

³⁹⁷ Inaugural Convention of the PAC April 4 – 6 1959, Opening Address by RM Sobukwe.

gesticulation but an expression of nationhood. *Izwe* seems a homonym, in its various meanings; it indicates country, land and nation, combined altogether. Contemporary BC also uses *Izwe Lethu* with frequent regularity, showing a yet to be achieved black nation. For Africanists the struggle is both nationalist and democratic, meant for restoration of the land to its rightful owners, the Africans and this is a fact of history.³⁹⁸ The argument is: the democratic struggle is about numbers in which the wishes of the majority are implemented while the national struggle is about recognition of heritage dating back to Moshoeshoe, Shaka and Gcaleka who fostered nation – building by bringing in scattered tribes into one single entity.³⁹⁹ The Africanists critiqued the ANC for preoccupation with the democratic struggle at the expense or total exclusion of the nationalist. The former as a political struggle is seen as “designed to remove legal restrictions, recognises the foe as the present Nationalist government,” the Congress like the UP only aspires for acceptance. As a result the struggle for African freedom should not accept compromise, apology, collaboration or servitude. The Africanists differed from the ANC in that Africans are oppressed as a subject nation which makes the struggle a national one.⁴⁰⁰ Thus there are conscious efforts by African people to reject “balkanization of pakistanization” of their country by apartheid rulers (at a time when the homeland system was being implemented). They conceived the struggle in Manichean terms where two belligerents were identified: the oppressor/oppressed; master/slave; the fight between forces of evil and righteousness; champions of oppression and champions of freedom.⁴⁰¹

In the 1970s BCM used to talk of *sechaba*⁴⁰² (nation), *isizwe es'mnyama* (the black nation) and

³⁹⁸ Potlako Leballo, “The Nature of the Struggle Today.” Article in *The Africanist*, December 1957.

³⁹⁹ “Future of the Africanist Movement”, Questions and Answers by RM Sobukwe in *The Africanist*, January 1959.

⁴⁰⁰ “Future of the Africanist Movement”, Questions and Answers by RM Sobukwe in *The Africanist*, January 1959.

⁴⁰¹ “The State of the Nation” address by RM Sobukwe on “National Heroes day”, August 2 1959.

⁴⁰² Incidentally the ANC published a journal called *Sechaba*.

sechaba seyashwa/saphela isizwe es'mnyama (the black nation is perishing) and used to call people Ma Afrika (Hlongwane 2008: 38). BPC also had a publication called *Inkululeko YeSizwe* (Freedom of the Nation). All these were expressions of a yearning for nationhood. It acknowledged that only two groups/nations exist – the oppressor and the oppressed; the oppressor being white and the oppressed being black.⁴⁰³ In the 1980s BCM would critique the ANC for denying the existence of an oppressed nation and an oppressor nation. The BCM sought to foster a common black identity opposed to apartheid imposed tribal identities. The objective of BCM was to unite all blacks as a nation in quest for both psychological and physical liberation and reclamation of their land.⁴⁰⁴ Blacks had to form a power bloc/solid group to counter an institutionalised racism and to bargain from a position of strength. The solidarity of the oppressed as expressed in Black Solidarity was inalienable. Black Solidarity was the coming together of blacks to solve their problems using their numbers and their blackness and rejecting sectional, tribal or religious differences. It recognised that black people had one thing in common: oppression which comes as a result of the colour of their skin and this was the central point of their suffering.⁴⁰⁵ It argued Black Solidarity would remain relevant as long as blacks are politically and economically a minority, that is, whereas BC is an on-going and an all-embracing philosophy reflecting all aspects of black community life, Black Solidarity is a means to an end relevant only in the course of working towards liberation and,

Despite the white forces having repressive machinery on their side, we have about 30 million black people on our side. No amount of manipulation and subjugation by the repressive white forces can prevent us from uniting as an oppressed people, as Blacks – Africans, Coloureds and Indians - into a common political movement.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰³ Black Peoples Convention's Policy, by Vice President, June 9 1973.

⁴⁰⁴ Speech by Reverend Mashwabada Mayatula, First National Congress of the Black Peoples Convention, Hammanskraal, December 16 1972.

⁴⁰⁵ Temba Sono "Black Consciousness: Its Significance and Role in the Life of the Community." n.d.

⁴⁰⁶ BPC Historical Background. n.d.

They believed that Azania is a country in which both black and white live and shall continue to live but a truly open society could only be achieved by blacks by virtue of their numbers and state of oppression.⁴⁰⁷ However they asserted that Azania belongs to black people, whites who live in it have to do so on terms laid down by blacks and on condition that they respect black people (Biko 1987). BC argued that this should not be construed as anti – whiteness but “only means that in as much as black people live in Europe on terms laid down by Europeans, whites shall be subjected to the same conditions.”⁴⁰⁸ The so - called non – white oppressed were seen as excluded and discriminated against as a black nation and not as a class; therefore the response had to be some form of nationalism not classicism (Sebidi 1984). The many Azanian ethnic groups suffered from same oppression and landlessness thus constituting a single black nationality (Tsotsi 1982). BCM like the Africanists before them critiqued the ANC for promoting multi – racialism at the expense of a black nationhood.⁴⁰⁹ Gerhart (cited in Mthembu 1981) adds that the world of the ANC was peppered with a select world of writers, white universities' academics and multi – racial gatherings; it was the milieu where the ANC's policies took shape which probably explains the Congress' many ideological and political postulations. Further the South African situation, described as internal colonisation, meant collective exploitation and oppression of a whole people, not classes. There is a link here with Negritude thinkers who saw colonialism as a racial experience, whose contradictions creates a “community of blood” and therefore a collective personality of black people (see Irele 1971). Such exploitation, Sebidi like Magubane (1969) before, argues, doesn't give rise to class consciousness but to race or national consciousness that transcends tribal divisions. The struggle for national liberation constitutes a

⁴⁰⁷ SASO Policy Manifesto, July 1971.

⁴⁰⁸ Steve Biko testifying during the BPC – SASO Trial.

⁴⁰⁹ Khehla Mthembu (AZAPO president), “Black Consciousness: Class, Capitalism and Colonialism in Azania.”

Ikhwezi Number 18, October 1981.

new entity of all social classes who identify with the national territory; around it develops a new consciousness reflecting all their interests (Nabudere 1981). A similar observation is made by Wolpe (1983): – that while the black petit – bourgeoisie is small, it is unable to develop because of legal racial constraints, the racial and national subordination of this class led to its alignment with the national liberation movement. This position gives credence to race as a unifying factor for all black classes. BC in following the Africanists was averse to both non – racialism and multi – nationalism, whether expressed by white liberals or blacks because it serves to “preserve power in white hands, designed to create a condition of white “haves” and an upper crust of black “haves.”⁴¹⁰

In the 1980s the BMC, unlike their 1970s counterparts, conceived the struggle for national liberation in class terms, directed against racism and capitalism (see chapter 2 and 3 of this thesis). It argued that the black working class is central in the struggle because blacks are exploited, oppressed, dispossessed, own no land or means of production. The material position in which the black man finds himself in is determined in both racial and economic dimensions, in the process reducing all blacks to a class of workers, “therefore in South Africa race is a class determinant.”⁴¹¹ The BCM's position in the 1980s was: “Black Solidarity under the hegemony of the Black working class, the dictatorship of the Black proletariat and its hegemony over all classes in the South African social formation.”⁴¹² By late 1980s BMC and their ideological kindred, the PAC, were arguing that apartheid can't be reformed, it had to be totally destroyed; liberation and self – determination for a free, non – racial socialist Azania had to be attained not on a silver platter but through struggle, the motor being the liberation movement, not the

⁴¹⁰ Tami Zani, “The Future Society as seen by the Black Peoples Convention.” n.d.

⁴¹¹ Khehla Mthembu (AZAPO president), “Black Consciousness: Class, Capitalism and Colonialism in Azania.” *Ikhwezi* Number 18, October 1981.

⁴¹² Frank Talk Volume 2, September 1987

regime.⁴¹³ They argued that since apartheid was a special manifestation of colonialism, the fight therefore was against settler colonialism and capitalism.⁴¹⁴ The PAC would aim to rally and unite Africa people under one banner of African Nationalism “in order to overthrow white domination and establish a socialist order recognising the supremacy of the interests of the individual.”⁴¹⁵ Building a society which doesn't see people as black or white was the goal as Zeph Mothopeng explains:

We say there are no whites or blacks in Africa, there are only Africans and colonialists.⁴¹⁶

He explains that an African is the indigenous person of Africa and all those who owe their allegiance to Africa and accept the democratic rule of the African majority.

Central to BC and Africanist visions for negotiations or a future Azania was “land restoration, socialist transformation of the economy, building of a national culture in which all Azanians, irrespective of race, gender or religion will participate;”⁴¹⁷ creation of an egalitarian society – egalitarian - meaning blindness to colour and non – recognition of minorities because “this is symptomatic of using skin colour to place man in a specific special box.”⁴¹⁸ In this discourse the

⁴¹³ The PAC Second National Conference, December 7 – 9 1990; Speech by president of PAC of Azania, ZL Mothopeng, July 7 1990, Shareworld, Johannesburg.

⁴¹⁴ “AZANYU Rejects Talking.” New Nation August 10 1990.

⁴¹⁵ PAC's Clarence Makwetu's speech at the Patriotic Front meeting, October 1991. AZANYU also accepted African Nationalism and Scientific Socialism as “ideological vehicle of our youth movement, mobilising the exploited masses under the banner of African Nationalism” (Press statement of the resolutions adopted in the annual national congress of the Azanian National Youth Unity (AZANYU) held at Ipelegeng Soweto, January 16 – 17 1988.

