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**Bantu Stephen Biko & Black Consciousness.  
The Struggle for Equality in a Racist South Africa**

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## Acknowledgements

It was a difficult decision, how to choose the words, which segregation ideology saw as distinguishing realities, confining a certain group of people.

I was further challenged through the different use of those words, written whether as proper names, or not. Some scholars even made some differences in using 'Afrikaans', with a high case, but at the same time using 'african' in lower case.

In the acknowledgement of the book „Beyond Apartheid. Labour and Liberation in South Africa“, the authors mention that they will write all categories, which divide the South African population along racial or national lines (like 'african', 'indian', 'afrikaner', 'british', 'white', 'black', 'european') in lower case. (Cf. Fine/ Davis 1991: vii ff.)

I will also choose this way of description. Because as far I see it, all of these attributes are only descriptions rather than identities, which would be suggested by using high case.

I won't put these words into quotes, as I want to simplify the language and don't want to put more emphasis on those categories than necessary.

I will write the term Apartheid using a capital A, because in my definition Apartheid as a system of overall oppression is not to be underestimated in its dimension. In a lot of literature I used, Apartheid is written in low case. I still stay with the capital A.

The reason I used the term South Africa to describe the country and choosing it over Azania (which stands for a liberated South Africa) is the fact that I don't think South Africa is liberated from patterns of colonialism, racism and capitalism. In its creation the "Term Azania" carries a deeply anti-imperialistic claim. Therefore Azania, in my eyes, can only be used, when the vision of Biko for a true humanity is achieved and a political situation is created, where politics will be shaped for the upliftment of the people.

A lot of people in nowadays discourse use Azania for South Africa. Like Zimbabwe changed its name from South Rhodesia to Zimbabwe. As it is more accurate to describe the nation in their own terms. Azania in its etymology means "Land of the Black People". (Ct. Wauchope 2006: n.p.)

## Introduction

One can argue that the person Bantu Stephen Biko is for South Africa what Malcolm X or Martin Luther King is for North America, or Che Guevara for Latin America.

But who was this man, who already died at the age of 30? And what is his philosophy, his state of mind still keeping his legacy alive? What is so brilliant and unique about his words, about his thought? And why is Steve Biko not known on a daily basis, compared to others?

In this work I try to go behind the picture of Steve Biko and want to show that his philosophy is equally relevant today as it was during the time of its creation.

In literature Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness thought is more or less discussed within the framework of Apartheid's opposition. Recently a short biography about Bantu Biko was released (Wilson 2011) which takes a close look at the man Biko, his childhood, his family-life, his love life and his state of mind, taking its resources from interviews with close friends and associates, who knew him well. It is a quite personal work linking with the soul of the, otherwise merely politically cited man.

As yet there are only few books on the Black Consciousness thought analyzing it along the factor of liberation philosophy. (f.e. Fatton 1986: Black Consciousness in South Africa. The Dialectics of Ideological Resistance to White Supremacy)

In my thesis I try to show that Black Consciousness aimed at freeing the mind of people who are systematically oppressed. In South Africa's case this was by a system of institutionalized racism for the benefit of the white minority.

What is relevant in this respect is the close relationship between a system of racial oppression and the economic benefits resulting from it. In literature the connection between race and class is deeply analyzed (for example Legassick 1972, Wolpe 1972) and usually the authors take either one category to analyze Apartheid.

It is important to show that Biko created a philosophical/ political movement which, in its deepest sense, was to liberate each person on its own, give back sense and value of self. Its goal was, in the end, to liberate the whole society, changing the values, which are struck through the centuries of racism and subjugation. What is essential for me is to show that Biko did not reduce the question of liberating the mind to blackness.

His definition of blackness as being part of an oppressed group gives space to interpretation and shows that it is about the status within a social system which defines you as black (or white). It is about the attitude of mind, not the color of skin.

This is a crucial point I try to work out throughout this paper. And it is one of enduring

relevance even today.

In a recent article Veli Mbele (Azayo president) asks whether it is still accurate to talk about “blacks” in the sense Biko defined it, over 35 years ago and answered his question with a big “yes”, as there is still a majority of South Africa’s people economically oppressed.

It is an important measure, if one wants to write about Black Consciousness, all the more if you are white, that one is aware of the own background and what color of skin still means within our society. Racism has not vanished from this planet in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, nor will it be gone in the next hundred of years.

Racism always had an important stance in defining who owns and who does not own, but still one must remember that white people also exploited white people ever since. It is a structure within the (capitalist) society where a few live at the expense of others. It is nothing new under the sun, Apartheid, as well as Anti-Semitism showed the cruelty of racism at it’s worst.

I did worry about the fact, that I as a white female student, belonging more to the possessing group (on a world scale) than the exploited one, wanting to write about Black Consciousness and I asked myself about the motivation underlying the passion I feel for this topic and if I have the warrant to do so. And by digging deeper and deeper into Bantu Stephen Biko’s philosophy, I deeply knew, that I did. If we as people, want to overcome the system of exclusion and division in our minds (which is seeing people of different colors and immediately and systematically putting them in different boxes) white people need to remember what their history is as a people and to not forget the disasters of the past, slavery, colonialism, scientific biological racism and so on, which shaped the world and the system we live in nowadays more than anything else.

It is a history of pain, a history of oppression and greed, a history of power and subjugation.

Therefore, as a human being, without color, I am dedicated to the world’s struggle, to my black brothers and sisters still suffering all over the globe, but also to all my white brothers and sisters suffering all over the globe.

It is a fight for the marginalized and even if the written word is not as powerful as action, I dedicate this paper to the person who articulates my feelings in a way that not many have done before, my personal hero Bantu Stephen Biko, for telling the world not to see color, but to see true humanity, which is the thing connecting us as one, and to the people of Azania, who lost their lives in fighting for respect and equality.

Biko always stood for love; he never was a fighter of hate. What he wanted to show the people was the worth of self. A clear and humble self that is able to see truth within a system, which tries to undermine the (physical and spiritual) ability of the people.

What is so clearly striking about Biko’s philosophy is that it is seeing a broad picture, seeing

South Africa not as an isolated micro cosmos, where a certain system rules and dominates, but recognizing Apartheid South Africa as a part of the bigger functioning of the world system, one of exploitation which seeks to alienate the people from their own inner wisdom. This was the point Biko was addressing, and he tried to heal a broken people through conscientizing about this situation of alienation.

It is here where I have to quote the Emperor of Ethiopia, a quote which mingles in my head for more than a decade and which might be seen as a bridge which led me to feel and understand the words of Bantu Biko, as I do now, and therefore was an inspiration and motivation for the need I felt to go deeper into the Black Consciousness philosophy, to understand more.

His Imperial Majesty Haile I Selassie I held this speech at the United Nations Conference in 1963:

*“Until the philosophy which holds one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned, everywhere is war and until there are no longer first-class and second-class citizens of any nation, until the color of a man’s skin is of no more significance than the color of his eyes. And until the basic human rights are equally guaranteed to all without regard to race, there is war. And until that day, the dream of lasting peace, world citizenship, rule of international morality, will remain but a fleeting illusion to be pursued, but never attained (...).”* (Selassie I 1963: n.p.)

My interest therefore lies in the unity of mankind and every philosophy, which is making this unity central in the argumentation about the problems of the world and the vision for a unified humanity.

Bantu Stephen Biko provides the basis of dealing critically with the world system as a whole, not only in the years of its emergence, but also in the present day world, where the financial system is threatened to fall apart as the financial crisis of 2008 suggests; war is ruining and threatening the lives of millions of people (whether it is Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Mali...), the uneven distribution of wealth and property did not change at all on a world scale, where the richest percent became richer in the last decades and the poor poorer, so poverty is still striking. In his recent book *"Wir lassen sie verhungern: Die Massenvernichtung in der Dritten Welt"* Jean Ziegler (2012) is talking about murder, when people die of hunger, as it is a systematic crime against humanity, as the planet could feed 12 billions of people.

This is the modern day cynicism, spending billions on saving the banks from falling apart to save capitalism for some more years, but forget to feed the people of the world. What is

wrong within the world is the system of capitalistic exploitation of the people and the planet. This is what Ziegler is arguing and this is what Biko did argue, when he stated that man must become aware of what he is and where he stands, to see, that it is not capitalism which will make him rich in mind.

This topic is more relevant today than ever before, where all people are heading after a short-lived wealth, believing the media and the advertisement, which mostly tries to confuse the people to become good customers and consumers. It is the capitalistic system that Biko was fighting against in a positive way. And it is the capitalistic system that Ziegler is denouncing. Not everybody wants to hear that, since it is our system that we are used and have adjusted to, that suffocates the majority of the world's population, serving only a small minority of people and transnational companies. It is therefore very important to raise the consciousness of the people of the so-called "economic north" that the way they choose to live does make an impact on a broader scale. There are decisions each of us has to make on a daily basis, for example, the decision of what (and where) we eat and therefore what (and where) to buy our food. It is the same with clothes, do we take the tram or the car, and do we need to let the lights on, when we leave the room? Do we need to heat 24/7 in winter, or should we just wear warmer clothes?

We need to understand and become conscious that globalization is part of capitalism's evolution and therefore we all are connected. If we buy at H&M, we see in the label, that it is produced in Bangladesh; when we buy a toy it is nowadays most likely made in China. We need to become conscious of the connection between buying and the way the things we buy are produced. We are a world community, where some people consume and the other produce. It is still that simple, but the interconnection is much broader now, than 50 or 100 years ago.

What I want to say here is, that changes only happen, when people, one after the other, get conscious about the role they play on this earth, in this time and the power they hold, even if we think we do not have any, as the world is so big, and one person is so little. That is what Black Consciousness and its "father" Biko tried to show and that is what the black power movement tried to show "power to the people". It might be this starting point, which distinguishes this work from other works about Biko.

In my effort to show the legacies of Bantu Stephen Biko's thought and the Black Consciousness Movement, I rely heavily on Biko's words collected in the book "I Write What I Like", edited by Father Aelred Stubbs in 1978, shortly after Biko's murder. I wanted to bring back his wisdom and let him speak, so in the second chapter, which is dealing with the philosophy of Black Consciousness I quote him a lot. Other books take a stance on social

psychology helped examining the impact of racism on the creation of identity and relationships within society (Ratele/ Duncan 2003).

A masterpiece I came across is Fatton's "Black Consciousness in South Africa", which provided a deep analysis of this philosophy. (Fatton 1986) Premier sources of basic documents were important to analyze the ideology of Apartheid and its opposition, which are dealt with in chapter One.

The first chapter gives an overview about the Apartheid situation, the laws restricting the people's (human) rights and daily living conditions, the political opposition to the regime. This is done in order to provide the reader a basis for the better understanding of what surrounded Biko and the context in which this philosophy evolved.

In chapter two, Biko's philosophy and state of mind will be analyzed. Interviews with the assistance of contemporary writers provide the basis for analyzing the thought as well as the system of institutionalized racism.

Chapter three will deal with the organization of the BCM and the programs they designed. In the fourth chapter recent projects keeping Biko's legacy alive will be discussed. The first part of the fourth chapter will analyze the reception of Biko's person in music, as well as his recent reception within literature. Main sources are the homepage of AZAPO, where articles are published, and the daily news magazine *Daily Maverick*, describing itself as independent and not connected with any political party or religious view. It shall give a picture of the present day discourse about Biko, the Black Consciousness Movement and the main subjects Black Consciousness was concerned with.

# 1. Apartheid

Before turning to the description and analysis of cores and intention of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) I will use the first chapter of this work to clarify the socioeconomic background and situation of the south african society in which the Black Consciousness Philosophy arose. In the first part Apartheid policies and the forth going reduction of personal rights will be discussed, turning to the parties and groups who tried to oppose the system. The election of the National Party in 1948 paved the way for an institutionalized Apartheid regime, based on segregation and leading to a deeply segregated development in the later years.

Acts and laws passed before 1948 had already divided the population in South Africa into different groups, providing the superior position to whites. It is important to mention the big land reforms, the Native Land Act of 1913 and The Native Trust and Land Act of 1936, which proclaimed most of South Africa's land for whites and the rest for the black majority. This distribution manifested an unequal usage of land, which was, after all, a mean to impose pressure upon the majority of South Africa's population, black, indian, colored, in short: on all non-white people within South Africa's borders. (Cf. Hahlo/ Maisels 1966: 8) Herman Giliomee (2009) stressed that the main driving force behind Apartheid legislation in the beginning, was the protection of a so-called 'Afrikaaner Identity', which would have been threatened by an empowerment of the non-white population. (Cf. Giliomee 2009: 191)

"The ideology of segregation was primarily expressed as a means to defuse potential class conflict and maintain overall white hegemony." (Dubow 1995: 145) But Saul Dubow highlights, that the main ideas and implemented acts promoting segregation in the earlier period, were influenced by English-speaking thinkers and were attesting a white supremacist ideology rather than an afrikaner. (Cf. Dubow 1995: 147) However, the elected National Party (NP) under Malan, was mostly concerned with protecting afrikaner identity and culture, as well as the ongoing segregation of the races. During the first 30 years of the twentieth century, the afrikaner nationalist theoreticians worked on issues like language equality, self-government and the poor white question. This was a time, when the dissociation from the british was essential. (Cf. Dubow 1992: 210) So the main concerns in the upcoming 20<sup>th</sup> century were to prevent an afrikaner identity in opposition to the british, white, fellow countrymen.

"However, the process 'which was to consolidate the common nucleus of their color consciousness and policy of differentiation into a national idea or ideology was to take place only in the 1940s' " (Dubow 1992: 210) The creation of a unified, homogenous white group

was aspired, including all whites. On the other side the racial group of africans, was further divided into ethnic entities (like Xhosa, Zulu, Tswana, etc.) to avoid a unified opposition. (Cf. Beinart 2001: 146)

That scholars take and took different emphasizes in analyzing the motive behind Apartheid policy is evident. Some of them warn to look at Apartheid as ‘just’ a racist way of leading and exploiting a country. (Like Dubow 1992 or Giliomee 2009, to name a few) Dubow recalls the dominant influences of different schools of thought, like Darwinism, Social Evolutionism, or later on, Eugenics, which had an impact in the constitution of the mind of generations of afrikaner people, as well as european scholars all over the world.

*“The imagery of social Darwinism is clearly discernible in three important areas of political debate: speculation about the relative intelligence of blacks and whites, the almost universally expressed horror of ‘miscegenation’, and fear of racial ‘degeneration’ following upon uncontrolled development of a black and white proletariat in the cities.”* (Dubow 1995: 155)

Racist ideology of apartheid grew out of already existing notions of human difference. (Cf. Dubow 1992: 210) Even if the biological argumentation for racism was not part of the daily Nationalist political rhetoric, it “suffused everyday white language” (Beinart 2001: 147)

Posel writes that between 1936 and 1946 the urban african population grew by 57,2%, outstripping the urban white population. An increasing number of africans were staying in the cities and in peri-urban areas permanently. “The 1946 Population Census was the first to reveal the presence of an African majority in the urban areas.” (Posel 1997: 24) While african employment (poorly paid, unskilled work, etc.) in the urban areas were expanding, the conditions in the reserves were getting worse. A big part of the people in the reserves suffered from malnutrition, poverty and overpopulation. “Roots of these problems was a serious land shortage. The 1913 Land Act had restricted Africans’ land leasing and buying rights to the existing reserves, which comprised a mere 7 per cent of the country’s land (...).” (Posel 1997: 27) The Native Land Act 1936 broadened the size of the reserves, but the situation of the african population stayed the same.

Dubow sums up the decade before the 1948 elections in a short and clear way. During the Second World War, the south african industry expanded strongly, which led to an increased influx of african workers into the urban areas. This flow was perceived as a threat to unskilled/semi-skilled white workers in the cities. The intensification of trade union activities for african interest and ongoing strikes (like the strike of mineworkers in 1946) and several

boycotts challenged the previous social order. “It was under these circumstances that apartheid came to be formulated with particular urgency.” (Dubow 1992: 211)

## 1.1. Institutionalization of Segregation, 1948

*“In sum, then, by the 1948 election the contours of the problem of influx control facing the state were starkly defined. The election took place in the midst of an economic upswing, marked by rapid industrial expansion, which depended increasingly on African labor. Yet, at the same time, white farmers were complaining bitterly about worsening labor shortages, and the proliferation of black protests in the cities had exploded the political calm of the preceding decades.”* (Posel 1997: 39)

The NP (National Party) took office in 1948 under president D.F. Malan. Their primary political steps regarded African urbanization. The word “detribalization” was a catching phrase, describing africans living in the urban areas, gradually loosing their connection to their so-called tribe in the periphery. NP senator Hendrik Verwoerd, minister of Native Affairs under Malan’s mandate, stated in 1948 that one of the NPs’ principal objectives was the interest of white farmers. Namely to change the situation of severe labor shortage on the white owned farms, due to better payment in the industrial sector, they were confronted with. (Cf. Posel 1997: 62)

*“He [Verwoerd] was one of those ideologues who had shifted away from the language of baasskap to mould apparently more justifiable notions of separate cultures, nations, and ‘homelands’. ‘Natives’ became Bantu, a word derived from Xhosa/Zulu for ‘people’, apartheid became ‘separate development.’”* (Beinart 2001: 146)

According to Deborah Posel there were two differing views, what Apartheid implies. “To create the impression of unity and consistency between the two versions of Apartheid, total segregation and ‘practical’ Apartheid were presented as if two separate phases of the same blueprint.” (Posel 1997: 66) Total segregation was pictured as the long-term ideal, while ‘practical’ policies were implemented as short-term options. Minister Verwoerd saw two different ways: one leading to equality, the other to total segregation. As africans and other non-white workers had started to claim political participation, the system of cheap labor and the white superiority in society was challenged. (Cf. Lester 1998: 109) “However distant and elusive the deal of total segregation, it served an important ideological purpose in legitimating

the state's immediate, more 'practical' plans." (Posel 1997: 69)

The political situation in South Africa became more and more oppressive after World War Two post-1948 policy saw the intensification of institutionalized segregation. The Group Areas Act, the Population Registration Act and the Immorality Act (1950), as well as the extension of the pass laws (1952) deepened the control and repression over the black population and were established by law. (Cf. Sodemann 1986: 39ff.) The Nationalists were very concerned about their capacity to maintain power. Afrikanerization of the state was an important task. "Key English-speakers in spheres such as the army, military intelligence, the South African Railways and Harbours, broadcasting, African administration, and the economic bureaucracy were sidelined or retired." (Beinart 2001: 148) Another important challenge was to fill the Native Affairs posts with political supporters. The major laws, which were implemented, concerned political, social or economic spheres.

I will start with a list of laws by the year of implementation, trying to put them into thematic order and discussing their consequences on the oppressed population. By an odd coincidence the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN in 1948, in the same year when the NP-regime gained power in South Africa, dismantling the human rights of the majority throughout the decades until its fall in 1994. I subsumed the laws under three categories, each describing Human Rights as written in the Human Rights Declaration, as for example the right for personal freedom is, as for example article 13 of the Declaration states that "everyone has the right to freedom of movement within the borders of each state", articles 18 & 19 speak of the right of freedom of thought, conscience, religion, opinion and expression. (Cf. UDHR 1948: n.p.)

### **1.1.1. Restriction of Personal Rights**

Under the category of personal rights fall such diverse rights as rights of personal freedom, the right to life, the right of security, the right to choose marriage, work, and education. South African Apartheid violated the rights of the majority population on all these levels.

Shortly after election, in 1949 The Mixed Marriage Act No 55 was administered. This act prohibited marriage between whites and other races to avoid further amalgamation between the races. (Cf. Beinart 2001: 147) The Apartheid regime not only feared miscegenation and the threat of declining racial value if mixed with a non-white race (social Darwinism), but what bore a more rational threat was the growing number of potential colored electorate in the cities. (Cf. Beinart 2001: 147) In 1950 the Immorality Amendment Act made sexual intercourse between white and non-white illegal. (Cf. Dugard 1978: 69) Besides the stated

reasons above, this kind of legislation was to penetrate every area of social relations. (Cf. Lester 1998:112)

The Population Registration Act of 1950 had severe consequences, it classified and divided the south african population into three main racial groups: white, black/native and colored. According to this Act indians fell under the colored category. The criteria used to determine the classification to one of these categories was based on appearance, social acceptance and descent. (Cf. Beinart 2001: 148) The Act described a white person as one whose parents were both white, a person who looks white, a person whose habits and speech would suggest whiteness. In the original document of the act “white” is defined as the following: “1 (xv) 'white person' means a person who in appearance obviously is, or who is generally accepted as a white person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously a white person, is generally accepted as a coloured person.” (Union of South Africa 1950: n.p.) Blacks (in the documents still referred to as natives) were defined as being members of an african race or tribe, and colored as people who were neither white nor black. The Department of Home Affairs was responsible for handling the classification process. This act forced the black population to carry passes. Those passes contained information of employment, background, and fingerprints. If a black person was controlled within a white area without a passport he was directly put to jail, or on farms to work there.

### **1.1.2. Restriction of Movement**

Another main piece of Apartheids' early legislation was the Group Areas Act 1950. This act completed what the Native (Urban Areas) Act had started in 1926. The idea stayed the same: installation of 'reserves' for the black population of South Africa. The big difference between the two acts was that the former was not binding, which means, that the municipalities could decide on their own, whether they implemented the establishment of racially divided locations or not. (Cf. Duncan 1955: 95)

The Group Areas Act in contrast made it obligatory by law, to implement segregation of the different races to specific areas. Additionally it restricted ownership and the occupation of land. It defined that no black person could own nor occupy land in defined white areas. The primary aim of this act was to deepen residential separation. On the other side it should prevent further influx and settlement of rural blacks in the urban areas, which by the act were declared as white-areas. The government set up semi-urban locations for blacks, coloreds and indians, the so-called “Townships”, which were located on the edge of the urban areas. Forced resettlement over the next decades was one of the main consequences of the act. One

huge resettlement project took place in Cape Town, where the government destroyed a lively community, where mainly blacks but also coloureds and indians lived together, a place of severe social importance, with an artistic scene. (Cf. Beinart 2001: 150f) “District Six lost around 60,000 people (...) [b] y the 1970s it was a city-centre wasteland (...)” (Beinart 2001: 153)

The Natives Laws Amendment Act of 1952, an amendment of the Native Urban Areas Act 1923, narrowed the definition of the category of blacks, which had the right of permanent residence in towns. Section 10 of the act limited this to those who had been born in a town and lived there continuously for not less than 15 years, or who had been employed there continuously for at least 15 years, or who had worked continuously for the same employer for at least 10 years. (Cf. Beinart 2001: 158) If they weren’t able to qualify within this framework, or were not employed, they were liable to be “casted out” of the city at any time. “For the first time a systematic attempt was made to incorporate women on a national basis in the web of legislation controlling African movements.” (Beinart 2001: 158) These Restrictions made distinctions between urban african “insiders” and rural migrant “outsiders”, where those already in town had more rights than the other migrant workforce. The government was interested to perpetuate the system of migrant labor between “homelands” and urban areas (workplace). (Cf. Beinart 2001: 157) Deborah Posel describes this kind of policy as follows:

*“These so-called ‘residential rights’ should not be mistaken for political rights, however. The NAD’s [Native Affairs Department] policy makers underlined the fact that, ‘while it is admitted that Natives should remain in urban areas... it is explicitly stated that they should have no political or equal social law (...) with Europeans.’”* (Posel 1997: 79).

The restrictions, implemented by the act served another main problem of the apartheid system: the growing unemployment within the urbanized community, since their residential right has not been conditional on continuous employment before. One way to end this trend was to stop new work force coming to town. So the Natives Law Amendment Act was a measure to utilize all available labor resources in the urban area. (Cf. Posel 1997: 84)

The unemployment of the urban youths was very high, which made the threat of an uprising evident. In 1951 80% of the 15-20 year olds in Pretoria were unemployed. It was therefore important to channel the youth into white employment, a means to execute social and political control. “The implementation of the ULPP [Urban Labor Preference Policy] would, therefore,

depend on the creation of a national system of labour bureaux, to establish systematic and comprehensive control over the allocation of labour to employers in the urban areas.” (Posel 1997: 85)

The Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act in 1951 was a main piece of legislation in regard to the relocation of non-white population. It declared all kinds of squatting illegal. This act should work against the squatting on the peripheries of the city, which had grown significantly during the war years. (Cf. Posel 1997: 24) Offences against the Urban Areas Act, as well as offences against the Illegal Squatting Act were punished. Wellmer wrote that in the year 1957/1958 around 200 000 blacks were convicted to forced labor on white farms. (Cf. Wellmer 2005: 3) These measures helped additionally to reduce the labor shortage on the farms. Farms within the NP rule were the least controlled spheres of industry. This matter of fact led to severe working conditions and child labor on certain farms, especially those farms, where convicted africans had to serve labor. (Beinart 2001: 209)

Another law of the early 1950s defining the personal freedom of a non-white group was the Separate Representation of Voters Act. “Most important, the Nationalists removed coloureds voters – at about 50 000, far more than the total African voters in 1936 – from the common role.” (Beinart 2001: 149) In 1951, the Separate Representation of Voters Act passed through parliament. It determined that colored people were to elect four white representatives. This act gained strong opposition within the black and colored community. But also white groups opposed to it. The Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 attempted to divide South African citizens upon a racial and ethnic basis. The segregated development within the country made a kind of political self-control inevitable. This meant that the government set up black ethnic governments within the declared black ‘homelands’. It prepared the way for a new system, where local and regional governments were set up in the reserves. It was no real self-government, as they were still subordinate to white interests in the city. (Cf. Beinart 2001: 161)

The Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act of 1952 was a further measurement by the government to take impact on labor mobility. The act made the carrying of the reference book obligatory by law. This reference book held details about the owner, like place of origin, employment record, tax payments etc. Africans were expected to carry those passes with them, anytime. A permit was necessary to enter any urban area. These permits enabled the work-seeker to stay in restricted urban areas 72 hours. If he couldn’t find a job he had to leave town immediately. This act was obligatory for women work-seekers also. Women had to carry passes as well. This provision resulted in a widespread strike by women in 1956. (Cf. Wolpe 1995: 81ff)

“It was partly the presence of the slums, but also the desire for a clearly demarcated racial pattern, that led to the 1954 Native Resettlement Act.” (Lester 1998: 123) This act allowed a forced removal of african citizens in the center (such as Sophiatown, District 6, which were still black parts of town). (Cf. Lester 1998: 123) Another legislative piece with severe consequences on daily life was the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, Act No 49 of 1953. This act provided that there should be separate and unequal amenities in public, such as public transport, parks, beaches, toilets, restaurants and so on. It defined who was allowed to use which facility. (Cf. Beinart 2001: 152)

The Bantu Education Act 1953 defined the educational level of africans throughout the country and had essential influence on the employment situation of africans. The directive of education was removed from mission and provincial authorities and was subordinated to the secretary of Native Affairs, W. Eiselen.

„Education at the 5,000 or so mission schools had produced, in Nationalist eyes, an academic training with too much emphasis on English and dangerous liberal ideas. It was seen as the foundation of an African elite that claim recognition in a common society.“ (Beinart 2001: 160) The Extension of University Education Act, Act 45 of 1959 widened the Bantu Education Act of 1953 to a university level. Till then, there were a few of so-called “mixed campuses”, where black and colored, as well as whites were educated. This act prevented a further division of education on a higher educational level. (Cf. Karis/ Carter 1977: 803)

In 1954 Verwoerd, the Minister of Native Affairs stated the following:

*“There is no place for him [the Bantu] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour (...) Until now he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and misled him by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he is not allowed to graze ”* (Verwoerd in Soudien/ Kallaway [eds. 1999]: 494)

This quote shows the two sides, which segregation depicted: one was the division of black and white, in all realms of everyday life (work, education, residency, private life), the other was the belief that black and white are distinct from each other. “Separate but equal” was just a slogan to justify the legislative and to ease the rhetoric of racism. Verwoerd’s statement should suggest, that the so-called “native” should not be distracted by the way whites live, they should be educated within “their” framework. The racist dialectic between “we” and “the others” is evident. Wulf D. Hund, a popular scholar in racism analysis, characterizes the process of racial construction as a multilayered overlay and conjunction of exclusion and

inclusion. Racism always created contrastive pairs, to create one group superior and the other inferior. (Cf. Hund 2007: 20f.) Color based racism is a social construction being deepened into a social relation. Capitalism and colonialism provided the base for the economic and political supremacy of the white group, from colonialism over imperialism to globalization. (Cf. Hund 2007: 69ff.)

### **1.1.3. Restriction on Freedom of Speech**

Laws were not only implemented within the economic and the personal sphere but also within the sphere of political activism of africans, colored and indians.

One of the earliest laws regarding the restriction of political work was the Suppression of Communism Act, Act No 44 of 1950. The banning of work and engagement regarding any kind of communist thought, was due to the NP's fear that communism would have too much influence on africans as well as afrikaner within working class. As the communists were promoting unity among workers of different races, due to their experiences within one class, the working class. "The surge of grass-roots militancy in the 1940s gave new momentum to the Communist Party of South Africa (...). By 1945 the CPSA had established branches or groups in the African areas of most industrial towns." (Posel 1997: 36) Posel further comments that the Communist Party was more concerned with the needs of the masses than the ANC. (More about the opposition parties in Chapter 2). As the term "communism" was broad in definition this act also had severe impact on any other political oppositional activity working for a change of state. Additionally it gave the Minister of Justice the power to ban a person, if he/she made herself suspicious in any way. "A banned person was restricted to a certain area and could not take part at any political gatherings. (Albert Luthuli, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and a lot more were victims of this act). White communists were expelled from parliamentary participation. (Cf. Posel 1997: 36)

The Natives Settlement and Disputes Act 1953 banned blacks from registering with trade unions and the Public Safety Act of 1953 increased penalties for protest offences. It was passed as a response to the ANC's civil disobedience campaigns. The Act granted the British governor general authority to set aside all laws and declare a state of emergency. Under a state of emergency the Minister of Law and Order, the Commissioner of African Police (SAP), a magistrate or a commissioned officer could detain any person for reasons of public safety. It further provided the detention without trial for any dissent. (Cf. Lester 1998: 124) The Criminal Law Amendment Act, Act No 8 of 1953 asserted that anyone accompanying a person found guilty of offences committed during protests or in support of any campaign for

the cancellation or modification of any harsh law would also be presumed guilty and would have the responsibility to prove his or her innocence.

The Terrorism Act (No 83) of 1962 marked the beginning of a structural means of imprisoning political opponents without trial. The purpose of detention was “the obvious gathering of intelligence (...), the destruction of anti-apartheid-organizations by separating them from leaders and activists; and general intimidation, disruption and deterrence which forced thousands underground.” (Merrett 1990: 29) There existed no time limit for detention. Merret writes that detentions had a deep effect on all organizations with a Black Consciousness tradition and in the mid 1980s about 25 000 people were detained. Deaths in detention went up to 80 between 1963 and 1986; Biko was the 44<sup>th</sup> man to die by force in detention. (Cf. Merrett 1990: 30)

The list of repressive laws and restrictions presented above, were extended throughout apartheid legislation. In the eyes of the Nationalist Party and the ruling white group, there were multiple factors that made a political repression inevitable. The problems african inhabitants in the urban areas had to face during wartime went from severe impoverishment (due to low wages rather than unemployment), overcrowding, to ill health. Last but not least africans had no effective voice within the state. For the NP, after 1948, those elements were likely to promote further uprising and social unrest. (Cf. Posel 1997: 32ff.) The NP avoided a possible system change by implementing restrictive laws.

*„The alternative for the Afrikaner working class, resisting competition from African workers, for the growing Afrikaner industrial and financial capitalist class, struggling against the dominance of English monopoly capital, and, perhaps, for a petit bourgeoisie threatened with proletarianization by the advance of African workers (and Indian petit bourgeoisie), was to assert control over the African and other non-White people by whatever means were necessary.” (Wolpe 1995: 80)*

It was important for the Apartheid regime to put pressure on the african workforce, within the cities and outside. It was also a way of trying to reduce the severe labor shortage on white-owned farms. “The greatest migration to the urban areas however came from white-owned farms.” (Posel 1997: 29) Reasons for the big migration wave into the cities were mainly better payment within the manufacturing sector than on farms or mines. (Cf. Posel 1997: 24) Beinart made it evident, that until the 1970s the agricultural sector absorbed a greater number of african labor force than any other sector. The era of “sheep and wool export” was displaced by a phase of “dairy and meat”, maize production increased by 50 percent, sugar nearly

doubled. (Cf. Beinart 2001: 206) This phase of mechanization within the agricultural sector made a cultivation of acreage possible, which had vast influences on the labor demand within South Africa. An indicator for a changing situation on farms, were the number of tractors that were purchased in the period between 1945 and 1960. The quantity increased from 22,000 to 122,000 within 15 years. This process of capitalization in the farm sector was already favored in the decades before when the NP under Hertzog was in a coalition with the Labor Party (which later became the South African Party, SAP) and implemented a series of laws which favored the white agricultural capital. (Cf. Duncan 1995: 122ff.) The immanent labor shortage in the farm sector could be changed into a surplus in the 1960s. The color bar was never introduced within the farm sector. Beinart illustrates that the majority of black skilled workers in South Africa were found on farms (like tractor drivers etc).

The use of migrant and prison labor on the farms worsened the working conditions. This kind of “do as you wish” state policy regarding the treatment of the workers made the circumstances in which laborers had to work by no means better. Aware of the conditions the ANC put the farm labor issue higher on their agenda. They issued a campaign in 1959 promoting the boycott of potatoes (from eastern Transvaal farmers where documented abuses took place). (Cf. Beinart 2001: 207ff)

“In 1967 the government announced its intention to end black tenancy within three years and by 1969 these regulations had been applied in most of the grain-farming districts of the Free State and Transvaal where tenancy had persisted.” (Beinart 2001: 210) As legislation had outlawed nearly all forms of squatting, most people affected by the law, had to leave. Some of the people moved voluntarily, but the bulk of the squatter families were forced to move. Beinart refers to a number of 1,1 million people who were removed from the farms by 1982. 600,000 more were displaced from the so-called “black spots”, which is the term for farms, owned by africans (some owned since the nineteenth century), located outside the proclaimed areas. (Cf. Beinart 2001: 211) Through the vast changes within the agricultural sector and the dislocation of many people, as well as bad payment for farm labor the influx into the cities of former peasants and rural population became a problem for the regime. Pass laws as the Natives (abolition...) Act and other influx policies tended to ease the problem of further urbanization and proletarianization of the former rural residents. And not less important to reduce the unemployment rate of the urbanized africans was their confinement to the reserves, “(...) where, in theory, ‘separate development’ would absorb them.” (Beinart 2001: 159) These aims were not realized; the unemployment rate remained high. As written above, the unemployment rate of urban youths was extremely high which symbolized a threat, when those youths were getting older they might fight if they’d have nothing to lose. “Industrialists

in the city were urged to take more unemployed youth into employment and tried to make this more attractive by reducing the wages of the youths compared to adults, doing the same job.” (Posel 1997: 87)

Beinart writes about an actual decline of african population within the “white” urban areas, which still indicates an increase over two million people. (Beinart 2001: 212) The demographic changes took place within a political framework of segregation. The effects of all measurements regarding influx-control aiming at the elimination of black daily life and culture within white towns and to provide a relatively low-wage labour pool were fundamental. “Settlement, planned or unplanned, was diverted to areas within the boundaries of the homelands, where the population grew from 4,2 mio in 1950 (39% of all africans) to over 11 mio in 1980 (52,7%).” (Beinart 2001: 212) This so called “surplus people” (Beinart), or “surplus labour units” (Legassick), were ethnicized and channeled to new townships, alongside the urban areas. (Cf. Legassick 1977: 192) The NP government no longer favored long distance migration because the former advantages of the labor-migration-system were not given any more. (Cf. Beinart 2001: 215) Within the townships and reserves, population growth led to an increasing number of landless families (about 50%). Boundaries were redrawn to enlarge townships near major cities. At the end of 1980 the South Africa Development Trust created twenty-four new “towns”, housing more than two million people. (Cf. Beinart 2001: 212) Beinart brought the situation of the townships quite to a point when he writes: “Millions of people found themselves in barely planned rural slums, which were urban in respect of their population density and lack of agricultural opportunity, but rural in relation to facilities, services, and employment.” (Beinart 2001: 213ff.)

The division of the black group into ethnic entities, as the Urban Areas Act indicated, where every ethnic group, such as Xhosa, Ndbele, Zulu, etc. had their own “homeland” was also a strategic means. The government tried to give the whites mainly consisting of british and afrikaans people, the feeling of being a homogenous group. (Cf. Beinart 2001: 162) What the laws brought about also, was a (wanted and forced) distinction between urban in- and outsider within the proclaimed white urban areas. Along with the division of the black workforce, went the division of employment opportunities and income. As the national government intended to, poverty was externalized more systematically to the homelands, Beinart cites an estimation of an average urban african income, that was twice as high as that of a rural african worker. So the gap between rural and urban was getting wider due to the apartheid legislation till the mid-1980s. (Cf. Beinart 2001: 218)

The transfer of education under state control was a further step to divide the population and to prevent a further education of critical minds, as the church was not a partner the apartheid

regime laid their trust in. The regime tried to avoid the creation of a conscious oppressed group, which was able and ready to fight against the racism of everyday life in South Africa. A new curriculum was introduced, to provide the african population with a minimum of educational skills, to provide them with nothing more, than they would need to accomplish certain workflows in semi-skilled or more likely in unskilled jobs. Yet it was important to educate a kind of african elite, who was open to collaborate with the white apartheid apparatus and install their businesses within “homeland” boundaries. Those kinds of agents were needed to ensure the perpetuation of the segregated system. (Cf. Legassick 1977: 192)

The Separate Amenities Act took severe impact on the structuring of urban society. As from now on, all public facilities had to be separated between white and non-white. Africans could no longer use “white beaches”, “white benches”, “white restaurants”, nor “white toilets”. It was a masterpiece of separation calling for not only separate but also substandard facilities for blacks. Not only amenities should be separated, also the ‘job reservation’ was kind of modernized. Beinart writes concerning the matter, that between 1956 and 1959 the regime “(...) reserved a far wider range of jobs for whites only in the private and public sector: Africans could be barred from skilled work in the clothing industry or (...) unions with white and coloured workers were required to have separate branches and a white executive.” (Beinart 2001: 156) As Legassick writes, the former “process of reclassification” happened through changing economic conditions, and he points out that the call for semi-skilled or skilled black laborers in certain branches. “Non-whites may indeed move into more jobs, into more skilled jobs in manufacturing industry, and may receive marginally increased wages. But the whites move upwards even farther.” (Legassick 1977: 193)

In addition to the promotion of territorial separation, the NP needed to get along with potential oppositional power. The Repression of Communism Act was just the first stone in a big political campaign against ideological opponents. “In the 1960s and 1970s banned groups and people could not express themselves publicly. It was particularly dangerous for African people to associate themselves with the ANC and PAC.” (Beinart 2001: 191) As in 1960 the most important opposition parties were banned (ANC, PAC) diverse associations, community- and church-groups managed to become a social and political gathering place. The independent churches were highly important especially for women and upcoming women organizations. “Black-consciousness and trade-union movements sprang up to fill the vacuum at a national level and take advantage of the limited openings afforded by government policy. (...) but black people did not live by politics alone.” (Beinart 2001: 191) Beinart pointed on something important. The implementation of apartheid legislative had severe consequences on black and colored people lives, but beside the restrictions and inequality on a daily basis, a

social life took place within the “homelands”, townships, and urban areas: there were shebeens, cigarettes, music, and liquor manufacturers. But as intended, in the end, the prohibition to reside in town and urban areas, put an end to the living of what was once known, and left big aches in the hearts of the people who were resettled against their will, leaving the areas they lived in, demolished. “All the terms on which Africans could have the right to reside permanently in the towns have been whittled away. So that today no African, no matter his place of birth or that of his parents, no matter where he has lived before, has the right to a permanent residence anywhere except in the ‘reserve’- or, as they are now termed *Bantustans* or ‘homelands’- allotted to him by authority.” (Legassick 1977: 192)

## **1.2. Opposition to Apartheid**

Throughout the period of institutionalized Apartheid resistance against oppressive laws and the state (had) existed. “*A chronology of events from 1912 to 1994 reveals the relationship of attack and counterattack that existed between the government and a variety of resistance organizations.*” (Brook 1996: 210)

Numerous strikes were taking place to fight for better wages and working conditions. In 1953 The Native Labour (Settlement and Disputes) Act, which actually implemented a structure of industrial legislation for Africans, additionally extended the criminalization of strikes by African workers. (Cf. Lichtenstein 2005: 300) Strike was not the only means of working against the Apartheid government.

In this chapter I will try to list up the different kind of movements, which acted (differently) in their opposition against the Apartheid system and government. Afterwards I will evaluate the ongoing action against the repressive laws and the unequal status of life.

