

BIKOISM OR MBEKISM

- the role of Black Consciousness in Mbeki's South Africa

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1.1 Summary

A combination of European administrators, an indigenous elite and colonialist discourse upheld colonial rule. The colonialist discourse that engulfed all colonies was extensive, drawing on both non-cultural explanations such as racism, and cultural such as Eurocentric universalism to justify colonialism. Resistance to colonialism therefore required an imaginative reconstruction and a transcendence of colonial discourse as well as resistance to its more physical and material legacies, also because the material and non-material elements of colonialism are mutually constitutive and interconnected. As Postcolonial theory further acknowledges, the legacy of colonialist discourse continued to influence the perceptions and self-image of both coloniser and colonised after actual colonialism had ended.

Although South Africa's colonial period was in a sense unique because of the "internal" nature of its colonisation, until the late forties and even into the sixties the nature of exploitation of its indigenous population was relatively unexceptional compared to that of other African countries and colonies elsewhere. The combination of the decolonisation of most other colonies in the late fifties and sixties and the increasingly rigid nature of apartheid laws in South Africa changed this.

Black Consciousness was a response to the increasingly rigid nature of apartheid that according to Biko had caused the black¹ defeatism, lack of pride and dependency upon white liberals that was evident in the lack of black liberation activity inside South Africa in the late sixties. Whereas Biko's goal was a non-racial society, his solution was two-tiered, blacks having first to regain pride and confidence in themselves by acts of self-sufficiency, this being a pre-condition for a successful second tier, that of actual liberation and material and political improvements. After the elimination of apartheid, Biko's Black Consciousness envisaged a non-racial society and an integration that fused the lifestyles of the various groups.

The ANC of Thabo Mbeki that achieved actual political power after the dismantling of apartheid saw things the other way round, striving to end apartheid whilst giving little thought to racialism until well into the nineties. Mbeki's ANC thereby ended up with an "over-racialised" view of South Africa, advocating an Africanism or Afrocentric universalism and group-orientated multiculturalism that has seen a resurgence of exclusionism. Additionally,

¹ BC used the term "black" as a non-essentialist construction synonymous with "the oppressed" (Africans, Coloureds and Indians). Other uses of black are, and have been, prevalent, even in South Africa where many whites used "black" as synonymous with "African". I will use "black" in the way intended by Black Consciousness.

Mbeki combined an individualistic economic liberalism with that of centralist, top-down style leadership that was opposed to the communalistic mixed economy, bottom-up approach of Black Consciousness.

In reality the psychological aspects are interconnected with the political and economic. Only an integral solution that attempts to deal with all aspects and include some of the insights of both Bikoism and Mbekism will consequently be successful. Having accepted this, Biko seemingly understood the necessity of an integral solution better than Mbeki because of what he saw as the interconnectedness of psychological matters, social change and liberation.

1.2 Introduction

South Africa's first proper democratic elections in 1994 were seen as a watershed in the history of the country. Centuries of colonialism and decades of apartheid were to be transformed into a truly democratic and non-racial society of equals. Separate development was to be replaced by that of a collective development without reference to race.

A little over a decade later the change that was hoped for by the majority who were disadvantaged under apartheid has not come about, the many post-1994 improvements notwithstanding. Whilst a relatively small black middle class has materialised, most blacks are as poor as under apartheid and black and white socialising is no more frequent than before. There are obvious reasons for this lack of equality and integration. Addressing the material concerns of the disadvantaged was and is a gruelling task, made worse by the fact that the coffers that the African National Congress (ANC) inherited were not bulging as expected, but virtually emptied by the apartheid regime's increasingly desperate attempts to keep the apartheid state afloat. Additionally, the educational standards of many young blacks were hampered by the deliberately substandard Bantu-education and the subsequent refusal by many blacks to attend school and be educated to become second-rate citizens.

The question is consequently not whether or not the task of bringing about a non-racial South Africa is daunting, but what the best way of achieving it is. In other words, can the development that South Africa has made since 1994 be improved upon by employing another outlook than that of the present South African government. In the seventies, the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) of Steve Biko had a different view of how to bring about true liberation. The movement saw dealing with the psychological aspects of apartheid such as inferiority complexes as vital, initially by way of black introspection; as well as promoting

equally distributed wealth and a people-centred leadership. The detention, banning, imprisonment and murder of the majority of its leaders stifled the impact of the movement, and the momentum of the liberation movement returned to the non-racialist ideology of the ANC and United Democratic Front (UDF) in the eighties.

In the post-apartheid era, Mandela's reconciliatory approach was replaced by Mbeki's focus on economic remedies, and programmes such as that of Black Economic Empowerment revealed an increasing willingness to devise methods to specifically deal with the disadvantaged black community. In additionally employing an increasingly Africanist rhetoric, Mbeki would seem to concede that non-racialism has not succeeded in South Africa today. But are his somewhat blurred and contradictory references to the concepts of "African" and "black", seen as inclusive in some instances and exclusive in others, helpful in attaining a non-racial society that was the goal of the ANC as well as that of the BCM?

An important question is thus whether Mbekism deals adequately with the legacy of apartheid or if Black Consciousness can provide better or complementary solutions to some or all of these problems. The answering of this question that is attempted in this thesis is not only relevant to a narrow South African context, but also globally, as South Africa can be seen as an embodiment of the North-South conflict. Whether South Africa can solve its problems of race relations, economic differentiation or other matters discussed in this thesis is consequently of interest at the individual level (because of the pervasiveness of colonial discourse and the complexes that this produces), the nation level (because most other countries are multi-ethnic and multi-cultural) as well as at the international level (because of the interdependence of contemporary international society). If post-apartheid South Africa can succeed in transforming itself into an inclusive society of equals it can teach all societies a lesson by "provid[ing] evidence for the fact that heterogeneity does not preclude harmony" (Zegeye: 342). Biko acknowledged the representative nature of South Africa in stating that "South Africa is but a microcosm of the global confrontation between the Third World and the rich nations of the world" (Biko, 1996: 72), as does Mbeki in recognizing the need to "end apartheid globally" (Gumede: 197).

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The structure and theory of this thesis is meant to enable me to conclude on a sound and adequate basis where each part of the thesis informs the next chapter. Briefly discussing the

pre-colonial period in Africa is accordingly necessary to understand the impact of colonialism, the kind of society that inspired Africanists and the Negritude movement, and the Black Communalism espoused by Black Consciousness. Examining colonialism and its effects enables an understanding of racism and the inferiority and superiority complexes, the continuation of which explains the relevance of Postcolonial Theory. Postcolonial Theory is used to understand the psychological effects and ongoing legacy of colonialism that Black Consciousness claimed blacks had to be liberated from before they could successfully oppose the apartheid regime, psychologically as well as physically, and become truly human. An overview of South African history, focussing on the liberation struggle, is necessary to understand the specific nature of South Africa's experience of colonialism and apartheid, as well as to understand the reasons for the emergence and demise in the late sixties and seventies of Black Consciousness. The success and failure of Thabo Mbeki's South Africa and the ideology behind it will then be judged against that of Black Consciousness, as a philosophy as well as a set of more or less specific answers to the legacy of apartheid in an attempt to see whether the latter is still relevant in informing or challenging the former.

1.4 Choice of theory

I have chosen to use *Postcolonial Theory* because it questions the ideological assumptions of colonialism, acknowledges the psychological aspects hereof, and deems these problems to have continued in the postcolonial period. Postcolonial theory is applicable to post-apartheid South Africa because a) the apartheid period was legitimised by the theory of apartheid, specifically that of white superiority and separate development, b) apartheid had severe psychological consequences for all South Africans, black and white, in the inferiority and superiority complexes that it produced, and c) I believe these problems have not been solved with the demise of apartheid, making the theory's focus on postcolonialism relevant.

An understanding of *Racism* as an ideology is equally necessary to understand South Africa, especially because the racism of apartheid was so explicit and formalised. Additionally, racism or a race-orientated discourse has survived in post-apartheid South Africa, and many South Africans, whites and blacks, continue to view South African society in a racial frame.

Black Consciousness is theoretically relevant because it attempts to solve the above listed problems: the psychological legacy of colonialism and/or apartheid and their potential

manifestation in postcoloniality, the problems of using essentialist categories of race, and applying theoretical non-racialism in a racially charged society. Black Consciousness is also relevant in present day South Africa because it has a different view on how a post-apartheid South Africa should deal with the legacy of apartheid, as well as how such a society is ideally constituted. I have chosen mainly to focus on Black Consciousness as Steve Biko saw and promoted it, thus the “Bikoism” of the title of this thesis, because as with other overarching movements, there were disagreements within the BCM of the seventies, for instance regarding the use of violence or whether one was to socialise with whites. Amongst the variety of standpoints to choose from within the BCM, I have chosen to mainly employ Biko's for three reasons: a) Because Biko's views are the most readily available and elaborated upon, b) that Biko's views are usually those that are discussed when referring to Black Consciousness, and c) because I believe Biko's views are the most advanced and useful, both regarding the period they were espoused and contemporary South Africa (Magubane: 123).

Postcolonial Theory and Black Consciousness have both been accused of focusing too heavily on the non-material and non-economic side of postcoloniality, criticism that will be discussed in regard to both Postcolonial Theory and Black Consciousness. This is also an overall problem in regard to the fields within which this thesis is written, namely Postcolonial Studies and Development Studies, in that the former focuses primarily on non-economic problems and the latter mainly on economic. One could therefore argue that one needs to combine the two if one is to solve the problems of developing countries such as South Africa, which would necessitate a more all-encompassing or integral² practice.

Whereas the initial focus of this thesis will be on the non-material and non-economic aspects of postcoloniality, material and economic aspects will subsequently be discussed briefly with regard to colonialism and at greater length in relation to South Africa because of the interrelatedness of psychological liberation and equal opportunities in the economic sphere.

² Integral is used here to mean something included as a part of an interconnected whole rather than a separate entity.

1.5 Objectives

I will focus on three overall questions that I will attempt to answer in this thesis:

- What are South Africa's legacies of colonialism and apartheid, in other words what are the problems that need solving?
- How can these legacies be reversed or transcended, in other words how can these problems be solved? Here the focus is specifically on the Black Consciousness movement of Steve Biko and the present policies of Thabo Mbeki.
- In which ways can the Black Consciousness of Steve Biko inform or improve on the policies of Mbeki's government?

2.1 Pre-colonial Africa

Before Africa was colonised, the continent was characterised by a large degree of pluralism and flexibility (Kaarsholm: 6). The continent consisted not of "closed reproducing entities, equipped with unique unchanging cultures" (Thomson: 11), but of more fluid units that would readily incorporate outsiders (even whites) into the community as long as they accepted its customs, and where the sense of obligation and solidarity went beyond that of the nuclear family. An example of such inclusiveness were the Xhosa who limited Xhosadom not along ethnic or geographical lines but along political. "All persons or groups who accepted the rule of the Tshawe [the paramount chief] ... became Xhosa" (Thompson: 29).

Pre-colonial African societies were of a highly varied nature. They could be either stateless, state run or kingdoms, but most were founded on the principles of communalism in that they were self-governing, autonomous entities, and in that all members took part, directly or indirectly, in the daily running of the tribe (Mbah: Chapter 3).³ Land was held commonly and could not be bought or sold, although other things, such as cattle, were owned individually (Feinstein: 18). In those societies that were not stateless, the chiefs ran the daily affairs of the tribe together with one or more councils. These councils simultaneously informed the chief, checked his powers and made policy by reaching unanimous decisions. If unanimity was not reached, a village assembly would be called to debate the issue and majority ruling would now apply (Ayittey: 38-42). The chief would listen silently to all queries during such meetings and every male adult was free to criticise him. The role of the chief during such

³ Many "traditional African societies manifested 'anarchic elements' ... founded on communalism", although such communalism "was not an anarchist utopia" (Mbah: Chapter 3).

meetings was to sum up what had been said and attempt to “form some consensus among the diverse opinions” (Mandela, 1995: 24-25). Hence the chief did not rule or dictate but led by consensus. Many tribes, especially those that were stateless, had no central authority and no class system, and many of those that did could depose a chief that was thought to have abused his power (Ayittey: 39, 45-46). An overarching feature of pre-colonial Africa was that its societies were not designed to be the all-powerful entities that they are today, hence the abundance of confederation-type societies. One reason for this was that the villages and tribes commonly owned the land, a fact that undermined the basis for a market economy and a landed aristocracy (Cypher: 195-196), another that there was an abundance of available land to which dissatisfied individuals or groups could move. The creation of a market economy in Southern Africa was further undermined by the area lacking the “regular markets and trade fairs” that flourished elsewhere in Africa, as well as in medieval Europe, and thus the potential for continuous economic development (Feinstein: 20).

In many parts of Africa, especially in the British colonies where indirect rule was the norm, the indigenous system of government survived and was used by the colonial powers alongside the colonial system. This is one of the reasons why the structures of such political institutions still exist in Africa today, although mostly in a more fixed and static form, due to the colonial powers having rearranged the tribal landscape and employed chiefs as virtual colonial administrators that served as buffers between themselves and the masses (Ayittey: 81). British indirect rule in countries such as South Africa thereby reduced chiefs to “salaried officials, responsible to white magistrates” (Thompson: 77), “debased by the control of an unsympathetic white government” (Mandela, 1995: 4). Where there were elements of participatory democracy and a lack of rigid ethnicity in pre-colonial Africa, these were less likely to be found in post-independence Africa where only Botswana built its society and government on indigenous institutions, and where the rigidities of colonial “invented tradition” and centralised government became dominant (Ayittey: 12, 325).

While pre-colonial indigenous African systems had many appealing qualities, something that has been widely advocated, if not practised, by many post-independence African leaders and Africanists generally, they have some obvious weaknesses when attempting to build a centralised state around them. The fact that chieftaincy is mostly based on kinship, for instance, is problematic because of the exclusive nature of leadership that this entails, which is especially problematic in countries with ethnic antagonisms. Secondly, some of the customs

of indigenous African society might have been effective in relatively smaller-scale societies but are less likely to be so in the larger states of present day Africa. An example of this is that of consensus which in a large-scale modern African state would make the political process invariably slow, as well as prone to conformity and authoritarianism that could effectively silence dissent and result in uncontroversial and un-enlightened decisions. Ngugi, in claiming that Africa's pre-colonial peasant cultures had "oppressive reactionary tendencies" that were "only slightly less grave than the racist colonial culture"⁴ might be overstating the case, but he nevertheless strikes a chord.

It is therefore important to realize that the relevance and usefulness of traditional or pre-colonial African institutions and customs depend upon whether one views African culture, or any culture for that matter, as static, or whether African culture is deemed to have evolved and changed, to some extent because of outside influence and colonialism. Culture must be seen as dynamic, and pre-colonial African cultures seen to be historical manifestations that are relevant in their entirety only to that specific period of time. Otherwise, they are useless as sources of inspiration for contemporary societies.

2.2 Colonialism

Colonialism can be defined as the "settlement of territory, the exploitation or development of resources and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands" (McLeod: 8). Unlike the more overarching concept of imperialism, which can be defined as the legitimisation of "economic and military control of one nation by another" (McLeod: 7), colonialism implies actual settlement. Colonialism is thus a historically specific type of imperialism.

Although by the time sub-Saharan Africa was colonised European technology such as guns was superior to that of the indigenous population, this had not always been the case. Prior to Columbus discovering America in 1492, European nations were not technically or economically superior to other parts of the world, nor were they closer to creating capitalist or other modern forms of society. The virtual attainment of economic and technical hegemony that European nations achieved by way of the jump from feudalism to capitalism and the industrial revolution came about, amongst other things, because of the wealth gained from the colonies, initially in the Americas (Blaut: 51, 173). This surplus wealth boosted the European

⁴ Ngugi wa Thiong'o, "Detained", Heinemann, 1981, p. 106.

economy, enabled Europeans to outbid and undermine non-European competitors and was crucial in paying for the infrastructure necessary for the industrial revolution (Blaut: 204).

There was widespread resistance to colonisation in practically every African colony. Besides the fact that colonisers had superior weapons, however, that Africans were never able to create a united front against the colonisers, whereas the latter were able to use African allies or mercenaries in conquering new territory, was an important reason for the relative ease of the physical colonisation process. Most invading armies were thus “African in recruitment and only European in command” (Thompson: 71; Uzoigwe: 39; Ayittey: 83).

It was one thing to conquer Africa, but to keep it pacified demanded more than military control as the colonialist indigenous population hugely outnumbered the colonialist settlers. Well into the twentieth century, little more than a thousand administrators controlled the 43 million people that comprised British tropical Africa (Meredith: 5). As a result, upholding colonial rule over such vast stretches of land and millions of colonial subjects had to be enforced by other means than militarily. This was principally done by creating an indigenous elite of functionaries and chiefs that would be “the muscle of imperialism” (Cypher: 78; Meredith: 6) and generate a buffer between the colonisers and colonised. By the thirties, most of the colonial states in Africa were thus “firmly entrenched”, and had “acquired a legitimacy in the eyes of their inhabitants”, especially the educated indigenous elites (Meredith: 4, 7).

2.3 Colonialist discourse

This firmly entrenched legitimacy that we may call colonialist discourse was the product of a series of not necessarily directly interconnected, but nevertheless fundamentally similar, assumptions about differences between the colonisers and the colonised that were used to justify colonialism to both parties.⁵ Whereas these assumptions changed over time, from focussing mainly on these differences being of a physical nature to them being explained as being mainly cultural and thereby reversible, on the whole they can be said to constitute a homogenous whole in being a claim to white, European superiority over their colonial subjects. The assumptions of colonialist discourse and its legitimising powers rested on ideas from a wide range of fields.

⁵ Though Westerners had represented non-European peoples long before actual colonisation (Mbembe: 175).

Christianity legitimised conquest by referring the bible's claim that Christ's power extended "from sea to sea ... unto the ends of the earth"⁶ (Mbembe: 227), whereas continued colonisation was legitimised by referring to the bible's supposed subordination of black descendents of Adam (Miles: 25). Christianity accordingly played an important role in justifying colonialism, and in latter-day South Africa many churches generally accepted the ideology of apartheid as being in accordance with Christianity well into the nineteen eighties and nineties (Tutu: 145).

Literature and education as a whole was equally employed to justify colonialism. The ideas and culture of the colonialists were automatically deemed superior to those of the colonised and Africans were viewed from a European perspective that saw "African culture" as a contradiction in terms (Wendt: 2).

The study of *history* saw most changes as having originated in a Europe that was seen as the permanent centre of progress (Blaut: 7, 14). All proof of African know-how found upon arrival in Africa was consequently seen as having been the invention of non-Africans, colonialism thereby distorting and disregarding the past of the colonised (Mudimbe: 13). Colonialism was thus legitimised as being an inevitable progressive force, leaving non-European modernisation impossible without European tutelage.

Whilst not disregarding such particular features, the most important legitimisation of colonialism were more all-encompassing ideologies such as universalism and racism that claimed theoretical proof of white Western superiority. Universalism and racism are complementary ideologies that were (are) used at different times to explain European superiority by cultural and non-cultural factors, racism being the primary non-cultural explanation and Western universalism the primary cultural.

