

Kenneth Mateesanwa Tafira, “Steve Biko Returns: The Persistence of Black Consciousness in Azania (South Africa).” Doctor of Philosophy degree, Social Anthropology, University of the Witwatersrand

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 a 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.