In organizing the material I make a distinction between political organizations, trade unions and community organizations (including women's, students' and others).

### **1.2.1. Political Organizations**

#### **1.2.1.1. ANC - The African National Congress**

The South African Native National Congress was formed in 1912 and renamed to African National Congress in the year 1923. “(...) its founders declared that ‘We [the African

population] are one people'. (Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 285) In the 1940s the former moderate, petty bourgeois pressure group began to transform into a mass movement, where especially the working class was seen as a significant class (or group) to challenge oppression. In 1943 the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) was formed. The Youth League became an integral and active part in designing new policies and strategies. Its leading members argued that only through involvement of the masses, the white domination could be overthrown. Later on the ANCYL was the more radical wing within the ANC, but its strategies were accepted as guideline of policy. In 1949 their so-called "Program of Action" was adopted and in 1952 actually implemented in the Defiance Campaign. The ANC followed for around fifty years the strategy of peaceful, non-violent resistance. (Cf. Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 285ff.) As Barber stated, the ANC tried to resist and oppose to all kinds of fascism, but they were likely to work together with the government. (Cf. Barber 1999: 125)

Together with the South African Indian Congress, the ANC launched the Defiance Campaign in 1952 against the oppressive legislative acts of the former years, mainly to oppose against the restrictive pass laws, which made the everyday living (and earning) much more difficult. The campaign resulted in a high increase in Congress members (from 7,000- 100,000). (Cf. Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 286) Another result was the submersion of the part-taking groups to an unified Alliance Movement. The government answered the non-violent resistance through physical violation, strengthening of persistent orders and implementation of new restrictions.

*"The Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1953 made a repeat of the Congress Alliance's Defiance Campaign impractical, by imposing stiff penalties on anyone who committed an offense 'by way of protest or in support of any campaign against any law', so the movement had to consider other forms of action."* (Gurney 2000: 124)

The idea was to start the boycott of selected businesses, intending to get the employer to pay decent wages and to make obvious, that all of the businesses were relying on african labor. So the boycotts of local shops went on. Also, in support of striking workers, the products of the United Tobacco Company in Durban were boycotted and they suffered heavy losses. (Cf. Gurney 2000: 124)

The ANC, in agreement with the Congress Alliance, saw the importance of a clear statement of policy, which would be pursued through the Freedom Charter. So over the next years the Congress of the People was busy with the evaluation of the main principles of the paper and

in strengthening the resistance against the implementation of the Bantu Education Act (1953) as well as the extension of pass laws to women. One example shows the persistence of the boycotters quite well. Gurney writes about a boycott tactic used by about 2500 residents of Evaton townships, who usually went 30 miles to work in Johannesburg by bus, boycotted the bus (because of too high fare tickets) for a whole year, taking the much slower train. Another example shows the citizens of Alexandra Township, where about 50,000 people decided to rather walk to Johannesburg, which laid around 18 miles away, than to use the busses and pay the rising fares. They did this everyday for about three month; in 1957 the government passed an act requiring all employers to make a monthly transport payment. That was also a way to (kind of) “solving” boycotts. (Cf. Gurney 2000: 125)

The late 1950s had in any case been a difficult period for the ANC. Attempts to extend its political strategies through boycotts and workers stayaways were hampered by banning and imprisonment. (Cf. Beinart 2001: 165) In 1955, however, the Congress of the People (convened by the Congress Alliance) gathered near Johannesburg for two days (25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> of June), about 3,000 people joined the event. The combatants included people of different professions, workers, intellectuals, students, peasants, women delegates of all different races and colors. Each of the members of The Congress of the People (Congress Alliance), which included the ANC, the South African Indian Congress, the South African Coloured People’s Congress, the South African Congress of Democrats and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), adopted the Freedom Charter as their own program of means to promote and execute it on a larger scale. Basically the Charter called for a democratic state, wherein the land and the wealth of the country should be equally distributed and in the hands of the people. (Cf. Davies/O’Meara/Dlamini 1988: 283ff.) Police stopped the conference and confiscated all documents on the second day.

The new strategy laid the main action on ongoing boycott, but with an emphasis on economic boycott, which should become a political weapon in the country. In 1958 the ANC held a conference where Anti-Pass Planning Council as well as an Economic Boycott committee was installed. The ANC made clear that they were against the confrontational approach of refusing to wear passes; instead the system of Apartheid should be challenged through economic and industrial boycott. As they argued, it was not the pass restricting the people but its functioning within the system. So economic boycott was seen as the more lasting way of acting against the pass law system than to discard or burn the passes, which would be re-imposed immediately. (Cf. Gurney 2000: 125ff.)

The changes of ANC, becoming a mass movement, also had impact on the internal structure of the Congress. The ‘Africanists’ within the ANC opposed a coalition with the democratic

organizations of non-africans in the Congress Alliance, as working together with whites had to be avoided. They stated that the ANC had become just a vehicle for white communist interests of the Congress of Democrats. There were points in the Freedom Charter that did not fit into the policies the Africanists within the movement wanted to see. So in 1958 a group, led by Robert M. Sobukwe und P.K. Leballo left the ANC to form the Pan Africanist Congress one year later. When in 1950 the Suppression of Communism Act was passed that banned the Communist Party from political activity, it also targeted any other (mass) opposition to the state. In the early 1950s, after protesting against the act, ANC office members were banned from holding a political office, like Walter Sisulu who had been the Secretary-General, Nelson Mandela as Deputy-President and Chief Albert Lutuli was restricted to Natal rural areas for a longer period. (Cf. Davies/ O'Meara/ Dlamini 1988: 287)

In 1960 "Africans in Cape Town launched a march into the city centre that seemed momentarily to threaten parliament. The government declared a state of emergency and sent the armed forces into dissident areas. Following mass arrests, the ANC and PAC were banned." (Beinart 2001: 166) The banning forced the groups into underground. Although the circumstances were harshly changed, the ANC was prepared for illegal existence, they were able to maintain effective underground operation in some areas, especially in the Eastern Cape, but the strategy of non-violent actions against the state were deeply constraint through repression and banning and therefore changed the way of action. Many leading persons from ANC and Congress Alliance were sent abroad to form an external mission. "Finally, in 1961, together with the South African Communist Party, ANC leaders formed a military wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, with Nelson Mandela as its Commander-in-Chief. Large numbers of cadres left the country for military training." (Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 288, cf. Beinart 2001: 167ff.) *Umkhonto's* first actions were mainly focusing on sabotage acts against governmental installations, like railways etc. The state responded with high violence and the implementation of more oppressive laws.

"In July 1963 the underground network of the ANC and *Umkhonto* was effectively broken when the police captured virtually the entire leadership in a raid on the Rivonia underground headquarters." (Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 288) After the elimination of existing underground structure and the imprisonment of the leadership the movement was silenced and a period of political inaction followed. The "external mission" came into focus. Therefore in the 1960s the ANC worked together with other african liberation movements like FRELIMO (Mozambique), ZAPU (Zimbabwe), MPZA (Angola), PAIGC (Guiné/ Cape Verde) and SWAPO (South West African People's Organization) to gain assistance in a unified fight against (white) oppression. Assistance was also coming from the communist countries,

particularly from the Soviet Union. In 1969, at a conference, held in Tanzania the ANC defined its aims and strategy for a national revolution. The theory of "Colonialism of a Special Type" was adopted as official ANC policy. This theory started from the premise that South Africa is an 'internal colony' in which the white colonizers hold (economic) power over the black colonized in a capitalistic system. When the aim was economic and political emancipation, the special role of the working class could not be left aside. Not everybody in the remaining ANC was accepting this leftward turn. "Both the right wing and ultra-leftist sects argue that the ANC is under 'Moscow domination'." (Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 289) But the answers to those voices were either to join a unified struggle against the oppressors or loosing anyway. After these "lost" years of the mid 1960s, regarding the active fight of opposition, the early 1970s could record a slow recovery of mass struggle within South Africa. On the one hand there were the black workers regaining their strength after the destruction of the SACTU (South African Congress of Trade Unions) in the mid 1960s. "And second was the growth of largely student-based Black Consciousness organizations." (Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 289) The growing resistance from the bottom was further improved by the regime's fatal intervention of the students' protest in Soweto in June 1976, which became known as the Soweto uprising. State repression was intensified after Soweto, political prisoners (ANC and non-ANC) were killed in detention, and some opposition leaders died under mysterious circumstances (like Luthuli in 1969). Such policies as well as trying to break the ANC support from outside the country, was the state's response to the growing resistance against the Apartheid regime. (Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 289)

#### **1.2.1.2. SACP - The South African Communist Party**

The Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), after the ban renamed in South African Communist Party (SACP), was formed in July 1921 by the revolutionary wing of the white working-class movement. The vision of the early CPSA was as follows: "The question of racism and national oppression would be solved under the dictatorship of the proletariat, which would free all South Africans." (Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 292) Their aim was to lead the fight for the national liberation of the non-white people, through regaining the people's power and later on create a state where the working class in alliance with the poor peasants would be the leading force. The capitalistic system was the one, which had to be challenged. (Cf. Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 291)

By the year 1928, about 2,000 members strong, the vast majority of CPSA's members were africans, but whites, indians and coloureds having important positions. After a severe decline

in members during the 1930s, the CPSA managed to gain strength again, sharing common ground with the ANC in opposing the regime's discriminatory policies and in working towards a non-racial society. The intensification of mass struggle at all levels, after World War 2, like the growth of a militant African Trade Union movement, stimulated the CPSA's growth. White communists gained african trust by getting elected as "Native Representatives" into parliament. They cooperated with the ANC on specific issues, for example the formation of an African Mine Workers' Union, the anti-pass campaigns and more. (Cf. Barber 1999: 131) At the end of the 1940s the Communist Party was orientating their policy along the "Theory of Internal Colonialism", which explained the complexity of the South African society and economy. South Africa was both an imperialist state with a white bourgeoisie exploiting black labour for their own enrichment, and a colony, where a minority ruled over a majority along racial lines. The way to fight these two sides of the same coin, capitalist and racist imperialism was the creation of a unified revolutionary movement consisting of peasants, intellectuals, and petty bourgeoisie in alliance with conscious european workers and intellectuals. Unity could be reached by showing white workers that the color bar (which protected special jobs for whites only), was only installed to avoid an amalgamation of white and black workers against the dictate of capitalism, and therefore against the capitalistic Apartheid-state. The existing similarities regarding the situation of workers should be emphasized, not the differences which mainly existed due to racial differentiation and the discriminatory laws concerning this matter. (Cf. Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 293)

When the Nationalist Party gained power in 1948 it stated that one main (political) goal was to eliminate communism. The Suppression of Communism Act was implemented in 1950 and outlawed the CP immediately. The party dissolved, for it was ill prepared for underground mission. But three years later, in 1953 the party was reformed underground as the South African Communist Party (SACP). Making their reformation not publicly, the party concentrated on working within various organizations of the Congress Alliance. Attacks and criticism by "africanist" elements within the ANC saying that the white communists exert too much influence on the Congress Alliance's program, as well as by Trotskyists, who saw a decline of the CP's care for workers, were answered through pointing out that they were a party comprised mainly by african working class members and that it was still their primary aim to ensure the leading of the working class in the national struggle. (Cf. Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 294)

### 1.2.1.3. The South African Indian Congress

Even if the indian community might not be that relevant to the Black Consciousness movement, it was an important force in anti-apartheid resistance, so it is necessary to address it here. Political organizations within the indian community have a long history and go back to the formation of the Natal Indian Congress by Mahatma Ghandi in 1894 and its developed tactic of passive resistance had a wide impact all over the country. The South African Indian Congress was formed in 1920 unifying the Indian Congresses of Natal, Transvaal and the Cape. “For nearly a quarter of a century from its foundations, the SA Indian Congress was, like the ANC, dominated by ‘moderates’ seeking essentially better terms for a petty bourgeois minority within the existing form of state.” (Davies/O’Meara/Dlamini 1988: 295)

This changed in the mid 1940s, when discriminatory laws were passed to exclude and restrict people from the indian community to buy land in the Durban area, as well as other areas. Acts implementing this racial law were the Pegging Act 1943 and the Ghetto Act 1946. One consequence following the implementation was a switch of leadership in the Indian Congress, again a parallel to the ANC’s history. The new leadership organized a number of passive resistance campaigns and a strike of indian workers in 1946. A completely new element was the search for amalgamation with other anti-apartheid groups, which the SA Indian Congress had refused in earlier periods. After the NP came to power in 1948 the SA Indian Congress and the Congress of Democrats got involved in the defiance campaign of 1952, and in 1953 joined in, with the ANC, the Coloured People’s Congress and the Congress of Democrats to form the Congress Alliance. (Cf. Davies/O’Meara/Dlamini 1988: 295ff)

Throughout the following years the SA Indian Congress participated in campaigns and strikes the Congress Alliance brought up. Some militant representatives also were involved in the sabotage actions of the 1961 formed ‘Umkhonto we Sizwe’, the military wing of the ANC. Although the South African Indian Congress never was banned, many leaders were jailed, the work of the Congress was severely weakened and the repression against the indian population increased throughout the period, especially after the Sharpeville Massaker in 1960, where many young people lost their lives.

To appease the indian community and to further separate them from the black group, the government installed the South African Indian Council. The indian community was answering this appeasement strategy in reinstalling the Natal Indian Congress in 1971, which campaigned against “(...) the puppet South African Indian Council and against all proposals to incorporate persons of Indian origin in some new ‘constitutional dispensation’ which excludes

other nationally oppressed groups.” (Davies/O’Meara/Dlamini 1988: 296)

This anti-SAIC campaign soon became a mass movement within the indian population, placing the Freedom Charter as their plan of policy. The campaign against the election of the so-called ‘puppet SA Indian Council’ in 1981 recorded a notable success, as the voter participation was about only 10%, in some areas even only 2%, which was a clear sign that the majority of the indian community in South Africa refuses to work with the Apartheid regime.

#### **1.2.1.4. PAC - The Pan Africanist Congress**

The early roots of PAC dates back to the formation of the ANC Youth League in the 1940s, as the so-called “africanist element” within the ANC. They introduced a more radical viewpoint and an elaborated "program of action" which later, in 1949 became the adopted ANC program, one indicator that the ANC opened their politics to the masses. In the course of the next years the ANC got involved in a lot of cooperations with other anti-apartheid organizations, which culminated in the creation of the Congress Alliance in 1956 and the adoption of the Freedom Charter. Groups of different (racial) background were involved merging to one (multi-racial) organisation. (Cf. Davies/O’Meara/Dlamini 1988: 298)

Some africanists within the ANC were not in favor of the new line fought by the ANC party. They could not agree to cooperation with whites, even if they declared to be anti-governmental. The main point leading to a break off, were clauses of the Freedom Charter which were not in accordance to what they stand for. They claimed "authentic african nationalism". They were convinced that white and indian elements as well as communist influence were taking over the lead in the Congress Alliance and attacked the multi-racialism of the Congress as a whole. So in April 1959 the africanists split with the ANC and formed the African National Congress with Robert M. Sobukwe as their new president. (Cf. Davies/O’Meara/Dlamini 1988: 299)

As Sobukwe is quoted within Fine’s and Davis’ book, he argued that multi-racialism is racialism multiplied, for that it has to be rejected as a whole. “With little regard for consistency he non the less conceived of the abolition of group antagonisms only through the dominance and exclusivity of the african group, his aim being ‘government of the African, by the African, for the African’.” (Fine/Davis 1991:193) The definition of “the african” was not always linear and quite broad in attempt, as it reached from a definition which opposed them to the other groups in South Africa, to a definition where everybody was included if he was in favor of the african struggle for a democratic and just system where the african majority

would take the lead. An interesting point is that the PAC refused the Freedom Charter because of some clauses which were, according to them, a betrayal of african needs, as for example the clause of “South Africa belongs to all who live in it”, because of the attempt to put the oppressor and the oppressed on the same level. For PAC it was unacceptable to not recognize the different wants and needs of the different groups, as for the whites could never be after the same thing as blacks were, as their initial (basic) position within the oppressive system was completely different. Even, if in later years, white apartheid opponents were also targeted severely by the government. (Cf. Fine/ Davis 1991: 195) Sobukwe himself explains the PAC’s different position compared to the ANC’s position, as follows: “To us the struggle is a national struggle. Those of the ANC who are its active policy makers, maintain... that ours is a class struggle (...)” (Sobukwe quoted in Davies/O’Meara/Dlamini 1988: 299)

The PAC’s aims, however, were strongly defined through Pan Africanism, with the overall aim of creating a “United States of Afrika” (Sobukwe 1959) and their focus laid on the deliverance of status of the african people, to free them of being mere objects of oppression and racism. This was a different standpoint compared to the focus on the economic plight of african workers and african people as such. They refused to define the oppressive system and the rescue out of this situation only in terms of economic oppression. They used the language of Nkrumah, when they stated that, ‘the liberation of the African is the task of Africans. We alone can emancipate ourselves.’ (Fine/ Davis 1991: 195) Apart from the Westerncape the PAC wasn’t really able to establish a broad base of supporters, but still had about 31,000 members. The founding of the Federation of Free African Trade Unions of South Africa (FOFATUSA) few months later was an attempt to represent a unified african workers, without any non-african influence.

After all, the existence of PAC was short-lived. After refusing to collaborate with the ANC in the Pass Campaign in March 1960, they rallied their own campaign.

*“The campaign which started on 21 March 1960, was uneven in its effects but large crowds, including the PAC leaders Sobukwe and Leballo, presented themselves at police stations in Evaton, Vanderbeijl Park Sharpeville (...) and Langa in Cape town to surrender their pass books and invite arrest.” (Fine/ Davis 1991: 220)*

Additionally in Johannesburg about 130 africans were detained, in Vereeniging and Cape Town thousands of workers stayed away from work. In this phase of events, the police saw physical violence as the way out of the threatening situation confronting the white supremacist system. About 90 people were killed and about 220 injured in Sharpeville alone,

17 people were killed, about 50 wounded in Langa. The biggest part of the ANC leaders were arrested, as well as PAC leadership. This massacre was criticized and condemned internationally, but for the blacks it was the starting point of a mass protest following the shootings of Sharpeville. Ten thousands of african workers went on strike in Cape Town alone. People without passes were challenging the pass-system. Within this height of peaceful resistance the ANC and PAC was declared unlawful. (Cf. Fine/ Davis 1991: 220)

Due to their quite short-lived existence the PAC was not able to stay active underground, like the ANC, they moved their main activity to outside the land and focused on armed resistance to fight the regime.

*“The characteristic features of the PAC politics in exile have been those of intense sectarianism and bitter internal division. Rapidly forgetting its attacks on ‘leftists’, class analysis generally, and the ‘rigid totalitarianism’ for which Sobukwe had condemned Chinese communism in 1959, in the wake of Sino-Soviet split, the PAC officially adopted ‘Maoism’.”* (Davies/O’Meara/Dlamini 1988: 300)

It started calling themselves ‘Marxist-Leninist vanguard party of Azania’. They did not produce a proper class analysis of South Africa, and remained their focus on just declaring South Africa a colony that is exploited by ‘foreign conquerors’. Their military wing called Poqo, whose later name was the Azanian People Liberation Army (APLA), formed during the early 1960s shortly after the ban, focused on sabotage action within South Africa to destabilize the country to provoke an uprising. In contrast to the armed wing of the ANC ‘Umkhonto we Sizwe’, Poqo did not avoid loosing life on both sides. In 1963 large numbers of PAC supporters within South Africa were arrested, some of the guerilla fighters sentenced to death. In the course of these events, the General Laws Amendment Act (also called the 90-days Act) was passed. This act allowed the detention of any suspicious person for a length of 90 days without trial. It also gave free operation to the Minister of Justice (Voster) to hold political prisoners, as long as he regarded them as a threat to the order in south african society and to extend banning orders. The history of PAC was characterized by internal turbulences, coups and contradictory political attitudes. In sum they failed to (re)present a unified line of program since their formation in 1959. (Cf. Davies/O’Meara/Dlamini 1988: 301) In 1981 the Azanian National Youth Unity (AZANYU), the youth wing of the PAC was founded in Orlando East in Soweto with Arthur Moleko elected as its first president. AZANYU was to function as a vehicle to establish PAC underground structures and recruit the youth for military training.

#### **1.2.1.5. AZAPO - The Azanian People's Organisation**

It was formed in May 1978 to fill the vacuum after the banning of all Black Consciousness organizations in October 1977. Being established soon after the organizations' executive committee was imprisoned AZAPO's actual start of action began in 1979. Their actions were aimed at conscientizing and mobilizing the black workers through Black Consciousness. They were convinced that it was essential to build up a good educational system, as well as to define religion as an element facilitating the black struggle as a means of liberation. Black unity was inevitable in the longer run. Last but not least they fought for an equal redistribution of wealth and power to all. (Cf. Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 308)

AZAPO was occupied with supporting different actions, from strikes, to rent and bus boycotts. Its members were busy in organizing activities around important events taking place, organized by other liberation groups. One problem of AZAPO to ensure the efficiency of their political action were their internal ideological differences. The questions causing trouble within the organization were, for example, if white democrats should play a role within the liberation struggle and in which terms the class- and the national struggle were interrelated. The majority of AZAPO members favored the "original Black Consciousness" line, where whites, being part of the problem should be excluded from the liberation struggle of the oppressed people, instead of collaborating. On the class-question however, AZAPO made their way of compromise to define all blacks as workers and all whites as part of the capitalist class, which was a quite simple way of dividing very heterogeneous interests and positions in South African society. Former BCM members who were released from jail criticized this standpoint later.

AZAPO did not have an easy start, for state repression was evident from their early beginnings. Till 1983 AZAPO did not make much impact, but the moment former Robben Island political prisoners of the BCM were released, they took over the leadership, strengthening the organization's power. (Cf. Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 309)

### 1.2.2. Trade Unions

As african employment in the big cities broadened during the post Second-World-War-era, there was a need to establish new organizations to aid the workers. *“A greater proportion of industrial workers were settled permanently in urban townships - not herded as migrants in compounds; they were also, as a rule, better educated, and a minority were able to find more skilled positions than were generally open in the mining industry.”* (Beinart 2001: 239)

#### 1.2.2.1. SACTU - The South African Congress of Trade Unions

The SACTU was formed in 1955 and was a trade union that saw it as impossible to separate the struggle for economic rights from that of political rights and overall liberation. Banned in 1964 their activism shifted to operate underground and in exile. SACTU rejected the ‘non-political’ economic forms of trade unionism, as they saw the issues directly bound together. It was not possible to separate them, in order to achieve a better situation. Manifesting equality in the economic sphere (like fairly paid wages) as well as in the personal sphere (like equal human rights) were for SACTU two sides of the same coin. This point of view made collaboration with the Congress Alliance obvious. (Cf. Davies/O’Meara/Dlamini 1988: 330)

The SACTU was affiliating organized workers amongst different economic branches, like food canning or metal-industries throughout the country. “When its membership peaked in 1961, SACTU had 46 affiliated unions with a total membership of 53,323 (of whom 38,791 were Africans, 1,650 Indians, 12,384 so-called coloureds and 498 whites).” (Davies/O’Meara/Dlamini 1988: 330)

SACTU launched a very important campaign demanding a legislated minimum daily wage throughout the country. During this campaign many workers joined the course, challenging not only the superiority of white rule, but also the system of cheap labour, which was essential for the industrial expansion after World War Two. SACTU was also involved with mass political strikes, planned by the Congress Alliance.

In 1962 SACTU’s operations were severely restricted, though never “formally proscribed”, their work was complicated by repression by the government. In the year 1963 about 30 SACTU officials were jailed and even more put under ban, exilation was also common among the SACTU members. So in the late 1960s SACTU focused mainly on international solidarity work. In 1973 they succeeded in securing TUSAS exclusion as a body of representation for South Africa in the International Labour Organisation (ILO). (Cf. Davies/O’Meara/Dlamini

1988: 331)

#### **1.2.2.2. FOSATU - The Federation of South African Trade Union**

The Federation of South African Trade Union laid their main emphasis on creating a strong factory floor based organization. They were rather putting the workplace into the focus of their action than concentrating on community-based issues. In contrast to SACTU FOSACU was promoting not to get involved into the political struggle. So one can see that the different trade unions and councils had different ways to achieve a common aim, that of liberating the african worker explicitly, but to empower workers as a whole. FOSATU was formed quite late (1979), compared to others and became the first non-racial trade union federation. “When the FOSATU was finally established some two years after the first meeting, it consisted of four TUACC [Trade Union Advisory and Coordinating Council] unions, three of BC, two former TUCSA ‘parallels’ (...) and some independent unions.” (Davies/O’Meara/Dlamini 1988: 333)

In 1982 about thirteen member unions represented workers from different manufacturing industries. The membership nearly doubled from 50,000 in 1980 to 94,000 one year later. FOSATU emerged out of organisations, which were analyzing the situation in South Africa in terms of ‘monopoly capitalism’. The TUACC (one of the former organisation) was based on shop floor organisation in multinational companies and promoted democratic control by the membership, so that independent trade unions could use Industrial Councils to achieve their interests.

But the state drafted a legislation excluding migrant and contract workers from registering. All major trade unions opposed this act but the state introduced it and added additional ways to control the workers unions. (Cf. Davies/O’Meara/Dlamini 1988: 335) FOSATU saw a way in registering as a non-racial union and by doing so, to challenge the governments’ reaction. As the democratic workers unions were weak, FOSATU saw a kind of benefit in registering, as the workers could use the state’s industrial relations institutions. The new registration system was a way to get some real rights within the repressive system. So FOSATU was concentrating on these positive side effects, and still did not forget whom they were fighting against. (Cf. Davies/O’Meara/Dlamini 1988: 336) FOSATU was often criticized to treat the economic and political sphere separately, but somehow they were convinced that it was better to fight one enemy (the employer), instead of fighting against the state as well. “This view has been criticized as economist in that it elevates struggles at the point of production against employers to the most important political task of the working class.”

(Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 336) As the struggle for better wages, the critics claimed, was not the same as the struggle for a change of capitalistic production. But FOSATU saw itself as a political body fighting for the workers' rights. FOSATU was also convinced that a unified workers movement would be important, but was not yet reached. The way to unity, as they saw it, could be achieved through a clear ideological direction, and through FOSATU's consolidation of factory floor organisation. From 1982 onwards FOSATU co-operated with different trade unions to work for further unity amongst workers.

### **1.2.2.3. SAAWU - The South African Allied Workers' Union**

The South African Allied Workers' Union was formed in March 1979. "SAAWU began as a general workers' union with the long-term aim of developing into a federation of industrial unions." (Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 337) The SAAWU recorded a growing number of memberships, which rose from 5,000 in 1980 to 70,000 at the end of 1981. The rapid growth made the consolidation of factory floor organizations problematic but it worked well to fight against employers. In contrast to FOSATU, SAAWU rejected registration under the Labour Registration Act vigorously. Registration, they said, would be cooperation with the regime as well. SAAWU took a non-racial standpoint, and therefore analyzed the situation in South Africa according to class rather than race.

Their overall aim was the liberation of the working class, which could only be achieved through economic means. But they did not refuse to get involved into political issues as well, as for them economy and politics within this repressive system were correlated. They saw the workers' direct control of trade unions as an important way to overcome petty bourgeois leadership of the former decades. A collective leadership should be striven for.

In 1982 a second unity conference was taking place, but collapsed over the registration issue. Afterwards SAAWU, together with other unions, seemed to work for a unified union with excluding the registered unions. Like other unions, SAAWU's work was affected by state repression; leaders were arrested, detained and attacked. SAAWU was not in favour of the state's attempts to ease the political and social tension by offering the oppressed majority semi-liberating opportunities, such as the registration of african trade unions, or the so-called independence of regions as the Ciskei. So they openly fought against what they saw as hypocrisy. (Cf. Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 338ff)

#### **1.2.2.4. CUSA - The Council of Unions of South Africa**

The CUSA consisted of nine unions, claiming a membership of about 49,000 in 1982. They described themselves as black oriented and controlled. This organization was only open to blacks and criticized other unions for their non-racial approach. Like SACTU it promoted a non-political approach to trade unionism. CUSA grew out of the Urban Training Project (UTP), which was concerned with promoting workers to participate in working committees, but later in 1972 shifted its actions to union organisation. In 1978 they formed the Black Consultative Committee of Trade Unions (BCC) with a few other unions. (Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 345)

CUSA was actually formed in September 1980 and adopted a black exclusivist ideology, but still had some white advisers through their collaboration with other groups. Like SACTU, CUSA was not challenging the capitalistic system as a whole, but favoring a betterment of the workers circumstances, and therefore to challenge the employment system of the regime. "CUSA's approach to negotiations gives a leading role to officials rather than shop stewards." (Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 345). Comparing to the FOSACU, which was leading a "working-class-struggle", the CUSA was leading a workers' struggle. CUSA was immediately registering under the Labour Registration Act but also participated in a number of strikes and took militant position from time to time. In 1982 CUSA was leading in setting up a National Union of Mineworkers to start organizing african mineworkers throughout South Africa, since the African Mine Workers' Union collapse in 1946 after the huge mineworkers strike.

#### **1.2.3. Community Organizations**

Since the 1970s the role played by the community organizations in the liberation struggle grew bigger and broader in perspective.

Davies, O'Meara, Dlamini write that towards the end of 1970 community and civic associations recorded a rapid growth. This might be due to the fact that all political opposition was banned, even the Black Consciousness Movement's organization and projects. The regime installed the "Community Council" after the Soweto uprising in 1976. Which should constitute a picture of community participation, which actually was not happening. Collaborators from the oppressed group joined the Council administrating the rent collection. "The struggle against rent increases has been the principal focus of activity of many of the

community and civic associations to date." (Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 353)

Rent struggles were part of the broader community struggle against the system of oppression and exploitation, besides campaigns against bus fare increases, consumer boycotts, support of striking workers and other activities. The community associations were based on "working class and oppressed petty bourgeois forces". (Cf. Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 355) The overall mobilization of the community to support the organization's activities was important, for example the consumer boycott only could have an impact if as many people as possible were involved, boycotting certain products or companies. The Committee of Ten played an important part in the struggle against national oppression. The Women's Organisation developed out of the need for a specific women's organization to fight against all forms of oppression and exploitation, which particularly went against women.

The committee of Ten and Soweto Civic Association was established in 1977, after the Soweto Uprising, and was composed of "leading professional people, teachers, churchman and others" (Cf. Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 357) They refused to work together with the government and campaigned against the so called "Community Councils" and shortly after its creation, the Council of Ten was detained.

The Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (PEBCO) was founded in 1979 as a fusion of local civic associations in the Port Elizabeth area. PEBCO vehemently opposed participation in the community councils. In their mission to advocate an end to discriminatory legislation and participation in the decision making process they achieved a high mass mobilization. They had to face severe repression by the state, causing a leadership vacuum.

The Federation of South African Women (FSAW) was founded in 1954 by leading women of the Congress Alliance taking up a big role in the campaign against the extension of passes to african women in the mid-50s. In 1956 they rallied a march where 20 000 women took part to protest against the pass laws. The FSAW was never banned, but was facing severe repression prevented them from working effectively. It was impossible to have meetings; leaders were detained, banned and forced into exile.

The United Women's Organisation (UWO) founded in 1981, uniting 300 delegates from 31 areas, identified the women's struggle with the struggle against capitalist exploitation as such. They aimed at organising and unify women from all classes in the need to fight against oppression and exploitation. (Cf. Davies/O'Meara/Dlamini 1988: 369)

Other community projects were: the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee (CAHAC) serving as an umbrella organization, campaigning against rent increase, supporting strikes, and consumer boycotts etc. The leadership were facing detentions and banning.

To name a few more projects: The Durban Housing Action Committee, The Border Civic

## **2. Bantu Stephen Biko & BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS**

In the following chapter I will start with a very short overview on Steve Biko's life, to give the reader an insight into the circumstances surrounding Biko during the evaluation of the movement of Black Consciousness and black activism. It is important to state, that Biko had only 30 years to live, but his attitude towards his vision of an end of oppression and the white system of Apartheid made him deeply dedicated to the political fight, which became central in and for his life. Later on I will discuss the main elements of Black Consciousness philosophy, how Biko defined the term, what was essential and relevant to overcome racism and to emancipate black people to become conscious of the system of oppression and exploitation that faced them in South Africa.

I will analyze Biko's statements alongside theoretical framework, such as the definition of racism and the debate about whether racism and capitalism are bound together or not, as lot of scholars have a divided opinion about the past – and contemporary history. I will answer the question why Biko saw the overthrow of the capitalistic system as inevitable to achieve a common egalitarian society, and why the current situation in South Africa tends to be exactly as Biko has foreseen it nearly 40 years ago. After discussing the essential ideas and ideological framework of the movement I will analyze its organization on a national and international scale. The question of effectiveness and to which extent the thought gained currency will be answered.

### **2.1. Biographical Introduction**

*“Born shortly before 1948, I have lived all my conscious life in the framework of institutionalised separate development. My friendships, my love, my education, my thinking and every other facet of my life have been carved and shaped within the context of separate development.”* (Biko 1970c: 27)

Bantu Stephen Biko was born on December 18<sup>th</sup> 1946 in Tarkastad, Eastern Cape. He was the third child of his parents, father Mzingaye Biko and his mother Alice Nokuzola called

Mamcethe. Bantu was Steve's first name, literally meaning 'people'. And this was the name, his family called him. (Cf. Wilson 2011: 18) He was brought up in a Christian surrounding, living in a house in the black location of Ginsberg, King William's Town. His father was a policeman who died when Steve was 4, after suffering an illness. His mother therefore had to bring her four children through by doing domestic work. She always put a great emphasis on the education of her children. Due to Steve's effort at school he got a bursary to go to Lovedale Institution, when he was 16. It was a boarding school, where his older brother Khaya already went. Only some month later his brother got busted because he was suspected to sympathize with the already banned PAC, which was banned in 1960 together with the ANC. Steve Biko was arrested too; up to this time he never had engaged with politics in any matter and planned to become a doctor. Police let him go free, because they discovered that he did not know a thing about what they were trying to find out about, but Steve immediately got expelled from school. His brother Khaya just disappeared for the next 10 month.

It was this moment when something inside Biko changed; there was a momentum of understanding through experiencing unjust accusation and pressure. As he described it himself: „I began to develop an attitude which was much more directed at authority than at anything else. I hated authority like hell.“ (Biko cit. in Wilson 2011: 23) After loosing nearly a full year of study through his expelling, Biko, now aged 18, enrolled in the boarding school of St. Francis, a college in Mariannhill near Durban, run by catholic nuns and monks, mainly liberals, as he recalls it. He states that it was an atmosphere far from government intervention but still, „(...) one began to see the totality of white power.“ (Biko cit. in Wilson 2011: 24) Biko was curious about questioning the system within the church, the authority structure, and he used his time to debate about things, which were important to him personally. It was during this time, where Biko came to know Father Aelred Stubbs, who would later be of severe importance to him. „It was the start of an important and long-term relationship between spiritual 'father' and 'son'.“ (Wilson 2011: 25) As Father Stubbs remembers the moment in his personal memoirs „Martyr of Hope“, when he got a long letter from Steve: „After introducing himself as Kaya's brother he launched into a long series of questions about the Christian faith.“ (Stubbs 1978: 155)

The time Biko spent at Mariannhill College was a time of ongoing decolonization on the African continent. As shown in the last chapter it was also a time of political changes within South Africa. The 1960 massacre at Sharpeville and the banning of the main opposition parties, ANC and PAC, were a crucial marking a brake with the old oppositional strategies.

Biko was only 13 years old, when the banning happened. Stubbs called the years between 1963 and 1967 demoralizing years for the people, especially the students of South Africa, as

the repression after Sharpeville was highly intensified. (Cf. Stubbs 1978: 155f)

Biko recalls hearing and talking about decolonization and strong african leaders like Algeria's Ahmed Ben Bella, Hastings Banda of Malawi or Oginga Odinga of Kenya.

Biko matriculated school in 1965, aged 19, entering the medical school at Wentworth, Durban (UNNE-University of Natal Non-European Section) after receiving a scholarship, in 1966. Linda Wilson writes that Steve wanted to become a lawyer but that it was safer and easier in those days, if one was a good student, to go to medical school, for law and anti-apartheid activism was not a good match. (Cf. Wilson 2011: 26f, Stubbs 1978: 156) "Thus many intelligent and remarkable young black students, for whom medicine was not necessarily their first choice, found themselves there in a core group with a measure of freedom which did not exist in any other long-established liberal university (...)" (Wilson 2011: 29) Biko was conscious about what was going on around him and soon expressed his distaste of what he saw as this "appalling silence" (Biko cit. in Wilson 2011: 28) of africans not strong enough to face the enemy.

After enrolling in the UNNE, he immediately joined the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). Unlike many other black students and black student groups who did not agree with the non-racial approach of the NUSAS, Biko was eager to join the union. In 1967 he went as a delegate to a congress at Rhodes University, Grahamstown. He was confronted with segregated residential facilities for the congress participants. Indians and coloureds were allowed to stay in town, whereas africans were required to stay some distance away in a church hall in the „location“, only white students could stay in the university residences. There was a debate of whether postponing the conference until they would find a venue, where no racial segregation was taking place. This experience made some things clear for Biko. (Cf. Wilson 2011: 30) "I realised that for a long time I had been holding onto the whole dogma of non-racialism almost like a religion, feeling that it was sacrilegious to question it (...)" (Biko cit. in Wilson 2011: 31) What was now coming to fore, was that the white liberals, even if they felt an affinity to the black mans struggle and oppression, they would never be in the same position as non-whites were all over the country. Biko, regarding this momentum of inner thought, stated, that it became clear to him, that the white liberals had a problem on their own, and this was the position of superiority, "(...) and they tended to take us for granted and wanted us to accept things that were second class." (Biko cf. in Wilson 2011: 31)

It was this moment, that let flouring ideas, of what Biko later would call the inferiority complex of the blacks of South Africa and their duty to free themselves from their oppressors, not letting white liberals speaking for them, but to be their own liberators. "1968, as you will remember, was 'the year of the students'" writes Father Aelred Stubbs. (Stubbs 1978: 156) For

all non-white campuses, this year marked a kind of renaissance, the multi-racial institution of NUSAS had to accept a new line adopted by the non-white students. In Fort Hare University about 500 students ensued a non-violent strike to protest for an equal treatment at university, being suspended right after. Re-application was needed, 22 students were told they could not re-apply, due to the role they played in the strike. (Cf. Stubbs 1978: 157)

The spirit of change mingled within the next month, Biko and Barney Pityana toured the universities across the country and in July 1969 at Turfloop University, the South African Student Organisation (SASO) was founded to represent the non-white students of South Africa. With Steve Biko as its first President. (Cf. Wilson 2011: 36) What composed the politics of SASO will be discussed later. Important is, that Biko was not interested in playing a leader. The organisation tried to avoid any kind of leadership cult, even if Biko was a man who definitely had an impact on other people. Friends around him, describe him as a good listener, and a heart-warming person, who was personally dedicated to the cause of emancipating and liberating the oppressed people of the country. Father Stubbs writes that Steve was always „too big a man to put ideology before persons“ (Stubbs 1978: 158). This statement regarded the attitude of SASO to avoid working together with white liberals, as it was seen as an obstacle for liberation. Biko held certain friendships, even if they did not underline the concept SASO was stating.

That Steve had a special authority, a special emphasize for people is a common attribute given by friends and people who lived around him. "There was a burning inner spirit which filled his limbs, so that he always met you with his own powerful presence." (Stubbs 1978: 159) It was his personality, which guaranteed a kind of equality between the leaders, and members of SASO, for everyone had a voice and a mind to be heard. It was said, that Biko was able to encourage people to use their full potential. Mamphela Ramphele writes in her autobiography, "he enabled people to go beyond the limits they placed on their own capacity and agency." (Ramphele 1999 [1995]: 109)

In July 1970 Barney Pityana became second president of SASO, Biko then started his column 'I Write What I Like' under the synonym Frank Talk. It was an essential part of spreading the message of Black Consciousness to a wider audience. (Cf. Wilson 2011: 41) Pityana described Biko as the one who brought in ideas, who was kind of the fundamentalist within the leadership and describes him as stubborn to go for his opinion, but "[h]e did not dominate and he had the capacity to be delighted by counter-argument." (Wilson 2011: 44f.) SASO became a sub-culture at university, the members reading books outside their study subject, educating one another through discussions and visions for a better future, without racism. In political and theological matters, Biko and Pityana were the leading proponents. "Steve

respected people and he made people respect each other. His whole attitude and his whole experience were a working-class attitude and experience (...)", Bokwe Mafuna recalls, working for SASO and later on in the SASO's black workers' project (Wilson 2011: 52) Biko's style of leadership was extraordinary; he lived for his vision, taking more emphasis on the long-term, the wider picture to not fall for the frustration of the daily oppression and therefore the frustration the black people of South Africa had to deal with all their life.