2.3.1 Racism

Racism originated in enlightenment philosophy where science claimed to demonstrate the existence of distinct races, and culminated in the scientific racism of the late nineteenth century that saw the human species as "divided into permanent and discrete biological groups" (Miles: 40) where non-white "races" were subordinate to the white "race". Racism is thus an assertion of racial supremacy and a denial of a common humanity, although racial categories that have historically been used to sub-divide the human species are largely social

⁶ Psalm 72, 8.

constructions, as opposed to natural, the fact that there is “more genetic variation within groups ... than between them” disproving any such racist theory (Miles: 45, 89).

Racism can be seen as both an ideology and as “intentional practices and/or unintended processes or consequences” (Miles: 58). Some even define racism as “all processes that, intentionally or otherwise, result in the continued exclusion of a subordinate group”, or as an exclusively white phenomenon (Miles: 66, 74). These views, whilst apparently sound in circumstances where class and race are made to fully coincide such as under apartheid, are simplistic in societies where this is not the case because of their disregard for racism not targeted at blacks or committed by non-whites.

Miles therefore ends up defining racism as an

“ideology rather than a doctrine [that] includes within its scope relatively unstructured, incoherent and unsupported assertions, stereotypical ascriptions and symbolic representations; in short, beliefs that are consciously held but not logically structured” (Miles: 83).

Racism is to be defined as an ideology “if it is to have any serious analytical value” (Miles: 112).

The economic and political benefits that colonialism brought the European countries espousing racist ideology indicates that the fact that racism occurred at the same time as colonialism is not coincidental, but that racism was more or less consciously used to justify colonialism. That racist assumptions and theories were often based on speculative studies, such as those of German researcher von Soemmering, who in 1785 claimed that Africans had less intellectual potential than whites due to a smaller cranial capacity (Mungazi: 29), further illustrates this.

Due to racism's increasing unpopularity after the Second World War in mainstream discourse, it having been discredited by Nazism, American segregation and apartheid, as well as its recurring classificatory fallacies, cultural arguments claiming Western superiority being due to cultural factors replaced racism's non-cultural ones. Racist discourse was not altogether replaced by cultural arguments of European superiority as influential theories found as late as the sixties claiming the incapacity of abstract thought by non-Europeans and apartheid South Africa demonstrates (Blaut: 97).

“Ethnicity” is often preferred to “race” in contemporary discourse, however, although the borders that divided so-called distinct races tend to be indistinguishable from cultural or

ethnic borders, culture thereby being essentialised and cultural boundaries being understood as seemingly impenetrable (Baaz: 47, 49; Miles: 92). Whereas pre-colonial African groups or tribes were much less rigidly demarcated, colonial powers solidified them in a “divide and rule” strategy that was meant to undermine demands for independence (Halisi: 112). Ethnic groups also became political groups in the colonial era in response to amongst other things the arbitrarily drawn borders of colonialism and the disruption that these brought. They are therefore relatively recent inventions, formed no earlier than the late nineteenth century (Thomson: 62). African ethnic groups or tribes are in fact more akin to nations, apart from them lacking a state of their own, and “had they but been in Europe we would have called them nationalities” (Kaarsholm: 137). Ethnic groups served social and political purposes during the colonial era and continue to do so today, not unlike that of present day interest groups or nineteenth century European nationalisms.

The nation state and nationalist ideology were developed “hand in hand” with racism in its initial European context, and both advocates of racism and (some advocates of) nationalism draw upon supposed biological differences to separate themselves from other nationalities and races (Miles: 45, 145). Hence both racism and nationalism are exclusionary in nature.

Nationalism had an important role in bringing about a unified resistance to colonialism in a non-European context, as opposed to the fragmentary nature of resistance prior to national movements such as the ANC, UNIP (in Zambia) and KANU (in Kenya), but nationalism’s “potential essentialising of culture” is nevertheless problematic in postcolonial nations (Moore-Gilbert: 65), as is the class-like ethnic competition for the power of national government. National unity was more or less easily conjured up during the liberation struggles, but was much harder to sustain once the common enemy of the colonial power was gone, although some African politicians, Mugabe springs to mind, continue to claim an enemy in the former colonising nations. Even though national unity was meant to forge a feeling of togetherness, ethnic “nationalities” continuously threaten to disrupt national unity and the stability of many African states.

South Africa is an example of a country with a seemingly more inclusive nationalism, that of the “Rainbow Nation” and the “New South Africa”, though continuous white racism and a recent upsurge in black South African xenophobia towards black Africans from Western and Southern Africa (Butler: 43) seems to disprove the inclusive nature of South African nationalism. The fact that the modernistic project of South African nation building has had to

take place during an era and in conditions unlike that of most other nations, seemingly split between a “post-modern” nation and a modern, or even pre-modern one, is perhaps an additional hindrance to an inclusive South African nationalism (Herwitz: 175).

Where all more or less arbitrary group formations such as ethnic groups, nations and, as we will later see, the definition of “blackness” that the Black Consciousness Movement employed are in a sense problematic, especially if they are exclusionary on the basis of race, to attempt to transcend groups such as class or nation prematurely, without an understanding of group solidarity on a higher level, can be equally problematic because it “play[s] straight into the hands of the oppressor” (Moore-Gilbert: 198).

2.3.2 Universalism

As with racism, universalism emerged with enlightenment thinking, brought about to counter the relativistic tendencies of the late renaissance (Skelton: 194). This doctrine of “Western rationality” was widely used to explain European exceptionalism in place of racial superiority (Blaut: 104). Not perceived as being inferior in a biological sense as in racist discourse, non-Europeans were seen in this Eurocentric universalism⁷ as having the potential of reaching the stage of a Western rationality that was deemed superior to that of non-Europeans, although they had no part in defining this rationality.

Eurocentric universalism has been rightfully criticised as being particularistic. Postcolonial writers such as Frantz Fanon did not see much advantage in employing Eurocentric universalism instead of racism. He saw “Western bourgeois ideology” as particularistic racism dressed up as universalism, where the black “subhuman” is urged to rise to the level of Western humanity (Fanon, 2004: 110). Cultural relativism also emerged in opposition to universalism, often seeing universalism as synonymous with foundationalism, i.e. that we have “unmediated and infallible access to reality” (Browning: 138; Skelton: 194).

Indispensable though this criticism of Eurocentric universalism has been, it easily slips into a relativism that is equally problematic. A relativist criticism of universalism that seeks to eliminate the racist outlook that colonialism engendered is in fact self-defeating, as the immoral nature of racism is “difficult to sustain if one has a relativist ideology” (Renteln: 63). Moreover, the “birthright of freedom” that was the cry of independence movements

⁷ I refer here to *Eurocentric universalism* as the “universalism” espoused by enlightenment philosophers and others that was subsequently used to justify European superiority and colonialism. This is done to distinguish it from what I refer to as “true” universalism.

throughout the colonial world is untenable without presupposing an essential human nature (Miles: 13).

The question of whether true universalism is possible, or whether it is always some particularism dressed up as universally applicable standards is thus highly relevant in a postcolonial context. It is true that Eurocentric universalism universalised its own particularism. Europeans were equated with universal man in the renaissance and earlier (Mungazi: 13), and this trend continued via colonialism's civilising mission to the present. That Europeans attempted to monopolise universalism and use it as a strategy of imperial control does not prove that all attempts at universalism are particularistic, however. Claiming that because Eurocentric universalism is particularistic, then all attempts at universalism are equally so is throwing out the baby with the bathwater. The difference between Western universalism and "true" universalism is that for Eurocentric universalism, the truth is already known and located in Western culture. Proponents of true universalism, on the other hand, have learnt from Postmodernism's and Postcolonial theory's criticism of Eurocentric universalism that truth is contextual, intercultural and not transparent. Theories that espouse cultural equality such as multiculturalism are therefore misguided attempts at disavowing Eurocentrism, because equality should be attempted at the individual level not at group level. Otherwise one is only one step away from a cultural essentialism not unlike that of racialism where the integrity of each culture "must be preserved" (Skelton: 147), blind of what Homi Bhabha calls "borderline temporalities" or hybridity, in other words the heterogeneous nature of all cultures (Bennett: 32). And equally important for countries with histories of interethnic strife and uneven power relations such as South Africa, multiculturalism is divisive in that it ends up highlighting differences instead of commonalities (Baines: 14).

Postcolonial theorists such as Edward Said and Fanon recognise that true universalism can exist when true postcoloniality, the recognition of the relativity of different cultures and their mutual enrichment, come about, and when humanism is used to assert true universality (Fanon, 1967b: 92; Kennedy: 34). This presupposes acknowledging that universalism only makes sense when it recognises the fallibility of human sensation or knowledge and that we as a consequence of this may have to move through the particular to reach the universal. Universalism and relativism can thus be seen as co-dependent, as "each person is an individual, but to know this you must appreciate the larger human family" (Browning: 137).

2.3.3 Culture

If colonialist discourse was to lay claim to a European sense of superiority towards non-Europeans, then colonial control had to be extended to the level of culture to be fully effective and for European culture be seen as universal.

An example of this is *capitalism*, today seen as universally applicable in a development context through such widely accepted discourses as Good Governance. Whereas both Adam Smith and some present-day adherents see capitalism as “an inherent part of human nature”, it is more likely to be simply a “symptom of the abstractification and alienation inherent in the social character of modern [Western] man” (Fromm, 2002: 144), making capitalism’s “drive to boundless acquisition” a cultural manifestation, not a universal one (Skelton: 15).

Communism is equally problematic. The Communist Manifesto’s claim that “workers have nothing to lose but their chains” is “a profound psychological error”, as they also have to lose or discard the complexes and irrational needs that they harboured when wearing the chains. Hence Marxism’s claim that “emancipation from exploitation” would automatically produce free human beings is plainly false as “moral change” is equally necessary (Fromm, 2002: 257), as is Marx’s view of colonialism as being a precondition for the liberation of non-Western societies (Loomba: 22).

Technology is also culturally imbedded, historically associated with the West and Westerners, and used to assert cultural superiority over non-Westerners, especially Africans (Blaut: 109; Gordimer: 191). That many Africans, and the Negritude movement specifically, felt it necessary to stress their “humanistic cultures” in opposition to Western technological superiority, is consequently because of resentment of the (perceived) lack of technical proficiency in these cultures.

European psychologists seeing non-Europeans as being “deficient in cognitive ability” (Blaut: 99) made mainstream *psychology* equally problematic. This is particularly so because the founder of modern psychology, Freud, rested his conception of normative behaviour on a binary position between Western and non-Western cultures and saw the “primitivism” of non-European cultures as akin to the psychological set-up of the European child (Gikandi: 181). Whilst Fanon thus believed that it was acceptable that Freud, Jung and other psychoanalysts based their research only on whites, he saw it as problematic that they made universal arguments from this research (Gibson: 48). Yet not all psychologists were Eurocentric. Fromm, for instance, saw normality from a universal perspective. His concept of sanity was

different from that of most Western psychologists and sociologists who, according to Fromm, “equate sanity with conformity ... [and] reject the idea of absolute norms existing outside culture” (Fromm, 2002: xv), making mainstream psychology “apologist for the status quo” (Fromm, 2002: 71).

As we can see, much of what we presently regard as culture was “produced by the colonial encounter”, which emphasises the universalising and racist effects of colonialism and explains its continuing effects to the present (Gikandi: 194). Resistance against colonialism therefore required more than physical resistance, it required “an entire imaginative reconstruction” (Lonsdale: 292) of the self and transcendence of colonialist discourse.

2.4 The material impact of colonialism

On the other hand it is important not to overestimate the non-material impacts of colonialism, as many Africans, especially in an overtly repressive system such as that of apartheid South Africa, submitted to the colonial system because of its physical as well as its psychological powers of repression.

Although I have mostly described the non-material aspects of colonialism in this chapter, it is important to acknowledge the interconnectedness between this and colonial discourse, as they are mutually constitutive. The material impact of colonialism was severe, not only in robbing Africa of a large part of the continent's most able-bodied men and women who were sold as slaves, but also the extraction of its resources and the arresting of its political development. These factors obviously helped substantiate the claims of colonial discourse, “proving” the inferiority of the colonised. Lewis Nkosi substantiates this, in claiming that

“the aggressiveness with which Africans tend to assert the worthiness of their humanistic cultures in comparison to Europe’s is intended primarily to conceal [a] deep feeling of resentment that their cultures lacked an aggressive technological thrust” (Gordimer: 192).

The interplay between material and non-material aspects of colonialism is not only relevant in the past tense, however, but also in a postcolonial situation, as the socio-economic inequities brought about by colonialism still inform and perpetuate white superiority and black inferiority complexes.

2.5 Neo-Colonialism

The deeply embedded nature of colonialist discourse in the colonial period meant that the psychological transcendence of colonialism was not simple and straightforward. Much of the complexes and tendencies of the colonial period continued after the de-colonisation period, in Africa as well as the West, proving the need for psychological liberation on top of the (partial) physical liberation achieved at independence.

Post-independence African rulers, most of whom had Western university degrees, might have condemned the West publicly but they “secretly admired it”, denigrating African history, culture and indigenous institutions in much the same way as had the colonialists (Ayittey: 110), eagerly modernising their countries along Western lines. Along with the “obsession with grandeur” that most of these leaders showed, this demonstrated both a lack of psychological liberation from colonial discourse and an inferiority complex (Ayittey: 112). Kenya’s former president Moi’s claim (in 1991) that Kenya was “at least 200 years behind the West” (Ayittey: 319) exemplifies this. Moreover, many of these leaders were seemingly as elitist as the colonisers, dismantling “little of the oppressive colonial administrative machinery” and employing “the same instruments of coercion and tyranny that colonialists had widely used” (Ayittey: 102). The “second” liberation of Africa in the nineties was equally elite-managed (Ayittey: 321). The power of these post-independence elites was enhanced by using ethnicity to “divide and rule” in much the same way as the colonisers, and used to loot their countries, treating public resources as private funds to be stashed away in foreign bank accounts.

Even so, such elites are only intermediaries “whose strings are pulled by the ... powerful and faceless system of capitalism, operating in its global mode as imperialism” (Williams: 96). Whereas colonial domination was upheld by direct rule, neo-colonialism is upheld by a dual system of “trade negotiations, aid conditionalities, debt management and concessions, and so forth” (Baaz: 33), which depends upon the African countries themselves “voluntarily” adapting Western systems of government and economics, and a continued belief in dichotomies such as African irrationality and passivity opposed to Western rationality and innovation. Such dichotomies were central in legitimising colonialism and held up as a reason for Western development and African underdevelopment, but can also be seen in the continuing impact of colonialist discourse in the aid world (Baaz: 45, 120). This line of thought, where Western culture ought to become that of the world and modernisation is

equated to that of Westernisation, or what Claude Ake refers to as “universalising the Western model” (Ake, 1993: 239), has its roots in colonialist discourse and the Rostowian modernisation theories of the fifties. It presently continues in the claim of the Good Governance paradigm that a liberal market economy is the only plausible model on which to base a successful society (Mbembe: 7). An example of the continuing effects of such Eurocentric universalism is the Aid Industry's continual representation of and speaking for their African aid recipients (Veltmeyer: 132, 137), regardless of the present partnership discourse of such organisations, as well as the view of Western superiority held by many individual development workers (Baaz: 39).⁸

Legacies of colonialism have evidently continued beyond the actual colonial period and continue to inform contemporary discourse and politics. To fully understand the impact this legacy has on present-day people, European as well as non-European, as well as transcend it, consequently calls for a coherent theoretical understanding of the nature of colonialist discourse that acknowledges the consequences of this fact.

3.1 Postcolonialism

The field of postcolonialism concerns itself primarily with links and continuities between the imperial, colonial past and the postcolonial present of both former colonised and former colonising societies. In seeking to contest present-day legacies of colonial domination, postcolonialism explores how colonial discourse was an important weapon by which colonial powers controlled colonised peoples, as described in the previous chapter, and questions the Eurocentric universality of colonial discourse. Generally, postcolonialism is thus an attempt to explain and try to break with the colonialist discourse and neo-colonialism that informs the present postcolonial situation.

3.1.1 Fanon

Frantz Fanon was an important forerunner of the work of Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi Bhabha, the so-called “holy trinity” of postcolonialism, as well as being an important figure in his own right (Moore-Gilbert: 16).

⁸ Baaz' study of development workers in Tanzania reveals a discourse of evolutionary development amongst them, not unlike that of colonial discourse, where Europeans are seen as belonging “to a higher level of development” (Baaz: 39), leading them not to expect too much of the African recipients because of their alleged “backward position on the evolutionary ladder” (Baaz: 42).

Fanon despised the Eurocentric, “hypocritical”, “pseudo-universalism” of European humanism (Posnock: 328; Gibson: 181) and believed that the colonised should “rise above this absurd drama that others have staged around [them]” (Gibson: 180). Fanon nevertheless retained a humanist outlook, believing “that the individual should ... take on the universality inherent in the human condition” (Fanon, 1967: 19), although true universalism could only exist when true postcoloniality and the appreciation and recognition of the relativity of different cultures and their interdependence came about (Fanon, 1967b: 92).

By advocating a universal humanity, Fanon disagreed with the racial focus of the essentialised blackness that many of his contemporaries, particularly those of the Negritude movement, advocated. Whereas he agreed with Negritude’s attempts to eliminate psychological problems by advocating cultural pride, self-belief and self-consciousness, he saw Negritude’s essentialism as an inversion of colonialism that was ultimately incapable of leading to true liberation. Nevertheless, Fanon also rejected a non-racial approach that “pretends that racism doesn’t exist and ignores its denigrating and derisive psychological effects” (Gibson: 18). For Fanon, the lack of recognition of the equal worth of blacks that racism implied necessitated initial withdrawal from false non-racialism.

Although necessary, psychological remedies such as Black Consciousness are not sufficient by themselves and must be accompanied by physical struggle (Gibson: 39). Liberation must ultimately be achieved by force because it rids the colonised of the remainder of their inferiority complexes by shattering the image of the superior and invincible coloniser (Fanon, 2004: 51, 115). Fanon’s endorsement of violent resistance has been controversial and heavily criticised (Gibson: 104), although in fairness Fanon had qualifications about violent resistance, saying it must be “clearly without barbarity” and carried out by “self-controlled people” (Gibson: 124).

Independence for Fanon was not an end but a beginning which ought to lead via a humanistic nationalism accompanied by social and political consciousness (Fanon, 2004: 144) to a humanist internationalism that was meant to transcend the potential “regional, racial, and ethnic politics” (Gibson: 162) nationalism can easily lead to. Fanon was well aware that independence could easily fail to significantly benefit the population as a whole. He had witnessed the initial euphoria, but subsequent disappointing performances, of most post-independence African states where many of the leaders ended up betraying the masses (Fanon, 2004: 35). For Fanon, the elites had become a caricature of Europe, viewing the

masses in the same way as the colonialists (Fanon, 2004: 65), disregarding local history (Fanon, 2004: 68) and generally prolonging the heritage of colonial thinking and institutions (Fanon, 2004: 120). The elites had become neo-colonial managers for Western interests, the nation a conveyor belt for Western capitalism (Fanon, 2004: 100, 102).

