

“Without Mental Freedom”
*An Analysis of Self-Worth and Black Consciousness
In Post-Apartheid South Africa*



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Abstract

Physical freedom means nothing without mental freedom. The historic notions of inferiority and superiority, which colonization and apartheid set out to indoctrinate into the mentality of all those within its grasps, were left intact in the post-apartheid era; South Africans need to be enlightened as to their own prejudices that claim their unconscious behaviors. Through Black Consciousness the humanity, which was stripped from Blacks for centuries, seeks to restore itself and establish Blacks as equal human beings; while inevitably re-establishing their dignity, self-worth, and identity.

The research undertaken in the process of this paper is the result of gathering information, both quantitative and qualitative, from a variety of sources including: books, articles, interviews, speeches, and other such forms of information. The texts aided in understanding the results of colonization, racism, and apartheid on the mentality of the oppressed and provided possible means to overcome such obstacles. Interviews allowed the research to take on a more up-to-date perspective, considering the majority of texts were written pre-democratic South Africa.

Through the research undertaken in this project, it has become apparent that Black Consciousness is still quite relevant in present day South Africa, in fact, it is necessary. The psychological oppression of the past centuries has not been sufficiently redressed since independence in 1994; therefore Black Consciousness remains an important ideology that has the capability of eradicating the legacies of apartheid and colonization from the psyche of the oppressed.

*“All round me the white man,
above the sky tears at its navel,
the earth rasps under my feet,
and there is a white song, a white song.
All this whiteness that burns me...”*
- Frantz Fanon

Introduction

Reason for Conducting Research

Physical freedom means nothing without mental freedom. Is it possible to fully grasp the implications of what that entails, of lacking mental freedom? Whether or not it is fully possible, in the South African context, it becomes necessary. Centuries of oppression by a white racist minority have undoubtedly left a scar on the psyche of the oppressed. The effects of colonization and apartheid extend beyond the visible levels of abject poverty across South Africa through the unrelentingly imposed notions of superiority & inferiority, white & black, pride & disdain, into the mentality of the oppressed which continues through in today’s society¹.

From this it becomes clear that as long as blacks are suffering from inferiority complex – a result of 300 years of deliberate oppression, denigration and derision – they will be useless as co-architects of a normal society where man is nothing else but man for his own sake. Hence what is necessary as a prelude to anything else that may come is a very strong grass-roots build-up of black consciousness such that blacks can learn to assert themselves and stake their rightful claim. (Biko, 1970, p.22)

The reasoning behind this research lies in the effects of three centuries of mental denigration, dehumanization, and oppression which continuously leaves those historically marginalized peoples of South Africa incapacitated – in the sense that the ‘physical freedom’ they have gained since 1994 means nothing without mental freedom. The

¹ Society, in the general sense, when referred to, will specifically regard South African society for the purposes of this paper.

society that arose from the compromise of the previous government with the new democratic government was one in which “[t]he Negro [is] enslaved by his inferiority, [and] the white man enslaved by his superiority alike behave in accordance with a neurotic orientation” (Gibson, p.185). The freedom that was negotiated maintained the domination by the white minority; however, in post-apartheid South Africa, it was the economy that they dominated as opposed to the government. Integration was spoken of in terms of achieving a ‘Rainbow Nation’, yet “[a]s it is, both black and white walk into a hastily organized integrated circle carrying with them the seeds of destruction of that circle – their inferiority and superiority complexes.” (Biko, p.70) Those historic notions of inferiority and superiority, which colonization and apartheid set out to indoctrinate into the mentality of all those within its grasps, were left intact in the post-apartheid era. While, the masses who took up the vote for the African National Congress (ANC) received their Black President, new flag, and new national anthem, little was done to deal with the psychological issues of identity and self-worth that plague South African communities.

Personally, I am conducting this research for reasons beyond the academic. Through my own identity struggle I have become aware of the intense psychological defects that can debilitate the individual, and prevent one from reaching their potential that arises from a true understanding of self-worth. I do not claim to have undergone similar psychological and physical oppression as experienced in South Africa; nonetheless, I understand the importance of self-reclamation, especially in the context of this society. Freedom, specifically mental and psychological freedom, must be something that comes from the desire within an individual to seek out something better.

There must be an innate sensation from within that leads one to believe that they are worth more than what they have been given, and warrants the justification for establishing ones self-worth adamantly and rightfully. In these circumstances, an ideology such as Black Consciousness is needed to help develop such notions of self-worth into the psyche of the oppressed.

The information provided in this analysis of Black Consciousness and its role in reconciling one with oneself, is intended for the everyday victims of the unconscious effects of racism and inferiority complexes, and white superiority alike, that is apparent in daily behaviors of Blacks – ‘Blacks’ as defined by Black Consciousness, in which:

Black, as defined in the AZANIAN context, are defined as all those who have been politically, culturally, economically, and by law discriminated against and who bind together in the struggle for liberation....It brings together Africans, Asians, and people of mixed race. (Mangena, 1989, p.50)

Black Consciousness emphasized that “[b]eing black is not a matter of pigmentation - being black is a reflection of a mental attitude.” (Biko, p.52)

Society needs to be enlightened as to their own prejudices that claim their unconscious behaviors. These behaviors need to be assessed and take a conscious form, therefore allowing the prejudices of racism to be dissected and eventually eradicated. Through Black Consciousness the humanity, which has been stripped from Blacks for centuries, seeks to restore itself and establish them as equal human beings; while inevitably re-establishing their dignity, self-worth, and identity, affirming the interconnectedness of the three. “Out of this mutual respect for each other and complete freedom of self-determination there will obviously arise a genuine fusion of the life-styles of the various groups. This is true integration.” (Biko, p.22) It is only when these issues

have been addressed can South Africans look for Biko's idea of integration and non-racialism; until then, it is only a daydream awaiting to be realized.

Methodology

The research undertaken in the process of this paper is the result of gathering information, both quantitative and qualitative, from a variety of sources including: books, articles, interviews, speeches, and other such forms of information. The majority of the texts aided in understanding the results of colonization, racism, and apartheid on the mentality of the oppressed and provided possible means to overcome such obstacles. In coordination with my secondary source documents, several interviews took place to further develop specific aspects of the paper. The secondary sources created the foundation for further research and the basis for interviews.

Interviews allowed the research to take on a more up-to-date perspective, considering the majority of texts were written pre-democratic South Africa. Interviewees were questioned according to their specific domain of expertise. The questions asked, therefore were adjusted to accommodate the purpose of each interview, and would occasionally build off comments of previous interviews. Below is an example of a few general questions that were asked throughout the interviewing process:

- Has the psychological oppression of colonization and apartheid been adequately addressed since democratization?
- How important are ideologies such as Black Consciousness in the future of South Africa? and Why?
- Does Black Consciousness, an ideology designed to reclaim self-worth and identity, have a role to play in individual/national reconciliation?

