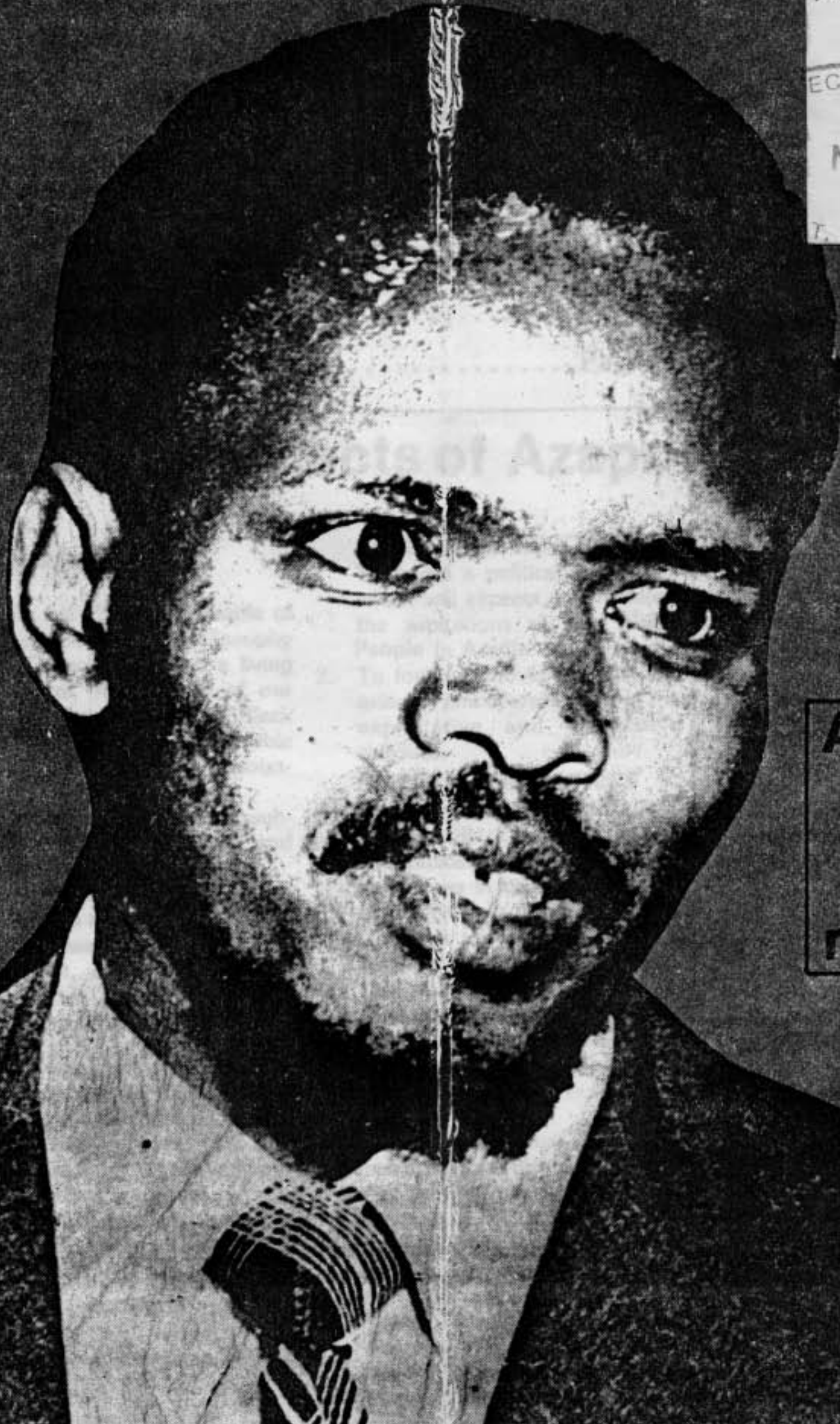


FRANK TALK

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**Azapo
on
the
march**

To the memory of Bantu Steve Biko...

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Aims and Objects of Azapo

PREAMBLE

Whereas we, the Black People of Azania, conscious of the philosophy of Black Consciousness as a living force amongst the majority of our people, and recognising that Black Workers particularly are responsible for creating the wealth of our country;

And whereas workers are subjected to the most inhuman and ruthless laws;

And further realising that the oppressive system in its effort to render the worker powerless and perpetually subservient, creates and utilises tactics of divide and rule that gave birth to factionalism and tribalism;

And whereas the worker is more determined to see freedom and justice, and desirous of occupying his rightful place in the land of his birth; And also that it is an inalienable right of any community to organise itself into a political movement to express and manifest its aspirations, ideals and goals;

And further believing that Black Consciousness be developed and maintained as a true philosophy for workers;

THEREFORE RESOLVE

1. To found a political movement which will express and manifest the aspirations of the **Black People** in Azania.
2. To found a movement that will unite all and liberate all from the exploitative and oppressive shackles.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To conscientise, politicise and mobilise Black workers through the philosophy of Black Consciousness in order to strive for their legitimate rights.
2. To work towards the establishment of an educational system that will respond creatively towards the needs of Azanians.
3. To promote an interpretation of religion as a liberatory philosophy relevant to our struggle.
4. To promote and encourage research into various problems affecting our people.
5. To expose the oppressive and exploitative system in which our people are denied basic human rights.
6. To work towards the unity of the oppressed, for the just distribution of wealth and power to all people of Azania.

Editorial

Frank Talk is a journal devoted to the memory of Bantu Steve Biko (who used "Frank Talk" as his pseudonym in the now-banned SASO Newsletter) and unashamedly propagates the ideology of Black Consciousness.

There are a few ideologies which are as poorly understood by the "revolutionary" intelligentsia but which so easily strike a responsive chord in the hearts and minds of those who bear the brunt of ruthless oppression.

And the reason for this is not difficult to discern: BC is born out of the experiences of the downtrodden and believes in fearlessly translating these experiences into meaningful and constructive action.

In later issues we hope to offer criticisms of the ideology and we are intent on being the most ruthless dissectors of our own records. Make no mistake — our approach will be critical.

Revolutions all over the world show that if revolutionary movements are not prepared to examine themselves, warts and all, they will suffer from atrophy. This is why so many "revolutions" in the colonized world would have become disasters.

Consistent and open discussion are features which characterize the Black Consciousness Movement and Frank Talk is proud to continue this tradition.

BC is a developing ideology: thus the article on AZAPO's Fourth National Congress in this issue suggests areas that need to be explored within the BC movement.

This issue of Frank Talk offers a development of the BC ideology beginning with the pre-1976 BC movement and it captures the evolution in thought which characterizes the movement.

The fundamental pillars of BC remain intact today despite desperate attempts by liberals and other reactionaries to suggest that AZAPO's socialist direction is at variance with the message expounded by Biko and others.

Socialism is a logical development of BC: the pre-1976 papers that we have included hint at a delicate mix of nationalism and socialism that is crystallized by AZAPO in the 80's.

Frank Talk is of the view that the BC movement must continue in its measured and rational response to its critics, for the only task facing us now is to dislodge the system of racism and capitalism, to promote the leadership of the black working class and to usher in a socialist, anti-racist AZANIA. We are developing an indigenous ideology capable of bringing about this revolutionary era.

Future issues of Frank Talk will include features such as Azanian Focus, international forum and will aim to provide a background to events in this country. Articles will be in English and Zulu and contributions are welcome.

While Frank Talk is the official organ of the Natal Region of AZAPO, it encourages discussion — from all concerned with achieving a socialist, anti-racist Azania.

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The Definition of Black Consciousness

This paper was delivered during a leadership training course in December 1971 and traces many of the fundamental tenets of BC. It also describes the BC attitude towards the true working class in SA.

WE have defined blacks as those who are by law or tradition politically, economically and socially discriminated against as a group in the South African society and identifying themselves as a unit in the struggle towards the realisation of their aspirations. This definition illustrates a number of things:

1. Being black is not a matter of pigmentation — being black is a reflection of a mental attitude.
2. Merely by describing yourself as black you have started on a road towards emancipation, you have committed yourself to fight against all forces that seek to use your blackness as a stamp that marks you out as a subservient being.

From the above observations therefore, we can see that the term black is not necessarily all-inclusive; i.e. the fact we are all *not white* does not necessarily mean that we are all *black*. Non-whites do exist and will continue to exist for quite a long time. If one's aspiration is whiteness but one's pigmentation makes attainment of this impossible, then one is a non-white. Any man who calls a white man "Baas", any man who serves in the police force or Security Branch is *ipso facto* a non-white. Black people — real black people — are those who can manage to hold their heads high in defiance rather than willingly surrender their souls to the white man.

Briefly defined therefore, Black Consciousness is in essence the realisation by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their oppression — the blackness of their skin — and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude. It seeks to demonstrate the lie that black is an aberration from the "normal" which is white. It is a manifestation of a new realisation that by seeking to run away from themselves and to emulate the white man, blacks are insulting the intelligence of whoever created them black. Black Consciousness therefore, takes cognizance of the deliberateness of God's plan in creating black people black. It 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.

The interrelationship between the consciousness of the self and the emancipatory programme is of paramount importance. Blacks no longer seek to reform the system because so doing implies acceptance of the major points around which the system revolves.

Blacks are out to completely transform the system and to make of it what they wish. Such a major undertaking can only be realised in an atmosphere where people are convinced of the truth inherent in their stand. Liberation therefore, is of paramount importance in the concept of Black Consciousness, for we

QUOTE

Being black is not a matter of pigmentation — being black is a reflection of a mental attitude.

cannot be conscious of ourselves and yet remain in bondage. We want to attain the envisioned self which is a free self.

The surge towards Black Consciousness is a phenomenon that has manifested itself through out the so-called Third World. There is no doubt that discrimination against the black man the world over fetches its origin from the exploitative attitude of the white man. Colonisation of white countries by whites eg. the colonisation of Scotland by England has throughout history resulted in nothing more sinister than mere cultural or geographical fusion at worst, or language bastardisation at best. It is true that the history of weaker nations is shaped by bigger nations, but nowhere in the world today do we see whites exploiting whites on a scale even remotely similar to what is happening in South Africa. Hence, one is forced to conclude that it is not coincidence that

black people are exploited. It was a deliberate plan which has culminated in even so-called black independent countries not attaining any real independence.

With this background in mind we are forced, therefore, to believe that it is a case of *haves* against *have-nots* where whites have been deliberately made *haves* and blacks *have-nots*. There is for instance no worker in the classical sense among whites in South Africa, for even the most down-trodden white worker still has a lot to lose if the system is changed. He is protected by several laws against competition at work from the majority. He has a vote and he uses it to return the Nationalist Government to power because he sees them as the only people who, through job reservation laws, are bent on looking after his interests against competition with the "Natives".

It should therefore be accepted that an analysis of our situation in terms of one's colour at once takes care of the greatest single determinant for political action — i.e. colour — while also validly describing the blacks as the only real workers in South Africa. It immediately kills all suggestions that there could ever be effective rapport between the real workers, i.e. blacks, and the privileged white workers since we have shown that the latter are the greatest supporters of the system. True enough, the system has allowed so dangerous an anti-black attitude to build up amongst whites that it is taken as almost a sin to be black and hence the poor whites, who are economically nearest to the blacks, demonstrate the distance between themselves and the blacks by an exaggerated reactionary attitude towards blacks. Hence the greatest anti-black feeling is to be found amongst the very poor whites whom the Class Theory calls upon to be with black workers in the struggle for emancipation. This is the kind of twisted logic that the Black Consciousness approach seeks to eradicate.

“We do not apologise...”

In terms of the Black Consciousness approach we recognise the existence of one major force in South Africa. This is White Racism. It is the one force against which all of us are pitted. It works with unnerving totality, featuring both on the offensive and in our defence. Its greatest ally to date has been the refusal by us to club together as blacks because we are told to do so would be racist. So, while we progressively lose ourselves in a world of colourlessness and amorphous common humanity, whites are deriving pleasure and security in entrenching white racism and further exploiting the minds and bodies of the unsuspecting black masses. Their agents are ever present amongst us, telling us that it is immoral to withdraw into a cocoon, that dialogue is the answer to our problem and that it is unfortunate that there is white racism in some quarters but “you must understand that things are changing.”

Provocation

These in fact are the greatest racists for they refuse to credit us with any intelligence to know what we want. Their intentions are obvious; they want to be barometers by which the rest of the white society can measure feelings in the black world. This then is what makes us believe that white power presents itself as a totality not only provoking us but also controlling our response to the provocation. This is an important point to note because it is often missed by those who believe that there are a few good whites. Sure there are a few good whites just as much as there are a few bad blacks.

However what we are concerned here with is group attitudes and group politics. The exception does not make a lie of the rule — it merely substantiates it.

The overall analysis therefore, based on the Hegelian theory of dialectic materialism, is as follows. That since the thesis is a white racism there can only be one valid antithesis i.e. a solid black unity to counterbalance the scale. If South Africa is to be a land where black and white live together in harmony without fear of group exploitation, it is only when these two opposites have interplayed and produced a viable synthesis of ideas and a *modus vivendi*. We can never wage any struggle without offering a strong counterpoint to the white racism that permeates our society so effectively.

One must immediately dispel the thought that Black Consciousness is merely a methodology or a means towards an end. What Black Consciousness seeks to do is to produce at the output end of the process real black people who do not regard themselves as appendages to white society. This truth cannot be reversed. We do not need to apologise for this because it is true that the white systems have produced throughout the world a number of people who are not aware that they too are people. Our adherence to values that we set for ourselves can also not be reversed because it will be a lie to accept white values as necessarily the best. The fact that a synthesis may be attained only relates to adherence to power politics. Someone somewhere along the line will be forced to accept the truth and here we believe that ours is the truth.