3.1.2 Said

Whereas Fanon dealt mainly with the psychological problems of the colonised under colonialism and beyond, Said reflects on the coloniser's legitimisation of colonialism. In *Orientalism*, Said attempted to reveal how the West's representation of the non-Western world and the material and political subordination of the latter by the former was interconnected (Moore-Gilbert: 38). According to Said, Orientalism is "a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient" (Said: 3) that is wide-ranging in that it is a "distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philosophical texts ..." (Said: 12). European culture was defined by "setting itself off against the Orient" (Said: 3), whereby Orientalism played an important role in claiming Western cultural superiority and the inferiority of other cultures.

Said has been criticised for exaggerating the powerfulness of the West, seeing non-Westerners as virtually powerless (Kennedy: 30), although he has granted the latter more agency in later works (Moore-Gilbert: 64). Another thing that one could similarly criticise is his tendency to see the West as an oppressive whole, bereft of internal diversity.

3.1.3 Bhabha

Bhabha deals with what he sees as the absurdity of the concept of homogenous cultures. For him, "cultures are never unitary in themselves, nor simply dualistic in the relation of Self and Other" (Bhabha: 52), and he sees the increasing importance of migration as undermining and invalidating clearly defined groups such as "nation", "ethnicity" and "race" because the migrant exemplifies the non-pureness and hybridity of cultures that claim to be homogenous (McLeod: 218). Bhabha thus challenges Fanon and Said, attempting to merge Fanon's focus on the colonised with Said's focus on the coloniser, but unlike Said's initial belief in the all-powerful nature of the colonialist he sees their constant stereotypification of the colonised as proof of the insecurity and unstableness of colonial discourse (Moore-Gilbert: 118).

Bhabha's concept of hybridity seems less obviously applicable to a South African apartheid context than to other colonial and postcolonial countries, as the rigidity of apartheid left less space for fluid identities or ambivalences. South Africans might further be wary of too much celebration of cultural and ethnic differences, as this is reminiscent of apartheid's focus on differences instead of likenesses (Zezeza, 2003: 282). Additionally, one might question the concept of hybridity because in focusing on the space between cultures, one inadvertently defends a belief in concrete cultural boundaries and "common cultural conditions" (Selden: 232). Even so, Bhabha's understanding of the nature of hybridity points towards an ongoing fusion of so-called "homogenous" cultures that questions the multiculturalist approach of countries like South Africa.

3.1.4 Spivak

Unlike (the early) Said and Bhabha, Spivak focuses on counter-discourse and differences amongst colonial manifestations (Moore-Gilbert: 75), and whereas arguing that the "subaltern"⁹ cannot speak for himself or herself in earlier work seemingly contradicts such a stance, she revokes this in her more recent work. Spivak believes, along with Fanon and the later Said, that even though the reversing of colonial discourse, exemplified by Negritude, is a necessary step, it must be transcended. Otherwise one remains within the logic of colonial discourse (Moore-Gilbert: 85). Spivak's concept of "strategic essentialism" is used to explain the need for this necessary step towards liberation that Achebe calls "anti-racist-racism" (Moore-Gilbert: 179). According to Spivak the distinction between "deploying" and "activating" essentialism and "falling into" or "lapsing into" essentialism is an important one (Selden: 238).

3.2 Criticism of postcolonialism

Postcolonialism has generally been criticised for being too dependent upon postmodernism, because postmodernism's fragmentary logic and focus on multiple truths disregards historical dynamics and agency (Loomba: 240), and for disregarding non-colonial history (Loomba: 13, 17). In fact, in claiming all grand narratives to be dead, postmodernism ended up supporting the status quo by leaving neo-colonial global capitalism, human rights and Western democracy unchallenged, and as a result many African scholars, particularly those living on

⁹ Marginalized citizen belonging to a lower class.

the continent, have been hostile to what they see as postcolonialism's flirtation with postmodernism (Zezeza, 2003: 229).

While such criticism is valid to a degree, especially when bearing in mind the obvious differences between postcolonial theorists, it is incorrect to think of postmodernism and postcolonialism as being synonymous. Whereas postmodernism in challenging grand narratives such as that of colonialism refuses to replace them with anything remotely concrete (apart from the grand narrative of postmodernism), postcolonialism's challenge of the grand narrative of colonialism can be done "while embracing the 'ethical universal' and in the name of humanism" (Ashcroft: 123), as Fanon did. To be able to achieve its goals, postcolonialism's criticism of cultural domination must also be complemented by an equal criticism of political and economic dominance, as well as by greater understanding of the importance of the agency of those who attempt to defeat neo-colonialism, something that Said, Bhabha and Spivak have attended to in more recent work (Zezeza, 2003: 272; Moore-Gilbert: 154, 161).

One way of solving this is by employing a larger degree of interdisciplinary work between postcolonial studies and more materially focused fields such as development studies, as suggested by Stuart Hall (Moore-Gilbert: 186). This would enable studies that focused on the whole reality of people in the developing countries by acknowledging the link between identity and economics in for instance aid organisations. In these organisations "identities [for example of an active donor-Self and a passive partner] inform the distribution of economic resources and the organisation of the economic sphere", which in turn feeds a discourse of aid dependence that ends up leading to a "restrictive policy when it comes to financial support" (Baaz: 13).

Until now, mainly non-interdisciplinary solutions have been attempted where one has attempted to separate, or at least not integrate, the different parts of the problem and their respective fields in trying to find solutions to solving them. This is what Ngugi refers to when claiming that "for resistance [to imperialism] to be successful, it has to be waged at all levels: ... economic, political, cultural and psychological" (Ngugi in Williams: 163). An understanding of imperialism, colonialism and postcolonialism must also be gained at all these levels to be useful.

4.1 South African history

South Africa would seem to epitomize a country where a multitude of explanations have been given to justify the imposition of first colonialism and secondly apartheid. On the other hand, South Africa is generally seen as different from the rest of Africa because of its large group of white settlers, especially the Afrikaners who had severed all ties to the “mother country”, as well as the distinctiveness of its historical experience. Much of what is argued in the previous chapters might therefore seem not to apply to South Africa. The historical overview that follows is, amongst other things, meant to illustrate South Africa's similarities with other African colonial histories, especially before the sixties or at least before 1948, and the dissimilarities to other African countries that apartheid brought about later. It is also meant to focus more specifically on the history of the liberation struggle to show the different approaches to this at different moments in history, as well as amongst different movements, something that will be elaborated upon in the next chapter relating to the Black Consciousness Movement. It therefore follows that this chapter does not attempt to give a comprehensive historical overview, but to describe the historical occurrences and their impact in relation to the questions I attempt to answer in this thesis.

4.1.1 South Africa before apartheid

Whereas apartheid certainly structured and enhanced the rigid nature of the repression of blacks in South Africa, removing all the meagre rights that blacks had enjoyed up until the forties and fifties, it was what Mandela refers to as “a new term but an old idea” (Mandela, 1995: 127). Apartheid, based on scientific racism of Victorian Britain (Butler: 31), was accordingly more a question of filling in gaps in an already racist environment than a totally new way of thinking. What was new was the totality of the ideology. Forcing Africans to carry passes and town segregation was used in Kimberly during the 1870s (Thompson: 118) and a 1921 official commission argued that Africans should only be allowed into towns to work (Ramphela, 1991: 5), foreshadowing apartheid's later refinements and country-wide use of these tools; regulations that gave white workers a “monopoly of skilled operations” were passed as early as 1911 (Thompson: 167); and the Land Bill or Land Act was introduced in 1913 that designated racial land zones and evicted blacks from their land, forcing them to seek work in the mines and white farms (Woods, 1987: 18; Gumede: 6).

4.1.2 Similarities to other African countries

Even though South Africa was not nominally a colony after 1910, becoming a British dominion that year and an independent republic in 1961, for blacks this merely changed the form of colonialism, not the feeling or reality of being colonised. In 1948 South Africa's racial policy was different "in detail rather than essence" from other countries under European rule in Africa (Meredith: 117), and segregation and racist assumptions that were similar to that of South Africa were widespread in the Caribbean and the United States (Cole: 585), as well as throughout most of Asia (Thompson: 155; Freund: 528). Racial hierarchies were the norm in most colonies (Seidman: 423), illustrated by the fact that legal segregation, including separate townships, was enforced by law in most countries in Southern and Eastern Africa, as well as in parts of Western Africa, until independence (Conhaire: 393; Goldthorpe: 3; Freund: 527). Kenya, for instance, had laws "restricting ... where Africans could live", including segregated townships not unlike those of apartheid South Africa, Nairobi being "designed with an exclusive European sector, controlled by racial exclusion clauses, an Asian bazaar, and an African location" (Elkins: 152; Christopher: 106).

In fact D.F. Malan, Prime Minister of the first apartheid government, "applauded [British colonial] Kenya's use of force and arbitrary rule, and saw it as a model for his own apartheid regime" (Elkins: 119). Another example of such racial hierarchy is that of Congolese children who were belatedly permitted to enter secondary schools in 1950 that had until then been reserved for white pupils, Africans still being barred from higher education such as medicine (Meredith: 97). Much of South Africa's growth was (and to a degree still is) furthermore based on primary products such as gold and diamonds, not unlike that of other African countries (Butler: 49).

Until the sixties, South Africa was therefore in many respects unexceptional compared to the rest of pre-independence Africa although South Africa's segregation was seen as more "inflexible" than elsewhere. White supremacy and the exclusion of Africans from participation in formal political activity was the norm in colonial Africa, although this was to change in the sixties with most African countries achieving independence¹⁰ and South Africa intensifying the apartheid project, leaving South Africa increasingly distinctive from other

¹⁰ With the notable exception of Zimbabwe, Namibia, Mozambique and Angola, these countries forming a buffer of white supremacist states between South Africa and the independent states.

countries.¹¹ South Africa was in fact “popular abroad” when the Nationalist Party introduced apartheid in 1948 because, amongst other things, of its involvement on the side of the allies in the Second World War, General Smuts’ reputation and involvement in world politics, and its achievements in sports (Woods, 1986: 129-130).

With the growing number of African countries achieving independence in the sixties, the South African government had to react lest this “domino effect” was to reach South Africa. The idea of distinct ethnic “homelands” and “separate development” in South Africa was thus partially inspired by these instances of independence (Butler: 19), although the implicit aim of separate development was to keep power in the hands of the white minority.

One of the main reasons for the intensification of an already racist South African system was the recession caused by the depression in the twenties and thirties that predominantly affected Afrikaner poor whites. Having been “swept off their farms” by the depression, they faced competition from blacks in the cities where they came in numbers to seek employment. This situation was part of the reason for the intensification of discriminatory laws in the mid-thirties that would further intensify with the election of a Nationalist Afrikaner government in 1948 (Gumede: 8, 12).

4.1.3 Apartheid

From 1948 and onwards the intensification of so-called petty apartheid, such as “whites only” notices appearing in “every conceivable place” (Thompson: 197), began in earnest. During Verwoerd’s premiership from the late fifties to the mid-sixties it was ensured that apartheid segregated every area of life in South Africa, racial polarisation being practically complete in the late sixties throughout South African society (Jukes: 127).

Four ideas were central to apartheid: That the population comprised four “racial groups”,¹² that the white race was entitled to absolute control over the state, that white interests prevailed over the interests of all other races, and that whites comprised one nation whereas blacks comprised several (Thompson: 190). The diversity and multitude of laws that were used to

¹¹ Ironically, many of the post-independence African countries soon became practically as repressive and undemocratic as apartheid South Africa, according to Ayittey (Ayittey: xix, 131). “The dismantling of apartheid [furthermore resembled] ... the decolonisation process in various parts of the continent”, South Africa thus having to “face many of the same political and development challenges experienced elsewhere in post-colonial Africa” (Zeleza, 2004: 10; Ayittey: 279).

¹² White, Native (later Bantu and African), Indian and Coloured were the four racial categories used in apartheid South Africa.

enforce the apartheid state's vision of separateness and black subjugation was simply mind-boggling.

Laws that ensured segregation included the *Population Registration Act* that classified and registered all South Africans into one of the four "races"; the *Group Areas Act* that enforced racial segregation, thereby criminalizing inter-racial neighbourhoods and causing mass exoduses of mainly blacks from previously mixed areas;¹³ the *Immorality Act* that criminalized inter-race sex and marriage; and the *Pass Laws* that enabled the police to arrest any black failing to produce his or her pass book. A concrete example of the severe effects of these laws can be seen in the fact that between 1948 to 1980 "yearly arrests [on charges of breaching the Pass Laws] averaged 368,000" (Woods, 1987b: 117, 184; Cole: 586).

The powers of the Nationalist government to arrest virtually anyone questioning the status quo was ensured by the powers of laws such as the *Suppression of Communism Act* that declared anyone a Communist who sought to change the race laws (Woods, 1987b: 56; Gumede: 19), and the *Terrorism Act* that "permitted indefinite detention without trial" (Cole: 586). Laws were passed governing what could be published in newspapers, empowering the government to close down these without court proceedings or to jail or ban¹⁴ any editor without explanation (Woods, 1987b: 168). These laws also declared any attempt or suggestion that apartheid could or should be replaced by a one man, one vote system encompassing the whole of South Africa's population a criminal offence.

The *Bantu Education Act* attempted to stop teachers from "transmitting dangerous, alien ideas to their African students" (Thompson: 196) by moving the control of the education of blacks from the more liberal mission schools to central government. Bantu education further legitimised apartheid, its deliberately substandard levels of education making the perceived inferior nature of Africans a self-fulfilling prophecy. As Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd asked rhetorically in a speech in 1966, "would it be right for the Bantu [Africans] to become the dominating group while they were unable to direct and develop the stage of Western civilisation which this country has achieved?" (Botha: 131).

¹³ "More than 3.5 million people were forcibly removed ... between 1960 and 1985" (Ramphela, 1991: 3).

¹⁴ Being "banned" in apartheid South Africa was a severe restriction upon one's freedom. Steve Biko's ban meant that he was banned from all the organisations he was working for, restricted to a specific magisterial district, was forbidden to speak to more than one person at a time apart from his immediate family, that it was illegal to quote anything he had said or written, that he was not allowed to leave South Africa and that he was continuously under surveillance and frequently visited by the security police (Bernstein: Chapter II; Woods, 1987: 61).

The final nail in the coffin of black influence in South Africa was the *homelands policy* which created nine mostly scattered so-called autonomous African regions on thirteen per cent of the most arid of South Africa's territory, whereas "white South Africa" included the best agricultural and mineral land, as well as all the major cities (Woods, 1987b: 167). Verwoerd's official reasoning behind this was that he wanted to develop "them [Africans] along their own lines using their own traditional communities and tribal chieftains" (Botha: 63), whereas the policy in reality made Africans strangers in their own country and denied them a common humanity with whites.

These laws were heavy-handedly enforced by an army and police force that were heavily funded, as well as given increasingly draconian laws to work under, allowing an atmosphere of impunity to prevail, shown in the widespread use of torture by the police forces (Tutu: 94). Successive governments furthermore laboured to create a consensus of blacks that accepted the status quo, which is why the creation of the Bantustans or so-called homelands and Bantu education was seen as important (Lobban: 2).

Despite of the fact that evidence contradicted this, most South African whites claimed at least outwardly that apartheid was a free and fair system. Minister of Justice (and later Prime Minister) John Vorster claimed in 1964 that the South African state was "a democratic state [that] ... has two important characteristics, namely periodic free elections ... and a free, independent judiciary" (Botha: 199). Others were more explicit about the need for segregation. Donald Woods recalls his solution to the "racial question" at the age of eighteen (in 1952) being to "[send the Africans] back to the reserves, where they belong. They're happier there. It's no good educating them and bringing them to the cities. It's either send them back to the reserves or shoot them – it's them or us" (Woods, 2000: 157; Woods, 1980: 59).

4.1.4 The liberation struggle before Soweto

This was the everyday environment of intolerance, racial bigotry and totalitarian-like laws that blacks had to live in. Many blacks succumbed to the totality of apartheid's powers, psychologically as well as physically. Many others chose to struggle against the apartheid state in an attempt to bring about a society that would empower the majority of South Africans that were disenfranchised under apartheid. Until the late sixties, the only organisations that had any real impact on South African society were the ANC and its

Africanist counterpart, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), formed by ex-members of the ANC in 1959.

The history of the ANC until the mid to late forties, known as the organisation's "Christian Liberal phase", was one of attempting to create sympathy and white support for the injustices of the apartheid state's policies towards Africans. The language of its campaigns was moderate and their ideas were those of Western liberal thinking. The ANC did not agitate for full African enfranchisement or majority rule, fearing that this would alienate white liberals, but for qualified enfranchisement and gradual inclusion (Thompson: 175; MacDonald: 97, 101; Gumede: 4-5). This changed with the formation of the ANC's Youth League (ANCYL) in 1944 and the league's virtual control of the ANC by the late forties. ANCYL called for more radical forms of protest such as strikes and civil disobedience, for full enfranchisement of blacks and "true democracy",¹⁵ as well as belatedly for collaboration with other "oppressed communities", namely Indians and Coloureds (Davenport: 364).¹⁶

In 1948 the ANC still had fewer than six thousand members (Thompson: 182), and as least outwardly and visibly the organisation was still no more radical than allowing for the potentiality of gradualism. Accordingly, Mandela could suggest in 1960 that democracy could "be achieved through gradual reforms" (Mandela, 1995: 297). Having admitted the limited effects of its disobedience campaigns,¹⁷ or at least that the protest form had outlived its purpose and usefulness (Thompson: 211), the ANC turned towards violent forms of struggle by creating Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), "The Spear of the Nation", in 1961. After the Rivonia Trial in 1964, however, most of Umkhonto's "underground machinery had been destroyed", practically all of "the ANC's senior leaders" were "in jail or in exile" (Mandela, 1995: 521; Davies: 288; Davis: 22) and the ANC as a whole had been "crushed and humiliated" (Hadland: 33). Perhaps only literally a few active members of the ANC, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and Umkhonto were present inside South Africa, along with a small number of sympathisers (Hadland: 30), but communication links had been broken and "between 1963 and 1976 no armed actions by [the ANC] took place at all inside South Africa" (Davis: 22; Hadland: 33).

¹⁵ See ANC Youth League Basic Policy Document, 1948.

¹⁶ Mandela still argued in 1951 that Africans "should go it alone" (Gumede: 19).

¹⁷ Whereas the disobedience campaigns might not have achieved their primary goal, i.e. to undermine or end apartheid, they did generate mass support for the ANC, the membership of the organisation rising in a few months in the early fifties from 7,000 to over 100,000 (Davies: 286).