In 1971 Biko got married to Ntsiki Mashalaba. She stood outside the political life, standing beside Steve, being the mother of two of his children stating, "I very much accepted him." (Ntsiki Biko cit. in Wilson 2011: 70) As Biko got expelled from Wentworth College it was evident that he would decide to choose the political road, quit his studies at university and fully dedicate himself and his time to the evolution of Black Consciousness philosophy and the Black Consciousness Programme (BCP).

*„Biko's work was to awaken the people: first, from their own psychological oppression through reorganizing their inferiority complex and restoring their self-worth, dignity, pride and identity; secondly, from the mental and physical oppression of living in a white racist society.“* (Wilson 2011: 54f.)

He therefore made a choice, as many thousand other students would come to face too, that of becoming a political activist or to be trained in a profession within the existing system of Apartheid, which only had specific positions „open“ for black students. Biko got engaged in the process of the Black Consciousness Programmes, where great emphasis was laid on the education and development of skills within the black community as well as training of leadership for those pupils and students who got expelled or dropped out of school but also for other young workers in industry. (Cf. Wilson 2011: 58)

In February 1973 Biko was banned. The Nationalist Government banned eight leaders of the National Union of South African Students NUSAS, and after the political uproar about this banning, also banned eight leaders of the SASO, including Steve Biko, Barney Pityana, Harry Nengwekhulu and Strini Moodley. A ban was one of the means of oppression the government used to discourage any kind of oppositional work. It was a systematic approach to avoid people of continuing their political work. For Biko and all the other banned SASO members this meant a severe constraint. Banned people mostly got banned to a certain district that was usually their place of birth. In Biko's case he got sent back to King Williamstown, to the house of his mother. So he had to leave Durban for his hometown. He was not allowed to move out of the district. Visiting East London, Alice, Fort Hare, Grahamstown, Port

Elisabeth, Durban, Cape Town or Johannesburg was prohibited. He was not allowed to enter any educational institution. He was not allowed to write anything for publication (which harmed the proliferation of the Black Consciousness thought in the newspaper *black review*, which was finally finished shortly after Biko's banning order and therefore had to be published under a different editor). He was not allowed to speak in public nor to be around a group of people. As a banned person you were only allowed to be with one person at a time, a thing that hardened the daily life and communication severely.

Stubbs writes that one purpose of the banning order was to silence the banned person, to put her out of the game and lately hope that she will be forgotten. The only possibility to change the banning order was to change one's attitude towards Apartheid, but this so called "change of heart" could only be accepted through the Minister himself. Such a ban could last for five years or longer. Biko was to be in banning condition till the day he died. (Cf. Stubbs 1978: 161) Steve's mother remembers the moment he stood in the doorway, stating her thought that "there was something deep in this child and I had an understanding of what was going on." (Mamcethe Biko cit. in Wilson 2011: 78) She stated that she was truly afraid that her son would be imprisoned forever.

Being trapped in King Williamstown Biko saw his way in establishing BCP in the Eastern Cape. Steve was therefore made Branch Executive. At his side he had Reverend David Russell, an Anglican priest helping Steve on multiple levels in the establishment of BCP. Maybe more important he was a confidant and friend Steve could rely on, as well as challenging him intellectually. (Cf. Stubbs 1978: 163, Wilson 2011: 80) Russell, knowing about the local conditions as well as the security police's actions, agreed to install the office for SASO and the BCP in the old church on Leopold Street.

As written above security police closely watched banned people. Life became tricky, turning to a cat-and-mouse game if one was to stay in political action. Harassment by the security police was relentless. "The banning order was studied, the loopholes found, and those banned began to interpret it for the police." (Wilson 2011: 86)

Father Aelred Stubbs underlines the power of Biko's mother, and her way she interacted with the security police and how she was able to defy Steve and those around him. "Her son made it clear from the first that he was on his way going to be subjugated by his restriction order. Out of love for him she complied." (Stubbs 1978: 163) Biko managed to have anyone he wanted into his mother's house, as Father Stubbs remembers. Even his wife Ntsiki and the children were living with them, Biko tried to spend hours each day with his son Nkosinathi and later his daughter Samora. "Sometimes he would break his banning order to drive Ntsiki back to St Matthew's [where she worked as a nurse], far outside the permitted magisterial

district of King. Life was to be as normal as possible." (Stubbs 1978: 163) Wilson describes it the following way: „They [security police] found it extremely difficult to handle his style, his intelligence, his statements; a man of that calibre.“ (Wilson 2011: 89) As anybody else, Biko was consistently breaking most of the banning condition.

Biko was aware that the banning order existed to undermine his ability to continue his work against the “system of oppression“, but by recognizing it as such, he got the strength to handle it and to work harder towards the Black Consciousness Movement’s goal of community work and conscientizing the black “masses“.

Steve was very active in the years of his banning. The BPC rented a disused church right in King Williamstown and started to use it as administrative office, a research and publishing department, a showroom for the clothing, which was produced at the local home industry centers (run by the Border Council of Churches), as well as leatherwork from Njwaxa, a nearby town, where BPC initiated the establishment of a cottage industry in cooperation with Father Timothy Stanton. The most ambitious project was the creation of the Zanempilo Community Health Center, where Mamphela Ramphele took on the leading role. This clinic should provide a good health care for the people, as this was lacking in the so-called resettlement areas. (Cf. Stubbs 1978: 167) The Clinic opened officially in April 1975; Mamphela Ramphele was their first medical officer. Stubbs describes the center as „the incarnate symbol of Black Consciousness“. (Stubbs 1978: 169)

1974 another bunch of SASO and BPC members were arrested and held under Section 6(1) of the Terrorism Act. Seven month later, 13 were charged under the Terrorism Act. The renowned SASO-BCP Trial was convened in Pretoria starting on 31 January 1975 and lasted till December 1976, when nine were convicted. Steve Biko was an important witness in this trial. The testimony Steve gave at the SASO-BPC Trial showed his capacity to use words and to redefine questions that were put unto him. As Wilson describes it: "He displayed the capacity to walk through a minefield of cross-examination without compromising himself or incriminating the accused." (Wilson 2011: 106) He was able to handle the situation brilliantly, using the stage he never had under his banning, to speak about the political and ideological principles and intentions of the Black Consciousness movement. Through his appearance in public he could heighten the moral and strengthening the solidarity, which was severely diminished throughout the repressive years they experienced.

Meanwhile life in King Williamstown continued. 1975 was a year with big advancement, marred only by the savage vandalism of an attack on the BCP offices in Leopold Street in September, and by the sudden death of Steve’s elder sister at about the same time. King Williamstown became the center for all BC committed people. The political wing of the

movement Black People's Convention (BPC) grew in strength. (Cf. Stubbs 1978: 179)

"Steve recognized the vital need to conscientise and thus politicise the masses by community development action." (Stubbs 1978: 181) Even if some people of the BPC thought Steve and the others are wasting their time and would be better off, to invest their energy in political action. Due to his ban, Steve could not hold an office in BPC, but he was the one who was consulted in regard of nearly everything.

"Within a month of Biko's giving evidence in Pretoria, on 16 June 1976, a transforming political event occurred, the Soweto Uprising." (Wilson 2011: 110) Biko stated, that everybody was surprised, as nobody organized this peaceful protest of students against the imposition of Afrikaans as language of instruction. The police answered by force of arms, killing a hundred throughout the country. After Soweto nothing stayed the same. Students were fleeing the country to join the military resistance, either the military wing of ANC (Umkhonto we Sizwe) or PAC (Poquo). "There was a crackdown in the King William's town area." (Wilson 2011: 118) About a month after the Soweto killings, Mapetla Mohapi was arrested; he was the permanent secretary of SASO administrating a trust „Zimele“ in King, a fund that was operating for the benefit of ex-prisoners. Mohapi died in custody three weeks later on August 5, which was a traumatic event for the people around him. In the time after more and more BC activists got detained, like Mamphela Ramphele, and most of the other activists working in the BCP in King Williamstown. Biko was detained too, on August 17, two days after Mohapi's funeral. They were released weeks and month after, but scattered to locations all over the country to avoid the continuation of their work. Ramphele for example was banished to the northern Transvaal. "After the long detentions of 1976 the state continued to break up and destroy the carefully established network all over the country by consistently removing people." (Wilson 2011: 120) It was hard to maintain the work, as there were nearly no more people to fill up the gap, as nearly everybody of the leading spirits were either in detention or banished. Steve was released in December 1976, after 101 days in detention, shortly before Senator Dick Clark, chairman of the US-Senate sub-committee for Africa applied to see him in detention. Biko was the one who was able and willing to get together with foreign ministers or ambassadors to finally bring out the message internationally, as the situation nationally began to get more and more repressive and the scope of action was reduced to a bare minimum.

"The scene was darkening and we all sensed we were living on borrowed time as the enemy became more desperate" Father Aelred Stubbs remembers. (Stubbs 1978: 197) Biko was appointed honorary president of the BPC in order to provide him with the leadership-label necessary that the foreign journalists, political ambassadors etc. did know whom to talk to. He

was best at this job, knowing whom to trust and whom to avoid. It became more and more important to let the outside world know what was going on in detention and to make clear that any foreign government acting against Apartheid was important to break the power of the regime and to further liberation. Biko was invited to come to the US, under the auspices of the USA-SA leadership exchange programme and his refusal "(...) explaining that he would only accept such an invitation when 'America had given proof of a radically changed policy towards South Africa'" (Wilson 2011: 124), made his dedication to the cause evident, even if threatened by fear of his own death.

In August, Biko once again broke his banning order and went to Cape Town to see Neville Alexander, who was released from Robben Island a short time before, to hear what the imprisoned political elite (ANC and PAC leaders) was thinking about the next steps to take. When Alexander was released he immediately was put under house arrest. Biko did not receive the message, when Alexander cancelled their meeting due to the high risk Steve's visit would have been, as his house was monitored all day and night. Peter Jones, an BPC activist and companion, brought Steve there and remembered that they waited for hours, but the one who tried to persuade Neville Alexander to see Steve just for a short time, was not successful. So they had to drive back to King early morning, when the situation seemed more harmless.

It was on August 17, 1977 when the two reached Grahamstown, and ran into a roadblock. Both were immediately detained. Jones was released after 533 days without trial. "What happened in room 619 happened countless times. The security laws allowed detainees to be held in terror without any protection" (Wilson 2011: 140) Biko was never to be released alive. Bantu Steven Biko was killed in detention, losing his life on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 1977, leaving a huge gap in the Black Consciousness Movement and the lives of the people who knew and loved him. „He had a much greater fear of betraying himself than a fear of physical violence even to the point of death.“ (Wilson 2011: 141)

Steve explained his attitude towards security police when he was still alive, talking about death:

*"My attitude is, I'm not going to allow them to carry out their programme faithfully. If they want to beat me five times, they can only do so on conditions that I allow them to beat me five times." And he said to the police men executing the command to get information no matter how hard the treatment would get: „If you allow me to respond, I'm certainly going to respond. And I'm afraid you may have to kill me in the process even if it's not your intention." (Biko 1977:153)*

Even if Biko was dead his thoughts lived on. "You are either alive and proud or you are dead, and when you are dead, you can't care anyway." (Biko 1977: 152)

## **2.2. The Black Consciousness Movement- Ideology, Philosophy, Attitude of Mind**

This chapter will provide for a deeper understanding of the main issues, the Black Consciousness Movement and - the thought was concerned with. It will go deeper into the topics of how Biko defined certain things, and why he was able to spread a message of upliftment to the oppressed people.

In analyzing Stephen Biko's writings and interviews, it is of importance that he had developed some swings within his thought, or might matured into a broader way of seeing things.

In the Introduction of the main source of Steven Biko's thought (containing articles, speeches and interviews) "Steve Biko. I Write What I Like" Malusi and Thoko Mpumlwana, who along with Biko were founding activists of the B.C. movement, evaluate it as the following:

*"The early Biko is trying to justify black withdrawal from integrated organizations, which he believes is a false integration under false and unequal conditions for no useful purpose. The later Biko believes that black confidence and capacity to lead the struggle has been restored, and the time has come to march forward to a new society."*  
(Mpumlwana 1996: XIX)

The standpoints and thematic shifts within the movement's focus due to outer periodical changes will be discussed.

### **2.2.1 'Being Black is not a Matter of Pigmentation'**

It is kind of hard to handle the idea of a movement and its ideological claims, if one does not understand, whom this philosophy should serve. As the term "Black Consciousness" suggests it is the black people of South Africa who it is addressed at. "[But] being black is not a matter of pigmentation- being black is a reflection of a mental attitude." (Biko 1971b: 48) This is one of the most important parts in understanding what Black Consciousness is all about. It is neither about colour nor race, it is about your status within a society, within an economic and

social structure, exploiting the majority, for the enrichment of a minority, where in South Africa this minority is white.

Blacks, concerning Biko's definition, are all those people, who are suppressed by a higher order, be it the government, military, dictatorship or anything else. The point is, that you as a black person are in a position of voicelessness. Even if you are classified as Indian, or a coloured person in South Africa, still you are part of the oppressed race (class), and therefore, according to Biko, defined as black. Biko explains it in his own words:

*„We [SASO] have in our political manifesto 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 realization of their aspiration.“* (Biko 1971b: 48)

So it is important that one is conscious about his localization in society and his active participation in the struggle for an egalitarian society. Biko goes on explaining this point: „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.“ (Biko 1971b: 48)

In Marxist tradition Herbert Marcuse defined “False Consciousness” in the 1960s, describing the ideology that is dominating the consciousness of the exploited groups, justifying and perpetuating the system of exploitation. (Cf. Langston 1968: n.p.)

There were (liberal) voices describing Black Consciousness as an “anti-racist racism“, an argument which can be regarded as a quite superficial argument speaking against a movement which addressed the consciousness of a people, making evident, that oppression and racial separation as practiced by the apartheid regime, was to end and equality before the law had to be ensured. (Cf. Gibson 1988: 8)

One important thing to add here is that Biko takes accurate stance, in his definition of blackness and has a complex way of defining it. Because he did distinguish between, black, non-white and white. And therefore provides a deeper analysis of blackness. Being non-white does not mean that one is black, this explains the first definition of “being black is not a matter of pigmentation”, and because being non-white does not mean that you are black per se. As Biko explains this point further: „If one's aspiration is whiteness but his pigmentation makes attainment impossible, then that person is a non-white.“ (Biko 1971b: 48) It is also a person who calls a white man „Baas“, an Afrikaans term for master or lord, anyone who serves in the police force, security force, or working together in any way with the oppressor. (Cf.

Biko 1971b: 48)

So Biko distinguishes between black and non-white. Its difference is the aspiration of a person of the oppressed group, where for example a non-white person premises white as the optimum, and the need to adjust to whiteness becomes a way of acting against his own appearance, his own background, his own skin colour. A non-white is thinking that living up to the parameters of the white world are something worth striving for. Biko will later attribute this behavior to the immanent inferiority complex the black people of South Africa are suffering because of their history.

Biko's differentiation in the used terminology makes evident, that within the Black Consciousness thought, the exclusion of the white men is not really important, but the underlying intention is the creation of a conscience which reveals apartheid's mechanisms of subjugation. (The issue of the white liberals will be discussed in a following chapter) So the accusation that BC might be a racist response to a racist system fails to understand the motives behind this philosophy. Regarding this issue Biko tried to explain and stated the following:

*“What blacks are doing is merely to respond to a situation in which they find themselves the objects of white racism. We are in the position in which we are because of our skin. We are collectively segregated against- what can be more logical than for us to respond as a group?”*(Biko 1970b: 25)

He gives the example of trade unions, which consist of workers of the same profession, fighting for a betterment of their working conditions (higher wages, shorter working hours, etc.) and nobody is worried about their exclusive fight within a group of same interest. “Somehow, however, when blacks want to do their thing the liberal establishment seems to detect an anomaly.” (Biko 1970b: 25)

It is evident that the white liberals, who were fighting on the side of blacks, were worried about the development of the BCM, as racially exclusivist. “They want to shy away from all forms of “extremisms”, condemning “white supremacy” as being just as bad as “Black Power!”” (Biko 1970b: 21) The Black Power movement was, at about the same time, already on its peak in the United States.

This misunderstanding of a promulgated way of fighting white oppression becomes clearer later on, as the role of the white liberals for the emancipation of the blacks will be discussed into detail. Here the question comes in, of whether blackness is a conscious decision or not. According to Biko it is an articulation of consciousness about who you are and where you

stand in the struggle.

The Apartheid regime, in annexation with the policies of the past hundred of years divided the population, separating them along the colour line using a terminology that made whiteness and being part of the white group desirable, putting them on top of evolution and gods creation. The so-called *kaffa*, native or non-white, the coloured and the indian were dictated to be a lower beings and credited a lower status. Non-whites, is a term created by the white apartheid government to describe and subjugate all people of South Africa as one group, to place them at the opposite side of whiteness and being white. It is here, where the power of definition ensues the power position of the white minority. Racist behavior is defined by the motive of inclusion versus exclusion. In this understanding the own group is positioned in opposition and to another group to create an opposite to the self, which is not the self, but perpetuates the self. (Cf. Hund 2007: 20f) For the Black Consciousness philosophy it was ultimate to be aware of this underlying structure of immanent racism and to oppose this system. Therefore “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.” (Biko 1971c: 49)

After trying to clear what the term “black” means and whom it defers to, I now try to subsume what Biko saw as the main elements of Black Consciousness and afterwards continuing to get into detailed analysis.

### **2.2.2. The Definition of Black Consciousness – The 'Inward Looking Process'**

In a paper produced for the SASO leadership-training course in December 1971, Biko spoke in front of his colleagues. He defined Black Consciousness as the following:

*“Briefly defined therefore, Black Consciousness is in essence the realization 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.”* (Biko 1971c: 49)

It is a manifestation of a new realization of self, refusing the determinant of *whiteness* as the normal optimum. In addressing the colour of their skin, as the sign of their oppression, Biko challenged the way in which one (or Apartheid society in general) defined and classified color, in reformulating the connotation that was bound to the *blackness* of their skin. Always

degrading them to fulfill a subservient role, marking exclusion in political, economic and social spheres. Biko knew that it was inevitable to change the bad connotation that was bound to the blackness of one's skin. Even if this meant that, once again, the color of one's skin shall take the place of identification. This identification should be in a positive way, not as before in a negative one. The consciousness about the own value had to be recreated, and the color of one's skin therefore was defined as explicitly powerful in creating a better self worth. He goes on:

*"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 system, their culture, their religion and their outlook in life."* (Biko 1971c: 49)

It is the overthrow of what generations of generations had been taught to believe in: that the black race will never be able to stand on the same level as the white race. It is evident that the alteration of the system is not enough; Biko speaks of a transformation that is needed to completely change the underlying system of exploitation. As I will explain later on, Biko saw in African Socialism a system that was desirable as a form of governance within South Africa. So what is important within the Black Consciousness movement is the new consciousness of the black man and women, to value themselves as what they really are and not what the white world (the racist system) wants them to be. What is essential and of paramount importance in achieving this kind of consciousness is the liberation of the mind, for it is impossible to be conscious about oneself and still remain in bondage. What Biko might have meant with this bondages, is the mental slavery, which the system of Apartheid was able to create during its existence and which existed long before Apartheid was institutionalized. It is this kind of mental bondage, Biko writes, that bounds a man to servitude, which holds a man down. It is this feeling of inferiority that black men developed, thinking never to be able to become more than the system allowed them to.

The psychological liberation of the black masses, confined and shaped through centuries of racism and paternalism, was to be gained before the physical liberation could take place and racism could effectively be overhauled. (Cf. Hirschmann 1990: 5) "We want to attain the envisioned self which is a free self." (Biko 1971c: 49)

Biko traced back racism as being part of the exploitative attitude of the white man, to be found all over the world. He stated that capitalist exploitation gave way to the discriminatory practice against black people of the world over the last 400 years. "(...) it is a case of *haves*

against *have-nots* where whites have been deliberately made *haves* and blacks *have-nots*.” (Biko 1971c: 50) The blacks were made to be in the inferior position in all aspects of life. Institutionalized racism within Apartheid determined who not to marry, where not to work, where not to live, where not to drive, where not to eat, where not to sit, where not to wait, where not to talk, where not to swim. The economic component of making the black majority an economically disadvantaged group was evident in the apartheid policy, for there were laws that prohibited economic upswing of blacks as a whole, excluding black work force from most working positions. (For example job reservation, skilled jobs vs. unskilled labor) Blacks were to fulfill the low qualified, low paid jobs. Apartheid policy occupied all aspects of life of a black person.

Biko gave an example, trying to explain the theory of the *haves* vs. the *have-nots* as follows: A white worker, even if he is the “most down-trodden” still has a lot to lose if the Apartheid system would collapse. This is the case because of laws and regulations, which put a white worker in a better position, on a legal basis (Laws Amendment Act). Therefore the white worker is always in a better place than the black worker. Several laws were ensuring these differences to avoid an amalgamation of the workers across the color line. Biko goes further in defining only blacks as the “real workers of South Africa”, which makes an analyze in Marxian terms maybe more difficult, distinguishing South African conditions from other countries, where the working class is not divided through color. There are a lot of differing opinions and discussions in the discourse of how to analysis the system of South Africa, whether on class or on race.

Biko knows his stance and did not see white workers and black workers within one group within the racist structure of Apartheid. Biko analyzed the white group as deeply heterogeneous. There were many poor white workers, who were suffering too but on a different basis, because skin color was keeping the white worker in a higher position, compared to the black worker, to avoid an amalgamation of working class interests between black and white, as it was the case in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. A unification of the workers would have severely threatened the system of Apartheid. So competition along the color line was enhanced and deepened. It is here, in the lower ranks of white (working class) society, where Biko assumed high racist elements against 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.”* (Biko 1971c: 50)

Biko invokes that it is important to recognize white racism as one major force in South Africa and states that its greatest ally is “the blacks refusal to unify (...) because we are told to do so would be racist.” (Biko 1971c: 51)

White power presented itself as a totality and the one important thing is unification of the oppressed masses to stand against this suffocative power.

*“For a people who had long been weakened through divisions enforced upon them, re-groupment in a world where political power derived from groups was an essential step towards emancipation.”* (Hirschmann 1990: 4f)

It is evident that the Apartheid structure tried to divide the oppressed group into different entities mostly defined through racial “tribal” differentiation, each group should have their own so called “homeland”, making an unification harder and nearly impossible to achieve. To outline differences was one of the main activities in creating the policy of Apartheid, to avoid any possibility of a unified opposition.

Steve Biko made an overall analysis, based on the Hegelian Theory of Dialectic Materialism, concluding the following: The thesis is “white racism”; antithesis is the “solid black unity”. The synthesis resulting from the regained balance between black and white is an egalitarian non-racial society.

*“One must immediately dispel the thought that Black Consciousness is merely a methodological 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 of white society.”* (Biko 1971c: 51)

Black solidarity is a thing that is of severe importance to form a strong opposition to the existing dominant system of racial discrimination. And to overcome the inter-group suspicions that did the government infiltrate. Further implications of BC Biko explains, are the correcting of a wrong image of the selves, in terms of culture, education, religion and economics. (Cf. Biko 1971c: 52)

Biko always preferred the non-violent way, of achieving the end he envisioned. Therefore he always promoted non-violence as a way and means to counteract the brutal system of Apartheid. As Biko knew best, it was to change the thoughts of many, first, to achieve later on, what was hoped to be a society of equality and respect.

*“The most potent weapon in the hand of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.”*  
(Biko 1973: 92)

The main issues Black Consciousness tries to take up is, the redefinition of blackness and the alteration of long-learned attributes regarding being black. This revaluation shall bring a new self into being, a people who is proud to be black, proud of where they come from and proud to go on with strength. After shaking off the shackles of the past, which is a feeling of inferiority, the blacks must unify to gain power in the fight against a common enemy, which is the white Apartheid system and its immanent racism. Black solidarity shall help to gain strength and recreate the sense of living in a system of oppression, to finally see the vision of a future, where every person is free. It is a hard road, everybody in the Black Consciousness movement was clear about that, but it was important to finally see a vision again and to work towards this vision.

### **2.2.3. White Racism, White Liberals and the Accusation of Black Consciousness as Counter-Racist-Racism**

“No race possesses the monopoly of beauty, intelligence, force, and there is room for all of us at the rendezvous of victory.” (Césaire cit. in Biko 1971e: 61) Biko assumed that Aimé Césaire could not have thought of South Africa while formulating this statement, because the whites in South Africa had placed themselves as top of evolution, exploiting the work and thoughts of the majority. “In an effort to divide the black world terms of aspirations, the powers that be, had evolved a philosophy that stratifies the black world and gives preferential treatment to certain groups.” (Biko 1971e: 61)

As SASO, the South African Students Organisation was formed in 1968 (as will be discussed in chapter 3) it was important to form a political representation of black students. The multi-racial organization NUSAS, the National Union of South African Students, included black students too, but the leadership was mainly white. It was this kind of co-working where blacks did not have any influence on defining the policy or programme. “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.” (Biko 1971e: 63)

Biko points on the fact that the political vocabulary that blacks have used came from the liberals, as well as the white liberals tended to dominate the orientation of the organization.

As NUSAS has formerly been a white student body, later in the early 1960s it became open to the cause of blacks students, allowing black membership, but it was never really able to strive against the deep racist structures in the universities in small- and the society as a whole. Biko gives a very shiny picture of this inability to confront existing structures, when he remembers his experience at a congress at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, the bitter taste of being confronted with racially segregated residential facilities, where blacks had to leave the campuses and were advised to a church hall in the “black locations”. This was a turning point for Biko, as he saw, that he, as a black man and his black colleagues might be members of a so called multi-racial organization, but they were not equal. There was nothing equal about the treating he had to experience there. As one is aware of the experiences Biko must have made throughout his lifetime, growing up in a system of institutional racism, this experience showed him something else, not only that he was not equal with the whites (a reality of Apartheid South Africa) but that he was wasting his energy in working within NUSAS, as they are not aiming at what he was aiming for: an equality of mankind in South Africa. (Cf. Wilson 2011: 30) For this and other reasons Biko, together with others, break away from NUSAS, forming an exclusive black student body in 1968. Biko then analyzed and had to justify why it was so important for the black students (and people) to have their own bodies of representation and phrase their own aspirations. Biko knew that the white “masses” did not mix up in black politics but he was curious about the motives of that *"bunch of nonconformists (...) do-gooders (...) liberals, leftists"* because

*"[t] hese 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."* (Biko 1970b: 20)

Biko calls them the people who claim to have “black souls wrapped up in white skins”, a straight reference to Frantz Fanon's masterpiece “Black Skin White Mask”. (Biko 1971e: 63f, Fanon 2008 [1952]) Biko reminds the readers and listeners that the white liberal had a curious role in the black man's history ever since. He states that only very few black organizations of the past were not under white direction, who always acted to know what was best for the blacks. Biko complained about the black people who did believe in the white liberals for too long, finally starting to demand to be their own guardians, taking care of themselves and working for themselves.

The early Biko criticized the liberal ideology, for white liberals sought the solution to the

problem of Apartheid in a bilateral approach, where black and white work together. This idea might be relevant in a society where nobody is discriminated by the reflection of one's skin, but in a racially segregated society, there would always be a huge gap in the experienced realities of everyday life, even if the white man feels that racial discrimination is an unacceptable state. The whole system must be overhauled first before black and white could walk hand in hand against a common enemy. (Cf. Biko 1971e: 64)

Biko suspects a certain purpose behind the motivation of the white liberals to lead the opposition:

*"For a long time, in fact, it became the occupation of the leadership to 'calm the masses down', while they engaged in fruitless negotiations with the status quo." (Biko 1971e: 64)*

This must have been the impression after experiencing the situation at Rhodes University. The real problem was the immanent racism, which was experienced, even within multiracial organizations. Biko addressed the work of the liberals, describing

*"(...) everything they do is directed at finally convincing the white electorate that the black man is also a man and that at some future date he should be given a place at the white man's table." (Biko 1970b: 21f.) Biko continues, "Hence the multiracial political organizations and parties and the "nonracial" student organizations, all of which insist on integration not only as an end goal but also as a means." (Biko 1970b: 20)*

What this quote makes evident is the emphasis that the liberals put on the white man's world as the only right way in which a society was and is functioning, not taking into account that the (capitalist) society as a whole needed to be changed. Not only the problem of discrimination and power relations, Black Consciousness included also an immanent critic of capitalism as form of social formation.

This is a very important point to analyze a little deeper. Biko spoke of integration, the white liberals wanted to attain, he labeled this kind of integration as an artificial one. Artificial, because

*"[t]he people, forming the integrated complex have been extracted from various segregated societies with their inbuilt complexes of superiority and inferiority [check chapter 2.2.4.] and these continue to manifest themselves in the "nonracial" set-up of*

*the integrated complex.*” (Biko 1970b: 20)

The result of this integration is a “one-way course”, as Biko called it, continuing an attitude of “whites doing all the talking and blacks the listening”. It is an integration that puts the suppressed group in the moral system of the one group in power. Therefore Biko concludes this kind of integration would not and cannot be desirable. The white man’s society structure and power of definition remains. The blacks would be integrated into an existing system of moral and codes, he was never able to participate in creating. “It is rather like expecting the slave to work together with the slave-master’s son to remove all the conditions leading to the former’s enslavement.” (Biko 1970b: 21) What Biko tried to say is, that the white liberal is, no matter what he does, still part of the oppressing/oppressors group. Integration as a means was an unproductive one.

“Once the various groups within a given community have asserted themselves to the point that mutual respect has to be shown then you have the ingredients for a true and meaningful integration.” (Biko 1970b: 21) This statement makes clear that Biko was not against integration per se, but he was against an integration that was directed by and into the standards of the white minority. Integration as a systematic means is suggesting to solve the problem of discrimination, while the pattern of society stays exactly the same, where a few own much and the majority still has no equal access to good education, health, jobs and political power. Liberals and some blacks (so called non-whites) believed that it was already a difficulty to bring people from different races together, so that working together was already an achievement within the system of Apartheid. But for Biko and the Black Consciousness thought, this kind of achievement was not enough; it was just a playing within the box, not trying to make an effort to step outside the box.

So what might have been a successful and desirable integration for Biko? He defined it as the following:

*“At the heart of true integration is the provision for each man, each group to rise up and attain the envisioned self. Each group must be able to attain its style of existence without encroaching on or being thwarted by another. Out of this mutual respect for each other and complete freedom of self-determination there will obviously arise a genuine fusion of the life-styles of the various groups. This is true integration.”* (Biko 1970b: 21)

Till this point is reached, it is impossible for the black man to work side by side with white

liberals relying on them to free them out of oppression.

Biko underlines two points why a working-together is not effective at this stage. The first point he made was that the black-white-circles were a creation of white liberals. One must remember that the break away from NUSAS was not that long ago and the accusation of the BCM as being racist was still evident, when Biko stated the following about the white liberal's attitude:

*“The more of such tea-parties one calls the more of a liberal he is and the freer he shall feel from the guilt that harnesses and binds his conscience. Hence he moves around his white circles- whites-only hotels, beaches, restaurant and cinemas- with a lighter load, feeling that he is not like the others. 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 Nats (National Party), he feels quite secure under the protection offered by the Nats (...)”* (Biko 1970b: 22)

This quote points out that the white liberal, no matter how much he felt and saw the injustices done to the black man, was in a position to sometimes forget the harmful system they live in, they are protected by the color of their skin: whiteness was their birthright. This just was a matter of fact, even if a lot of white people got banned or detained because of their political activism, but on a daily basis, the white man, even the liberal white man did not experience severe harassment, or racism.

Blacks on the opposite were experiencing an oppressive situation, each and everyday, unable to escape the circumstances they were put into, simply because one was born black. One had to face the pressure, humiliation, injustices, and racism. And the white liberal should help them free themselves?

The second point, Biko lined out is, that the black-white circles were static circles with neither direction nor program. He sees the real concern of the multi-racial formations in rather just keeping the group alive than in changing the overall situation.

*“In this sort of set-up one sees a perfect example of what oppression has done to the blacks. They have been made to feel inferior for so long that for them it is comforting to drink tea, wine or beer with whites who seem to treat them as equals.”* (Biko 1970b: 23)

Biko calls those sort of blacks, who better experience an ego boost of feeling “slightly superior to those blacks who do not get similar treatment from whites” (Biko 1970b: 23) non-

whites, and a danger to the black community. It is important to see, that the problem is not that people – white and black – drink tea together, but the conceited attitude of whites towards his black colleague, which is the problematic thing about it. If, in this racial setting, a white treats you, as one of them (of the superior group), than you (as part of the oppressed group) feel more important. This is the underlying problem, that the recognition of the powerfull opposite (which is the white group) is important to the oppressed (which is the black group). That is why Biko spoke of inferiority, complaining about a black man who feels better only if a white treats him as an equal human being, which he actually is. Biko said it is those blacks, who were as guilty as the white liberals for avoiding a real salvation and a real swift of the status quo,"(...) for it is from such groups that the theory of gradualism emanates and this is what keeps the blacks confused and always hoping that one day God will step down from heaven to solve their problems." (Biko 1970b: 24) Biko explains further, that for example the growing support for the former MP Helen Suzman was seen as a major mile stone in the “inevitable change” which was promoted by the liberals, but that there was no recognition of the signs of severe changes for the worse at the same time, as for example, the large-scale removals of Africans from urban areas. (Cf. Biko 1970b: 24) So coming back to the point of integration which is promulgated by white liberals and their non-white colleagues, Biko stated that he was against that sort of integration which means “(...) a breakthrough into white society by blacks, an assimilation and acceptance of blacks into an already established set of norms and code of behaviour set up by and maintained by whites, then YES I am against it.” (Biko 1970b: 24) Biko stated that he was against the superior-inferior, white-black stratification that makes “the white a perpetual teacher and the black a perpetual pupil (...)” (Biko 1970b: 24)

As written above, the Black Consciousness philosophy went deeper, than the re-assertion of the self and a newfound pride of the black people, but longed for a real overthrow of existing patterns of power-relations and economic structure. The white-liberal-promoted integration would only grant some blacks a good living, but the vast majority of people would remain where they had been, on the bottom of the social ladder. This kind of one-sided integration would also assert the intellectual arrogance of white people, Biko assumed; and over all, it was awkward that a settler minority should impose an entire system of values on an indigenous people. This was a reality to be changed by the upswing of the majority.

But Biko was not against integration that meant that “(...) there shall be free participation by all members of a society, catering for the full expression of the self in a freely changing society as determined by the will of the people, then I am with you.” (Biko 1970b: 24) So Biko argued that its not the matter of integration which is an idea not to follow, but the way

how it is done must be defined by the people of the oppressed group, not from people of the oppressors group:

*“The liberal must understand that the days of Noble Savage are gone; that the blacks do not need a go-between in this struggle for their own emancipation. No TRUE liberal should feel any resentment at the growth of Black Consciousness. Rather, all true liberals should realize that the place of their fight for justice is within their white society.”* (Biko 1970b: 25)

It is important that they understand that they themselves are oppressed and that they must fight for their own freedom, not the freedom of the black people. The role the white liberals shall play is within the white group, because it is the matter of white racism that is the country's problem, so solution approaches must be sought for especially within the group of the oppressors.

*"The liberal must apply himself with absolute dedication to the idea of educating his white brothers that the history of the country may have to be rewritten and that we may live in 'a country where colour will not serve to put a man in a box'."* (Biko 1970b: 25)

In its early years, therefore, whites were excluded from participation in SASO politics. However, as we will see later on, the BCM did not put focus on the exclusion of whites in later years. Many people who engaged with the BC programs were white. Close associates of Biko were white. It is not about color of skin, it is about having a common understanding of what really went wrong within society, about having a common goal: equality.

Confronted with the critics of their black members, the liberal students body of NUSAS as well as other multiracial groups were affronted by the creation of an all black student body in 1969, the South African Students Organisation (SASO). They saw it as a step backwards, as described above, they were convinced of the way and means of multiracialism and thought this would gradually lead to an integration of the black man into the white world, where racism will be vanished in the end.

There was an outcry claiming an anti-racist racism. As discussed above, blackness was made the element of analysis or the element of identification. As Biko analyses, the history of black self-determination took a new shape, when “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.” (Biko 1971e: 67) What

Biko was referring to, was the break away from some members of ANC to create the Pan Africanist Congress. The latter focused more on an exclusivist Africanism and were opposed to the softer line of the ANC, where a generation gap was complicating the different assumptions and strategies.

Biko saw another step towards the creation of Black Consciousness in the adoption of the 'People's Charter' in 1955, "In a sense one can say that these were the first real signs that the blacks in South Africa were beginning to realize 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." (Biko 1971e: 67)

After 1960, when the political parties, representing black thought, were banned (ANC, PAC) and went into underground there was a kind of political vacuum in the black politics. But the black students began to rethink their position in black-white coalitions, as they were starting to get more conscious about the role they play within these constellations, making a move towards self-determination, by stepping aside and walking a new way, for "(...) its [SASO] tough policy of non-involvement with the white world set people's minds thinking along new lines." (Biko 1971e: 67) The liberal-minded white students protested and charged SASO of racialism.

But Biko argues in favor of the founding of the SASO, that it opened up and deepened the new era of self-empowerment, self-care and self-responsibility.

*"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 realization 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."* (Biko 1971e: 68)

So instead of choosing the common ground of color/ or blackness, the movement seeks its coherence in the common experience of oppression. Therefore the philosophy of Black Consciousness expresses group pride rather than exclusionism. "At the heart of this kind of thinking is the realization by the blacks that the most potent weapon in the hand of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed." (Biko 1971e: 68) This quote is a very popular one by Biko. It suggests that if you are in a system of severe oppression, the oppressor is able to put laws to curtail your movements (as the pass laws or the 72 hour law or example), to take away

your freedom of speech and your political freedom, they can control who you marry, who you are allowed to talk to, for what wage you have to work, and seek to control your mind by telling you a fake history, by dominating all media sources. But in the end, if you wake up and choose not to be blinded by the lies they tell you, they can never control your mind. It is a conscious decision, a decision of awareness. So by using your mind feeding your mind with critical thoughts (by reading books, listening to people...), engaging in debates beside the indoctrination of the system's philosophy, you choose freedom of mind, and decide to control your own mind. This is only the first step to gain a real and deeply rooted self-awareness and one of the most important components of fighting against oppression, mentally.

Biko claimed that whites are not aware of this prison blacks are living in within Apartheid South Africa. "Such consciousness is essentially an inward-looking process." (Biko 1971e: 69) And this inward-looking process is a walk towards the attainment of the envisioned self, of a free self, in a society not defined by race. The attitudes of whites, working towards a non-racial society, did not meet with this kind of inner awakening of black people's consciousness. Within these circles, blacks had always been the extension of something, but they did not lead, they did not determine important decisions, they were there because they were black, a liberal multi-racial body, would not have been one without black people sitting at the table. It is one big problem, that

*"(...) no matter what a white man does, the colour of his skin- his passport to privilege- will always put him miles ahead of the black man. Thus in the ultimate analysis no white person can escape being part of the oppressor camp." (Biko 1970b: 23)*

But for the emancipation of the black man, there can only be one-way, self-empowerment. The accusation of white liberals, that the emergence of a black consciousness thought was racist showed that they were not ready to see the problem as it was: white racism in a segregated society dominated by a white minority. They were reluctant to the idea that they themselves might be "part of the oppressor camp", as Biko put it, rather they wanted to be something in between, a transmitter between right wing whites and oppressed blacks. It was a new development where blacks were demanding their rights for self-determination, setting aside the multiracialism approach, which was thought to be *the* way to achieve the end of racial segregation. "They want to shy away from all forms of 'extremisms' condemning 'white supremacy' as being just as bad as 'black power!'" (Biko 1970b: 21) This makes this whole complex easier to understand, whites putting white supremacy and the crime of Apartheid oppression as well as black power or black consciousness on the same level, which signified

that they did not want to see the power relations behind. Maybe its effective to put in Biko's definition of racism:

*“Those who know, define racism as discrimination by a group against another for the purposes of subjugation or maintaining subjugation. In other words one cannot be a racist unless he has the power to subjugate.” (Biko 1970b: 25)*

Biko analyzed that blacks were only responding to a situation, where the power to subjugate and discriminate lies in the hand of a small minority of white people. The majority, mainly blacks, is oppressed on a daily basis by Apartheid legislation. There was no equal distribution of power, no equal distribution of land and no equal distribution of wealth. After all, how does men gain equality? One can either wait, that the oppressive system changes all by itself, distributing power and the other components freely and equally, which is not likely to happen. Or the oppressed group finds the strength in the common experience of being oppressed and seeks their power in the fact that they are numerically superior, outnumbering the camp of the oppressors. So Black Consciousness seeks not to wait, but to stimulate the inner power and resistance of the oppressed group, creating a scope for activism and therefore forming a positive outlook for a brighter self-defined future.