Concern

The future of South Africa in the case where blacks adopt Black Consciousness is the subject for concern especially among initiates. What do we do when we have attained our Consciousness? Do we propose to kick whites out? We have defined what we mean by true integration and the very fact that such a definition exists does illustrate what our standpoint is. In any case we are much more concerned about what is happening now, than what will happen in the future. The future will always be shaped by the sequence of present-day events.

Stereotype

The importance of black solidarity to the various segments of the black community must not be understated. There have been in the past a lot of suggestions that there can be no viable unity amongst blacks because they hold each other in contempt. Coloureds despise Africans because they, (the former) by their proximity to the Africans, may lose the chances of assimilation into the white world. Africans despise the Coloureds and Indians for a variety of reasons. Indians not only despise Africans but in many instances also exploit the Africans in job and shop situations. All these stereotype attitudes have

led to mountainous inter-group suspicions amongst the blacks.

What we should all times look at is the fact that:

1. We are all oppressed by the same system.
2. That we are oppressed to varying degrees is a deliberate design to stratify us not only socially but also in terms of aspirations.
3. Therefore it is to be expected that in terms of the enemy's plan there must be this suspicion and that if we are committed to the problem of emancipation to the same degree it is part of our duty to bring to the attention of the black people the deliberateness of the enemy's subjugation scheme.

QUOTE

White power presents itself as a totality not only provoking us but also controlling our response to the provocation.

4. That we should go on with our programme, attracting to it only committed people and not just those eager to see an equitable distribution of groups amongst our ranks. This is a game common amongst liberals. The one criterion that must govern all our action is commitment.

Further implications of Black Consciousness are to do with correcting false images of ourselves in terms of Culture, Education, Religion, Economics. The importance of this also must not be understated. There is always an interplay between the history of a people i.e. the past, and their faith in themselves and hopes for their future. We are aware of the terrible role played by our education and religion in creating amongst us a false understanding of ourselves. We must therefore work out schemes not only to correct this, but further to be our own authorities rather than wait to be interpreted by others. Whites can only see us from the outside and as such can never extract and analyse the ethos in the black community.

A tragedy we can never forget....



Soweto 1976: Thousands of black pupils protested against Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools. The result is history. Yet the memory of those violent weeks continue to haunt black people,

for what began as a peaceful boycott of classes erupted into a bloody confrontation between police and pupils.

White Racism and Black Consciousness

"No race possesses the monopoly of beauty, intelligence, force, and there is room for all of us at the rendezvous of victory." I do not think Aimé Césaire was thinking about South Africa when he said these words. The whites in this country have placed themselves on a path of no return. So blatantly exploitative in terms of the mind and body is the practice of white racism that one wonders if the interests of blacks and whites in this country have not become so mutually exclusive as to exclude the possibility of there being "room for all of us at the rendezvous of victory".

The white man's quest for power has led him to destroy with utter ruthlessness whatever has stood in his way. In an effort to divide the black world in terms of aspirations, the powers that be have evolved a philosophy that stratifies the black world and gives preferential treatment to certain groups. Further, they have built up several tribal cocoons, thereby hoping to increase inter-tribal ill-feeling and to divert the energies of the black people towards attaining false prescribed "freedoms".

Cocoons

Moreover, it was hoped, the black people could be effectively contained in these various cocoons of repression, euphemistically referred to as 'homelands'. At some stage, however, the powers that be had to start defining the sphere of activity of these apartheid institutions. Most blacks suspected initially the barrenness of the promise and have now realised that they have been taken for a big ride. Just as the Native Representative Council became a political flop that embarrassed its creators, I predict that a time will come when these stooge bodies will prove very costly not only in terms of money but also in terms of the credibility of the story the Nationalists are trying to sell. In the meantime the blacks are beginning to realise the need to rally around the cause of their suffering - their black skin - and to ignore the false promises that come from the white world.

Then again the progressively sterner legislation that has lately filled the South African statute books has had a great effect in convincing the people of the evil inherent in the system of apartheid. No amount of propaganda on Radio Bantu or promises of freedom being granted to some desert homeland will ever convince the blacks that the government means well, so long as they ex-

perience manifestations of the lack of respect for the dignity of man and for his property as shown during the mass removals from the urban areas. The unnecessary harassment of Africans by police, both in towns and inside townships, and the ruthless application of that scourge of the people, the pass laws, are constant reminders that the white man is on top and that the blacks are only tolerated - with the greatest restraints. Needless to say, anyone finding himself at the receiving end of such deliberate (though uncalled for) cruelty must ultimately ask himself the question: what do I have to lose? This is what the blacks are beginning to ask themselves.

To add to this, the opposition ranks have been thrown into chaos and confusion. All opposition parties have to satisfy the basic demands of politics. They want power and at the

would venture to say that the most overdue political step in South African White politics is a merger between the United and Nationalist Parties.

The flirtation between the Progressive Party and blacks was brought to a rude stop by legislation. Some blacks argue that at that moment the Progressives lost their only chance of attaining some semblance of respectability by not choosing to disband rather than lose their black constituents. Yet I cannot help feeling that the Progressives emerged more purified from the ordeal. The Progressives have never been the black man's real hope. They have always been a white party at heart, fighting for a more lasting way of preserving white values in this southern tip of Africa. It will not be long before the blacks relate their poverty to their blackness in concrete

This paper was delivered at a student conference in Cape Town in January 1971. It records the BC interpretation of non-racialism and the role of the white "radical" intelligentsia.

same time they want to be *fair*. It never occurs to them that the surest way of being unfair is to withhold power from the native population. Hence one ultimately comes to the conclusion that there is no real difference between the United Party (The United Party used to be the official opposition to the NP and consisted mostly of English-speaking whites. The UP is presently represented by the New Republic Party (NRP)-Ed.) and the Nationalist Party. If there is, a strong possibility exists that the United Party is on the right of the Nationalists. One need only to look at their famous slogan, "White supremacy over the whole of South Africa", to realise the extent to which the quest for power can cloud even such supposedly immortal characteristics as the "English sense of fair play". Africans long ago dismissed the United Party as a great political fraud. The Coloured people have since followed suit. If the United Party is gaining any votes at all it is precisely because it is becoming more explicit in its racist policy. I

terms. Because of the tradition forced onto the country, the poor people shall always be black people. It is not surprising, therefore, that the blacks should wish to rid themselves of a system that locks up the wealth of the country in the hands of a few. No doubt Rick Turner was thinking of this when he declared that "any black government is likely to be socialist", in his article on "The Relevance of Contemporary Radical Thought".

We now come to the group that has longest enjoyed confidence from the black world - the liberal establishment, including radical and leftist groups. The biggest mistake the black world ever made was to assume that whoever opposed apartheid was an ally. For a long time the black world has been looking only at the governing party and not so much at the whole power structure as the object of their rage. In a sense the very political vocabulary that the blacks have used has been inherited from the liberals. Therefore it is not surprising that alliances were formed so easily with the liberals.



Soweto 1983: Pupils of Ibhongo Senior Secondary School dash for safety from teargas cannisters thrown at them during a boycott.

Who are the liberals in South Africa? It is that curious bunch of non-conformists who explain their participation in negative terms; that bunch of do-gooders that go under all sorts of names - liberals, leftists, etc. These are the people who argue that they are not responsible for white racism and the country's "inhumanity to the black man"; these are 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; in short, these are the people who say that they have black souls wrapped up in white skins.

The liberals set about their business with the utmost efficiency. They made it a political dogma that all groups opposing the *status quo* must necessarily be non-racial in structure. They maintained that if you stood for a principle of non-racialism you could not in any way adopt what they described as racist policies. They even defined to the black people what the latter should fight for.

With this sort of influence behind them, most black leaders tended to rely too much on the advice of liberals. For a long time, in fact, it became the occupation of the leadership to "calm the masses down", while they engaged in fruitless negotiation with the *status quo*. Their whole political action, in fact, was a programmed course in the art of gentle persuasion through protests

and limited boycotts and they hoped the rest could be safely left to the troubled conscience of the fair-minded English folk.

Of course this situation could not last. A new breed of black leaders was beginning to take a dim view of the involvement of liberals in a struggle that they regard as essentially theirs, when the political movements of the blacks were either banned or harassed into non-existence. This left the stage open once more for the liberals to continue with their work of "fighting for the rights of the blacks".

It never occurred to the liberals that the integration they insisted upon as an effective way of opposing apartheid was impossible to achieve in South Africa. It had to be artificial because it was being foisted on two parties whose entire upbringing had been to support the lie that one race was superior and others inferior. One has to overhaul the whole system in South Africa before hoping to get black and white walking hand in hand to oppose a *common* enemy. As it is, both black and white walk into a hastily organised integrated circle carrying with them the seeds of destruction of that circle - their inferiority and superiority complexes.

The myth of integration as propounded under the banner of the liberal ideology must be cracked and killed because it makes people believe that something is being done when in reality the artificially in-

tegrated circles are a soporific to the blacks while salving the consciences of the guilt-sticken white. It works from the false premise that, because it is difficult to bring people from different races together in this country, achievement of this is in itself a step towards the total liberation of the blacks. Nothing could be more misleading.

Guilt

How many white people fighting for their version of a change in South Africa are really motivated by genuine concern and not by guilt? Obviously it is a cruel assumption to believe that all whites are not sincere, yet methods adopted by some groups often do suggest a lack of real commitment. The essence of politics is to direct oneself to the group which wields power. Most white dissident groups are aware of the power wielded by the white power structure. They are quick to quote statistics on how big the defence budget is. They know exactly how effectively the police and the army can control protesting black hordes - peaceful or otherwise. They know to what degree the black world is infiltrated by the security police. Hence they are completely convinced of the impotence of the black people. Why then do they persist in talking to the blacks? Since they are aware that the problem in this country is white racism, why do they not address themselves to the white world?

The call for Black Consciousness is the most positive call to come from any group in the black world for a long time.

In an effort to answer these questions one has to come to the painful conclusion that the liberal is in fact appeasing his own conscience, or at best is eager to demonstrate his identification with the black people only so far as it does not sever all his ties with his relatives on the other side of the colour line. Being white he possesses the natural passport to the exclusive pool of white privileges from which he does not hesitate to extract whatever suits him. Yet, since he identifies with the blacks, he moves around his white circles - white-only beaches, restaurants, and cinemas - with a lighter load, feeling that he is not like the rest. Yet at the back of his mind is a constant reminder that he is quite comfortable as things stand and therefore should not bother about change. Although he does not vote for the Nationalists (now that they are in the majority anyway), he feels secure under the protection offered by the Nationalists and subconsciously shuns the idea of change.

The limitations that have accompanied the involvement of liberals in the black man's struggle have been mostly responsible for the arrest of progress. Because of their inferiority complex, blacks have tended to listen seriously to what the liberals had to say. With their characteristic arrogance of assuming a 'monopoly on intelligence and moral judgement', these self-appointed trustees of black interests have gone on to set the pattern and pace for the realisation of the black man's aspirations.

I am not sneering at the liberals and their involvement. Neither am I suggesting that they are the most to blame for the black man's plight. Rather I am illustrating the fundamental fact that total identification with an oppressed group in a system that forces one group to enjoy privileges and to live on the sweat of another, is impossible. White society collectively owes the blacks so huge a debt that no one member should automatically expect to escape from the blanket condemnation that needs must come from the black world. It is not as if whites are allowed to enjoy privilege only when they declare their solidarity with the ruling party. They are born into privilege and are nourished by and nurtured in the system of ruthless exploitation of

black energy. For the 20-year-old white liberal to expect to be accepted with open arms is surely to overestimate the powers of forgiveness of the black people. No matter how genuine a liberal's motivation; may be, he has to accept that, though he did not choose to be born into privilege, the blacks cannot but be suspicious of his motives.

What I have tried to show is that in South Africa political power has always rested with white society. Not only have the whites been guilty of being on the offensive but, by some skilful manoeuvres, they have managed to control the responses of the blacks to the provocation. Not only have they kicked the black but they also told him how to react to the kick. For a long time the black has been listening with patience to the advice he has been receiving on how best to respond to the kick. With painful slowness he is now beginning to show signs that it is his right and duty to respond to the kick *in the way he sees fit*.

Terrible

"We Coloured men, in this specific moment of historical evolution, have consciously grasped in its full breath, the notion of our peculiar uniqueness, the notion of just who we are and what, and that we are ready, on every plane and in every department, to assume the responsibilities which proceed from this coming into consciousness. The peculiarity of our place in the world is not to be confused with anyone else's. The peculiarity of our problems which aren't to be reduced to subordinate forms of any other problem. The peculiarity of our history, laced with terrible misfortunes which belong to no other history. The peculiarity of our culture, which we intend to live and to make live in an ever realer manner.' (Aimé Césaire, 1956, in his letter of resignation from the French Communist Party.)

At about the same time that Césaire said this, there was emerging in South Africa a group of angry young black men who were beginning to "grasp the notion of (their) peculiar uniqueness" and who were eager to define who they were and what. These were the elements who were disgruntled with the direction imposed on the African National

Congress by the "old guard" within its leadership. These young men were questioning a number of things, among which was the "go slow" attitude adopted by the leadership, and the ease with which the leadership accepted coalitions with organisations other than those run by blacks. The 'People's Charter' adopted in Kliptown in 1955 was evidence of this. In a sense one can say that these were the first real signs that the blacks in South Africa were beginning to realise the need to go it alone and to evolve a philosophy based on, and directed by, blacks. In other words, Black Consciousness was slowly manifesting itself.