The PAC fared no better. It was founded in 1959 as a Pan-Africanist organisation, meant to counter what the organisation saw as the growing influence of whites and communists¹⁸ in the ANC (Woods, 1987: 21; Schuster: 31). Although the PAC was rightly seen as exclusivist and racist, its first president and co-founder Robert Sobukwe in defining the PAC as different from the ANC because the PAC “claim Africa for the Africans; the ANC claim South Africa for all” (Davies: 299), did not continue to hold the extreme views of many of the PAC’s other members, but came to hold humanist views that whites could become genuine Africans in a post-apartheid South Africa where colour was to be irrelevant (Thompson: 210; Gerhart: 195; Frederickson: 312). The PAC became known primarily for organising the protest march that led to the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, though the organisation had little time to create a large following before it was banned along with the ANC in 1960, shortly after Sharpeville, most of its leaders subsequently being arrested (Thompson: 210). According to Sobukwe, the PAC’s “undoing has not been in its ideology but in its reckless rush to confrontation at a time when circumstances did not favor a black victory” (Gerhart: 285). Its military wing, Poqo (“pure” in Xhosa), was thus involved in direct attempts at killing whites and was generally more brutal than Umkhonto (Lobban: 208). Poqo was “destroyed” in 1963 by police arresting thousands of its supporters (Schuster: 38) and the ensuing legal assault (Lobban: 208), although it later resurfaced as the Azanian¹⁹ People’s Liberation Army (APLA), and the PAC as a whole was “virtually defunct by the late ‘70s” (Frederickson: 310).

The ANC and PAC “slipped into obscurity, suppressed by parents too frightened to tell their children” of the organisations, amongst other things because of the heavy penalties that were given to anyone found to be associated with them, and because informers were ready to tell of anybody showing affinity toward them (Schuster: 38). The organisations reassembled in exile, becoming increasingly centralist (Gumede: 24-25), and a slump in liberation movement presence and activity inside South Africa followed until the coming about of the Black Consciousness Movement in the late sixties.

Black Consciousness “seized a generation of youngsters who knew little of the ANC”, who were “virtually unknown in the townships” in the early seventies (Schuster: 54, 56), and who

¹⁸ Although the PAC was itself later to embrace Maoism, and now advocates an “Africanist Socialist Democracy”.

¹⁹ The name “Azania” was originally proposed as an alternate name for South Africa at the All-African People’s Conference in 1958 by Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah, and was subsequently used in the Azanian People’s Manifesto drawn up in 1959 by the PAC. In 1965 the PAC adopted the name for South Africa. The BCM also consistently used it instead of “South Africa”.

could therefore not compete with the Black Consciousness Movement inside South Africa. The youth of Soweto that were to have such a huge initial impact on South African liberation politics in the mid-seventies were thus mainly influenced by Black Consciousness (see chapter 5).

4.1.5 Soweto

The years before the Soweto uprising were the “high noon of apartheid”²⁰ (Lobban: 1). Because of the virtual annihilation of the liberation movements inside the country, most blacks believed that challenging the apartheid state successfully was impossible (Mandela, 1995: 154; Jukes: 115). Most whites, on the other hand, seemed unaware of the degree of discontent among blacks (Lobban: 102) as this mostly revealed itself in the townships towards spouses or fellow township-residents, well away from the gaze of the vast majority of whites. Even court convictions of blacks who during their court cases alleged having been tortured, made little impression on most whites (Lobban: 258). As illustrated by the Vorster quote in chapter 4.2.1, the apartheid state to some degree seemed to believe in their own rhetoric of South Africa being a democratic state with mainly happy citizens, the odd discontented black aside. The Soweto uprisings were to change all that, undermining the belief held by whites that blacks were mainly content by revealing the “legitimate grievances” of the black masses (Lobban: 142), leading to a fragmentation of white consensus (Lobban: 261) that had hitherto been fundamentally solid, and virtually overhauling government authority in the townships. Where only a few years previously there had been virtually none, a culture of protest including thousands of black South African activists grew throughout South Africa as the result of a newfound belief in the vulnerability of the apartheid state in those attempting to overthrow it. This new belief was instilled mainly by the Soweto uprising (Lobban: 141; Thompson: 228).

The students of Soweto were dissatisfied with their conditions long before the 16th of June 1976, the day of the demonstration that started the uprising (Lobban: 229). Poor educational standards, inadequately trained and authoritarian teachers, as well as the appalling general standard of living in townships such as Soweto were as much the reasons for the

²⁰ Apart from the lack of liberation movement activity inside South Africa, the sixties were a decade of state repression as well as of black economic improvement because of “unprecedented economic growth”, “relatively low” black unemployment and economic stability. The seventies, however, became a period of recession in South Africa as elsewhere, amongst other things because of increasing oil prices and falling gold prices (Worden: 128-129, 134).

demonstration (Schuster: 84) as the teaching of subjects in Afrikaans that was the pretence. The demonstration of 15,000 students (Jukes: 148) was meant to be peaceful, but after a disproportionate use of violence by the police, including firing on the unarmed students, the deployment of thousands of heavily armoured police and helicopters dropping teargas on the township,²¹ hundreds ended up dead²² and hundreds more wounded during the three days that the initial rioting lasted (Schuster: 68, 76). The uprising that had started in Soweto quickly spread to other townships and took on a larger scope, as the initial more or less disorganised outbreaks of violence against state symbols turned into organised demonstrations, stay-aways and strikes in the months after the initial demonstration. These events were to re-ignite the liberation struggle and create a revolutionary spirit inside the country (Schuster: 81, 83).

The repressive measures that the government took against the demonstrators and in the townships, where whole sections of townships were sectioned off and the police detained and maltreated suspected participants (Schuster: 105), proved to many that armed struggle was the only viable way of confronting and bringing down the apartheid government. Another effect of the uprising was consequently to prompt thousands of young men and women to leave the country and join the liberation movements in exile, which in turn helped to re-ignite the movements. Especially the ANC benefited from this, the number of ANC exiles swelling from 1000 in 1975 to 9000 in 1980, these new recruits infusing the organisation with Black Consciousness traits such as internal democracy and discouragement of leadership cultism (Lobban: 193-94; Gumede: 26).

4.1.6 Post-Soweto

Whereas the ANC struggled more or less unsuccessfully to have much of a military or political impact inside South Africa until the early or mid-eighties, it gathered prestige outside the country. This was largely due to the successful lobbying of Oliver Tambo and Thabo Mbeki, amongst others, the ANC beginning to be seen as the “authentic voice of the South African majority” (Berman: 120; Hadland: 45). The demise of the Black Consciousness Movement after Biko's death in 1977, caused by the arrest and detention of its members, divisions over the direction of the movement and successful ANC and white liberal attempts

²¹ Prime Minister Vorster said on the 18th of June 1976 that, “orders have been given to maintain order at all costs” (Rambally: 100).

²² Estimates of the death toll for the duration of the uprising differ, some claiming between 500 and 700 activists had died by 1977, up to 4000 having been injured (Schuster: 129; Davenport: 453) and others that over 1000 were killed (Gumede: 26).

to smother the movement by cutting off its funds (Pityana, 1992: 141; Hirschmann: 16, 19; Davis: 33), meant that the ANC could slowly start to regain its position as the main liberation organisation inside South Africa.

The ANC's newfound influence changed the ideological outlook of the liberation movement as a whole from the "going it alone" of Black Consciousness to one of non-racialism in the early eighties (MacDonald: 92; Lobban: 249). The ANC had deliberately distinguished itself from the then powerful adversary of Black Consciousness in the late seventies by "[emphasizing] non-racialism to contrast themselves with BC" (MacDonald: 115). Previously the ANC had been more openly Africanist, in 1959 defining the "South African revolution" as that of "the African people" (Davies: 284), only allowing non-Africans to join the organisation in exile in 1969 (Schuster: 192), and barring whites from serving on the ANC executive (Mandela, 1995:325), though not that of Umkhonto. Combined with later statements advocating the "primacy of South African blacks" in the liberation struggle, as well as remarks by ANC President Oliver Tambo that "power to the people means, in fact, power to the black people" in 1971, this did not help make the ANC's non-racialist stance clear (Mathebe: 160).

Nevertheless, it was another organisation, the non-racial *United Democratic Front (UDF)*, formed as an umbrella organisation of 575 organisations in 1983 and with the support of 2 million people, that together with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) was to revitalize the cause of liberation inside South Africa in the mid-eighties by instigating numerous strikes and boycotts, as well as bringing about virtual civil government collapse in many townships (Thompson: 228-229; Worden: 144; Worden: 147).²³ The membership of the UDF included former Black Consciousness activists as well as members of the ANC, the latter needing to compliment its largely unsuccessful military campaign²⁴ with that of a non-violent, above ground campaign. Both the ANC and the BCM had previously called for "the formation of a united front", but it was the speech by Reverend Alan Boesak (who had a BCM background) that succeeded in creating enough interest to enable the creation of such a broad front (Frederickson: 306; Seekings: 46).

²³ Although in some instances, local grievances were the reason for such actions, the UDF ending up "trailing behind the masses (Worden: 147).

²⁴ Umkhonto was in fact deemed a "total failure" in achieving its objectives. It did not impact the economy, scare away foreign investors or provoke any (positive) reaction from the white electorate (Meredith: 127). By the late eighties and early nineties, even the ANC began to see the armed struggle as going nowhere (Gumede: 38), Umkhonto leader Chris Hani admitting in 1990 that defeating apartheid militarily "would have taken a very, very long time" (Heribert: Chapter 2).

Practically the whole of the UDF's leadership along with many junior members were detained in 1986, and the UDF as a whole was banned in 1988 as the apartheid government increased its intimidation of liberation activists. In detaining such a wide range of UDF-members, the government "inadvertently 'conscientized' a number of people who had little previous connection with the revolt" (Schuster: 304), causing the range of South Africans to acknowledge the illegitimacy and brutality of the apartheid government to significantly widen. The UDF-led revolt thus became nationwide, in mobilising "every level of black society" as well as a significant part of white society, in a way that no such campaign had been before (Schuster: 346). The UDF disbanded in 1991, concrete negotiations between the liberation movements and the National Party having been secured.

Apart from the internal pressure applied by the UDF, there was a range of other factors that contributed to the downfall of apartheid. The costs of upholding apartheid, especially its homelands and three parliamentary chambers;²⁵ the shortage of skilled labour due to job reservation and Bantu education; the "unsoundness" of the economy caused by recession, inflation, payment due on long-term loans²⁶ and overspending on military and security equipment; the loss of income due to increasing sanctions;²⁷ the disappearance of a buffer of forthcoming white-controlled neighbours; and the growing numbers of whites favouring change (Thompson: 211, 222, 241; Mathebe: 74; Meredith: 435; Gumede: 29). In attempting to maintain the status quo of apartheid, the policies of hard-line Nationalists were devastating the South African economy for the state as well as for private capital. An influential group of white South Africans, mainly businessmen, therefore began discussions with the ANC, something that the ANC and the Nationalist government had attempted several times during the eighties, though largely without success. The ANC also had reason to start discussions with the apartheid government. The fall of the Soviet Union took away most of the funding of its military campaign, as well as invalidating the apartheid government's argument that the ANC were a "Trojan horse" for "Soviet interests" (Meredith: 435).

²⁵ The apartheid government had introduced a new parliamentary system in 1984 with three uniraical chambers (with whites, Coloureds and Indians, respectively). This parliamentary system was meant to give apartheid a degree of legitimacy, which it failed to do because it still divided South Africa along racial lines, excluded the African majority from influence and retained white supremacy (Thompson: 225).

²⁶ The IMF and World Bank lent the apartheid government \$200 million between 1951 and 1967, continuing loans into the eighties, thus effectively neutralising sanctions. The US congress prohibited further loans in 1983, although the IMF continued to give the apartheid regime financial advice on how to liberalise its economy in the nineties (Bond, 2003: 143; Bond, 2001: 422-423).

²⁷ The impact of sanctions should not be overestimated, however. South African political scientist Deon Geldenhuys claims he "could not find any direct, positive correlation between reform in South Africa and disinvestment from abroad" (Heribert: Chapter 2).

Frederik De Klerk became President because he was deemed to be much more of a pragmatist than the ailing P.W. Botha. The pragmatic part of the Afrikaans community had finally understood that apartheid had outlived itself (Kunnie: 66), proven by the successful outcome of the referendum De Klerk held in 1992 to give himself a mandate for negotiations with the ANC over the creation of a new constitution. The Nationalist government's idea was to sell post-apartheid capitalism to black leaders as a mutually beneficial solution and hang on to as much power for the white community as possible, attempting amongst other things to secure an alliance with Bantustan leaders to (Gumede: 30). Both the government and most of the liberation movement were thus ready to discuss the dismantling of apartheid, although the road to the election process of 1994 was not a simple or straightforward one. The unbanning of liberation movements, release of prisoners and lifting of the State of Emergency (imposed in 1985) in 1990 by De Klerk was an important positive gesture, however, and although temporary setbacks, such as outbreaks of violence, De Klerk pushing for safeguards of the existing racial order such as a two-phase transition towards multi-racial democracy and a rotating presidency against the will of the ANC and the ANC temporarily withdrawing from the process, compromises were found and consensus was reached, allowing South Africa's first election of universal suffrage to commence on the 26th of April 1994 (Butler: 25).

The election was a momentous occasion for most South Africans. It was the "final vindication as people of worth" of black South Africans (Woods, 2000: 176), the ANC winning nearly three-fourths of the electorate, well over half the seats in parliament, and the Presidency and Vice-Presidency. Blacks as well as whites emerged from the voting booths transfigured (Tutu: 5), but it did not mean the achievement of full liberation for black nor white in any fully meaningful sense of the word. As Mandela reminded everyone, South Africans had "merely achieved the freedom to be free, the right not to be oppressed" (Mandela, 1995: 751). The conditioning of apartheid ideology that still affected "every institution, every aspect of life" (Tutu: 203) was much harder to remove than the actual system itself. The successful removal of this conditioning would depend on the activities of future governments, as well as those of ordinary South African citizens, black and white.

4.1.7 Post-1994

The problems that the ANC inherited from the previous government were both psychological and material or economic. When the ANC took office, they discovered that the resources

available to them, the abundance of which their election campaign had been based upon, were fewer than they had thought; “the coffers were nearly empty” (Meredith: 649; Herwitz: 189). Furthermore, the vast majority of sizable businesses were owned by whites, echoing the motto of other colonial white communities in Africa: “give them the parliaments and keep the banks” (Meredith: 436). As for practical solutions to necessary reforms of South Africa’s democracy and industry, as well as the economic, social and psychological ills of its black inhabitants, the ANC had none, naively believing that removing apartheid would “in itself put an end to black economic deprivation” and psychological deficiencies (Gumede: 67; Maloka: 89).

The *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)* was an attempt to deal with the psychological part of the equation, in effect being an expression of mass therapy and what its Chairman Desmond Tutu called “restorative justice ... in the spirit of ubuntu”²⁸ (Tutu: 51). Tutu characterised the TRC as “a compromise between the extreme of Nuremberg trials and blanket amnesty or national amnesia” (Schuster: 405), only those perpetrators who gave a full disclosure of the human rights abuses they had committed receiving full amnesty (Meredith: 654). Some criticised the TRC for letting off criminals without punishment (Hunter-Gault: 25), and many whites choose not to give evidence, apparently seeing reconciliation as an entitlement and not something to be achieved. Others claimed that the TRC was part of a process that allowed post-apartheid “normality” to set in too quickly (Schuster: 407). Tutu countered that the “therapeutic” nature of the TRC was meant to promote “national unity” and “reconciliation”, not achieve it (Tutu: 33, 126).

The TRC did not focus solely on the human rights abuses committed by the apartheid government, but also on those of the liberation movements. That the ANC tried to prevent the parts of the report mentioning its human rights abuses from being published, such as the “necklacing”²⁹ of rival Black Consciousness supporters or killings of civilians, led Tutu to warn against “allowing new censors to replace the old” (Woods, 2000: 194-195; Tutu: 119).

²⁸ Ubuntu involves communality and interdependence (Posel: 313), as well as a “consciousness of belonging together”, “collectivity, unity and group solidarity” (Lodge: 231). In using ubuntu in connection with the TRC’s unravelling of the evils of apartheid, it is implied that the solution to this problem cannot be solved without recognising the intertwined humanity of perpetrators and victims (Tutu: 35).

²⁹ Placing a tire filled with petrol around the victims neck and setting fire to it.

4.1.8 The present

Nevertheless, the present material conditions were the main problem that needed remedying in most (black) people's minds, being a significant potential cause for unrest. Whereas there are signs of a growing black middle class, albeit a small one, the economy is still “overwhelmingly” dominated by whites (Butler: 63) and inequality is still “determined by the race geography of the past”, something that has not changed significantly, the overwhelming majority of the poor still being blacks (Pityana, 2007). Street riots, such as those in mid-2005, are evidence of growing dissatisfaction and impatience with the lack of, or increasing cost of, necessary services such as water and electricity,³⁰ and the general insufficient rate of change (Hunter-Gault: 30). Maybe the reconciliatory policies of the Mandela administration or Mbeki's neo-liberalism have not been seen to change the legacy of apartheid at an acceptable pace.

The overall economy might have recovered from the slump of the eighties and nineties, showing small but steady levels of growth (Butler: 48; Hunter-Gault: 49), but South African income inequality, already higher than almost everywhere else in the world, is deepening, towns and cities remain segregated now by economics and not by law, unemployment is high, and education standards amongst blacks are still poor (Netshitezhe: 15; Butler: 63, 66-67, 135-36).³¹ Even so, the focus of the South African government has been on achieving economic growth, as it has in much of Africa since the eighties, not on eradicating income inequality. South Africa has far better economic capacities than the rest of Africa, for whilst most African countries are dependent upon imports for the running of their economies, South Africa is not (Kunnie: 113), its economy being larger than that of Southern Africa combined (Butler: 47). Nevertheless, economic theories that see greater income equality as necessary to achieve growth, and poverty and inequality further hampering this because of insufficient educational standards, malnutrition etc. (Cypher: 174-75; Martinussen, 2002: 38), have obviously not won the day.

In this climate of economic ascendancy for some blacks and stagnancy or descent for the majority, one finds a contradictory combination of strengthening Africanist tendencies within the ANC government (Baines: 13) paired with a combination of negative, nationalistic

³⁰ More than 10 million people have had their water cut off, the same number having had their electricity disconnected, according to government surveys (Bond, 2004).

³¹ South Africa is ranked 121st by the UNDP's 2006 Human Development Index, 172nd by the CIA's World Factbook's index on unemployment and as the country with the eighth most unequal society in 2003 (Gini index from the 2003 Human Development Indicators).

xenophobic responses to the millions of immigrants of East and West African descent by the general public, on top of aggressive policing and restrictive and rigid immigration laws passed by the ANC government (Butler: 43, 155; Cole: 605).

4.2 Is South Africa neo-colonial?

According to left-leaning academics such as Julian Kunnie, South Africa is thus a neo-colonial society (Kunnie: 70-71; Herwitz: 190-191). He believes that the emulation of America's attempt to dismantle institutional and general racism by constitutionally outlawing it, not fundamentally redressing historical injustices, will lead to (and has led to) American conditions of "extraction of wealth for minority whites and Black elites and the continued exploitation of poor Black people ... and all working-class women and men" (Kunnie: 82-83). He also believes that the ANC government, in adopting neo-liberal policies that facilitate such a situation, are "essentially servicing the needs of Western capital and imperialism" (Kunnie: 93). This tendency is further seen in South Africa's aligning itself with Western countries and not those of developing countries in forums such as the WTO or sub-imperialist attempts to enrol other African countries in free market organisations such as The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (Saul, 2005: 251-252). Without fundamental reforms of the system, as well as of the overall ideology of the ANC government, attempts at dismantling the racist legacies of apartheid such as Black Economic Empowerment end up enabling only a few blacks to join a "non-racial" middle-class by enriching them, leaving the majority of blacks poor (Kunnie: 101).