⁴¹⁶ Zeph Mothopeng's speech on March 10, 1990, Pax Nova Hall Bloemfontein.

⁴¹⁷ Keynote Address by Jerry Mosala, “Liberal Capitalist Accommodation of a Black Struggle for a Socialist Transformation in Azania?”, Harare Consultation of the BCM (A), Harare, May 19 -21 990.

⁴¹⁸ Tami Zani, :The Future Society as seen by the Black Peoples Convention.” n.d.

land question is the heart of the national question;⁴¹⁹ in other words land and nationhood are twinned. Land reclamation as opposed to Congress' struggle for political rights is the principal objective of national liberation. In final analysis the question would be consummated, and based on key tenets of the Azanian Manifesto: anti – imperialism, anti – sexism and anti – racism.

The NPs position, as expressed by Gerrit Viljoen, the minister of Constitutional Development, was worried about the use of “Azania” by the PAC and BCM. Let us quote him at length:

We want to change our approach completely. We want to include blacks as fellow citizens. But we would be negotiating even the name of the country...many blacks call it Azania. They are the blacks who see no place for the white man. They are the extreme PAC. I think there's no likelihood of coming to an agreement with them...the name Azania sounds a warning note, of completely ending South Africa and bringing a break in history. In our thinking, a complete break in history would be unacceptable.

We will have to provide some continuation with the past.⁴²⁰

On the other hand, Motsoko Pheko's (2012) observation is that the people of Azania whose country imperialists called South Africa through the British imperialist Union of South Africa Act of 1909 mined gold and copper at Mapungubwe as early as the ninth century. He argues that Azania, like Kush, Mizraim, Egypt, Kemet and Ethiopia, means Blackman's country or continent, that is, in the vernacular, *izwe labantu abamnyama, lefatsho la batho bats'o*. This view has been relayed to contemporary BC oriented youths who use “Azania” with deliberate intent; many have adopted it as a Facebook moniker and refer to South Africa as “Azania.” The struggle for a nation involves people identifying themselves as an entity by drawing on historical factors as part of the claim (Nabudere 1981). These intermingle with the new objective to constitute the present. The claim for nationhood arises out of objective facts brought about by the introduction

⁴¹⁹ Khehla Mthembu (AZAPO president), “Black Consciousness: Class, Capitalism and Colonialism in Azania.”

Ikhwezi Number 18, October 1981.

⁴²⁰ Gerrit Viljoen quoted in *The Independent* (London), March 13 1990.

of capitalist relations of production in the new societies (ibid). Thus the task of a democratic revolution is to eliminate foreign domination and monopoly capitalism paving the way to a socialist revolution.

10.1.1. The Congress Tradition

The formation of the ANC in 1912 as a supra - tribal and national movement aimed at uniting various ethnic groups into a nation. One of the founders, Pixley ka Isaka Seme, called for a single African identity. He called for a “Native Union” which unites all the natives; the “demon” dividing Natives along tribal lines had to be buried and forgotten.⁴²¹ Seme's stance is a little surprising. He had been educated abroad where he fell under the influence of ideas of du Bois and others. He called for a regeneration of Africa, the basic factor being the awakened race consciousness. He expressed his Africanism with phrases like, “I am an African, and I set my pride in my race against a hostile public opinion”, “the conflicts and strife are disappearing before the fusing force of this enlightened perception of the true inter-tribal relation, which relation should subsist among a people with common destiny.”⁴²² However, in the early Congress there was no common approach to what a nation is as Reverend Mahabane observed:

...affiliation to the nation should be based on locality of birth, that all who claim South Africa as the country of their birth should be eligible for membership of the nation
(cited in Jordan 1988: 115).

Contrary to Seme's Africanist perspective, ostensibly Mahabane's view has ever since been Congress' attitude towards the concept of the nation, while one of the ANC's early presidents S.M. Makgatho was decisively uncompromising on the ideal of an ultimately non – racial society.⁴²³ However Mahabane does express Africanist sentiments when he says of the Native

⁴²¹ Pixley ka Isaka Seme, “Native Union”, *Imvo Zabantsundu*, October 24 1911.

⁴²² Pixley ka Isaka Seme “The Regeneration of Africa” in *The African Abroad*, April 1906.

⁴²³ SM Makgatho “Presidential Address”, South African Native Congress, May 6 1919.

Affairs Act (1920): “a final exclusion of the black man, the original inhabitant of the land, from participation in the government of the affairs of this country of his birth.”⁴²⁴ He objected to the policy of segregation or separation of “the African or black races from European or white races” and noted “The Europeans came to Africa, robbed the African of his God – given land and then deprived the African of all rights of citizenship in a country originally intended by Providence to be his home.”⁴²⁵

The freedom charter's main pillar says “South Africa belongs to all those who live in it” (see above). Incidentally it enshrined the same NP pluralist idea of the country as composed of many nationalities, particularly the bantustan theory, as seen in the ANC logo (the four spokes representing four national groups: white, coloured, black African and Indian). It intersected with the Communist Party's Soviet influenced “independent native republic” and later on communist conceptual Colonisation of a Special Type (CST)⁴²⁶, the former recognising the right of oppressed nations to self – determination and the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) a two stage conceptualisation following the 1969 Morogoro conference which promulgated national liberation as a first stage followed by socialism and which has ever since consummated Congress' policy. A unity of Africans, progressive whites, Indians and coloureds as a single national front has been the policy of the Congress and its ally, the SACP, as from the 1970s. In the ANC's New Year message of 1971, Oliver Tambo said: “who are the blacks? They are the people known as 'kaffirs', 'coolies' and 'hotnots.' Together with those South Africans whose total

⁴²⁴ Reverend ZR Mahabane, “The Exclusion of the Bantu.” Presidential Address, Cape Province National Congress, 1921.

⁴²⁵ *ibid*

⁴²⁶ It saw South Africa as internally colonised with participation of both English and Afrikaner settlers. In 1928 the CPSA travelled to Moscow for the 6th World Congress of the Comintern where the national question was debated. The Comintern stressed the struggle for national liberation must precede socialist transformation. Alexander (1979) has critiqued the CST as implying a two nations thesis, a claim refuted by Slovo (1988).

political identity with the African oppressed makes them black in all but the accident of skin colour.”⁴²⁷ The question has always been: in a country where both the oppressed and oppressors claim the same geographical entity, then who comprises a nation? (Van Diepen 1988). However the Congress/ SACP approach has been to overcome internal colonisation non – racialism as a principle of struggle has to be applied. The ANC's Morogoro conference of 1969 recognised that African people are “a dispossessed and racially oppressed nation” (Pomeroy 1988; Meli 1988; Jordan 1988). This situation had to be overcome by NDR which would destroy the existing social and economic relationships and correct historical injustices perpetrated against indigenous peoples. The struggle for national liberation had to precede socialist transformation, a position associated with the SACP, which was incorporated in the ANC's tactics and strategy. It stressed that the black working class is not only an oppressed nation but represents the most potent force for national liberation (Comrade Mzala 1988; Slovo 1988). The policy paper also noted that Indian and coloured people like black Africans are discriminated against and oppressed; despite certain concessions, they share a common fate with black Africans, their own liberation is inextricably bound with liberation of Africans. The ANC/SACP therefore strove for unity of “South African nationalities”,⁴²⁸ their integration and fusion into a single unitary nation under leadership of the working class. The creation of a new nation would involve, as a basic objective, elimination of accumulated political, social, cultural and economic privileges associated with whites (Slovo 1988). However it was not spelt out how the working class would achieve this goal. Nonetheless national determination would be secured through a democratic institutional framework of adult suffrage and civil liberties within a non – racial state, that colonial and national question are synonymous and antagonistic “nations” can only be unified through

⁴²⁷ Quoted in the *African Communist*, Number 68, 1977.

⁴²⁸ One finds contradictions here, for example, Slovo argues that despite ethnic and cultural diversity South Africa is not a multi – national country and a one united nation would embrace all ethnic communities and this is the major liberation objective.

democracy⁴²⁹ and a commitment to the principle of “one country, one people, one government – a government of the people of South Africa.”⁴³⁰ For ANC the nation is not defined by skin colour or racial designation but by loyalty and “commitment to the country, its people and its future” (Jordan 1988: 118). By the late 1980s and during the negotiations era, the Congress' position on ending apartheid was that all people must be treated as equal citizens without regard to race, colour or ethnicity. This had to be guaranteed by a Bill of Rights that safeguards fundamental human and individual rights. ANC's constitutional vision was premised on the freedom charter, based on non – racialism and non – sexism; where structures and institutions of racial oppression and discrimination are dismantled and replaced with democratic ones; the insertion of constitutional provisions to facilitate redistribution of wealth; opening facilities to all and an independent, unitary, democratic and non – racial state.⁴³¹

As CODESA negotiations continued on, the ANC was ecstatic because “the dream of the oppressed majority in this country ever since 1910 has been full participation as ordinary South Africans in elections and the choice of government.”⁴³² The Congress saw elections as part of the process of achieving independence and a signal for true citizenship which for nearly hundred years since its formation was now realised.

10.2. Nation in the postapartheid

Smith defines a nation as “a named and self - defining human community whose members cultivate shared memories, symbols, myths, traditions and values, inhabit and are attached to

⁴²⁹ ANC Department of Information and Publicity “Apartheid South Africa: Colonialism of a Special Type”, London 1984.

⁴³⁰ Oliver Tambo “Message on January 8th” in *Sechaba*, April, 1978, London. Tambo repeated the same view during the 4th Congress of FRELIMO in 1983.

⁴³¹ Constitutional Guidelines for a democratic South Africa, ANC policy paper, Lusaka, August 1988.