It may be said that, on the broader political front, blacks in South Africa have not shown any overt signs of new thinking since the banning of their political parties; nor were the signs of disgruntlement with the white world given a real chance to crystallise into a positive approach. Black students, on the other hand, began to rethink their position in black-white coalitions. The emergence of SASO and its tough policy of non-involvement with the white world set people's minds thinking along new lines. This was a challenge to the age-old tradition in South Africa that opposition to apartheid was enough to qualify whites for acceptance by the black world. Despite protest and charges of racialism from liberal-minded white students, the black students stood firm in their rejection of the principle of unholy alliances between blacks and whites.

The call for Black Consciousness is the most positive call to come from any group in the black world for a long time. It is more than just a reactionary rejection of whites by blacks. The quintessence of it is the realisation by the blacks that, in order to feature well in this game of power politics, they have to use the concept of group power and to build a strong foundation for this. Being an historically, politically, socially and economically disinherited and dispossessed group, they have the strongest foundation from which to operate. The philosophy of Black Consciousness, therefore, expresses group pride and the determination by the blacks to rise and attain the envisaged self. 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. Once the latter has been so effective-

ly manipulated and controlled by the oppressor as to make the oppressed believe that he is a liability to the white man, then there will be nothing the oppressed can do that will really scare the powerful masters. Hence thinking along lines of Black Consciousness makes the black man see himself as a being, entire in himself, and not as an extension of a broom or additional leverage to some machine. At the end of it all, he cannot tolerate attempts by anybody to dwarf the significance of his manhood. Once this happens, we shall know that the real man in the black person is beginning to shine through.

I have spoken of Black Consciousness as if it is something that can be readily detected. Granted this may be an over-statement at this stage, yet it is true that, gradually, blacks are becoming more and more conscious of the self. They are beginning to rid their minds of imprisoning notions which are the legacy of the control of their attitude by whites. Slowly, they have cast aside the 'morality argument' which prevented them from going it alone and are now learning that a lot of good can be derived from specific exclusion of whites from black institutions. Of course it is not surprising to us that whites are not very much aware of these developing forces since such consciousness is essentially an inward-looking process. It has become common practice in this country for people to consult their papers to see what is said by black leaders - by which they understand the leaders of the various apartheid institutions. While these bodies are often exploited by individuals in them for candid talking, they certainly cannot be taken seriously as yardsticks by which to measure black feeling on any topic.

The growth of awareness among South African blacks has often been ascribed to influence from the American 'Negro' movement. Yet it seems to me that this is a sequel to the attainment of independence by so many African states within so short a time. In fact I remember that at the time I was at high school, Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda was still a militant and used to be a hero of a friend of mine. His often quoted statement was, 'This is a black man's country; any white man who does not like it must pack up and go'. Clearly at this stage the myth of the invincibility of the white man had been exposed. When fellow Africans were talking like that how could we

still be harbouring ideas of continued servitude? We knew he had no right to be there; we wanted to remove him from our table, strip the table of all trappings put on it by him, decorate it in true African style, settle down and then ask him to join us on our own terms if he liked. This is what Banda was saying. The fact that American terminology has often been used to express our thoughts is merely because all new ideas seem to get extensive publicity in the United States.

National consciousness and its spread in South Africa has to work against a number of factors. First there are the traditional complexes, then the emptiness of the native's past and lastly the question of black-white dependency. The traditional inferior-superior black-white complexes are deliberate creations of the colonialist. Through the work of missionaries and the style of education adopted, the blacks were made to feel that the white man was some kind of god whose word could not be doubted. As Fanon puts it: "Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the Native's brain of all form and content; by a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it." At the end of it all, the blacks have nothing to lean on, nothing to cheer them up at the present moment and very much to be afraid of in the future.

The attitude of some rural African folk who are against education is often misunderstood, not least by the African intellectual. Yet the reasons put forward by these people carry with them the realisation of their inherent dignity and worth. They see education as the quickest way of destroying the substance of the African culture. They complain bitterly of the disruption in the life pattern, non-observation of customs, and constant derision from the non-conformists whenever any of them go through school. Lack of respect for the elders is, in the African tradition, an unforgivable and cardinal sin. Yet how can one prevent the loss of respect of child for father when the child is actively taught by his know-all white tutors to disregard his family's teachings? How can an African avoid losing respect for his tradition when in school his whole cultural background is summed up in one word: barbarism?

To add to the white-oriented education received, the whole history of the black people is presented as a

long lamentation of repeated defeats. Strangely enough, everybody has come to accept that the history of South Africa starts in 1652. No doubt this is to support the often-told lie that blacks arrived in this country at about the same time as the whites. Thus, a lot of attention has to be paid to our history if we as blacks want to aid each other in our coming into consciousness. We have to rewrite our history and describe in it the heroes that formed the core of resistance to the white invaders. More has to be revealed and stress has to be laid on the successful nation-building attempts by people like Chaka, Moshoeshe and Hintsa.

Our culture must be defined in concrete terms. We must relate the past to the present and demonstrate an historical evolution of the modern African. We must reject the attempts by the powers that be to project an arrested image of our culture. This is not the sum total of our culture. They have deliberately arrested our culture at the tribal stage to perpetuate the myth that African people were near-cannibals, had no real ambitions in life, and were preoccupied with sex and drink. In fact the widespread vice often found in the African townships is the result of the interference of the white man in the natural evolution of the true native culture.

It is often claimed that the advocates of Black Consciousness are hemming themselves into a closed world, choosing to weep on each other's shoulders and thereby cutting out useful dialogue with the rest of the world. Yet I feel that the black people of the world, in choosing to reject the legacy of colonialism and white domination and to build around themselves their own values, standards and outlook to life, have at last established a solid base for meaningful co-operation amongst themselves in the larger battle of the Third World against the rich nations. As Fanon puts it; "The consciousness of the self is not the closing of a door to communication National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension." This is an encouraging sign, for there is no doubt that the black-white power struggle in South Africa is but a microcosm of the global confrontation between the Third World and the rich white nations of the world which is manifesting itself in an ever more real manner as the years go by.

* * * *

Idyllic setting for a tough battle

Some 50km north west of Pietermaritzburg, among the picturesque hills and rock formations near the University of the North, stands the simple, rustic Kransien Stein Lutheran Mission Centre.

The idyllic setting seems an unlikely venue for a congress of people who see their political group as an "above-board liberation movement", whose detractors accuse them of being intellectual elitists and loud-mouthed radicals who vent rage and don't do anything constructive.

But more than 200 delegates and observers turned up at the centre in January 1981 for the annual congress of the Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo).

They were aware that their organisation is under constant surveillance by the authorities, for they are the proponents of black consciousness. Their colleagues have been banned, jailed and detained. Some died or chose exile.

The former Minister of Justice, Mr J.T. Kruger, who declared war on the black consciousness organisations by banning most of them in 1977, described BC as the point where legitimate dissent ended and criminal activity began.

On another front, with the African National Congress and Pan-Africanist Congress operating from exile after being banned in 1960, the only internal, national black political organisation operating overtly in South Africa is Azapo.

Azapo and the black consciousness movement have been careful in their attitude towards the ANC and the PAC. While recognising their historical role, it has neither endorsed nor criticised them.

But for Azapo, another dimension has been introduced, what its members perceive as an attempt at infiltration by white liberals and radicals. One delegate described it as the "total onslaught from the northern suburbs".

It was against this background that Azapo delegates gathered at the mission centre, with a number of important papers on a wide range of subjects up for discussion.

Azapo was formed in 1978 out of the ashes of Mr Kruger's bannings, and immediately ran into trouble. Members of its interim executive were detained, and two members were banned.

In September, 1979, Azapo was formed inaugurated with the chairman of the Soweto Teachers' Action

Committee, Mr Curtis Nkondo, as its first president. Up to the time, BC was interpreted as a philosophy for the psychological and physical liberation of oppressed blacks.

But at the inaugural congress, there was a significant development in the philosophy. Delegates interpreted the black struggle as a race-class struggle, with blacks being oppressed as a class.

Blacks were classified workers, with white workers being rejected because they were regarded as the labour aristocracy which kept the Government in power to protect its own privileged position.

The new Azapo constitution placed strong emphasis on black workers. While the black struggle to repossess the land from whites was described as the rallying point, race was described as a class determinant in South Africa.

And it was this interpretation that was challenged by some delegates at the congress. Led by Mr Vusi Nkumane, chairman of the cultural group Mdali, the group of delegates insisted that the national struggle was solely for the repossession of the land.

Mr Nkumane, Mr Zakes Mofokeng and others gave an indication of the controversy to come when they challenged ideological terms used in a comprehensive, analytical report on education presented by an Azapo commission.

Under the title "curriculum and syllabus", the report said: "The dominant ideas of government and means of enforcement thereof and thus is able to organise society so as to entrench itself and keep in subjugation the other classes."

Mr Nkumane and his supporters immediately challenged the concepts of class in a lengthy debate which overshadowed the commission's full report itself. They objected to "foreign ideology" being used to interpret the struggle.

The debate continued late into the night over the class concepts when the Azapo national organiser, Mr Letsatsi Mosala, presented a paper on "the challenge of labour in the 1980's".

At one point, Mr Mosala accused some people of "seeing communism and Moscow" when they heard the term class.

The sharp differences over interpretation came to a head the next morning when Mr Nkumane presented a paper on "the inroads of

liberals into black consciousness".

The lengthy, controversial paper took most delegates by surprise, for it flew directly in the face of the constitution emphasising the struggle of workers.

Mr Nkumane took the opportunity to reject "Marxist analysis or defining classes". He called for an application to African culture, quoting extensively from students showing that in past centuries, African norms in various fields were well ahead of other continents.

He called for a return to the position prior to 1652, when whites first settled in the country.

But the paper was so lengthy that many delegates lost his thread. He was challenged on various concepts, and one delegate said his paper represented a shift to the "far right".

He was accused of excluding "so-called coloureds and so-called Indians" from his definition of the black struggle. He denied the charge, and said "Africa is for all who owe allegiance to Africa, give expression to its culture and is not confined to blacks."

He was accused of contradicting his own views, but his accusers were unable to cite specific examples because they did not have copies of his paper.

Because of this, and because time was running out on Sunday, delegates agreed to defer further discussion on his paper to a symposium of black consciousness organisations.

All the delegates were agreed on some basic points - that the struggle for land repossession was the overriding factor, that blacks want a socialist set-up, and that there was no place in their struggle for whites.

Mr Nkumane accused white liberals of "telling us to liberate ourselves from themselves", and had a go at Marxists, whom he accused of saying that blacks and whites had to get together to find a common enemy.

How to interpret black consciousness as an ideology for liberation is now the BC dilemma. In the early days of black consciousness, it was more a matter of conscientising blacks about their oppression.

Now it is a question of how to galvanise blacks into a vehicle for liberation, for repossessing the land.

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Black thinking falls under the spotlight again

Black political thinking falls under the spotlight again when Azapo holds the long-awaited symposium on black consciousness within a few weeks.

Already there is intense debate on the nature of the ideology and the symposium will go a long way towards clarifying some of the basic tenets of the revolutionary ideology.

Within a short space of time black consciousness virtually changed the entire focus of black politics percolating to all forms of activity — from cultural organisations to trade unions.

So fast was its development that even adherents found it difficult to keep pace with its momentum. No sooner had black consciousness asserted the idea of psychological liberation and pride in one's being when it suddenly changed its emphasis to black workers. And then, the question of re-analysing the ideology took root.

During its early days, slogans like "black is beautiful" and "Power belongs to the black people" soon gave way, in certain circles, to "Power belongs to the black worker"

It was with this change of emphasis that the storm broke within the black consciousness movement. Though

the colour question was not rejected, a new stress was placed on blacks within the labour field.

The problem started because some proponents believed that unless the ideology focused on the crucial problem of labour relations and its future re-organisation, black consciousness would not be able to provide any systematic critique of capitalism.

Moreover, this new view of black consciousness enabled blacks to posit, without contradiction, black principles of economic re-organisation and assert the view that the wealth belongs to the workers.

Thus, while maintaining the stress on "colour", the initiators of the new thinking added the dimension of "class" to black consciousness. In so doing, they recognised that all black people were oppressed but went further in their analysis by adding that black workers, particularly, suffered the most acute form of exploitation.

Along with Franz Fanon, the new view took into account that when liberation occurs, the danger of a middle class (whites in black masks) seizing the state apparatus would have been pre-empted. The growing middle class among the oppressed though not constituting any immediate threat to liberation, would

simply not be able to entrench itself and maintain the system of capitalism.

The new view seeks to encourage worker leadership based on the principles of black consciousness — worker pride in the fact that he is black, unashamed and therefore deserving respect. And he can get this respect through his collective unity in trade unions, he demands respect also in material terms: better pay, better working conditions, equal facilities and opportunities for development and the like.

From the moment the issue of "class" is introduced, trade union organisation is the logical follow-up.

In trade unions, whites are discounted as allies. Their standard of living make them into what has been called a "labour aristocracy". Whites do not suffer the daily indignities of black workers, they do not live in compounds, they enjoy the right to participation in the political process — all these factors alienate black workers from whites.

In the classical sense of exploitation, white workers because they produce under the system of capitalist relations are economically also exploited. However, their standard of living acts as a cushion against the ill-effects of exploitation.

The Race/class debate

IS the conflict in South Africa a race struggle between black nationalism and white nationalism? Is it a class struggle between owners of capital and the workers, irrespective of race?

Or is it a combination of class and race?

Close on 200 delegates, representing a number of black bodies supporting the black consciousness philosophy, got together at a symposium in April 1981 to give their viewpoint.