- Do the needs for addressing the psychological effects of apartheid, white racism, colonization, etc., differ from generation to generation? If so, how?
- Are the youth of today, in any sense, disengaged from the history of apartheid and colonization? If so, how does this relate to identity issues?
- What do you propose are methods that can help redress issues of mental oppression and loss of self-worth?
- How does forgiveness and forgiving relate to self-worth, if at all?
- How important is forgiveness in the search for reconciliation?
- What is your response to the following quote: “moral defense of not forgiving lies precisely in the fact that ‘the primary value defended by the passion of resentment is self-respect, resentment being tied to individual’s self-respect or self-esteem, perception of own worth, of what he is owed,’”?
- What does forgiving entail in the context of South African history?
- How does Black Consciousness view the issue of forgiveness, which arose specifically during the time of the TRC?
- How does Black Consciousness seek to eradicate the effects of racism, as well as the legacy left by colonization and apartheid?
- What is the response to the notion that Black Consciousness only seeks to further divide the nation along racial lines?
- When is it possible for South Africa to be a non-racial society? What needs to happen for this to occur?

In using my methodology I learned a great deal about what is required to produce a research paper as demanding as that of the ISP. Reviewing a variety of texts is necessary before beginning research and formulating ones ideas into a coherent analysis of any topic. Interviews also provide further in depth analysis, and a more current perspective on any issue.

Before there is further discussion of Black Consciousness and its importance in reconciling individuals within post-apartheid South Africa, it is necessary to quell basic

concerns that arise with the ideology of Black Consciousness and its place in a non-racial² society. Even though such phrases like ‘non-racial’ and ‘rainbow nation’ are used to describe the current position of South Africa in tourist books and travel agencies, on the ground it is far from accurate. The use of Black Consciousness is alone a critique on the current status of South Africa society. Steve Biko recognizes that the ‘Black Consciousness’ approach would be irrelevant in a colourless and non-exploitative egalitarian society.” (Biko, p.96) However, since South African society is quite removed from such a colorless, non-exploitative egalitarian society; hence, Black Consciousness remains a relevant ideology as a result of today’s circumstances. By the time Black Consciousness is no longer important it will have taken on a different form. Black Consciousness, when it is successful, takes on a natural ‘human consciousness’ and is locked into the behaviors of the unconscious (Mokoape, April 2005).

Black Consciousness is too frequently misunderstood and vilified for its emphasis on race. However, this emphasis on race should not be mistaken for ‘racism’ or held responsible for furthering the racial divide that exists currently in South Africa. BC, as an ideology, was formulated to counteract the devices and mentality of white racism. Oppression based on race cannot be overcome through non-racial means. The inferiority complexes that were associated with race for over three centuries were “[e]mbedded in the concept of blackness,” and as a result “was its direct opposite – whiteness.” (Jordan, p.35) If “[w]hite and black connoted purity and filthiness, virginity and sin, virtue and baseness, beauty and ugliness, beneficence and evil, G-d and the devil,” (Jordan, p.35) then it is inevitable that an ideology seeking to reclaim the humanity and self-worth of

² Non-racial, as described in the context of South African society, refers to a society in which race is not an issue; that is to say, a colorblind society. The word ‘non-racial’ is in quotations because it is far from having any real claim or meaning in present day South Africa.

the Black population would place its emphasis on race, the focus of oppression. “What blacks are doing is merely respond[ing] to a situation in which they find themselves the objects of white racism.” (Biko, p.27) Aside from this, the white minority simultaneously attacks Black Consciousness as being racist; trying by any means to discredit the belief in Black solidarity.

Steven Bantu Biko, often referred to as the founder of Black Consciousness, writes in an article concerning the white liberal’s attack on Black Consciousness as racist:

What of the claim that blacks are becoming racists? This is a favourite pastime of frustrated liberals who feel their trusteeship ground being washed off from under their feet. These self-appointed trustees of black interests boast of years of experience in their fight for the ‘rights of blacks’When the blacks announce that the time has come for them to do things for themselves and all by themselves all white liberals shout blue murder!

‘Hey, you can’t do that. You’re being a racist. You’re falling into *their* trap....’ Those who know, define racism as discrimination by a group against another for the purposes of subjugation or maintaining subjugation. In other words one cannot be a racist unless he has the power to subjugate....*We are collectively segregated against – what can be more logical than for us to respond as a group?...*When workers come together under the auspices of a trade union to strive for the betterment of their conditions, nobody expresses surprise in the Western world....nobody acts as a trustee for another. Somehow, however, when blacks want to do their thing the liberal establishment seems to detect an anomaly. This is in fact a counter-anomaly. The anomaly was there in the first instance when the liberals were presumptuous enough to think that it behoved them to fight the battle for the blacks. (Biko, 1970, p.26-27)

The solidarity of the Black population has never been received well by the white minority, but it must be established that it is not their place to dictate the form of the struggle. Directly after an initiative by the Black majority too unify themselves in support of each other, the white minority screams in terror that they are practicing ‘reverse racism’ and preventing any potential social harmony from taking place.

Unfortunately, at this point the Black population tends to cede to the demands of the white minority and begins to believe that Black solidarity will prevent non-racialism. Instead of solidarity, the historically oppressed peoples of South Africa become incredibly divisive. The tactic of the apartheid regime was the age-old ‘divide and

conquer' strategy, hence their obsession with classifying people according to race, tribe, and the development of Bantustans. One of the most affected provinces was KwaZulu-Natal, because the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the ANC waged a brutal campaign of terror on each other rather than unifying themselves against a common enemy, white racism. This proved the success of the Nationalist Party in dividing the races; even through today there lies an absurd level of mistrust among the Indians, Coloureds, and Africans, while the white population is alone regarded without disdain.

In spite of those contestations about Black Consciousness, there lies an even greater fundamental reason behind the use of the word Black and the exclusiveness of Black Consciousness to those defined as Black. It stems from the understanding by the oppressed peoples that their future lies within themselves, the right to self-determination and the right to take hold of their future. Colonialism's "most devastating effect was:

the erosion of the self-confidence of the colonially oppressed people it affected. As a consequence, even though the cultural practices, beliefs and dispositions of the indigenous African people are prevalent in the area, the hegemonic ideal of most of the inhabitants is 'European'. (Alexander, 2002, p.140)

As a result of this, the process of reclaiming ones self-identity and self-worth cannot be undertaken by another, especially one who cannot claim to understand the plight of the oppressed; specifically targeting white liberals "because the experience of being 'white' is still largely that of privilege." (Booth, p.116) It is only when the oppressed individual believes in his³ own humanity can true progress be made in the search for racial equality. Either way, neither non-racialism nor integration will occur in a society that was formed and maintained along racial lines without redressing the effects of racism.

³ The use of the word 'his' and other gender specific terms should not be interpreted as a reference to one specific gender, but simply as a form of identifying the human race from other species.