⁴³² Working Group 2: ANC's proposals, CODESA, March 31 1992.

historic territories or 'homelands', create and disseminate a distinctive public culture, and observe shared customs and standardised laws (Smith 2009: 29). This definition overlaps with that of *ethnie* thus showing a close relationship between ethnic communities and nations. One detects a synonymy with postapartheid's brand of multi – culturalism which goes by the name of rainbow nation or non – racialism. During the Mandela era (1994 – 1999) a new vocabulary emerged to describe a new social order, that is, nationhood, unity, racial harmony and race entered a delicate and sensitive terrain (Posel et al 2001; Moodley and Adam 2000; Mamdani 2000; Harris et al 2004). While these were attempts to give South Africans a new language of colour – blindness, it rendered the real often violent consequences of race and racism invisible. As a result there was little attention to how race continues to shape relationships and identities in the postapartheid. Central to this project is the TRC⁴³³ headed by Desmond Tutu who once quipped:

Ours is a remarkable country. Let us celebrate our differences. God wants us as we are. South Africa wants and needs the Afrikaner, the English, the Coloured, the Indian and the black. We are sisters and brothers in one family – God's family, the human family...my appeal is ultimately directed to us all, black and white together, to close the chapter on our past and strive together for this beautiful and blessed land as the rainbow people of God (cited in Harris et al 2004: 22 -3).

Mandela's inauguration speech on 10 may 1994 also echoed these sentiments:

We enter a covenant that we shall build the society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity – a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world.

Mngxitama⁴³⁴ likens Mandela to Nonqawuse's miracle: “When Nelson Mandela walked out of a

⁴³³ Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act (1995) set up the TRC with an objective to “promote national unity and reconciliation in a spirit of understanding which transcends the conflicts and divisions of the past and investigate human rights violations committed from 1 March 1960 (Government Gazette July 26 1995).

⁴³⁴ Andile Mngxitama, “The People versus Philip: How the ANC Sold Us For a Cup.” New Frank Talk 6, July 2010.

brutal twenty – seven years of unjust imprisonment, he extended his hands to his jailers, embracing them as one does to a long lost friend. The world was agape with awe. What magnanimity! Mandela showed no bitterness and demanded no justice for himself and his people. With the help of Desmond Tutu, he built a successful forgive and forget industry that culminated in the TRC. The outcome was neither truth nor reconciliation, but a democracy which was founded on a refusal to address the historical injustices systematically inflicted upon the Black majority by a settler white minority.”

Harris et al (2004) see the TRC as a product of a political compromise during the period of negotiations and a historical moment under Mandela's government of national unity. As an instrument of national unity it served to conceal historical injustices in order to project the image of, and imagine a new nation. This necessitated erasure of race and racism from its interrogational framework and inscription of new values of constitutionalism and citizenship of the new nation; a superficial reconciliation which denies the racist past and “suppressed the dialogue on the persistence of racism in the new South Africa” (Valji 2004: 5). Omission of race meant placing individual blame rather than collective guilt and “actively fed the denial by white beneficiaries of their role in the past and removed collective [racialised] sense of responsibility for apartheid” (Harris et al 2004: 30; see also Mamdani 2000). The constitution is blamed by BC youth for denying blacks an authentic nationhood; for entrenching both black propertylessness and white existing property rights; some youth call the constitution a “blueprint for neocolonialism.”

Major government commissions continue to recognise the non – racial character of the nation. For example the Trevor Manuel chaired NPC throws non - racialism into an admixture of ideologically incoherent statement. The vision statement of the NPC says:

Who are we? We are Africans. We are an African country. We are part of our multi

- national region. We are an essential part of our continent. Being Africans, we are acutely aware of the wider world, deeply implicated in our past and present. That wider world carries some of our inheritance. We have learned a great deal from our complex past; adding continuously to our experience of being African...our connectedness across time and distance is the central principle of our nationhood...we have welcomed people from distant lands, who have chosen to live among us...we are a community of multiple, overlapping identities, cosmopolitan in our nationhood. Our multiculturalism is a defining element of our indigeneity. We are, because we are many. Our many – ness is our strength - we carry it throughout our lives...South Africa belongs to its peoples.⁴³⁵

The NPC stresses nation – building and social cohesion, balancing between healing the divisions of the past, broadening economic equalities particularly for black people and building a sense of inclusion and common purpose among all South Africans. It says the aim is not building a melting pot where individual, religious, and cultural and other differences disappear, but rather “a society with a shared South African identity, without distracting from our diverse multiple identities.” Integral in this project is the constitution and the Bill of Rights, which established a new South Africa and a new South African identity, which “enabled us to overcome our history and envisioning a new society based on equality, freedom and dignity” where human beings are individuals and moral agents with rights and responsibilities. The document, which sounds charterist and not very much divorced from the ANC's policies, says unity in diversity is “the key to the country's unity in embracing the reality that all South Africans have many identities, and yet are South African.” In its liberal postulation, the NPC notes while the government is expected to fulfil its responsibilities, South Africans are obliged to meet theirs and play their role “as responsible and active citizens that shape society.” Incidentally Freedom Day celebrations continue to have a conspicuous absence of white South Africans; the audiences remain largely

⁴³⁵ National Planning Commission: - “Vision for 2030, National Development Plan.” November 11 2011.

black.⁴³⁶ Various opinions point out that the event shows how the nation is still divided along racial lines.

Multi – culturalism has become a central discourse in the struggle over issues pertaining to national identity, construction of historical memory, purpose of schooling and meaning of democracy (Giroux 1994; Goldberg 1994). The notion of a multi - cultural nation is critiqued for masking a democracy that is secured through controlling the conscious and discipline of bodies, through manipulation of sounds and images so as to form identities divorced from the larger context (McLaren 1994). Thus the idea of democratic citizenship is equated with a private consuming citizen coupled with increasingly subalternization of the Other. What we have in postapartheid South Africa is two fold: the private consuming citizen is part of a democratic *jouissance* where the idea of freedom is an alibi for material lack and deprivation. Secondly there are residues of apartheid notions of conservative multi - culturalism which sought to construct difference through “sameness” Kock (2004). In modernity the African subject is constituted through structures of oppression and exploitation (Olaussen and Angelfors 2009). These complex questions of complicity need to be addressed on an entirely new basis – all identities have been shaped by and continued to express structures of power and exclusion (ibid). De Kock (2004) uses a metaphor of the “seam” which while joining together it bears the mark of the suture. So there is an attempt at the seam to flatten out difference which de Kock calls “politics of the seam” (2004: 13). These have however endeavoured to wean themselves from legacy of white supremacy. In the post 1994 there have been attempts to create a common “South African” culture which takes into cognisance cultural differences, though. If a “common national culture” means abrasion of differences, it implies assimilation of previously racially dominated groups into the mainstream dominant framework of values. It is important to acknowledge that this has placed problems of white anti – black racism, social justice and ramifications of power off limits

⁴³⁶ SABC 7pm main news bulletin of April 27 2011 and 2012 reveals such footage.

(Giroux 1994; Valji 2004). It posits that anyone regardless of colour can reap economic benefits of the nation, but the precondition is for one first becoming “denuded, deracinated and culturally stripped” (McLaren 1994: 49). The divergent pole of this kind of multi - culturalism is the critical and resistance multi – culturalism which posits that without a transformative political and economic agenda, multi – culturalism is just another form of accommodation to the larger social order. This school doesn't see culture as non-conflictual, harmonious and consensual; it doesn't see diversity as a goal but rather it must be affirmed within a politics of culturalism and a commitment to social justice. Though attentive to notions of “difference”, which of course is a product of history, culture, power, and ideology, it interrogates the construction of difference and identity in relation to radical politics; to a testimony to pain, suffering and “walking nihilism of black people” (West cited in McLaren 1994: 67) which can be traced to the origins of racism in the social, political and cultural dynamics of white supremacy (Giroux 1994; 328). Thus a need to challenge narratives of national identity, culture and ethnicity; address systemic structural harbingers of such a social order and undo master narratives of racism and deconstruct centres of colonial power (Giroux 1994). Notwithstanding the above there has been concern that anthropology is sidelined by multi - culturalism because of differences in conception of culture which multi – culturalists refer primarily to collective social identities in struggles for social equality (Turner 1994). Anthropology's various concepts of culture are seen as not oriented towards programmes for social change, political mobilization and cultural transformation and therefore not relevant to that end (ibid).

In BC and Africanist tradition non – racialism is synonymous with assimilation and integration and incorporation into mores of whiteness; and into the larger compass of social, political and economic privilege (Malcolm X 1965, 2007; Biko 1987; Dyson 1995). Contemporary BC youths have argued that the ANC fights for inclusion while BC seeks destruction of the system and its

values rather than seeking entry into a multi – racial society.⁴³⁷ In rejecting integration, Biko's words remain true in contemporary society:

....this is a white man's integration – an integration based on exploitative values. It's an integration in which black will compete with black, using each other as rungs up a step ladder leading them to white values. It is an integration in which the black man will have to prove himself in terms of these values before meriting acceptance and ultimate assimilation, in which the poor will grow poorer and the rich richer in a country where the poor have always been black. We don't want to be reminded that it is we, the indigenous people, who are poor and exploited in the land of our birth. These are concepts which the BC approach wishes to eradicate from the black man's mind before our society is driven to chaos by irresponsible people from Coca – Cola and hamburger cultural backgrounds (1987: 91).