The Azapo president, Mr Khehla Mthembu, stressed that black consciousness was not on trial. "We are here to reaffirm black consciousness, to redefine some of our terms, and give direction to the struggle.

"Black consciousness," he added, "is dynamic — we shall adapt and move with the demands of our times."

The symposium set out to show that BC was still a necessary force in South Africa as it moved from its initial "psychological liberation" stage, through the "activist" phase into its present "ideological" phase.

The first two papers — both on "black consciousness and the class struggle" — set the tone for the symposium. The first was by a former Robben Island prisoner, Mr Eric Molobi, and the other by Mr Quraish Patel, of the Media Workers' Association of South Africa.

Eight commissions discussed questions arising from the papers. Some delegates were still unhappy about the class analysis.

But at the end of the symposium, delegates accepted without dissent the following:

Their commitment to the BC ideology;

The assertion that because the black worker is "the hub of the South African economy and yet the most exploited and oppressed", black worker consciousness be promoted in such a way that the black working class be a vehicle for change in South Africa;

Race is a class determinant in the current South African context;

There is no place for whites in the black consciousness movement.

Acceptance by the delegates of the class analysis did not imply that Azapo had embraced Marxism. On the contrary, Mr Patel pointed out: "Orthodox Marxists look at a doctrine and mould it to reality, whereas black consciousness looks at reality and moulds its doctrine accordingly."

With Azapo's focus on black workers reaffirmed, it was logical that worker organisation be taken a step further.

The Reverend Buti Tlhagale, of the Black Priests' Solidarity Group, delivered a paper in which he warned black trade unionists not to regard concessions in the labour field as ends in themselves.

It now seems clear that apart from battles in the educational, sporting and ideological spheres, the tensions in South African society will become increasingly concentrated in the labour field.

* * * *

Black Consciousness and the Class Struggle

Black consciousness in South Africa is no longer in its infancy. A decade has already elapsed since this novel vision was advocated. Despite the initial optimism, the Herculean task of establishing an integrated conception of our reality remains incomplete. But a system of thought or an ideology is of little value if it can only be defined as a response to a particular period of historical crisis.

When an ideology is able to reflect the continuous process of change and conflict, then that ideology has the potential for challenging the dominant ideas of the ruling class. To say then that a set of ideas is incomplete is to accept the permanence of social change which can never be halted.

In this context, black consciousness is the attempt to understand the material conditions from a position of self-determination. When black consciousness emerged, it did so on a specific level and for a definite purpose. Not only did it describe the reign of conceptual blindness among blacks, but it stimulated an intense period of political opposition, inculcating a new sense of existence from which is growing an unparalleled unity of the oppressed. However, one of the aspects of conflict which black consciousness did not properly examine was the relationship of black workers to the productive forces at this stage in history. Such an analysis would no doubt raise the connection between black consciousness and the class struggle.

The question is not to view black consciousness within the class struggle but to find out the relationship of black consciousness and the class struggle within the pattern of social transformation in the country. I suggest that black consciousness does not conflict with the notion of class struggle. There are in fact no practical problems in this regard. To suggest otherwise would be to imply that a black worker does not exist as "colour-blind" orthodox Marxists wish to do. Theoretically, it is necessary to participate in this discussion if only for the sake of conceptual clarity. My starting premise — one which may incidentally surprise orthodox and dogmatic Marxists for it is from the founding father himself — is that: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, it is their social existence that determines their consciousness." To this should be added

the idea that consciousness, in turn, affects social existence.

It is against this background that a cursory analysis of black consciousness will be made. Let us first accept that black consciousness is an idea used to describe a whole set of experiences — experiences revolving around a certain relationship and structure. It is a ruler-ruled relationship. The structure formalises this relationship where the ruler is not visible. The awareness of both these processes is what we have come to call black consciousness. This relationship and structure influences and determines everyone — black and white alike. It socialises all — teaching the ethic of superiority to whites and perpetual subservience to blacks. In the formal structure of parliament, legislation like the Land Act, Group Areas Act and Influx Control, reinforces what may have existed only informally.

At the time when the government ruled by fear alone, black consciousness emerged as a direct challenge to the dictatorship. At the same time, it addressed itself to blacks urging defiance in the face of unrelenting oppression.

The aftermath of Sharpsville had dealt a devastating blow to black political development. The unspoken threat, the unseen omnipotent security police, the memories of pre-dawn swoops, all this was internalised becoming a feature of the psychological make-up of black people. The government had successfully conditioned people to accept their burden without question. This conditioning became the norm of existence in South Africa. The psychological "dwarfing" of the consciousness of black people clouded their perception of reality and they were unable to properly perceive alternative modes of opposition. The large majority of black workers involved in the process of production were policed into ensuring the continued well-being of the economy.

The sudden, dramatic expression of revolt — much to the dismay of dogmatic Marxists — came from an unexpected section of the black people. Those outside of the focus of the means of production and distribution, the students, searching for identity in an alienated environment, unleashed years of pent-up hopes and dreams by rejecting the false black-white student unity. The search for identity coupled with

political opposition began questioning the ruler-ruled relationship and its related institutions.

The age of political despair was at an end, and the ruler-ruled relationship stood under the imminent threat of collapsing. With this antidote to fear, a new process of de-conditioning started to take place. Refusing to be defined in white terms and rejecting white values, black consciousness stressed the ethic of creativity: think on your own terms. Define yourselves, for you are what you want to be, and you want to be free. In short, re-define yourselves in terms of your own reality. The decade of fear began to disintegrate and the event produced a sense of discovery, an inward severing of the psychological shackles of slavery.

The first condition for liberation took root when black consciousness ripped open the false consciousness of black people and allowed them to experience reality on their terms — to project a vision of liberation without the aid of the white man. The necessary condition for liberation was realised in the tenet that psychological de-conditioning was a crucial preparatory phase for involvement in the actual change of circumstances which enslaved blacks. Black consciousness brought the promise of re-humanisation — again on the black man's terms. Intellectually poverty-stricken, what was there for blacks to emulate in the West?

Before the government even had time to react, white liberals, aggrieved at being cold-shouldered, wagged accusing fingers at a phenomenon that they were unable to comprehend. "Racists," they shouted from the steps of their expensive homes. Strange that when people of colour experiencing varying degrees of oppression unite against a privileged minority, the label of racism is flung in their faces.

Being black is not being a race; it is being conscious that people of colour are the downtrodden, the wretched of the earth and that only they can liberate themselves. We decided to define ourselves. According to the white frame of reference, not being white is non-white. That's their definition. We said black.

Hence, black consciousness can be given a two-edged definition. On the one hand, as the awareness of people of colour of the problems facing them in the social, political and economic structure and on the other

hand, it is the attempt to re-humanise black people whose dignity has been stripped away by the master-slave relationship and the institutions supporting this relationship. A negation of white superiority — not a negation of whites as people — black consciousness is at the same time a positive assertion of our being what we want to be.

This is the humanism of black consciousness. It wishes to restore our being human even if the environment is hostile and inhuman and by proclaiming black solidarity, it prepares us for participating in the historical movement towards a free society. But to be prepared for liberation means establishing the basic preconditions for a revolutionary ideology which challenges and transcends the dominant one of the ruling class. Therefore black consciousness can become a truly liberatory ideology when it also focuses on the economic sphere of activity.

Its main thrust was on the psychological and cultural level but a few years ago it became obvious that unless the economic infra-structure of social organisation was taken into account, black consciousness will be confined to clenched fists and protest poetry.

We don't need an economics degree to know that of about 10 million economically active people in the country, 8 million are black. Moreover, the top 20 percent of the population take 58 percent of the national income while the bottom 20 percent get only 2 percent. It's easy to see that the majority of the economically active workforce, black workers, produce the bulk of the wealth which is distributed among a minority. The pride of being instilled by black consciousness is only half the story. For the oppressed one of the most essential values — because it is the most concrete — is land: the land which will bring wealth and above all, dignity. But blacks hardly own any land. Can we forget how the Land Act drove hundreds of thousands of blacks off their land forcing them into the cities to become proletarianised? So, one of the principles of black consciousness revolves around the struggle for the repossession of land. Another says that since we are the major producers of wealth, we have a right to share in the rewards. Without the just redistribution of wealth, political power is meaningless — substituting a black owner of the means of production for a white one does not

solve the problem of labour exploitation.

How can a black worker feel any sense of pride when he is waging a constant battle against starvation? On this score, black consciousness by committing itself to a re-organisation of the structure of society carries the implication that liberation must also involve the elimination of economic exploitation. Why? Because in the way in which the economy is arranged, the owners of capital by extracting surplus profits rob the worker of his labour. Black workers as victims of colour prejudice and economic exploitation are the force without which capital cannot grow and accumulate.

Since black consciousness expresses the reality of life for black people, it is not a pre-conceived doctrine. The task of black consciousness can now be extended to articulate the problems of black workers. And what is their main problem? Exploitation of labour. The conflict between black workers and capital in South Africa is evident almost daily. When the conflict reaches breaking point, you can be sure of a strike.

Where capitalism is faced with an acute crisis, it tends to move in the direction of a dictatorship. Where a dictatorship exists, there you will find a severe social crisis. And only that class involved as victims in the capitalist-worker relationship can make any real change. In South Africa, it is the black worker. His revolt against capital is also a revolt against a system which denies him the right to determine his future. And, his protest against conditions in the township, is also a protest against the system of capitalism which has actively aided in creating cheap labour reserves.

The existence of a large number of strikes involving black workers attests to the fact of discrimination on the basis of colour in the economy. The division of the labour market along colour lines, supplemented by the segregation in housing and education and reinforced by the white ethic of superiority, perpetuate the low class economic status of blacks. Since the majority of black people are workers, i.e. sellers of labour to owners of capital, black consciousness preaches black solidarity and the power of labour in the economy. What is it but black worker solidarity that is demonstrated when black workers don tools in sympathy with black workers in another industry? Is this not the awareness of black workers' unity? Or, when

students come out on boycott with students from another university? Is this not black student unity?

The consciousness of the power of black workers is gradually taking root. Is this consciousness of the power of black workers anything other than black consciousness operating in the sphere of labour? This is merely a labour-directed view of black consciousness.

Incidentally, when we refer to the "white working class" we do not intend a class description in the classical European sense because white workers — whites who do not own capital — are by the very nature of South African history a "labour aristocracy". Since white racism expresses itself most clearly in the workforce, and since black consciousness is regarded by white workers as the chief antagonist, a clash is inevitable. Those who hope that black and white workers will unite and fight and dream of solidarity between them do not realise that whenever white workers have struggled or supported a struggle in this country, it has not been a struggle for liberation — but a struggle to get something for themselves. Moreover, white workers are a privileged labour aristocracy, i.e. they enjoy the benefits of black exploitation, they have the vote and the right colour. The social and political arrangements which make white workers into a labour aristocracy decide that their labour, because it is white, is worth more than black labour. White workers' awareness of their status compared to blacks inspire their superiority ethic.

When white workers become aware of themselves as a class and realise that the wealth created by the majority should be shared among all, then only will it be possible to reconsider the labour-orientated view of black consciousness. Until then, they must be excluded from the struggle of the true working class for liberation from economic exploitation and political oppression. Black workers are the historical force for the liberation of this country. It is this class that holds the future in their hands.

The only whites who profess to want to join black workers are those who are economically most secure: university students, professionals and a handful of intellectuals — individuals who represent no significant social force.

Black workers are confined to

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AZAPO's new leadership takes office



From Left to Right: Muntu Ka Myeza (Publicity Secretary), Imrann Moosa (Natal Vice President), Kenneth Rachiidi (Trent), Peter Jones (Cape Vice President), Lybon Mahasa (President) Satha Cooper (Deputy President) Zihalela Cindi (Projects Co-ordinator), Sefako Nyaka (Secretary General), Fikile Qhili (Free State Vice President), National Organiser

direct the struggle within the framework of the law, but each time the struggle reaches an explosive pitch, more workers are driven to recognise that the things they are fighting for cannot be achieved within the system.

Among black people, there are but a mere handful who own some meagre form of means of production. That they are part of the struggle for liberation is beyond doubt. But, by virtue of their involvement with capital and its accumulation, the black consciousness movement must guard against them taking control and redirecting the struggle away from the ideal of economic reorganisation in the interests of the producers of wealth.

It has often been said that black consciousness is a way of life. It is an attempt to search for a lost identity, it is a rejection of a foreign value system and a belief that unless society is completely organised in the interests of black workers, liberation will remain an unattainable ideal.

The more powerful the black workers' protest, the more they will move towards black solidarity and the greater the chances of the whites accepting large-scale changes. On the other hand, the more the black protest and challenge is weakened and diluted by class collaboration (black and white unite and fight) the more chance there is of the white workers remaining counter-revolutionary.

When we speak about black consciousness in relation to the class struggle we are referring to the

workers of colour who live in the reserves and townships subject to the daily humiliation of pass raids, inhuman living conditions, high transport costs and a barbaric form of education for their children. At work, its low wages, bad working conditions and little, if any, bargaining rights.

With his low wages, there is little hope of him improving "the quality of his life". Conditions in the township also prevent him from enjoying the benefits of recreation, even if he was paid enough at work. Caught in this vicious circle, is it any wonder that severe problems at work become "community issues" when workers down tools?

I make bold to suggest that this entire experience is a description of black consciousness operating in all spheres of life. I am not saying that this should be the case theoretically because it is a description of the phenomena that exists. I only describe what is happening, what is the case.

In so accommodating the various levels of the black experience, black consciousness is able to posit the contours of a possible alternative. By transcending the existing status quo and projecting the aspirations of blacks into a system in which wealth and power are equitably distributed, black consciousness truly raises the hope of liberation and so carries the seeds of meaningful change. Without this projection of an alternative, black consciousness would be a mere reaction to the status quo.