Legacy of Colonization and Apartheid

It is indeed important to take care of the wounds of the past, because if there is no self-healing then there can be no future together. This is evident in the fact that the majority of South Africans are living in the same destitute conditions that they were living in under the apartheid, except that now the white minority legitimately controls the wealth in the country. “When we consider the continuing disparities between rich and poor – crudely, between white and black – we may well ask whether the new South Africa...is doing anything more than legitimating inequality.” (Alexander, p.143) Simultaneously Blacks are being told, “‘Liberate yourselves from victimhood’...and then provided with the terms, the conditions, the language, the mode, whilst not the material or economic means.” (Grunebaum, p.5) There can be no healing, no reconciliation, and no moving forward for the “14.7 million black people [who] do not have safe drinking water, which makes them vulnerable to cholera and other water-borne diseases,” or for the 7.3 million South Africans living in shacks referred to as ‘squatter camps’ (Mangena, Sowetan Press). The disparities of wealth are a constant reminder of the oppressive systems of the past. Unfortunately,

the demography of the colonial city reflects [the oppressed person’s] view of the psychic structure of the colonial relation. The native and settler zones, like the juxtaposition of black and white bodies, are opposed, but not in the service of ‘a higher unity.’ No conciliation is possible, he concludes, for of the two terms one is superfluous. (Gibson N, 1999, p. 192)

While the everyday physical aspects of life remain a constant reminder of South Africa’s history, one cannot imagine this being an environment ready to foster mental growth and freedom. As long as the physical structure of the old regime remains intact, progress will be hindered by the everyday reminders of the racial divide and notions of inferiority that

were intertwined with it. The phrase ‘actions speak louder than words’ is a commonly used expression that fits the South African paradigm. As leaders speak of ‘freedom’ and a ‘new nation’, the meaning of the words get lost somewhere in the discussion of implementation; leaving Black South Africa with no sense of freedom.

Moreover, with close to forty-percent unemployment it is unrealistic to speak of reconciliation and integration. Along with such appalling statistics of current South Africa, integration and non-racialism remains unrealistic because:

Reconciliation in South Africa is buoyed between communities denying Apartheid and their complicity in it and communities who have not as yet been given the opportunity to mourn the varying forms of loss that came with their experiences under Apartheid. (Henri, 2003, p.16)

The white supremacy of colonization brought with it notions of race deeply rooted in all areas of life. One example is of the definition of the word ‘black’,

[a]s described by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the meaning of *black* before the sixteenth century included, “Deeply stained with dirt; soiled, dirty, foul....Having dark or deadly purposes, malignant; pertaining to or involving death, deadly; baneful, disastrous, sinister....Foul, iniquitous, atrocious, horrible, wicked....Indicating disgrace, censure, liability to punishment, etc.” Black was an emotionally partisan color, the handmaid and symbol of baseness and evil, a sign of danger and repulsion. (Jordan, 2000, p.35).

Racism was inescapable. Colonization sought to “convince the natives that colonialism came to lighten their darkness. The effect consciously sought by colonialism was to drive into the natives’ heads the idea that if the settlers were to leave, they would at once fall back into barbarism, degradation and bestiality.” (Fanon, p.169)

The desire to claim one’s self-identity and self-worth, that is so vital for reconciling oneself, has been driven away through years of devaluation. “These then were a defeated people who wallowed in the hopelessness of their situation, believing in the totality of the superiority of whites and the inherent inferiority of Black people.” (Mangena, p.49)

Colonization sought to ingrain superiority and inferiority complexes amongst its inhabitants along racial lines, thus:

the total result looked for by colonial domination was indeed to convince the natives that colonialism came to lighten their darkness. The effect consciously sought by colonialism was to drive into the natives' heads the idea that if the settlers were to leave, they would at once fall back into barbarism, degradation and bestiality. (Fanon, 1963, p.169)

With such vile thoughts forcing themselves upon the Black population, physically and mentally, even the strongest of souls are coaxed to give in after years of servitude because the world becomes all encompassing:

All round me the white man, above the sky tears at its navel, the earth rasps under my feet, and there is a white song, a white song. All this whiteness that burns me...I sit down at the fire and become aware of my uniform. I had not seen it. It is indeed ugly. I stop there, for who can tell me what beauty is? (Fanon, 1963, p.258-260 (Excerpt))

It is this mental struggle for liberation from the dehumanization of the past that has not been adequately addressed. Colonialism "is a systematic negation of the other person and a furious determination to deny the other person all attributes of humanity, colonialism forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly: "In reality, who am I?" (Fanon, p. 200); a question that has not been taken seriously in post-apartheid South Africa.

Even when Blacks find themselves accepted or welcomed into the white community it becomes an inescapable dilemma for them, Fanon explains the plight of the black man in a white progressive community: "When people like me, they tell me it is in spite of my color, when they dislike me, they point out that it is not because of my color. Either way, I am locked into the infernal circle." (Gibson, p.67) This is the legacy that colonization and apartheid have left on society, leaving a psychological vacuum that must be replaced with an ideology seeking to re-establish that all men are indeed created equal.

Concise History of Black Consciousness

“It becomes a problem when the history of resistance is seen as synonymous with the history of the ANC...”
- Mamdani

The philosophy and history of Black Consciousness is a direct product of its environment. Since the psychological and physical conditions of the Black population of South Africa has been placed into a historical context, the evolution of an ideology such as Black Consciousness appears almost inevitable. BC was a philosophy based on the necessities of the Black population of the 1960's, and is understandably relevant in today's society as well. Black Consciousness was an organic response to oppression. Mental degradation had noticeably taken its toll on the oppressed and it was within the young minds of students attending the University of Natal – Non-European section campus that the mentality of the oppressed peoples of South Africa experienced a drastic shift. As of 1959 the apartheid regime passed the 'Extension of Education Act' which created specifically Black ethnic universities across the country. Blacks were officially not permitted to attend white universities by law – it should be known that at this time Blacks mostly did not attend white universities before 1959. The University of Natal was the only school to have a section of it specifically for designed for Black students, part of the reasoning behind this was because it was the only university in the country where Blacks could attend medical school.

Under the guidance of strong-willed intelligent individuals, Black Consciousness sought out to conscientize the population and help reclaim the right to self-identify and self-worth within each individual. The most prominent Black Consciousness figure of the time was Steven Bantu Biko because of his charisma and his eventual unfortunate

death. After several ‘awakenings’ took course through his unsuccessful interactions with the National Union of South Africa Students (NUSAS), Biko, along with Mokoape, Moodley, Pityana and others, formed an alternate student organization that would cater to the needs of the Black students and provide them with the right to self-determination without interference from the ‘white liberal’⁴. The South African Students Organization (SASO) was formed in 1968. It’s birth as an organization was initiated through informal discussions between Biko, Mokoape, Moodley, Pityana, and their comrades. Their discussions resulted in a constant interrogation of their lives, environment, society, education system and all other areas where the oppressive apartheid regime extended. The questioning would begin with simple questions like: why are our parent’s poor? Why are we attending the ‘Non-European’ section of the university?, and would result in questions concerning greater society. The contradictions experienced in their interactions with NUSAS became overtly apparent, and even further, the fact that the privilege that the white liberals spoke of was a direct result of the oppression and sweat off the backs of their fathers, led them to secede.