Whereas the Mandela and Mbeki administrations may not realistically have been able to redress the imbalances of apartheid in the little over a decade available to them, one might at least side with Kunnie in questioning whether the present neo-liberal economic policies are part of the solution or part of the problem, no matter how much Mbeki claims social transformation to be one of his primary goals. One example of this is that the welfare system, although seen as "ambitious" and providing "a bulwark against poverty", only covers South African children below the age of fourteen³² and pensioners (Butler: 73; Gumede: 119), although the constitution guarantees the right to social security for all in need of it.³³ Furthermore, privatisation and growth-fixated neo-liberal policies have not proven at all

³² "Strategic Plan 2006/7 – 2009/10", Department of Social Development, page 37.

³³ Section 27 of the South African Constitution states, "everyone has the right to have access to ... social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance".

successful in furthering development or achieving social transformation or economic equality in other African countries in the eighties and nineties (Gumede: 108; Cypher: 518-520; Madeley: 58; Saul, 2005: 207).

Others disagree, claiming that it is unfair to blame the government for all of the ills of present-day South Africa, listing the achievements of the South African government at its people in redressing the all-encompassing legacy of apartheid,³⁴ and claiming that a stable economic framework is necessary for eradicating poverty (Manuel: 5). Future under-performance in addressing poverty should therefore be unnecessary given that the government seemingly has the resources to close the gaps between the rich and poor, having allegedly achieved macroeconomic stability (Ramphela, 2005; Gumede: 99).

5.1 Black Consciousness

The most obvious historical contender to the hegemony of the ANC in recent South African liberation politics was the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). The BCM not only challenged the political outlook of the ANC, but was also an important influence on the liberation movement as a whole at a crucial point in time. Unlike the promotion of immediate political liberation and non-racialism of the ANC, Black Consciousness advocated a two-tiered approach of initial psychological liberation and black self-sufficiency that would enable black confidence and true liberation and integration. When looking at the policies in present day South Africa it is obvious that there are significant differences in the policies that Steve Biko and Black Consciousness wished to implement in a post-apartheid society, as well as the type of leadership they advocated, and those of Mbeki's South Africa. In wanting to consider alternatives to the present ideological and political implementation, the BCM is therefore the most obvious placer to look.

5.1.1 History

Apart from being ideologically different from the ANC, Black Consciousness was also, as most political organisations, a reflection of the period of time into which it was born. The

³⁴ Netshitenzhe speaks of a "marked decline in poverty" (Netshitenzhe: 12), Ramphela lists the "solid constitutional foundations, ... strong independent judiciary, ... the TRC, ... stable macro-economic[s], ... a strong civil society, ... building on our African heritage" and the peaceful democratic "orderly changing of the guard" in 1994 and 1999 (Ramphela, 2003) and Finance Minister Trevor Manuel speaks of social improvements, "sound management of public finances" and having "created the conditions for rapid economic growth" (Manuel: 4) as success stories.

ANC-led liberation movement had up until the sixties mostly pursued a programme of multiracial cooperation, the moderate liberal programme of the thirties and forties subsequently modified in the fifties to accommodate more radical forms of protest. Whilst this had been possible up until the early sixties, although perhaps not particularly effective, the interracial polarisation of the sixties and seventies made such cooperation virtually impossible (Jukes: 128, 135; Pityana, 1992: 50). Black Consciousness was therefore not only ideologically different from the non-racial ANC or the Africanist PAC, but also different in terms of the conditions that it faced. This was further reflected in the fact that most of the leaders of the South African Students' Organisation (SASO)³⁵ and the BCM as a whole were “products of the locations and townships” (Pityana, 1992: 114) and consequently influenced by the “working-class attitude and experience” in the townships (Pityana, 1992: 31). They thus suffered denigration and self-doubt that many of the leaders of the ANC never had to endure, as they “grew up as members of a proud peasant class in the Eastern Cape” and therefore “never had to doubt their own worth as human beings in spite of the racism around them” (Ramphela, 1995: 184). According to Black Consciousness, the tactics of the ANC and PAC had failed because they failed to take into account the all-pervasive black inferiority and white paternalism (Worden: 132; Frederickson: 302).³⁶

Black Consciousness evolved as a philosophy in South Africa in the late sixties, transcending its initial student-orientated beginnings at an executive meeting of SASO in 1970 where Black Consciousness was discussed and seen as important for the entire black community, not only for students (Woods, 1987: 158), reflecting that “Black Consciousness philosophy sought ... to ... fuse intellectuals and masses” (Pityana, 1992: 101). The launching of the Black People's Convention (BPC) “to expand the work of Black Consciousness beyond the student and youth groups of SASO” and get the masses involved (Pityana, 1992: 52; Woods, 1987: 118), and the Black Community Programmes³⁷ (BCP) “to give practical effect to the philosophy of self-reliance” (Ramphela, 1995: 94) in the early

³⁵ The South African Students' Organisation was an all-black (“blacks” in a BC-context being those oppressed by the apartheid government; Africans, Indians and Coloureds, and not an essentialist racial determinant) student organisation, formed in 1968 against the background of NUSAS, the national multi-racial students movement, being insensitive to black opinion. SASO was the earliest concrete manifestation of South African Black Consciousness, and thus the first of an array of organisations forming the Black Consciousness Movement.

³⁶ Two examples of such complexes are Tutu describing how he automatically doubted the capabilities of black Nigerian pilots because they were black (Tutu: 204) and Woods how he was surprised when coming across assertive and intelligent blacks (Woods, 1987: 68).

³⁷ The Black Community Programmes covered the fields of health, education, leadership training, publications, home industries and childcare (Pityana, 1992: 157).

seventies furthered this process, launching educational programmes that introduced the message of self-reliance and Black Consciousness to high-school students and township youths throughout the country (Schuster: 53; Pityana, 1992: 215).³⁸ The BCM was also influential because of its “strategic use of the media” which was part of the reason why the BCM and Steve Biko became recognised as “a key political voice” by “members of the international community” that subsequently began consulting Biko on issues regarding South Africa (Pityana, 1992: 59, 128).

While the BCM had initially been left alone because the apartheid government saw its proclamation of “going it alone” as in accordance with apartheid’s separate development philosophy, they soon found out that the organisations of the BCM were a dangerous challenge to apartheid and began intensifying repressive measures against its members. Gaining new members for the organisations, especially the outwardly political BPC, consequently proved difficult (Pityana, 1992: 126), leaders of SASO, BPC and BCP routinely being banned, their replacements also banned (Pityana, 1992: 45), and judges convicting Black Consciousness members for little more than “white fear of black ideas” (Lobban: 260).

In late 1977 all BCM organisations were banned. This, combined with the murder of Biko, created divisions in an organisation already at odds and a split into a multiracial and an exclusivist camp, the former seeing Black Consciousness more as a means and the latter more as an end (Pityana, 1992: 141; Jukes: 156; Magubane: 157). Many ended up joining the ANC and PAC in exile, although the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA) and the Azanian People’s Organisation (AZAPO) were formed in exile and inside South Africa respectively to replace the banned BPC, BCP and SASO. The two were distinct organisations, AZAPO embracing a PAC-like Africanism,³⁹ but both espoused a Soviet-style Marxist rhetoric that saw class and race as interconnected, and they eventually merged after their unbanning in 1990 (Davenport: 494; Maaba: 433, 436; Zabalaza, 2006: 23). Ironically, the

³⁸ Other Black Consciousness-affiliated organisations or programmes of the seventies included the Black Allied Workers’ Union, the Black Workers’ Project, the Black Theology Project, the Black Parents’ Association, the Black Women’s Federation, the South African Students’ Movement, the National Youth Organisation that was affiliated to the programmes for leadership development run by SASO and the BPC, the Zimele Trust, the Home Education Service Project and the Union of Black Journalists. Furthermore, Black Consciousness was active in the spheres of culture and the arts (Davies: 302-308; Gerhart: 312; Magubane: 138, 141).

³⁹ “Draft position paper on the ideologies of Pan Africanism and Black Consciousness as they have developed in occupied Azania (i.e. South Africa)”, Frank Talk, Volume 3, 1989/90, pp. 89-91, (Published by the Natal Region of AZAPO).

BCM had turned from the anti-class focus and “new left”⁴⁰ democratic socialism of Biko (Pityana, 1992: 102) to a class-focused Marxism⁴¹ akin to that of the more SACP-influenced parts of the ANC at a time when ANC-moderates such as Mbeki were detaching themselves from Marxism (Gumede: 38).⁴²

With AZAPO and the BCMA, the BCM had been “reduced to near rhetoric and sloganeering” and a trivialisation of and deviation from the philosophy of the movement according to Saths Cooper, a former publicity secretary of the BPC and president of AZAPO (Nyeke: 158; Frederickson: 310). Former South African Students’ Representatives Council (SSRC) treasurer Selby Semela further described it as a “dead weight” of “isolated groups of radical cheerleaders” who were incapable of originality (Semela: 13, 15), and who had learnt all the wrong lessons from the Soweto uprising (Zabalaza, 2006: 23).

The BCM had never really recovered from the mass-bannings, imprisonments and torturing of its main leaders. This along with the fact that the ANC took successful steps to prevent international funding or recognition of BCM-organisations and to “re-educate” BCM activists sent to Robben Island, leading to most of the remaining principal figures, as well as a majority of its foot soldiers, joining the ANC and Umkhonto, meant a “return to dominance” of the ANC and of non-racialist ideology (Frederickson: 310; Hirschmann: 16-17; Pityana, 1992: 142). In addition, white liberals, revengeful of what they saw as the painful rejection of them by the BCM and the belittlement of their role in the anti-apartheid struggle, also played an important role in “stifling the movement” by using their “access to financial resources and their influence over the media, academia, and publishing houses, both internally and internationally” to stop donors supporting the BCM (Hirschmann: 19; Pityana, 1992: 228).

Nevertheless, the principle of a unitary liberation movement that Biko had promoted (Woods, 1987: 119, 403; Pityana, 1992: 66) was an influential contributory factor “to the

⁴⁰ The “rejection by young people of the decadent values of the passing generation” of the New Left during the sixties and seventies, as well as its unprecedented “challenge to authority” and dogmatic, centralist politics (Pityana in Halisi: 120) struck a chord with Biko and the BCM.

⁴¹ This turn to Marxism and class-based analysis of South African society was partially an answer to the apartheid government’s attempt to create a black middle class and thus divide blacks along class lines. Already the 1976 SASO Congress attacked such middle class blacks for aligning themselves “with imperialism” and concluding that the BCM needed to “look at our struggle ... also in terms of class interests” (Davies: 307).

⁴² The early South African left of the nineteen-tens and early nineteen-twenties that provided the foundation of (the predecessor to) the SACP were ironically more influenced by the anarchism of Bakunin than by Marx, as was common with most of the radical, non-social democratic left at the time. That this is a little-known fact is mainly due to the history of such anarchist movements being “buried under subsequent defeats and political orthodoxies”, to a large degree resulting from the ascendancy of the Marxism of Communist parties such as the SACP after the Russian Revolution (Van der Walt, 2004: 67-70, 84).

success of the United Democratic Front” (Works: 777), and the BCM was an important contributor in its own right, especially to the psychological side of the liberation movement as a whole. The legacy of Black Consciousness was felt throughout South African liberation politics and spanned the whole political spectrum, the legacy of the movement being significantly more than that of the small and relatively insignificant movements who claim affinity to Steve Biko and Black Consciousness that remained, such as AZAPO and the Socialist Party of Azania (Pityana, 1992: 3, 10). The “combination of PAC Africanism and orthodox socialist theory” that these parties espoused did not prove to be popular with the masses in post-apartheid elections (Davenport: 494) that left them virtually without representation in parliament and influence, as well as divided by internal divisions and leadership struggles.⁴³

Perhaps this is why AZAPO President Mosibudi Mangena, a founder member of Black Consciousness, national organiser of the BPC and the first Black Consciousness activist to be sent to Robben Island (Pityana, 1992: 126; Magubane: 135, 142), accepted first the post of Deputy Minister of Education in 2001 and later that of Minister of Science and Technology in 2004. Although Mangena described the move as one of preparing AZAPO “to be SA’s alternative” to the ANC government, insisting that “the party [AZAPO] will continue to exist as an independent party with socialist principles”,⁴⁴ his appointment in 2001 led to him being called a “sell-out” by the PAC and many top AZAPO members to leave the party because of what they saw as a betrayal of the policies of AZAPO.⁴⁵

⁴³ AZAPO, having seen only the defeats and not the gains in the compromise that led to liberation, boycotted the 1994-elections, only amassing 27,000 votes and gaining one parliamentary seat in the 1999 general elections and 39,000 votes in retaining this seat in 2004. Another party claiming BCM-affiliations, the Socialist Party of Azania (SOPA) formed in 1998, has no parliamentary presence after having only received 9,000 votes in 1999 and less than 15,000 votes in 2004.

⁴⁴ “Plucky Azapo aims to profit from mayhem in corridors of power”, *Business Day* 27th of October 2005; “PAC criticises Mangena post”, *Die Burger* 25th of January 2001.

⁴⁵ “PAC slams ‘sell-out’ Mangena for accepting Cabinet post”, *SABC News* 25th of January 2001. Mangena implicitly accepted GEAR by joining the government and voting in favour of NEPAD, “a continental version of Gear ... which we totally oppose”, in parliament, according to Kedibone Melema, outgoing spokesman for Azapo, (“13 top Azapo members quit”, *News 24* 16th of August 2002). That AZAPO states in its 2002 Policy Positions that an “AZAPO GOVERNMENT will ... pursue and uphold an economic policy where the objective will be to attain control of the means of production” (“Azanian People’s Organisation Policy Positions”, 2002, p. 6) underlines the confusing political trajectory of the party. AZAPO’s highest decision-making organ, the standing committee nevertheless backed Mangena’s appointment (“Azapo man ‘humbled’ by top job”, *News 24* 24th of January 2001).

5.1.2 Steve Biko

Steve Biko was born in 1946, thus spending all his conscious life under apartheid rule. Biko grew up in the Ginsberg Location near King Williams Town, “a closely knit community of about eight-hundred families, every four families sharing communal taps and toilets” (Pityana, 1992: 18). Being a successful student, he received a scholarship to attend Lovedale, from where he was expelled, though innocent of his alleged crimes, finishing his secondary education at a Catholic boarding school. At university he studied medicine at the University of Natal from 1966 and law from 1973 through the University of South Africa (UNISA), a correspondence university where other notables have studied,⁴⁶ completing neither degree.

Having initially worked and subsequently broken with the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) to help form SASO in 1968, Biko began working for the BCP in 1972 but was banned in 1973, although he remained thoroughly active within the movement, amongst many other things helping to form the Zimele Trust Fund⁴⁷ in 1975. Biko was the “father of the Black Consciousness Movement”, as well as its “main thinker” and “key catalyst” (Tutu in Biko: vi; Maaba: 432; Switzer: 188) although he deliberately “managed not to be dominant” (Pityana, 1992: 30) to enable others to assume responsibility and discourage a personality cult (Woods, 1987: 33).

Biko's general fearlessness in openly opposing the authorities such as during the SASO-BPC trial⁴⁸ in 1976, his “unhesitant response to insult” and his disregarding of his banning were probably contributing factors to his early death. On the other hand, showing that he was not afraid of the authorities was also an important contributing factor in fostering the culture of fearlessness that helped end apartheid (Pityana, 1992: 47, 256). Repeatedly detained without charge for months at a time, facing long periods of solitary confinement on several occasions (Biko, 1996: 1; Bernstein: Chapter II), he was detained for the last time in August 1977, having been stopped at a security Police roadblock. He died in police custody in September, having been tortured and severely beaten. An inquest into his death beginning in November 1977 failed to blame anyone for his death (Woods, 1987: 353), and although the perpetrators eventually came forward during the TRC, they were refused amnesty (Tutu: 51).

⁴⁶ Nelson Mandela, for instance, finished his degree at UNISA (Mandela, 1995: 79), as did Robert Sobukwe (Woods, 1987: 81).

⁴⁷ A fund that financed as well as gave educational and emotional support to former political prisoners, mainly ANC and PAC members.

⁴⁸ In the 1976 SASO-BPC trial, the apartheid government prosecuted and convicted nine members of the BCM for “subversion by intent”, in effect placing their thought and that of Black Consciousness on trial. Steve Biko was “summoned by the defence team to give evidence” (Woods, 1987: 149; Lobban: 76).

Coming from “a tradition that embraced [both] traditional African values and western ways” (Magubane: 121), Biko “was not convinced by what he saw as [the] exclusive Africanism” of the PAC, though the loyalty of the politicised in his family was to this organisation (Pityana, 1992: 21), and was not “sympathetic to the [non-racialism of the] ANC” either (Pityana, 2007). The radicalism of his youthful writings in the early seventies lessened in those of 1976 and 1977, showing a change of emphasis and admittance that some of the earlier writings had been “overkill” and “written in the heat of the moment” (Woods, 1987: 62). His early writings focused on the tactical black withdrawal from integrated organisations, his later writings on bringing about a new non-racial society with increased attention to “those whites of good will” being able to participate in the struggle for liberation (Mpumlwana in Biko: xiii), reflecting the two-tiered strategy of Black Consciousness of consciousness first, political action thereafter.

5.1.3 Influences upon Black Consciousness

Although the BCM was a reaction to a specific situation and a specific period in time, the “high noon” of apartheid, the movement was inspired by South African as well as foreign ideas. But simply claiming that its ideology was imported or copied is assigning “too little significance to the life experiences and political intuition of the movement’s founders” (Gerhart: 273). On the one hand one can see Black Consciousness as a “continuation of earlier traditions”, its members coming from diverse political backgrounds such as the ANC, PAC and the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM)⁴⁹, as well as from the Progressive and Liberal parties⁵⁰ (Pityana, 1992: 101, 185; Davies: 304; Halisi: 128). On the other, Black Consciousness is also clearly inspired by foreign movements and individuals, although such internal and external influences are not necessarily strictly separate or unconnected.

⁴⁹ The relatively small Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), formed in 1943, called for non-European (black) unity as opposed to the African unity of the PAC or the non-racialism of the ANC, the aim of the organisation being “the liquidation of the National Oppression of the Non-Europeans in South Africa”. NEUM criticised the ANC’s non-racialism for “reproducing the theory of four nations in South Africa” (Davies: 311-313), but “was unable to fill the vacuum created by the repression of the other liberation organizations”, ending up “split by ideological division” (Worden: 130).

⁵⁰ The Liberal Party, formed in 1954, was initially a gradualist party that attempted to win over white voters to a qualified franchise. The party was radicalised in the late fifties, the Progressive Party, formed in 1959, taking over the gradualism of the Liberal Party, the latter now calling for one man one vote and supporting the ANC’s call for boycotts on South Africa. The Liberal Party dissolved in 1968 (Davies: 378-379), never having won any seats in parliament. The Progressives in many consecutive elections won only the lone seat of Helen Suzman until taking over the role of official opposition from the United party in the seventies and eighties, though never winning over 26 seats out of a total of 165 in 1981.