Since this is not the best of all

possible worlds, black consciousness must at least also provide some thoughts on what it wants — not only what it rejects. The struggle for liberation is often defined in terms of the alternative — and what is the alternative of black consciousness?

I don't intend to fool myself by believing that I can offer any assistance in this regard. But I do know that unless the alternative includes the decisive feature of worker control, liberation will remain a mere catchword for meaningless reforms.

The surge of a black worker consciousness appears to be dominating the political spectrum. When that consciousness becomes political, the demands of workers will go beyond wages, working conditions and trade union recognition — for a political black worker consciousness means that the producers of wealth finally realise that to achieve a better life would involve a direct struggle for political power.

How black workers will then use their economic muscle depends entirely on the black solidarity built up in all those little strikes across the country, in those boycotts, at those mass meetings and during those community protests against rents and mass removals.

In the meantime, black organisations will serve the purpose of popularising pertinent issues and acting as training grounds for building that unity required for the ultimate and concerted national struggle waged against a regime that appears to be plunging towards its own destruction.



Police keep watch on hundreds of black people marching in protest.

Trade Unions: Strength and Weaknesses

MUCH excitement has been generated by the growth of the labour movement in this country — growth which has been seen as heralding a new era in our political scene.

As was to be expected, this movement has been greatly influenced by the dominant political thoughts and, as a result, it has developed in two distinctive trends: the 'nonracial' trade unions on the one hand and the black consciousness-inspired trade unions on the other.

Those who rally round the banner of non-racialism argue that the instruments of change should be embodied in the envisaged change, whereas those under the Black Consciousness banner believe instruments of change need not necessarily be embodied in the envisaged change.

False

In Black Consciousness, we believe in taking into cognisance the material conditions.

Racism in this country is not just an attitude, but it exists in structures and institutions we have to contend with on a day-to-day basis.

These structures are built to enhance and foster the false superiority of white people in this country and experience has shown that, in any partnership of blacks and whites, white people feel it is their natural duty to occupy positions of leadership, power and control.

Education, and exposure to better facilities and life, are used to justify this position.

The trade union or labour movement has been seen by some as the most revolutionary movement capable of ushering in a new social order, while others have dismissed it as a reactionary product of a capitalist society.

Both views are inaccurate and misleading.

While, on the one hand, it is true that trade unionism introduces workers to democratic processes of accepting joint responsibility and joint decision-making, it also sharpens their consciousness to the relationship that exists between them and the means of production and exchange.

This should not be misconstrued as a complete revolutionary process that needs no direction and guidance.

A revolution has been described as "a dialectical progress of historical development" which is "the sum of varied and diverse circumstances, of multiplex elements that together add up and lead to the solution, in a given historical moment, of a crisis that has stubborn and deep economic causes".

With that in mind, the working class as such is not synonymous with a revolutionary phenomenon. If this were true, the picture of the society in our country would have been otherwise.

Values

As many scholars would have it — and we agree with them — the dominant ideas in any given society are those of the ruling class, and sections of the working class in this country have absconded from their fundamental worker responsibilities and embraced the values of the ruling class.

Nay, they have been bolstering the status quo through the exercise of their bourgeois democratic right — the vote.

Concern

We know the rule of one class over another does not necessarily depend on economic or physical power alone, but rather on persuading the ruled to accept the system of beliefs of the ruling class and to share its social, cultural and moral values.

In our country, the labour union movement should be influenced by revolutionary consciousness to transcend its limitations, that straight-jacket it into assuming "a pressure group" character that concerns itself with the amelioration of working conditions.

Discard

The movement must discard its reformist character, that is, being solely concerned with factory-floor grievances and turning a blind eye to both the existential situations in which the workers find themselves, and the material conditions that determine their respective backgrounds.

It should never be divorced from day-to-day rigours and vagaries of living in a racist capitalist society and, for the direction of its programmes, it

must draw from the ethos and pathos of the workers experiences at both factory-floor level and beyond mass and not work systemati-

Workers do not cease to be — or to exist — as people after downing tools at knocking-off time.

As the political writer, Sorel, has said, we believe "the working class alone" — by virtue of its being the most down-trodden and oppressed people in our society — has the moral virtues necessary to rejuvenate society, and that to perform this mission it must have faith in itself and in its purposes.

Our duty is to raise its revolutionary consciousness.

In conclusion, on this potential revolutionary phenomenon — the labour movement, Gramsci has lessons for any serious activist or student of society to ponder upon when he writes: "To expect that a mass, reduced to such conditions of physical and spiritual slavery, could embody a spontaneous historical development; to expect that it would spontaneously begin and continue an act of revolutionary creation — is an illusion of ideologists.

"To rely on the unique creative capacity of such a mass and not work systematically to organise a great army of disciplined and conscious militants, ready for every sacrifice, educated to put their slogans into practice simultaneously, ready to assume effective responsibility for the revolution, ready to be agents of the revolution — not to do this is a real betrayal of the working class and an unconscious counter-revolution in advance."

Imbalance

The Azanian Peoples' Organisation, Azapo's policy statement on trade unions reads: "Realising the imbalance of power between the owners of capital and black workers, we acknowledge trade unions as instruments that can bring about the redistribution of power.

"In the unique situation that is South Africa, trade unions should go beyond the problems of management and labour.

"We envisage a persistently militant system of trade unions which will challenge the discriminatory labour laws of the white minority Government and thereby bring about change."

CHEAP, BLACK LABOUR FUELS ECONOMY

Any ideology has to come from the experiences of the people and the kind of oppression they undergo. We find ourselves in a capitalist society today. But it is a capitalist society with a racist twist. The overwhelming majority of black people in South Africa are reduced to workers, irrespective of whether or not they would like to enter the ranks of the capitalist class.

Capitalism thus assumes a novel character with the distinction between the haves and the have-nots being colour. The working class is split into a privileged white working class or labour aristocracy and an extremely oppressed black working class. This statutory proletarianisation of the black man in general is well summed up by the past nationalist minister who said that "there is no station in life for the bantu beyond that of a labourer".

Within the body politic we again find that the demarcating line between those who wield power and those who do not is colour. Again it is the black man who is disenfranchised.

Socially the same statutory prohibitions apply. It is blacks who are ghettoised, blacks who are forcibly removed, blacks who are fed gutter education and blacks who have separate and unequal amenities.

We can thus say that Blacks are politically, economically and socially discriminated against and are forced to occupy the lowest rungs of this society.

These are the material conditions existing in society today and any ideology that does not take cognisance of this is starting from the basis of historical fallacy. Black consciousness emerged from the boiling point of this society and the experience of the most oppressed segments of this society. It emerged from the pain of our degradation, the shame of our plight and the vision of our restoration to the ranks of free and proud people of this earth.

Taking into account all these factors, the future society we envisage is one in which there will be no discrimination on the basis of colour; where there will be no economic exploitation on the basis of class; where the wealth of the nation is equally distributed among all her people. Education shall be entrenched in law and the leaders of the people shall be

of the people, elected by the people to serve the people.

It should be obvious that only the oppressed are capable of bringing about the necessary transformation in any society. However this does not occur of its own accord. It has been said that a people can only be oppressed to the extent they allow themselves to be oppressed. Such a truism implies that a national consciousness has to be activated.

Proceeding from the premise that in our vast numbers is our strength we have to harness that strength to the best effect.

It is the economy that is the backbone of any society and the economy of this country is based on abundant and cheap black labour. It follows that the black working class is the pivot around which the liberation movement revolves.

The Black worker possess immense economic power but as yet he has not realised his full potential and is not able to exercise his economic strength on a coordinated basis. Our focus is on accelerating realisation of this potential, of making him aware that he holds a power without parallel in this country. We have to emphasise the political content of the labour struggle, of making the struggle of the worker the struggle of the community. The worker and the political organisation have to become one and indivisible.

We have to work towards the objective of the workers joining the political organisation in ever increas-

ing numbers and the political organisation being ready, willing and able to tackle questions of labour and nurturing the ascendancy of worker leadership.

It is perhaps fortunate that I am speaking in a rural area because this is where the majority of workers are recruited from. Rural areas have been earmarked as vast labour reserves and are the granaries of the country. Every liberation movement in South Africa has been guilty of ignoring the workers in the rural areas and we must ensure that AZAPO does not perpetuate this error.

We may add that students have a role to play in the liberation struggle. Firstly they possess certain skills which can be utilised for the furtherance of our struggle and secondly they tend to have an incredible amount of free time. Students can thus play an activist role in the community. But at this point a note of caution must be sounded: because students possess certain specialised skills, they can be seduced into a comfortable accommodation within the system. Therefore students have to make an active and authentic commitment to the liberation struggle. Vigilance has to be their watchword and they have to bear in mind that they are part of the black community before they are students.

AZAPO commits itself to the liberation of black people under the active leadership of the black working class and the guiding philosophy of black consciousness.



ON STRIKE: Black workers on strike use their economic muscle also to express dissatisfaction with their denial of rights and are becoming aware of their collective strength to demand change.

Nation and Ethnicity in South Africa

A speech delivered during June 1983: this contribution sets out AZAPO's attitude to ethnic politics which parade under the banner slogans "non-racialism" and "multi-racialism".

The immediate goal of the national liberation struggle now being waged in South Africa is the destruction of the system of racism and capitalism. Apartheid is simply a particular socio-political expression of this system. Our opposition to apartheid is therefore only a starting point for our struggle against the structures and interests which are the real basis of apartheid.

During the past 100 odd years, a modern industrial economy has been created in South Africa under the spur of the capitalist class. The most diverse groups of people (European settlers, immigrants, African and East Indian slaves, Indian indentured labourers, Chinese indentured labourers and indigenous African people) were brought together and compelled to labour for the profit of the different capitalist owners of the means of production.

Now, during the 18th and 19th centuries in Western and Central Europe, roughly similar processes had taken place. But there was one major difference between Europe and the colonies of Europe. For in Europe, in the epoch of the rise of capitalism, the up and coming capitalist class had to struggle against feudal aristocracy in order to be allowed to unfold their enterprise. Through unequal taxation, restrictions of freedom of trade and freedom of movement and in a thousand different ways the aristocracy exploited the bourgeoisie and the other toiling classes.

In order to gain the benefit of their labours, to free the rapidly developing forces of production from the fetters of relations of production, the capitalist class had to organise the peasants and the other urban classes to overthrow the feudal system. In the course of these struggles of national unification this bourgeoisie developed a nationalist democratic ideology and its cultural values and practices become the dominant ones in the new nations. The bourgeoisie became the leading class in the nation and were able to structure it in accordance with their class interests.

In the 20th century in the colonies of Europe, however, the situation has been and is entirely different. In these colonies, European or metropolitan capitalism (i.e. imperialism) had become the oppressor which brutally exploited the colonial peoples. In some cases the colonial power had allowed or even encouraged a class of colonial satellite

capitalists to come into being. This class, being completely dependent on London, Paris, Brussels, Berlin or New York, could not oppose imperialism in any consistent manner. If it had done so it would in fact have committed class suicide because it would have had to advocate the destruction of the imperialist-capitalist system which is the basis of colonial oppression. After World War II especially, the capitalist powers realised that this situation would put a great strain on the capitalist system as a whole. Consequently we had a period of 'decolonisation' which as we now know, merely ushered in the present epoch of neo-colonialism, which Kwame Nkrumah optimistically called the 'last stage of imperialism'!

In South Africa, a peculiar development took place. Here, the national bourgeoisie had come to consist of a class of white capitalists. Because they could only farm and mine gold and diamonds profitably if they had an unlimited supply of cheap labour, they found it necessary to create a split labour market, i.e. one for cheap *black* labour and one for skilled and semi-skilled (mainly *white* labour). This was made easier by the fact that in the pre-industrial colonial period white-black relationships had been essentially master-servant relations. In order to secure their labour supply as required, the national bourgeoisie in South Africa had to institute and perpetuate the system whereby Black people were denied political rights, were restricted in their freedom of movement, tied to the land in so-called 'native reserves', not allowed to own landed property anywhere in South Africa and their children given an education, if they received any at all that 'prepared them for life in a subordinate society'.

The colonial national bourgeoisie compromised with British imperialism in 1910 in order to maintain their profitable system of super exploitation of black labour.

They did not incorporate the entire population under the new state on the basis of legal equality, they could not unite the nation. On the contrary, ever since 1910, elaborate strategies have been evolved and implemented to divide the black working people into even smaller poten-

tially antagonistic groups. Divide and Rule, the main policy of any imperial power, has been the compass of every government of South Africa since 1910.

In order to justify these policies the ideology of racism was elaborated, systemised and universalised. People were thrown into a set-up where they were categorised racially. They grew up believing that they were Whites, Coloureds, Africans, Indians. Since 1948, they have been encouraged and often forced to think of themselves in even more microscopic terms as 'Xhosa'; 'Zulu'; 'Muslim'; 'Hindu'; 'Griqua'; 'Sotho'; 'Venda'; etc., etc.

The ideal policy of the conservative fascist-minded politicians of the capitalist class was to keep these 'races' separate. The so-called liberal element strove for 'harmonious race relations in a multi-racial country'. Because of the development of the biological sciences where the very concept 'race' was questioned and because of the catastrophic consequences of the racist Herrenvolk policies of Hitler Germany socio-political theories based on the concept of 'race' fell into disrepute. The social theorists of the ruling class then restored to the theory of 'ethnic groups', which had in the meantime become a firmly established instrument of economic and political policy in the United States of America as well as elsewhere in the world. It is to be noted that this theory of ethnicity continued to be based on the ideology of 'race' as far as South Africa is concerned. From the point of view of the ruling class, however, the theory of 'ethnic groups' was a superior instrument of policy, because, as I have pointed out, it could explain and justify even greater fragmentation of the black working people whose unity held within itself the message of doom for the capitalist apartheid system in this country.