Steve Biko stated, and this might be one of the crucial elements in opposing the accusation of anti-racist racism, that in a colorless society, non-exploitative society, where people enjoy equality before the law, “Black Consciousness” would not be relevant. There would be no need to uplift a people by creating self-awareness due to their skin. But in a society, where people are subjugated because of the color of their skin, it is important to regain the intrinsic value, because it is this, which is enabling him to fight against oppression and, to see what is wrong within the society. (Cf. Biko 1973: 87) Powerlessness due to the lack of self-esteem is something, which an oppressive system is creating. Apartheid created what Biko calls the “inferiority complex” of the black man. “Racism does not only imply exclusion of one race by another-it always presupposes that the exclusion is for the purposes of subjugation. Blacks have had enough experience as objects of racism not to wish to turn the tablets.” (Biko 1973: 97f)

## 2.2.4. Inferiority Complex vs. Superiority Complex

*“From this it becomes clear that as long as blacks are suffering from inferiority complex- a result of 300 years of deliberate oppression, denigration and derision- they will be useless as co-architects of a normal society where man is nothing else but man for his own sake.” (Biko 1970b: 21)*

As written above, the white liberals exerted the dominance within the oppositional organization. Biko analyzed the impossibility of the oppressed group being freed by part of the oppressor group, as the power distribution was still defined by the system which bounds them to the context of racial segregation. Biko states that it was in the black man's hand, to deliberate him from oppression. One step in the process was to recognize the fact that both sides, the black and the white people of South Africa were downtrodden by racial jurisdiction, miseducated to believe that there is a real difference between a black man and a white man, between a colored girl and a white girl. Those created realities were introduced by colonialism. Inferior-superior, black-white complexes started to dominate the thinking. In reading Fanon, Biko and his comrades discovered some inspiring messages, which they could also see relevant for South Africa.

In *Black Souls White Masks* Fanon speaks of the interesting fact, that although the white colonizers had always been fewer in number, they never felt inferior. The black man, however, was made to feel inferior at the moment, the white man decided to define the black man as slave. (Cf. Fanon 2008[1952]: 73) As Biko and his comrades analyzed the writings of Frantz Fanon, they too made out the turning point to inferiorization in the establishment of colonialism. “The problem of colonization, therefore, comprises not only the intersection of historical and objective conditions but also man’s attitude toward these conditions.” (Fanon 2008 [1952]: 65) As Fanon recognized a certain unconscious desire by the black man to change color (due to the problems he is facing within society because of his physical appearance), it is therefore important for the black man to realize this voice inside, and therefore not to step aside and keep distance, but „on the contrary, once his motives have been identified, my objective will be to enable him to choose action (or passivity) with respect to the real source of conflict, i.e., the social structure.“ (Fanon 2008 [1952]: 80)

This is what Biko was criticizing about the attitude of the white liberals and their way towards an integration of the black man (which should lead to a multi-racial society), as they did not tend to challenge the social system per se. The Apartheid apparatus was the racial form of a western capitalistic system, where a few own and earn, and the majority is exploited. This

system must be overhauled as a whole. The liberals did not have such an aspiration. But Black Consciousness concentrated on a change of the system from bottom up. So the first step was to overcome this immanent inferiority complex, which was continuing to exist and which was obvious in the black and white circles. (Cf. Biko 1971e: 64) To overcome this complex of self-contempt Black Consciousness saw the correction of false images as crucial, which served to hold black people in a subordinate and weak position. Main aspects to re-define the black man's virtue were education, history, culture, economics. Biko speaks of a process of acculturation that took place since the first European did go on shore in 1652, where "the African began to lose a grip on himself and his surroundings." (Biko 1971b: 41) It is this situation, where a foreign minority sets up a code of conduct, creating a system of dependency leading to a system of institutionalized racism. "Somehow Africans are not expected to have any deep understanding of their own culture or even of themselves. Other people have become authorities on all aspects of the African life or to be more accurate on BANTU life." (Biko 1971b: 40)

Biko brings in the terminology chosen by the white minority to define people. Bantu was one of the discriminatory term for blacks, another one was *kaffa*, the Afrikaans word for black. Still another word, which was used later on within the strategy of separate development, was the term "non-white" to describe all people aside the wide minority. Making non-white the common description for people without white skin, manifesting whiteness as the optimum. The use of certain terminology is and was effective in alienating the black man from himself. I want to bring in Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* that is of theoretical relevance, as Biko had dealt with the writings of Frantz Fanon, who - influenced by Hegel's master-slave dialectic - used it as a concept in regard of the psychology of the oppressed. It is worth noticing it here in short. Fanon quotes Hegel: „Self-consciousness exists *in itself* and *for itself*, in that and by the fact that it exists for another self-consciousness; that is to say, it *is* only by acknowledged or recognized.“ (Hegel cit. in Fanon 2008[1952]: 191) Hegel's main point is that for an individual it is important to have another subject to counteract with. In being alone the self does not need definition. But living in a society the other, as point of examination, creates the self. The self is created by the moral codes and standards that exist in a certain space and by which one is categorized and judged by. Humans are waiting for recognition by which one receives a feeling of worthiness and status. It is therefore the other who gives the self a meaning. As Fanon extends this happened between white and black, when the *white master* recognized the *black slave*. To the Hegelian *master/slave* dialectic "an absolute reciprocity" exists. It is the slave who defines the master. And it is the master who defines the status of the slave. If there was no slave, there cannot be a master. Translated to the South African context,

there would not be a superior white man, if there was no inferior black man. The color problem would cease to exist.

If recognition is not granted by the other, an opposition would not exist, which led the self-consciousness experience *desire*, which is, as Hegel describes it, the first stage that lead to the dignity of the mind. It shall not be discussed any deeper, but in regard to the situation of the South African blacks, this desire was to become equal with white(nes)s. As Biko knew, there was the existing problem, the inferiority complex, which forms the desire of the black people to become white. This negation of the self (and the negation of one's own color of skin) leads further in the circle of self-negation and the feeling of inferiority. So it was the negation of the self that must be worked against, through recognizing the problem as such, and therefore to become conscious of the system of mental oppression. The next step is to create a positive connection with blackness, to create a sense of power for self-definition. To not let the white man define any longer, who the black man is, what he does and how he does it. It is therefore a process of self-emancipation, of self-creation and self-dignity.

Fanon also quotes Jean-Paul Sartre, who discussed *Négritude* (in his essay *Orphée Noir-preface to Senghors's Anthologie de la Nouvelle Poésie et Malgache*) as an „anti-racist racism“ and defined it as an antithesis to the thesis of white racism, which is created to disband itself in the end, in a multi-racialism. In Biko's thought, the master/slave duality of Hegel and the dialectic of Sartre are both considered too narrowly. "The *thesis*, the *anti-thesis* and the *synthesis* have been mentioned by some great philosophers as the cardinal points around which any social revolution revolves." (Biko 1973: 90) Biko states that the white liberals had analyzed the basic problem of South Africa as being Apartheid; their anti-thesis therefore was non-racialism and the formation of non-racial groups. Their synthesis was never clear defined, but Biko emphasized that the white liberals had always put integration as the ideal solution to the power problem in South Africa. The way to achieve this integration, was working together along non-racial line. Biko replies to Sartre's and the liberal's thesis-antithesis the following: for Black Consciousness the thesis was *strong white racism*, the antithesis was a *strong solidarity amongst the blacks (black unity)* and the synthesis was a *true humanity* where power politics will have no place.

"This is why we reject the beggar tactics that are being forced on us by those who wish to appease our cruel masters. This is where the SASO message and cry; '*Black Man, you are on your own!*' becomes relevant." (Biko 1973: 91) With beggar tactics Biko refers to the leadership of white liberals, working towards a vanishing of white racism through integration (as explained in the former chapter) into a system that is solely defined by whites, and where the economic power is only in white hands. In the next chapter therefore it will be argued why

the economic oppression is a strong, driving force to hold and keep the black masses down. And it will explain why Black Consciousness saw this element as an underlying source for racial oppression.

### **2.2.5. Education - 'Bantu Education' & Rewriting History**

*“The homes are different, the streets are different, the lightning is different, so you tend to begin to feel that there is something incomplete in your humanity and that completeness goes with whiteness.”* (Biko 1976a: 101)

What is crucial in this statement Biko coined, is the matter of duality, the reality of separation. It is the declaration of *good* and *bad*, superior and inferior by the Apartheid legislation. It is a reality where the black man lives in poverty, physical and psychological because he is constantly confronted with discrimination. It is this feeling, Biko tried to describe this in the quote above. It is this wrong conclusion, that the incompleteness lies within the oppressed group and that the completion lies within the group of the oppressor, those who also occupy and possess the definatory power. For the Black Consciousness philosophy the liberation of the mind was of severe importance, it was defined as the ultimate requirement for a holistic liberation from oppression. Education was an integral part of the deliverance from oppressive forces. The regimes' laws to constrain the ways and means in which the black people were educated, was essential for a perpetuation of hierarchy.

The Bantu Education Act introduced in 1953 was directed at the division of educational system along racial lines, for white and black, as well a separation along ethnic labels. (Cf. Norval 1996: 131) The decades before, schooling for africans were predominated by missionary schools, the state did not have a lot influence on what and how black pupils were taught. For the functioning of Apartheid its ideology had to be secured through schooling too. Through the act, african schooling and the topics, which were taught, were put under the central direction of the Department of Native Affairs. (Cf. Beinart 2001: 113f, Gilliomee 2009: 195) The original document of the Bantu Education Act 47 of 1953, Nr 2 (b) says the following:

*“There shall cease to be vested in the executive committee of a province any powers, authorities and functions, and the provincial council of a province shall cease to be competent to make ordinances, in relation to native education: (...)”* (Union of South Africa 1953)

As Beinart states, the nationalists feared the missionaries' emphasis on English and on liberal ideas, the latter was dangerous for the reproduction of the hierarchical system in creating critical individuals. In 1958 Bantu Education became a separate department of state, to handle the increasing number of educational provisions for africans (from about 800,000 schools in 1953, to about 1,800,000 in 1963). The malinvestment into the bantu education was one of the obvious racist elements of this so-called betterment of the education system. (In 1968 the government spending on a black pupil was only 6% of that of a white pupil). Inequalities were huge and obvious. (Cf. Gilliom 2009: 196)

For Biko it was evident, that the quickest way to destroy the substance of and conscience about ones own culture is through mis-education, which intrinsically changes the mind. This is not an education for the benefit of the individuum but for the purpose of maintaining a certain social and political situation, in other words to maintain the superior-inferior complex under the guise of 'separate but equal' development. "By bringing the bulk of urban Africans into a few years of basic schooling, Bantu education provided a mechanism of social control, which could be used to fight crime and political militancy." (Hyslop 1999: 54) Furthermore, it produced a semi-skilled workforce, which was needed within the urban areas. In the environment of Apartheid, mis-education, as Biko calls it, was pointed at distancing the black and oppressed parts of the society from their origin. Biko saw it as evident that the mind of the oppressed was virtually overcrowded by the topics the white regime considered appropriate for the non-white people of South Africa. Their own history is washed away by a dictate of european white ideas of history, there are no black heroes, no black heroines, tradition is labeled barbarism. History, the black man's history is presented as a long lamentation. Biko wonders that it was "strangely enough, everybody has come to accept that the history of South Africa (...) starts in 1652." (Biko 1971e: 70)

These means were effectively used, to alienate the blacks from from their own self. Fanon defined this alienation as a negation of the own culture and the black self through seeing the self through the eyes of the white oppressor, connecting everything that is good with whiteness. He also calls this process *lactification*, the desire to become white, or whiter than one is. (Cf. Fanon [1952] 2008: 80) For Biko and the Black Consciousness Thought it was of severe importance, that the history of the blacks must be rewritten to gain confidence in the roots of ones own culture and upbringing. As Biko depicts, the colonialists were not just satisfied with dominating the people in the present, but in addition they took away the history of the people they subjected. Like in all other colonial contexts, so in South Africa, the past was declared *barbarism*. "No wonder the African child learns to hate his heritage in the days

of school.” (Biko 1970c: 29)

To the conscious black man or women in South Africa it is evident that one must start to feel opposed to his/her own heritage by the way the whites coined the past. As stated above, the deeply negative picture painted by the oppressor within the racist discourse keeps the black youth seeing a past he does not like, learning of a so called barbarian history he does not like, finding himself bound in a racial category, defined by the color of his skin, he is not able to leave. Here again the analysis of the body complex comes in, as the editors Fiffer and Fiffer have pinpointed in the introduction of their book "Body" (Fiffer/ Fiffer 1999), the problem of how we see ourselves, and how a person belonging to a discriminated group sees itself: “It may be our minds that govern us, our souls that guide us, but it is our bodies on which our histories are written, in which our stories are embedded.” (Fiffer/ Fiffer 1999: xi) But somehow, the body, as it is seen, is a consequence of historical construction. The whites, possessing not only the power of definition, but also a feeling of superiority that allows them to believe they do have the power to subjugate, mainly shape this construction. This is where a black boy finds himself, in a situation where everything connected with blackness is per se lower than the attributes connected to whiteness. It is there again, when the alienation to one's own blackness sets in and gets deepened.

Biko, in analyzing this process declared that the black man “tends to find solace only in close identification with the white society.” (Biko 1970c: 29) This refers to the quote at the beginning of this chapter. Here the black individual, who is made an object of white racism, starts to develop a so-called *double consciousness* (a term W.E.B DuBois, one of the leading Pan African philosophers of the US had coined in 1903), which arises out of the process of looking at one's self through someone else's eyes. DuBois speaks of the oppressed to which a true self-consciousness is denied because the dominant culture devalues them. (Cf. Warfield Rawls 2000: 243f)

As Biko also refers to Fanon, it is worth to quote Fanon in this context: “I did not create a meaning for myself; the meaning that was already there, waiting.” (Fanon 2008 [1952]: 113) What Fanon describes here, is not only the label of race, which bounds one to a certain scheme, but more exactly all the associations, stereotypes, values and limitations that come with the color of one's skin. It is here where Biko and the Black Consciousness see the opportunity for change. Black Consciousness had to be directed to the past, in seeking to rewrite the history of the blackman, which was vanished and connected with negative impressions and stereotypes. First there was the need to create a positive connection with one's blackness, rather than to seek an equal stance with the white, like the liberals of the country wanted to see it, because, as Biko said straight that “[a] people without a positive

history is like a vehicle without an engine.” (Biko 1970c: 29) Telling the true history of queendoms and kingdoms of Africa, describing heroes of the past, such as Shaka Zulu and Moeshoeshoe (the man who united the basotho people in Basutoland, resisting the boers, but in 1868 had to sign and declare it a british protectorate) and other nation-builder and resistance fighters who fought against the imperial invaders, was an important part of the Black Consciousness activity of regaining self respect of an oppressed people. (Cf. Biko 1971e: 70)

It is the issue that blackness is created by white society as the absolute otherness to the white man. So there is always an interconnection between white and black, for white constitutes black and other way round, they are in other words dependent on each other. It is the white man who creates the black man in a racist system of governance like Apartheid, or in general within the colonizing discourse. (Cf. Hook 2008: 121)

Biko, in searching a way out of these cages, created by others than one self, stated the following: “(...) Black Consciousness seeks to show the black people (...) not to be fooled by white society who have white-washed themselves and made white standards the yardstick by which even black people judge each other.” (Biko 1970c: 30)

Black Consciousness therefore seeks to eradicate the negative into the positive, to give a positive outlook to the black people, and to regain the definition.

“It is through the evolution of our genuine culture that our identity can be fully discovered.” (Biko 1971e: 70)

When the Bantu Education Act was passed in 1953, there was consistent revolt in South Africa. African students went on strike in almost every institution of higher education. These strikes did not stayed solely within the affected institutions, but broadened to black workers, who were not allowed to hold strikes, and a refusal to work was punished by fine or imprisonment. It was the intention of Apartheid government to install an educational system that held the black majority down. Verwoerd the minister of Native Affairs at that time brought the goal of the Bantu Education to the point in a statement he made in 1954.

*„There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour... Until now he has been subjected to a school system that drew him away from his own community and misled him by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he was not allowed to graze.“* (Verwoerd cit. in Rebusoajoang 1979: 229)

This statement makes things clearer to the extent of how the role of the “Bantu” was defined

for the future. He should remain in the state of inferiority. (Cf. Reagan 1987: 301ff)

In August 1976 the well-known Soweto Uprising happened in the Township Soweto, which was followed by a three-day General Strike among workers. The government's answer to this outburst was the slaughter of hundreds of peacefully protesting students. The student revolt broke out as the regimes' decision to introduce Afrikaans as the language of instruction in all schools. In the period since 1953, segregated schooling rested on two pillars, one was the "ideology of Apartheid" and the other the "mother tongue principle". The latter emphasized of the language of education on the native language, in the first 5 years of schooling. Additionally Afrikaans was taught. In secondary schools Afrikaans and English were made compulsory subjects and language of instruction in the senior years alongside the mother tongue. (Cf. Reagan 1987: 300, 304)

As the question of the body is an immanent target of the discourse of apartheid and racial discrimination, it is important to understand that also language is a defining matter of one's own growth and understanding of the world one lives in. Therefore constructing language policy along racial lines was one important mark to undergo the natural affinity one feels about the own background. (Cf. Ratele/ Shefer 2008: 99) Fanon, who analyzed the society in Martinique and the use of French language stated: "One of the most direct routes of racial alienation is through the adaption of the language of the oppressor." (Fanon 2008 [1952]: 114) Biko went deeper into the issue of language and the importance it had for the oppressed individual. When he was given evidence in the SASO/BPC trial in May 1976, before Soweto Uprising took place, arguing with the attorney Attwell about the reason why the BPC paper are written in English he stated:

*"You don't have to interpret it back into your language because your values as a person, whether you speak English or not, your values are affected by your culture, so your perceiving- you perceive a document in terms of your general make-up, in terms of your understanding and what I am saying to you is that not one black person looks at this thing in terms of the precise meaning of each word. After this has been read for instance, if you ask a black person how will whites- how were whites described in that document, he will not remember the precise words. He will just have a vague idea. This is all I am trying to say to you, about the meaning of language."* (Biko 1976a: 117)

What Biko tried to make clear is that the element of language is on the one hand limiting the way a non-native speaker can articulate himself, since it is not the mother tongue. And on the other hand the usage of English serves as a unifying language between all those different

speakers within the group of blacks. The first point Biko explains, is part of the feeling of being inferior. A black might be intelligent, but will always be less articulate than a native English or Afrikaans speaker. "You tend to think that it is not just a matter of language, you tend to tie up also with intelligence in a sense, you tend to feel that that guy is better equipped than you mentally." (Biko 1976a: 107) Biko also states, that Afrikaans as a language of communication between blacks would have never been considered, as it was the historical connection of oppression which goes with that language. Therefore the introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of education was an offence against the oppressed group as a broadening of oppression of the mind.

After the Soweto Uprising, the country was in a state of emergency. As Lou Turner and John Alan write in the analysis of Soweto and Steven Biko, in August 1976

*"scarcely a day (...) passed without police shooting down demonstrators somewhere, as township after township exploded. By September 2, 1976, the revolt had spread to the 'Coloured' masses (...), when 3,000 Coloured youth brought the conflict for the very first time directly to a white area itself- downtown Capetown."* (Turner/ Alan 1978: 10)

One interesting point one comes across by studying Steven Biko's selected writings "I Write What I Like", is in the preface to chapter 16 *"The Righteousness of our Strength"* a chapter consisting of an excerpt of Biko's evidence in the SASO-BPC Trial. The preface states:

*"Steve gave his evidence and was cross-examined during the whole first week of May 1976. The proceedings were fully reported in the Rand Daily Mail. Overnight Steve became the toast of the Soweto shebeens (...). Here at last was the authentic voice of the people, not afraid to say openly what all blacks think but are afraid to say."* They ask further *'Can the example of this one man's courage have inspired the boys and girls of Soweto to face death, as they so bravely did just six weeks later?'* (Stubbs 1978: 120f)

It is concluded that there might be a close association between these two events, as "courage is infectious". Biko also takes stance to the continuous upheavals within the community after and before Soweto, regarding the Bantu (mis) education, where young people were losing their patience as the government refused to change the educational sphere.

*"But the government responded in a high-handed fashion, assuming as they always have done that they were in a situation of total power. But here for once they met a*

*student group which was not prepared to be thrown around all the time. They decided to flex their muscles, and of course, the whole country responded (...)" (Biko n.y.: 147)*

What started as a student protest against the forced introduction of the oppressor's language emerged into a nationwide movement against oppression. Black workers held a three-day general strike to gain the right to withhold their labor. This strike sent shock waves through the economy. This events made clear, that the white system of Apartheid "was nakedly exposed, disclosing that its very existence was dependent on Black labour." (Turner/ Alan 1978: 10)

#### **2.2.6. Economic Oppression - 'Haves' vs. the 'Have Nots'**

Apartheid was a system based on the segregation of black and white, the economic exploitation of black labor was a main pillar on which the economic system relied on. Only a few of the total population of South African, the white group was to enjoy the privileges of a well functioning economy. The racial legislature created an unjust situation, by first creating a separate geographical space for the black population (starting already in 1913 and 1936 with the Land Acts, continuing in 1950 with the Urban Areas Act, which declared the cities "white only", no black settlement was allowed in the urban areas). The land policy allocated mostly land to the "non-white" population that was more difficult to cultivate, due to poor soil. The Apartheid regime tried to avoid that blacks were able to remain solely in subsistence economy, because this would have had a bad effect on the forthcoming of the economic system. It was decades before the NP came to power that the cornerstone of this kind of policy was laid. It was essential to get the masses of Africans into the system of wage labor to provide the work force that was needed in the mines and other industries, by creating a system of head tax for all males. It might be already at this point in history, that the state of poverty of the black population was created to put them into the place the white man had created for him: to serve the capitalistic system on the lowest ends.

As Biko analyzed, Apartheid has always been tied up with white supremacy, capitalist exploitation and deliberate oppression. One of the problems Biko lined out is that the black man already was kind of convinced of his own inabilities. "The logic behind white domination is to prepare the black man for the subservient role in his country." (Biko 1970c: 28) The essence of this statement leads to the conclusion that Biko also saw the economic exploitation of the black man as the basis or motivation for racist discrimination. This is of essential importance, for in literature the discourse of whether racialism was the essence of

capitalism or the other way round is still alive. There are authors who analyze the Apartheid system by means of race; others analyze it by means of class. As written in the chapter before on bantu education, the educational system was focusing on mental subordination as well. Blacks should only be taught things they would fit them into those positions Apartheid provided for them within society. (Cf. Biko 1970c: 28)

*“To a large extend the evil-doers have succeeded in producing at the output end of their machine a kind of black man who is man only in form. This is the extend to which the process of dehumanisation has advanced.”* (Biko 1970c: 28)

The reason for this dehumanization is the plain reduction of a man to labor power (as Marx already stated, this kind of alienation which separates a man from himself, by reducing him to his labor power therefore his work makes him an alienate form of himself. So in Apartheid there are two streams of alienation. One is through exploitation. The other through oppression due to the color of skin respectively race.

In Biko's words: “There is no doubt that the colour question in South African politics was originally introduced for economic reasons.” (Biko 1973: 88) The creation of Apartheid, as Biko concludes, served to create a barrier, where black and white would always stay far apart from each other and whites could enjoy all the privileges available within the country.

It might be relevant to give a short insight into the discourse about the correlation of capitalism and Apartheid, as South Africa had one of the most pervasive systems of racial discrimination and meanwhile a great economic (capitalist) growth. (Cf. Stasiulis 1980: 463) Within the academic discourse there are two main branches of analytical framework, of how to analyze the situation in South Africa On the other side there are the conventional political economists or liberals, who stand in the non-Marxist tradition. They believe in the freedom of the market conceptualized either in classical or neoliberal terms. On the other side there are the radical writers in the structuralist Marxist tradition, who analyze the situation in terms of capitalist accumulation. It is the conventional political economists and liberals' stance who argue that state interference in the economy was harmful to capitalist development. They argue that the “white man’s supremacy (ideology)” was prior, the economic development and the way of creating laws had to follow accordingly. The radical structuralists follow the conviction that economic growth was based on the pretended functionality of state policy, specifically in guaranteeing the supply of cheap black labor. In contrast to the liberal analysis, the structuralists do not see any important contradictions between the apartheid-legislature and the requirements of capitalist expansion. An essential distinction between those two

streams is that the structuralists aim to change the capitalistic system, for them the fight against apartheid is same way a fight for socialism. For the liberals, communism was distasteful, same way as apartheid. (Cf. Nattrass 1991: 655f)

The theoretical starting point of the radicals was to conceptualize the racial system in South Africa as generated and determined by the economic system. This economic system is and was based solely on cheap labor. In the 1960s Harold Wolpe determined the “cheap labor thesis”, in which he concludes that the purposes of institutionalization of Apartheid was the reproduction and control of cheap african labor force. Within this theory the analytical category refers rather to class than race to explain and analyze the history of Apartheid and its functioning. (Cf. Dubow, 1989: 51, Nattrass 1991: 666)

In 1972 Harold Wolpe published an article referring to Claude Meillassoux, a french Marxist anthropologist defining the politics of segregation as designed to “maintain the productive capacity of the pre-capitalist economies and the social system of the African societies in order to ensure that these societies provided portion of the means of reproduction of the migrant working class.” (Wolpe 1995[1972]: 62) The essence of this, or what it is aimed at, is maximizing the surplus of the possessing minority (capitalists). The determinants of racial policies of Apartheid were seen as rooted in the requirements of the economy, therefore the under-development of the reserves substantiated this argumentation. “According to this perspective, racist phenomena (ideology, antagonistic attitudes and discrimination) all originate with capitalism and are a necessity in the development of the capitalist system” (Stasiulis 1980: 466) For it is evident, that racist ideologies were required in the colonial period to ensure capitalist expansion. Cox for example argues, that it was the white ruling class, the exploiting class, who stigmatized some groups as inferior so that exploitation can be justified through racial ideology. (Cf. Stasiulis 1980: 466) Even if Cox and other radical writers were criticized for the linkage between capitalism and racism, the reality in South Africa made it evident that racism followed an idea of superiority, as a way and means of exploitation. As Wolpe argued, apartheid and capitalism were “historically contingent”, even if it is not likely to assume that the capitalist class is homogenous within South Africa. (Cf. Nattrass 1991: 674)

Coming back to how Steve Biko analyzed the situation of economic exploitation of the majority of South African population and the ramifications thereof, he states that over time and intensification of apartheid laws, “[a]ll in all the black man has become a shell, a shadow of man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity.” (Biko 1970c: 29) Biko problematized the issue of existing silence within the oppressed group. They remain in the stage of exploitation because the

options for change were not seen and were rare within Apartheid, which tried to do anything to avoid a conscientization of the black masses. It was therefore on the Black Consciousness Movement to awake the sleeping masses. Biko traced poverty back to the blackness of the skin, which is and was the matter of separation and subordination. Therefore he concludes, that the poor people in South Africa will always be black. He called upon the blacks to discover the prison they live in and to see that it is the system that locks up the wealth of the country in the hands of just a few whites. (Cf. Biko 1971e: 63)

*“Being part of an exploitative society in which we are often the direct objects of exploitation, we need to evolve a strategy towards our economic situation. We are aware that the blacks are still colonized even within the borders of South Africa. Their cheap labor has helped to make South Africa what it is today. Our money from the townships takes a one-way journey to white shops and white banks, and all we do in our lives is pay the white man either with labor or in coin. Capitalist exploitative tendencies, coupled with the overt arrogance of white racism, has conspired against us. Thus in South Africa now it is very expensive to be poor.”* (Biko 1973: 96)

Biko went on analyzing the system poor people have to go through, living outside town spending money on white transportation to come to work working for white employees. It is the poor who did not have electricity in the black areas and therefore had to use expensive and uneconomic fuel, like paraffin and coal; it is the poor who are governed by restrictive humiliating laws and therefore paying money for offending those laws; it is the poor who did not have any hospitals and therefore were paying a lot of money for private doctors; it is the poor who had to pay schoolbooks for their children, while whites got them for free. “It does not need to be said that it is the black people who are poor.” (Biko 1973: 97) Biko defined the system of exploitation and racism as one, which created a situation of *haves* versus *have-nots*, where whites have deliberately made *haves* and blacks *have-nots*. (Cf. Biko 1971c: 50)

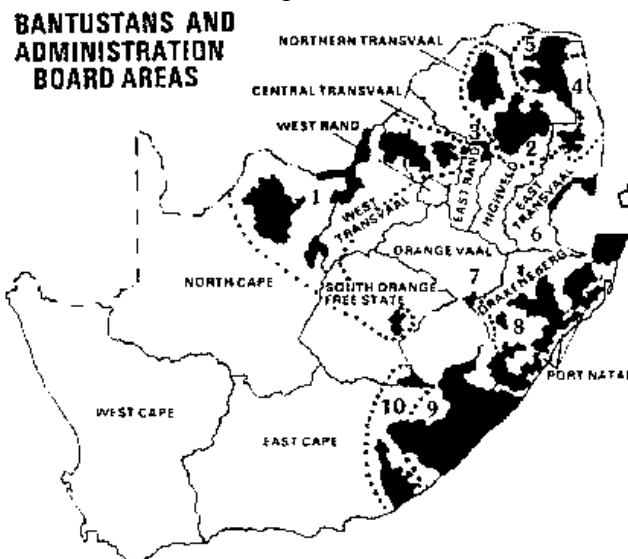
Biko explaining this thought the following: A white worker, even if he is the “most down-trodden”, still has a lot to lose, if the Apartheid system would collapse. This is the case because of laws and regulations, which put a white worker in a better position on a legal basis. Therefore he is at any time in a better place than black workers, protected by certain laws, like the job reservation laws, which are created to drive a wedge between white and black workers. Therefore, even if the white worker is economically nearest to the blacks, they are made superior, creating an anti-black attitude, which avoids an amalgamation between the working class. (Cf. Biko 1971c: 50) This highly intended division should distance the white

worker from the black worker. Biko points out “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.” (Biko 1971c: 50) This discovery makes the discussion of class/ race variant obligatory, as one can see that the determinant of race was weightier than the determinant of class. The Apartheid laws were pointed at making this difference, for a unity amongst workers of different races would mean to have a strong oppositional power, and in the long run, lead to the downfall of segregation.

The creation of the so-called Bantustans was also in order to divide and rule. The next chapter shall give an insight in what Biko calls the “tribal cocoons”. (Cf. Biko 1971e: 62)

### 2.2.7. Geographical Separation - Bantustans

Before analysing what Biko and BC thought about the Bantustans I give a short insight in the history of the creation of Bantustans as an element of territorial segregation. As in 1950 the Urban Areas Act was used to divide existing communities within the then declared “white areas” – and there was a separation not only according to racial lines but to ethnic lines – the main groups of whites, coloureds and natives was divided further into “tribal” elements. The white group was the only one, who remained a homogenous group before the law. There was severe opposition by the oppressed majority, opposing the government’s attempts to remove so-called “black spots” from the urban areas. “Despite the resistance by 1959, 170 group areas



were proclaimed, and a total of 12,971 ‘black spots’ were removed by 1957.” (Norval 1996: 131) Ten so-called Bantustans were enacted. The Bophuthatswana - for Tswana people (1), the Ciskei for Xhosa (2), the Transkei - also for Xhosa (3), Venda for VhaVenda (4), Gazankulu for Shangaan (5), KaNgwane for Swazi (6), the KwaNdebele for Ndebele (7), the KwaZulu for Zulu (8), Lebowa for the North Sotho (9) and Qwaqwa for South Sotho.

(Cf.: <http://hierographics.org/yourhistoryonline/map19BantustansofSouthAfrica.html>)

Both the Bantu Authorities Act of 1950 and the Bantu Education Act of 1953 were early attempts of redefining and divide Africans into a number of distinct ethnic groups. The system of control that was installed shall rely on the reinforcement of the authority of so-

called “tribal chiefs” in the reserves. The rural local administrations were acting in advisory capacity to the Minister of Native Affairs (then under Vorster). As the concept of territorial segregation dates back to 1913 when the first Native Land Act was adopted entrusting a certain territory to blacks, broadening the space in 1936 to an area of 13%, the rest of the land was dedicated to the whites. Verwoerd, labeling the “Separate Development” strategy, was criticized from nearly all camps (black opposition, liberals, and afrikaaner camp). It was an idea of a kind of fake “self determination”, according to which each race or further, each tribal entity should have the possibility to live and direct their (varying) cultural and traditional identity. It was under this pretext, that further division of the majority was provided. Biko will call this the “fragmentation of resistance”.

In the article “*Let’s Talk About Bantustans*” Biko articulates the standpoint why the Black Consciousness Movement is against the Bantustans idea: At first, it is obvious, that this so called solution was given from the people who have created the problem and more “the whole idea is made to appear as if for us, while working against our very existence.” (Biko n.y.: 82) He deepened this point explaining the geographical distribution. 87% of the land is secured for 20% of the population, the remaining 13% for the majority of 80% South Africans. He points out that there is no intact piece of land within the so-called Bantustan nations.

*“All of them are scattered little bits of the most unyielding soil. In each area the more productive bits are white-controlled islands in which white farms or other types of industry are situated.”* (Biko n.y.: 82)

Besides the geographical wasteland the reserves were placed on, economically the areas of Bantustans were the least developed and most unsuitable for agricultural or pastoral work. He claims that not one Bantustan has access to the sea; all mineral rights in the reserves were strictly reserved for the South African government. The operative budget, the government spent for the so-called “separate development” was very low. So all in all, what Biko saw, was, that the Bantustans were simply built up as a labor force supplier. One indicator for the accurateness of his point of view was the growing industries on the borders to the bantustans, where labor was exploited further, paying about one third less than the industries within the urban areas.

Besides geographical and economical imbalance/disadvantage/discrimination, “politically, the Bantustans are the greatest single fraud ever invented by white politicians.” (Biko n.y.: 83) This statement needs more evaluation. Biko stated that the intention behind this bantustans lied in the creation of a false sense of hope amongst black people; they do offer a new, but

false direction in the struggle. It also tried to compensate the critics in the outside world, pretending to be after a multinational theory. One problematic development was the strengthening of intertribal competition, which was kind of created and further promoted by legislation. This led to the fragmentation of the resistance of black people, and that is what Biko feared. (Biko n.y.: 83) As some blacks argued, they tried to carry on the fight against the oppression from within. But Biko counters that participation in the bantustan set-up is dangerously misleading, even if the argument for “playing from within” is, that there is no form of protest available for blacks in white South Africa anymore. Biko assumes that the white Apartheid apparatus did know exactly what the blacks wanted and that the strategy of bantustans was there to avoid real rebellion.

*“When they created these dummy platforms, these phoney telephones, they knew that some opportunists might want to use them to advance the black cause and hence they made all the arrangements to be able to control such 'ambitious natives' (Biko n.y.: 84f)*

Those “ambitious natives” were also part of the group of black people, who were considered to be not black but either non-white, as they are concerned about the premises of the white world instead of fighting against oppression and a liberation of their black brothers and sisters. What Biko did not accept is an attitude of cooperation with the one who brings you in the situation you are in, the one who is discriminating you, judging you by the color of your skin. One should not compromise in the interaction with those people. I think the following statement of Steve Biko makes his lack of understanding such a position very clear:

“But if you want to fight your enemy you do not accept from him the unloaded of his two guns and then challenge him for a duel.” (Biko n.y.: 85)

What Biko did not want to accept is the fact that some of the bantustan leaders can overlook the underlying intentions of the scheme, as some of the leaders would make some big leaders for the black people “if they had not decided to throw in their lot with the oppressors”. (Cf. Biko n.y.: 84) For the Black Consciousness thought it was evident, that there is nothing to achieve within the bantustan system, so all the leaders are in reality misled and misleading the black people around them. Biko condemned the manner in which white South Africa was using the speeches of black bantustan leaders such as Matanzima (Transkei) or Mangosuthu G. Buthelezi (KwaZulu) in order to create a picture of South Africa that is far from reality.

*“(…) by widely publicizing the pronouncements of the Bantustans leaders and attaching extremely liberal connotations to these pronouncements, the white press has confused*

*the outside world to think that in South Africa not only is there freedom of speech but that the Bantustan leaders are actively plotting for the ousting of the white government without the government taking any action.” (Biko n.y.: 85)*

It is a two-shed trap, as by articulating the criticism the bantustan leaders had with the system, the outside world would receive a picture of a South Africa where internal criticism is accepted, which actually was not so. It freed Apartheid South Africa of the picture of being a regime, a police state, which it actually was until 1994, and maybe much longer. If you did not speak out at all and still arranged yourself with the bantustan idea, you seemed to be ok with the system the white regime was creating with the bantustans. It was important to not grant the idea of bantustans any form of respectability, so participating in it was somehow giving a kind of sanction to the idea. Biko argued against being a piece of the white man's puzzle. It is on blacks to create and act self-reliant for a system, where equality would be sustained in the end. (Cf. Biko n.y.: 146)

*“At this stage of our history we cannot have our struggle being tribalised through the creation of Zulu, Xhosa and Tswana politicians by the system. These tribal cocoons called 'homelands' are nothing else but sophisticated concentration camps where black people must constantly pressurise the bantustan leaders to pull out to the political cul-de-sac that has been created for us by the system.” (Biko n.y.: 86)*

Regarding the tribalization of the blacks, the Black People's Convention's motto was “One Azania, One Nation” and this is the premise under which the organizations are working. It is important that the black majority was not divided by some kind of intrinsic policy of the NP, like “tribalization” was. Biko stated that this kind of division acted against that unity of the black people, which was one of the most important features in fighting against white racism and the Apartheid structure. As he points out:

*“We are oppressed not as individuals, not as Zulus, Xhosas, Vendas or Indians. We are oppressed because we are black. We must use that very concept to unite ourselves and to respond as a cohesive group.” (Biko 1973: 97)*

Above all, the blacks should never forget that South Africa belongs to them, and not to some european colonizers or so-called settlers. Concluding therefore, the Black Consciousness Movement rejected the idea of Bantustans. What they wanted was “a total accommodation of

our interests in the total country, not in some portion of it.” (Biko 1976b: 134)

### **2.2.8. 'Our Strategy for Liberation' - Achieving the Vision of a 'True Humanity'**

*„The first step therefore is to make the black man come to himself, to pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth. This is what we mean by an inward looking process. This is the definition of 'Black Consciousness'. (Biko 1970c: 29)*

In an interview in 1977, the last interview Biko gave before his death later published under the title of “Our Strategy for Liberation” Biko sums up the gaining force of Black Consciousness thought and politics and took stance on the important issues that characterized the way the BCM had gone since its beginnings. This chapter should sum up the pillars that were elementary for the ultimate liberation of the black people within South Africa, taking the interview as a basis for further evaluation, as it was the latest statement on these issues by Bantu Stephen Biko himself. The interview shows his position from the perspective of already having lived through a lot since the emergence of Black Consciousness. There will be some differences to texts and opinions of the early Biko.

Black Consciousness, as analyzed above, was aiming at the liberation of the mind of the oppressed people of South Africa. The conscientization of the individual was the most important challenge and mission for the Black Consciousness Movement. Biko defined the mind of the oppressed as the most important guardian for a true liberation. Black Consciousness thought was rooted in the awareness of where the black man was standing within society. In South Africa it is the black man finding himself exploited and discriminated in a white racist capitalist structure. It is therefore of primary importance to make the black man see and recognize his position to make him realize his frame of action and therefore to create hope for a brighter future of self-definition and change. Biko saw it as inevitable to spread the consciousness of being oppressed, by talking about the circumstances of oppression, by making references to the conditions of the black man and the conditions in which the black man lives.

*“We try to get blacks in conscientization to grapple realistically with their problems (...) to develop what one might call an awareness, a physical awareness of their*

*situation (...) to be able to analyze it, and provide answers for themselves.” (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 33)*

The individual man or woman is the micro-place of change; the starting point for subsequent change on the macro-level, which is the consciousness of *all* black people. Black Consciousness aimed at changing and rejecting the heteronomy of what the black man was in the eye of the whites, making way for self-definition. It is the process from being an object of oppression and racism to become a subject determined only by one's own thoughts. It was inevitable to reject the connotations and prejudices that came with the color of the skin. To make evident that the construct the white man had created was not reality, but a way of suppressing and weakening generations of generations and therefore not a fixed state but changeable. The feeling of inferiority was connected with the color of one's skin. The ascription that this feeling is part of defining and influencing the picture of the self, was important to be recognized and consciously rejected. Only then a real liberation of the mind could begin.