The Africanism of *Anton Lembede*⁵¹ was thus inspired by Garveyism⁵² (Mandela, 1995: 111) and akin to Negritude. As the BCM was to rediscover nearly three decades later, Lembede saw the inferiority complex as “the greatest barrier to liberation”, Africans having to “improve their self-image” and self-reliantly embrace their past before being able to successfully challenge apartheid (Mandela, 1995: 115, 119; Gerhart: 58, 272). Aspects of Lembede’s ANCYL thereby “precipitated the emergence of Black Consciousness” (Pityana, 1992: 119), Biko seeing it as “the first real signs that ... Black Consciousness was slowly manifesting itself” (Biko, 1996: 67). Unlike the BCM, however, Lembede saw non-European unity as a “fantastic dream” (Gerhart: 76), believing instead in an essentialist, exclusivist African “God-given blackness” that was to unite Africans in a common nationalism (Gerhart: 58, 60), an argument similar to that of Sobukwe in the fifties that Africans would have to reject their inferiority to end white domination (Gerhart: 187).

The ideologies of post-independence African leaders were also an influence on Black Consciousness, especially Tanzania’s *Julius Nyerere*, who’s African Socialism or Ujamaa and self-reliance was similar to the Black Communalism and ubuntu that Black Consciousness advocated (Pityana, 1992: 154-155) in its claim that socialism was inherent in traditional African values such as the extended family and the “co-operative nature of village communities” (Thomson: 38-39, 51). As Barney Pityana, former President of SASO, stated in 1971: “Black man you are on your own. Like Nyerere we must minimize reliance on external aid” (Gerhart: 274). Nyerere was the most influential African thinker of his time, his concept of self-reliance manifesting itself concretely in Ujamaa’s self-sufficient socialist villages that sought to “integrate the logic of economic efficiency with the goal of social equality”, as well as that of rural African mutuality with modern production methods (Thomson: 53). Unlike many other post-independence leaders, he shied away from extravagance and prevented “the growth of a privileged elite” (Meredith: 250), insisting on the elite being “part of the society which [they] are changing”, success only being possible if “they work from a position within ... society ... [and] identify themselves with the uneducated” (Nyerere, 1974: 8). Yet by the end of the seventies, it was clear that Nyerere’s increasingly undemocratic and centralist

⁵¹ Lembede was founding president of the ANC Youth League between 1944 and his untimely death in 1947 at the age of 33.

⁵² The “Garveyism” of Marcus Garvey was introduced to South Africa in the twenties, preaching Pan-Africanism, African exclusivism, and prophetic Christianity. According to Vinson, Garveyism “pervaded black South African politics generally”, including the ANC, and was “central to the transnational ... black political consciousness ... in interwar South Africa” (Vinson: 282, 303).

system was not economically viable. Ujamaa “degenerated into [undemocratic] state control over the peasants” (Mbah: Chapter 5) where peasants continued to produce for their own subsistence because of government price controls; administrative errors, corruption and coercion further hampering the project. Although he had produced results in education, health and social services, these were mainly financed by foreign aid (Saul, 2005: 151; Meredith: 256-259; Thomson: 54-55). According to some economists, positive lessons can be drawn from Nyerere's Tanzania (Saul, 2005: 36), such as the “remarkably stable and equitable society” he managed to create in a country with a vast ethnic and religious diversity (Thomson: 50, 55), a focus on rural, agricultural development as opposed to the traditional draining of rural wealth, as well as the basic contention that alternatives to a global capitalism detrimental to Africa should be sought.

A severe critic of the betrayal of the first generation of African leaders, *Fanon* was another important influence on Black Consciousness (Pityana, 1992: 29). Even though “proto-Fanonism” was to found in South Africa before Fanon, Fanon's desire to break the psychological shackles of colonial discourse, his universalist and humanist rejection of Africanist Negritude, his rejection of “gradualist solutions”, his “mistrust of bourgeois blacks anxious to step into the shoes of the exploiter” and his rejection of the influence of white liberalism was to influence Black Consciousness (Gerhart: 275; Halisi: 119). That Fanon acknowledged that democracy in most post-independence African countries ended up becoming a “strategy for power, not a vehicle for popular empowerment” (Ake, 1993: 240) and broke with Marxist orthodoxy, adopting a more decentralised and democratic socialism (Gibson: 201-202; Fanon, 2004: 130-131; Mbah: Chapter 3) can also be seen to have influenced the movement. Unlike Fanon, Biko disregarded Fanon's call for a “cleansing effect” of violence in the liberation struggle, although this stance was predicated on the actions on the apartheid government, as well as probably being employed as an act of self-defence against apartheid's law, and not all inside the BCM agreed with Biko's non-violent position (Biko, 1996: 149; Woods, 1987: 127; Semela: 13).

In finding societies and situations that they could compare themselves with and learn from, Black Consciousness proponents looked not only to Africa but also towards America. The influence of the American “*black power*” movement can be seen in the belief in the “closing of ranks before entering open society” that Black Consciousness espoused, and in that comparisons between Afro-American and South African approaches to their respective racist

experiences were “popular exercises at SASO leadership training seminars” (Gerhart: 276; Pityana, 1992: 27). Many proponents of Black Consciousness also copied black American slang such as “hi” and “guys” and used “black power” terminology such as the term “black” instead of “non-white” (Biko, 1996: 48; Schuster: 53; Woods, 1987: 72; Gerhart: 275-277). Even so, the obvious differences between the struggle of a black American minority group and the black majority in South Africa were acknowledged, the BCM adopting selectively and reinterpreting ideas to “fit South African conditions” (Frederickson: 298).

Pedagogically, the methodology of *Paolo Freire* in “Pedagogy of the oppressed” was an inspiration, workshops and training courses being held on Freire’s methods of education and conscientisation during the early seventies (Pityana, 1992: 27, 35, 155). Non-hierarchical participatory development or education has a history in South Africa, captured in the South African terms “uglolana”, meaning “sharpening each other”, and “uakana”, meaning “to build each other” (Rahman, 2004: 17). Freire’s non-hierarchical pedagogy was therefore readily applicable to the South African context, as was his acknowledgement of the oppressed being “fearful of freedom” because they have “internalized the image of the oppressor” (Freire: 29), of the futility of the gradualism and white (oppressor) ownership of the struggle sought by white “liberals” (Freire: 26, 36) and of the dehumanisation of oppressor and oppressed alike (Freire: 29). His insistence that only “true reflection” can lead to action that can eradicate both the consciousness of the oppressed and the oppressor, that “the oppressed must see examples of oppressor vulnerability” for this to happen and that the oppressed must actively participate “in the act of liberation” unless he is to end up an “object” that “can be manipulated” (Freire: 37, 46-48) similarly influenced the practice of the movement.

5.1.4 Definition of Black Consciousness

Having accounted for the history of South African Black Consciousness and what inspired the movement we now turn towards the philosophy itself. Black Consciousness was “an attitude of mind and a way of life” (Biko, 1996: 91) focussing on “the cultural and political revival of an oppressed people” (Woods, 1987: 116). According to Biko, “the type of black man we have today [in the early seventies] ... accepts what he regards as [his] ‘inevitable position’” (Biko, 1996: 28), rejecting his own humanity by attaching “the meaning white to all that is good” (Biko, 1996: 100), believing “the myth that *Black* is an alienation from the normal which is white” (Rambally: 120), white standards thus being “the yardstick by which even

black people judge each other” (Biko, 1996: 30). “The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor” being “the mind of the oppressed” (Biko, 1996: 69), Black Consciousness meant to enable blacks to fight this defeatism, develop hope, and build up their humanity (Woods, 1987: 174) by infusing them with “pride and dignity”, reminding them of their “complicity in ... allowing [themselves] to be misused” and urging them to be their own “authorities rather than wait to be interpreted by others” by demonstrating “the lie that black is an aberration from the ‘normal’ which is white” (Biko, 1996: 29, 49, 52). Black Consciousness “no longer seek[s] to reform the system because so doing implies acceptance of the major points around which the system revolves” (Biko, 1996: 49), turning instead to “black communalism as its economic policy” (Rambally: 122), whilst at the same time conceding that “racial integration requires economic integration” (Biko, 1972: 66).

Liberation was important because blacks “cannot be conscious ... and yet remain in bondage” (Biko, 1996: 49), which explains why political and cultural struggle are interconnected (Pityana, 1992: 185), liberation not simply being about freedom from material conditions, but about “liberation ... first from psychological oppression ... and secondly from physical oppression”.⁵³ If liberation was seen as being simply about material conditions, alliances with other groups seeking liberation such as liberals or communists were possible, but “the moment [liberation] was conceived as a kind of therapy, a cure for alienation, it excluded such alliances” (Chipkin, 2002: 572).

Both the non-racial and multi-racialist politics of the ANC and the separatist and confrontational politics of the PAC were rejected (Frederickson: 300). According to Bennie Khoapa, “there is a third choice [besides integration and separation] – pluralism, and beyond that a fourth – transformation ... at this moment ... we can neither integrate nor separate” (Khoapa in Biko, 1972: 63). “While as a matter of principle”, Biko rejected “separation in a normal society”, he claimed that South Africa was “far from a normal society” (Biko, 1996: 12), equality having to obliterate white superiority and black inferiority for non-racialism to be of any use. Nevertheless, non-racialism was the BCM’s target for a future South Africa (Biko, 1996: 139; Woods, 1986: 183), Black Consciousness deemed to be “irrelevant in a colourless and non-exploitative egalitarian society” (Biko, 1996: 87).

⁵³ SASO Newsletter, August 1971, page 10.

5.1.5 The South African “liberal”

The first group targeted by the BCM were the white “liberals”. The power of accommodative and moderate views on top of the negligible action taken towards apartheid in the sixties, by white liberals as well as by black homeland politicians, was seen as the primary objects for initial improvement. For whilst it was acknowledged that liberals were in fact friends and not enemies, the real enemies being the apartheid government and its supporters, their influence over blacks in the absence of ANC or PAC involvement in the late sixties and early seventies was seen as detrimental to the cause of liberation.

The multiracial nature and white liberalism of NUSAS attracted many black students on account of it being one of the few legal anti-apartheid groups in the early sixties (Juckes: 117). But Biko's experiences with NUSAS made him see the integration possible at its meetings as “a one-way course” where blacks were meant to assimilate “white (liberal) values and attitudes”, whites always knowing better how blacks should respond to apartheid (Biko, 1996: 20) and accordingly assuming the role of spokesman for the blacks. The mere confidence-boosting of blacks associating “with whites who seem to treat us as equals” (Biko, 1996: 23) was seen an illusory integration, as was what Biko saw as liberals soothing their conscience by socialising with a few “intelligent and articulate” blacks with whom “total identification ... is impossible” (Biko, 1996: 22, 65). Integration was not to be enforced according to the Black Consciousness, but would follow “automatically when the doors to prejudice are closed through the attainment of a just and free society”.⁵⁴

That all whites were seen as having been born into privilege and had a lot to lose if apartheid was overthrown (Biko, 1996: 50, 66) was seen as a contributing factor to the moderation of liberals. Liberals were holding back the struggle “offering a formula too gentle, too inadequate for our struggle”, according to Biko, whereas the homeland politicians and other leaders accommodating the apartheid government and having “enjoyed a decade of legitimacy” were simply “labelled stooges and sellouts [sic]” (Woods, 1987: 63; Juckes: 140). The latter were a clear example of the liberation struggle not simply being between blacks and whites but between those who “maintained the oppressive status quo and those who wished to change society into a non-racial democracy” (Juckes: 157). They had the doubtful honour of being seen as the embodiment of “non-whites”, the derogatory Black Consciousness term for unenlightened blacks (Biko, 1996: 48; Magubane: 114). Such “colourless white lackeys” who

⁵⁴ SASO Newsletter, August 1971, page 11.

“propped up the system” were considered having “lost the right to [be] part of the black world” (Biko, 1996: 78). Not all liberals were therefore necessarily white (Pityana, 1992: 251).

An example of white liberal ideology was that of the South African Progressive Party who, although accepting a future “South Africa as a unified, multi-racial state ... with equal opportunities for all”, based its outlines for this future South Africa on “a qualified vote ... based on educational and economic qualifications” (Botha: 46).⁵⁵ “Simple majoritarianism” was seen as problematic in a “deeply divided society” such as South Africa (van Zyl Slabbert: 133), the Progressives rejecting “the concept of black majority rule just as ... the concept of white majority rule” (Midlane: 379)⁵⁶ and thereby essentially wishing to retain “all the essential structures and institutions of capitalist exploitation in South Africa” (Davies: 148).⁵⁷ Former member of the Progressives, Jan Botha, argued that the necessity for such moderate measures lay in “the difference in the standards of civilisation of the various racial groups in the country” (Botha: 256). The Progressives and other white liberals were thus not working for true integration but for black assimilation into white society,⁵⁸ and some liberals, such as Donald Woods, once a member of the Progressives, ended up admitting the futility of such moderate South African liberalism (Woods, 1987: 370-71).

The attack on the liberals was in effect an attack on the particular South African brand of liberalism and “the gradualist approach that they supported” (Juckes: 130) and not an attack on all whites or liberalism as such (Magubane: 119), it being acknowledged that “useful coalitions between blacks and whites [could] be formed” (Biko in Woods, 1987: 123) once the removal of white liberal influence had taken place. An example of the anti-liberal stance of Biko and others being more tactical than racist (Biko, 1972: 63), and of the waning focus on white liberals because of the strengthening of the liberation movement in the seventies, was seen in Biko’s friendship with Donald Woods⁵⁹ and in the fact that “not one white present” at Biko’s funeral, attended by thousands and lasting several hours, “was made to feel

⁵⁵ Although most Progressives such as van Zyl Slabbert had disavowed qualified franchise by the late seventies, they kept on arguing for the need for some sort of “minority veto” (van Zyl Slabbert: 151-153).

⁵⁶ Progressives leader Colin Eglin, quoted from the Sunday Times, 30 October 1977.

⁵⁷ Although “an oversimplification”, according to Midlane, some Nationalists as well as radicals saw the Progressives as being little more than “the mouthpiece of the Anglo-American Corporation” (Midlane: 378-379). In fact many employees of Anglo-American doubled as Progressive MP’s, the corporation virtually keeping the party going by large donations (Davies: 67, 146).

⁵⁸ SASO Newsletter, August 1971, page 11.

⁵⁹ Some members of the BCM resented this friendship (Woods, 1987: 2), however, showing that some of the nuances of the Black Consciousness philosophy were lost on some of its adherents (Ramphela, 1995: 65).

unwelcome” (Woods, 1986: 182), the message of the speeches held at the funeral consistently promoting “a non-racial, non-ethnic society” (Woods, 1986: 183). As the BCM became stronger and more confident during the seventies, white liberalism no longer being a threat to the liberation movement, they could be “invited to participate, as a minor but welcome ally” (Pityana, 1992: 235), the “debate on the merits and demerits of separatism [having] exhausted itself” (Rambally: 108). If they wanted to help bring apartheid to an end, however, whites ought to concern themselves with realising and dealing with the fact “that they themselves are oppressed” and fighting for justice and against “white racism” in their “white world” (Biko, 1996: 23, 25, 65; Pityana, 1992: 233; Magubane: 122).

5.1.6 Blackness and whiteness

A non-racial approach to a racially charged situation such as that of apartheid South Africa, often “absorbed unreflectively” by an ANC hoping racialism would simply “wither away” (MacDonald: 111),⁶⁰ is akin to pretending that racism does not exist, ignoring “its denigrating psychological effects” (Gibson: 18). Centuries of “negative stereotyping of Africans” had “inhibited a desire to embrace a black identity” (Berman: 118), but unlike many other colonies, especially those of France and Spain where a certain amount of assimilation into white culture was possible, South African blacks had never aspired to be white. Whiteness in South Africa was “associated with police brutality and intimidation” (Biko, 1996: 76); though this did not necessarily mean that blacks did not feel inferior to white South Africans.

Although charged with being racist (Woods, 1987b: 250), the BCM in fact “evolved as a counter-ethnicity movement” to the tribalisation politics of the apartheid government’s ethnically divisive homelands and Bantu education policies (Pityana, 1992: 103; Halisi: 113). Moreover, the social construction of groups such as “blacks” to counter this⁶¹ has its precedents as well as latter-day adherents. Hannah Arendt in claiming that one must “defend oneself as a Jew” if attacked as one (Browning: 11) and Spivak in coining the term “strategic essentialism” wherein she distinguishes between “deploying” or “activating” essentialism and

⁶⁰ According to MacDonald, “The ANC’s reasoning verged on the circular: non-racial institutions would dispel racialism by ignoring race officially and ignoring race officially would prove that racialism had been dispelled” (MacDonald: 112).

⁶¹ Biko believed that “any group of people who identify as a unit through shared interests and aspirations necessarily need to protect those interests they share” (Biko, 1972: 8), that blacks were “collectively segregated against”, and that responding, “as a group” was therefore as natural as workers uniting in trade unions (Biko, 1996: 25).

“falling into” or “lapsing into” it (Selden: 238), are examples of a similar line of thought.⁶² The latter effectively describes the difference between the essentialism of Negritude, Lembede or the PAC and the strategic essentialism of the definition of blackness employed by Biko and Black Consciousness.⁶³ Appealing to “blackness” can consequently easily be construed as acceptance of colonialist discourse, only turning it on its head as with Negritude and Africanism. Black Consciousness escapes falling into this category precisely because of its non-essentialist or strategic essentialist use of the term black, not defining an impenetrable and non-interchangeable group based along racial lines, but a constructed and interchangeable one based on consciousness (Pityana, 1992: 105). “Black” is seen as a state of mind or “a reflection of a mental attitude”, not a matter of pigmentation, and “blacks” seen as “those who are by law or tradition politically, economically and socially discriminated against as a group in the South African society” (Biko, 1996: 48). A non-conscious African, Indian or Coloured is by the same logic not a black but a “non-white”. In transcending the groups that the apartheid government had defined, as well as the concept of “non-white” that saw whiteness as the norm to be emulated, adherents of Black Consciousness were defining themselves, and doing so positively, as well as uniting the previously fragmented and divided black liberation movement (Thompson: 171). Whites are excluded from this equation because of their privileges accrued from and complicity in apartheid, embeddedness in racist⁶⁴ ideology and because their inclusion could potentially undermine black unity (Pityana, 1992: 105).⁶⁵

One might speculate upon whether such exclusion is to be applied to all whites, only to South African whites steeped in apartheid ideology, or whether there are degrees to such exclusion. If all whites are to be excluded the argument is essentialist, if exclusion is to be qualified as the second and third points argue, it is not. The necessity of a strong and coherent strategic essentialism, reflecting the disunity and weakness of the liberation struggle in the late sixties and early seventies, meant that Biko and others were inclined to overstate their

⁶² Aboriginal Australian author Mudrooroo is essentially making the same point in claiming that it is necessary “that we struggle ... [as] the one mob of the colonisers, though we knew that before we had been many and are still many” (Mudrooroo: 2).

