

# DRAFT POSITION PAPER ON THE IDEOLOGIES OF PAN AFRICANISM AND BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS AS THEY HAVE DEVELOPED IN OCCUPIED AZANIA ( i.e. SOUTH AFRICA)

This Position Paper was arrived at by the Durban and Districts chapter of the Black Consciousness Movement after a seminar held on 25 February 1989.

NOTING that for a people to survive in struggle it must be on their own terms,

AND THEREFORE NOTING that the correct theoretical, philosophical and ideological constructs emanate from the people's collective wisdom which is a synthesis of their culture and their real experience of struggle,

AND EMPHASIZING that both Pan Africanism and BC are developmental ideologies in that they do not prescribe the relationship of people to the world step by breathtaking step but rather take as their departure point the concrete experience of people in struggle and their shared past,

AND EMPHASIZING FURTHER that the shared past is the basis of consciousness, of knowing, of being,

AND ASSERTING that Pan Africanism and BC emerged at distinct moments in the history of occupied Azania and have therefore assumed disparate organisational forms culminating in exile in the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) and the re-grouping of BC organisations banned in 1977 as the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCM(A)),

AND UNDERLINING that the Sharpeville Uprising of 1960 organised by the PAC marked a firm transition from the politics of protest to those of resistance while the Soweto Uprising of 1976 organised by the BCM marked a transition from the politics of resistance to those of rebellion;

AND UNDERLINING FURTHER that the extent to which both spontaneous resistance and fierce, unending rebellion

is transformed into conscious and thoroughgoing revolution will determine whether we merely rattle the chains of our oppression or shatter them completely;

AND NOTING that in 1960 and 1976 respectively the PAC and BCM demonstrated their firm roots in the consciousness of the oppressed masses and showed decisively that they represent a single historical continuity,

AND NOTING WITH ALARM AND DEEP CONCERN developments within the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS (Nactu) resulting in squabbles about the use of the terms "African" and "Black" respectively (Congress on 6-7 August 1988) and the attendance of "BC unions" at the Worker's Summit (March 4-5 1989),

WE HEREBY BRING the following evidence to show that BC and Pan Africanism constitute part of a single ideological family:-

- (a) It was the BCM which popularised the annual commemoration of the Sharpeville Uprising as Heroes' Day on the 21st March;
- (b) both Pan Africanism and BC emphasize the National Question and the Land Question and delineate the repossession of occupied soil as a key component of their programmes;
- (c) both ideologies stand pointedly and vehemently opposed to the liberal and reformist position of the Kliptown Charter (sometimes referred to as the "Freedom" Charter);
- (d) it was the BCM which popularised in mass struggle the name "Azania" adopted by the PAC in exile;
- (e) the concept of the African Personality and the basis of the PAC's Status Campaign outlined in 1959 reached their apogee in BC's emphasis on psychological emancipation, Black Self Pride,

Self Affirmation and Self Reliance in the 1970s and 1980s;

- (f) the position of scientific socialism – currently shared by both ideologies – developed out of rather nebulous economic policies which were *progressive* in their time, place and context viz African Socialism adopted by the PAC in 1959 and Black Communalism adopted by the Black People's Convention in 1975;
- (g) BC's emphasis on the hegemony of the Black Working Class takes Sobukwe's emphasis on class differences (eg. the "Indian" merchant class as against the working class) to its logical conclusion;
- (h) both BC and Pan Africanism share a policy of non- or anti-collaboration with the oppressors and their political instruments and both ideologies reject white tutelage in the struggles of the oppressed;
- (i) both ideologies emphasize the cultural dimensions of struggle and reject all value systems which seek to make the dispossessed foreigners in the land of their birth;
- (j) the emphasis on African Theology and the role of the churches in the 1950s saw a systematic exposition of Black Theology and the role of the churches, mosques and temples in the 1970s and 1980s;
- (k) Raboroko's proposed use of Swahili *alternatively* a synthetic all-inclusive African language called "Siafurika" was not developed further by BC, but saw an emphasis at the 1987 Congress of the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) on the use of African languages rather than the foreign English medium;
- (l) both ideologies regard the strategy of white exclusion as pivotal to their programmes;

- (m) both ideologies reject the very concept of protection of minority rights as profoundly undemocratic;
- (n) both ideologies regard self-determination and the mapping of their own destinies by the oppressed and the exploited as being pivotal to genuine liberation and resist the interference and domination by missionaries, liberals, "radicals" or progressive-democrats.