While the struggle against the white regime was in the first instance directed against national oppression, in 1994 there was an inheritance of a system with its norms, values, rituals, structures and institutions that were meant to perpetuate oppression (Nefolovhodwe 2000). BC youth intimate that freedom is defined in western liberal terms and people have yet to understand what freedom means. One time on facebook someone posted a photograph of white children riding on top of black. The facebooker wrote: “in one meeting Dr Verwoerd climbed on a table and asked, 'waar stan ek op?' 'oop die tafel!' they replied."nee ek stam op die kaffir se kop.”⁴³⁸ Another facebooker responded, “That statement to a majority of blacks still holds true even after freedom, that is why ours is not independence, it's a flaccid freedom day.” They do note, however, of black South Africans' commitment to, and defence of non – racialism and integration especially educated blacks, a scenario they find “out of order” as one participant intimated. Others think non – racialism is worthy but it is not manifested in lieu of everyone being allowed to vote. It gets much more complicated to claim it as a goal, unlike during apartheid, the

⁴³⁷ Deliberations at SNI Durban September 23 – 25 2011.

⁴³⁸ Facebook post, May 18 2011.

postapartheid state is not manifestly and overtly racist making it not a legal problem but a social or even cultural one. A bigger portion of these protagonists demur non – racialism as a mystification; anti-racist society rather is ideal where all energies should be projected toward. The historical demands commensurate with a nation that looks after a historically dispossessed population, they say, is yet to be realised. This opinion is at the centre of historical consciousness which is the heart of radical traditions of black thought. On many occasions I hear the youth use the phrase “not yet uhuru” with frequency. On Facebook some even juxtapose ANC's logo and colours with the old NP's orange, blue and white. They base this reasoning on the fact that there has been a continuation of the apartheid nation into the postcolony, albeit with some ramifications.

An important question by both the black radical tradition and the radical anti – colonial political thought is: can rights be reposed only in citizenship? (Bogues 2011) Early proponents of South African struggle petitioned for granting of equal political rights to “qualified men irrespective of colour, race or creed.”⁴³⁹ Although they did this within the confines of their own narrow condescending pretensions towards the rest of uneducated Africans, certainly citizenship, the vote, liberty and nation were conjoined. In the postapartheid race and citizenship have become complex intersections of identity, conflict, nationalism, history and interpersonal relationships (Harris et al 2004). In its liberal formulation citizenship means reciprocity or rights against, and duties towards, the community. As entitlements, citizenship rights establish a legitimate sphere for all individuals to pursue their actions and activities without risk of arbitrary or unjust interference (Held 1998). The left critique is that the degree to which individuals are “free” and the nature of that “freedom” is subject to intricacies of capitalism: - a citizen may enjoy “equality before the law” but do they have the material and cultural capacities and resources to choose between different courses of action or do existing relations between races allow citizenship to become reality in practice? In the postapartheid the constitution and its rights are used by those

⁴³⁹ “Petition to the House of Commons”, from WP Schreiner, A, Abdurahman, J.Tengo et al, July 1909, in Hansard.

who lost nothing or little political power, to which they turn for recourse (Ndebele 2007). The question is how rights of South African white citizens can be protected without entrenching the privileges of the old especially in a context of continuing historical disparities in socio – economic life.

The controversy that Freedom Front Plus' Pieter Mulder⁴⁴⁰ generated when he said the “Bantu” who originated from east and central Africa, arrived at the same time as Europeans and met at Kei River and therefore had no claim to 40% of the country has long been in the psyche of racist right-wing thought. Note the similarities with Verwoerd speech in the House of Assembly on 21 January 1961:

A territory which generally speaking was unpopulated became the area of settlement of two population groups at a certain stage. Whites who came from Europe and Bantu who came from Central and East Africa. These two groups established themselves in specific areas and generally speaking these specific areas did not encroach upon each other...basically, however, we had two communities here of two different origin, who had actually settled more or less simultaneously in certain areas which did not overlap.

The claim that white settlers arrived at the Cape simultaneously as African tribes was asserted by colonial historians Theal and Cory early in the twentieth century; was common in most school history texts and vehemently propagated by serious Afrikaner scholars and “this claim was made in service of state ideology” (Goldberg 2000: 229).⁴⁴¹ This claim, Goldberg asserts, was designed to substantiate the idea that whites originally laid equal claim to the land with blacks and historically acquired 87% of South African land by way of a “just” war; “the deeper insinuation here, of course, is one of white superiority” (ibid).

⁴⁴⁰ Pieter Mulder was speaking in a debate in the National Assembly on February 15 2012.

⁴⁴¹ A booklet published by the South African state in 1969 “Progress through Separate Development” makes this claim.

The return of popularising the freedom charter by the ANC which reinforced the notion of different races, and ANC's inability to sustain solidarity built up by the BCM means today there has been a creation of “a backlash of tribalism, ethnicity, xenophobia, all the diseases the BCM had at least eliminated within the black community.”⁴⁴² If national leaders imagine the vision a nation should be envisioned, then friction is unavoidable. Nationhood is re-imagined by citizens as they reluctantly embrace difference and “multiculturalism”, the “rainbow nation” and terms of similar resonance provide an argot of accommodation, even amidst bitter contestation (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001: 635). This is best exemplified by the inception of a new black on black racism (Tafira 2011) that has taken a violent form against *makwerekwere*⁴⁴³, heightened by an increasing emergence and presence of black African identities. Concern with borders and their protection escalate. Under global conditions and neoliberal capitalist economy, the state deregulates motion of wealth and regulates movement of migrants, “aliens” and other “undesirables” who work tractably and cheaply, and are denied citizenship and entitlements of belonging (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001). The nation as a cultural elaboration as more as it is political, there is hybridity when “new” people are incorporated into the body politic (Bhabha 1990). However Bhabha's concept of hybridity seems less applicable to South Africa because apartheid left little space for fluid identities – it focused on differences rather than likeness (Zezeza 2003; Kenworthy 2007). There are internal dynamics as well, for example, ethnicity which during the struggle was rejected by both Marxists and the dominant liberation movement as “false consciousness” (Dubow 1994), because ethnic particularism was used by apartheid as a tool for colonisation, political division and exploitation. However ethnicity has always, and remains alive today. ANC's commitment to universalism and common citizenship makes it struggle with adjusting to multiple ethnicities and differences. Dubow (1994) observes that ethnicity can become a substitute for other appellations: first where “tribes” evolve into nations;

⁴⁴² Interview with Strini Moodley by Daniel Magaziner, April 10 2006, Palace Hotel, Durban.

⁴⁴³ A derogatory term for black African immigrants

second, its function as “race” connecting with nation and culture. This is exhibited in the so - called “xenophobia”, a prominent feature of postapartheid social relations. Of late there has been concern on rising “tribalism” based on patronage like ANC's cadre deployment policy which gets abused for “opportunistic, factional and tribal ends” (Gumede 2012). Gumede notes perception that under Zuma's rule there has been “Zulufication” just like Mbeki's “Xhosafication.” Ethnic nepotism is not only a black feature: white English speakers give preference to their own just as Afrikaans speaking did at certain schools/universities, while coloureds feel marginalised because they are not black or white enough. At the same time inequalities within and among the nation's citizens have widened, alarmingly. Thabo Mbeki once mystified this during his “Two Nations Speech.” He reckoned although economic inequalities were rooted in the past, in the present there is a nation of the poor and black and the rich and white. As a man of many ironies and contradictions and theatrical posturing he later discarded the “two nations” notion for a “united South Africa”, at the opening of parliament in 2001. Mbeki didn't also realise that much of the postapartheid poverty has been exacerbated by his own neo – liberal policies propagated during his tenure.

Conclusion

The ANC continues to talk a language of universal citizenship and rights and “has sustained its commitment to a classically European form of nationalism and nationhood” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997: 402). The idea of the nation will continue to be contested especially by the BC and Pan – Africanists. In any case this is a historical question that will reach its denouement under a different set of social conditions. More importantly the black nation remains trapped in material inequalities despite ascendancy of a tiny proportion of the BMC into the echelons of power in the postcolony. For that reason the nation will always be a bitter contestation. Ndebele (2007) argues that while race and racist past may appear as a central category for analysis, the postapartheid society with a black majority in power there should be emancipatory strategies of change. Seemingly these will emanate from below.

Chapter 11

Symbols, Symbolism and the New Social Order

We have seen the importance and increasing use of symbols and symbolism in the postapartheid social formation, both as a nation building strategy and as a reminder to the people of the hegemonic mantle the current ruling dispensation wields. This is done through apotheosis of certain leaders to demi – god status, erection of monuments, and memorialisation of “sacrifices” of the liberation struggle which are apportioned to one political party and a single set of leadership. The nation and its associated phenomena, nationalism, the nation state, national symbols, histories and so on are based on social engineering which is deliberate and always innovative (Hobsbawn 1983). In this chapter, which follows the last, I examine the role of tradition and aesthetics of the postcolonial nation and how it obliterates the contributions of opposing ideologies like BC and PAC (for example recently there have been debates why PAC stalwart Robert Sobukwe is not recognised in the same way as Nelson Mandela). I find the functionalist theory opportune in this chapter, in understanding how symbols are used to contain the “masses” into a vision of the nation the ruling elite envisages.