In this context the redefinition of the black man's history was important, as well as changing the language of the system. One example of linguistic change was to replace the term *non-white* with the term *black*, which was definitely a rejection of the system's diction and a refusal to make *whiteness* the optimum of all things. *Non-white* was seen as a negation of oneself and therefore part of the process of alienation. So in the recreation of a new setting, the black man should not be provided with a history, which was told by the europeans painting a dark picture (barbarism, superstition, Africa the dark continent, uncivilized and evil) but should provide a bright and true history of the past, where one can be proud of one's own heritage. The roots of real self-esteem lie in the respect for and knowledge of the past and a sense of awareness and even pride of what was gained and achieved. That the europeans vanished all what was good in Africa, and in South Africa especially, served only the perpetuation of power and the feeling of superiority of the white race.

The first important step on the organizational basis to a self-definition of the black man was to distance himself from the paternalism of white liberals within the oppositional ranks. Biko describes, that after the early 60s when the ANC and PAC were banned and a lot of leading activists were imprisoned or killed, there was a kind of vacuum in black leadership, to the extent that blacks didn't participate in the articulation of their own aspirations. It was strange but evident that even the (political) opposition to the government's actions against blacks came from white organizations, student groups like NUSAS, the Liberal Party and the Progressive Party. Biko remembers entering the University in Durban in 1966:

*“(...) there was some kind of anomaly in this situation, where whites were in fact the main participants in our oppression and at the same time the main participants in the opposition to that oppression.” (Biko n.y.: 144)*

The participation of blacks was missing everywhere, due to an inability to wash away the fear, created by the government through its violent means to oppress any kind of resistance amongst blacks. Biko mentions the Terrorism Act (see also Chapter 1) in this regard, according to which most political opponents were detained. The policy of Apartheid was always one, which was driven by fear; better lock 80 people than miss the three, who might be dangerous to the stability of the system. “This was also the basis of the arrest of about 5,000 during the so-called 'Poqo' raids of 1963.” (Biko 1971f: 79)

The system of fear created by the government and its security system, which was more likely to be force-oriented than intelligence-oriented, as Biko calls it, is due to the immanent fear the white government is feeling. Biko analyzed this system of fear as a tripartite one. There is first, the white minority fearing the black majority, through the experience of severe racism and police harassment, second blacks fearing whites and, third, the white government fearing blacks to overhaul the system. It is a kind of circle where one fear is feeding the other. So the system of fear must be overcome to act against the oppressive force of the government. So Black Consciousness argued that changes could only occur, when the black man starts to formulate their aspirations, starting to create programs for the black man by the black man, without the leadership of whites. The main element to start anew was to overcome what was created throughout the last hundreds of years: “a psychological feeling of inferiority” which was deliberately cultivated by the system of discrimination. What was the feeling of inferiority which bound the black to inactivity, was, same way, the “feeling of superiority” which the white man had to overcome, to finally see an equal output at last. (Cf. Biko 1971f: 79f)

According to Biko, the first step to overcome the alienation of the black man on organizational grounds, was to avoid working within multi-racial organizations “which were by far white organizations because of the overwhelming number of white students at universities in this country.” (Biko n.y.: 144) There was the problem of interests within these organizations, mostly laying emphasis on topics affecting the white students, as well as the ability by white students to articulate more properly than the blacks, which again was reflecting the inferior/superior complex within these micro-structure of an organization. The unequal quantity of members, with more white members than black, made an outvoting of

blacks easy. So there was not much equality in the reality of multi-racial groups.

All of these facts made it an evident move for the black students around Biko to step away from paternalisation and to form an independent black orientated and black defined student body, the SASO (South African Students Organization) in 1968, which was based on Black Consciousness. (Cf. Biko n.y.: 144f) Biko reminds the listener that due to the immanent threat blacks connected with political participation the universities were not able to produce useful leadership to the black people. He traces this situation back to the fact that “everybody found it more comfortable to lose himself in a particular profession, to make money” than to involve in politics. (Biko n.y.: 145) Since then, Biko stated, black students started to prepare themselves to exercise a certain leading role within the black community in different places.

*“Through our political articulation of the aspirations of black people, many black people have come to appreciate the need to stand up and be counted against the system. There is far more political talk now, far more political debate and far more condemnation of the system from average black people than there has ever been since possibly 1960 and before.”* (Biko n.y.: 145)

Biko uses the example of the educational system and the student revolts, where (young) people were demanding their rights and arguing against a certain system of discrimination and inequity, whereas the government’s only answer was to strengthen those laws and using violence to spread terror amongst those who were willing to stand up for their believes. (Cf. Biko n.y.: 147)

The next point towards the attainment of an egalitarian society for the whole of Azania Biko made, is the essence of a united whole. It is not only that the oppressed people must form a unity, but Biko also advocates a political unity, where ANC, PAC and the Black Consciousness movement decide to form a liberation group, as their power in unity would have been way stronger than in division. As after the Soweto uprisings in 1976, all Black Consciousness organizations had been banned, homes and offices of the SASO and BPC members had been raided and most leading persons were detained, the Azanian People’s Organization (AZAPO) aiming at the establishment of a non-racial and socialist workers republic was created in 1978 (The AZAPO guidelines and aims will be discussed in a later chapter). The detainees were held under the Terrorism Act, Section 6(1), which permits indefinite isolation in detention. The Terrorism Act was one of the centerpieces of Apartheid’s security legislation, to prevent any mass upheaval in the country. (Cf. Arnold 1979: xxiv) On the question of non-violence Biko took a concrete stance, when he argued, that Black

Consciousness and the BPC always stood for the non-violent solution of the problem of inequality. He explains that it is in the hands of the National Party to decide in which direction the fight against Apartheid would lead. If the government was more likely to use violence against the opposition than talking to the black people, the reaction would be that of violence, because the people were willing to risk their lives then. Biko foresaw a battle between white and black in case the government is not able to see and accept that the black masses will not hush any more, to achieve what is necessary for their own liberation. As the outbursts since Soweto has caused a lot of fear within white society, the government was realizing that their power was at risk. (Cf. Biko n.y.: 151)

But Biko also is telling about the vast numbers of blacks who did not see a solution through non-violent means anymore. Still Black Consciousness tried to explore non-violent options within the country. In regard to the question of achieving an egalitarian society, which the Black Consciousness approach was aiming at, means that were directed at a socialist system rather than a capitalistic system, Biko stated the following:

*“(...) I think there is no running away from the fact that now in South Africa there is such an ill distribution of wealth that any form of political freedom which does not touch on the proper distribution of wealth will be meaningless. The whites have locked up within a small minority of themselves the greatest proportion of the country’s wealth. If we have a mere change of face of those in governing position what is likely to happen is that black people will continue to be poor, and you will see a few blacks filtering through into the so-called bourgeoisie. Our society will be run almost as of yesterday. So for a meaningful change to appear there needs to be an attempt at reorganising the whole economic policies within this particular country.”* (Biko n.y.: 149)

This quote shows very accurately where the Black Consciousness thought was heading to, i.e. the changing of a whole system of society. It argues that capitalism and the economic exploitation of the masses, necessary to provide further accumulation of wealth, was the underlying system of oppression. So it was not only necessary to change the racial situation to reach equality, but over all the vanishing of existing structures of economy and the redistribution of resources, such as wealth and land. A mere changing of “color” would not change the profound system of inequality that was cultivated for hundreds of years. The whole system needed to be recreated to lay more focus on humanity instead of money accumulation in the hand of the possessing few.

As Biko explained, blacks are not concerned, once having gained power, to loose it again, as

they are in a majority position anyway. They did not think of discriminating against whites or making special laws to save the power position as the white government did. The National Party did always live in fear of being overthrown by the oppressed majority, so they needed several laws to protect their position at the top of society; this is also why they needed to apply severe violence against demonstrators or political opponents. Biko knew. Blacks were not focusing on taking revenge for what the white man has done to the black man. The blacks were focusing on themselves, focusing on their own liberation from oppression. The essence of Black Consciousness was to bring the message of self-respect back to the black community, to the vast majority of oppressed people, and to not reduce the black opposition to university sites only. It was important to reach a broad portion of society to create a basis for the envisaged vision of overall liberation. In the early 1970s black groups came into being (like the Black People's Convention or the Black Allied workers Union, as well as the Black Community Programs such as Zanempilo hospital in Kingwilliamstown). (Cf. Beinart 2001: 236) As Biko evaluated:

*„Hence what is necessary as a prelude to anything else that may come is a very strong grass-roots build-up of black consciousness such that blacks can learn to assert themselves and stake their rightful claim.“* (Biko 1970b: 21)

So one important thing is to create a community-based scope of action, where black people are involved in creation and which are dedicated to the black people's needs. Biko examined several times that the black people's money is floating back to the white community. As the system is based on the enrichment of whites, it is not easy to circumvent the support of the white system. By using white-owned transport, buying in white-owned stores and so on, the blacks are somehow supporting the system. Therefore it is inevitable to create own “institutions” and to “examine the possibilities of establishing business co-operatives whose interests will be ploughed back into the community”. (Biko 1973: 97) Organizational development was important to channel the forces. “The last step in Black Consciousness is to broaden the base of our operation. One of the basic tenets of Black Consciousness is totality of involvement.” (Biko 1973: 97)

This meant that all blacks must unify. All kinds of fragmentation, as promoted by the bantustan theory to split up the forces of the oppressed people, must be rejected, for only unity can bring the needed strength. As Biko points out this major necessity of acting as one group as the “are oppressed not as individuals, not as Zulus, Xhosas, Vendas or Indians. We are oppressed because we are black. We must use this very concept to unite ourselves and to

respond as a cohesive group.” (Biko 1973: 97) Biko tries to specify that the option the apartheid system offers, are only focusing of getting people fighting separately for certain so-called freedoms and gains. The individual has to refuse to fight within the system. It has to be remembered that by joining the system “we are well on the way towards selling our souls”. (Biko 1971: 39) In this sense, the black opposition should be able to conquer the evil doings of the white racial system in the end, by becoming a fearless and demanding oppositional force, where the government will no longer be able to avoid the black people’s needs and wants for liberation. The “totality of involvement”, Biko is calling upon, needs a relentless conviction in the cause of liberating the people. Biko explained this dedication as the following:

*“In a true bid for change we have to take off our coats, be prepared to lose our comfort and security, our jobs and positions of prestige, and our families, for just as it is true that 'leadership and security are basically incompatible', a struggle without casualties is no struggle.”* (Biko 1973: 97)

Biko was quoting Stokely Carmichael, black activist in the civil rights movement of the 60s in the USA and husband of south african singer Miriam Makeba. In the end, what the liberation struggle shall lead to, is a non-racial society, where man is just man for his own sake. Biko calls it “a quest for the true humanity”.

*“We see a complete non-racial society. We don’t believe, for instance, in the so-called guarantees for minority rights, because guaranteeing minority rights implies recognition of portions of the community on a race basis. We believe that in our country there shall be no minority, there shall be no majority, just the people. And those will have the same political rights before the law. So in a sense it will be a completely non-racial egalitarian society.”* (Biko n.y.: 150)

Biko explains that Black Consciousness is aiming at achieving an open society. He is asked in the court during the BPC-SASO trial in 1974, what he means by the phrase “the open society”. He explains it to the judge:

*“We regard an open society as one which fulfils all the three points I have mentioned just now [one man, one vote, no reference to color]. Where there can be free participation, in the economic, social and (...) equal opportunity and so on.”* (Biko

1976b: 122)

And it is the vanguard movement that was leading the revolution and the people to change. For the Black Consciousness movement the importance laid at hand, that after overhauling Apartheid, there should never be made any kind of differences between people before the law. People should just be people, not blacks, not coloreds, not whites, just equal members of a society, where everybody should have the same rights and liabilities. One man, one vote, as everyone should have the same power regardless of color.

*“In time we shall be in a position to bestow upon South Africa the greatest gift possible- a more human face.”* (Biko 1973: 98)

### 3. The Organization of the Black Consciousness Movement

„Despite the radicalism, interracial political activity was limited and NUSAS conferences were dominated by the large and articulate white delegations.“ (Beinart 2001: 235) This fact and the feeling of being patronized by white liberals led to the foundation of SASO in 1968 under the leadership and presidency of Bantu Stephen Biko.

#### 3.1. SASO – The South African Student Organization

As Steve recalled in the BPC trial, SASO came into existence after the UCM (University Christian Movement) Conference in Stutterheim, in July 1968, following a NUSAS conference at Wits, where the 72-hour clause was discussed. Furthermore, the situation and position of black students within those organizations was put into broad discussion. The group which decided to put further another conference on that issue in December was not representative of the various Student Representative Councils (SRCs), so it was necessary to speak to the SRCs about the idea, “in fact really we just appointed a convener from a particular campus to write to the various SRC’s and to convey the ideas taken and formed at that particular meeting.” (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 11) At a conference in Marian Hill, Biko explained

*“the interests of Black students were being fully served within the given multiracial student organizations, and the finding was that of course these organizations were inadequate to fully satisfy the interests of the Black students- both interests in the educational sphere and the life of the Black students on the Black campus, and also in a sense in the political expression that comes from student organizations.”* (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 12)

They drafted a guideline on the aims and decided to name the black student body South African Student Organization. At the first conference of SASO in early July 1969, at Turfloop University, the draft was adopted as the Constitution of SASO. Basic policy questions were discussed, such as the question of how to deal with the existing student organizations. Biko said that there was a lot of debate about this matter. Some members were for a completely break; others wanted to retain some links. It was decided to not affiliate with NUSAS but to recognize it as the national student organization. Elections were held, Biko was elected as the

first president, accompanied by vice president Pat Matshaka.

At the stage of beginning SASO was more or less a trade union of black students, the affiliation of campuses was missing, so an efficient policy could not be taken up at this point, because the collaboration with students from various campuses was not given at that time. Between the first and the second conference several campuses affiliated with SASO (for example Turfloop, U.N.B., Ngoya and Fort Hare). (Cf. Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 14) “On the one hand NUSAS felt very threatened by the emergence of SASO, and thought that they should try and block its growth on the various campuses (...)” (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 16) The ongoing confrontation between NUSAS and SASO led to a withdrawal of recognizing NUSAS as the national body. SASO was not recognized by NUSAS anyway. The refusal to use the term “non-white” showed the conscious approach of SASO, to recognize this term as a negation of their being. Biko explained:

*“They [the students] were be stated as 'non something', which implied that the standard was something and they were not that particular standard. They felt that a positive view of life, which I commensurate with the build-up of one's dignity and confidence, should be contained in a description which you accept (...) ”* (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 16)

So they replaced the term “non-white” with “black”, reclaiming a new sense of unity and liberation. (Cf. Gibson 1988: 5) As Biko explained further, they decided to bring the philosophy they are following not only to the black students but also to the black community, through sharing their knowledge with existing black organizations. “I think we already begun to realize and accept that our attitude, which constitutes Black Consciousness, was a unique approach in the country, and that this is what we wanted to share with other organizations.” (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 18)

So SASO additionally wanted to coordinate the works of the organizations, to make their work more effective. To put this into reality they decided to set up a series of meetings with those organizations, to promote the thought and to enhance the situation of the black man in the country. Some organizations Biko mentioned were IDAMASA, the Interdenominational African Ministers Association of South Africa; the AICA, the African Independent Churches Association; the AFECA, which is the Association for the Educational and Cultural Advancement of the People of South Africa. Teacher organizations were also included. One of the things SASO set up to (re)-gain a deeper consciousness was the implementation of two days to remember the killings of people, who were fighting for liberation and for the black man's cause. This was the remembrance of the Sharpeville killings in 1960, March 21, where

69 people died and about 200 were wounded due to protesting against the carrying of reference books. The second one was called the Compassion Day. Biko stated that there were two main reasons behind the holding of these events “the first one being factual and the other one being psychological”. (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 19) So it was first the remembrance of self-less deaths for the black mans cause. The second, the psychological one, was to not forget and therefore not let the government forget about the white man’s crime and police brutality on a everyday basis, which might lead to a stricter attitude regarding police brutality, which was definitely not the case.

Being asked, if hostility against whites was encouraged, Biko denied and indicated that the sense for unity is stronger than the grieve for the recent aspect of history and went on the following:

*“In a way they tended to relate it to a Biblical sacrifice, you know, to say that the people died for us, to recognize the fact that we have got to dedicate ourselves to our struggle, so to speak.”* (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 20)

Compassion day was to remember situations of suffering that the blacks were confronted with. Biko explained it by a specific example that of the families who have been forcibly moved from the Northern Cape, North Western Cape and Western Cape, settled in Dimbasa, being left there with nearly nothing. The motivation behind holding Compassion Day was therefore “to get students to develop a social conscience, to see themselves as a part of the communities (...)” (Biko cit. in Woods 1978: 160) feeling united with all other oppressed people, to know their story and their struggle for life and to direct their energies towards problem-solving. (Cf. Biko cit. in Woods 1978: 160f)

It is important to have a look at the SASO guidelines to understand which standpoint Black Consciousness is playing within this organization, and vice versa what role SASO played in spreading the message. In the BPC trial Biko had to answer a lot of questions about the constitution and the motives of SASO, therefore I will use the original “SASO Policy Manifesto” (1971) and the interrogation in May 1976 carried out by David Soggot, the senior council of defense, where Biko was called to the witness stand. (Cf. Arnold 1979: xiii)

*“1. SASO is a Black Student Organization working for the liberation of the Black man first from psychological oppression by themselves through inferiority complex and secondly from the physical one accruing out of living in a White racist society.”* (SASO 1971: 2)

Soggot asks Biko in which way this point of the manifest links up to the concept of Black Consciousness, Biko first refers to the fact that the underlying cause was the liberation of the black man from his situation of oppression. Biko differentiated between external oppression, which comes from outside like “institutionalized machinery”, laws that restrict the black man from doing certain things, “through heavy work conditions, through poor pay, through very difficult living conditions, through poor education (...)”(Biko 1976a: 116), all things external to him. And the second form of oppression lies within the black man himself, through a kind of alienation, which makes him reject himself. This rejection arises out of an experience that connects all things positive with whiteness and white society. Biko explained that this state of feeling inferior starts to develop in the early years, when kids start to reject their history, their culture and the color of their skin. This feeling of incompleteness is “carried through to adulthood”. (Cf. Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 22f) Biko gives an example of a black man going to work, living far outside the city centre, confronted with overcrowded trains “by the time a guy gets to work he has really been through a mill. He gets to work, there is no peace either at work.” (Biko in Arnold 1979: 23) These two areas of oppression (outside and inside), Black Consciousness and SASO tried to eradicate, as shown in point one of the manifest. The upliftment and liberation of the oppressed being, within a racially divided system, is the aim of action.

Point number two in the manifesto states the following:

*“2. We define Black People as those who are by law or tradition, politically, economically and socially discriminated against as a group in South African society and identifying themselves as a unit in the struggle towards the realization of their aspiration.” (SASO 1971: 2)*

By taking up the term black “we reject the term Non-White and take upon ourselves the right to call ourselves what we think we are (...)” (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 26) Rejecting all other alternatives, such as “Africans to Kaffirs to Bantu to Non-Whites”, they chose the term black as most accommodating to the cause of self-definition.

*“ 3. SASO believes:*

- a) South Africa is a country where Black and White live and shall continue to live together*
- b) That the Whiteman must be made aware that one is either part of the solution*

*or part of the problem.*

*c) That, in this context, because of the privileges accorded to them by legislation and because of their continual maintenance of an oppressive regime, Whites have defined themselves as part of the problem.*

*d) That, therefore, we believe that in all matters relating to the struggle towards realizing our aspirations, Whites must be excluded,*

*e) That this attitude must not be interpreted by Blacks to imply “anti-Whitism” but merely a more positive way of attaining a normal situation in South Africa,*

*f) That in pursuit of this direction, therefore, personal contact with Whites, though it should not be legislated against, must be discouraged, especially where it tends to militate against the beliefs we hold dear. “ (SASO 1971: 2)*

As Biko explained, it was not their intention to see white people leaving the country. SASO knows and respects the plurality of society; the aim is to maintain “a society in which everybody shall contribute proportionally”, not as it was state of the art during Apartheid, where only the white minority decided the rules of the “game played”. (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 48)

In point (b) and (c) Biko explained the unbalanced distribution of wealth and power that makes the evolvement of the Black Consciousness Movement necessary. He made clear, that it is the whites that enjoy all the privileges, which society and politics have to offer. So everyone enjoying privileges on behalf of the exploited group of society is part of the problem, by accepting the whole power structure. It is on anyone to decide, whether to live within the system, or to oppose it. Point (c) tries to show that, no matter how willingly you put yourself against the system, as a white man you were born into privilege. Even if you were at the bottom line of white society, you were still better off than a black man on the upper level of black society, because legislation provided for this situation. For example only whites were allowed to vote constituting an electorate elite.

*“And it is that government which maintains legal provision legal provisions that creates problems for Black people- problems of oppression, problems of poverty, problems of deprivation, and problems of self-alienation (...).” (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 50)*

This is one argument leading further to (d) explaining why the black students refused to let the white liberals talk for them, act for them and argue under the pretext of fighting for equality. It is on the oppressed people to free themselves, talk for themselves, act and argue

for themselves.

On (e) Biko explained that accordingly to the power imbalance and the things stated before it is not expedient to work side by side with people who were part of the oppressor's group. It was an experienced skepticism, arguing that they could never be able to emphasize the oppression felt by the black man. Regarding (f) Biko stated "we did not intend making ourselves a policeman organization over the formation of friendships between one individual and another." (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 51) It was not the point to make any regulation regarding the lives of the members, but on the political arena, it was necessary to be in accordance with the SASO and Black Consciousness ideas of self-reliance.

*"4 (a) SASO upholds the concept of Black Consciousness and the drive towards black awareness as the most logical and significant means of ridding ourselves of the shackles that bind us to perpetual servitude." (SASO 1971: 2)*

This statement sums up which part Black Consciousness occupied within SASO, one can say it was the philosophical and mental foundation of the organization, which was heading for action within the black community, and to spread the awareness of oppressed people.

*In "4 (b) SASO defined Black Consciousness as follows:*

- (i) BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS is an attitude of mind, a way of life*
- (ii) The basic tenet of Black Consciousness is that the Blackman must reject all value system that seeks to make him a foreigner in the country of his birth and reduce his basic human dignity*
- (iii) The Blackman must build up his own value systems; see himself as self-defined and not as defined by others.*
- (iv) The concept of Black Consciousness implies the awareness by Black people of the power they wield as a group, both economically and politically and hence group cohesion and solidarity are important facets of Black Consciousness.*
- (v) BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS will always be enhanced by the totality of involvement of the oppressed people, hence the message of Black Consciousness has to be spread to reach all sections of Black community." (SASO 1971: 2)*

Confronted with 4 (b / ii) Biko explained that the capitalist system introduced by the europeans is differing severely to the form of communal economy of the past african societies. He tried to make clear that the basic tenets of society were totally different, there

was nothing like land ownership, everybody within the community had a right to use land. “Now we are advocating Black Communalism” (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 61) a concept that was still under constant debate within the BPC. The so-called African Socialism was not what it claimed to be.

*“We would be developing our standpoint from this side, which is the platform from which we are going to talk to people who hold dear a free enterprise system, and out of these two clearly you know the synthesis will come.”* (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 63)

The elimination of capitalism is important to Black Consciousness thought, but regarding the circumstances, Biko tried to explain it in a different way, so that the judge and the advocate would understand it too. He explained that capitalism in itself is based on the unequal distribution of wealth, therefore only a few possess the whole wealth. Biko explained further:

*“The one is strongly capitalist, the other says, We are Black Communalist in approach or we are African Socialists or we believe in sharing. Now, you have got to synthesize that (...). This is all part of the values, the beliefs, the policies that have got to be synthesized in the bargaining process between Black and White in this country.”* (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 63)

So in reaching the balance within society, which meant to overcome racism and the economic structure underlying this racism, it was important for the oppressed group to find a way of uniting within the group of the oppressed, and thereby gain power to act against the immanent racism and exploitation as *one* group. In the manifest SASO formulates this step in the following way:

*“4 c SASO accepts the premise that before the Black people should join the open society they should first close their ranks to form themselves into a solid group, to oppose the definite racism that is meted out by the White society, to work out their direction clearly and bargain from a position of strength. SASO believes that a truly open society can only be achieved by Blacks.”* (SASO 1971: 2f)

Biko tried to articulate what “solid group” means. He concluded that white society was a group, a closed group holding privileges. The few liberals offending Apartheid have not grown in number, the construct of racism was flourishing and the white kids were growing up

with rejecting blacks and, getting used to the circumstances they grow up in, became adult whites who did not see anything wrong in the racial system. Biko analyses that to “crack this cocoon (...) to get Whites away from the concept of racism, away from the concept of monopolizing privileges (...)”, it is essential to form a unified group and to articulate what they, as the oppressed group, want. (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 68) It was time to get heard by the white man, the white government had to be confronted by what the majority of South Africa was thinking. “We are beginning to say this is what we are thinking.” (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 69) Biko stated that it might take some twenty years of dialogue between blacks and whites, but no matter how long it would take, they were convinced that any white society on the continent of Africa would finally have to accommodate black thinking.

It is important to mention that the emergency of SASO was at first welcomed by the state as a manifestation of separate development, which the government dearly promoted. They therefore provided SASO with some official recognition on the black campuses. But as a speech by an important SASO leader in 1972 led to massive student expulsions and student strikes on all black campuses, the government recognized the threat to the persisting order emanating from SASO and their believes.

It is difficult to tell the overall membership of SASO but it claimed to have about 4,000 subscribers to its regularly published newsletters. SASO organized many conferences where Black Consciousness thought was discussed, always well attended. Gail Gerhart concluded that SASO was reaching a level of political education and consciousness and that its diffusion was unlike any other organization before. (Cf. Gerhart cit. in Fatton 1986: 80) To further this proliferation to other levels than the university, a number of organizations were formed to spread to the community, such as the Black People’s Convention. (Cf. Davis/O’Meara/Dlamini 1988: 304f) The period between 1972 and 1975 was a time where BC spread from student based to community based and became the prevalent political influence on the so called “black petty bourgeoisie”, its influence spread far beyond its membership. (Davis/O’Meara/Dlamini 1988: 305) In this regard Fatton (1986) concluded that the BCM developed a sophisticated analysis of social classes and therefore provided a deep insight in the political, social and economic circumstances of South Africa.

### **3.2. BPC - The Black People’s Convention**

The Black People’s Convention was formed in 1972 as a political wing of the Black Consciousness Movement, Biko becoming its first president. It was then when Biko decided to step away from university and student politics. Wilson writes in the Biography about

Steven Biko that a lot of black students had to decide whether they put all their energy in the political fight against the system or if they dedicate their energy to their studies. Biko chose the more difficult road, the political one. He was dismissed from medical school the same year. (Cf. Wilson 2011: 56) I now want to discuss the program of the BPC, taking into account one source of basic documents and the history of BPC edited by Sipho Buthelezi, former secretary General of the BPC, and I additionally use Biko's statements given at the interrogation in 1976.

Buthelezi writes that the formation of the Black People's Convention marked a turning point in the history of black liberation struggle, as it served as a national political movement of the black people in the country at the time of severe pressure by the government. (Cf. Buthelezi n.y.: 2) As stated before, after the banning of the ANC and PAC in the 1960s there existed a kind of political vacuum within the black community. A silence that was to be broken by a vanguard movement as the BC turned out to be. The birth of BPC was preceded by a number of conferences and meetings by black organizations of the country. At the first conference held in Bloemfontein on April 24<sup>th</sup> in 1971, the intensification of dialogue and collaboration between existing groups throughout the nation was decided. As Buthelezi points out, "co-operation and co-ordination" was the dominant theme of this first gathering. At the end of the conference it was decided that the representatives of the organizations elect a committee who should prepare the involvement of a broader number of people for the next meeting.

A two-day conference followed in August the same year in Pietermaritzburg, attended by over 100 representatives of various organizations. The aspiration of forming a national confederate organization was discussed, and steps were to be taken to reach that aspiration. One important statement was that the organization would not operate within government created platforms such as the Bantustans. The proposed organization shall devote itself to re-present the political opinion of the oppressed people. It should promote community development programs on education, socio-economic and cultural aspects to strengthen the grass roots of the black communities. A new committee was elected given a period of four month to draw a draft constitution and to call an assembly for the establishment of a national confederate organization that shall involve all black organizations. In December the same year in Soweto the Black People's Convention was founded. In January 1972 the BPC released a press statement announcing the formation of a "national black political movement under the banner of Black Consciousness". (Cf. Buthelezi n.y.: 3)

The press statement elucidate that any community has an inalienable right to have a political voice to articulate. This point reminds of the Human Rights Declaration of 1948, where it is stated that any person has a right to speak his mind and therefore to articulate one's own

political expressions. In South Africa there was no respect for oppositional persuasion, but to the contrary, it was harshly acted against any activity of resistance to the existing order. The second point of the BPC constitution defined the members of the “black community” within South Africa, it comprised africans, coloreds and indians, all individuals who are barred from any form of self-representation. After a long time of political vacuum the BPC filled the position of a political agent to represent the black community’s political aspirations. In the statement they also described their aim as seeking unity and solidarity amongst black people working for a liberation and emancipation from both psychological and physical oppression. It shall rest on the black community, shall create programs, which serve the black community and their aspirations and aims of liberation. At the end of the struggle an egalitarian society was envisaged, where social justice and economic equability was guaranteed to all. (Cf. Buthelezi n.y.: 5)

It was an essential task for the BPC to popularize and implement the philosophy of Black Consciousness and black solidarity amongst the oppressed masses.

*“Thus, Black Consciousness became a revolutionary theory. Its immediate task was to make possible this complete transformation of the white system and this liberation of the black people. (...) Black Consciousness was in fact the antithetical stage in the long and difficult process of dialectic liberation. As such it contradicted the thesis-white racism- and yet, remained conditioned by white racism itself.”* (Fatton 1986: 76)

The inaugural conference took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> July 1972 in Pietermaritzburg. (Cf. Buthelezi n.y.: 4) In the following years till its banning the BPC adopted several important resolutions to its policy. The newly installed National Executive Committee (NEC) was charged with the task to encourage closer collaboration amongst all workers’ organizations to achieve the goal of forming a broad-based national Workers Council, as the black working class was recognized as a social class essential for the struggle, so their mobilization was a priority to the BPC. In respect of international relationships, BPC was quite clear that they just can have contact with those states and international organizations which were free from colonial or imperialist powers and were in sympathy with the cause of the black people. Foreign investors were harshly criticized, and the BPC followed the line that a total withdrawal from foreign investment must be striven for. (Cf. Buthelezi n.y.: 6f)

The political consolidation was not an easy task. In 1973 more than 100 BPC, SASO and other black advocates were banned and house arrested under the Suppression of Communism Act. Biko was one of them, being banned in February that year, pressuring him to leave

Durban and stay in King Williamstown, his hometown. (Cf. Stubbs 1978: 154) In late 1974 BPC and SASO launched a rally, attended by thousands of blacks, to celebrate and show solidarity with the revolution going on in Mozambique. (Cf. Buthelezi n.y.: 9) Biko himself was not in favor of this rally because he knew that it would be risky to undergo the prohibition of the rally by the government. The same day 40 BPC and SASO leaders were arrested throughout the country. This event was followed by the BPC-SASO trial, which took several years, making history as being one of the longest political trials in Apartheid South Africa. (Cf. Biko 1976: 99f, Buthelezi n.y.: 9) Nine people were charged under the Terrorism Act for conspiracy against the state, intending to bring about revolutionary change in South Africa. There was the allegation of building a black power bloc, which might be not controllable, reaching out to declare war on the white government. Biko tried to wipe out this argument by the following explanation:

*“ If I [may] contest the first point, My Lord, I don’t think the means [that] are used for conscientizing have that effect at all of making-antagonizing Black people, or of creating antagonism within Black people. On the contrary, what I would say is that our methods do in fact give hope. I think it must be taken in the context of a situation where Black people don’t have any hope, don’t see any way ahead. They are just defeated persons. (...) Now, when you speak to them, conscientizing them, what you are in fact doing is to rekindle their hope. (...) You are giving him some kind of home within a group called the Black People’s Convention; if you are in trouble go to the Black People’s Convention. (...) And in fact I think you are giving them some kind of psychotherapy to move away from being a defeated society to being a hopeful society, and you are not dealing out some kind of juggernaut that is going to get out of hand. When you are speaking of Black Solidarity all you are talking about really is just that feeling that you are speaking for the majority of Blacks.” (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 73f)*

### **3.3. BCP - The Black Community Programmes**

In August 1972 Biko joined Ben Khoapa as a staff member of the Black Community programmes. The Black Community Programmes aimed to generate programs of self-help and the development of skills especially in the rural areas. Biko coordinated the youth leadership trainings, which shall empower and develop the ability to decide and to see things

critical and to develop a prospect. Those trainings reached out to conscientize the youth in and outside school, addressing also those who dropped out of school at an early age due to economic reasons. One main influence were the writings of Paulo Freire and his “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” with the methodology to recognize teaching as a political act, “directly related to production, health, social conditions” and so on, he defined teaching and learning as one. Biko and other BC members attended workshops over months. (Cf. Wilson 2011: 57ff.) BCP applied for funding at the Ford Foundation, to produce an annual review over the conditions and situation of the “black nation”, researched and produced by blacks. Biko organized the first issue of the Black Review, he then was the editor, but by the time it was printed in 1973, Biko had been banned and this banning prevented him from all sorts of publications, whether written or spoken. So there was no way but to put the Review under another editor’s name, which was Khoapa, but it was dedicated to Biko and his colleague Mafuna, who was also banned. (Cf. Wilson 2011: 60)

In a letter to Reverend Aelred Stubbs, dated on December 4<sup>th</sup> 1973, Biko described how he copes with the situation of being banned and that he is heavily engaged into the work of the BCP. “I have developed a strong liking for the kind of work done by the Black Community Programmes. One admits that there are many unfulfilled missions to work on.” (Biko cit in Stubbs 1978: 166) Biko was bothered, because the security police was eager to see him breaking his ban and he was worried of more obstacles to occur in the programs. During the first year of BCP, work in King Williamstown was prosperous. Steve was able to organize a disused church in the middle of King, there was space for the offices, for administrative, research and publishing usages, as well as a show-room where products from different local home industries, e.g. the leatherwork of the cotton industry of Njwaxa, could be showed. The most ambitious project was the creation of the Zanempilo Healthcenter under the direction of Mampela Ramphela. Biko wrote the following statement, explaining why the establishment of this center was of severe importance to the black community:

*“The creation of Zanempilo Community Health Clinic is part of a wider and more general health project introduced by the Black Community Programmes in the Eastern Cape. The aim of this project is to provide the Black Community with essential services of medical nature, both curative and preventative, which are often sadly lacking especially in the 'resettlement areas'.” (Biko cit in Stubbs 1978: 167)*

It was a grass-root manifestation, creating a sphere without state intervention or control. Biko was amazed by the progress the programmes like the Njwaxa Home Industry or the Clinic

made, as it gave the people the feeling of creating a better future for themselves. In these programs the emphasis laid on the doing and not the talking. Money was raised through personal funding, which was an important part of showing the independence of the Black Consciousness organizations. Even if the local bantustan government of the Ciskei tried to harass the creation of the project, the Zanempilo Community Health Centre opened on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 1975 under the conduct of Dr. Mamphela Ramphele. Aelred Stubbs remembers of Zanempilo that “[i]t was, more than any other institution or project, the incarnate symbol of Black Consciousness.” (Stubbs 1978: 169) This was because it expressed what Black Consciousness sought to do, the creation of a feeling of capability to care for oneself, to rely upon oneself. Zanempilo gave evidence of a progress of the mind of the people, as it was black-designed, black-build, black-served, it was totally a community driven program serving the needs of the black community in the situation of everyday Apartheid.

Referring to a question in the BPC-SASO trial Biko gives the following overview over the aims of BCP and the role of conscientization:

*“The approach of BCP is three-pronged. First we engage in the form of direct community development projects which are in the form of clinics, churches and so on. And then we engage in what we call home industries- these are economic projects in rural areas mainly, sometimes in urban areas as well, which are in the form of cottage industries, producing one article or the other. And the main purpose here is to give employment to people, and also to offer some kind of technical training in that particular skill, so that they can themselves go and live off that skill if they like. And thirdly we do leadership-training courses. (...) It is essentially to answer to that problem (...) that the Black man is a defeated being who finds it very difficult to lift himself up by his bootstrings. He is alienated- alienated from himself, from his friends, and from society in general. He is made all the time concerned with matters of existence, concerned with tomorrow, you know (...). Now, we felt that we must attempt to defeat and break this kind of attitude and to instill once more a sense of human dignity within the Black man. So what we did was to design various types of programs, present these to the Black community with an obvious illustration that these are done by Black people for the sole purpose of uplifting the Black community.” (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 112f)*

Biko pointed out that it was not about talking but about leading by example. So that the people shall question themselves and find answers to themselves. It was important for the

BCP to pass over the projects to the community after a while to assure the ongoing and effectiveness of the programs.

Biko gave an example of a crèche in Kingwilliamstown, the “Ginsberg Creche” which was reinstalled for the purpose of mothers, who could not go to work due to their toddlers or babies. So the crèche was aiming to give the mothers more space and to avoid the older children to miss school, as in most cases they had to look after the smaller children instead of attending school when the mother needed to work. After a short time of existence the crèche was handed over to the community. “It is not only to provide facilities, but also to encourage them to live on their own efforts. So that they have now to subsidize the creche more than we; they do.” (Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 114) So it was on the Black Community Programmes to transcribe the word into action and to create consciousness and trust in ones own worthiness through action.

### **3.4. Emergence of Black Theology in South Africa – Collaboration with the Church**

Fatton (1986) describes that the emergence of Black Theology was serving as a “revolutionary ethic” for the emancipation of the black masses. It concentrated on the original Christian thought. It was to accomplish the need of the oppressed population in South Africa. Therefore it was a liberating theological thought identifying with the oppressed. In the respective of Black Theology, God was a fighting God, not a passive one. This point is evident, since Christianity in the colonial context, was always connected with a racist and capitalist point of view. The church and its white God was always there to legitimize colonization and racism. So the Black Theology refused and condemned the perverted Christianity, which was abused to put white people in power and legitimize their conquest and submission over continents and people. In the South African context Christianity had a severe impact on oppressing black people. Fatton (1986) refers to Basil Moore, who explained that the church was an important advocate in rejecting and defining everything african as heathen and superstition. The history and believe system of the black man was vanished. The churches and its missionaries had a lot impact on the proliferation and dominance of racist thought and therefore were a prerequisite to make way for the institutionalized racism of Apartheid South Africa. Black people were made to think that only the white God and the white (capitalistic) value system can give them salvation. (Cf. Fatton 1986: 107f)

Biko once said that the white men brought the concept of hell to South Africa. There was

nothing like that in the traditional african value system. There was one God, and worshipping of that creator was intrinsic in everyday life. It was God who lived in the creation all around. Biko refers to those Christians only going to church one day of the week to worship their God. In the former value system God was felt and praised continually, not in a conservative and stringent manner. (Cf. Biko 1973: 93)

The concept of Black Theology included a criticism of western values, like individualism, and therefore of the western model of Christianity, where there is a clear-cut dichotomy between the profane and the sacred (secular and religious). Before colonial indoctrination, spirituality was embedded in the everyday experience of blacks and therefore became one important element in the Black Consciousness Movement's fight for the liberation of the black man. In the BPC/SASO trial Biko stated it was evident that within the black community the question of God allowing the suffering of black people culminated in the question of what God's intention was for the black people. (Cf. Biko cit. in Arnold 1979: 118)

Biko analyzed Black Theology, as a way to bring back God to the black man and to bring back the thought of Christianity to the reality of the situation in Apartheid South Africa.

*“This is an important aspect of Black Consciousness, for quite a large proportion of black people in South Africa are Christians still swimming in a mire of confusion – the aftermath of the missionary approach. It is the duty of all black priests and ministers of religion to save Christianity by adopting Black Theology's approach and thereby once more uniting the black man with his God.”* (Biko 1973: 94)

### **3.5. The End of the Black Consciousness Organizations, Bann 1977**

On 25 September 1974, BPC and SASO together with other black groups launched the “Viva Frelimo” rally at Curries Fountain, Durban, to show solidarity with the freedom struggle in Mozambique and the victory of the FRELIMO party. This demonstration was attended by thousands of black workers, black men and women. The government prohibited the rally. On the day of the rally more than 40 BPC and SASO leaders were arrested all over the country, the executive arm of the white system raided the offices of the organizations and put many more people in jail. The BPC-SASO trial, also called the “Terrorism Trial” lasted for a long period of nearly two years. 9 leaders were charged under the Terrorism Act (see also: 3.3.). The trial lasted until the 21<sup>st</sup> of December 1976. At the end of the trial, where Biko gave main

evidence, the accused were sentenced to imprisonment on Robben Island, three for 6 years, the other 6 for five years. (Cf. Buthelezi n.y.: 10)

6 month before the trial ended, on June 16 1976, the Soweto uprising took place, leading to estimated 700 deaths and to the arrest of hundreds of Black Consciousness activists. Most of the leadership was incarcerated or killed. (Cf. Arnold 1979: xxvi) “On October 19, 1977, the Internal Security Act banned SASO, BPC, and all the Black Consciousness Movement organizations.” (Fatton 1986: 121) One month earlier, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 1977, security police murdered Bantu Stephen Biko. He was the forty-fourth black man to die in detention. (Cf. Fatton 1986: 121) He had been arrested after returning from Cape Town, once again, breaking his banning order, to see Neville Alexander, who was released but put under house arrest after serving a 10-year punishment on Robben Island. Due to the circumstances and being under 24/ 7 surveillance, Alexander refused to see Biko, but the message did not get across to Biko when he was still in King Williamstown. So he, together with a colleague Peter Jones who drove the car (as Biko had no license) went all the way to Cape Town. After waiting for hours to change Alexander’s mind without success, they drove back, in the early morning 18<sup>th</sup> of August. They got into a roadblock and were soon after arrested, brought to Port Elizabeth Security Police headquarter and detained under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act. (Cf. Wilson 2011: 129ff.)