The fact of the matter is that the white National Party used ethnic theories in order to justify Bantustan strategy whereby it created bogus 'nations' and forced them to accept an illusory 'independence' so that the black working class would agitate for political rights in their own so-called 'homelands'.

The idea, as we all know, was to

create, revive and entrench antagonistic feelings of difference between language groups (Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho Tswana, etc.), religious groups (Muslim, Hindu, Christian etc.), cultural groups (Griqua, Malay, Coloured etc.), and of course racial groups (African, Coloured, Indian, etc.). I need not show here how this theory was designed to serve the interests of the ruling class by preserving apartheid (grand and petty) and how ruthlessly it was applied. The literature on apartheid is so large today that no single person could study all of it in the span of a lifetime. What we need to do is to take a careful, if brief, look at how the liberation movement has conceived of the differences between and the unity of officially classified population registration groups, the different language groups and religious sects that constitute the Black nation.

Those organisations and writers within the liberation movement who used to put forward the view that South Africa is a multi-racial country composed of four 'races' no longer do so for the same reasons as the conservative and liberal ruling-class theorists. They have begun to speak more and more of building a *non-racial South Africa*. For most people who use this term 'non-racial' it means exactly the same thing as multi-racial. They continue to conceive of South Africa's population as consisting of four so-called 'races'. It has become fashionable to intone the words a 'non-racial democratic South Africa' as a kind of open sesame that permits one to enter into the hallowed portals of the *progressive* 'democratic movement'. If we do not want to be deceived by words we have to look behind them at the concepts and the actions on which they are based.

The word 'non-racial' cannot be accepted by a racially oppressed people because we reject the concept 'race', we deny the existence of 'races' and thus oppose all actions, practices, beliefs and policies based on the concept of 'race'. If in practice (and in theory) we continue to use the word 'non-racial' as though we believe that South Africa is inhabited by four so-called 'races', we are still trapped in multi-racialism and thus in racialism. The denial of the existence of races leads on to anti-racism which goes beyond it because the term not only involves the denial of 'race' but also opposition to the capitalist structures for the perpetuation of which the ideology and theory of 'race' exist. Words are like money. They are

easily counterfeited and it is often difficult to tell the real coin from the false one. We need, therefore, at all times to find out whether our 'non-racialists' are multi-racialists or anti-racists. Only the latter variety can belong in the national liberation movement.

The theory of ethnicity and of ethnic groups has taken the place of theories of 'race' in the modern world. Very often 'racial' theories are incorporated in 'ethnic theories'. In this paper, I am not going to discuss the scientific validity of ethnic theory, usually pluralism of one kind or another. That is a job that one or more of us in the liberation movement must do very soon before our youth get infected incurably with these dangerous ideas at universities. All I need to point out here is that the way in which the ideologies of the National Party use the term 'ethnic group' makes it almost impossible for any serious-minded person grappling with these problems to use the term as a tool of analysis.

It has been shown by a number of writers that the National Party's use of the terminology of ethnicity is contradictory and designed simply to justify the apartheid/Bantustan policies. Thus, for example, they claim, amongst other things, that:

- The 'African' people consist of between 8 and 10 different 'ethnic groups', all of whom want to attain 'national' i.e. Bantustan 'independence';
- The 'Coloured' people consist of at least three different 'ethnic groups' (Malay, Cape Coloured, Griqua and possibly 'other Coloured'). On the other hand, 'Coloureds' are themselves an ethnic group, but not a 'nation';
- The 'Indian' people constitute an ethnic group not a 'nation';
- The 'White' people consist of Afrikaners and other ethnic groups but constitute a single nation i.e. the white nation of South Africa.

In all this angle of contradictions, the most important point is that every 'ethnic group' is potentially a so-called 'nation' unless it is already part of a 'nation' as in the case of the Whites.

We have to admit that in the liberation movement ever since 1896, the question of the different population registration groups has presented us with a major problem, one which was either glossed over or evaded or simply ignored. I cannot go into the history of the matter here. We shall have to content ourselves

with the different positions taken up by different tendencies in the liberation movement today. These can be summarised briefly as falling into three categories:

(i) For some, the population registration groups are 'national groups or racial groups, or sometimes ethnic groups'. The position of these peoples is that it is a 'self-evident and undeniable reality that there are Indians, Coloureds, Africans and Whites (national groups) in our country. It is a reality precisely because each of these national groups has its own heritage, language customs and traditions' (Zak Yacoob, speech presented at the first general meeting of the Transvaal Indian Congress on 1 May 1983).

Without debating the point any further, let me say that this is the classical position of ethnic theory. I shall show presently that the use of the word 'national group' is fraught with dangers not because it is a word but because it fires expression to and thereby reinforces separatism and disruptive tendencies in the body politic of South Africa. The advocates of this theory outside the liberation movement, such as Inkatha and the PFP, draw the conclusion that a federal constitutional solution is the order of the day. Those inside the liberation movement believe contradictorily that even though the national groups with their different cultures will continue to exist they can somehow do so in a unitary state as part of a single nation.

We have to state clearly that if things really are as they appear to be we would not need any science. If the sun *really* quite *self-evidently* moved around the earth we would not require astronomy and space research to explain to us that the opposite is true, that the 'self-evidently real' is only apparent. Of course there *are* historically evolved differences of language, religion, customs, job specialisation etc among the different groups in this country. But we have to *view* these differences historically, not statically. They have been enhanced and artificially engendered by the deliberate ruling-class policy of keeping the population registration groups in separate compartments, making them lead their lives in group isolation except in the market place. This is a historical reality. It is not an unchanging situation that stands above or outside history. I shall show just now how this historical reality has to be reconciled *through class struggle* with the reality of a single nation.

The danger inherent in this kind of talk is quite simply that it makes room both in theory and in practice for the preaching of ethnic separatism. It is claimed that a theory of 'national groups' advocated in the context of a movement for national liberation merely seeks:

'To heighten the positive features of each national group and to weld these together so that there arises out of this process of organisation a single national consciousness'

(Yacoob)

whereas the ruling class 'relying upon the negative features' (of each national group) 'emphasises ethnicity' or 'uses culture in order to reinforce separation and division'. We can repeat this kind of intellectualist solace until we fall asleep, the fact remains that 'ethnic' or 'national group' approaches are the thin edge of the wedge for separatist movements and civil wars fanned by great-power interests and suppliers of arms of opportunist 'ethnic leaders'. Those who sow the wind, as the prophet says, will reap the whirlwind! Does not Inkatha in some ways represent a warning to all of us? Who decides what are the 'positive features' of a national group? What are the boundaries or limits of a national group? Are these determined by the population register? Is a national group a stunted nation, one that, given the appropriate soil, will fight for national self-determination in its own nation-state? Or does the word 'national' have some other more sophisticated meaning? These are relevant questions to ask because the advocates of the four-nation or national-group approach maintain that a liberated South Africa will guarantee group rights such as 'the right of national groups to their culture' and that we have to accept that if the existence of national groups is a reality and if each national group has its own culture, traditions, and problems, the movement for change is best facilitated by enabling organisation around issues which concern people in their daily lives, issues such as low wages, high transport costs and poor housing. Or as other representatives of this tendency have bluntly said we need separate organisations for each of the 'national groups,' which organisations can and should be brought together in an alliance.

These are weighty conclusions on which history itself (since 1960 and especially since 1976) has pronounced a negative judgement. To fan the fires of ethnic politics today is to go

backwards, not forwards. It plays into the hands of the reactionary middle-class leadership. It is a reactionary, not a progressive policy from the point of view of the liberation movement taken as a whole. Imagine us advocating 'Indian', 'Coloured' and 'African' trade unions or student unions today!

(ii) There is a diametrically opposite view within the liberation movement even though it is held by a minority of people. According to this view, our struggle is not for national liberation. It is a class struggle pure and simple, one in which the 'working class' will wrest power from the 'capitalist class'.

For this reason the worker should be organised regardless of what so-called group they belong to. This tendency seems to say (in theory) that the historic evolved differences are irrelevant or at best of secondary importance.

I find it difficult to take this position seriously. I suspect that in practice the activists who hold this view are compelled to make the most acrobatic compromises with the reality of racially prejudiced 'workers'. To deny the reality of prejudice and perceive differences, whatever their origin, is to disarm oneself strategically and tactically. It becomes impossible to organise a mass movement outside the ranks of a few thousand students.

Again, the historical experience of the liberation movement in South Africa does not permit us to entertain this kind of conclusion. All the little organisations and groups that have at one time or another operated on this basis have vanished after telling the simple story which, though 'full of sound and fury', signified nothing.

(iii) The third position is one that has been proved to be correct by the history of all successful liberation struggles in Africa and elsewhere. I have found no better description of this position than that outlined by President Samora Machael in a speech held in August 1982 in reply to General Malan's accusations that South Africa was being 'destabilised' by hostile elements in the sub continent.

In that speech Machael said among other things that:

'Our nation is historically new. The awareness of being Mozambicans arose with a common oppression suffered by all of us under colonialism from Rovuma to Maputo.

Frelimo, in its 20 years' existence and in the path of struggle,

turned us progressively into Mozambicans, no longer Moconde and Shangaan, Nyanja and Ronga, Nyungwe and Bitongs, Chubabo and Ndau, Macua and Xitsua.

Frelimo turned us into equal sons of the Mozambican nation, whether our skin was black, brown or white.

Our nation was not moulded and forged by feudal or bourgeois gentlemen. It arose from our armed struggle. It was carved out by our hard-working calloused hands.

Thus during the national liberation war, the ideas of country and freedom were closely associated with victory of the working people. We fought to free the land and the people. This is the reason that those, who at the time wanted the land and the people in order to exploit them, left us to go and fight in the ranks of colonialism, their partner.

The unity of the Mozambican nation and Mozambican patriotism is found in the essential components of, as we emphasise, anti-racism, socialism, freedom and unity'. (WIP no. 26)

This statement is especially significant when one realises that for many years FRELIMO accepted that 'there is no antagonism between the existence of a number of ethnic groups and National Unity'. This sentence comes from a FRELIMO document entitled 'Mozambican Tribes and Ethnic Groups: Their significance in the Struggle for National Liberation' written at a time when the movement actually was under strong pressure from politicians who were consciously manipulating ethnicity in their own interest' (J Saul: The dialectic of class and tribe).

Even earlier in 1962 a FRELIMO document stressed that 'it is true that there are differences among us Mozambicans. Some of us are Macondes, others are Nianjas, others Macuas, etc. Some of us come from the mountains, other from the plains. Each of our tribes has its own language, its specific uses and habitudes and different cultures. There are differences among us. This is normal.... In all big countries there are differences among people.

All of us Mozambicans — Macuas, Macondes, Nianjas, Changanas, Ajuas, etc. — we want to be free. To be free we have to fight united.

All Mozambicans of all tribes are brothers in the struggle. All the tribes of Mozambique must unite in the

common struggle for the independence of our country'. (Quoted by J Saul).

The development of the Mozambican National Liberation ideology through the lessons learnt in struggle shown clearly by President Machael's August 1983 statement that:

'Ours is not a society in which races and colours, tribes and regions coexist and live harmoniously side by side. We went beyond these ideas during a struggle in which we sometimes had to force people's consciousness in order for them to free themselves from complexes and prejudices so as to become simply, we repeat, simply people'.

Every situation is unique. The experience of FRELIMO, while it may have many lessons for us, cannot be duplicated in South Africa. Certainly the population registration groups of South Africa are neither 'tribes' nor 'ethnic groups' nor 'national groups'. In sociological theory, they can be described as colour-castes or more simply as colour-groups. So to describe them is not unimportant since the word captures the nature or the direction of development of these groups. But this question of words is not really the issue. What is important is to clarify the relationship between class, colour, culture and nation.

The economic, material, language, religious and other differences between sections of the oppressed are *real*. They influence and determine the ways in which people live and experience their lives. Reactionary ethnic organisation would not have been so successful in the history of this country had these difficulties not been of a certain order of reality. However, these differences are neither permanent nor necessarily divisive if they are *restructured and redirected* for the purpose of national liberation and thus in order to build the nation. The ruling class has used language, religious and sex differences among the working people in order to divide them and to disorganise them. Any organisation of the people that does not set out to counteract these divisive tendencies set up by the ruling-class strategies merely ends up by reinforcing these strategies. The case of Gandhi or Abdurrahman are good examples. Middle-class and aspiring bourgeois elements quickly seize control of such 'ethnic' organisations and use them as power bases from which they try to bargain for a larger share of the economic cake. This is essen-

tially the kind of thing that the Bantustan leaders and the Bantustan middle-classes are doing today.

Because they are oppressed, all black people desire to be free and to participate fully in the economic, political and social life of Azania. The middle-classes cannot be consistent since their interests are, generally speaking and in their own consciousness tied to the capitalist system. Hence only the black working class can take the task of completing the democratisation of the country on its shoulders.

It alone can unite all the oppressed and exploited cases. It is the leading class in the building of the nation. It has to redefine the nation and abolish the reactionary definitions of the bourgeoisie and of the reactionary petty bourgeoisie. The nation has to be structured by and in the interests of the black working class. But it can only do so by changing the entire system. A non-racial capitalism is impossible in South Africa. The class struggle against capitalist exploitation and the national struggle against racist oppression become one struggle under the general command of the black working class and its organisation, AZAPO.

