

"The basic tenet of black consciousness is that the black man must re...

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Black Consciousness and Pan-Africanism

Last September member of the All-African People's Revolutionary Party's Central Committee, Kwame Ture led an A-APRP delegation to Azania/South Africa to participate in the commemorative activities for martyred leader Steve Bantu Biko. Ancestor Biko was the founder of the South African Student Organization, Black People's Convention, and many of the other organizations associated with the Black Consciousness Movement (which he founded in 1969). Our young ancestor's heinous martyrdom was reminiscent of the torture murder of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba.

The commemorative campaign involved many activities across Azania/South Africa including the unveiling of an official Steve Biko Memorial tombstone in Ginsberg. September has been designated as a commemorative month because the murder occurred in September 1977. At that time the settler "justice" minister issued the infamous "his death leaves me cold" statement in response to questions about the murder.

While taking part in an Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) press conference called to launch the national Steve Biko commemorative campaign, AZAPO deputy president Pandelani Nefolovhodwe stated that "Comrade Ture, like our own Steve Biko, is a well-known firebrand of black consciousness". He further observed that Azanian revolutionaries had "drawn inspiration from his speeches," and that Kwame had "influenced events in Africa and around the world.

Brother Kwame said the following about those who perpetrated Steve Biko's murder:

"...I believe that when one commits a crime, one should make amends for what one has done," Kwame Ture (source *South African Press Association* September 10 1997)."

The following quotes from Steve Biko are exhibited here in Honor of our Young Ancestor and the Black Consciousness Movement.

"I think what we need in our society is the power by us blacks to innovate. We have got the very system from which we can expand, from which we can innovate, to say: this is what we believe, accept or not accept . . . Cultures affect each other, like fashions, and you cannot escape rubbing against someone else's culture. But you must have the right to reject or not anything that is given to you."

"The basic tenet of black consciousness is that the black man must reject all value systems that seek to make him a foreigner in the country of his birth and reduce his basic human dignity."

"We are looking forward to a non-racial, just and egalitarian society in which color, creed and race shall form no point of reference."

"South Africa is the homeland of white facades, black blood, and black tears. This country, rich in natural resources and inherent beauty is also home to one of the greatest social and political evils of our time. As a continual conclusion to history's racial problems, the South African white government has suppressed the native Africans for hundreds of years. In the last century, this uncompromising situation has continually been re-enforced through governmental legislation spear-headed by the vanguard racists, the Afrikaner National Party. Native South Africans finally voiced their suppressed anger and frustration at the government in the late 1950's, as the National Party was passing protective legislature to ensure their paranoiac hold on political, economic and social power. "

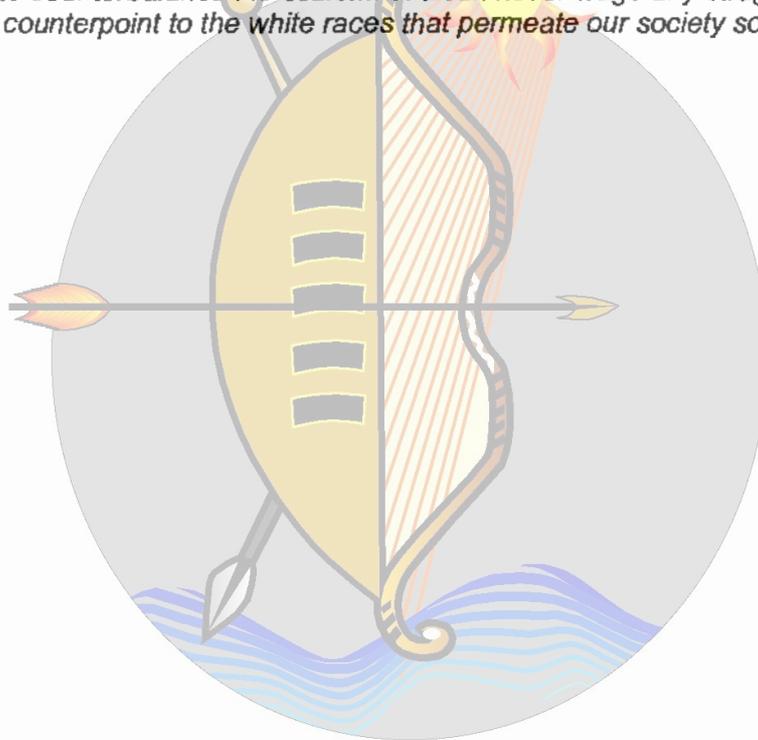
"We are not concerned with that curious bunch of non-conformists...that bunch of do-gooders