An African proverb, one participant told me, says “until lions have their own historians, tales of the hunt will always glorify the hunters.” Let us begin the discussion with a poem by BC aligned poet Mputlane Bofelo entitled “Give Mandela a Rest”:

Have mercy South Africa
Please, let Mandela go
I know you are a cruel beast
...pitiless animal with an ice – cold
stone heart to let children die
in the front-line while adults
still on foreign beaches
waiting for the peace treaty
to return home to claim
their prize and drink champagne
through their lips on behalf of the masses
but for once please, South Africa
have mercy, let Mandela go
to get his first ever rest since 1990

or maybe since Golgotha 1962
the day our father died to give us
the gift of an eternal smile to hide our cool eyes
the face of a tormented
restless, burdened soul
South Africa, I don't mean
to disturb you from your peaceful comfort
but think of a manifestations coming out of the dungeon
to build home a home
out of his prison cell
for just one minute
be this smiling cool dude
taking a tight nap
visited by beautiful dreams
in a house he especially requested
to be built like his prison cell and then live the rest of your lifestyles with an obligation never
to look at your scars
disallowed to talk to anyone
about your nightmares
denied even the relief
to simply whisper
to your soul – mate any feeling of pain
any sense of internal turmoil
dear patriotic South African
lover of Mandela

Just for one day
live the wounds of sainthood
or the load of God
without human luxury
to be capable of fucking up
not having the comfort you messed
and get just on with lifestyles imagine being an emblem
pulled up at fundraising festivals
a flag hoisted at campaign rallies
suppressing your exhaustion
for (the sake of) the memory of the STRUGGLE
not able to complain about
a sore back like any octogenarian should
just keeping strong and smiling
sometimes enduring a dance
just to ensure you do not
cause the markets to panic
please South Africa
have mercy, give Mandela a rest
his first ever peace of mind
since he became aware of
such things as apartheid
democracy, presidency and Nobel prize
since Groote Schuur minute
since he became your fund-raiser
peace symbol
campaign ticket and father Christmas
since he begged you:
“don't call me I will call you.”
since you invaded his retirement
dragged him half asleep to another election rally

please South Africa
give Mandela the peace of mind
the first ever since Queen Elizabeth stopped calling him a terrorist
and named him Sir Nelson Mandela.⁴⁴⁴

Archbishop Tutu is not spared from criticism either. On Facebook someone posted:

Desmond Tutu = sell-out and hypocrite. This bishop spends his whole life advocating for a non – violent struggle against white apartheid government, he even mobilised darkies to forgive and forget without justice in the TRC. Like Mandela and Luthuli he received the stupid recognition of the Nobel peace prize that is given to darkies who lived their lives to entrench white supremacy under the guise of democracy. Last year he was reported to have said violent means must be used to topple the great son of Africa Robert Mugabe. This is a clear declaration that our so – called celebrity revolutionaries are all in service of white supremacy. Those who refuse like Sobukwe, Masemola, Langa Six, Biko, Tiro, Ntuli ka Shezi, Mashinini, Solomon Mahlangu, Chris Hani, Sabelo Phama and many more had to be killed. We now live in a born again apartheid that is very subtle but effective in its mandate of securing maximum advantage for the white man at the expense of the black man. Not Yet Uhuru. *Molweni bonyana nentombi zomqaba.*⁴⁴⁵

Personalising South Africa's successful transition by attributing it mainly to the reconciling “magic” of Mandela has become conventional global wisdom (Adam, Van Zyl Slabbert and Moodley 1997). His apotheosis to demi – god involves deliberate contrivance of western imperialism whose strategic and corporate interests had to be protected in a postapartheid dispensation. Arundhati Roy writes:

When Mandela took over as South Africa's first black president, he was canonised as a living saint, not just because he was a freedom fighter who spent 27 years in prison,

⁴⁴⁴ Facebook post, May 16 2012.

⁴⁴⁵ Facebook post, March 6 2012.

but also because he deferred completely to the Washington consensus.⁴⁴⁶

Frene Ginwala, an ANC veteran narrates that in the early 1980s there was advice that the anti-apartheid movement needed a figurehead and a face and Mandela's name was brought up.⁴⁴⁷ Consequently streets in London; gardens at Leeds university and rooms of buildings were named after him; statues and art festivals were about his legacy and Nelson Mandela day (his birthday) celebrated in London was declared by the UN an international day in 2009. On the other hand AZAPO's Sadique Variava told me that in BC tradition the cult of leadership was detested and curtailed by reducing leadership tenure to one year even though every movement needs to have some sort of figurehead. The feeling among Africanists and BC adherents is "Nelson Mandela didn't liberate us, we liberated him from prison."⁴⁴⁸ According to Haile Gerima when Mandela walked out of prison it was the most watched programme on television - "the first TV reality show."⁴⁴⁹ Recently Google sponsored a \$US 1, 25 million grant to create a Mandela online archives that "takes the life of Mandela to the world. Our job is to take important stories to the people of the world and in those stories of the twentieth century none is more inspiring than Madiba's", according to Steve Crossan head of Google cultural institute. At the launch, author Beata Lipman said the archive attempts to turn Mandela into "Jesus Christ superstar" and Naledi Pandor, minister of science and technology, said "our country and the globe is in desperate need for role models that espouse the values and morals Mandela exhibited." In fact while a few years ago it was sacrilegious and blasphemous to critique Mandela, contemporary BC youth are increasingly critically scrutinising the role the man has played in the country's post 1994 conundrum. Some BC participants believe this symbolisation spurred by Mandela's head on South African currency, as they intimated to me in a conversation, is meant to be a permanent

⁴⁴⁶ Arundhati Roy, "Capitalism: A Ghost Story." <http://www.outlookindia.com>

⁴⁴⁷ Frene Ginwala the documentary "Have You Heard from Johannesburg?" broadcast on SABC 1 on June 26 2012.

⁴⁴⁸ Sindiswa Sisanti, during a presentation at Jozi Book Fair, August 7 2011, Museum Africa, Johannesburg.

⁴⁴⁹ Haile Gerima addressing SNI Durban, September 23 2011.

imprint on society “that will always confuse our children, their children and their children and their children until amen.”

But seeing Mandela as a demi – god shows the political immaturity of the electorate which doesn't trust its own political autonomy (Adam, Van Zyl Slabbert and Moodley 1997). They add: “Mandela's lack of bitterness has symbolically exonerated whites from their apartheid sins. Handing power to such a magnanimous figure made the National Party defeat during constitutional negotiations more tolerable” (1997: 223). There may be a long term damage resulting from plastering over racial differences by Mandela; reluctance to force whites to show more contrition to their black victims of apartheid and “South African whites continue to enjoy their privileged lifestyles while the national high priest, Madiba, appears to have absolved them of their sins without a proper confession and penance (Adebajo 2010: 230). In the postcolony the desire for reconciliation obfuscates both history and the present. The Mandela – Rhodes foundation formed in 2002, with the Rhodes Trust in Oxford contributing ten million pounds to scholarships, child health care and sporting facilities for disadvantaged communities. While both Zimbabwe and Zambia removed statues of Rhodes after independence, they still litter South Africa's landscape, and even Rhodes university remains (Adebajo 2010). In Cape Town there is a Mandela Rhodes building. This makes it an anomaly because Rhodes was a crude racist whose ruthless sense of white supremacy was a precursor to apartheid and racial segregation. At the launch of the Mandela - Rhodes Foundation in February 2002, Mandela said: “combining our name with that of Cecil John Rhodes in this initiative is to signal the closing of the circle and coming together of two strands in our history” (cited in Maylam 2005: 134). Maylam questions whether this is about forgetting and sanitising the past in the “new South Africa”; if the spirit of reconciliation entails letting off the hook villains of South Africa’s racist colonial past. The analogy is made of TRC granting amnesty to white supremacists and the posthumous amnesty of earlier architects of white supremacy which Maylam (2005: 138) questions whether it is historical amnesty or historical amnesia? This is compounded by history as a subject losing its

salience. Later generations would not know of Rhodes' misdeeds because his name is associated with educational excellence rather than racist brutality and colonial exploitation. Even if the pairing of Mandela and Rhodes is bizarre and incongruous, exonerating Rhodes of his crimes is within the ambit of the ANC's neoliberal and capital friendly agenda. Maylam intimates that if Rhodes was alive today he would have been given plenty of scope to make monstrous profits. Fanon best explains this scenario. Let us quote him liberally: "Every time the black man fights for liberty and justice it's always for a white liberty and a white justice. In other words, for values secreted by his masters" (Fanon 2008: 195). On being freed he is just like a patient suffering a relapse after being told his condition has improved, "so the news of emancipation for the slaves caused psychoses and sudden death" (ibid). He adds, "It's not the sort of announcement you hear twice in a lifetime. The black man was merely content to thank the white man, and plain proof of this is the impressive number of statues throughout France and the colonies representing the white figure of France caressing the frizzy hair of the docile black man whose chains have just been broken" (ibid) and "on battlefield, marked out by the scores of Negroes hanged by their testicles, a monument is slowly rising that promises to be grandiose. And on top of this monument I can already see a white man and a black man hand in hand" (2008: 196). Statues, street and town names of Verwoerd and Vorster among others intensely hated by the masses were left intact, standing and imposingly tall. Some in the Africanist/BC are dissatisfied that "we have a country whose landscape is littered with erstwhile racists and colonisers" as one participant opined.

All major companies and rabid racist individuals' egregious history is whitewashed as they are recast in a new light in the postcolony. This is aided by their association with former liberation stalwarts. As for Mandela, the man has enjoyed mythical stature which, however, has in history been perforated. For example during negotiations there were reports of people in Natal affiliated to ANC and UDF who denounced him, removing his portraits and pictures on t/shirts, replacing

them with slogans praising Chris Hani. Mandela was considered a 'sell – out.'⁴⁵⁰ A western journalist wrote:

The mythology and aura which built up the world's famous political prisoner have swiftly fallen away to reveal just another African politician. We are now seeing Mandela the man, not the myth.⁴⁵¹

The politics of symbols are best explained by reconciliation. In the early days ANC politicians sought to learn Afrikaans “the hated language of the oppressor” (Waldmeir 1997: 268); Mandela called de Klerk, a representative of white supremacy, “a man of integrity.”⁴⁵² The discovery by Mandela of rugby, a high totem of Boer nationalism, summarised the politics of symbolism. Waldmeir (1997: 269) writes: “Rugby was a sport which apartheid architects embraced with a passion they reserved for nothing else but religion and politics. If the Dutch Reformed Church was the NP at prayer, rugby was the NP at play. For blacks, the sport came to symbolise the arrogance of Afrikaner power, and the brutality and aggression that went with it.” The zenith would come at 1995 rugby world cup where Mandela appeared in the springbok rugby jersey. The trend was followed by his successor Thabo Mbeki, who in rugby jersey adornment, was hoisted high by a victorious springbok team in the 2007 world cup.