Biko’s death was officially declared on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September. The cause of his death was fatal brain damage due to severe beating. The racist apartheid state firstly claimed that Biko died of hunger strike. There were many detainees of the opposition dying wether of slipping on soap, falling down stairs, hanging themselves, or hunger themselves to death. Everyone who knew Biko knew he would have never give up his life that way.

*“What happened in Room 619 happened countless times. The security laws allowed detainees to be held in terror without any protection. Doctors, magistrates and others were willing to compromise the integrity of their professions in the shadow of these laws (...)”* (Wilson 2011: 140)

The death of Bantu Stephen Biko opened a big gap within the black community and unleashed nation wide grief and rage of anger and international condemnation. The spiritual leader of the Black Consciousness Movement was buried in King Williamstown, the literature tells, a crowd between 15 to 20,000 mourners were there to show Biko their condolences, thousands of others were prevented by police action from reaching King Williamstown. Thirteen western states sent senior diplomatic representatives to pay respect. Even if Biko

claimed political action by western states (i.e. the USA) during his lifetime, but never was heard properly, they seemed to find it appropriate to show their condolences. (Cf. Arnold 1979: xxiv, Buthelezi n.y.: 10)

Biko gave an interview some month before his death, which was not printed until January 1978; it makes the last chapter of the collected writings of “I Write What I Like”. I want to let Biko himself speak of what might have happened on the day of his death. As one can embrace, Biko was a fighter, a rebel. He stood for what he believed in and he was ready to choose death instead of letting the oppressor dictate the rules. He had a mind full of pride. And he was ready to die for the cause he lived and fought for.

*“I was talking to this policeman, and I told him, 'If you want us to make any progress, the best thing is for us to talk. Don't try any form of rough stuff, because it just won't work.' And this is absolutely true also. For I just couldn't see what they could do to me which would make me all of a sudden soften to them. If they talk to me, well I'm bound to be affected by them as human beings. But the moment they adopt rough stuff, they are imprinting in my mind that they are police. And I only have one form of dealing with police, and that's to be as unhelpful as possible. (...) 'I will kill you.' He meant to intimidate. And my answer was: 'How long is it going to take you?' (...) My attitude is, I'm not going to allow them to carry out their program faithfully. If they want to beat me five times, they can only do so on condition that I allow them to beat me five times. (...) It's a fight. So if they had meant to give me so much of a beating, and not more, my idea is to make them go beyond what they wanted to give me and to give back as much as I can give so that it becomes an uncontrollable thing. You see the one problem this guy had with me: he couldn't really fight with me because it meant he must hit back, like a man. But he was given instructions, you see, on how to hit, and now these instructions were no longer applying because it was a fight. So he had to withdraw and get more instructions. So I said to them, 'Listen, if you guys want to do this your way, you have got to handcuff me and bind my feet together, so that I can't respond. If you allow me to respond, I'm certainly going to respond. And I'm afraid you may have to kill me in the process even if it's not your intention.'” (Biko 1977: 152f)*

It was one month later that the racist regime banned all black organizations, starting with SASO, BPC, BCP and all smaller organizations for example the Black Women's Federation, the Zimele Trust Fund etc. The leadership was arrested and jailed, or put under ban. This was a time of severe violent repression and the system wanted to vanish every spark of black

resistance. The violent actions against black resistance became part of the “Total Strategy” of the white state proclaimed by General Malan in the “Defense White Paper” in 1977. As Fatton describes it, force was to be used to put pressure on the opposition, to create a scope to transform the terms of white supremacy from above. (Cf. Fatton 1986: 122f)

## 4. Reception

In the following chapter I want to give a short insight into the reception of Bantu Stephen Biko’s life and philosophy in temporary South Africa, or broader, since his death 35 years ago. Many projects were started keeping the legacy of this conscious young man alive, to prevent that the philosophy of Black Consciousness gets lost as part of history. In the used sources and literature, it becomes evident that Black Consciousness is discussed on a scientific basis, but more than this, it is still part of everyday life. As one will see later on, the chosen articles (dating from 2005 to 2013) discuss mainly the same topics. I present the pictures the authors are painting of the temporary South Africa and the problems and obstacles relating to the essence of Black Consciousness thought nowadays.

One uniting element is the immanent critic of the capitalist system, and therefore the greed for material wealth within all parts of the community. It is evident that all are bothered with the status quo and the insufficient changes made within the country’s economic and political spheres since the official end of Apartheid in 1994. Many critiques exist regarding the since-then ruling ANC and the perpetuation of a system leaning and depending on the masses of poor within the country, still functioning alongside the same means of the past, cheap labor provided by masses of unemployed people. There is still insufficient investment in educational institutions, hospitals and housing for the majority of the people, which underlines the priority given to the economic sector, still dominating the politics and the structuring of the society. South Africa remains the neoliberal capitalist system that it has grown into during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

I will start the chapter with an analysis of songs pervading many musical genres, remembering Bantu Stephen Biko and his message. It astonishes how many people were and are still touched by Biko’s philosophy and his active fight for the liberation of the mind. Still he is mentioned alongside powerful black leaders of the past and persons who, by their life or death, became symbols of (black) resistance, from Malcom X, Marcus Mosiah Garvey to Amadou Diallo. The lyrics and the contexts in which the legend and message of Biko is carried forward, witnesses the extend to which Biko's legacy is still alive and well.

In the second part I will discuss the present day discourse about Biko and Black Consciousness. It is contemporary South Africa where the message of the liberation of the mind to forward the liberation of a whole society is still of severe importance, but, went out of focus within the ruling elite and the black middle class, who are willing to sacrifice the well being of the majority for the gain of wealth and power.

In the documentary “Dear Mandela” Mazwi Nzimande - who is part of the community movement Abahlali baseMjondolo which fights for proper housing and against evictions - states that they “agree the Apartheid is over, but there’s a new Apartheid system that is operating in South Africa, and that Apartheid is between the rich and the poor”. (Cf. Nzimande in Dear Mandela: 2012)

The last part of the chapter will deal with the practical steps undertaken in keeping the legend Biko alive. Compared to the second part, which mainly deals with the theoretical discourse, this part will deal with the measurements to give the message of Black Consciousness and the “father of Black Consciousness” a powerful output in the everyday life of the people in present day South Africa to further change.

## **4.1. Biko in Songs - Musical Reception**

As already stated, the reception of Steve Biko within popular music is not limited to just one genre. It is evident that the genre of Roots Reggae brought out a lot of songs, where Steve Biko is mentioned (4.1.1.). There are simple melodically formations without words dealing with Biko (the title is referring to him). The next genre, where there are a lot of songs to discover is Hip Hop. This is not surprising because Hip Hop in its origin deals with injustices and confronts the social and capitalist order. There is one section I call “Anglo- American Pop”. And another section will be subsumed as “African”, as there are plenty of african singers (from Africa and the african Diaspora) making reference to Biko.

### **4.1.1. Biko in Reggae**

One tune was released by the jamaican Roots Reggae interpret Tappa Zukie (born David Sinclair) shortly after Biko was killed, with the title “Tribute to Steve Biko” (1978).

I want to discuss this song at length, as its lyrics provides a deep understanding of the greatness of Biko’s message and life struggle.

Steel Pulse, a Roots Reggae group of three (David Hinds, Selwyn Brown and Sidney Mills)

from Birmingham, England, formed in 1975, also released a tune for and about Biko. Steel Pulse was always dedicated to the issue of racism and willing to affront it frankly. Their first song released in 1978 was the single “Ku Klux Klan” which appeared also on their first album “Handsworth Revolution” and manifested the political engagement and attachment the group engaged with. Their song about Steve Biko is named “Biko’s Kindred Lament” and was released in 1979 on the album “Tribute to the Martyrs”. The song that gave the album the name also refers to Biko, as will be analyzed later.

Groundation, a seven-head-strong reggae band from California, founded in 1998, has two tunes referring to Biko. The first called „Silver Tongue Show“, was released in 2002 on the „Hebron Gate“ album, the second, „Suffer the Right“ was published in 2004 on the „We Free Again“ album.

One song from Alpha Blondy “Bory Samory”, released in 1984 makes reference to Biko and other freedom fighters that died or were killed on their mission. Alpha Blondy, born as Seydou Koné in Côte d’Ivoire, is one of the continent’s greatest Reggae singers. I do not discuss Alpha Blondy in the category of african interprets, because he is an african Reggae singer.

**Tappa Zukie (1978) "Tribute to Steve Biko"**

Sorrow lead up to pain

Blessed are they, that keeps a commandment  
And blessed is the man who will get up and fight  
Blessed is the man who will fight for him right  
Blessed is the man who will get up and fight  
Blessed is the man who will fight for him right

For they shouldn't kill Biko  
Man a say, them shouldn't Kill Biko

Biko was a great likkle leader  
Biko never troubled no one  
Biko always teach us to love and live  
Biko never teach us to fight  
But sameway they killed Marcus Garvey,  
Sameway they killed Martin Luther King,  
Sameway they killed Paul Bogle  
And sameway them gonna kill every greater one that  
come.

But they shouldn't kill Biko, Lord! God!  
Say, them shouldnt kill Biko, wooh!  
They shouldn't kill Biko, Lord! God!  
Say, them shouldn't kill Biko.

A.F.U. Natty join up the cue  
A.F.U. Natty join up the cue  
For we going on a secret mission  
Well I say, we going on a secret mission.  
A.F.U. African Unity, you know?  
Biko! Leader of our Black Organisation  
You know?  
In South Africa.  
Sorrows and Pain

Blessed are they, that keeps a commandment  
And blessed is the man who will get up and fight  
Blessed is the man who seek fi truth and rights

Blessed is the man who will get up and fight

Blessed is the man who seek fi truth and rights  
For they shouldn't kill Biko  
No, they shouldn't Kill Biko, Lord!

Biko never troubled no one  
Dat man was a righteous man  
They killed him inna prison, Lord!  
Say they kill him inna prison  
Afraid him woulda get I and I wiser, you know  
And teach I and I more about Babylon  
you know  
And dem corruptiveness but tell me,  
where has one go, one come

For they can't stop I and I, no  
say they cyan't stop I and I, Lord!  
They shouldn't kill Biko, oooh  
They shouldn't kill Biko, Lord  
Weeping and wailing all over di land  
Weeping and wailing all over di land

School children are poor, seh  
The workers are poor, seh  
The big people poor, seh  
And everyone poor, seh  
Everyone mourning  
Everyone feel it

The whole African unity feel it  
As I would tell you, surel  
Say they shouldn't kill Biko, Lord!  
Say they shouldn't kill Biko, God!  
Sorrows and pain,  
that's all I'n'I got in our vain, you knowthe man upon  
fight

They have the right to the tree of life!

**Steel Pulse (1979) – “Biko’s Kindred Lament”:**

The night Steve Biko died I  
cried and I cried  
The night Steve Biko died I  
cried and I cried  
Biko, O, Steve Biko died still in chains  
Biko, O, Steve Biko died still in chains.  
Biko died in chains, moaned for you  
Biko died in chains, moaned for you, yeh.

Blame South African security,  
A no suicide he was’nt insane.  
It was not for him to live in Rome, No  
Still they would’nt leave him alone.  
Yeh yeh yeh,  
They provoke him, they arrest him  
They took him life away,  
but can’t take him soul,  
Then they drug and ill-treat him,  
till they kill him,  
And they claim suicide.

I’ll never forgive I’ll always remember,  
Not, not only not only I no,  
But papa brothers sisters too, Yeh, yeh  
Him spirit they can’t control  
Him spirit they can’t man-trol  
Cannot be bought nor sold  
Freedom increase one-hundred fold.

The system something’s got to be done,  
Straight away,  
The system of weakheart emontion  
They’ve got to pay  
The system of backra corruption  
They’ve got to pay  
The system is destroying my nation  
The system.....kill him

O, O Jah Jah, O Jah Jah,  
Take them where life sweeter,  
Send a Moses to set them Free.  
Pharoah’s army won’t let them be,  
From the beginning he knew  
he’d meet his end  
Yes my friend  
They’ll keep on ruling, all hours Jah  
Jah send  
I’ll tell you again  
Dem take him life - Dem take him soul,  
Him spirit they can’t control  
Cannot be bought nor sold  
Freedom increases one hundred fold  
Freedom increases one hundred  
Freedom

The system, the system, the system,  
the sy, a, a,  
Somethings got to done,  
The system where black man get no, get no,  
Get no recoginition.  
The system of colour partition  
The system shoul be yanked from creation  
The system kill him.

O, O Jah Jah, O Jah Jah,  
Take him where life sweeter  
Send a Moses. Send a Moses.  
Pharoahs army won’t let them be,  
Biko died in chains Yeh  
Moans for you  
Biko died in chains all are moaning  
Moans for you Yeh eh eh eh.....  
Biko, O, O, O  
Steve Biko died still in chains  
Biko, O, O, O  
Steve Biko died still in chains  
Still, still in chains  
Still, still in chains  
Cha-ains.....

What makes Tappa Zukie and Steel Pulse's lyrics to be my point of departure, is their quite deep sense for the matter. For it is Tappa Zukie who concludes that the system, which in the south african context, is a capitalist racist regime, should have never killed this great leader, but it did, as he explained because the government was „afraid him woulda get I and I wiser (...) and teach I and I more about Babylon (...) and them corruptiveness“.

This paragraph is striking, because it makes evident the power Biko had to make people aware and conscious of the exploitative system they lived in. One must know that “I and I” is the term for the divine within each man and women. Using “I and I” (instead of “you and me”) should draw a unifying connection between the “you and the I”. So “I and I” stands for all people. Babylon is the term describing a system, which make people suffer instead of lifting them up. Nowadays the term Babylon is used for all the tribulations the world as a whole is faced with. Capitalistic exploitation of the many for the benefit of a few is just one example of it. War, pollution, consumer and eating behavior, confusion through media and advertisement and so on, are part of Babylon, a system which is destined to fall, because it will kill itself in the end.

In “Biko's Kindred Lament” Steel Pulse sing, “the system of the weakheart emotion, they've got to pay. The system of backra [bankrupt] corruption, they've got to pay”. Steve Biko was a threat to the existing Apartheid order, as people who refused to be part of their own exploitation are not useful in being exploited. It also explains in short, that it was Biko's concern to educate the masses to think critically and to understand the mechanisms of Apartheid. The “Tribute to Biko” shows also the non-violent way, Biko did take. “Biko never troubled no one, Biko always teach us to love and live, Biko never teach us to fight”. As I stated in the introduction of this chapter, Biko is mentioned alongside great people, who were also either killed or died during their struggle, as, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey, Paul Bogle. Again in “Tribute to the Martyrs” after singing about Marcus Garvey and his Black Star Liner, Steel Pulse state, “Hey is wha happen to Biko? Biko died in detention - What? 1977 South Africa”, going along with the Black Panthers Freedom Fighters, Martin Luther Kind and Malcom X. All those men and women were important to the black man's struggle all over the world, and they remained symbols of active fight against a perpetuated system of inequality and discrimination.

Steel Pulse's song “Biko's Kindred Lament” starts with the personal statement, that the message of the death of Steve Biko made them cry, making clear, that it is a personal loss, which all the people who recognized Biko as a symbol of hope and strength, all over the world, had to deal with. They give a deeper insight in the cause of Biko's death and the harassment he had to face during lifetime as “they provoke him, they arrest him, they took

him life away, but can't take him soul, then they drug him and ill-treat him, and they kill him, and they claim suicide". They make clear, Biko would have never killed himself, and that they might kill his body, but his spirit and his message could never be silenced.

The californian band *Groundation* mentions Biko in two songs, "Suffer the Right" and "Silver Tongue Show". In "Suffer the Right" they sing about the people fighting for a cause, "(...) I want them to remember (...) I Steven Biko (...) I want them to see, that the glory of their hearts was put inside them for a reason (...)". In "Silver Tongue Show" they state the following:

"Spit fire as Judas come  
thinking them can destroy the words of Bantu  
Biko  
oh man, de were filling up our heads with  
visions  
While it's our souls 'pon which they baragain  
Oh the crisis de man light, the fittest de man  
fight  
They'll never know that for this here price  
we shall give our lives to themselves  
Now did ya see dem ride into the war  
Conquered us so long  
they hold their head up high"

In history a lot of revolutionary black men were killed, because they threatened the existing system of white supremacy. Biko was one of them. He challenged the knowledge, he challenged the oppressed group to rethink what they were taught, to open their eyes and see their power to refuse to serve in the white defined system. Biko's work in conscientizing the black man is always an overall theme in the music.

Alpha Blondy's song "Bory Samory", means in translation "Flee Samory". It is dealing with Samory Touré, who was the founder of the Wassoulou Empire, resisting French rule, until he was captured in 1898. The song is dealing with all the black spiritual and political leaders who were killed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. So he sings:

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| “Flee, flee Samory<br>The whites are arriving<br>They have sworn to kill you<br><br>Flee Samory (...)<br>Samory Toure, they killed you<br>Almany Toure, they killed you<br>Ba Bemba, they killed you<br>Lumumba, they killed you<br>Tafawa Balewa, they killed you<br>Biaka Boda, they killed you | Haile Selassie, they killed you<br>Marcus Garvey, they killed you<br>Malcom X, they killed you<br>Martin Luther King, they killed you<br>Steve Biko, they killed you<br>Diallo Telli, they killed you<br>Sekou Toure, they killed you<br>Anour Al Sadate, they killed you<br>Amilcal Cabral, they killed you<br>Kwame N’Krumah they killed you<br><br>What harm have we done you?” |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

It is important to understand that what Alpha Blondy is singing about, is the rule of white supremacy, which either killed the men cited in his song physically, or spiritually, by making their mission of freeing the oppressed people, impossible. "What harm have we done to you?" The harm of speaking up against an oppressive system, of articulating an answer against the ruling white supremacy and showing a vision of hope where equality is the aim to be achieved.

#### 4.1.2. Biko in Hip Hop

There are different interprets within the Hip Hop genre mentioning Biko in their songs.

A Tribe Called Quest did a song in 1993 named “Steve Biko”; Wyclef Jean released a song in 1999, “Diallo”, mentioning Biko. Rootsword released a song “Against the Grain”, Dead Prez is taking reference to Biko in “I’m An African” released in 2000. Earth, Wind and Fire, an american band (more soul than hip hop), mentions "the father of BC" in their song “Revolution”, released in 1997. A.N.G.A.Z.E.T.U, a hip-hop trio from Kenya, has released a tune “Steve Biko” in 2010.

In the song “Steve Biko”, A Tribe Called Quest is dealing with the dimension of Biko’s concept of mental freedom, “stir it up, Steve Biko” is the refrain.

|                                                            |                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| “Okay<br>I am recognizing that the voice inside my<br>head | So just clean out all of your ears<br>these are my views and you will find that<br>we revolutionize over the kick and the snare |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| is urging me to be myself but never follow<br>someone else<br>Because opinions are like voices<br>we all have a different kind | The ghetto vocalist is on a state-wide tear<br>Soon to be the continent and then the<br>freakin globe<br>Theres room for it all as we mingle at the ball“ |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

It is said here that it is important to not follow the message you get, but to allow yourself to listen to your own message. It is here where the aspect of self-reliance and self-love comes in. Biko always appealed to reconnect with the own inner wisdom to recognize the own worth, instead of listening to the discours where black people are discriminated and reduced to lower beings or lower positions within society. Everyone who feels his own value will change the bigger picture and free the oppressed people from their situation: "Soon to be the continent and then the freaking globe".

In “Diallo” Wyclef Jean, former member of the Fugees, alongside Lauryn Hill, is discussing the death of Amadou Diallo in New York 1999. Amadou Diallo was a 23-year-old immigrant from Guinea who was shot by the NYPD due to a “mistake”. As Wyclef remembers in this song, he was shot 41 times. Amadou Diallo’s death sparked massive outcry within the Afro-American community and brought up the issue of racism, police brutality and racial profiling. And "similar to Steve Biko" he was killed due to immanent racism.

„You guys are vampires  
In the middle of the night  
Suckin on human blood  
Is that your appetite sir?

You said he reached sir  
But he didn’t have no piece sir  
But now he rest in peace sir  
In the belly of the beast sir

Diallo, Diallo - similar to Steven Biko  
Diallo, Diallo - you told me the murder was an  
error  
Diallo, Diallo - but every man will be judged  
Diallo, Diallo - according to his words”

In “I’m An African” Dead Prez is telling the story of beeing an African, born in the USA. It is about the sense of getting conscious about your situation and where you come from. Calling Africa your home, suggests you value your african heritage and the way your ancestors where brought to another continent by force, i.e. brutal slavery. Blackness must be felt as a positive not a negative feature of the own appeareance because in being connected with negative thoughts, the colour of one's own skin can become a main obstacle for feeling positive about the own self. This is the personal level. Racism, which is connected with appeareance is another level, Dead Prez is also refering to.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>„Camouflage fatigues, and daishikis<br/>Somewhere in between N.W.A. and P.E.<br/>I’m black like Steve Biko<br/>Raised in the ghetto by the people<br/>Fuck the police you know how we do<br/>(...)<br/>I’m an African , never was an African-<br/>American</p> | <p>Blacker than black I take it back to my<br/>origin<br/>Same skin hated by the klansmen Big nose<br/>and lips, big hips and butts, dancin’, what<br/><br/>I’m a African, I’m a African, uhh”</p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Earth, Wind and Fire mentions Biko in the song “Revolution” as the following:

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>“Revolution just evolution<br/>Bless our sisters, fathers, mothers, brothers<br/>Who press us ahead of schools<br/>Steve Biko, Steve Biko<br/>Taught us right been condemned to win<br/>And said keep the golden rule<br/>Show others pure love, children<br/><br/>Harmony of our diversity<br/>means accountability<br/>The sacrifice been paid, the price<br/>Nuff blood shed to beg us to see”</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

They are dealing with the message of love Biko always tried to focus on. He was against racialism on all levels. He stood for equality where all people are equal in their value. Even if he was confronted with the severe racism he kept "the golden rule" of justice and equal right

for all people.

Rootsword, an artist from USA, with Zambian origin, living in Switzerland, did a song called “Against the Grain” discussing all those people fighting for justice and liberation, listing up famous names, Marcus Garvey, Malcom X, Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Assata Sankur, Nelson Mandela, Steven Biko, Huey P. Newman. In between there are samples of voices of Jimmy Hendrix, Bob Dylan and John Lennon. He explains he “rep[s] equality and peace cause all around me is war. Rich man taking advantage over the poor (...)”

### 4.1.3. Biko in Anglo- American Pop

Peter Gabriel did a song, which is probably the most popular among all of the Biko songs. Written in 1978 and first released in 1980, his song “Biko” was used as the cover theme song of the british movie “Cry Freedom” starring Denzel Washington as Biko and Kevin Kline as Donald Woods, a white liberal and friend of Biko. Directed by Richard Attenborough in 1987, the movie schematized the struggle of Steve Biko’s life and his death. Joan Baez did a cover of Peter Gabriel’s song in 1987, giving the song a female voice of passion. Simple Minds also did cover this song. Their version was released in 1989.

Peter Gabriel's original protest song “Biko” was released in 1980 and states the following:

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>„Biko“</p> <p>September ,77</p> <p>Port Elizabeth weather fine</p> <p>It was business as usual</p> <p>In police room 619</p> <p>Oh Biko, Biko, because Biko</p> <p>Oh Biko, Biko, because Biko</p> <p>Yihla Moja, Yihla Moja</p> <p>-The man is dead</p> <p>When I try to sleep at night</p> <p>I can only dream in red</p> <p>The outside world is black and white</p> <p>With only one colour dead</p> | <p>Oh Biko, Biko, because Biko</p> <p>Oh Biko, Biko, because Biko</p> <p>Yihla Moja, Yihla Moja</p> <p>-The man is dead</p> <p>You can blow out a candle</p> <p>But you can’t blow out a fire</p> <p>Once the flames begin to catch</p> <p>The wind will blow it higher</p> <p>Oh Biko, Biko, because Biko</p> <p>Yihla Moja, Yihla Moja</p> <p>-The man is dead</p> <p>And the eyes of the world are</p> <p>watching now</p> <p>watching now</p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Peter Gabriel did pack a lot of information into the song, making clear, that Steve's death was not a scarcity in Apartheid South Africa and that reality was brutal. In police room 619, many people lost their lives. "You can blow out a candle but you can't blow out a fire". "The fire" is standing for the message Biko gave his life for. You cannot kill the message, as the spirit will live even if the messenger is dead.

#### **4.1.4. Roots Melodies dedicated to Biko**

It is pretty special to listen to melodies, without lyrics, which are dedicated and written for Steve Biko. One tries to find elements and passion within the music. Sometimes music is just enough, you do not need words to explain certain moods. *The Revolutionaries*, a Jamaican reggae band, founded in 1975, released a tune "Spirit of Biko" in 1978, which is an instrumental Dub song. It was published on the LP "Jonkanoo Dub". Jonkanoo refers to a musical genre in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Jamaica, rooted in the African tradition it was a celebration of the heritage by slaves in the Caribbean. *Scientist & The Forces Of Music* released also a "Steve Biko" version on their Album *International Heroes Dub*. Only instrumental dub versions, 12 songs are on this album, each one dedicated to one great man in history, the titles chronologically: Marcus Mosiah Garvey, Walter Sisuli, Malcolm X, Mohammed Ali, George Jackson, Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Jomo Kenyatta, Steve Biko, Dedan Kimathi, Kwame Nrumah. The *Johnny Dyani Quartet* released an instrumental Jazz song in 1978 named "Song for Biko". Johnny Dyani was a South African musician, born in East London, leaving South Africa in the mid 1960s to avoid the repression faced. The song is lively, jazzy and uplifting. *Merger*, a UK reggae group released a song named "Biko", its mainly instrumental, but includes some phrases, which are not sufficiently true, as Biko was not born in Soweto, as they state. This tune was released in 1978.

#### **4.1.5. African Interprets Referring to Biko**

In several live settings Youssou N'Dour did sing the song "Biko" with Peter Gabriel, but in his song "New Africa" he also refers to Biko pointing out the necessity of a unified Africa. First released on the "Eyes Open" album in 1992, he mentions Kwame Nkrumah and Steven Biko among others.

In his song "Uhuru Road" Spuki Mulemwa speaks out about South Africa, which has achieved its freedom from colonial oppression and what a day this was for the whole

continent of Africa. “Let freedom reign” he insists; “we’re on Uhuru road,” the background voices repeat. He mentions people who dedicated their life to the struggle, like Kaunda, Mandela, Malcom X, Martin Luther King jnr, Harriet Tubman, Gadaffi, Biko, Sankara. “Uhuru” means freedom in Swahili.

The band KIONA, dedicated a song “Steve Biko” telling his life story in portuguese.

Cote d’Ivoire’s Amadou Doukoure’s song “Steve” released in 1979 tells the story of Steve’s life in a soulful way. The african-american women a-capella trio *Sweet Honey In The Rock*, founded in 1973, released a song named “Biko” in 1981, picturing Steve Biko “coming down the water”.

This chapter put together a lot of examples. It was intended to show how broad the reception of Bantu Steven Biko's life and message is. It is evident that in most of the songs his strong personal dedication to the fight for the betterment of the situation of the oppressed people is mentioned. It is his conviction and his deep feeling of justice and the need for equality for each human being, apart from any prejudices of skin color, race, gender etc. that puts the young Biko into the ranks of other freedom fighters in history. It is also interesting that people and bands of contemporary times are referring to Biko, as did those bands in the late 70s, early 80s, soon after Biko had died, and Apartheid was still alive. In those times doing a song about Biko who was killed by Apartheid system was a sign of protest against oppression in South Africa and elsewhere. Nowadays, after the end of Apartheid’s institutionalized racism, the person Biko still stands for a fight against a worldwide existing system of exploitation and oppression.

A contemporary artist from Jamaica, Iya Phillips, is referring to the change of mind, which the blacks still need to make, inhale and put forward. The title of the song is “Black Is Beautiful”, he sings with a soft voice “you may be black as tar, but don't you worry you are ok as you are. (...) black is beautiful, black is powerful, being black is wonderful, I say.”

What is important to understand, is, that the fight is still going on; that Black Consciousness must still be spread with a lot of passion and patience, so that the seed once will be ready to sprout; once history is understood, there might be a way to overcome and see, what slavery did and what the capitalistic system is still doing to the souls of the oppressed people.

I want to conclude this chapter with a song by the south african Hip-Hop-MC Siyabonga Metane aka Slikour with the title “Blacks are Fools”. This song was released in March 2012 and caused an unforeseen stir in South Africa. Discussions arose, about whether it is accurate to make a song, which generalize blacks as fools. We should take a look at the lyrics of the song; to understand the emancipatory notion of Metane’s song and the way he criticizes the

situation of nowadays capitalism in South Africa through critical language. The introduction of the song states the following:

*„A nation without education will not know its worth.*

*What I'm about to say is going to determine whether you know your worth*

*(and if you don't know) this is not book education, but it's your present!"*

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| <p>And when you tell the truth they say you have<br/>envious</p> <p>I'm going to be blatted coz now this is strenuous</p> <p>Media undermine us</p> <p>They even offend us</p> <p>Radio don't play us</p> <p>They don't even recommend us</p> <p>Journalists with scandals to misrepresent us</p> <p>Meanwhile they building companies of the<br/>oppressors</p> <p>For minimum wages they make us look lesser</p> <p>So who should the kids look up to? America</p> <p>Of course, our heroes are down played by<br/>editors</p> <p>So why blame white people when we can credit<br/>us</p> <p>For our own lack of progression that we bring to<br/>us</p> <p>And we think we are progressing but we are<br/>delusional</p> <p>We show off the BMW's, and VWs but doesn't<br/>that trouble that they don't consider you</p> <p>In their marketing strategy that's my view</p> <p>But they know that you have the fashion IQ</p> <p>Chances they don't even like you</p> <p>But they know you going to make their brand<br/>cool</p> <p>Coz we so materialistic we're such fools</p> <p>They don't give a buck to the same hoods</p> <p>Spending money on extravagant foreign goods</p> <p>[Verse 1]</p> <p>Ten years in the game I know white bands that<br/>only seen</p> | <p>Zola was the biggest star that we've ever seen</p> <p>But what's sad was it was only seen by Cell C</p> <p>While we work hard just to sell a CD</p> <p>They make millions of a couple of mp3's</p> <p>And break bread for their own race, own creed</p> <p>I wish black executives could take the lead</p> <p>But they put us down like we embarrass them</p> <p>And give us deals that equate to embarrassment</p> <p>And when we broke they blame it on money<br/>management</p> <p>I must say black people are stagnant</p> <p>BEE billions we brag with it, while black schools<br/>are less than average</p> <p>Then what's up with that?</p> <p>Coz we blackz are foolz they just want to fresh</p> <p>And they want to be cool</p> <p>Give them a little money and they think they rule</p> <p>But I hope we, but I hope we're, but I hope we're,</p> <p>But I hope we better than that</p> <p>We better than that</p> <p>We better than that that that that that</p> <p>[Verse 2]</p> <p>Now in the struggle we used to burn traitors</p> <p>I guess that's how they could to separate us.</p> <p>Nowadays its money and political favors,</p> <p>Politicians wanna be Celebs and famous.</p> <p>Celebs want to be politicians, buy faces</p> <p>I guess our society has gone pretentious</p> <p>Black people always be job hunting,</p> <p>Is BEE the only way to be something? (...)</p> <p>Gucci, Versace, Louis</p> <p>We advertise them so much you think we get loeries</p> |
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| Two years of fame but they set for life<br>Look at the Parlotones and KFC<br>I ain't knocking them it's really just what I see | And supporting our own is such a duty<br>That's why we don't own nothin,<br>'cause we think of ourselves as nothing |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

In the article “Are Blacks Really Fools” (2012c) Veli Mbele discusses the song in length. He is stating that the song is an attempt at waking up the South African blacks. Slikour takes stance on themes like black poverty, poor education, corruption, the inferior complex Biko had analysed, materialism, lack of black leadership and solidarity. Mbele links the content of the song with black political thinkers of the past like Booker T. Washington, DuBois, Fanon, Garvey, Malcom X, Sobukwe, Biko etc. who had to deal with the same problems. “Just like Slikour today, these illustrious black thinkers used various tools and language styles to articulate their interpretation of what is known as the black condition.” (Mbele 2012c: n.p.) In an article in the Sunday World, a boulevard newspaper in SA, it was said that the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) had decided to ban the song from their TV- and radio stations, as it was an affront to black people’s dignity, which was actually just a rumor, spreading very fast and was quoted in a whole number of articles on the internet. Slikour's song was criticized to form a bad picture about black people.

Mbele refers to Biko in this aspect, as he writes, that Biko too, employed words, which could be perceived as insulting as they were frank. He refers to the verse in the article “We Blacks” when Biko makes the point that “(...) all in all the black man has become a shell, a shadow of a man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish-timidity.” (Biko cit. in Mbele 2012c: n.p.)

It is part of the Hip Hop genre -where Slikour is rooted- to express criticism and the anger regarding the system and injustice, through songs. It is nothing new, as 70s/ 80s Hip Hop pioneers such as Public Enemy, or a Tribe called Quest, the Roots and so on, always confronted issues like racism, police brutality, violence. In South Africa singers like Miriam Makeba and Letta Mbulu sang against the status quo and for the dignity of the black people. Music is there to discuss social issues and political circumstances, and Slikour is doing what many others have done before him; using his music in combination with frank words to bring in discussion and to point out what is going on wrong within society. Slikour speaks openly, in interviews conducted after the release of his song, that it is about conscientizing and uplifting the people, who are still trapped in the psychological aftermath of slavery, colonialism and racism.

The question is, why can a song produce such uproar within the country. Mbele tries to point out the reasons. First he concludes that the kind of “racial reconciliation”, which tried to avoid

offending the white capitalist class or further those blacks who profit from white capitalist interests left a lot of important matters, like the severe “inferiority complex” Biko talked about, untouched. The deep traumas on a psychological level were not attended. There was more the idea of, letting the past behind, because a new South Africa would emerge now (in 1994). Mbele calls this process a process of “a history of a people swept under reconciliation carpet”. The second point he concludes is the attitude of those blacks, which post-1994 made it into the middle class and therefore are supporters of the economic system, as it exists nowadays. They, he states, expect everybody who is black to support the system and systematically suppress the critical thinking and reflection on the black condition. This last point he coins out is that there is a lack of tolerance for different opinions within society. If you differ from the dominant view, you tend to be judged in a negative way e.g. as being unpatriotic. (Cf. Mbele 2012c: n.p.)

It is important to see Slikours lyrics as not an individual assault, but an awakening call of where the whole society is running to: an alarming attitude of putting material wealth ahead of anything else. Therefore the song promotes a change in the political and economic consciousness throughout South Africa and its people. In the following chapter it will be discussed, what temporary South Africans see as big problems within their society and the system of post-Apartheid they have to deal with. Taking reference to the topics Steve Biko and Black Consciousness were dealing with in the past, which are still more relevant than ever.

## **4.2. Biko in Present Day Discourse**

In the upcoming chapter recent developments in South Africa will be discussed. There are annual lectures regarding the legacy of Steven Biko and his impact on present day South Africa, which helps to remember the struggle of Black Consciousness during Apartheid, always giving a short overview over the problems and tribulation the people involved had to face, but try to give a motivation to the people of today, to not forget about the past and the necessity for the liberation of the minds to liberate the society.

As one can see, the problems the present day youth and elders are facing are still very much coming from the system of Apartheid, as will be discussed later.

I will try to summarize the points that are discussed in the articles and annual addresses of the last years. My sources coming mainly from the internet, the homepage of the AZAPO (which is more or less the offspring of the B.C.M) and other pages (like the online Daily Maverik and

other newspaper), discussing themes and concepts of Black Consciousness philosophy, milestone events of the past (f.e. the June 16 Uprising in Soweto), activities of the movement in general or the person and „father of B.C.“ Steve Biko in particular.

It is interesting to see what steps were already taken in the fulfillment of the vision of a „non-racial, egalitarian society“ and why South Africa is still miles and miles away in achieving this vision.

#### **4.2.1. Dealing with Steve Biko as Person & The History of BC**

*„We, the people, for whom Bantu Biko toiled and dedicated his life to, are in a crisis, thirty-five years after his brutal murder in police cells. Eighteen years after making that big jump from a white minority dictatorship, to a democratic one voted into office (...) look all around, and all you see are fading aspirations.“* (Mangena 2012a: n.p.)

Barney Pityana, an important Black Consciousness advocate, a founding member and comrade of Steve Biko, held a lecture on „Black Consciousness, Black Theology, Student Activism and the Shaping of the New South Africa“ in 2012. He states that Black Consciousness was in search of answers, and the students of the 1960s generation were aware of the severe repression and the forces of oppression and injustice. They were aware of the history of racism within the country traced back hundreds of years and that they do were conscious about the always existing african resistance throughout the time of european invasion and what came along with it (like land dispossession etc). He tells that they were traced by the question (and therefore to understand) how it did

*„come about that we the black people of this Continent appeared to be complicit in our own oppression, and why was it that our life and cultures and destiny appeared to be in the hands of foreign powers?“* (Pityana 2012: n.p.)

As in 1960 all the oppositional parties were banned and South Africa left the Commonwealth in 1961, the only leaders of the blacks who were left, not jailed nor killed, were collaborators with the system, Bantustan leaders. Pityana calls them „Agents of Disempowerment“. Bantustans were the big lie of Apartheid, claiming that there was something like „separate but equal“. The problem nowadays is the missing of a progressive leadership the revolutionary spirit of confronting the underlying system of inequality seems to be asleep, even if the problems are nearly the same as of the past.

K.J. Dikobo writes that Biko „then came up with a new way of looking at things, new

concepts and indeed a new philosophy, Black Consciousness, and that his death in 1977 represented a very serious setback to the struggle. He states „[w]e declare here today that Biko lives, the Spirit lives. Black Consciousness!“ (Dikobo 2011: n.p.)

Mangena is calling upon the importance to remember the strength and vision and the determination of Biko and his comrades in the struggle. The present time South Africa is marked by a severe poverty of the majority and a „zealous worship of bling“ of a few. Biko had a „deep intellectual commitment to the liberation of his people“ writes Mangena in 2011, and a strong will to „dedicate his whole live to and for the struggle“. (Mangena 2011c: n.p.) Mangena describes the society of South Africa as schizophrenic in the sense that there is a huge gap between what the Constitution states and the way reality looks like. (Mangena 2011b: n.p.) It was very important to Biko to not just talk about but to get involved in the struggle by action. The power of the masses to liberate themselves was essential in his thinking, like Paolo Freire he believed in the conscientization of the people and in bringing about change through making people aware of their own situation. (Cf. Freire 2005[1974]: 15) There is a lot to learn still. The people need to be connected with the powerful idea of liberation.

*„Steve Biko was a man of supreme personal courage, who was imbued with an unshakeable sense of justice, a razor-sharp intellect and extraordinary vision. His every thought, his every action, were indefatigably dedicated to the quest for human dignity and, more particularly, the quest for black dignity.“* (Mbele 2012b: n.p.)

Veli Mbele states that Biko is a global symbol of black dignity, because his action was full of bravery. Biko called for a free egalitarian society where the colour of skin, religion, and culture would be no reason of reference. He envisioned a society with no minorities, no majorities, just people. Mbele concluded: “One People, One Nation, One Azania”. (Qekema 2011: n.p.)

Mangena states that one would have thought that with the event of democracy 18 years ago, fear in politics would have passed but „as they say, the more things change, the more they remain the same. Fear does continue to be an important part of our political and social landscape (...)“ (Mangena 2011d: n.p.) He states that the fear nowadays is of different reasons than during Apartheid, in that it is a more subtle variety, where it is not legislated for but it is there, as „fear of ostracism, marginalization or professional, economic stunting“ is immanent. (Mangena 2011d: n.p.) He gives an example to underline his statement. Many people change their political affiliation in order to improve their employment options at work.