Before the creation of SASO, they began with renaming their section of the school to the University of Natal – Black section. As they questioned the reasoning behind them being referred to as the ‘Non-Europeans’, they rejected the title of ‘Non-European’ because of its implications. It was as if the Europeans were there first, and Blacks were the ‘other’. The rejection of being a negation of the European, or the white

⁴ White liberals are those that Biko explains as “the people who claim that they too feel the oppression just as acutely as the blacks and therefore should be jointly involved in the black man’s struggle for a place under the sun.” (Biko, p.21) The ‘white liberal’, in relation to Black Consciousness, finds himself associated with such organizations as NUSAS where integration was seen in theory, but the lack of practical application by NUSAS led to the formation of SASO and the development of Black Consciousness.

man was the students of the University of Natal's Black sections first move; founding SASO was their second.

SASO was initially unwelcome and was confronted by NUSAS, and others, with hostility. Because Blacks formed SASO for Blacks, the organization was antagonized as a racial organization that only sought out to further the racial divide in South Africa. Such ludicrous comments by the white community brought forth a series of contradictions and issues.

As stated previously, the 'white liberal' community, for years, dictated the discourse concerning the issue of Blacks. Even though they were quite aware that the root of the problem was indeed white racism, they neglected to address that issue in any meaningful form. The white liberal had the luxury of a clean conscious because they were 'helping the Black man', all while they continued living in their white world of privilege. Occasionally it would appear as though it became a competition among white liberals to "prove to as many blacks as they can find that they are liberal." (Biko, p.24) However, if ever the white liberal was asked to do something like "stopping to use segregated facilities or dropping out of varsity to work at menial jobs like all blacks or defying and denouncing all provisions that make him privileged, you always get the answer – 'but that's unrealistic!'" (Biko, p.24) Therefore, it became imperative that Blacks recognized that it was their struggle, they needed to understand it, and they needed to explain it (Mokoape, April 2005). "White liberals must leave blacks to take care of their own business while they concern themselves with the real evil in [South African] society – white racism." (Biko, p.25)

The philosophy of Black Consciousness is that of self-interrogation and understanding. It is a never-ending sojourn that seeks to instill values of self-worth and self-identity within the Black population. Black Consciousness cannot be easily defined and limited because it “is a quest for true humanity,” (Biko, p.108) that is in itself infinite. Black Consciousness seeks to “infuse the black community with a new-found pride in themselves, their efforts, their value systems, their culture, their religion and their outlook to life.” (Biko, p.53) It further “seeks to destroy inferiority complexes that afflict Blacks as a result of living in a society dominated by white racist power structures...It is a philosophy empowering Black people to define themselves on their own terms.” (Mangena, p.50)

Black Consciousness, although it is a philosophy, in the face of such fierce oppression, was forced to take a political or libratory form. “There can be no consciousness that lives side by side with oppression.” (Mokoape, Discussion) Once Blacks became conscious of their self-worth and rightful claim as equals, it was unimaginable that nothing would result from this. SASO was the first of many organizations to form based on the foundation of BC. During the years of the 1960s and 1970s approximately twenty-five Black Consciousness Movements (BCM) were set-up and were either directly or indirectly associated with BC philosophy. The goal of BC was to take the message to the people where they were, this was partially based on the realization that the struggle was something that not only belonged to the students at the universities, but also involved everyone. The message of BC became one of self-empowerment, individuals were infused with such knowledge that each person is his own leader, and there lies a struggle within each person. The slogan of the time became

“Black Man, you are on your own!” Do not look to the universities for direction, you have the abilities to fight and determine your own role in the struggle. There was great decentralization throughout the ranks of BCM, which aided in the development of a large core of BC leaders (Mokoape, April 2005).

The conscientization of the youth specifically, sparked the Soweto uprisings and further carried the struggle for liberation into a new level and on through the 1980's. This spark caught the apartheid regime off-guard and brought forth the banishment of all BC organizations in 1977, as well as the death of Steve Biko at the hands of the ruthless security police. In 1978 the Azanian⁵ People's Organization (AZAPO) was formed by followers of BC philosophy, which currently remains the dominant BCM organization in the post-apartheid political landscape. The defiance of the 1970's that was ignited with the advent of BC ended approximately three decades later with South Africa's first democratic election.

Reconciliation thus far, through 2005

AZAPO Case Against Truth and Reconciliation Commission

AZAPO adamantly protested the negotiation process leading to the democratization of South Africa because of the power structure that remained intact. The leaders of AZAPO felt that they were bargaining from a position of weakness, leaving the apartheid regime in control of the negotiations. As a result of the remaining position of power that was used in the negotiations by the National Party, the Truth and

⁵ Azanians are the people of Azania. Azania is a Swahili word used by Black Consciousness followers as an alternate name for South Africa. South Africa was named as a country by white colonialists, therefore the renaming of the country is a more accurate reflection of its inhabitants who are indigenously African.

Reconciliation Commission was created through excessive compromise on behalf of the liberation movements. When the TRC began investigating and hearing cases for amnesty and reparations, AZAPO brought a lawsuit against the TRC and President Mandela.

The focus of the case was based on a few concrete ideals. The liberation movements of South Africa, as well as the international community had acknowledged that apartheid was indeed a 'crime against humanity'. AZAPO argued that if then what had happened was a 'crime against humanity' how can an institution be created that seeks to justify the "actions of apartheid practitioners?" (Mokoape, April 2005) Furthermore, everyone involved in the liberation struggle had spent years convincing the international community that apartheid was in fact a 'crime against humanity'; and to then grant amnesty to perpetrators of gross human rights violations without first finding them guilty is a "distortion of justice." (Mokoape, April 2005) AZAPO wanted for the criminals to first be convicted for the crimes they have committed, and then grant them amnesty if they were deemed fit to receive it.

The impact of the failures of the TRC has left a lasting impression on the minds of Black South Africans. For some it has sent them in defiance of the law claiming their actions of petty theft is nothing compared to gross human rights violations, in which the government has failed society by allowing those criminals to walk free. For others it has left them deprived of mental victory, that is, the ability to truly feel free in *their* country. They have been robbed of that cathartic moment which should have come with their freedom. For those who are still locked into the 'mental shackles' of bondage because they have not yet been set free from the physical reminders of apartheid, nor has their psychological sufferings been adequately addressed.

Those who have sacrificed their lives in the struggle for liberation “needed to feel that they were victorious,” to know that the pain, torture, distress, angst, and inexplicable sufferings throughout the days of their past were for a legitimate reason; and “to know that there is a penalty for those who committed crimes against humanity;” it was all needed because it justifies the struggle. The institution of the TRC denied Blacks of that feeling, leaving them “in limbo” because “they’ve been told they were victorious without seeing it, [without] feeling it.” (Mokoape, April 2005) There is this sense of a ‘National Depression’, as Dr. Mokoape describes, that leaves Blacks in a state of uncertainty with the abrasions of the past exposed.