This discussion points generally towards leaders, past or present, being part of a myth, the sacred – that permeate the whole society - set apart and forbidden (Durkheim 1915). They are taboo, which involves “ritual avoidances” and enjoy a different “ritual status” in a social system (Radcliffe – Brown cited in Hugh – Jones and Laidlaw 2000). Tabooed persons are respected as sacred, are objects of ritual avoidance and recipients of tribute; in this sense they are “abnormal” by virtue of being separated from that which is normal (ibid). They are also a totem, precisely a

⁴⁵⁰ *The Evening Standard* March 27 1990.

⁴⁵¹ *The Evening Standard* March 27 1990.

⁴⁵² Speech by Nelson Mandela on the Grand Parade, Cape Town February 11, 1990.

national totem. They are an emblem, a collective label that assumes a religious character. The force of the totem assumes a spiritual form similar to god (s), outlives the individual and generations of today as well as of tomorrow just as it animated those of yesterday. It follows to say the totem is a symbol of outward and visible form of god and of society (clan) itself; a visible mark of society's (clan's) personality that distinguishes it from others. Durkheim asks: "if it is at once the symbol of god and of society, is it that not because god and society are only one?" (1915: 34). This apotheosis is enabled by the effect and power it divinely has over the minds of the worshippers because a god is above all a being individuals think is superior to themselves, whom they feel they depend on. The god is also peculiar and possesses a nature different to ourselves that we become its servitors even at the expense of own convenience, privation and sacrifices. We are obliged to submit ourselves to rules of conduct, thought and deeds even if it causes discomfiture or "contrary to our most fundamental inclinations and instincts" (Durkheim 1915: 34). The figure/god becomes infused as part of collective consciousness which asserts supremacy over individual consciousness and assumes moral ascendancy over members of society. Since the leader (s) is taboo and sacred, and the symbols are meant to be beyond criticism (Geertz 1975) what happens to those individuals who fail to observe this "religious" authority? Those particular individual (s) who ignore the moral – aesthetic norms the symbols formulate, who are discordant, "are regarded not so much as evil as stupid, insensitive, unlearned, or in case of extreme dereliction, mad" (Geertz 1975: 129). Geertz gives a case of Java where small children, simpletons, boors, the insane and the immoral are all said to be "not yet Javanese", that is, not yet human because they are yet to observe the morality which religion supports as proper conduct where such conduct has to be "common sense" (1975: 129). The Javanese use a term *tjotjog* which means to fit "as a key does to a lock, as efficacious medicine does to a disease, as a solution does to an arithmetic problem, as a man does with a woman he marries (if not they will divorce)" [1975: 129]. Therefore all separate elements have to strike a chord to avoid dissonance.

Nabudere (2000) makes a distinction between neo – traditionalism used by the elites and post – traditionalism as use of culture and tradition by people to resist colonialism and neocolonialism. The former involves use of symbols and suitably tailored discourse such as national history. Therefore the national phenomena cannot be adequately studied without looking at “invention of tradition” (Hobsbawn 1983). Hobsbawn traces the “invention of tradition” to post - revolution France where public ceremonies were invented especially the Bastille Day which included festivals, fireworks and merriment, “its general tendency was to transform the heritage of the Revolution into a combined expression of state pomp and power and citizens pleasure” (1983: 78). There also began mass production of monuments which he calls “statuomania” (ibid). Incidentally postcolonial Africa replicates the same. The postcolonial state gets increasingly involved in the lives of the citizens – a pervasive etitisation - by manipulating an erstwhile liberation history, invocation of memory and constant reminders that the masses are always in a perpetual mode of gratitude. There is the use of what Smith (2009) calls ethno – symbolism in analysis of employment of symbolic resources, traditions, memories, values, myths, rituals and symbols that compose the accumulated cultural heritage. These are crucial in analysing ethnicity, nations and nationalisms which ensure the degree of social cohesion and common national consciousness. They also endow these communities with a distinctive repertoire of language, customs and institutions that demarcate social boundaries delineating them from “others”; a distinctiveness of identity and exclusiveness (Cohen 1969). This is similar to endogamy, a mechanism for maintaining boundaries of groups and keeping members exclusive to prevent encroachment of undesirable elements (ibid). In modern societies it’s done in a subtle, unconscious manner through a disparate body of symbols fashioned on the pretext of nationhood; mass mediated ritual excess which produces/reproduces state power to conjure up national unity and to persuade citizens of the reality of both, feature prominently in the postcolonial society (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001). The assurance of continuity of the past ethos of the colonial era is guaranteed by the new political dispensation through collective

symbols like the flag (even if the colours change, the concept is the same), a national anthem that includes vestiges of the old colonial one, which ironically was galvanised in the extermination of the indigenous population and national holidays.⁴⁵³ Such symbols, according to Smith, are important in the rites and ceremonies of public culture which help to create and sustain communal bonds, strike a chord with a heterogeneous population and thus a sense of national identity. Symbolic forms are analysed to discover their symbolic functions of which is the objectification of relationships between individuals and groups; these relationships are developed and maintained by symbols and they also objectify roles and relations which help differentiate people and assist in achieving stability and continuity.

The current friction between the liberation movements (ANC, PAC, and AZAPO) is based on a supposed marginalisation, obliteration and exclusion of the Africanists and BCM in official memory of the country's liberation. The question is whether the new nation is/will be the official and sole author of the official script of public memory or collective memory will continue to lie elsewhere whether in embodied memory, privacy of home or within spaces of violence (Robins 1998: 121). The general observation is although memory mediates the past, the present and the future (Fagan 1998), authorised versions of the past which become public memory, which is merely selective memory, involves forgetting and remembering, inclusion and exclusion. All is premised on who wields the reins of power at that particular historical moment. Current discussions reveal that the ANC believes that all the intellectual history and liberation credentials reside with it. ANC's spokesman Keith Khoza has affirmed: "...the ANC should be treated as part of our collective heritage as a nation."⁴⁵⁴ The debate has been precipitated by obfuscation of struggle icons like Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe and Anton Lembede from official and public

⁴⁵³ One may think of *Die Stem* being incorporated into the new South African national anthem.

⁴⁵⁴ Quoted, in a *Mail and Guardian* article, "ANC Taps Government Funds for Centenary", by Glynnis Underhill, November 18 – 24 2011.

memory. Rapule Tabane asks: "...has anyone heard of him (Sobukwe)? Is it correct that he is not acknowledged in any way or not in the way other liberation heroes have been commemorated – through institution being named after them? Do they remember that Sobukwe was the only prisoner so feared by the NP regime that a special parliamentary law⁴⁵⁵ was created to keep him and only him in jail without any charge?"⁴⁵⁶ Although Steve Biko has been honoured in many institutions like the Steve Biko Centre for Bioethics at Wits; Steve Biko Academic Hospital in Tshwane renamed after HF Verwoerd hospital, Sobukwe has no place named after him or Jeff Masemola who spent more than 27 years in prison. Following the screening of the documentary "Sobukwe: A Great Soul", some comments suggested that collective memory is not just about remembering but also collective forgetting where Mandela has been promoted as a key collective memory of South Africa because of his support for the status quo while collective memory of Sobukwe would disturb the collective discourse of ANC as the sole and only force for the liberation struggle and would show there were other powerful forces outside the ANC that played a crucial part "even much more than Mandela himself."⁴⁵⁷ To remember Sobukwe would also mean remembering his radical politics, which "would bring to the doorstep memories of Chris Hani – something the current predatory elite (one that Fanon warned would replace colonial oppressors) don't care about. Remembering Sobukwe would prick the conscience of many in society who benefit from tenders and corruption and those who benefited from apartheid. Remembering Sobukwe would conscientise the people to rise up and reject half baked transformation... so the ANC and its institution of collective memory have 'deliberately forgotten Sobukwe.'⁴⁵⁸ In 2012 the government decided to relocate Sharpeville commemorations from

⁴⁵⁵ This came to be known as the "Sobukwe Clause."

⁴⁵⁶ Rapule Tabane, "Spare a Thought, and a Place Name for Mangaliso Sobukwe. March 9 – 15 2012."

⁴⁵⁷ Comments responding to Percy Zvomuya's review of the documentary, "Sobukwe, Picture of an Icon", <http://mg.co.za/article/2012-03-06-sobukwe-picture-of-an-icon>, March 16 2012.

⁴⁵⁸ *ibid*

Sharpeville to Kliptown where the freedom charter was presented. One placard had these words inscribed, “ANC, where is your conscience? - Sharpeville 21 March massacre”; one resident said, “It is a tradition that when you hold a ceremony of the ancestors it should be held at home and not at a neighbour's yard.”⁴⁵⁹ The South African flag was also burned by irate Sharpeville residents.