#### 4.2.1.1.Blackness & Inferiority Complex

„A don't care attitude pervades the system (...)“ according to Mangena (2012c: n.p.), who points to the deep-seated inferiority complex and goes on explaining: „This is the slave menta[lit]y Black Consciousness set out to confront and defeat. It is clear that we are still very far from victory.“ (Mangena 2012c: n.p.) The political oppression was overcome through the formal end of Apartheid. But many writers illustrate, that the psychological oppression is still alive, as the mind was polluted over centuries of slavery, colonialism and racism, stripping the native people of their history and traditions, telling them, that they, as a group, were by nature inferior. Biko was in search for answers to escape the deep-seated inferiority complex of the oppressed people. This is still relevant today. (Cf. Khoapa 2012: 2)

BC sought to deal with this superiority/ inferiority complex and defined blacks as „those who are by law or tradition politically economically and socially discriminated against as a group in society“ (Dikobo 2011: n.p., SASO 1971: n.p.) Explaining that blackness is, by definition, an attitude of mind, a way of life rather than the color of skin, which includes everyone who is confronted with oppression. Biko defined a person - no matter how dark skinned he might be - who identified with white values and aspiring whiteness, as a non-white. This category is very important and essential to understand what Black Consciousness is all about. It makes a mere ascription of the complexion impossible, as you can have black skin and still not be regarded as black. This category also invalidates the charge of B.C. being racist. This point is crucial in the daily discourse about the ANC leadership and the way they do their politics in regard of the black (poor) masses. (See also 4.2.1.2.) Khoapa writes, that things have seemingly changed, because one can see black and white walking the same streets, using the same facilities, sitting next to each other, but underneath that superficial togetherness lies a deep division and a deep seated racism, not yet reconciled. „Self-hate colours almost all areas of our lives“ (Mangena 2012c: n.p.)

Dikobo tells a story about a friend of his, which he calls a „proud coloured person“. This friend complained that under Apartheid they were not white enough and after 1994 they are not black enough. The author concludes that the argumentation of this friend suggests that during Apartheid they aspired to be white and that now, after Apartheid was over, he was aspiring to be black. (Cf. Dikobo 2011: n.p.) It marks the definatory power in the hands of the rulers, doesn't it? Here Gramsci crosses one's mind and his hegemonic power-block thesis, where the ruling entity in power controls what people aspire by subtle means. The ownership of discourse and the ownership of narratives are still not in the hands of the formerly

oppressed. (Cf. Pheko 2012: 7) But as Gramsci analyzed, it is the civil society that will reach out to change those means through a critical conscientization. (Cf. Krauss 1997: 6, Ritsert 1998: 71)

Biko provided a theoretical theme and framework to analyze the political situation of the present. Blacks (in color) are leading the country now, treating their own people badly. To understand this, one must see underneath skin-color, it makes evident that color does not mean anything it does not change an attitude, which is fundamentally capitalistic and does not care for the basic needs of the people, but for profits from wealth and resources of the country, foreign investors and capital-strong industries. Asha Moodley states in this context, that South Africa „remains, despite its new clothes, an essentially capitalist, patriarchal state“ (Moodley 2012: 5) Dikobo is asking whether it is accurate to still label people in South Africa as black, regarding the definition of the BCM. He questions:

*„Do we still have people now, according to the Black Consciousness definition? (...) My answer and AZAPOs answer is a big yes. There is nothing previous about the material conditions of our people. Our people are poor now.“* (Dikobo 2011: n.p.)

It is the economic Apartheid that still keeps the majority of people suffering everyday. (Cf. Pheko 2012: 7) But who is responsible for this situation, if the Constitution of 1994 suggests a very different vision of a post-Apartheid South Africa? Mangena criticizes -what he calls- the „Black Intelligentsia“: „This class has embarked on the path of avaricious accumulation of wealth (...) through theft, corruption and short changing of the very masses.“ (Mangena 2011b: n.p.) He states that they joined the white counterpart keeping capitalism alive and well.

Liepollo Pheko writes in her paper „Socio-Political Developments in South Africa- Reflections on the Myth of Reconciliation“ which appeared in the Frank Talk Issue #3 in February 2012, that they had a kind of naive vision of how it's going to be, after the struggle was fought and ANC came to power. They thought that where there had been shacks, there would be houses; and where there had been darkness there would be electricity. But they were definitely wrong. Instead what was happening, was that 350 years of racial and economic domination „became moving targets“ and therefore much more difficult to locate and to act against it. (Cf. Pheko 2012: 7) What Pheko points out here is that white capital domination still continued and continues to be the powerful motor behind the black government.

Neville Alexander states that the real beneficiaries of the compromise of 1994 are the white capitalist class and the black middle class, „a middle class that has become so degenerate in

its value system, it has forgotten what it is we fought for, how we fought for it, how we suffered for it.“ (Alexander 2012: 11) It is the internalized negative view of the black body that still has fatal consequences, states Mbele (Mbele 2012b: n.p.).

ANC politics (even if the leaders are black, in Biko's criteria some of them are not *blacks*) reveal this deep issue; examples are quoted, such as the latest Marikana Massacre, where 34 Miners were shot dead by the special security force, during a strike for better payment. This event strokes the country and remembered on the Soweto Uprising in 1976. A lot of articles took reference to this event, because it opened a wound, which not yet had healed and make the humiliating policy of a so-called democracy evident. In March 2013 seven policemen, accused of the killing of community leader Andries Tatane during a service delivery protest in April 2011, were acquitted by the Ficksburg Regional Court. This case shows once more, that police brutality is still protected by law.

In „The Power of the Pen, Blackness under attack from within“, Mathatha Tsedu asks the question of how „people can have the impression that 'we' are refugees in our own land and have guts to say so in public?“ (Tsedu 2012: n.p.) He explains further that colonialism is always based on characteristic features such as land dispossession, turning the indigenous into cheap labor, psychological subjugation, and a denigration of everything that is local. (Tsedu 2012: n.p.) It was not different in South Africa. The self-degrading concept which internalized over centuries, which made the african people to mere laborers for a white economy, is still alive, for there is still no equal (re) distribution of land and wealth happening in post-Apartheid South Africa and law is still not protecting the poor and vulnerable people.

„Biko found blackness under attack“ as he became politically active in mid 1960s, he reemphasized the value of being black positively. It was about connecting a positive feeling with blackness again, to achieve a conscious and proud self. (Cf. Tsedu 2012: n.p.) According to Tsedu in 1994 the cadres of the different liberation movements (ANC, PAC, BCM, AZAPO) had embodied the characteristics of blackness; they fought for what was right and either got jailed, killed or went into exile. And what happened then, after the fall of the regime? Tsedu states that „in the main black people in government have turned it into a looting zone“ apprehending that „our very being as black people is under attack. Not by enemies from outer space but from within.“ (Tsedu 2012: n.p.) Tsedu gives a lot of examples by which black people perpetuate the system of oppression from within: „When we protest lack of service delivery and burn community libraries, it is madness beyond belief.“ he states, one example which symbolizes the self-destructive ways and the attack which is launched from within the citizenry. (Tsedu 2012: n.p.)

In the article „The Burden of Blackness: Reclaiming the Essence of June 16 Uprising“,

Veli Mbele argues that young black people are still suffering a daily humiliation, who despite their academic qualification cannot fulfill their potential, because they do not find a job. He brings the example of a young black female graduate who would not find a job but as a cleaning lady, and this is not one single story, there are thousands and thousands of this kind. Mbele criticizes the negative stories of blacks, and mainly political figures, which are part of the „daily news diet“ people get to see, this influences the picture in negative ways. Mbele criticizes the little value that is given to the poor people by their own people, in the individual and the collective, which is an indicator of the self-hate that still exists in the former discriminated group. Black people killing blacks, black police officers killing poor blacks that go out on the streets to protest for a improvement of their situation. (Cf. Mbele 2012a: n.p.)

#### **4.2.1.2. Economy - Capitalism - Racism - Hypocritical Leadership**

*„The real issue is the fact that 18 years into democracy, we still have a small coterie of foreign white capitalist owning and controlling our country's mineral wealth. And instead of us (blacks) jointly fighting for control of our mineral wealth- we have a supposedly democratic state that is prepared to murder its own citizens in defense of white capital.“* (Noboda 2012: n.p.)

The crucial point is, that white capital is still ruling the country, a thing that is clearly pointed out in dozens of articles, papers and speeches. Mangena writes of the dimension that even after 18 years of democracy South Africa still is the most unequal society on earth. Constitution versus reality, the people are not respecting one another's human rights. „Despite our triumph over racial discrimination, instances of racial bigotry still around.“ (Mangena 2012b: n.p.) He speaks of a society and political behavior „addicted to greed and rampant corruption“. Dikobo mentions the latter as an evidence of the absence of Black Consciousness within the political responsible figures and parties. (Cf. Dikobo 2011: n.p.) „It would seem our biggest problem lies in the psychological and moral realms. We are a broken society, or a „wounded“ one, as Mamphela Ramphele often says.“ (Mangena 2012b: n.p.)

Mangena and many more writers claim the lost aspirations, fading into the grievance for wealth and status symbols. (Cf. Mangena 2011b: n.p.) The material grievance is addressed in nearly every article, pointing at the capitalism which is broadly spreading and continues to be a driving force and motivation. Mangena asks how it is possible that grievance is taking root in society and, at the same time, Biko is deified. That does not go together smoothly.

The south african Reggae singer Zoro (Zolile Matikinca), born in 1974, was experiencing the

Apartheid regime in its brutality. Living in Sweden since 2003, he pushes forward his musical career. He released a tune in 2013 called "Azania Roots". This song deals with the continuation of the economic system and the still existing poverty the people of South Africa have to deal with.

*"In Azania, where the capitalists rule (...) politicians dem nah care fi we (...). In Azania where my people dem suffer still. Everyday the poor man a feel, black man is still inferior."* (Zoro 2013)

He is addressing the overproduction of food, while people are hungry as well as the unequal distribution of land, criticizing the immanent reign of capital instead of people's politics in South Africa.

Qekema states, that there are a number of reasons, why there is no new and progressive leadership coming up within the ranks of young blacks today, to fight for a betterment of the lives of the majority. (Qekema 2011: n.p.) One of those reasons is, that society gives a wrong message about obsession with wealth, he explains. Success is confused with wealth. The people are obsessed of quick wealth and luxury „Agony precedes ecstasy“, he concludes, „Biko would be appalled by the greed of wealth that has destroyed the moral fiber of our society.“ (Qekema 2011: n.p.)

Pityana states, that it is a very sad fact that the role models of nowadays are uneducated people in powerful political offices, and the others are people who assumed a lot of wealth. Education does not play a role in either of them. It is a matter of fact that political discourse does not put emphasis on really important matters anymore, like reducing poverty. (Cf. Pityana 2012: 18) Pityana speaks about the failed, ineffectual and inappropriate economic policies; the government which is not able to see the crisis which is taking over the country, xenophobic violence and persistent racism. He speaks of „a nation divided by race and (...) social cohesion is not just something one pronounces, but a governmental and transformative programme to be pursued.“ (Pityana 2012: 18)

Mbele points out that societies are organized along particular supra-systems which prescribe all other sub-systems and

*„[t]herefore, not only do these systems determine the current and future structure of society- they also determine the current and future power relations in society, which inevitably determine the social and political temperament of society“* (Mbele 2010a: n.p.)

In this context Mbele claims that there must be a re-opening of the debate about whether african countries that were exposed to centuries of colonialism, or in the case of South Africa a certain form of settler colonialism, are really liberated in the present. White settler colonialism, Mbele explains, is premised on white racism and capitalism. Although in the early 90s, after clandestine activity of talks the ANC was taking over the management of the colonial state from the boers, the ANC did not change the economic system and therefore perpetuated the system of exploitation. (Cf. Mbele 2010a: n.p.)

Khoapa analyses oppression as an economic framework in which one group of people benefits from the exploitation of another. And this is still happening in South Africa, as well as on a world scale. (Cf. Khoapa 2012: 2) Pheko claims that in truth the economy in its functioning, has not significantly changed since the end of Apartheid, nor has the power pattern changed. She speaks of a consolidation of the existing and the new oligarchy in the country, and this oligarchy has strong links to politics. (Cf. Pheko 2012: 8)

Mbele agrees in this regard and points out that the mere act of transferring the management of the colonial state to the ANC did not change the historical power relations, and states that the only thing that really changed was the color. Evidence for this fact is the severe inequality that constitutes the society in South Africa with blacks continuing to be at the bottom of the pit, with black youth being the most affected group by the malfunctioning of ANC politics. (Cf. Mbele 2010a: n.p.) The black youth still believes that it is their fault why their lives are visionless, because on paper (Constitution) they are free individuals, allowed to do and achieve whatever they want. Mbele (2010a) underlines that this lack of progress is a result of the system of racism and capitalism that still oppress the huge mass of South African's citizens. The historical and structural societal factors are interconnected and shaping the outlook and choices people are able to make. Steve Biko foresaw this situation, if the underlying system of capitalism would not be infringed.

The hypocrisy of the leadership is often mentioned throughout the articles and speeches. When the ANC under the leadership of Nelson Mandela joined the negotiations and gained power in 1994, a whole oppressed people longing for equality and dignity saw their vision came true. But, as stated above, the dreams did not come true. In present, black, non-white people in favor of white capital rule the country. Ben Khoapa (2012) states that about 800 million of the worlds' population is so impoverished that it constitutes a global „underclass“ characterized by malnutrition, disease and illiteracy, to name a few. This „global underclass“ consists the majority of the worlds' population defined and hold down through an unjust distribution of resources.

In South Africa, since 1994, the battle has changed its face. It is no longer a struggle for liberation against a regime of a white minority, harassing people openly on an everyday basis (like passbook controls etc.) but a struggle against a new global regime, which is to be found everywhere. (Cf. Khoapa 2012: 3) As mentioned above, the oppressor had become a moving target, which is not easy to discover. Khoapa points out that this is the new form of colonialism and in regard to the Black Consciousness thought, needs a new conscientization. He states that the Black Consciousness Movement is needed more today than ever, to discover the tremendous faults of the capitalistic system.

*„As the neoliberal ghosts of mental slavery drive the oppressed masses of South Africa into a new colonization of Western capitalism, a new Black Consciousness needs to return to its mass-mobilizing roots in order to give South Africa its 'human face'“*  
(Khoapa 2012: 3)

Liepello Pheko urges that it is the struggle for access to resources, land and self-determination, which still has to be fought. (Cf. Pheko 2012: 7) Many writers agree on the point, that economic Apartheid is still alive and well in South Africa, as will be discussed later, many indicators underline this. The African majority in South Africa is on average 12 to 13% worse off than they were before 1994, while the minority of the wealthier part of people is better off since the end of Apartheid. (Cf. Pheko 2012: 8)

It is important to point out that the paradigm of Neoliberalism and western financial interests pervades the ruling politics. Even if there are different class interests inside the ANC, all of them are entrenched into the paradigm of rule that is determined by neoliberal thought and action. As Alexander analyses, this paradigm is infused by the need of foreign direct investment (FDI) and the maximization of exports. (Cf. Alexander 2012: 10) Abrey Masango asks in his article „Constructive Criticism: If we can't give it, who can?“, if criticism is allowed at all. As during Apartheid, the oppressed had a common enemy, nowadays the perpetuation of mental slavery is achieved through a „black Neo-Colonialism“ which is oppressing people of their own „group“. It is their own group, the former victims of the system that is in charge and still perpetuating economic Apartheid as Masango concludes. (Cf. Masango 2012: n.p.) There is not only a perpetuation of the system along economic matters, but the ANC is also fighting for power over the conscience of its own people. So there is a battle over the ownership of discourse. (Cf. Pheko 2012: 7)

Quekema discusses that a discursive battle nowadays exists, one example is the Soweto upheaval. As the ANC claims it was their influence that led to the uproar, and therefore try to

get power in present over the active influence they had on the struggling masses in 1976. This is neglecting the historical facts. In 2008 Raymond Suttner, an academic -former ANC underground and prisoner- criticized this discourse as a political propaganda which pretends to depict ANC and BCM as parent and child, which is definitely untrue. (Cf. Suttner 2009: n.p.) „It is a *fact of history* that June 16 uprising transpired under the auspices of the BCM, its ideology and its leadership.“ (Quekema 2010: 4)

Gaontebale Nodoba, National Spokesperson of AZAPO and lecturer at the University of Cape Town describes another catching experience. It is a subtle propaganda used by the present-day ANC to glorify the ANC of the past, to benefit from it. In his article „Narratives from Robben Island Suffocate the True History of the Liberation Movement“ (Noboda 2012a: n.p.), he states that he has been on Robben Island again, to make a tour. Such tours are divided in two parts. At first the tourists are taken over the island by bus, to see, for example, Robert Sobukwe's small house, where he was banned in. The second part is a tour through the prison. The guide tells stories about the imprisoned persons, showing Mandela's cell, but as Nodoba revealed, no mention was made of prisoners from other elements of the liberation movements, the only people mentioned were imprisoned ANC members. He states that for him it was evident that this is part of the silent mission to rewrite the history and narratives of the liberation struggle. (Cf. Nodoba 2012a: n.p.) He is calling it hypocrisy par excellence, as the ANC under Zuma is pointing out on events like the Kliptown Freedom Charter, instead of acknowledging the role of PAC f.e. in the countrywide marches and protests of the past. As Nodoba asked the guide of Robben Island Prison, why he would not tell about the prisoners of the other liberation movements the man answered that he was only carrying out instructions. These experiences show a severe tendency of hegemony, as Gramsci pointed it out. „The Robben Island experience was a rude reminder of a government that does not seem to care for its people.“ (Noboda 2012a: n.p.)

Sam Thompson and Norman Abraham write in their introduction to a collection of texts dealing with the aspects of the south african revolution between 1976 and 1985, that some issues of Apartheid are still in existence today, not as legal means but in the action of government. For example there is a high amount of evicted people since end of Apartheid, and in 2004, the government evicted about 2 million people. (C.f. Thompson/Abraham 2005: n.p.) Reason for those evictions are that people are not able to pay their rent, or they just built up a shack “illegally”. It is stated that an average of 400 Rand is needed for rent, lights and water, but by 2002 the majority was living on less than 140 R per month. One out of four black children do not have enough to eat every day, about a million of people were disconnected from water supply, because they could not pay for it. Only 3% of arable land

had been redistributed since the end of Apartheid. (C.f. Desai 2002: 11) One has to remember those facts, when speaking of a liberated or free South Africa.

This is a sign of weakness by the state to not be able to provide their citizens with basic needs. Thompson and Abraham are criticizing Mandela and the way the ANC was and is following in compromising with (international) finance.

*„When Mandela came out of prison his first gift to the rulers was to call for discipline, an end to looting and an end to the theft and burning of cars (the subversion of exchange value) and an end to classroom boycott (the subversion of ideological conditioning aimed at acceptance of relations of domination and submission.“*

(Thompson/ Abraham 2005: n.p.)

They point out that the degree of racial segregation in neighborhoods, schools and lifestyle is still very evident, and in a kind of cynic manner the authors state: „[o]nly in some of the cavernous malls which have mushroomed across Johannesburg do the races mingle, 'united' in their separation as *consumers*.“ (Thompson/ Abraham 2005: 3) So while most of the wealth is still under white control, black middle class is living a higher standard than their black brothers and sisters.

In accordance to IMF and World Bank, the ANC implemented policies that by every measure lowered the conditions of the poor dramatically, writes Ashwin Desai (2002) in his book „We are the Poors“. The number of blacks living below the poverty line has risen from 50% to 62%, during the first decade of „Democracy“. This is only one of the many examples of the severely worsening state of living conditions. The Neoliberalism, the ANC is following has helped to enrich about 300 „black dynasties in-the-making“ (as Thompson and Abraham call it) "while about 10 million South Africans have had their electricity cut off, and another 1 million their water cut off (...)" (Thompson/ Abraham 2005: n.p.) In a country which counts 48,810 427 people (Cf. CIA Factbook Juli 2012), that is quite a huge amount of people. Another parameter of the governments' neoliberal policy is the company tax, which has been brought down from 49% to below 30%. This is a severe indication on which lines policy is functioning.

There are signs of new strength within civil society, to act against what the state pushes through. New community organizations and other groups are on the rise, 'emergency reconnections by so called 'struggle electricians' and 'struggle plumbers', mass action against evictions, demonstrations are signs of a new movement. The community group *Abahlali baseMjondolo* was formed to fight against evictions, bringing the ANC before court to charge

those forced evictions and the prohibition of building up houses in the settlements transgressing against the constitution. The documentary “Dear Mandela” shows the work and obstacles this movement had to face.

As a result of over a million water disconnections, in the 8 years from 1994, 40,000 children were dying from diarrhea caused by dirty water every year. Cholera returned. (Cf. Desai 2002: 11, Thompson/ Abrahams 2005: n.p.) The Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC), a group of electricians, formed to confront ESKOM’s announcement in 2001 to disconnect about 75% of the Soweto residence from electricity, to clear old debts. People cannot afford to pay electricity, as it is extremely expensive. Absurdly, electricity in townships is more expensive than in the city, in rural areas it is most expensive. So the SECC reconnected about 3,000 houses within 6 month and did not stop doing reconnections until ESCOM decided to not cut off those who cannot pay. (Cf. Thompson/ Abrahams 2005: n.p., Fisher 2009: n.p.)

One point, some writers are discussing, which might be in charge of the status quo, is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) which gave amnesty to the crimes of the white ruling class, so it manifested the continuation of power relations, for the wealthy people were still wealthy, had their jobs, their companies, their land. Pheko also argues, that the TRC consolidated the interests of capital, as it did not confront those multinational corporations, which subsidised the Apartheid regime all along. It is evident, that this turned reconciliation within the economy to a wasteland. The economic situation is still the one of the past. Pheko claims that the reconciliation process was not designed to forward social, racial and economic equality but to perpetuate and to grant amnesty to the „perpetuators of race based, capitalist and political oppression“. (Pheko 2012: 7f) So what does matter, besides the role of the „Truth and Reconciliation Commission“, which cannot be discussed here at length, is that the power relations did not severely change since the end of Apartheid. It is the present middle class joining in with the former ruling class, running capitalism par excellence. (Cf. Thompson/Abrahams 2005: n.p.)

In the article „Biko for Marikana: A Call to Rise Up“, it is stated that the Marikana massacre showed the "increasingly rightwing tendencies of the state under the ANC“ and the extent to which the elite within the ruling party is prepared to go to protect the interests of the white capitalist class. (Cf. Nodoba 2012b: n.p.) The black mine workers at the Lomnin owned platin mine in Marikana decided to go on the streets to assert their right to dignity and a fairly pay. On August 16<sup>th</sup> 2012, a special intervention unit of the South African Police opened fire and killed 34 striking miners. In the strike, ongoing for about 10 days, 48 people lost their lives. The brutality with which police was answering the refusal of the demonstrating miners led to

a nationwide out roar and confirmed that "(...) black life continue to be cheap (...) also that Biko's observation more than 30 years ago that "black man you are on your own" is more relevant today than ever before" (Nodoba 2012b: n.p.)

#### **4.2.1.3. Poverty – Bad Schooling – Health – Housing**

*„There is no Verwoerd anymore to hold us back. We are in charge of the education budget and state machinery. Who or what is holding us back?“ (Mangena 2011b: n.p.)*

*“We are not Indians, we are the poors’ (Girlie Amod);*

*‘We are not African, we are the Poors’ (Bongiwe Manqeke)“ (Desai 2002: 44)*

Nkosingathi Biko, Steve Biko's son, states that poverty is still poverty, but during Apartheid there were structural reasons why the black people were in the state of poverty. Structural and legal forms of second class citizenry, restraining black people to gain a good education, to work in certain jobs, to live in the cities and so on. So the analysis then, was along those lines, but today, still the same people and their children are stuck in cycles of poverty. The black government does not change this situation. The problem is that a strong state and an impoverished citizenry today characterize the situation. (Cf. Nkosingathi Biko cit. in Hlongwane 2010: n.p.) Thompson and Abraham state, that poor are effectively excluded from going to university, as they cannot afford it and there are too less programs, designed to fund university attendance of poor youths. (Cf. Thompson/ Abraham 2005: n.p.) The gap between rich and poor has grown since end of Apartheid exponentially. (Cf. Moodley 2012: 5) Economy is still dependent on the masses of poor, the *have-nots*, who make the system of cheap wages possible. A return to the philosophy of Black Consciousness and deep analysis of the situation is needed in everyday life to make a change. A transformation in all aspects of society is needed. Many write about the bad situation of the public health system. A two-class medicine is striking the country, as ever since. If you can pay, you will be served correctly, if you cannot, or even cannot afford to go to the next hospital you are worse off. „The health of the poor was very close to Biko's heart, and that should be expected from any true freedom fighter“ (Mangena 2011b: n.p.) As Biko started to study medicine, he was deeply committed to the betterment of the healthcare for the poor people. The Zanempilo clinic, as stated in the chapter before was one outcome of the work towards a self-dedicated and self-motivated upliftment of the healthcare structure. As the state, even now, does not really care for a proper health supply, initiatives by the community are inevitable. Neville Alexander sees in

empowerment and self-organization the only way to change the status quo. (Cf. Alexander 2012: 12) Nkosingithi Biko speaks of the importance that the citizens are getting active in the community, as they cannot rely upon the government to change anything. This is a very important point in the debate. In its ineffectiveness the disastrous government policy regarding the HIV/Aids pandemic in the Mbeki years (1999-2008), the change for the better only happened due to the activity of the TAC (Treatment Action Campaign) that mobilized, lobbied, protested and demanded change. (Cf. Nkosingithi Biko cit. in Mandy de Waal 2011) The government changed its policy but still only 1% of infected people receive the anti-HIV drug. Death by Tuberculosis (TB) constitutes almost half of the deaths caused by Aids related illnesses. One must be aware that TB is 100% curable, if you are medicated right. (Cf. Thompson/Abraham 2005: n.p.)

Another topic that makes the majority suffering daily is the insufficient housing opportunities in the growing townships around the cities. Living in the cities is only affordable for a few people; geographically the state of affairs did not change a lot in South Africa. The Reconstruction and Development Programme, a policy framework passed under Mandela, was passed to secure a better housing for the people in the townships. The documentary “Dear Mandela” (2012) directed by Dara Kell and Christopher Nizza, tells the story about a community movement “*Abahlali baseMjondolo*” which formed to oppose the government’s intention to eradicate a whole shantytown near Durban, bringing the case to the court. It is here, where it is stated that in 1994 the ANC promised to provide solid houses for all the shack dwellers of the former townships till 2014. Not a lot was done. The majority of poor blacks still live in shacks around the bigger cities. Many writers mention the bad housing conditions of the people. The RDP houses that are provided by the government (but not sufficient in numbers) are lower in quality than those solid houses, built in Apartheid times. (Cf. Mangena 2010: n.p.) In 2005 confrontations due to the bad housing conditions in the Townships motivated burning barricades in Parts of Cape Town and attempts to block major highways in Gugulethu. All signs of a state, which is not able to provide the citizens with the basic needs and underlines the argument Biko and Black Consciousness coined. That it is not about the colour of those who run the state, but about their dedication to the real problems of the people. Self-reliance is the only way, to escape these mal politics. The anger about the lack of services (houses, water, electricity) is turning more often into violent upswings nowadays, as the youth is hopeless. Police aggression is brutal. There were riots in Diepsloot in 2004 gaining ground in other townships around, cars were stoned, reporters attacked, and the police firing rubber bullets. The people are upset that the ruling class ignores their constitutional rights for a proper housing and living condition. (Cf. Naidoo 2007: 58f.)

Another big problem still lingering on today was also one of severe importance to Biko and the Black Consciousness: Education. What BC was dealing with was to make the young people self-conscious adults. Education was seen as the most potent weapon against poverty, a weapon that is not used sufficiently nowadays. So poverty needs to be approached by educational means on a broad basis. To the contrary, the public education is in a very bad state. (Cf. Mangena 2011b: n.p.) Veli Mbele gives the example of black pupils in Limpopo who had gone through half a year without any textbooks. And this is definitely not the only example. (Cf. Mbele 2012b: n.p.) Who can afford it; send their children to private schools.

Tsedu strikes a nerve when he points out that it is not white nurses letting black people die because they refuse to give service to those who can't afford to pay, but blacks, and that it is black teachers sending their own children to a school with white teachers. So once again, there is the reference to the group of the formerly oppressed people, treating their own people bad. This is linked to the psychological aspects of historical oppression. Mangena states that race is a very important variable in education, as children's success in statistics is linked with the color. (Cf. Mangena 2011a: n.p.) „Whilst apartheid is legally consigned to a museum, it is alive and well in real life.“ (Mangena 2011a) Pheko asks „How are we going to redeem our education system when young people are not able to identify the trajectory of struggle?“ (Pheko 2012: 9) This is the other side of the insufficient state-provided education, it does not conscientize the youths. It does not provide a proper historical analysis, to understand the system that is now ruling the country, and to understand the severe poverty the majority lives in. Alexander claims that the real intellectuals are not those who are taught in school or university, but those who understand how society is structured. Those are the people who are able and hopefully willing to change the status quo. (Cf. Alexander 2012: 12)

Another aspect of the way oppression managed to stay in the minds of the people is the was women and the western beauty dogma. According to Mangena (Cf. Mangena 2010: n.p.) this shows the intrinsic inferiority complex pervading black people's minds. Qekema refers in this respect, to the self-denigration and self-hatred that people had and still have to face. He is explaining this by referring to toxic lightening creams and hair relaxers that were used during Apartheid. Whites manufactured the stuff for black people, but blacks used them (more or less) on their own initiative. The discourse about bleaching, hair straightening and so on, is still alive nowadays. Why do, for example the black wife and daughters of Barack Obama, have straightened hair? This is a huge topic and can't be discussed here at length, but it shall make one think about the underlying reasons, why so many women choose a (costly) wig, or exhausting straightening over their natural, curly hair. Biko and Black Consciousness, as well as the black power movements were aware of the importance of such small everyday issues,

and it became a political statement to not straighten the hair, or use a wig as a female, back in the days. Qekema tells that a „(...) spirit of rebellion was induced where the people would not comb their hair resulting in a hairstyle called AMA-AZANIA.“ (Qekema 2010: n.p.) Women need to be educated about their real natural beauty and not to be confused by outer images. Tsedu is also worried about the fact that so many women are wearing hair from Brazil and India trying hard not to look like themselves, “are we not in trouble?“ he asks, explaining further that it is still the picture of whiteness, which black people and especially women are running after. This sign of rejection of the self is a threat to the sanity of society. (Cf. Tsedu 2012: n.p.) He points out the absurdity of spending money one does not have, buying expensive extensions and wigs one does not need. „How is black bright, right and beautiful when we negate it through our actions?“ (Tsedu 2012: n.p.) Mangena is addressing the aspect of women’s physical health and complains about the political discourse. Bitter he states

*„We do not seem to mean anything we say (...) because blacks who are imbued with this philosophy [B.C] would love themselves and want to excel in what they do. They would seek to uphold the dignity of their people in everything they do. We would build ourself better houses, teach our children with dedication and love, treat patients in our care with respect and dignity, speak our languages and practice our culture with pride.“* (Mangena 2010: n.p.)

All the points stated above should give just a short insight in the discourse about nowadays problems of South Africa, showing, that the political arena has changed, that the legitimated racial oppression of Apartheid has ended nearly 19 years ago, but that the problems are still lingering on. South Africa plays within the neoliberal (world system) framework, and it plays well, which means: wealth for a few on the backs of the majority. Similarly one can see this trend on a world scale. (Cf. Khoapa 2012: n.p.)

#### **4.2.2. Outlook**

Mangena calls for authenticity and solidarity among black people, which means the people, who are still suffering the consequences of an unjust former racial- nowadays capitalist - system. He states that the progressive Constitution, South Africa’s constitution is definitely one of the world’s best constitutions but was simply „imposed“ on this tremendously broken society, without teaching the people how to use their rights and how to adjust to the new reality. Mangena points out that South Africa

*„should have taken time to heal our society of the sicknesses of the past and sometime educate one another about the rights and obligation in the new situation. We should have civic education programmes in school, churches and unions (...)“ (Mangena 2012b: n.p.)*

Today, as Pityana argues, the landscape has changed a lot since the 1960s generation, of Biko. There are more groups for young people to engage with, but he is pointing out a major problem of these organizations, as they are not taken serious by the ANC government. The ANCYL, the youth league of the ANC for example dissociate from the president, as „Zuma is not re-electable“. (Pityana 2007: n.p.) The idea of economic liberation, including the nationalization of mines and mineral wealth, as well as the land resources, are important to the ANCYL, but the response of the president seems to be just one: that, of young people must not speak out of turn. They are not taken seriously, as they follow a truly different premise than the governing party does. Political discourse in an open manner is avoided by the leading ANC, which results in a silencing and a marginalization of the political youth organizations and other oppositional parties. (Cf. Pityana 2007: n.p.)

As Alexander states, there is no real political party, which offers an alternative, most of them internally divided. Formerly informed by the struggle for liberation are nowadays got used to the neoliberal tenor and refuse to give a program of hope. (Cf. Alexander 2012: 11) Pityana is pointing on the problem resulting out of this situation of being silenced, is, that young people seek to insinuate themselves into the political bureaucratic lifelines of the governing regime.

Those who stay out of the ruling party politics „seek to mobilise other networks and lines of patronage, bribe themselves into the heart of the system“ (Pityana 2012: 15) One point of relevance is, that the constitution in his written words holds a reference to “equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms.“ (Cf. RSA Constitution 1996)

In many articles the point was made that the constitution is nothing more but mere words. There are still only certain colors of the rainbow expected in certain environments. Examples for this kind of social division, still normal in South Africa, are for example, that of a white taxi driver, who decided to take a job in one of the townships in Durban, or a white family that moved into an RDP house in Kagiso. This news made it to the newspaper and into TV. Why? Because, after 19 years in democracy it is still not normal, that those things happen.

*„The point is that in the South African context, we do not expect to see this white man there or see white families staying in RDP houses. It is not normal; in much the same way as it is not normal to see white gardeners or domestic workers in our homes.“*

(Mangena 2012a: n.p.)

The question Mangena asks here is, when will it be normal? And when will South Africa be the non-racial country it claims to be. It will be non-racial, when all colors will be „normal“ in any environment and activity.

Neville Alexander is writing, „*Truth is what will liberate us*“. He claims a true understanding and education of the people from within, not from above. He asks to regain the sense that revolution still must be fought, not against a minority regime, but against a capitalist system, which is exploiting the people on a daily basis. It is important to make the people see that there is an alternative. He states that there is so less hope in the population to make any effort changing the system that they loose the feeling for the power they as individuals and as a collective would have. This was the same issue Biko and his comrades were dealing with. People are silenced, not knowing about their power to create change. Alexander asks to start doing things themselves, taking charge of their own live again and to not have faith in a government who is not about to change anything.

Alexander is telling about the "Truth Conference" in Durban, where information on many important matters is made public, an initiative that shall bring knowledge and hope to the people, to strengthen their mind and to support action. He calls for unity and to let go the fear, which bounds people to the status quo. (Cf. Alexander 2012: 12)

*"Colonialism is dead but new overlords impose themselves. The World Bank, WEF, G8, IMF and WTO. They are supported not only by lackey governments like our own, but also by a legion of other forked-tongued abbreviations: NGOs, UNO, USAids, (...)"*  
(Durban Social Forum 2001: n.p.)

AZAPO, as the offspring of the BCM, has failed to make a meaningful impact on the political landscape of the country. There is only one leader of AZAPO in parliament, the election results are bad, which the nowadays leaders trace back to the „wrong elements which are found their way into AZAPO leadership“ (Qoboza 2009: n.p.). It had been leaders who were selfless in the BCM of the past, devotion and loyalty is a very rare element today. It is important that AZAPO takes the leadership role again in the strikes happening nowadays, educate the masses, re-establish vital links and most importantly to „quit the silence“ as well as to consistently mobilize black people to rise up and become their own liberators. „Let us reclaim our proud history and rightful place in the political space of our country. Otherwise that which Cde Biko saw on that distant horizon may never be realized ever.“ (Qoboza 2009:

n.p.) The role of AZAPO's youth in the forward-bringing of change to better, is to first educate themselves about the history, to later spread this knowledge to conscientize the people around them, to get the youths away from drugs and alcohol, making them aware of the brainwash-mass media and therefore getting actively involved into solving community problems. (Cf. Mbele 2010a: n.p.)

Mangena is making the point straight, when he states that black people are the vast majority in South Africa and it is therefore impossible to gain a free, democratic, equitable society when they don't free themselves from the inferiority complexes and take up their place in society. (Cf. Mangena 2012c: n.p.) It is inevitable to achieve political freedom, without people conscientizing themselves, Mangena calls for a conscientized black petit bourgeoisie, to ensure that municipalities as well as education, health and other services are run for the benefit of the people, and not for the benefit of capital. (Mangena 2011b: n.p.) So one, as Biko always preached it, has to become conscious of one's own situation to be able to take a step towards change. (Cf. Dikobo 2011: n.p.)

Nelvis Quekema, Azapo Head of Youth Affairs, in a speech on „Steve Biko in Contemporary Society“ was, is appealing to the youths in the audience „You are the future (...) the world is yours but you have to come forward claim it (...) education is the key to open the doors of success and prosperity.“ (Quekema 2011: n.p.) He states that one is never too young to get involved; Biko was only a teenager when he started to make difference. Young people must start to organise themselves, every government department ought to have a youth element, to form coherent voices. Full creative potential of young people (music, poetry, arts...) There's a need to create a network within the youths of the country. (Cf. Biko, N. in de Waal 2011: n.p.) „My plea to you today is for you to take Biko's ideals to heart.“ (Quekema 2011: n.p.) Social justice was important to Biko, and the achievement of a true humanity was his vision. Quekema speaks out about the importance of reading, to become a critical being, as reading widens one's scope „[y]ou become more self-assertive as your self-esteem increases. Reading is what made Biko to be one of the most respected leaders of his time.“ (Quekema 2011: n.p.)

„Biko lived and died for excellence“, the premise is to respect and love oneself, he states. „(...) the way we dress, walk, talk and smile must exude confidence and excellence. (...) Excellence does not depend on (...) external appreciation. It is a drive from within (...).“ (Quekema 2011: n.p.)

Tsedu advises the people to reject the false consciousness, to be real and „start with yourself feeling good the way you are“ (Tsedu 2012: n.p.) Pityana states in this respect, that in South Africa at present there is a „danger of growing a generation of young people without hope of

a better future.“ (Pityana 2012: 16) As students and young people are living in a political environment where they are silenced and education is not aspired, radical scholarship is needed and it must be based on the daily experiences and conditions of life. As Pityana points out he finds the youth of today caught up in the atmosphere of national politics, undermining their ability to become the voice for an alternative political way. (Cf. Pityana 2012: 17) Tsedu advises everybody who is a member of political organization or else to enhance blackness and to remember that those who intent to subvert blackness have special means, why they do it, might it be wealth or fame. He also points out the difficulties to stand against the masses, even to stand against ones own family when it comes to different opinions and speaking up for changing the attitudes towards blackness, the self or the principles of society.

*„When you succumb we are dead. When you stand up and defy the wrong norm, the wrong fashion, like Jesus, you push the frontiers of righteousness, you change the world, you make the world a better place, inch by inch, centimetre by centimetre, person by person, day by day.“* (Tsedu 2012: n.p.)

Referring to Biko, Pityana states that, in time, young people will take the lead to create their own future. Biko was and still is shaping the life of many by example. (Cf. Pityana 2012: 19) Mbele suggests that it is important to honor the memory of those „gallant young people, who gave their lives (...) to inspire young people that they too can become the best they can be.“ (Mbele 2012a: n.p.) Changes must be done; money and resources should be spent on the development programs instead of political events. Soweto Uprising (June 16, 1976) was aimed at the bad quality of education, so those who have an educational standard or resources should organize and invest in township schools to assist in providing a good education, which enables the pupils to escape the cycle of poverty and to challenge the „get rich quick“ mentality. It is on the black community to educate their own children So those concerned about progress and wellbeing of blacks should make personal commitment to improve the situation. (Cf. Mbele 2012a: n.p.)

Nkosingithi Biko (2011) states the same, that it is time the people get up and start to engage into the building up the country they wish to see. He recognizes a big problem in the people waiting for the government to change the situation, but as the constitution are mere words, not many people are in the position to enjoy actual rights and privileges. One crucial point in this regard is that during Apartheid people did not believe in the state. Therefore it was important to engage actively to shape the reality; there was no state to rely on. Today it is still an exploitative capitalistic state that does not improve the lives of millions through their action,

but the people believe the state would do so and remain passive. Black Consciousness always sought to infuse the notion of self-reliance and practical expression through projects, as the power of the collective was always stronger than the individual. An example of the self-induced power was building up the Zanemphilo clinic, which was built without any government support and still exists today. (Cf. Nkosingithi Biko cit. in de Waal 2011: n.p.)