Current Analysis of ‘Black’ Society

*“South Africa could succeed in putting across to the world a pretty convincing, integrated picture, with still 70 percent of the population being underdogs.”
- Steve Biko*

In order to properly place the relevance of Black Consciousness and this study in perspective with its purpose, it is important to understand the current reality of Black South Africans. Within the historically oppressed society of South Africa there appears to be conflicted feelings of post-apartheid South Africa. There are those who feel that a milestone has been reached in their society; they have a black president, “the white regime has been dislodged from political office,” and the country has progressed greatly since the elections of 1994. Allister Sparks reports statistical evidence of that progression:

We have brought clean water to more than 9 million people who did not have it before, electricity to more than 2 million, and telephones - that vital connection to the new Information Age - to 1,5 million. We have integrated, at least nominally, more than

30 000 public schools that used to be racially segregated.... (Sparks, 2003, p.3)

Nevertheless, there remains a sufficient amount of South Africans who do not feel that much has changed in the past eleven years of democracy, which “the product of negotiations has not translated into victory for blacks, not total victory.” (Mokoape, April 2005) Total victory is practically impossible to achieve, but Blacks should feel as though things have shifted in favor of a society prepared to redress the imbalances created by colonization and apartheid. The covenant that Nelson Mandela brought forth upon his inauguration as President in 1994 has hardly been realized:

We enter a covenant that we shall build a society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity - a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world. (Sparks, 2003, p.2)

Part of the euphoria around the release of Nelson Mandela from prison was the expectation that things would change upon his arrival into office. It did not take long for the euphoria to fade and the realization that Mandela alone cannot transform the country overnight to settle in. It could be said that Mandela helped provide ‘a new face’ for South Africa, while its internal organs remained vastly unchanged. Fanon describes the ideal role of a post-independence government:

before concerning itself about international prestige, ought first to give back their dignity to all citizens, fill their minds and feast their eyes with human things, and create a prospect that is human because conscious and sovereign men dwell therein. (Fanon, 1963, p. 165)

South Africa desperately needed ‘a new face’, a place that is African and proud of it.

Thabo Mbeki recently addressed the nation on Freedom Day in Durban. He spoke of the “challenges of the Second Decade of Freedom...because the legacy of colonialism and

apartheid runs very deep.” (Mbeki, p.2) The President also draws a direct connection between the dignity of the people and their current physical living conditions:

Indeed, in the first 11 years of freedom we managed to give hope where there was hopelessness; we brought back dignity where indignity prevailed, through among others, land restitution, housing delivery, provision of clean water, electricity, social grants, better access to education and an improved economy. In this way, millions of South Africans know and feel that South Africa truly belongs to all of us. (Mbeki, 2005, pg.2)

Although the last line of that comment is most debatable because of the physical and mental legacies of colonization and apartheid that have been left intact, Mbeki does graze over an important issue, dignity. The course to re-establishing ones self-worth will remain uncharted without addressing the significance of dignity. AZAPO is in agreement with Mbeki on this issue, that “[t]he worth, pride and dignity of Black people, which are among the goals of [AZAPO], can only derive from their ownership of their land and economy.” (Mangena, p.66) However, Mbeki seems to apply this as one of the only means in which Black people can regain their dignity. The physical and mental are inextricably linked together, but it is a mistake to focus just on the physical needs, although they are great, without addressing the psychological needs of the people. It’s as if providing people with a higher standard of living will in itself solve the psychological oppression of the past.

Regrettably this is not so, present day society is one in which Blacks are assimilating into “a pre-existing white order.” (Mokoape, April 2005) This kind of assimilation is not in the interest of the Black majority, nor is it beneficial towards building the nation of South Africa. “Integration and non-racialism cannot work if they are understood as a one way street where Blacks must assimilate white culture, values and norms.” (Mangena, p.52) Black society has yet to fully recover from their past.

Without a sense of pride in their history or their identity Black society remains ‘in limbo’. As Blacks assimilate into white culture and schools they are taught white values, and learn European history without at first having pride and an understanding of Black culture or history. Black South Africans have difficulty showing pride in their country as a result of a lack of identity. There is this sense of “powerlessness within a position of power.” (Mokoape, April 2005) It is at this point that Fanon believes the falsities of a ‘new country’ settle into the mind of the oppressed:

Now it must be said that the masses show themselves totally incapable of appreciating the long way they have come. The peasant who goes on scratching out a living from the soil, and the unemployed man who never finds employment do not manage, in spite of public holidays and flags, new and brightly-coloured though they may be, to convince themselves that anything has really changed in their lives. (Fanon, 1963, p. 136)

Black society must believe that they are citizens of a new country, to feel it mentally and to see it physically, rather than be convinced by politicians that they are living in one.

As part of the on going development and restructuring of South African society is a growing class conflict. There is a growing Black middle class and elite group that have greatly benefited in the transition process to a democratic South Africa. It is this group that reaps the benefits of such programs as Affirmative Action, and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) while neglecting the majority of South Africans, the lower class.

Howard Barrell quotes a study on the redistribution of income in post-apartheid South Africa:

[T]here has been a ‘significant redistribution of income towards previously disadvantaged population groups’. It demonstrates that the country’s economic elite is becoming significantly black, and that economic class divisions bear markedly less correlation to race than is commonly thought to be the case....The richest 10% of blacks received an average 17% increase in income, while the poorest 40% of households actually suffered a fall in household income of around 21% (2000). (Alexander, 2002, p.159)

Even though there is a growing Black middle-upper class, “it’s not a productive class that owns any means of production; they guard the means of the white man.” (Mokoape, April

2005) That is to say that the growing Black elite do not hold a significant control over the present day economy;

[n]evertheless it can be said with a high degree of certainty that even if the proportion of real, as opposed to token, black ownership of the economy were to rise substantially over the next twenty years or so, this will not automatically translate into any radical improvement in social relations. (Alexander, 2002, p.159)

A growing Black elite represents only a minority of Black South Africans, and unfortunately exacerbates the need for relief, from mental and physical oppression, for the marginalized masses.

Role of White Community

The role of the white community, in general, in reconciliation can best be described as absent. The moment freedom was achieved in April of 1994, reconciliation became commonplace among South Africans. The main institution intended as a gateway to the reconciliation process was the TRC. It was looked upon largely by the Black community as a reaching out to the white community to acknowledge their role in apartheid and help build a future together; however, the failure by the white community to engage with the TRC and the failure of the TRC to deal with beneficiaries of apartheid, disengaged the white people from the reconciliation process. When reconciliation is mentioned in political discourse there seems to be a constant expectation from Black people to go out of their way to resolve the social disharmony of the country, yet the white community does not reciprocate in any substantial manner. It is not enough that the Black population of South Africa suffered through three hundred years of oppression; now that they are 'free' they must also carry the burden of reconciliation too.