WE BELIEVE FURTHER that the alleged differences between Pan Africanism and BC are in no way irreconcilable and for this proposition we bring the following evidence:

- (a) The definition of *Black* as all those who are oppressed politically, exploited economically and discriminated against socially and who identify as a unit in the struggle for liberation and the definition of *African* as one who owes his or her *only* loyalty to Afrika and who is prepared to accept the democratic rule of an African majority are both definitions which emphasize the oppressed and the exploited and their interests as having primacy in the struggle, and they both have arguable advantages viz:
  - (i) *Black* is a term capable of fostering identification with struggles of people of colour beyond the shores of Africa;
  - (ii) *Black* consists of two prongs viz the reality of oppression and liberatory consciousness and hence encapsulates a political strategy which excludes all members of the ruling class and collaborators therewith. It captures 2 cardinal principles of BC viz the unity of the oppressed and anti-collaboration;
  - (iii) The concept of Blackness at a practical political level aids in the simplification of the conflict from a series of many skirmishes to the battle perceived as a total confrontation between the oppressors (whites) and the oppressed (Blacks);

- (iv) The word *African* reflects a sharp definition of the National Question which sees the indigenous African as the core of the Azanian nation, with the other Black groups being appendaged to this core and forces a choice – either with the African majority or with the settler minority;
- (v) The term *African* positively defines an emerging nation and identifies with the rest of Africa, rejecting the geographical boundaries imposed by colonialism and neo-colonialism;
- (vi) In terms of a political programme, the definition of *African* is posited by an emphasis on the axiom "One race, the human race", and, therefore, on anti-racism;
- (vii) The term *Black* specifically excludes white participation. Since the excision of whites is also central to the Pan Africanist programme, the definition of *Black* is reflective of a clear cut approach which takes Pan Africanism to its logical end;
- (b) The PAC emerged from the well of the African National Congress (ANC) and upholds the 1949 Programme of Action which the ANC deviated from in 1955 with its adoption of the Kliptown Charter. BC emerged out of the palpable political vacuum caused by the post – Sharpeville paralysis. BC as an ideology combines the best in the historical tradition of the ANC and the basic tenets of Pan Africanism and has developed beyond these into an oppressed class ideology;
- (c) The idea of a United States of Africa – from Cape to Cairo and from Morocco to Madagascar – which seems with hindsight to be naively idealistic was hardly so at a time when country after country was gaining political independence from the colonialists in a veritable tidal wave from north to south. No liberation movement can neglect the fact that Azania is a vital part of Africa and her liberation is crucial to the achieve-

ment of the Pan Africanist ideal which ideal is not at all inconsistent with the unity of the oppressed and exploited internationally;

- (d) The PAC emphasised charismatic leadership while BC strongly eschews the growth of personality cults. While Pan Africanism and the early BCM placed much faith in spontaneity, BC since the 1980s emphasises vanguard leadership. The kernel of both programmes lies, however, in the mobilization of the masses and in their revolutionary potential.

WE HEREBY RESOLVE THAT:

- (a) a closed national seminar be called to thrash out both the ideological and strategic differences within the "Azania School";
- (b) a United Front of the Pan Africanist and BC Movements is critically and vitally necessary;
- (c) it is elemental to both the Pan Africanist and BC ideologies that the economic and cultural aspects of struggle – the standard of living and the quality of life – are interdependent and retroactive;
- (d) it is vitally necessary to resist the transubstantiation of Black history to European radical theory and to expose the failed efforts to render the historical being of Black people into a construct of historical materialism, to reduce our existence to merely an antagonism to capitalist organization. It is only the Azania School which can do this;
- (e) Intensive and extensive studies of the life and works of Anton Lembede, Ashby Peter Mda, Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe, Bantu Steve Biko, Ongopotse Abraham Ramothibi Tiro, Mthuli ka Shezi and other Azanian luminaries be piloted as a priority;
- (f) the Pan Africanist analysis of the National and Land Questions and the BC analysis of the Social Question need to be more cohesively and systematically interwoven so that the common banner slogan "One People in One Azania, One Nation" is maintained and developed;
- (g) Seminal ideas such as the inexor-

able synthesis of Pan Africanism with BC must not be smothered by pettiness, point-scoring and the endeavour to create fiefdoms on foundations of sand;

(h) the interests of the toiling masses

and their righteous struggle against settler colonialism and imperialism are paramount and vision, purposefulness and an ability to create *praxis* are urgently required from the national

leadership of the Azania School.

TOGETHER WE STRIVE, TOGETHER WE TOIL, TO ACHIEVE ONE PEOPLE IN ONE AZANIA, ONE NATION ■

# I WILL ONLY VOTE IN A FREE AZANIA