BCM and PAC have in history used symbolic events associated with black struggles to both fight oppression and as a basis for memorialisation. For example a 1983 AZAPO pamphlet titled “Remember June 16” says June 16 is an expression of a determination by the oppressed masses to end their dispossession and “on June 16 we mourned and died together.” It adds that the day should stand as a symbol for the need for Black Solidarity. Other commemorations AZAPO still observe are Black Wednesday; Biko Lives/Biko Week 6 – 12 September; Heroes Day 21 March; May Day; Biko Day commemorative service 12 September. SOPA has appealed to government to declare Regina Mundi church in Soweto, a heritage site because it provided a sanctuary during the struggle and became a living symbol for all the people and to bring fallen heroes interred outside the country for burial at a “heroes acre” the government should create.⁴⁶⁰ Most BC adherents believe June 16 in particular has become trivialised and commercialised. One participant put it thus: “people are packed at Orlando stadium because of entertainment, Chomee is performing.” During the “Alex to Sandton - Hell to Heaven March” on June 16 2011 one participant revealed that one youth asked him, “Which DJ is playing at the march?” He said it shows how the elite has “destroyed” young minds and reversed the moral capital amassed during the struggle. For today's youth there is no significance for these symbolic days because it is a day of partying and hedonism. On June 16 2012, a photograph juxtaposing the iconic picture of a

⁴⁵⁹ “Razing the Flag”, by Amukelani Chauke and Khetiwe Chelemu,

<http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2012/03/22/razing-the-flag>.

⁴⁶⁰ Posted on Facebook June 14 2012

shot Hector Pietersen widely circulated on Facebook. It shows three very drunken youth, one carrying a passed out young man, their female colleague walking on the side, holding an alcoholic bottle. The photograph was meant to intimate both the degeneration of the country's youth and the day.

11.1. The Masses

Who are the masses? The masses are the people. Who are the people? The people are those caught up in a daily drudgery trying to make the most of, and meaning in their lives. They should, in all circumstances be the vanguard of the struggle, a thing that cannot be done “in laboratories but through critical engagement.”⁴⁶¹ The masses are a peculiar creature, though. Even if we reckon they are sometimes the downtrodden, exploited and oppressed of society, we don't need always to romanticise them, they should always be challenged to critical thought so as to create a critical society that becomes a safeguard of its own interests. Perpetuation of capitalist oppression after independence is accepted by the masses that took part and made sacrifices in the struggle (Nyerere 1968). They see this situation as a given and natural and beam with pride because their own are now holding the reins of power (Nyerere 1968; Cabral 1979; Ake 1981). The other reason is the people have learned to trust their nationalist leaders. As one participant says, “historically it's the masses that fought apartheid but they worship the leaders. We say we need a hundred thousand Bikos so if they kill one, others keep popping up.”⁴⁶² Another added, “The political animal we are dealing with has the ability to mutate and change itself. It can use political rhetoric and confuse the masses.”⁴⁶³ The leadership and its corollary bloc exert hegemony through consent of the masses that support power and social authority of the dominant social order (Gramsci 1971; Hall 1976). Sometimes there is the ambivalence by the masses when

⁴⁶¹ Haile Gerima addressing the SNI Durban September 23 2011

⁴⁶² A contribution during NFT's “Is Malema a Mugabe?” Museum Africa, August 6 2011.

⁴⁶³ A contribution from the floor during SNI Durban, September 23 2011.

they seem to participate in the state's domination over them while ridiculing it (Mbembe 1991; O'Brien 1996). Although people resent the state's intrusion in their lives, they are drawn into it because it remains a channel of getting the little to be gotten (Bratton 1989; O'Brien 1996). Even if the power is perverted, that matters little. The leadership is able to coerce the masses to conform to its interests. Total social authority is exerted, consent and preferences are shaped, and conflict is prevented or contained through *jouissance*. The masses are caught in enjoyment, a *jouissance* which in French has direct sexual connotations similar to “orgasm” (Evans 1988). Music and entertainment are integral. It doesn't have to be hedonistic; the masses listen and enjoy uplifting and revolutionary music but it doesn't always lead to any form of agency. It only strikes the senses not the inner emotions. The masses may not comprehend the message contained therein at all. In Lacanian analysis, the subject doesn't simply satisfy a desire, he enjoys desiring, and this is an essential dimension of his *jouissance* (Lacan cited in Evans 1998: 5). Desire lacks an object (in biological sense) but an endless pursuit for the enjoyment (*jouissance*), an eternally unsatisfied desire; so *jouissance* sustains desire, one is kept desiring in the absence of satisfaction. However *jouissance* moves from simply pleasure to mental and physical suffering – the existence of pleasure and pain “in a single packet” (ibid). In this discourse the Big Other factors in as symbolic. Žižek (2006: 8) asks whether by the Big Other Lacan means that individuals are mere epiphenomena, shadows with no real power of their own; that their self – perception as autonomous free agents is a kind of illusion blinding them to the fact that they are tools in the hands of the Big Other that hides behind the screen where he pulls the strings. For Lacan the reality of human beings is constituted by three inter-tangled levels: the symbolic, the imaginary and the real. This facilitates the masses' desire for things/objects which they don't possess themselves. Thus “man's desire is the other's desire” (Lacan cited in Žižek 2006: 36). Fundamentally human desire is that of the other's desire in both subjective and objective terms. It means envy and resentment are constitutive of human desire, that is, envy of the other who has and enjoys what the masses doesn't have or enjoy. In today's society, Žižek

observes that the injunction is “enjoy” but with prohibitions. One is permitted all enjoyment on condition that it's stripped of the substance that makes it “dangerous.” Seemingly the masses ape lifestyles of the Big Other who happen to be politicians, political leaders and celebrities. Party conferences, events and celebrations are a medley of conspicuous consumption and extravagance. Male leaders always have young women in tiny skirts in tow, who are referred to as “pantypreneur gold diggers in stilettos and two inch dresses that show off their underwear”⁴⁶⁴. The merriment, however cannot be complete without cars and drink for accompaniment. Party colours are strapped on car doors and windows; hooting and waving contribute to the excitement, the masses are enthralled, their emulation of leadership is orgasmic. The leadership hoist themselves in those poorly organised or disorganised spaces, momentarily, either to celebrate a party/national event or to canvass for votes, thereafter they leave for the exclusion of luxurious life of the suburbs. Performing artistes add to the splendour and glamour; “lavish musicals” elaborately crafted in detail meticulous, produced and staged at a cost, either in celebration of selected icons or historical events narrated on a subjective plane are also integral to these theatrics. The above situation is what I call *partitisation*.

This is similar to what Mbembe (2001) calls “aesthetics of vulgarity.” However, Quayson (2000) critiques Mbembe (1992) for his concern with “banality of power” and postcolonial African leaders' preoccupation with hedonistic fascination with the body as a means to foreground their power. Quayson's critique is that Mbembe ignores the history of this development in the west and how it continues as a stereotype broadcast in the media about Africa. Nonetheless it doesn't exonerate African leaders of this wanton obscenity that borders on criminality.

Just like all advanced capitalist societies, shaping and transformation of mass consciousness is aided by the rise of mass media and culture industry (Hall 1996). The resultant effect is the willing, voluntary consent and subordination of the masses under a particular social formation.

⁴⁶⁴ Sharda Naidoo, “ANC High – Rollers Spare No Expense.”

The masses may also be checked through naked brutal force involving police massacres, detention and general harassment. This scenario is epitomised by a facebook post: “suffering and smiling – Fela Kuti. I think the musician and prophet Fela wrote the song for us South Africans. We are indeed suffering and smiling.”⁴⁶⁵ Another added that “people are essentially stupid and gullible” and “that's right...people prefer lies and fairy tales than logical reality of life... the people were fed so much propaganda that the truth sounds like hallucinations...they have been *baasing* all their lives and getting on by just fine. Now you come tell them *baas* has been screwing them from behind, *hayibo wahlanya maan!* They would rather live in a lie, live for a lie, live believing all lies...than being alive.”

In a scenario like this one there is a contestation of ideas and ideologies – the mental frameworks, languages, concepts, categories, imagery of thought, systems of representation – which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define and render intelligible, the way society works (Hall 1996: 26). The extent ideas of different social groups enchant the masses will depend on both their materiality and posterity. A particular social group asserts its ascendancy and domination of social thinking of the masses, thus leadership over whole society. Power and domination are at dalliance here. But there are always contradictions. The masses develop their own corporate culture with its own forms of values and social relationships. It is within this culture that the struggle doesn't totally recede; rather it is always kept alive and seething waiting for a historic moment for explosion and aplomb. There exist some oppositional forces among the masses, who craft a counter ideology. A theory that explains the complexities of society; the figuring of a particular existing conundrum and a subjunctive description of a lived experience, necessitates this option. Social ideas arise which reflect the material conditions of certain social groups, become part of a social formation informing the struggle to change society and open the path towards a socialist transformation (Hall 1996). New

⁴⁶⁵ Facebook post May 23 2011

forms of consciousness and conceptions of the world are birthed, which move the masses into historical action against the prevailing system. The continued deterioration of conditions and mass impoverishment keep alive the flame of nationalism; awakening of consciousness on the basis of awareness of neocolonialist frustration and a reunion of by the majority of the population around the ideal of national liberation betrayed by the leadership (Cabral 1979: 134). In Gramscian sense ideas only become effective if they connect to a particular set of social forces. Ideological struggle therefore becomes part of a general struggle for mastery and leadership, that is, hegemony. This social bloc may be strengthened by its entry into “alliances”, enabling a wider social character that sets the popular classes and representatives of capital and those coalesced around the state, onto a collision course. But one finds out the masses are reluctant to engage into struggles that would benefit them and radically transform their lives, socially, economically or otherwise. Although there is intimation that the basis of a socialist revolution is created when in society the struggle results in mass consent and mass desire for change to transform society (Nkrumah 1964; Cabral 1979), the masses don't always desire change, even the poorest man. The masses are at times apathetic and shy away from any active self organising, engagement and involvement in endeavours that might bring change in their objective conditions. One elderly woman put it this way: “people only get up from their bums when they hear there is free stuff being distributed and cause a stampede there.”⁴⁶⁶ She added that the masses have normalised their condition and “all they think of is the bottle (alcohol).” The masses are slower to change their conceptions of the world or never change them at all (Gramsci 1971). Gramsci adds that a person may suffer intellectual crises, wavering between the old and the new, may lose faith in the old and yet may not come down in favour of the new. This all happens amidst state terror against the citizens and frequent police massacres. The people's capacity for anger is insipid. Black masses expect white liberal and white liberal democrats to