One of the greatest obstacles facing reconciliation is the white community not acknowledging their role in apartheid as either a beneficiary or perpetrator. “Many white people say, ‘I was never a part [of it], but [there] needs to be sense of acknowledgement, that even though you [were] not part, some way or another you benefited.’” (Nyembe, May 2005) Since the TRC was only designed to deal with perpetrators of gross human rights violations, it therefore eliminated the vast majority of white people from involving themselves in the reconciliation process.

It is essential that the white community recognize the amount of privilege they hold because of their skin color in post-apartheid South Africa, and accept the role of redressing that exact issue. There are hardly any white people who did not benefit from the systematic oppression of the majority of South Africans, yet few are willing to accept that under the apartheid regime they benefited from the oppression of others. In a survey taken by James Gibson he reports that approximately 90% of the white people he interviewed, perceived their role in apartheid as a bystander, inactive opponent, or spectator, while only 8% viewed themselves as beneficiaries (Gibson, p.38).

In addition, the white community has never apologized for what has happened, so there can be expectation for national reconciliation on a serious level. In fact, the most unsettling thing about the views of the white community was best described by the sister of a victim of an attack carried out by Umkhonte weSizwe militants. After a TRC hearing, she said that white people cannot be held responsible for the crimes committed during apartheid just because of the color of their skin, especially when they might not have even supported the National Party or the system of apartheid (A Long Nights Journey Into Day). It is that ignorance and lack of recognition of how white people

benefited from apartheid that cannot allow Blacks to forgive and move forward even if they wanted to.

Furthermore, the desertion of the white population in this post-apartheid society is ineffective for reconciliation; it was predicted by Mosibudi Mangena because of the resulting disappearance of white communities in other post-independence southern African countries. He predicted the withdrawal of the white community from the process of nation-building because:

In the countries of Southern Africa that have recently attained independence, it is only Blacks who are sincerely trying to integrate and produce a non-racial society. On losing state power, whites, as a group, have withdrawn into the economy, including land, which they control almost absolutely. (Mangena, 1994, p.51)

Since the white community has the luxury of removing themselves from society while maintaining their wealth and economic power, there has been no serious attempt in post-apartheid South Africa at addressing the issue of white involvement or responsibility.

the majority of white people have withdrawn back [and] are still enjoying the benefits of the past regime, [yet] the small minority is really being appreciated, but the majority who stays behind makes it so difficult for people to really say we can move on because there are still incidences where we feel that white people are behaving in the manner that they are in power and they are not even considerate of Black peoples efforts. (Nyumbe, May 2005)

Political leaders, because of that, only seem to imply the need for their involvement without actually asking. President Mbeki makes the following request:

Furthermore, through the work that we have done, some who were better-off before 1994 are even more prosperous today. As we build a South Africa that belongs to all, we would appeal to these compatriots to use their better positions in society to help improve the living conditions of the poor in our country. It cannot be that while government creates conditions for their own advancement and prosperity, these South Africans should continue to demand that it should be the responsibility only of the government to address the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment. (Mbeki, 2005, p.2)

In this speech Mbeki is reaching out to the upper echelons of society and requesting their aid in improving the livelihood of South Africans living in poverty. Although he does not specifically single out the white community, it is implied considering that white South Africans make up 65% of the wealthiest 10% as of 2000. Mbeki, however, is also addressing the new Black elite because as of 1995 white South Africans made up 95% of the wealthiest 10% in society, meaning that there has been a large growth of a Black elite since 1995 in South Africa, this gain for Blacks “is diminished by the fact that millions of their race still have desperate conditions of absolute want.” (Mangena, p.67) Interesting enough, Neville Alexander believes that “[i]f anything, [the Black elite] can be expected to be even more exploitative in their attitudes, since they would assume that in a 'democratic' country where there is constitutionally enshrined 'equality of opportunity', every other black person should be able to 'make it'.” (Alexander, p.159) Despite the fact that Mbeki is also making an appeal to the Black elite by requesting the help of those who have prospered over the years, they are not his target audience. The President is reaching out to the white community, like Blacks have always done. No longer can Black South Africa question the dedication of white people to building a new nation because that would be too racial or discriminatory, yet it does not deny the legitimacy of the question.

A dedicated white South Africa would be one who is willing to commit themselves in all aspects of life. First and foremost would be the acceptance of their role under the apartheid regime. Acknowledgment is not something that is only provided by the perpetrator of a crime, but also the beneficiaries. The need of those historically disadvantaged by apartheid and colonialism goes beyond monetary compensation. In

order for reconciliation to take place there needs to be acknowledgement within the white community of their role in the apartheid system, whether it was perpetrator or beneficiary. Desmond Tutu believes that “if the process of healing and forgiveness is to succeed, ultimately acknowledgement by the culprit is indispensable – not completely, but nearly so.” (Tutu, p.270) Acknowledgement of the truth and of having wronged someone is important, but there also needs to be a willingness to reach out and engage the Black community on every level. Even when there is integration in present day South Africa, the form that it is taking is not conducive to true integration:

Our children are being bussed into white schools but you do not see the same happening about white children going into the townships. White teachers come and teach in the Black schools whereas there are no Black teachers going into white schools. (Mangena, 1995, p.75)

Again the issue of the role of the white minority in reconciliation is questioned. It is the Blacks who seem to be making the most effort in integrating and ultimately in reconciling.

It goes without saying that under the apartheid regime the white community was clearly responsible for the systematic oppression and denigration of the Black population of South Africa – that is, not to say, the entire white population of South Africa committed human rights violations – and irregardless of political affiliation or stance the white community grossly benefited from the oppression of others. How is it that there can be talk of reconciliation when the white community is not engaged? Afrikaner politicians used reconciliation as a threat “to dictate their demands”, saying “give us what we want, or *we won't* reconcile” (Krog, p.109).

Reconciliation must be understood as an undertaking needed by all South Africans, enabling a true shift from the mentality of the past. “Integration and non-racialism cannot work if they are understood as a one way street where Blacks must assimilate white culture, values and norms.” (Mangena, p.52) This is often how reconciliation has been accepted in South Africa, with the white community withdrawing into the comfort of their own protected world and ignoring the needs of the rest of the population.

Self Worth & Reconciliation

Overcoming the Legacy of Colonization and Apartheid

“I am against the superior-inferior white-black stratification that makes the white a perpetual teacher and the black a perpetual pupil.”
– Steve Biko

The physical and psychological legacies of the past remain intact in post-independence South Africa. This is apparent in the physical structure of urban society. Blacks live away from the city and must commute to work daily. The continuing separation of the city along racial lines is seen in Durban where North Beach, an area historically limited to whites, remains a predominantly white beach; while Blacks continue to use South Beach, an area historically designated for ‘non-whites’. Those physical remnants in society prevent Blacks from psychologically fully attaining freedom because of the connection between the physical and the psychological.