that goes under all sorts of names - liberals, leftists, etc. These are all the people who argue that they are not responsible for white racism... These are all 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.... In short, these are the people who say that they have black souls wrapped up in white skins."

"I think, My Lord, in a government where democracy is allowed to work, one of the principles that are normally entrenched is a feed- back system, a discussion in other words between those who formulate policy and those who must perceive, accept, or reject policy. In other words, there must be a system of education, political education..."

"Even today, we are still accused of racism. This is a mistake. We know that all interracial groups in South Africa are relationships in which whites are superior, blacks inferior. So as a prelude whites must be made to realize that they are only human, not superior. Same with blacks. They must be made to realize that they are also human, not inferior".

"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.... We can never wage any struggle without offering a strong counterpoint to the white races that permeate our society so effectively".



The Black Consciousness Movement

AZAPO AND BCMA HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

BACKGROUND

Our Black forebears lived in this lower end of Africa for thousands of years. They reared cattle and small-stock, and raised various types of crops. Many of them produced clay and wooden crafts. More than 1 200 years ago they began to mine and smelt iron, copper and other minerals which they used to make work implements. The various communities spoke different languages yet had trade and inter-marriage amongst themselves. Sometimes, as the numbers grew and they needed more land, they would fight or negotiate, as other communities did all over the world.

Like the legendary phoenix, AZAPO emerged from the ashes and cinders of the Black People's Convention (B.P.C.), South African Students' Organisation (SASO) and Black Community Programmes (B.C.P.) - some of the black consciousness organisations that were banned on Wednesday, 19th October 1977 for their role in the resistance and the June 16, 1976 uprisings.

AZAPO successfully campaigned for the isolation of apartheid South Africa by tirelessly and vigorously waging the cultural boycott in the country.

Under the guidance of AZAPO, Black people increasingly regained their resolve to fight for their rights and formed trade unions and civic organisations that drew the blue print for the conduct of struggles by civil society.

Through AZAPO, Black people in this country regained their collective dignity and self-pride. We in AZAPO believe that people that take pride in themselves are likely to make a meaningful contribution to a quest for true humanity.

To this day, AZAPO remains the leading exponent of the black consciousness in this country and draws inspiration from such eminent sons and daughters of this soil such as Steve Biko, Onkgopotse Tiro and Vuyelwa Mashalaba. At its historic Constitutional Congress in December 1994, AZAPO resolved to participate in the forthcoming General Elections.

In October 1994, AZAPO merged with its sister exile organisation, the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (B.C.M.A.).

OCCUPATION AND RESISTANCE

Whites started coming here from Europe about 500 years ago. They sometimes traded with Black people. Other, whose ships sank, were found and looked after by local communities. Later, as they arrived in large numbers, they began to cheat and fight our forebears. They took our land by force pushing our ancestors into poorer areas and making them slaves. They also brought slaves from Java, Malaya and India.

Although our ancestors fought the settlers bravely, they were defeated by superior weapons. But Azania, the land of Black people, is still ours

Azapo Historical Background



and that is why we will reclaim it by force.



THE ECONOMY

Azania is very rich, with large deposits of various minerals, a lot of good land on which grain, fruit, vegetables, cotton and other crops are grown. Its oceans have large stocks of fish. The labour force has a number of skills and transport is fairly good.