Steve Biko's philosophy is still a threat to the current set-up, states Andile Mngxitama, a leading Black Consciousness thinker and organizer, in an interview. He also underlines the statement that „*South Africa is a white country under black management*“. (Mngxitama cit. in Patel 2011: n.p.) With regard to Biko he states that the idea of shaping one's own destiny might be the most powerful legacy of Biko. It is the importance for self-determination, as Nkosingithi Biko (2011) points out.

What this chapter tried to show is the reception of Biko's philosophy at a broad range in the daily discourse. It is still a long way to achieve what Biko and BC envisioned: a society with a more human face.

Along with Veli Mbele's analysis one can ascribe the bad political performance to change the economic inequality of the country by the leading ANC to four causes: historical, psychological, economical, and fear. Literature, in its heterogeneity, is quite homogenous in these aspects. It is in the one part a historical failure of how political „freedom“ was achieved, which guaranteed the ongoing economic powerlessness of the masses. With the CODESA, the Convention for A Democratic South Africa, the post-1994 state ensured economic dominance of white capital. As analyzed above, the mere change of state management does not change the economic structure. The psychological component is that the negative image of the black body painted over centuries is still internalized. It is the „*inferiority complex*“ Biko analysed at length. This picture is not challenged by the leading politicians, even if they are mainly from the black community, it will continue to interfere with the development of the real potential of the black (economically oppressed) people. Challenging the picture creates awareness and that is what Black Consciousness was aiming at to provide a change in mental attitude towards the self. What the black government is doing is to perpetuate the notions of black inferiority, through their politics of building sub-standard houses for blacks, second grade health care for blacks, substandard education for black children and so on. As Biko stated „*being black is not a matter of pigmentation. Being black is a reflection of a mental attitude*“, and therefore in Biko's definition non-whites are leading the country. Economically a perpetuation of the former, a kind of informal Apartheid, has replaced the formal institutionalized Apartheid.

Mbele (2012) argues of South Africa being a Kleptocracy par excellence instead of a

democracy. What all writers have in common is the criticism and condemnation of materialism and the material griever which is suffocating the society on all levels. The aspect of fear determining the choices people make, starts with the fear of speaking out against the common policy of the ANC. It is about becoming aware that the government is managing a political and economic system that is neoliberal capitalism and therefore not in favor of blacks, which are on the lower end of the societal ladder. But still a lot of people believe in the legacy of ANC as the liberating force in 1994. So speaking out against them needs courage. (Cf. Mbele 2012b: n.p.)

It was Biko who had already foreseen the situation as it is today, and it was his fight against a racist and capitalist state, which still is in need for completion. (Cf. Biko 1976: 149)

### **4.2.3. Activities done to achieve the Vision**

*„We proudly declare that Biko lives in us, I declare that I am the Spirit of Bantu Biko, I am the remains of Biko, here to continue with the struggle to change the conditions under which our people continue to live, and that struggle will continue until we have an egalitarian society where, to quote Biko 'there will not be black people and white people, but there shall just be people'!!“ (Dikobo 2011: n.p.)*

#### **4.2.3.1. AZAPO's Memorial Activities and Institutions**

The Stretch The Rand Campaign was one guided by AZAPO guided is stretching out to gain economic freedom. On the homepage from AZAPO it is stated that though freedom from political oppression might have been formally achieved by the first free elections in 1994, socio-economic problems are still holding down the vast majority of the country's population. The „Stretch the Rand“ campaign is a self-affirmation to fight for own economic and social advancement. The lack of support for black businesses is one of the reasons why there is no development. It is stated that blacks conduct white doctors, lawyers etc. when they are in need, instead of conducting businesses of black people. It is a straight forward call to blacks to uplift themselves through mutual support, so for example going to a black doctor when you are sick, buying at black shops instead of big company driven supermarkets and so on. The outcome and the purpose is to hold the money spent by blacks in the ranks of blacks, so that there is an increase in support and economic solidarity. Blacks spending their money on black businesses instead of spending their money on white owned industries. It shall activate a positive trend, where community improves (better schools, better businesses etc.).

„It is our duty and responsibility to enhance our collective and individual dignity through collective economic action.“ (Cf. AZAPO n.y.: n.p.) In 2010 AZAPO has launched the Biko-Tiro Political Academy. The main political objectives are to work towards the vision of Biko „giving South Africa a more human face“ and that of linking the education with the entire Continent of Africa. The concept of The Academy is based along the lines of the Formation Schools of SASO, which started in late 1969. It was in these formation schools where Biko spelled out the political objectives of SASO. Compared to SASO, which was a student-organisation, the Academy is for all BCM youth and students alike, there is no distinction made, and therefore the objective is also, to bring the Academy to the people. The Academy's theme is „*Educate to Liberate*“ and its objectives are as following:

*"To provide a platform for the intensive political, ideological and leadership training needs of young people*

*To guide young people in the undertaking of the study of Black Consciousness and Scientific Socialism*

*To promote in young people the understanding of the practical implications of the basic tenets of BC like self-reliance and community service*

*To encourage young people in their efforts to research about the social, political and economic challenges of the Continent, as well as researching possible solutions*

*To combat all forms of influences that seek to undermine African values and deliberately anchor young people in the spirit of Afro-optimism" (Qekema 2010: n.p.)*

As AZAPO sees the globalised capitalism as the major contributor to the social and economic situation that young people face in South Africa (as well as world wide), it is important to perform a critical examination of the economic structure of society to provide a deep understanding of patterns and then forming a vision of hope. This states Mbele in a paper held at the inaugural conference of the Academy in 2010. (Cf. Mbele 2010b: n.p.)

AZAPO launched the Black Consciousness Week between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of September, the days in which the torture of Biko in the hands of the Apartheid police was intensified leading to his death on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 1977. Due to the Marikana Massacre, which happened in August, AZAPO decided to put the Biko commemorations 2012 under the theme of „Biko for Marikana: A call to rise up“. A Biko Youth Dialogue was set up, to enhance the connection of today's youth with Biko's thought. A debate was held among the leadership of various youth political organisations, wherein they were discussing and analysing the relevance of Biko for the youth's of today. The „Biko for Marikana Protest“ marked the end of the Black

Consciousness Week programme, with a silent march along the Steve Biko Road in Tshwane (where Biko was born). It should remember Biko and mark a sign of solidarity with the victims of the Marikana slaughter, as Marikana marked a severe flashback to Apartheid's police brutality. (Cf. Nodoba 2012b: n.p.)

#### **4.2.3.2. Maintaining the Legacy of Bantu Stephen Biko in the African Diaspora**

The Steve Biko Cultural Institute is located in Salvador, Bahia, a province of Brazil and is named in homage and tribute to the life, teachings and actions of the South African leader of Black Consciousness. Salvador was Brazil's first capital (1549-1776). As the census in the year 2000 shows, eighty percent of the 2.5 million inhabitants of the city are individuals of African decent, which is quite a lot. The institute was founded in 1992 by a group of Afro-Brazilian students to fight racism through concrete means: through educational activism. The idea was to create an educational cooperative where low-income black youths could learn and get prepared for acceptance test in school or university and to stimulate the consciousness of the youths.

*„The institute works to overcome economic, social and political barriers for disenfranchised black youth, while also assisting them to develop self-esteem and an African rooted identity, ultimately constructing a sense of solidarity with the black empowerment struggle in Africa, Brazil and other African Diasporas.“* (Sanabria 2012: 8)

Their programmes include training and lectures on human rights issues; black career preparation and is committed to establish the first black university in Salvador. The centre tries to live up to the legacy of Biko by being about respect, self-esteem, hope, vision, and empowerment and accessing institutional rights for blacks in Brazil, to obtain equality in Brazilian society in the future. (Cf. Sanabria 2012: 8)

The „Biko Transformation Center“, is located in Brooklyn, New York and calls itself a spiritual community. It provides leadership training, educational and entertainment programmes and services for the community. It works to develop and promote cultural life and offers space for activities. Founded in 2006, the center provides a space for different activities for the people of the area, in arts, fitness, skills, spiritual and more. They provide space for building networks within the community; the center hosts classes to develop skills, a rehearsal studio, study time and a dance studio, so that the people can live what they have in

mind, to strengthen the heritage and to give an outlook and a way for expression. „*We are a can do group, rather than a do for group.*“ That is how the people who work in the Center describe their approach. And this is well in line with the idealism of self-reliance as Biko promoted it.

#### **4.2.3.3. The Steve Biko Foundation (SBF)**

Established in 1998 in South Africa, the Steve Biko Foundation as a community development organization ought to fight for the values Steve Biko lived and died for: the restoration of true humanity. The declared mission is to create spaces for critical analysis and engagement with community issues to strengthen democracy. Importance is laid on the aspects of reconstituting the people regarding their history, identity, and culture, to promote a individual and community based leadership. So one of the pillars of the Steve Biko Foundation is to develop leadership on different levels, to get the people involved in their community-, into the political, economic and cultural life. The core values the foundation and programmes try to enhance include respect for human dignity, self-respect and self-determination, affirmation of diversity, integrity and organisational independence. (Cf. SBF n.y.: About Us) The Steve Biko Foundation is currently running different programmes, the „Legacy Project“, the „Leadership Development“, the „International Dialogue Series“ and the „Research and Publications“, which will be discussed in detail below.

##### **4.2.3.3.1. Legacy Projects - The Biko Heritage Trail**

Located in the Eastern Cape, The Biko Heritage Trail consists of six Biko related sites, which connects the present to the past, by taking remembrance, including the following: the Steve Biko Centre, Biko's Home, the Office of Steve Biko, Biko's Grave in The Garden of Remembrance, the Steve Biko Bridge and the Biko Statue. Some of the sites were declared national monuments in 1997 on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the death of Steve Biko. It is mainly funded by the National Department of Arts and Culture in cooperation with the National Lottery, the National Department of Tourism, Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality and Transnet. The Steve Biko Centre is located in the Ginsberg Township of King William's Town, in the Eastern Cape and was opened on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2012. The centre focuses on the legacy of Steve Bantu Biko and its significance for present day South Africa. Two aspects are on the agenda, on the one side dealing with the „physical“ development (such as housing, electricity, water provision) as well as providing

intellectual recourses (heritage, culture, history...) on the other side. In time the Centre shall comprise many different facilities: a museum; an archive and library resource centre; a commemorative garden honoring the human rights activists, training rooms, cultural performance and production spaces; a community media centre; dining facilities, conferencing spaces and more.

The principal objectives of the Centre are to educate the public about the leadership of Bantu Biko and his contribution to freedom and democracy. It shall contribute to poverty reduction and eradication and the development of self-dependent industries.

*„For this reason the Steve Biko Centre is designed as both a destination for the tourist and a vehicle for greater cultural awareness and economic development for the local community. It is meant to be a living monument that utilizes memory to channel local energies towards contemporary development challenges.“ (SBF n.y.: Legacy Projects.)*

The „Biko Monument“ - Biko's Home is a national monument site situated in the Township of Ginsberg, not far from the Steve Biko Centre. The house belonged to Biko's mother Alice Nokuzola Biko, and it was here where Biko was banned to, from 1973 onwards until his death in 1977.

The „Office of Steve Biko“, the former office of the BCP located at No. 15 Leopold Street was an old Anglican Church building situated in the heart of King William's Town. The office was used to channel programs like Zanamphilo and Njawaxa Leatherworks. It was raided and vandalized on numerous occasions by the Security Branch of town. It is nowadays the office of a bible school. The Steve Biko Foundation tried to buy it some years ago when it was for sale, but it was then subsequently withdrawn from the market. The Foundation is still in negotiations about their right to buy the building.

The Zanempilo Clinic is also one of the sites of the Steve Biko Trail; it is a community health centre in the rural village of Zinyoka outside King William's Town. It was established by Biko as one of the projects under the auspices of the Black Community Programmes. Under the conduct of Dr. Mamphela Ramphele the clinic provided primary health care services for the people of the community. The BCP was building the clinic without any governmental support and therefore shows a perfect example of grass root organization for the betterment of the own people. It is still open today, and the Steve Biko Foundation is working on improving the service through funding.

Instead of erecting a big tombstone at the grave of Biko, as suggested by the Municipality to remember Steve Biko on his 20<sup>th</sup> year of death, Biko's family requested to upgrade the entire graveyard instead. The graveyard was improved and declared a heritage site and is now called

“Steve Biko – Garden of Remembrance”.

The „Steve Biko Bridge“ formerly John Vorster Bridge was renamed in 1997. The bridge is nearby the Fort Glamourghan Prison, where many political prisoners were jailed during Apartheid, Steve served a long period of solitary confinement there in the mid-70s.

The „Biko Statue“ was erected right in front of the City Hall on Oxford Street in East London, sculptured by a Johannesburg artist Naomi Jacobson, funded by Denzel Washington, who played Biko in the Movie Cry Freedom, by Kevin Kline, who played Donald Woods in the movie and by Peter Gabriel. (Cf. SBF n.y.: The Biko Heritage Trail)

Those sites are just the visible memorials to remember the public of the life of Steve Biko and his dead in the hands of the regime. They are also visiting spots for tourists and school classes. It is important for each society to not forget the sufferings of the past, to be remembered of the people who stood up to defend human rights.

#### **4.2.3.3.2. Leadership Development**

The Foundation’s emphasis lies also on development of multiple layers of leadership on personal, political and professional basis. The leadership development focuses on three pillars: consciousness, community and capacity building. „The proposition of the Steve Biko Foundation focuses on developing a cadre of leadership.“ (SBF n.y.: Leadership Development) It is seeking to create a culture of interrogative leadership. So the Foundation’s leadership development programs seek to increase the capacity of communities to an organic leadership culture, which perpetuates itself, sustained by consistent engagement with contemporary social issues. The foundation seeks to empower communities, that they are able not only to know about the daily issues (as they live in it) but to get engaged to develop alternative paradigms to change the situation. Critical engagement in the status quo helps to conscientize the people and therefore next generations will be more prepared to act, instead of letting time pass. SBF supports community development through creating forums for public education about various issues, developing platforms for interaction between professional and emerging practitioners as well as supporting the development of community-based organizations. It is important to create skills, so it is evident opportunities to develop a certain skill must be provided. The capacity building aims to create these spaces and opportunities, for as they declare „[t]he Foundation recognizes that without basic skills in community organizing and organizational development, the empowerment of marginalized individuals and communities remains an unattainable ideal.“ (SBF n.y.: Leadership Development.) It is evident that poverty is a circle, where a lot of potential is wasted, through the daily struggle to

survive. It is therefore essential to get people out of this cycle to free the potential there is.

#### **4.2.3.3.3 The International Dialogue Series**

Integral to the work of the Foundation are public lectures, seminars and publications. Among those are „The Steve Biko Memorial Lecture“, „The Robert Sobukwe Memorial Lecture“, „The Matthew Goniwe Youth Leadership Conference“ and various seminars. The „Steve Biko Memorial Lecture“ was established in 2000 and is the „flagship“ of the SBF to pursue the core element of its mission fostering „the intangible but essential community building blocks: history, identity, culture and values, as the foundation for leadership and agency at the level of the individual and the community.“ (SBF n.y.: International Dialogue Series) The Lecture links the individual and the collective, mentioning obstacles of today in reference to the vision of Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness thought. Among the main speakers were Prof. Zakes Mda (2001), Prof. Chinua Achebe (2002), Prof. Nelson Mandela (2004), Dr. Mamphela Ramphele (2005), Prof. Alice Walker (2010), Prof. Ben Okri (2012) All the lectures are available online connecting elements in the struggle for dignity among Africans in Africa and the Diaspora.

In 2013, as part of the commemoration on the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the murder in detention of Bantu Stephen Biko, the SBF hosted the „Steve Biko Memorial Lecture: Europe“ in cooperation with the London School of Economics (LSE). This lecture took place for the first time in London, at the end of October 2012, and was delivered by the co-founder of SASO Rev. Prof. Nyameko Barney Pitso. This event shows that the international recognition of Biko's legacy is about to broaden, instead of vanishing.

The Robert Sobukwe Memorial Lecture, honouring the late Pan Africanist Robert Malingo Sobukwe focuses particularly on issues relevant to the African continent.

The Matthew Goniwe Youth Leadership Conference brings together about 70 community-based organizations on an annual basis. It is a space to interact, exchange ideas, policies and provides training and capacity building.

The Seminars and workshops on different topics (from Global Impact of 9/11 to Consciousness, Agency and African Development), taking place during the year, are platforms for dialogue and leadership development.

Frank Talk is a newly created forum designed to bring people from various backgrounds together to discuss about the issues impacting South Africa on political, economic and social sphere. The last Frank Talk was issued and live on air in early February with the title „Steve Biko and Black Consciousness Today“. It offered a very interesting discussion about the

status quo, and the problems of economic Apartheid, which is still crucial in the lives of many. (Cf. SBF n.y.: Frank Talk)

#### **4.2.3.3.4. Research & Publications**

As SBF has been active on a national level and in grassroots communities, it became evident that there is a lack of interaction between „research, ensuing policies and the communities“. (SBF n.y.: Research and Publications.) SBF's Research & Policy Unit aims at assisting communities to bring their information and knowledge to a broader audience to bring in alternative voices and perspective into the discourse from those people who are truly confronted by the issues. So the Unit will engage in research and policy formulations, enabling fellowships, and publishing. The policy formulations shall be evaluated in reality, to see if policies are successful or not, problem-solving research will be undertaken in areas such as access to education, patient's rights and creation of economic opportunities.

The SBF is eager to provide a platform for information, on a monthly, and an annual basis as well as occasional policy papers. The monthly publication is entitled *Viewpoint* and contains perspectives on issues on the development agenda. The *Frank Talk Journal* is published on an annual basis and contains articles from various fellows. Three issues have already been published, providing a great mixture of texts and standpoints.

*„While intended to be a scholarly publication, Frank Talk will also create opportunities for “lay“ people, or those not recognized by the academic establishment, to contribute thoughtful pieces on topics of their choice.“* (SBF n.y.: Research and Publications)

This chapter should give a short insight into the activities taking place around the legacy of Biko and the message of BCM. It is evident that last year, 2012, was essential in the ongoing of Biko's vision, as many projects were put up, like the creation of the Biko Centre, which is a milestone in the country's history and historical fight against oppression. As the political tenor in South Africa tends to heroize the history of the ANC and its fight against the regime and to forget about the importance of the Black Consciousness Movement and similar movements, it is important to see those manifestations taking place and giving a space for gaining knowledge about the past to provide a better understanding of the present. That the Steve Biko Memorial Lecture made its way to Europe, London, is another big step to reach a wider audience and gain broader recognition of the message of Biko and BCM, which is nowadays more important than ever, as Pityana emphasized more than once.

Bantu Stephen Biko is a messenger and inspiration, to people all over the world, to get back

on the active side, to be a subject instead of an object to change the circumstances within one's reach and to change the daily life of a few people, instead of doing nothing. The Biko Foundation in Brazil shows that personal engagement can turn into an uplifting facility of hope. As well as the „Biko Transformation Centre“ in Brooklyn, New York, which is living up to Biko's legacy in working towards developing cultural life within the community, giving the people a place to regain their hope and inspiring them to aspire a better life.

## CONCLUSION

*“Yes, I think there is no running away from the fact that now in South Africa there is such an ill distribution of wealth that any form of political freedom which does not touch on the proper distribution of wealth will be meaningless. The whites have locked up within a small minority of themselves the greater proportion of the country’s wealth. If we have a mere change of face of those in governing positions what is likely to happen is that black people will continue to be poor, and you will see a few blacks filtering through into the so-called bourgeoisie. Our society will be run almost as of yesterday. So for a meaningful change to appear there needs to be an attempt at reorganising the whole economic pattern and economic policies within this particular country.” (Biko n.y.: 149)*

This quote shows once again the essential point that I have tried to make clear throughout this paper. The fight for liberation was same way a fight for revolution. It was the call for a revolution of the mind to transform society, from a racist capitalistic system into a system of “true humanity”, to use Biko’s phrase. The analysis of the interconnection between the economic structure and the institutionalized racism was important to the Black Consciousness Movement. Black Consciousness sought to make the oppressed individual aware of the situation it lives in and its agenda was to empower the oppressed. It was crucial to see the truth about the power one gets by changing the thinking and attitude. This insight is one necessary step towards ending the system of oppression.

There are two strands that were evaluated in this paper. One strand is the essence of Black Consciousness to empower the people by making them aware of their position within a certain order (institutionalized racism) and to show why they stand where they do and by whom they are oppressed. Black Consciousness puts an emphasis on the historical origin of oppression. The involvement with the past was essential in conscientizing. A strategy was to straighten and to correct the picture of the past, which was altered by white hegemonic domination and allegedly scientific racism of the past.

The first step, therefore, was to recognize the problem (white racism and capitalism) and the perpetrator of the problem (white ruling class). In the second step, the own position (as part of the oppressed, exploited group) would be understood. Within this state, the inferiority complex must be identified as an underlying force, which binds the individual to passivity. As BC had analyzed, the inferiority complex is perpetuating itself through certain mechanisms,

which are partly psychological but also physical and structural. Part of the reason why the inferiority complex is continuing, if it is not consciously recognized, is because the Apartheid system was based on the repetition of its notion of dividing the society in “have and have-nots”, to speak in Biko’s words once again. Blacks were made second-class citizens. Poverty, bad education, miserable healthcare, unemployment and the immanent fear of punishment held them in a state of inferiority. All those elements led to paralysis, in which the oppressed “objects” living under constant subjugation does not and cannot see the potential power and therefore remain in the existing system of devaluation. There is no vision and no hope. This is the point from where Black Consciousness departed. Infuse those people with knowledge of their past, educate them and thereby empower their mind and hearts. Through such empowerment, conscientizing of the self, hope and vision is regained, and the scope for action was opened. Action is the third step, which BC was heading to. Action was the only way to change the status quo, in the own life of the individual and in a collective way. The change Black Consciousness headed to was the transformation of the system, which back then was the racist capitalist white state of Apartheid South Africa.

The second strand is the revolutionary character of BC and its radical implications. Black Consciousness not only aimed at changing the racist Apartheid system, but also at uncovering its capitalist mechanisms, which needed a group of landless, powerless people for its survival. It was about the change of the capitalist structure, where racism was embedded in. Black Consciousness and Steve Biko knew that mere personal changes of the reigning power would not suffice. Without the conscientized black masses a transformation to better would not take place, as the value of capitalism would endure. The deep interconnection between racism and capitalism was a point Biko tried to make clear. The exploitation of the masses (black working class) by a small group (white ruling class) was and is part of capitalism’s essence.

*“The people do not even know really and truly their rights as workers. They are not educated to understand their participation in the whole economy of the country. Now, we [B.C.M.] believe that a worker is entitled to know his role in the economy, to know what happens to the kind of product he produces, to know how profits come to be made, so that he can be in a strong position to bargain with the employer with respect to the distribution of profits within an economic undertaking. This is what we see as a developed worker to be. Now, in this country this seems to have even more significance, because also thrown in is the color question.”* (Biko 1976 cit. in Arnold 1979: 268)

The individual, oppressed by racism and capitalism, must be enabled to clarify their consciousness. So there is the institutionalized racism and therefore the color of one's skin, which makes you part of the oppressed camp, and there is capitalism which makes you part of the group of the have-nots, struggling for survival. Black Consciousness showed the blacks what they were fighting for, and why they have to fight. Blacks had to acquire it. (Cf. Fatton 1986: 79)

This acquirement still has to be achieved. What Biko had foreseen nearly 40 years ago has come to hand. Capitalism is still holding the majority of the people of South Africa in a bad state. The majority of blacks are poor. Housing is bad, education is worse, health care is bad, and there is no hope and no trust into the governing ANC. Liberation in 1994 meant, that the color of the leadership changed, a constitution was adopted, making all people of South Africa equal before the law. But the constitution is mere words. Equality and justice do not characterize reality. Formally a democracy, South Africa did not manage it to overcome the gap between rich and poor, between haves and have-nots; it even increased. Why? It is because the transformation of the system did not happen yet. It just did not happen. What changed is that the institutionalized Apartheid made way for a new sort of leadership, which is still deeply committed to capital. What was and is missing, is the reprocessing of the past and the will to work towards a system that is dealing with the problems of the people, the poor people.

James Baldwin once said that "Anyone who has ever struggled with poverty knows how extremely expensive it is to be poor" (Baldwin 1960). And this is why the majority of people are occupied with ensuring the surviving of their families, rather than to fight against social injustices. This is the cycle in which the poor are trapped. And this is what Black Consciousness wanted to dissolve. They aimed at the creation of situations where people can take a step back from their battle for survival to recognize the trap they are caught in and to change the way they deal with it, in a positive, self-defined and more powerful way. This is why Black Consciousness is a revolutionary theory and philosophy, as it is an attitude to change the self for the betterment of the whole society, in respect to not stay where one is trapped by the economic and political structure, but to take action and begin to forward a vision and an exit to the status quo. It is revolutionary, because it is applicable in not only a racist Apartheid system, as in South Africa, but in other places of the world as well. As there is always a group of people suffering under the dictate of capitalism. Capitalism and the neoliberal paradigm are entrenched in the social and economic policies of the world's governments since the early 1980s. The capitalist structure and accumulation is dividing the world population into "*have vs. have-nots*" (Biko 1971), into the so-called "*economic north*

vs. south” (Harvey 2003), the “core vs. the periphery” (Wallerstein 1979).

Biko knew about the deep connection between racial oppression and the values of capitalism. He was sure that there would and could never be a true liberation of the people if the pervasive system of capitalism and its mechanisms would not be overthrown. This overthrow was essential and could only be achieved if the people (working class people, as well as people belonging the ruling class) refuse to take part in their own oppression and their own sufferation by reclaiming their rights (be it higher wages, equality or justice) and by refusing to be exploited, suffocated and fooled (by media, political discourse, mis-education and so on). Capitalism can only work if people do not have a vision of how to exist outside the capitalist system. Black Consciousness knew that for a radical transformation the awakening of the individual was essential.

By analyzing the laws of Apartheid (chapter 1) the mechanisms to subjugate the majority and to put them in a closely planned box (restriction of personal rights, movement, work, freedom), a framework where they were allowed to move, were discussed.

It is important to understand that physical restrictions and orders over the black body (the object of racist repression) had severe impact on the mind and the soul of the oppressed individual. And the thereof resulting inferiority complex, which Biko analyzed (Chapter 2.2.4), is an emotional disturbance which outlives generations of generations, even if slavery, colonialism or apartheid are long gone. If the people are not aware of the problems they face, be it emotional or structural, they are not able to change it.

If there is no conscientization, there won't be change. This is what BC was and is all about.

In chapter 1.2., a short overview of the opposition parties and organizations should have provided the reader with an insight in the quite complex representation of the oppressed group(s). It might have been this very diverse opposition, with different interests, which could not unify the people and therefore lost its strength by division. When ANC and PAC, the oldest- and the latter the most radical organization, were banned in 1960, South Africa's people were in need of a representation which the Black Consciousness Movement was about to fulfill. Starting with the formation of the student organization SASO in 1969, the way was paved for a broad conscientization of the black people.

“Black” was defined in a new way, in order to unite the Apartheid categories (bantú, colored, indian...) under one label “black”. Thereby this category provided a scheme for real colorlessness by using “black” not as a label for one's appearance (skin color) but as a description of an attitude of mind. “*Being black is not a matter of pigmentation - being black is a reflection of a mental attitude.*” (Biko 1971c: 49) Blacks were defined by the element of being part of a politically, economically or socially oppressed group, who identified

themselves as a unit progressing towards the envisaged liberation. By definition Black Consciousness was an inward-looking process. It was a way to channel the black man back to his roots, to infuse him with pride and dignity and “to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil supreme in the country of his birth.” (Biko 1970c: 29)

The accusation of BC being racist dismantles itself when one analyzes the definition of blackness. The people all over the world are trapped in a (capitalistic) system that is not eager to conscientize the people about the mechanisms in which society is functioning. Neither do the most governments try to conscientize the people about the power they have (as workers, as parents, as consumers) but try to keep the majority down (by insufficient information, low education, news and media as messenger to get a certain message across, poor pay, heavy working conditions and hours).

Capitalism would immediately transform if the people, on whom the system is built would deny serving as cheap laborers, blind customers and uninterested citizens. Black Consciousness was about to bring the people light, to bring about change in the heads of the people, who were not prepared to see anything outside the box Apartheid doctrine has prepared for them.

Apartheid created a geographical space for all non-white citizens of South Africa. Bantustans were the geographical boxes divided into so-called tribes. Besides geographical restrictions, the regime tried its best to suffocate the knowledge of the people, by bestowing them with the lowest education, the worst health care, the lowest loans, the worst working conditions. In effect, people began to feel that there is something, which they do not deserve: the living standard of whites, the education of whites, the health care of whites. Additionally colonialism and racism always tried to vanish the history, the tradition and the former customs of the people they subjugated. This was an essential mode to break the people's connection to their past, so that they have nothing to rely on. (Cf. Biko 1971e: 69) So what the Black Consciousness philosophy wanted to initialize was the deep connection to the higher self, in each individual. So that men can be powerful again, by knowing their history and recognize their own worth. These modes of empowering have radical, revolutionary implications not necessarily restricted to the south african situation. And this is why Black Consciousness has severe importance for all oppressed groups on this planet, still. It might be claimed Black Consciousness is even of special interest for the people who live in the economic north, to question their role within the system on a world scale and to get conscious about the mechanisms and thereby in the longer run, refuse to take part in the mental oppression of the masses and the physical oppression of the people in any given society, and

in the economic south especially.

It is important to see the parallels between the situation in South Africa and the situation of the world. As exploitation of resources and people is still very much connected to the former colonial systems, which were leading Europe and the West to the power they have today. Revolution and a transformation of the system must come from the people from the bottom of society, as the ruling elite, no matter how likely the country is to call itself a democracy, will never give away their power. As Jean Ziegler (2005) refers to, the global financial capital is the new colonizing power, subjugating any markets and nations. Capitalist corporations are those who take influence in the policies of the national governments. (Ziegler 2005) So transformation must come from inside the system, from people who are aware of the mechanisms and are willing to change their lives according to not support the ongoing of the system. South Africa and the Black Consciousness theme tells us a micro story about the macro functioning of the world and shows a way to combat the cycle of paralysation.

The essence of Black Consciousness is not to answer white racism with an exclusive philosophy of blackness, but to provide the people, who are oppressed, no matter what color they might have, with powerful means to fight against systematical brainwash, devaluing their true powers and their right for a life in dignity, self-reliance and happiness. Strong black unity was the antithesis to the thesis of white racism. In black unity, Biko saw the togetherness and the cooperation of all people of the oppressed group to fight against those who oppress, and to seek a new way of creating a life and an attitude towards life, which is positive in outlook and powerful in the everyday struggle. Biko knew it would take long until people are willing to see and to change the ways, both in mind and in physical action. But once the opportunity is provided to change one's attitude and state of mind, the first step was already done.

All mechanisms in which Apartheid legislature tried to trap the oppressed people, to suggest a potential change through a "*separate but equal*" attitude, setting up Bantustans in a mere manner to blind the people, Biko and his comrades of BC revealed immediately. What the people of South Africa need to remember, is that even if ANC is now ruling the country, the system is still run nearly as of yesterday, because an equal redistribution of land and ownership never happened. And it never happened because the capital-strong part of the society is still running the country. Finance is the doctrine, which drives politics. It does not matter which color the president has, as long as he is not active in changing the situation of his black brothers and sisters at the bottom of society. For Biko president Zuma, who reins South Africa since some years, would definitely be a non-white. He is reaching for values that are not associated with the upliftment of the poor people. The whole political parties are indulging Neoliberalism and the priority of capital.

Chapter 4 issued the initiatives that sprout within the community during the last years. Those initiatives are the future of the country. Not the big political parties who are not willing to change the status quo. This is what the BCM always supported as the basic facility for a meaningful change, the self-reliance of the people of South Africa to take their lives into their own hands. Even if it is no small white minority that is leading the oppression, but a capitalist class of different colors, the enemy must be fought through a conscientization and a regaining of strength to master ones own life and not stay disillusioned in the system the government is providing. The goals must be emancipation and empowerment, seeking for the truth rather than being comforted by a poorly paid job. So it is the community that provides a vision of hope, the grass root organizations which stand up, to claim their rights, the electricians who reinstall the cut wirings, no matter if they might get punished for their actions. It is about the people who speak out against injustice and inequality, not the politicians who tell one thing and do another. Many groups have formed in the past years to head to the vision of a “*true humanity*”, where the well being of the people is more important than the gaining of wealth by the individual.

What South Africa had to experience since the fall of Apartheid is a deeply seated materialism, regardless the sufferation of the majority of its citizens. Instead of a more human and social political approach, Neoliberalism spread. So what needs to be done to change the griever and greed of the people is to fill the vacuum which exists inside, which is nowadays filled by tangibles, with a deep sense of the need to return to a conscious way of life, where nobody of society has to suffer. As Biko stated:

*“The fact that apartheid has been tied up with white supremacy, capitalist exploitation, and deliberate oppression makes the problem much more complex. Material want is bad enough, but coupled with spiritual poverty it kills. And this latter effect is probably the one that creates mountains of obstacles in the normal course of emancipation of the black people.”* (Biko 1970c: 28)

This point is still accurate, not only in South Africa. Spiritual consciousness, as well as the sense for righteousness is missing in most capitalist economies, as is the deep sense to act for the betterment of political and economic justice. South Africa is still on its way to become *Azania*, the truly and deeply liberated society where the minority does not live on the majority’s sufferation. Biko was a revolutionary, he was a visionary, his message was and is of severe importance to all oppressed people who *have-not*, but also for all people who are part of the group who enjoy the privileges, by having been born into, or belonging to the

group which *has*.

*"The great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great gift still has to come from Africa - giving the world a more human face."* (Biko 1971: 47)

Black Consciousness was and is a philosophy and a way of life to confront existing systems of exploitation or exclusion, like capitalism, which does not provide same rights for all people. Black Consciousness dissolves, when it has reached its aim of a colorless and classless society. This might be one essential point, where one can see, that Black Consciousness is about to empower the people, to reconnect them with their inner wisdom, restoring the power to fight for an egalitarian, colorless society. Black Consciousness does not seek to perpetuate itself in a political way, but it seeks to infuse the people, who lost their hope and strength, with dignity and a vision.

Black Consciousness is a way to overcome the limitations of one's own mind, to create a better self, and thereof a better society, marked by mindfulness, leading to a "true humanity" in the end.

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# APPENDIX

## English Abstract

The paper „*Bantu Stephen Biko & Black Consciousness. A Struggle for Equality in a Racial South Africa*“ deals with the examination of Bantu Stephen Biko's thought and the message of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). It includes a short overview of Apartheid legislation and the effects of limiting and restricting the human rights of the majority of the South African population. A short insight into the opposition parties, their politics and structure are also part of the first chapter.

The main focus is laid on the evaluation and analysis of the message of Black Consciousness and the formulation as a philosophical political movement. Amongst others, Biko's definition of blackness and its meaning in the fight for a colorless, equal society, is essential to understand the underlying motives of the movement. Steve Biko's approach to unite all people who were faced with oppression under the term „black“ opens a broad base for analysis away from racial line and therefore is a useful theory when it comes to the situation the capitalist world faces nowadays.

The major result is the thesis, that economic Apartheid is still alive for the majority of South Africa nowadays because the underlying capitalist system which went hand in hand with the inhuman, discriminating and exploitative system of Apartheid, was not transformed.

In analyzing the present day discourses about Steve Biko, the philosophy of BCM and the recent problems society in South Africa, 19 years after Apartheid legislation officially fell and made way for democracy, makes clear that the change within the social system did not take place. The essential problem according to Steve Biko was the economic basis that underlied Apartheid policies, perpetuating the system of exploitation. Biko's analysis emphasized the importance of changing the underlying economic pattern to really achieve a change within the structure of society, which was structured along racial typology. The mere change of government was not sufficient. Biko was aware of this and formulated 35 ago, that if only the leadership change its color without transforming the economic structure the majority of black people will still remain to be poor.

Black Consciousness therefore include a capitalist critique and longed to achieve the vision of a „true humanity“, where politics would serve the people and not the financially strong part of the society.

By analysing the collected works of Biko in „I Write What I Like“ (1978) emphasize is laid

on his words and concepts. In the last chapter these are used to discuss the present day discours of present day South Africa and the problems of the past that society now still have to face.

## **Deutsche Zusammenfassung**

Die Arbeit *"Bantu Stephen Biko & Black Consciousness. A Struggle for Equality in a Racial South Africa"* behandelt Bantu Stephen Biko's Gedanken und die Botschaft des Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). Ein kurzer Überblick über die Apartheid Legislatur und deren Auswirkungen (Einschränkung und Aberkennung von Menschenrechten) auf die Mehrheit der südafrikanischen Bevölkerung, werden im ersten Kapitel dargestellt. Ebenso wird ein kurzer Einblick in die Politik und Struktur der Oppositionsparteien gegeben.

Der Hauptfokus der Arbeit liegt auf der Evaluation und Analyse der Botschaft und des Inhalts von Black Consciousness, als auch deren Formierung als philosophisch politische Organisation. Unter anderem, wird Bikos Definition von *blackness* genauer beleuchtet und dessen Bedeutung für den Kampf für eine farblose, egalitäre Gesellschaft. Steve Bikos Ansatz alle Menschen, die von Unterdrückung betroffen sind, in einer Gruppe (den *blacks*) zu vereinen, bietet eine breite Basis für die Analyse eines Systems, abseits einer rassistischen Analyse und bietet daher eine brauchbare Theorie um die Situation des kapitalistischen Systems zu untersuchen, das weltweit für Ungleichheit sorgt.

Die Hauptthese, die sich in der Arbeit entwickelt hat, ist, dass die ökonomische Apartheid für die Mehrheit der SüdafrikanerInnen in Südafrika nach wie vor existent ist. Grund dafür ist das unterliegende kapitalistische System, welches Motor für das Funktionieren und die Notwendigkeit des Apartheid-Systems war.

Der heutige Diskurses über Steve Biko und die Philosophie des BCM in Südafrika und der heutigen Probleme, 19 Jahre nach Ende der offiziellen Beendigung der Apartheid Legislatur, macht deutlich, dass die Veränderung der sozialen Gesellschaftsverhältnisse nicht stattgefunden hat.

Das Grundproblem, das Steve Biko und BCM gesehen haben, war die ökonomische Basis, die eine Perpetuierung eines Ausbeutungssystems gewährleistete und förderte. Biko war davon überzeugt, dass die ökonomische Struktur verändert werden müsse, um eine Veränderung der Gesellschaftsstruktur gewährleisten zu können. Der alleinige Austausch der Führung sei nicht ausreichend. Biko war sich dessen bewusst und formulierte dieses Problem bereits vor 35 Jahren: wenn die Regierung nur ihre "Farbe" wechsele, ohne die ökonomische Struktur (Kapitalismus) zu transformieren, werde die Mehrheit der schwarzen Bevölkerung nach wie

vor in Armut verweilen.

Black Consciousness beinhaltet Kapitalismuskritik und zielte auf die Idee einer "true humanity" ab, wo Politik für die Menschen praktiziert wird, anstatt für die finanzstarken Elemente der Gesellschaft.

Durch Analyse der gesammelten Schriften von Steve Biko "I Write What I Like" (1978) rücken seine Stimme und Konzepte in den Mittelpunkt. Im letzten Kapitel werden diese dazu verwendet, den Diskurs im heutigen Südafrika zu analysieren, dadurch wird erkennbar, wie aktuell Biko und die Probleme von damals heute nach wie vor sind.

## **Curriculum Vitae**

Name: Sophie Kaindl

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### **Education**

since 2012, May - Working on the Diploma Thesis "Bantu Stephen Biko & Black Consciousness. A Fight for Equality in a Racist South Africa"

2007, Summer - Begin of International Development Studies, University of Vienna, main Focus on African Studies

2005 - Graduation Diploma, HIB-3 Boerhaavegasse, 1030 Vienna

### **Interests and Added Qualifications**

Engaging in black resistance political thought, philosophy and discourses of the past and present on a private basis, by reading and attending lectures apart from university.

2012, January - Joining an Artist Collective, *Grundstein7*, organizing expositions and other activities. Painting gives an output to transform words and thoughts of (black) history in to pictures.

2008- 2009 - Volunteering in the office of *Oikodrom*, a viennese based NGO

2007, June to October - Working in a Community Creche (*Ikaya Trust- Bridge the Divide*) in Kayamandi, Stellenbosch- South Africa

### **Languages**

German and English (fluently - written and spoken)

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