The psychological effects of colonization and apartheid are seen in countless aspects of society, the use of the word *Baas* and *Missus* is a daily example of this. It is not enough when referring to someone in a respectful manner to use the word Sir or

Ma'am, or in KwaZulu-Natal where the Zulu tribe refers to its elders using the word Baba or Mama as a sign of respect, instead Blacks continue to refer to whites in a term that acknowledges the inferiority they were subjected to in the past. Black Consciousness and AZAPO seek to "destroy the phenomenon of *Baas* and *Missus* that has been the scourge of this country for centuries." (Mangena, p.84) The removal of those terms from everyday vernacular represents a shift from the oppression of the past, and towards a future as equals.

The effects of psychological oppression left no one unaffected. Nelson Mandela, an iconic figure in South Africa, experienced the effects of mental denigration during the apartheid years. As Mandela was on a plane flying around the African continent during the struggle, it was his first encounter with a Black pilot and immediately he felt his life in danger. Since white superiority and black inferiority was forced on him in all aspects of his daily life, for a moment Mandela questioned whether or not a Black man was capable of operating such machinery. Mandela's experience was certainly not unique to him, whether it is in the language or actions of Blacks the effects of oppression are still visible a half-century later, especially after two decades (1970-1990) of the apartheid regimes most oppressive period. Unmistakably, the physical and psychological legacies of apartheid have not been redressed.

As a result of these issues not being appropriately resolved, the Black community finds itself in a 'national depression' where there is a sense of identity and culture loss, a sense of change without seeing it, and remnants of the oppression of the past; all a result of the legacy left by colonization and apartheid. Black Consciousness has the foundation to fill this void, because it emphasizes empowering the individual and reclaiming ones

self-worth. If one becomes proud of being Black, essentially who he is, and believes in his own humanity, identity and cultural revitalization will follow. When addressing the physical elements of life that require a shift, Black Consciousness Movements are constantly advocating the need for further addressing the physical needs of the people so that they can also feel psychologically free; and ultimately expel the remnants of apartheid and colonization from present day South Africa.

Mental Healing and Liberation

During our years of freedom, South Africa has steadily become a country that belongs to all because, in part, where there could have been serious racial conflicts because of our unfortunate past, our people, particularly those who were oppressed, have offered the hand of friendship and forgiven those who were responsible for their untold suffering.
- Thabo Mbeki

Mental healing and liberation are both intertwined with issues of self-worth and respect. It is imperative for the effects of colonization and apartheid to be redressed and surface in mainstream political discourse. One important aspect of resolving the effects of mental oppression is coming to terms with ones history and moving forward. As a means to achieve this objective, forgiveness becomes a term of obsession and essentiality.

Forgiveness has been the center of discussion concerning reconciliation in South Africa. Whether it was Desmond Tutu emphasizing the need for forgiveness and occasionally dictating the form it would take throughout the TRC, or Thabo Mbeki speaking of the level of forgiveness that has occurred throughout society in present day South Africa, it is undoubtedly an issue that places itself at the forefront of the continuing struggle for a reconciled egalitarian society.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu is synonymous with the TRC because of his role in the truth hearings of the commission. The TRC took a specifically religious tone because of his presence and his emphasis on his own personal religious beliefs throughout the course of the hearings.

The TRC was then “[f]ramed as a moral, theological, and psychological project of healing, forgiveness, and reconciliation,” and emphasized “self-empowerment through forgiveness.” (Grunebaum, p.5) Without addressing individual needs, the TRC was expecting forgiveness to take place on the national level before South Africans had the time to deal with their own hurt and forgive themselves. This emphasis on utilizing religion as a tool to reconcile South Africa was predicted by Frantz Fanon in the early 1960’s:

The colonialist bourgeoisie is helped in its work of calming down the natives by the inevitable religion. All those saints who have turned the other cheek, who have forgiven trespasses against them, and who have been spat on and insulted without shrinking are and held up as examples. (Fanon, 1963, p.52)

Even though the new Black elite is not the colonialist bourgeoisie, they continue to use religion in the same manner as Fanon described.

Forgiveness, as something that occurs between two people, in this context mainly the Black and white communities, is not something that can be readily addressed in present day South Africa. AZAPO President Mosibudi Mangena writes:

We want people of all colours to come together and live amongst each other in harmony....We cannot build such a society on a false platform where Black people are the ones who must forgive and white people do not reciprocate. (Mangena, 1995, p.75)

This is precisely the problem with referring to national forgiveness in the South African context, the absence of the white community;

it appears the perpetrator is sitting idly by waiting for the victim to extend a handshake...how do you reconcile with that situation and say you forgive the perpetrator

or you forgive the regime of the past when people are still struggling...reconciliation needs to come with the entire society being empowered.” (Thobejane, May 2005)

Through empowering the historically disadvantaged Black society, the lingering effects of the past begin to address themselves, therefore aiming towards normalizing society. National forgiveness can only succeed in a normalized society because “you forgive because the situation has normalized, because the society has moved on.” (Thobejane, May 2005) Hence, it is not realistic to discuss forgiveness at the national level yet, but rather look to self-forgiveness in preparation for dealing with the white community in a constructive, non-threatening manner.

Self-forgiveness creates a foundation for building a future, because one cannot deny his history and expect to move forward. In South Africa,

most Black people were victims, were largely affected, and...all of the white people by the verge of their skin color benefited. As a community, irrespective of our race, we need to say we are willing to be a part of the new South Africa (Nyembe, May 2005)

Through self-forgiveness, where one forgives himself for the injustices of the past and does not blame himself for what has happened; one will then be able to deal with forgiveness on the national level that Mbeki and Tutu speak of because “forgiveness is something that you need to do on your own individual level first, before you can extend it to the next person.” (Nyembe, May 2005)

Self-forgiveness requires one to forgive himself for the pain that he has experienced, to come to terms with what has happened. Often Black people are left blaming themselves for the atrocities of apartheid, a level of self-hatred arises (Nyembe, May 2005). Questions of ‘why was I born black?’ or ‘if I had not been there then this would not have happened’, only debilitate the individual from moving forward and achieving reclamation of ones humanity.

Black Consciousness seeks to eradicate such mentally debilitating questions and thoughts, by instilling pride into each person, and helping them find that “harmony within” (Nyembe, May 2005) There can be no more questioning or blaming for being born Black or anything else related to the pigmentation of ones skin, it is as Biko and other SASO students said “Black is beautiful” (Biko, p.115), the closer this phrase comes to being accepted as truth, the closer this society will come to healing itself.