Politically -- in the short term and culturally (in the long term) the ways in which these insights are translated into practice are of the greatest moment. Although no hard and fast rules are available and few of them are absolute, the following are crucial points in regard to the practical ways in which we build the nation of Azania and destroy the separatist-tendencies amongst us.

(i) Political and economic organisations of the working people should as far as possible be open to all oppressed and exploited people regardless of colour.

While it is true that the Group Areas Act and other laws continue to concentrate people in their organisations — geographically speaking — largely along ethnic lines, it is imperative and possible that the organisations themselves should not be structured along these lines. The same political organisations should and can function in all the ghettos and group areas, people must and do identify with the same organisations and not with 'ethnic' organisations.

(ii) All struggles (local, regional and national) should be linked up. No struggle should be fought by one section of the oppressed alone. The President's Council proposals, for example, should not be analysed

and acted upon as of interest to 'Coloured' and 'Indians' only. The Koorhof Bills should be clearly seen and fought as affecting *all* the oppressed and exploited people.

(iii) Cultural organisations that are not locally or geographically limited for valid community reasons should be open to all oppressed and exploited people.

The songs, stories, poems, dances, music of one group should become the common property of all even if their content has to be conveyed by means of different language media. In this way, and in many other ways, by means of class-struggle on the political and on the cultural front, the cultural achievements of the people will be woven together into one Azanian fabric. In this way we shall eliminate divisive ethnic consciousness and separatist lines of division without eliminating our cultural achievements and cultural variety. But it will be experienced by all as different aspects of one national culture accessible to all. So that, for example, every Azanian child will know — roughly speaking — the same fairy tales or children's stories, whether these be of 'Indian', 'Xhosa', 'Tswana', or 'Khoikhoi' origin.

(iv) The liberation movement has to evolve and implement a democratic language policy not for tomorrow but for today. We need to discuss seriously how we can implement — with the resources at our disposal — the following model which, to my mind, represents the best possible solution to the problem of communication in Azania.

● All Azanians must have a sound knowledge of English whether as home language or as second language.

● All Azanians must have a conversational knowledge of the other regionally important languages. For example: in the Eastern Province, every person will know English. Afrikaans-speaking persons will have a conversational knowledge of Xhosa and Xhosa-speaking persons will have a conversational knowledge of Afrikaans. In an area like Natal, a knowledge of English and Zulu would in all probability suffice.

These are sketchy ideas that have to be filled in through democratic and urgent discussion in all organisations of the people and implemented as soon as we have established the necessary structures and methods.

The Black working class instilled with a revolutionary consciousness is the driving force of the liberation

struggle in South Africa. It has to ensure that the leadership of this struggle remains with it if our efforts are not be deflected into channels of disaster. The black working class has to act as a magnet that draws all the other oppressed layers of our society, organises them for the liberation struggle and infuses them with the consistent socialist ideas which alone spell death to the system of racism and capitalism as we know it today.

In this struggle the idea of a single

nation is vital because it represents the real interest of the working class and therefore of the future socialist Azania. 'Ethnic', national group or racial group ideas of nationhood in the final analysis strengthen the position of the middle-class or even the capitalist oppressors themselves. I repeat, they pave the way for the catastrophic separatist struggles that we have witnessed in other parts of Africa. Let us never forget that more than a million people were

massacred in the Biafran war, let us not forget the danger represented by the 'race riots' of 1949. Today, we can choose a different path. We have to create an ideological, political and cultural climate in which this solution becomes possible.

I believe that if we view the question of nation and ethnicity in this framework we will understand how vital it is that our slogans are heard throughout the length and breadth of our country.

Idyllic setting for a tough battle continued from page 10

The BC dilemma was summed up by another delegate, Mr Joe Thloloe who talked of the "onslaught from the northern suburbs on BC".

He said white liberals and radicals accused Azapo and other BC bodies of being "petty bourgeois".

"They have also come up with the slogan that 'the struggle is colourless'. Some years ago, people believed in African nationalism, that their goal was a socialist state," Mr Thloloe said. "It was a clear-cut definition.

"Now we are talking about BC. We have to pick-and-shovel workers, managers and other professionals. We all agree — our goal is a socialist state. But the people who are fighting to create it are the black people of this country. Do we call them a nation or a class?"

He added: "If we say the struggle is between black and white, our goal will still be a socialist State where there are no races or classes."

Those who believe in defining it as a class-race struggle are adamant that it has nothing to do with Marxism or any other theories as such, but merely a categorising of the struggle in line with the "socialist ethic".

Their argument is that the South African situation has to be interpreted along African nationalist and African socialist lines.

While the arguments may seem facile and irrelevant in defining its ideological concept, it has to be understood against the background that Azapo in its present format is aimed at mobilising the black workers.

The differences over ideological interpretations tended to overshadow other developments within Azapo. The education paper, in an appraisal critical of the present system in South Africa, suggested a far-reaching counter-system.

Mr Mosala's paper on labour spoke of the Government's dispensa-

tions being seen in the light of its policy of total strategy, and called for a counter strategy.

He argued that the Government had set out to destroy the political potential of the black labour force into a "semi-white mode of existence".

"By allowing workers to have access to the official bargaining machinery, the Government has succeeded in restrictive control on the worker movement, Mr Mosala said.

A major move which emerged at the congress was the expansion of various secretariats. They will now include health, sport, rural and urban development, youth and culture, education and labour.

By doing so, Azapo is hoping to play a bigger role in the daily lives of black people and countering accusations that it is not interested in bread-and-butter issues.

A controversial move during last year was hardly discussed at the conference — the axing of Mr Nkondo as president. It was touched on briefly when the publicity secretary, Mr George Wauchope, said the national executive had come under fire for the move, and although differences with other BC bodies had been resolved, some organisations had given Azapo the cold shoulder.

Mr Nkondo, before being banned by the Government, was suspended by the executive for "violating principles and policy".

The congress ended on an unexpected note — only one of the outgoing national executive was re-elected. Outgoing officials and the new president, Mr K'hehla Mthembu, insist that the move was aimed at training new leadership, from "preventing leadership from becoming an institution and preventing bureaucracy at all levels".

For some time now, BC organisations have been mindful of getting away from leadership cults and allowing the personalities of their

leaders to become associated with the organisations' image.

The new president, Mr Mthembu, 28, has a youthful "cabinet" under him. His immediate task will be to get the secretariat working, and then to await the direction on ideological concepts which is to come from the proposed symposium.

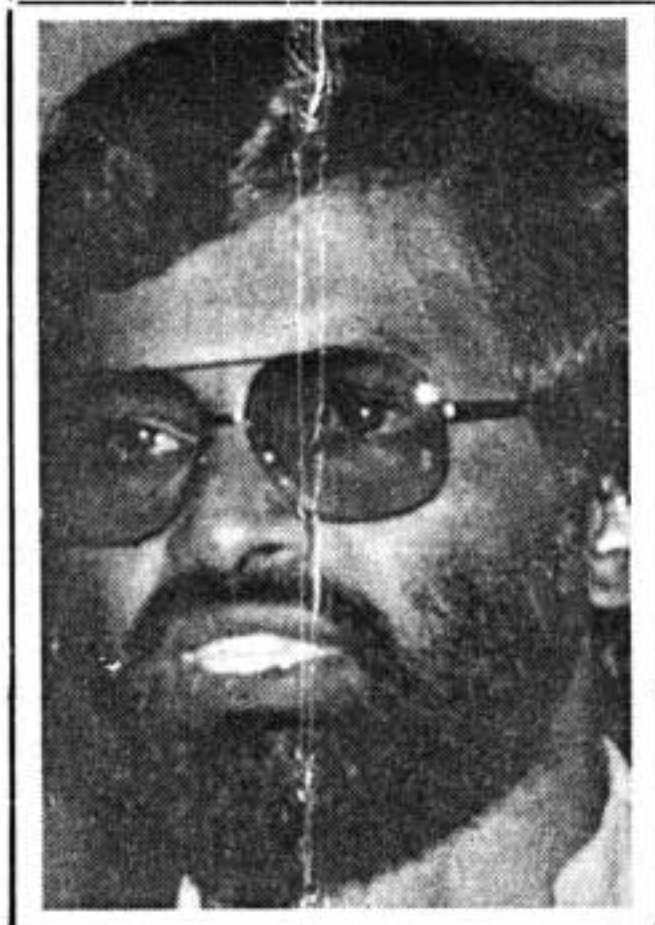
Personally, Mr Mthembu has made it clear how he interprets the struggle. "I believe in the interpretation contained in our constitution — that it is a national black struggle with land repossession as the all-important factor, but that race is a class determinant in our country."

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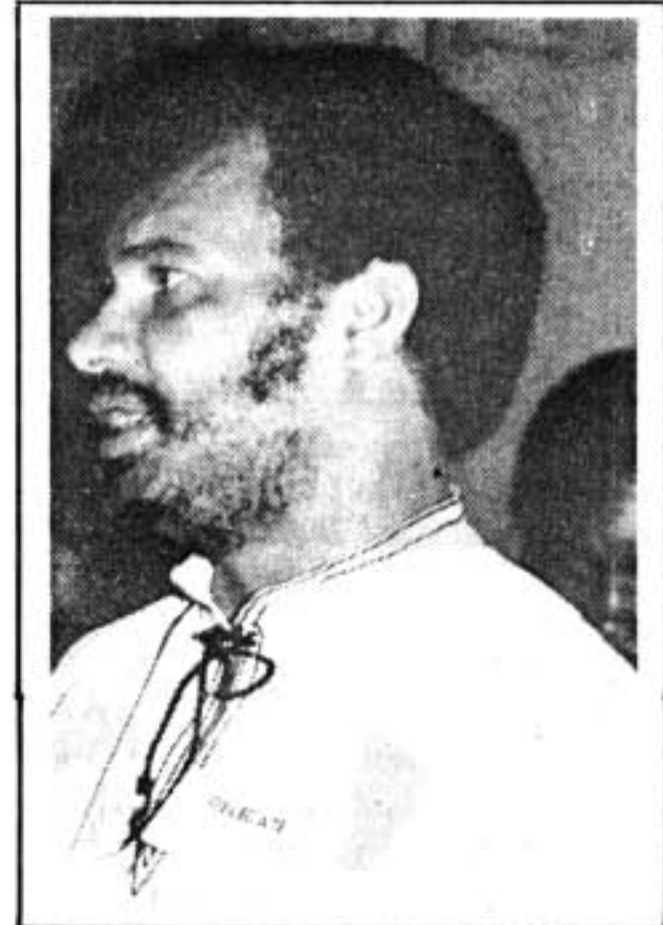
AZAPO's Fourth National Congress



HLAKU KENNETH RACHIDI
Transvaal Vice President



SATHS COOPER — Deputy President



PETER CYRIL JONES Cape Vice President

On being re-elected to the presidency of AZAPO, Lybon Tiyani Mabasa predicted that AZAPO was poised to make its mark in "Southern African history". The Fourth National Congress at the Patidar Hall in Lenasia was attended by over 1 600 observers and delegates on the 8th and the 9th January 1984. It was the largest congress in AZAPO's history and the first ever to be held in the Witwatersrand area.

The theme was, "AZAPO on the March — Facing the Challenges" and all the speakers emphasised that BC was a vibrant revolutionary ideology whose fundamental tenets were as relevant and as valid as ever.

Mabasa recalled that when AZAPO was formed in 1978, various "prophets of doom and destruction clamoured around singing dirges of (AZAPO's) demise." Many erstwhile "comrades", motivated by fear and opportunism, "joined the popular song" so that AZAPO has learnt not to consider affiliation to the pre-1977 BC Movement an "Open Sesame" to acceptance into AZAPO. There is no doubt that AZAPO has maintained its revolutionary consistency and is vigilant against "reactive, revisionist and opportunistic politics." Mabasa said the results of the referendum reaffirmed BC because they prove that white people connived at black oppression and exploitation. The white "radicals" were the main participants in the containment of the Azanian revolution.

Workers

Peter Cyril Jones, the Cape Vice-

President, contended that NUSAS provided a recruiting ground for white businessmen and politicians and a superb training-ground for security policemen. NUSAS's current flirtation with the United Democratic Front (UDF) was dubbed political "schizophrenia" because NUSAS faced "both ways at the same time."

Cyril Ramaphosa, the general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), said that alignments of black and white organisations had nothing to do with "love and friendship".

AZAPO committed itself to the ushering in of a Worker Republic of Azania and it was emphasised that liberation depended on the consciousness of blacks. The Azanian Worker Republic would, in turn, establish a classless society.

It was repeatedly emphasized that in South Africa, racism was the soul-force of capitalism. Ramaphosa complained that there was "a regrettable habit on the part of some people to denounce and ignore the black labour movement as irrelevant, and to heap scorn on what they call the "bread and butter war." In fact, the "black union movement has educated and is educating black workers and is turning them into fighters, not only for their bread and butter issues, but for liberation from oppression as well."

Unions

Ramaphosa said the black union

movement was confused "without any plan — be it short-term or long-term for liberation." Nevertheless, he says: "The black worker has taken the first step by joining other workers in forming his union. He has taken the second step by becoming part of the labour movement. He is presently working on his third step by demanding that there should be one union, one industry, and he will succeed very soon on his fourth step by forming one consolidated union federation for Azania. His fifth and ultimate step is the unity of all oppressed people."

Students

Kabelo Lengane, the President of the Azanian Student Movement (AZASM), emphasised the close link between students and workers. He argued that the 1976 and 1980 uprisings demonstrated that isolated student activity tended to be moribund.

The crux of Lengane's paper was that while it might seem that the Government paid for education or that industry paid for education. "It is the black workers that pay for our education. Everybody lives on their sweat and blood, including us ... Simply because they do the paying, all lovers of humanity must find a way of ploughing back what they took from them."