⁴⁶⁶ A contribution by one elderly woman from Alexandra during an SNI meeting, June 4 2011, Alex San Kopano, Alexandra, Johannesburg.

fight on their behalf, BC proponents allege. As human waste they don't matter to politicians; rather they only become important when elections are around the corner as one participant intimated. This is the primary reason why BC youth organised “NO VOTE” debates and campaigns in 2011 with pamphlets and posters distributed at Wits and around Johannesburg. Some t/shirts like SNI ones were inscribed:

Vote for ANC: Vote for Corruption and Poverty

Vote for DA: Vote for *Baas* and Madam

Vote for COPE: Vote for Clowns

We are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For

On Facebook messages like this were posted:

A note to voters: as you mark your X next to the ANC please think about Andries

Tatane who was murdered by the ANC government for demanding water. As you mark your X next to the DA think about the one eyed people of Hangberg and a concentration camp called Tin Town (Blikkiesdorp). It's you, the ballot and your God.⁴⁶⁷

Some sections of the masses still believe in the postapartheid “miracle” and still have a “kaffir mindset” as one BC aligned friend told me after a taxi ride to Soweto for an event. We were sitting in the back seat, conversing about the state of the nation. My friend, who is naturally voluble and loud, was criticising the ANC run government when a young man joined in and said there is BEE which is benefiting the people. He said we can no longer blame whites for whatever malaise affecting the country. He added that in townships development has been leaping in bounds as seen by the proliferation of state – of – the art malls. My friend vigorously defended BC and intimated that the economy is still in white hands. He said only 6% of the land has been redistributed to blacks since 1994 and that the ANC had failed to alleviate the Black Condition.

Some participants are sceptical if black people do read at all, given the levels of their gullibility.

⁴⁶⁷ Facebook post, May 18 2011.

Others agree that blacks do indeed read because in the townships the Daily Sun (which someone calls Daily Shit), the Sowetan, True Love and Drum are widely circulating, which all are biggest selling press editions are among blacks. Participants find problems with the content, though – what is it that they read and who owns those publications? The challenge, they say is for BC to come up with a popular media that would challenge the mainstream and identify with peoples' daily realities.

A revolutionary movement soon finds out it has to behave like Don Quixote; where participation is not conjoined by “winning their (masses) consent” but compulsion through the strength of the arm is necessary. The movement then asserts its hegemony and will over the masses, culturally, ethically, intellectually, not the other way round. However this has to happen only under certain determinate conditions. The Gramscian position is more persuasive – he outlines the task of a movement as never tiring repeating its own arguments because repetition is the best didactic means for working on the popular mentality. Secondly working incessantly to raise the intellectual of the populace, that is “giving a personality to the amorphous element” (Gramsci 1971: 340). One poem by a scintillating BC poet, Sabar affirms:

I am doing my best to open everybody eyes
time to break shackles of the mind and free ourselves
and turn pages of history
Malcolm X, Biko, Sankara, Mumia inspire us
and their spirit lives... Not Yet Uhuru⁴⁶⁸

11.2. The 2010 Soccer World Cup

Contradictions in the 1995 rugby and 2010 soccer world cups is that they “united” black and white South Africans despite expressions of “driving out” *makwerekwere* soon after the 2010

⁴⁶⁸ Performed at SNI Durban, September 23 2011

jamboree and a persisting white anti-black racism. Mngxitama⁴⁶⁹ sees the world cup as a reversal of old age racist perception that blacks are incapable. The hosting therefore was a laborious endeavour to “prove something.” An analysis of this view garners a perception that the event was a subconscious attempt by blacks to overcome a supposedly innate inferiority, summed up in the mantra “yes, we can.” This coincides with the idea of nation, nationalism and a repertoire of symbols epitomised by the national soccer team. The government made a call for Bafana “to make us proud”; Bafana, however, enjoyed the ignominy of making history by being the first ever host country to be eliminated in the first round. Nationalistic sentiments were mystified through efforts by the authorities to call it an “African World Cup” despite an aggressive anti – African feeling that is pervasive in the country. The irony is that billions of Rands were spent amidst pervasive poverty and vast inequalities. Mngxitama refers to the world cup as one of the latest miracles, “a colonial swindle” where priorities are misplaced. He bemoans the commercialisation of soccer which has lost its aesthetic and entertaining value. The people are also complicit because they didn't question the idea of playing host to enjoyment, merriment and entertainment in a sea of deprivation (see *jouissance* above), “a one big event and one big orgasm”, someone summed it.

Many were amazed by efficiency of services during the tournament:

The ANC is revealed as a proper anti – people servant of imperialism and an agent of neo – apartheid. They won't build hospitals, schools or clinics. They won't return the stolen land. They won't protect workers. They won't free the Black slaves on South African farms. They won't criminalise racism. They won't even build toilets, bring clean water and provide enough ARV's in good time to save lives but they can build intimidating infrastructure for their world cup within a short period of six years.⁴⁷⁰

Given the success of the world cup, lack of service delivery is deliberate whereby the ANC government “delivers services to its chosen constituency with frightening resolve and skill. That constituency is not

⁴⁶⁹ Andile Mngxitama “The People Versus Philip: How ANC Sold Us For a Cup”, NFT 6, July 2010.

⁴⁷⁰ Andile Mngxitama, “The People Versus Philip: How the ANC Sold Us for a Cup” NFT 6, July 2010.

the poor and voting majority but national settler white capital, global capitalism and the subordinated black capitalists of BEE” (ibid). FIFA is seen as the ultimate “scorer” benefiting handsomely from the spectacle.⁴⁷¹

The SACP which had criticised a trend in the ruling alliance to tenderpreneurship and corruption was silent about world cup dispossession⁴⁷² and corruption. Mngxitama declares, “The SACP's anti – corruption campaign is not only consistent with capitalism, but is a mere bourgeois moralising” (ibid).

Conclusion

According to Cohen (1969) any political/social order has to have a mystification of symbolism. Symbols bind and make the concept of the nation coherent. Always there are manifestations and exhibitions of power, which determine the official script that silences and mutes other voices. Notwithstanding this there exists spaces for consent, abidance and obedience, and oppositional and antagonistic on the other. The nation therefore is a frequent motion, a constant friction.

⁴⁷¹ Workers World News, Issue 59, June 2010.

⁴⁷² In Cape Town for example, people were dispossessed and dumped in Blikkiesdorp (Tin Town) in addition to general gentrification in major cities and towns. This was captured in the film “Tin Town” by Geoff Arbourne

Concluding Remarks

Black Consciousness is not simply an idea, a philosophy. It is a spirit. Like all spirits it never dies but lives, as an emotion and a motion that finds new meaning with each generation. This thesis has attempted to trace this lineage and the themes, topics and ideas corresponding to this legacy. Despite marginality in the postapartheid BC still insinuates itself in various spaces. Important in this discourse is the living embodiment of Steve Biko. Today he is claimed by various sections of black and white communities, for either narrow purposes or parsimonious interests. The contradiction is if his widespread invocation is meant to be an ideological pacification and dilution of his radical and potentially subversive thought, will it create a gap among the masses to question: who really is Biko; what is Black Consciousness; what is its meaning; what is its relevance in their social and spatial world? So while sometimes his valourisation might be for malevolent ends, could it ultimately be a tool that aids to an increased awareness by blacks of their historical and existential conditions? Biko has returned in the postapartheid, seething with “black rage and fury” as he finds a special niche among a particular zone: - a disenfranchised black and frustrated township youth who are politically, ideologically and theoretically astute. They relive and reimagine the ideals and ideas not only of Biko but of other erstwhile black radical thinkers. This raises the question: why should BC be relevant in today's society despite the triumphalism of non – racialism, rainbowism and neo – liberalism? The question seems to answer itself. Ideals, principles and teleology of the liberation struggle where a society that is human centred which BC proponents strove for has yet to come to fruition. There is a realisation by many that apartheid never died, it only went subterranean, and is well and well – fed, healthy, hale and hearty, is in robust constitution and alive. This postcolonial anomaly and malady opens up spaces for oppositional thought and action. BC, of course, is not a new thought but builds on the foundation patterned out by those of yore. BC will continue to illuminate the postapartheid social order because despite pronouncement of its “death knell”, it has never departed from the psyche of the people. The task of contemporary BC

adherents is to keep the thought wired, sharpen the strategy in face of a postcolonial tragedy and most important build a resilient grass-roots mass movement. To elaborate on the latter point, there is a need to organise in zones and spaces of marginality where the black majority are still trapped in the poverty created by apartheid and sustained by the postapartheid dispensations. This however, as I indicate in chapter 3, involves an elaborate political and ideological position that requires BC activists to be among, and constantly feel the pulse, of the people. As a historical fact, political upheavals and possibilities of change are cyclical and happen in phases. The first eighteen years of democracy may be deemed a phase of lull, celebration, pacification and expectancy. But as time rolls by, postcolonial black elite, who at one time were liberation fighters, in complicity with local white and imperialist capital, their former “sworn” enemies, soon “forget” the people. Expectancy and patience are known to wear thin unless if one is the biblical Job. This provides spaces for discomfiture and dissatisfaction. A prognosis of the postapartheid reveals that conditions for unrest and a possible social change are there. It is probable that sooner or later Azanian masses will revolt. A disconcerting and ominous prospect is that whenever that occurrence, there may be an absence of an organised, well – drilled black movement to provide leadership and politico-ideological direction. It might end up being a “revolution lost.” Nonetheless a revolutionary is an eternal optimist.

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