In order for there to be reconciliation on a larger scale, people must first come to terms with their own past, and their own hurt. Once that has been adequately dealt with, there can be progress. However it will require “patience...from the victims as well, ...it so that black people are willing to forgive, the question is, with whom? Many white people are still in their comfort zones, maybe, unfortunately, as Africans we need to be patient.” (Nyembe, May 2005) Nevertheless, if Black Consciousness successfully permeates into the mentality of Black people they will be prepared for forgiveness because it is a “process of self” first, “before you can extend it to the next person.” (Nyembe, May 2005)

Mental liberation and healing requires more than self-forgiveness, a psychological transformation of society must also take place. Tsoaledi Thobejane expresses the importance of a societal transformation from the psychological oppression of the past:

you nurtured the fruit of liberation of revolution, whether you forgive or not is inconsequential, the ultimate end is seeing what you fought for being realized in the country, there is no better gift than that, the gift of seeing freedom dawn on the people who have been oppressed and denigrated against for so many years, there is no better price than seeing those people who have been subjugated against ultimately rising up to an occasion where they can claim self worth in the country of their birth and that in itself gives you pride and reconciles you with the fact that what you fought for is not in vain. (Thobejane, May 2005)

The selflessness of the liberation fighter and the spirit of 'ubuntu'⁶ that exists in Black society cannot bring reconciliation on a national level while its people are still suffering as they had under the ruthless apartheid regime. As the physical and the mental are inextricably linked together, there must be a physical shift in society that will simultaneously progress the process of mental healing.

Identity in Crisis

This lack of identity, or should I say, identity crisis that the youth of South Africa find themselves in only exacerbates the issue of self-worth reclamation and the need for Black Consciousness. Kenneth Morige, a National Executive Member of the Azanian Students Convention (AZASCO), commented on the continuing struggle for identity experienced by Black youth:

The problem with this practice of trying to be someone else is mostly caused by the black youth who do not have their apt historical background, and this as a results when it is practiced (trying to be "clones"-imitating people to an extend of even trying to look identical to them) it injures and disfigures the image of the whole concept of identity. This as a consequence gives a false picture of identity...In moments like this B[lack] C[onsciousness] is a vital role player for addressing issues of self-reliance and identity. (Morige, May 2005)

This identity crisis is seen in the everyday activities of the youth. As they rush to the stores to purchase American music, clothing, and shift their styles according to what is seen on MTV, they lose site of their own culture and values. "There are hundreds of Black youth...wearing the American flag, talking and acting funny in an attempt to be someone else...trying to emulate western life styles to the best of their ability."

(Mangena, p.52) The lack of identity among the youth hinders individual reconciliation

⁶ A phrase in African culture which describes the interconnectedness of those in the community, that is to say: "I am, because you are"

because one “can only achieve true racial integration, non-racialism and the respect of others if we love ourselves first and are able to look after our own race.” (Mangena, p.52)

The current government must acknowledge the need for ideologies such as Black Consciousness to be reinforced in mass. Black Consciousness seeks to “restore the humanity and dignity of Black people which was eroded by white racism. It is a philosophy empowering Black people to define themselves on their own terms and to take pride in their norms, culture and history.” (Mangena, p.50) It is crucial that Blacks have the means to empower themselves mentally, especially the youth; Black Consciousness provides them with these tools to aid them in reclaiming their self-worth because “it seeks to destroy inferiority complexes that afflicts Blacks as a result of living in a society dominated by white racist power structures.” (Mangena, p.50) Along with reclaiming ones self-worth, Black Consciousness also instills a level of humanity within the individual that places every human being on an equal footing; and recognizing that “as Darwin himself said, that great as is the physical unlikeness of the various races of men their likenesses are greater.” (Du Bois, p.80)

Furthermore this identity crisis that is rampant among the youth is in part due to the fact that they are disengaged from their history. “This is one of the major source[s] that makes some of the youth today to be practically engaged in the activity of trying to be people that they are not (trying to adopt to the western way of living) This result[s] in a situation whereby black youth not being in line with self-reliance.” (Moripe, May 2005) The identity crisis experienced by the youth of South Africa needs to be addressed immediately and “‘by any means necessary’. Reasons being that they are the Future

leaders of AZANIA and if they are not properly addressed they are going to pass it to the next generation.” (Moripe, May 2005)

Conclusion

Black Consciousness has a significant role to play in the future of South Africa. Until the psychological oppression of colonization and apartheid are redressed, Black Consciousness will continue to be an essential instrument in eradicating white racism, and inferiority complexes that plague the Black community; and help South Africa move towards a truly anti-racial society. Black Consciousness

is merely trying to put those people who are historically denigrated as a people on a equal level, on par with the rest of the world. If you have people who are still doubting their self-worth and mental capacity or capability, obviously you won't have progress both economically and socially or otherwise, because those people cannot function well in a competitive normal society. (Thobejane, May 2005)

Colonization and apartheid were “a psychological phenomenon”, which has left “in this country, especially Black people...still oppressed mentally.” (Thobejane, May 2005) Along with those institutions of systematic oppression was white racism. “With white racism came mental colonialism, to an extent that Black people do not know who they are, they [are] always aspir[ing] to become something different, they want to become the colonizer.” (Thobejane, May 2005) Black Consciousness is the antidote to the “colonial structure” and “directly addresses issues of mental oppression, psychological oppression and so on and so forth.” (Thobejane, May 2005) As an antithesis to white racism, Black Consciousness addresses,

issues of race, issues of racism, issues of bigotry and all those things, so if you have racism in South Africa, white racism, obviously you will have Black Consciousness as an antidote, so its simply a dialectical relationship. One will not go away if another is still there. (Thobejane, May 2005)

When those issues have been adequately addressed in society, Black Consciousness will have already dissolved and become the unconscious; so there will be no need for an ideology that already exists in the minds of the Black community. Until then, “[t]here is no way Blacks can compete with others in the world economy without addressing the legacy of the atrocities and exploitation of the past.” (Mangena, p.64)

As Black Consciousness seeks to re-infiltrate society in mass, AZAPO is one of its more prevalent ambassadors. However, AZAPO, as a political organization, is losing sight of its goals of serving the masses and is instead getting locked into ideological quarrels that are of no concern to the average Black South African. AZAPO must return to the masses, like Biko and his colleagues did, the masses “are in the Villages, in Rural Areas, in Shacks, in Factories, in Townships, in Trade Unions, in the Mines, etc.” because it is the “masses of [who] are busy trying to eke out a living under very difficult and strenuous conditions.” (Unknown, p.6) While AZAPO and BCM are debating over “ideological differences”, they are no longer serving the true purpose of Black Consciousness; they have become “deeply ideological [and] separate[d themselves] from the masses.” (Thobejane, May 2005) AZAPO and BCM must look back to the leadership of Biko in SASO and help “Black people [to] sit up and think again...[because] the BCM is equipped with a compass that directs it through the dark, foggy and storm-tossed seas,” (Unknown, p.9) and in to tomorrow.

In order for individuals to reclaim their self-worth it will undoubtedly require more than the undoing of the physical and mental oppression experienced under apartheid and colonization. The statistics provide enough evidence that little has changed since the new government has come into power, “the gap between the haves and the have-nots in

this country must rank among the widest in the world.” (Mangena, p. 73) If the statistics are not enough proof, then the squatter camps along the freeway in every part of the country should be. Black Consciousness needs to find its way back into the mainstream and into the houses of the historically marginalized masses and aid in the reclamation of self-worth and equality as human beings that remains unfinished in post-apartheid South Africa.

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