⁶³ Although not all Black Consciousness advocates understood the finer points of such “strategic essentialism”, some seeing “Negritude [as] a vital force of the liberation movement” (SASO Newsletter, June 1971, page 19).

⁶⁴ Biko sees racism as “discrimination by a group against another for the purposes of subjugation” (Biko, 1996: 25). Unlike Miles’ definition (Miles: 83 or chapter 2.3.1), Biko’s is similar to that of Carmichael and the Black Power movement in America, and would be seen by Miles as a conceptual inflation of the term (Miles: 66-67).

⁶⁵ SASO Newsletter, August 1971, page 10.

case (Woods, 1987: 62),⁶⁶ the strengthening of the liberation movement subsequently allowing a more differentiated view to present itself. If a more differentiated view had not come about, the early more radical statements of Biko and Black Consciousness would have been in danger of emulating the stereotypical and uniform image of South African blacks, as well as homogenising whites, although from a position of relative weakness, not from the strength of the apartheid instigators.

Whiteness and the notions of superiority and paternalism that go with it must be dealt with as much as the connotations of inferiority that go with blackness if a society not based on notions of racial superiority and inferiority is to prevail. This is especially so because the underlying structures of white South African superiority, as well as white supremacist feelings, have not fully disappeared (Hadland: xi; Woods, 2000: 217; Butler: 63). As Said acknowledges, it was in fact the difference or “Otherness” of blacks that enabled the different European nationalities to construct “whiteness” as a unifying category. Apartheid, as well as the similar notions of empire or colonial superiority, therefore “messes with the identity of both colonizer and the colonized” (Gikandi: 31, 109) and accordingly, this feeling of racial and cultural togetherness between whites must be broken. Perhaps initially by bringing about a common national consciousness as Fanon favoured (Fanon, 2004: 144) together with breaking up the social and residential patterns that ensure that “the social lives of Black and White South Africans still rarely cross” (Butler: 136), because as Black Consciousness maintained, “a nation [and thus any common nationalism] presupposes a voluntary and unified political cooperation of all the social groups within the state” (Biko, 1972: 13).

Otherwise many whites might well end up with one of two views of their whiteness, both of them racially or culturally essentialist: either a view described in the sixties by Lewis Nkosi as being “greatly disproportionate to the individual achievement of ... white persons”, making it “possible for an ignorant backwoodsman in Alabama or some pathetic tramp in Trafalgar Square to assume, almost automatically, his superiority over any black man (Gordimer: 191), or a view only marginally different where obvious black achievers are given the status of “honorary whites”, the rest being treated as those blacks described by Nkosi.

⁶⁶ Statements such as “personal contact with Whites ... must be discouraged” (SASO Newsletter, August 1971, page 10) certainly seem excessive when seen against later more accommodating views on contact with whites. As mentioned previously, this change of emphasis might reflect the waning influence of white liberals and the equally strengthening of the black liberation movements.

5.1.7 Goals

The goal of the BCM was a non-racial, non-exploitative and non-exclusive society (Biko, 1996: 85, 139) with a “one man, one vote” type democracy and “no reference to colour” (Biko, 1996: 123), specific minority rights being discouraged because they implied “recognition of portions of the community on a race basis” (Biko, 1996: 149). Self-sufficiency or withdrawal from white society was “not an end in itself” (Biko, 1996: 16) but rather a means to nurture black confidence, self-reliance and self-respect, without which political confrontation towards apartheid and future true integration was believed to be impossible:

“Once the various groups ... have asserted themselves to the point that mutual respect has to be shown then you have the ingredients for a true and meaningful integration ... out of this mutual respect ... there will obviously arise a genuine fusion of the life-styles of the various groups. This is true integration” (Biko, 1996: 21).

On the other hand Biko warned that “the isolation of the black intelligentsia from the rest of society” (Biko, 1996: 18), “ill distribution of wealth” and “a mere change of face of those in governing positions”, making only “a few blacks [filter] through to the bourgeoisie” (Biko, 1996: 149), would make any political freedom meaningless unless it was complemented by material and non-centralist democratic progress and the eradication of respective black and white complexes, as well as black dependency on whites.

Instead, the BCM advocated a Nyerere-inspired Black Communalism that was meant to be a “modified version of traditional African economic life which is geared to meet the demands of a highly industrialized and modern economy” (Rambally: 122).⁶⁷ Black Communalism implied, amongst other things, the state owning the land, village cooperatives, state involvement as well as private initiatives and ownership on a communitarian basis in industry and commerce, foreign investment being discouraged, a minimum wage, state control of

⁶⁷ Ndebele for instance acknowledged that “blacks must set about destroying the old and static customs and traditions that have over the past decades made Africa the world’s human zoo and museum of human evolution ... almost all the so-called tribal customs must be destroyed”, and that “customs and traditions are man-made, [and] therefore ... can be changed according to whether man continues to find value in them” (Ndebele in Biko, 1972: 26). Biko, on the other hand, concludes that certain overarching elements of traditional African culture, such as that the “community orientated” African culture, are preferential to “the individualism which is the hallmark of the capitalist approach” (Biko, 1996: 42).

imports and exports (Rambally: 123-125), observance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, state-run health services and free and compulsory elementary education.⁶⁸

The society Biko envisaged was not to be a carbon copy of the African Socialism that some of the post-independence African leaders advocated, Biko acknowledging the “plasticity” and lack of any “ultimate definition” of African Socialism (Woods, 1987: 184). The BCM advocated a “mixed economy”, not a socialist one, as well as encouraging some private undertakings that were to be complemented by worker protection “against exploitation” (Davies: 306; Pityana, 1992: 155; Rambally: 122-125). Biko thereby refused to “accept the dilemma of capitalism versus communism”, both “capitalist type of enterprises” and the Soviet model clearly being rejected (Woods, 1987: 122, 140; Halisi: 114) as they both were seen as specific cultural manifestations that deemed colonialism to be necessary. The political aspects of the Black Consciousness philosophy are not as detailed as the psychological and cultural, in part because a future South African society was to be formed in discussion with all relevant parties so as to form an inclusive synthesis of views (Woods, 1987: 184).

The means to the downfall of apartheid, as well as the successful transcendence of its effects that was seen as equally necessary for true integration and the eradication of such complexes, was to focus upon many different areas such as those of economic relations, education and theology (Works: 777), all areas that were tainted by apartheid conditioning. Overall, the means to be employed in overturning apartheid were to be non-violent, according to Biko, not by way of an armed struggle that was to be left to the ANC and PAC (Biko, 1996: 134, 136; Davis: 25), “too many residues of hate into the reconstruction period” and “too many postrevolutionary problems” being the outcome of a violent approach (Woods, 1987: 84). As a result, any advocacy of the “military option” or “armed combat” was strongly discouraged, those who persisted being expelled from the movement (Magubane: 118). This did not necessarily preclude taking up arms in the future as non-violence was also a tactical standpoint, Biko and others fearing that by openly advocating violence they would jeopardise the aboveground nature of the BCM (Woods, 1987: 127; Frederickson: 307), smothering the movement before it became strong enough to have an impact.⁶⁹ The peaceful nature of the BCM therefore also depended on the future actions of the apartheid government (Biko, 1996:

⁶⁸ Minutes of the Black People's Convention 13th to 16th of December 1975, p. 15-17.

⁶⁹ Biko had perhaps heeded the advice of Sobukwe (in 1959), who, as previously mentioned diagnosed the downfall of the PAC as having been caused not by “its ideology but in its reckless rush to confrontation at a time when circumstances did not favor a black victory” (Gerhart: 285; Jukes: 121).

149) whose violent and uncompromising response to the Soweto uprisings can be seen to have brought about a “collapse of the BCM’s work-within-the-system approach” (Davis: 27).

5.1.8 Influence

The influence of the BCM can be seen as comprising two layers or parts. One part included influence on South African liberation as a whole, the other influence in achieving the specific goals it set out to realize (one of them obviously being liberation). The two parts were also interrelated and overlapping, the role of Black Consciousness being complimentary to that of the ANC and other liberation movements. Examples of this are the ANC’s military wing being dormant until the Soweto uprisings that reinvigorated its campaign with an infusion of ideas and thousands of new recruits for its military, as well as Biko’s attempt to unite the liberation movements that was a contributing factor to the formation of the UDF (Pityana, 1992: 66, 101).

The idea that the philosophy of Black Consciousness should “develop from psychological unity to political unity” was forged in the mid-seventies (Pityana, 1992: 53; Woods, 1987: 119), the movement being involved in discussions with the ANC and PAC about unifying the liberation movements (Biko, 1996: xii; Pityana, 1992: 54; Woods, 2000: 208) and Biko openly stating that he would “like to see groups like the ANC, PAC and the Black Consciousness Movement deciding to form one liberation group” (Biko, 1996: 148). Contact between the liberation movements and the idea of an all-embracing liberation group had been proceeding before this point in time and continued after it, however. Pityana had a history of ANC involvement and Winnie Mandela, “one of the few members of the ANC’s top echelon to embrace Black Consciousness”, had met on several occasions with Biko (Magubane: 145; Sampson: 274).

Meetings between the BCM and the ANC were continued in the late seventies, some of which included Thabo Mbeki in his role as ANC political secretary (Magubane: 155), as were calls for a united front by AZAPO in the early eighties (Seeking: 44). Biko’s “influence on the shift in resistance politics” towards the unity principle that he promoted, on top of the organisational skills that the BCM taught in workshops and leadership courses, therefore contributed significantly “to the success of the United Democratic Front” (Works: 777; Magubane: 158).

These achievements notwithstanding, the major achievement of the Black Consciousness ideology was the extent to which it successfully helped to “diminish the element of fear in the minds of black people” who, prior to the manifestation of Black Consciousness in the late sixties were “terribly scared of involvement in politics” (Biko, 1996: 145). Black Consciousness produced self-confident blacks (Hirschmann: 8; Gerhart: 315) that Woods called “the sort of personality ... that blacks had been needing in South Africa for three hundred years” (Woods, 1987: 53). The statements of many others, including Mandela speaking of a “different breed” of “brave” BCM-prisoners (Mandela, 1995: 576-577) and a Sowetan High School Principal claiming in 1972 that, “as little as ten years ago young blacks tried to emulate whites ... now they have absorbed the Black is beautiful concept” (Juckes: 148) further substantiates this.

This new self-confidence was an important element in the re-invigoration of the liberation struggle as a whole, as not only those involved in the BCM were affected by the philosophy of Black Consciousness, but blacks “in all walks of life”, including a majority of Africans of high school age in the mid-seventies (Switzer: 208, 211). The movement also influenced a small but influential number of whites, changing the political direction of a whole generation of white students by radicalising NUSAS, the student body running courses on Africanisation by the late seventies (Pityana, 1992: 234) and its president Eddie Webster arguing that whites had to make white society more receptive to change as well as work “towards a transformation of their own culture in an African context” (Lobban: 91).

As well as being spread by word of mouth, meetings, courses and the like in the townships, on university campuses and in high schools, the ideas of the BCM were spread to “the wider white liberal community and to middle-class Africans” by way of liberal newspapers, especially the Daily Dispatch of editor Donald Woods (Switzer: 186), as well as to a mostly black readership by Black Consciousness publications such as “Black review”, “Black Viewpoint” and the “SASO Newsletter” which, despite government attempts to disrupt them had sold in excess of 12,000 copies by mid-1973 (Switzer: 188). The fact that statements made by BCM members on trial in the 1976 SASO/BPC trial was given “wide coverage inside and outside South Africa” (Switzer: 207), was a further example of Black Consciousness and the BCM receiving attention well beyond that of its relatively limited resources and active

membership.⁷⁰ Biko's testimony at the trial could extraordinarily be quoted, something that was otherwise forbidden for a banned person, enabling his ideas to be further spread and him to be praised in the townships as "the authentic voice of the people" (Juckes: 147).

The "boisterous conduct" of the accused at the SASO-BPC trial was also an important contributing factor to the Soweto uprisings reviving of the liberation struggle, as was Black Consciousness as a whole (Davenport: 437; Woods, 1987: 119; Hirschmann: 8). Black Consciousness was the primary influence upon the youth involved in the planning and implementation of the uprising, its philosophy promoted by schoolteacher and clergy BCM members and in BCM programmes (Pityana, 1992: 164; Hirschmann: 9; Schuster: 54), and the South African Students' Movement (SASM), members of which formed the Soweto Students' Representative Council (SSRC) responsible for planning the June 16 demonstration that initiated the uprising, were a "direct outcome" of such BCM leadership training programmes. The SSRC had "roots and support" in the BCM and was virtually seen as its "youth contingent" (Lobban: 226; Juckes: 148; Kunnie: 34; Zwitter: 207), Tsietsi Mashinini, SASM's president being heavily influenced by Black Consciousness philosophy (Schuster: 61).

Finally, many with Black Consciousness backgrounds hold or have held important positions in contemporary South Africa. Examples of this are Barney Pityana, Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of South Africa; Mamphela Ramphele, having formerly served as one of the Managing Directors of the World Bank and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, now holds a position as the executive chairperson of Circle Capital Ventures, a venture capital company that embraces black economic empowerment; Cyril Ramaphosa, former Secretary General of the ANC; Jay Naidoo, former Government Minister and member of the ANC's National Executive Committee (NEC); Frank Chikane, member of the ANC's NEC and former Director General to the office of President Mbeki; Patrick "Terror" Lekota, member of the ANC's NEC and Minister of Defence; Nkosazana Clarice Dlamini-Zuma, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Mosibudi Mangena, AZAPO President

⁷⁰ SASO was estimated to have had between 4000 and 8000 members in 1972 and the BPC roughly the same number (Juckes: 141; Hirschmann: 7). There was a "remarkable growth in membership" of the BPC in the mid-seventies according to the movement, however, the attendance of its National Congress in December 1975 showing the BPC's "huge following within the black community" (Rambally: 119). Like most black movements, the BCM operated under police harassment, barriers of organising in the homelands, lack of funds and general repression of apartheid South Africa. The support of the BCM was thus more "than mere formal membership statistics suggested" (Gerhart: 293; Hirschmann: 7) and its influence extended "far beyond the membership of its own organisations" (Davies: 305).

and Minister of Science and Technology; Joel Netshitenzhe, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) and Mbeki's "policy czar" (Gumede: 315); Charles Nqakula, Minister of Safety and Security and Mojanku Gumbi, member of AZAPO and one of Mbeki's key presidential advisors.

Having a Black Consciousness background is no guarantee for the pursuing of Black Consciousness goals in 2007, however. This is proven by the ANC affiliation and the implicit acceptance of such government policies as the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR) by many of those mentioned above, especially ministers such as AZAPO President Mosibudi Mangena, as well as others such as Ramphela, who claims that "GEAR ... was the best economic policy choice we could make" (Ramphela, 2005).

5.1.9 Criticism

Throughout its history, Black Consciousness and the BCM have been roundly criticised for various reasons. The claims by liberals that Black Consciousness was racist or by the ANC that it neglected the armed struggle by building clinics and focusing on consciousness instead of destroying "the one and only source of our misery and oppression, namely white domination" (Davis: 31) are evidently inaccurate, but other critique is more debatable.

Some saw the BCM's lack of a concrete outline for a future South African society, for instance, as "[sidestepping] the whole question of what in fact its goals were" (Semela: 13) or "overlook[ing] the laying down of a firm basis of principle".⁷¹ This was particularly obvious in what was seen as the movement's initial lack of any "economic perspective on the nature of exploitation", although this also "reflected the censorship of Marxist literature at the tribal universities" as well as an unwillingness to adopt "white ideologies" such as communism (Heribert: Chapter 5). The problematic nature of such an omission becomes apparent when attempting to align the BCM's Black Communalism with a concrete political programme. Even so, the fact that the ANC have not pursued the ideals of the Freedom Charter upon liberation might validate Biko's position of leaving part of such a discussion open to wholesale bargaining (Woods, 1987: 184), as one might claim that having only a vague strategy was what undermined the ANC's position, enabling it to excessively compromise its previously held position.⁷²

⁷¹ Amandla-Matla, Newsletter of the African National Congress, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1976, page 5.

⁷² The Freedom Charter was itself somewhat unclear on the implementation of specific policies in regard to post-apartheid aims.

The notion of a communalism of “community orientated action” opposed to individualism can be equally problematic, unless it is understood that there is no necessary dichotomy between individualism and communalism and that the former is in fact a necessary component of the latter, unless we are to end in what Ngugi called the “oppressive reactionary tendencies” of African pre-colonial peasant cultures. This is especially so in a South Africa where group identity was formalised and is still only one step away from cultural essentialism. The BCM in fact seemed to understand this problematic element of the traditional African communalism that it advocated, it clearly being meant to be a “modified version” where “the sacred value of the human individual [is to be the basis] for the existence of communities”.⁷³

Others saw the “internal differences amongst blacks”, such as that of class, but also between men and women, as well as between cities and rural areas, being neglected by the movement seeing all blacks as equally oppressed (Pityana, 1992: 171). This is not altogether true, Ndebele for instance conceding in *Black Viewpoint* that “there are social divisions amongst the blacks ... between rural and urban blacks”, and that when “a black middle class ... was formed ... class divisions were [also] formed among the blacks” (Ndebele in Biko, 1972: 16, 21). That the movement was seemingly dominated by educated, bourgeois males who, to paraphrase Spivak, “speak” for the non-elite, non-male native population, can be said to apply equally to the ANC and PAC, thus not being a problem specifically related to the BCM (Pityana, 1992: 223), the BCM in fact acknowledging the “danger of the intellectual groups succeeding in creating a reality that would only be available to themselves” (Rambally: 108).

The BCM has also been criticised for being organisationally weak; especially for not succeeding in building a broad based organisation that could have taken advantage of the Soweto uprisings, something that many believed was due to it not being based sufficiently on the working classes (Frederickson: 309). Yet the BCM did attempt to build its own union in the seventies, the Black Allied Workers’ Union, amongst an array of other BCM-affiliated organisations, though the union never became a “significant force” and split into two in 1979 (Davies: 305; Magubane: 137). Perhaps the main reason for such organisational weakness was that the BCM had too short a time to build a strong base, as well as its unwillingness to centralise along the lines of the ANC, instead turning the ANC-in-exile’s Leninist-inspired

⁷³ Minutes of the Black People’s Convention 8th of July to 10th of July 1972, p. 11.

vanguard centralism on its head (Semela: 13). Marxists conversely “often claimed to be annoyed by the BCM’s refusal to behave like a vanguard party” (Halisi: 116). Another reason for the BCM’s organisational weakness was state repression. The ANC was allowed to grow for decades without facing the type of harassment, bannings and imprisonment that the BCM faced early on, allowing it to re-emerge in the eighties. Perhaps it was therefore more surprising that the ANC, having a functioning military wing in Umkhonto and “urging them to fight on” (Ranuga: 190), failed to provide the youths of Soweto with weapons or assistance.