THE STRUGGLE NOW

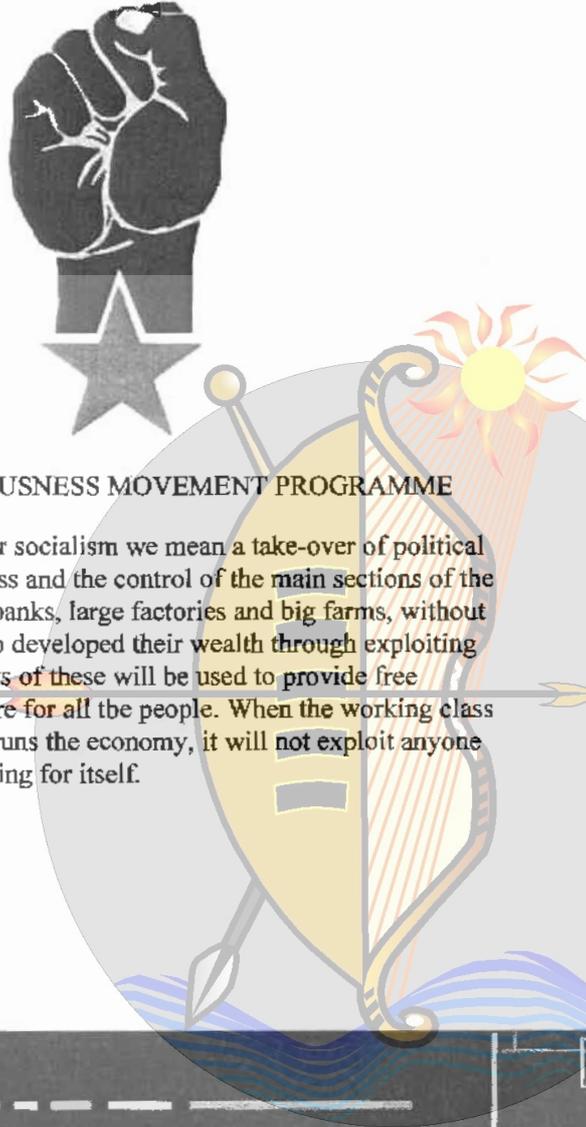
We have learnt from the tradition of our forebears and continue to strive for the control of our land and its wealth. From about 1910, people such as Sol Plaatje and later, Clement Kadalie have been rallying Black people to unite and fight for their rights. Many national organisations have been formed to advance the struggle. In the 1940's Black mine workers fought for safe working conditions and better pay. There were brave struggles against discrimination and farm labour abuse in the 1950's, and against pass laws and repression in the early 1960's. Large numbers of people were killed or imprisoned in those campaigns.

THE RISE OF THE BCM

After these frightening attacks, our people were quiet for some years until the youth spearheaded the renewal of the struggle in 1968. The Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) which arose then, called on the Black people to unite because they are all oppressed, exploited and discriminated against, whether they are called Bantu, Coloured or Indian by the regime of the white settler colonialists. The militants of the BCM such as Steve Biko, Mapetla Mohapi and Mthuli ka Shezi urged Black people to accept their identity, to unite in the struggle and not fear the whites nor to imitate them, and especially not to accept being told by them how to fight our Liberation Struggle.

Those who oppress us and get rich from our labour will not liberate us. It was our youth who staged the Viva FRELIMO rallies in 1974! It was our children who fought with stones against armoured cars during the June 16, 1976 Uprisings! We are our own Liberators! Power is ours if we unite against our common oppression.

The Black fist on our publications and garments stands for unity of Black people. The red star stands for our hope that Black workers, whose blood has been spilled for our liberty, will lead the struggle, and will rule a free socialist Azania. The gold is for the wealth of our country.



THE BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT PROGRAMME

When we say we stand for socialism we mean a take-over of political power by the working class and the control of the main sections of the economy such as mines, banks, large factories and big farms, without any payment to those who developed their wealth through exploiting Black workers. The profits of these will be used to provide free education and medical care for all the people. When the working class controls state power and runs the economy, it will not exploit anyone else, since it will be working for itself.

Designed by Yoweb

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