Black students, in order to realize the solidarity between themselves and Black workers, need to "transcend their elitist nature, join and work alongside the working class."

Law

Nakedi Poswa said the ruling class made laws to its own advantage, and all South Africa's laws seethe "with the rotten aura of apartheid."

Poswa concluded that the painful reality was that "the laws made by our oppressors can never serve our struggle for liberation" but that these laws "serve to frustrate and avert our final and total victory".

Imrann Moosa, the Natal Vice-President, warned that while laws were designed to serve ruling class interests, ruling classes often created legal forms which may continuously impose a brake upon their own arbitrary actions and it behoves revolutionaries to take full advantage of this fact.

Economy

Congress acknowledged that political independence without economic independence was a sham and that black people needed to prepare themselves now to assume the reins of power.

Jones noted: "In learning to conduct their own struggles, the masses learn to run the state and economy of tomorrow. This places the emphasis of struggle on people inside the country. We are not spectators, cheering on the team.... We must not underestimate our people. No small group can bring about liberation on its own. Experiences must be shared and taken to the people."

The Cultural and Sporting Isolation campaign was re-affirmed by Congress. George Wauchope, the outgoing Secretary, said that these campaigns were part and parcel of the campaign to persuade foreign companies to disinvest in S.A.

Congress endorsed an earlier decision by Council that people may leave SA as long as their actions overseas do not militate against the struggle.

New Deal

Deputy President Saths Cooper effectively put paid to all suggestions that AZAPO needed to review BC because of the "New Deal" (an argument which emerged from the liberal media) by saying that when Matanzima opted for independence, Xhosa-speaking people were not excluded from the BC Movement, neither were so-called Vendas and Tswanas excluded. Mabasa elaborated: "AZAPO can never review its stand and commitment to BC because of yet another predictable direction chosen by dummy puppet bodies such as the Labour Party and its ilk. We stand on solid ground and committed to our policies to the letter."

Black Solidarity once again emerged as AZAPO's watchword, the definition of Black automatically excluding all elements whom the system has co-opted i.e. sections of the middle class and the collaborators. Mobilization of the oppressed on ethnic lines was viewed as poisonous to the liberation effort. The argument that ethnic divisions are a "South African reality that cannot be wished away" was answered by Nkosi Molala: "Of course it is. But then is not discrimination against us a South African reality that cannot be wished away? Is not our exploitation a reality that cannot be wished away? If we can fight racism and exploitation why cannot we fight these divisions?" Tribal chiefs and kapteins are not to be ignored "for they still continue to dupe a large body of the oppressed that must be won onto the side of the revolution."

Congress saw the "new deal" as one of many oppressive measures which does not warrant being singled out, although Congress emphasised the need for AZAPO to guide the Black people on the issue of conscription into the SADF.

The National Forum Committee (NFC) was seen as a positive move by Congress as it seeks to unite the black people irrespective of their political persuasions. The NFC has not constituted itself into an organisation, but rather provides for unity in action.

The UDF has constituted itself into an organisation "with symbolic leadership" and had "coerced support from across the political spectrum." The UDF is an ad-hoc organisation responding to a crisis and like all ad-hoc organisations, it will face "the problem of leaders without followership". Muntu Myeza AZAPO's Publicity Secretary, called the UDF an "unprincipled amorphous pot-pourri of organisations with conflicting interests." He described the attacks on AZAPO by certain UDF members as "fulminations... of opportunistic, intellectually-abbreviated individuals some of whom harbour grandiose nepotistic notions."

Jones said the NFC-UDF choice was a choice between a united front and a popular front. The united front rejected any alliances between the liberal bourgeoisie and the workers movement and thus sharpened the conflict between workers and the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the popular front brought together the workers and the bourgeoisie in an amorphous grouping which subordinated the worker's interests to those of the bourgeoisie.

Structure

Four provincial Vice Presidents and the introduction of a Projects Co-Ordinator were the only changes in the structure of the National Executive, now re-named the "Central Committee". The new structure was found to be necessary because of AZAPO's phenomenal growth.

AZAPO's ten-person Central Committee comprises mostly "prison graduates". The Committee is: President — Lybon Tiyani Mabasa; Deputy-President — Sathasivan 'Saths' Cooper; Transvaal Vice-President — Hlaku Kenneth Rachidi; Cape Vice-President — Peter Cyril Jones; Free State Vice-President — Fikile Qithi; Natal Vice-President — Imrann Moosa; Secretary-General — Sefako Nyaka; Publicity Secretary — Muntu ka Myeza; National

er — Thabo Ndabeni; Pro-
Co-Ordinator — Zithulele Cindi
The Constitution was amended to
vide for Regional Executive Com-
ees and the Branch Executive
nmittees will all have to include a
ects Director in future.

he National Congress is the
me and highest governing and
-making body of the organisa-
efore, delegates must leave
s with a sense of mission, a
work and a clear set of direc-
s for the year. Congress must
vide cadreship with definite pro-
mmes of action: revolutionary
ggle is based on linking theory
practice.

Congress 1984 can be described
an unqualified success **only** from
ublic relations point of view.

The same can hardly be said about
sense of purpose and hard-
ided evaluation of AZAPO's

policies and progress these features
were sadly lacking.

The long speeches, nine on the
first day alone, acted as a soporific
and prevented maximum response.
Commissions were often searching
for terms of reference — surely the
reams of rhetoric in the papers
should provide the requisite
guidelines.

AZAPO should seriously consider
the following suggestions for all
future congresses:

1. The number of papers should be
at a **necessary minimum**.
2. Two points of view should be
presented on contentious issues,
e.g. Speaker A can justify
AZAPO's stand on Cultural Isola-
tion while Speaker B can attack
it.
3. All formations of the Organisation
should be given advance notice
of the topics to be discussed at

Congress.

4. Speakers should refrain from
repeatedly "justifying" BC —
AZAPO must move beyond
fighting rear-guard battles.
5. Commissions should be assigned
topics directly related to the
papers presented.
6. Symposia must be arranged at all
levels of the Organisation, par-
ticularly on the following topics:
(A) The Nature of the Soviet
Union,
(B) The National Question in
Azania and the Role of the
Peasantry,
(C) Scientific Socialism,
(D) The Isolation Campaign,
(E) Economic Self-Sufficiency,
(F) Black Theology,
(G) The Trade Union Movement
in South Africa, and
(H) The Specific and Multiple
Oppression of Black Women.

AZAPO ON THE MARCH

A terrified ruling class dropped the
netlet on Black Consciousness
(BC) organizations on 19 October
1977. The aim of the bannings was
re-create the post-Sharpeville era
when blacks stood in awesome fear
of their white "masters"; in a word,
the aim was to destroy the ideology
of Black Consciousness.

What the ruling class reckoned
it would lose was the vitality of BC and
that it had grown from the daily ex-
periences of the oppressed people.
It cannot be killed for it
characterizes the resistance of the
oppressed, the plundered, the
disadvantaged and the colonized
against an arrogant white world, one
in which the white man has tried to
impose his value systems.

As an ideology BC was first ar-
ticulated by a group of students
confronting problems that affected
them as students. Steve Biko,
Mpetla Mohapi, Onkgopotse Tiro
and their counterparts in the South
African Students Organization
(SASO) did not proceed from any
preconceived theoretical frame. In-
stead, the most remarkable fact about
it is that it is a developing world
view: as Amilcar Cabral says- "I can-
not ... pretend to organize a Party, or
struggle on the basis of my own
ideas. I have to do this starting from
the reality of the country." BC does
not seek to construct conceptions of
man and his relation to the world
step-by-logical-step but rather seeks
to embody the fears, the frustrations,
loves and hates, the needs,

desires and the aspirations of the op-
pressed and the exploited in a
coherent and a revolutionary
ideology.

When the BC Movement first
emerged, the very mention of the
word "politics" was enough to kill a
conversation: black people were in
the grip of a paralysis and they readi-
ly allowed white liberals to misrep-
resent the cause of the oppressed, a
cause liberals can never properly ap-
preciate because they do not feel and
suffer as the oppressed.

BC protagonists in the 70's pro-
ceeded from the reality of the coun-
try and proclaimed that the first re-
quirement was for black people to
shed the psychological shackles of
slavery, to reject the dwarfing of their
consciousness and to stand up and
define themselves as people who
have every right to live, work and
love in the land of their birth.

The early protagonists also suc-
ceeded where every other liberation
movement had failed — they
brought **all** black people into single
organisations.

The lethargy that had gripped the
60's was shaken off, resulting in
renewed black trade union activity in
December 1973, in recurrent student
action at high schools and univer-
sities which climaxed in the Soweto
uprising of June 1976 and in a
plethora of BC organisations such as
the South African Students' Move-
ment (SASM), the National Youth
Organisation (NAYO), the Union of
Black Journalists (UBJ).

As a result of the 1977 bannings,
there arose a vacuum in political ac-
tivity. But the spirit of pride and de-
fiance was carefully nurtured and this
prevented the paralysis of the move-
ment.

The BC groups which survived the
bannings such as the Black Priests
Solidarity Group and the Teachers
Action Committee formed the
Soweto Action Committee, chaired
by Ishmael Mkhabela. A sub-
committee of the Action Committee
convened by Lybon Mabasa was to
investigate "national possibilities".
This sub-committee called a conven-
tion at St. Ansgar's near Welgespruit
in Roodepoort on 28 — 31 April
1978: Lybon Mabasa delivered the
theme paper "Blackman, Whither
Goest Thou?". Father Buti Tlhagale
gave a hint of the new thrust of the
BC Movement in his paper "A Fur-
ther Determination of Black Con-
sciousness". Mabasa's voice rings
with the proud BC spirit:

*"Our peacefulness does not
presuppose timidity. No timid
people can become a nation. To
augment our peacefulness we also
need a militant spirit, a strong will
and a desire to survive in a violent
and carnivorous world."*

and Tlhagale hammers home the
point that the Black worker is the
most oppressed and exploited seg-
ment of South African society and
must become the vanguard of the
liberation movement.

The St. Angsar's Convention decided that an Interim Committee under the chairmanship of Mkhabela called the "AZAPO Interim Committee" be charged with the formation of an overt political organisation which will provide a rallying point for the Black masses. Mkhabela and Mabasa were banned after the Convention and the Interim Committee was relentlessly harassed. The Interim Committee succeeded in inaugurating the AZANIAN PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION (Azapo) in September 1979.

The theme of the Inaugural Conference was "A Further Determination of Black Consciousness and an emphasis on the workers' situation": from the necessary emphasis on BC being an "attitude of mind" in the 70's, AZAPO set about translating this attitude of mind into an empirical consciousness to challenge the system as a whole. It must be emphasised that the exploration of questions relating to the class struggle was a logical development of the BC ideology: after all, South Africa has to a greater extent been built on Black labour.

AZAPO held its first Congress at Houtbospoort in Pietersburg in January 1981 where Khangale Makhado, in a paper entitled "Black Consciousness as a Driving Force" examined the definition of and the interconnection between the "eight

classes of society" and concluded:-

"Having seen the situation for what it objectively is, BC offers itself as the only viable and appropriate vehicle that black people can ride to final victory and freedom."

In order to clarify concepts relating to the "class/race debate", a symposium was held at Hammanskraal in April 1981 where Quraish Patel argued with disarming simplicity:

"The consciousness of the power of black workers is gradually taking root. Is this consciousness of the power of black workers anything other than black consciousness operating in the sphere of labour? This is merely a labour-directed view of black consciousness."

AZAPO has thus succeeded in working out the dialectic between race and class: it argues that in South Africa, race is a class determinant and that the white labour aristocrat is an integral part of the ruling class. Furthermore, AZAPO argues that a cardinal issue is the repossession of Azania by the black people. AZAPO sees black nationalism as the driving force of the Azanian struggle. On the level of political theory, AZAPO's coalition of the National Question (i.e. the solution of national contradictions) and the Social Question (i.e. the resolution of questions relating to the class struggle) has

been thorough and cogent indeed.

AZAPO's task is to mobilise and consolidate the black masses around the revolutionary ideology of BC.

To do this, AZAPO has embarked on numerous strategies and can chalk up a number of successes: the bus and rent boycotts in the Northern Transvaal in 1981, the scuttling of the SAB International Soccer Tour in 1982 and the launching of the National Forum Committee (NFC) in 1983, to name but a few.

As a result of the strides made by the people's movement, there have emerged counter-strategies by the system with its ancillaries, the semi-system and the sub-system. Saths Cooper identifies the following as characteristic of this counter-strategy:

- a. "Improving the quality of life" in the ghettos,
- b. The promotion of "community-based" organisations with reformist civic and civil demands,
- c. The promotion of non-white leadership,
- d. Re-defining the concept blackness in racist, reactionary terms, and
- e. The revival of multi-racialism and liberalism and the active encouragement of ethnicity.

With these various forces making insidious inroads into black life, the challenges facing AZAPO are formidable.

★ ★ ★



CHATTING: From left to right: Saths Cooper, Ishmael Mkhabela, Zithulele Cindi, Lybon Mabasa, Ramakgopa, Muntu Myeza, Letsatsi Mosala, Pandhelani Nefolovodhwe, Kehla Mthembu, Kenny Rachidi.

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- **THE DEFINITION OF BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS** — December 1971.
- **AIMS AND OBJECTS OF AZAPO** — adopted September 1979.
- **IDYLLIC SETTING FOR A TOUGH BATTLE** — January 1981.
- **BLACK THINKING FALLS UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT AGAIN** — March 1981.
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- **FOURTH NATIONAL CONGRESS** — Lenasia, January 1984.
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