Finally, the distinction between the non-essentialist political use of “black”, and the more essentialist cultural use of “African”, where “African” is used to signify an indigenous culture in opposition to Western culture (Biko, 1996: 40-44, 70, 95) that was seemingly to be promoted as a desired national culture (Biko, 1996: 24, 69; Magubane: 85) is problematic. This is because it excludes Coloureds and Indians (and whites) from having a cultural part or stake in the liberation struggle, thereby impeding the attempt to bring about a common national consciousness. In seeing cultures as mutually impressionable and not solid and impenetrable, and in claiming that modern African culture “has used concepts from the white world to expand on inherent cultural characteristics” and that Western culture “has changed our outlook almost dramatically”, Biko seems to refute any claims to essentialism, however. The African cultural adaptation of Western cultural traits is seen by Biko as being problematic, but only as long as it meant a one-way flow where Africans were “required to fit in” and assimilate “standards we are not responsible for”, colonialism devouring the native culture (Biko, 1996: 45-46). His desire to see African culture promoted must therefore also be seen against the background of its denigration, African culture being negatively stereotyped in schools, generally presented as arrested and barbarous, and Africans allegedly having “nothing to boast of except lions, sex and drink” (Biko, 1996: 29, 70, 95). The emphasizing of African culture is consequently a means towards the end of “true integration” which will come about with “the fusion of the life-styles of the various groups” (Biko, 1996: 21), a sort of pre-Bhaba hybridity, not by multiculturalist group identities.

5.1.10 Relevance today

To be able to determine whether Black Consciousness is relevant today, an analysis of the way South Africa has fared under the Mbeki administration is necessary, something that will

be attempted in the next chapter. Nevertheless, it is possible to suggest some overarching areas in which Black Consciousness can still inform or develop present day South Africa.

Biko, by pointing out that any “change in color of the occupier does not necessarily change the system” (Woods, 1987: 122) and thus that true liberation requires social change, is alluding to the same neo-colonial tendencies that Fanon warned of. The relevance of Black Consciousness in a social context is therefore to be judged on whether South Africa has achieved real social change, as well as on the quality of Black Consciousness’ social and political alternatives to Mbekism.

According to Ramphela, although Biko “would be proud of what South Africa has been able to achieve ... he would be saddened by where we have fallen short: ... in the area of tackling HIV/Aids, [and] in the area of tackling the inequalities in our society” (Ramphela, 2002). Another area in which Black Consciousness is seemingly still relevant is in that of self-worth. Black Consciousness argued that blacks were killing and destroying themselves by proxy, in other words blaming themselves for their misery, not their oppressors, and that all South Africans needed to be freed from the conditioning of apartheid. When Pityana now claims that there is a “major breakdown of [contemporary South African] society” where too many have “lost that essence of humanity” (Pityana, 2007), he is simultaneously claiming that such reclaiming of humanity and de-conditioning has not been achieved.

Black Consciousness is furthermore relevant because it confronts what Works calls a “central paradox facing contemporary South African society: that of endorsing cultural differences while embracing a cohesive national culture”. According to Works, “Biko claimed that the paradox could only be solved if national bodies were unitary, not divided by race” (Works: 777), whereas the ANC has historically continued to define South Africa along ethnical lines, embracing their own particular brand of multiracialism or multiculturalism.⁷⁴

An additional problem is that of a culturally embedded capitalism and its global extension globalisation that some see as having colonial or neo-colonial connotations and as being detrimental to Africa’s development. The question is whether Mandela and Mbeki’s claim that capitalism is the only viable system (Gumede: 89, 91) helps consolidate its hegemonic status and consequently Western imperialism, and whether African elites are accordingly

⁷⁴ Group rights were advocated as early as 1948 by the ANC and the Freedom Charter has a clause stating, “all national groups should enjoy equal rights”. Mbeki’s definition of such group rights is to equate them to ethnic groups (Gumede: 43). Furthermore, the “right of self-determination of any community sharing a common cultural and language heritage, within a territorial entity in the Republic or in any other way” stated in section 235 in the South African Constitution is equally focused on securing group rights.

simply “conveyor belts for Western capitalism”? In attempting to suggest a different path than that of capitalism, Black Consciousness is interesting, if for no other reason than by challenging the intellectual hegemony of capitalism, a new understanding of capitalist society that shows some of its morally objectionable aspects can be found that goes beyond realism's “self-fulfilling prophecy of doom”. Understanding and challenging society is after all the first step towards changing it.

Finally, the fact that Black Consciousness establishes that the material as well as the cultural and psychological wrongs of colonialism/apartheid is to be eradicated makes it an integral approach to solving South Africa's problems that encompasses the non-economic, psychological solutions as well as the economic. Until now mostly non-integrated change has been sought,⁷⁵ but according to Fromm “one cannot separate the change in our industrial and political organization from that of the structure of our educational and cultural life”, because “no serious attempt for change and reconstruction will succeed if it is not undertaken in all those spheres simultaneously” (Fromm, 2002: 342; Gran: 2). That the ANC government has mainly dealt with redressing the material legacy of apartheid through programmes such as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), and that even this has been done in an un-integral way, means that it fails to deal with the fundamental negative psychological legacies of apartheid.

6.1 Thabo Mbeki's South Africa

Thabo Mbeki had been a highly influential figure inside the ANC as well as nationally for some time before assuming the presidency of South Africa. Although the change of the presidency from Mandela to Mbeki officially happened in 1999, Mbeki assumed many of the powers of the presidency years earlier. Whereas Mandela sought “reconciliation, compromise and new symbols of unity” (Gumede: 56), Mbeki is a more technocratic, “hands-on” type of politician that sees reconciliation as being impossible without changing society, but he lacks the common touch of Mandela.

Perceived changes of personality, style and politics aside, and they are not insignificant; the policies that they pursued were coordinated and similar. Mandela and Mbeki instigated the

⁷⁵ By for instance dissociating crime from poverty or psychological complexes, or privatisation of South Africa's water systems, and the subsequent increased prices of water, from health issues. The 2001 cholera outbreak, where people had to drink cholera-infected water because they could not afford to buy water (Nowicki, 2004), is an example of such interconnectedness.

change in policy from the nationalisation programme of the Freedom Charter⁷⁶ towards economic conservatism and neo-liberalism in the early nineties together, to a degree acting on the advice of the Chinese and Vietnamese governments who had made similar changes in policy at that time, seemingly proving the uselessness of going against a neo-liberal hegemony that was partially caused by the recession of the early nineties (Gumede: 68, 70, 81; Robins: 3). Mandela accordingly told the American Joint Houses of Congress in 1994 “the free market was a ‘magical elixir’ that would produce freedom and equality for all” (Saul, 2005: 205).

6.2 Short biography of Thabo Mbeki

Thabo Mbeki was born in 1942, his father Govan being a prominent figure in the ANC and the SACP. Mbeki grew up as a member of the “liberation aristocracy” (Jacobs: 6), attending Lovedale in 1955, joining ANCYL and the SACP, and becoming a leading member of the latter before falling out with SACP leader Joe Slovo in the seventies and renouncing communism in the mid-eighties.⁷⁷ Mbeki was sent into exile in 1962, studying economics at Sussex University until 1968, after which he was sent to the Soviet Union for military training in 1969. He was elected to the ANC’s NEC in 1975, becoming Oliver Tambo’s understudy and closest advisor and taking over many of Tambo’s duties after the former suffered a stroke in 1989. This led many to see Mbeki’s ascent to the top of the ANC as favouritism (Gumede: 37). Mbeki’s pragmatism, moderation and intelligence were, along with Mandela’s ditto, central to the willingness of De Klerk’s National Party to discuss and eventually reform South Africa (Jacobs: 9). Mbeki is “respected rather than loved” (Lodge: 241), although considered one of the “most important leaders of his generation”, a “spokesman for the developing world” as well as a “key political partner” of the USA (Jacobs: 5).

6.2.1 Style of leadership and democratic credentials

Mbeki has an “elitist, top-down” and “managerial style” of leadership (Jacobs: 267; Hadland: 94) that is much less open to criticism than his predecessors Tambo and Mandela. Junior

⁷⁶ The change from nationalisation to neo-liberalism was initiated at the top of the ANC. Mayibuye, an ANC-published newsletter, however, spoke for much of the ANC in 1990 prior to the u-turn of the party leadership by stressing the need to “campaign against privatisation”. The implications of privatisation were seen in Mayibuye to be that “many will lose their jobs”, “the poorer sections of our community will suffer” and “a new democratic government will not have access to resources to implement its policies”. Mayibuye, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1990, pp. 26-28.

⁷⁷ In 1984 Mbeki declared, “The ANC is not a socialist party. It has never pretended to be one” (Mbeki, 1984: 609).

members of the ANC dared to criticise or reprimand the latter two but not Mbeki, who is almost never challenged by those inside the ANC (Gumede: 296-297). There are different cultures and traditions within the ANC that explain such different approaches to leadership: The intellectual and centrist “exiles”, the consensually minded “elders”, the South African and grassroots-based (trade unions and civic groups) “inziles”⁷⁸ and the disciplinarian former Umkhonto soldiers (Gumede: 32, 40). The internal differences in the ANC can largely be seen to be along these lines. The secrecy, centralised control and intolerance of dissent that the exiles, most of whom have been trained “in the radical Leninist school of thought that gives primacy to the role of a vanguard party” (Jacobs: 20), had adopted for security reasons won the day in the ANC, especially after Mbeki became president (Saul, 2005: 234).

Mbeki based his leadership of the ANC and South Africa on “the three Cs: control, coordination and centralisation” (Gumede: 129). Examples of this are Mbeki denouncing the TRC-report without having read it (Gumede: 64; Meredith: 659), lengthening the period between party conferences to five years⁷⁹ (Gumede: 131) and increasingly forming policy centrally as well as externally with Western consultants (Gumede: 135). Lack of transparency, lack of criticism, the prevalence of “yes-men and –women” inside the ANC combined with persecution and harassment of those who dare to disagree (Gumede: 294-295; Bond, 2004), as well as Mbeki’s “you are with us or against us” attitude (Gumede: 167) are further examples of this.

This inflexibility is offset by his tendency to change his rhetoric according to the audience he addresses, Mbeki at one time or other having championed ideologies such as communism, liberalism and Africanism (Saul, 2005: 249; Hadland: 130). All this is harmful to the democratic nature of the ANC as well as to the nation. The outspoken criticism by such bodies as ANCYL, and to a lesser degree the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), has previously been subdued (Gumede: 297, 299; Basedau: 95), although there has recently been an increasingly vocal criticism of government policies and unprecedented voicing of differences of opinion inside the tripartite alliance.⁸⁰ Outside the ANC criticism is more openly voiced, opposition groups for instance claiming that the ANC is “building the foundations of a new authoritarianism” (Butler: 119)

⁷⁸ The “inziles” were the ANC’s internal wing, as opposed to the “exiles”.

⁷⁹ Most other parties hold party conferences annually or at least bi-annually.

⁸⁰ “Vavi: We’ll take over the ANC”, Mail & Guardian 9th of March 2007; “ANC under pressure to tilt left”, Mail & Guardian 26th of April 2007; “Cosatu speaks for the ANC”, Mail & Guardian 2nd of March 2007.

and the media portraying Mbeki as an “arch-manipulator” (Jacobs: 12). Some of this criticism seems to come from whites disgruntled with the fact that South Africa has a black government, however, enabling Mbeki to dismiss them as having “an European mindset” (Jacobs: 12).

Others compare Mbeki with post-independence African heads of state such as Nkrumah and Mugabe who came to adopt what Fanon warned against, namely liberation movements going from being all-encompassing organisations to pursuing the interests of narrow groups by patronage, awarding blind loyalty and stamping out dissent by intimidation or by calling critics imperialists or reactionaries. Even so, most see claims that South Africa is akin to a one-party state or that corruption is pervasive as incorrect, levels of corruption for instance being significantly lower than they were under apartheid (Gumede: 236, 238).⁸¹ Hence what is worth criticising is not the level of corruption or patronage or the regimentation of views in South Africa, but that these tendencies seem to be growing under the leadership of the ANC (Woods, 2000: 216),⁸² seen in occurrences such as the apartheid-era-like use of intelligence agents to intimidate dissenters (Gumede: 299).

In this respect it is a democratic problem that South Africans who do not wish to have their views represented by Mbeki's elitist neo-liberalism have virtually nowhere to go,⁸³ unless they are to believe that the ANC will carry out the policies of the left-leaning Policy Discussion Documents (PDD)⁸⁴ or embrace the more or less openly Marxist views of the

⁸¹ South Africa is ranked 51st by Transparency International's 2006 Corruption Perception Index.

⁸² For instance because of what Ramphele calls the “patronage” and “politisisation of appointments at many levels of our civil service”; “In no state to help the nation grow”, *Business Day*, 10th of April 2007.

⁸³ The main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, recommends economic policies not unlike those of Mbeki's ANC such as “sensible streamlining of government departments”, opening the door and smoothing the path “for foreign investors” (p.2) and “lower corporate tax rates” (p.6) in its alternative 2007 budget (“Budgeting for Growth, Jobs and Opportunity, the Democratic Alliance's Alternative Budget 2007”). The only other large party, Inkatha, maintains, “the IFP's socially responsible free market policies are substantially represented in the government's [GEAR] programme”. Some smaller parties, however, such as the United Democratic Movement (lead by Bantu Holomisa, former Transkei leader and ANC deputy minister), believe that “blindly imitating neo-liberal policies ... is damaging our economy” (UDM Manifesto 2004, p. 7).

⁸⁴ The Policy Discussion Documents (PDD) represents a significant jump to the left compared to previous ANC-policy. The documents recommend “considerable room to debate the appropriate framework for macro-economic policy”, including a review of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR) (PDD, Economic Transformation p.3, 17), as well as increased social spending. That “economic transformation requires a stable macro-economic environment” is still recognised, however (PDD, Economic Transformation p.17), although the PDD's are seen by some as a “move toward social democracy”; “South Africa circa 2010”, *Mail & Guardian* 22nd of March 2007. Whether these discussion documents will become ANC policy will be decided at a national policy conference in late June 2007 from which recommendations will form the basis of a larger debate at the national conference of the ANC in December 2007.

miniscule opposition parties available who do not embrace ANC-like liberalism.⁸⁵ As far as the PDD's are concerned, firstly its core ambitions are not different from the present ones: to retain control over every part of South Africa, secondly it is always wiser to judge any party on the merit of its actual policy and achievements rather than on its promises.

The forming of a new party, representing the largely voiceless poor masses that are no longer sufficiently represented by the ANC (Gumede: 252), is thus important to present South Africans with a truly representative democratic choice, unless one-party-ism disguised as a multi-party-ism of multiple parties, one economic policy, is to abound, something growing voter alienation indicates could already be happening (Gumede: 253). Sustainable democracy and voter participation depends upon a choice of alternative policies, not merely that of alternative parties or governments if it is to retain legitimacy.

This is especially true in Africa where many opposition parties have sought mainly the power of the presidency, not a change of policy.⁸⁶ Such a tendency can also be seen amongst South Africa's opposition parties,⁸⁷ and could ultimately lead to the absence of democratic legitimacy and growing voter alienation. That growing voter alienation might show not only discontent with the government and lack of a credible opposition, but with a democratic system that is seen as elite-driven, makes it a threat to South African democracy. Poor South Africans see democracy as being tied to economic advancement and redistribution of wealth (Butler: 165), and perhaps voter alienation is therefore not caused by de-politicisation as such but by a wish to embrace a more participatory bottom-up approach to politics that goes beyond voting every four years but sees such participation as "an essential part of the process of getting the economic agenda right" (Ake, 1993: 241-242). It is the outcome of this, along with the question of voter involvement in South Africa's democracy, that will more than

⁸⁵ The Africanist and Marxist parties only have a total of four seats out of four hundred in the South African parliament (the PAC three, AZAPO one and SOPA none). AZAPO have a certain influence by way of Minister of Science and Technology Mosibudi Mangena, although he, as mentioned in chapter 5.2, has implicitly accepted the neo-liberal GEAR by joining the government.

⁸⁶ Thomson refers to such parties as "vanity parties", elections being fought "between personalities rather than ideas" (Thomson: 237). A clear-cut example hereof is the Kenyan election of 1992 where President Moi won the election because of amongst other things the opposition's refusal to unite behind a single candidate, instead forming a multitude of such "vanity parties". According to Meredith, "the contestants were interested not so much in the democratic process or policy issues as the chance to occupy State House" (Meredith: 403).

⁸⁷ Some of South Africa's opposition parties, such as the United Democratic Movement of Bantu Holomisa or the Independent Democrats of Patricia de Lille, are essentially "vanity parties" that have "charismatic leaders, but no effective party structures" (Gumede: 249), Gumede insisting that "it makes little sense for South Africa to have so many splinter groups vying for the opposition vote", especially given that "their election platform differ only marginally from one another" (Gumede: 251).

anything determine whether South African citizens will ultimately react positively or negatively to post-apartheid democracy in the long run.

A decentralisation of politics has already been seen in the growing of single-cause protest movements, grass roots initiatives or interest groups such as the Anti-Privatization Forum, the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign and the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (Butler: 113-115; Saul, 2005: 253). The growing popular protest movement is presently mostly restricted to specific issues and consequently lacks “a clearly articulated ideological alternative” to elitist neo-liberalism such as that of Mbeki (Rahman, 2004: 14), but the fact that it exists is proof of a desire for a more participatory democratic and less elite-driven South Africa. More worryingly is the increasing use of violence by poor South Africans, or of what Greg Ruiters⁸⁸ calls “collective bargaining by riot” (Zabalaza, 2006: 5), acting out their dissatisfaction instead of voting. Both such forms of protest, single-cause and violent or aimless, will probably continue unless a viable alternative to the present political set-up appears, because where single-cause movements can be a necessary complimentary force to formalised democracy, as they are in many Western countries, and an important force where democracy is less functional, they are no substitute for actual democratic participation.

Any new party that wishes to change these tendencies could be formed by a combination of grassroots organisations, as well as from within the ANC's tripartite organisation by disgruntled members of the once syndicalist-orientated COSATU (Bond, 1996: 25; Mbah: Chapter 4), the SACP and the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), all of whom have recently criticised the neo-liberal policies of Mbeki's ANC, as well as having toyed with the idea of a left-wing party (Gumede: 264, 267-268, 271, 278). Criticism by prominent non-aligned South Africans such as liberation veteran Desmond Tutu might make the formation of such a party easier by removing this sentimental attachment, although many believe that “prospects for multi-partyism appear to dim” (Basedau: 95). This is especially so because COSATU and the SACP currently seem intent to work as a sort of internal opposition inside the tripartite alliance to try and change the way the alliance operates,⁸⁹ and move the

⁸⁸ Greg Ruiters is a local government specialist and Senior Lecturer in Political Studies at Rhodes University.

⁸⁹ “Cosatu, SACP eye alliance changes”, Mail & Guardian 29th of March 2007; “Cosatu: Don't forget the poor”, Mail & Guardian 27th of April 2007.

ANC towards the left,⁹⁰ although whether they will succeed in doing this by supporting the more populist than leftist Jacob Zuma to become president of the ANC is doubtful.⁹¹

Mbeki needs COSATU and the SACP as “shock absorbers to contain dissent” with the ANC’s neo-liberal policies (Gumede: 260, 272), which is why he uses all means to keep the two organisations inside the tripartite alliance. But the need to voice the concerns of the poor is important for the country as a whole if the potentially imminent “full-blown and devastating uprising of the poor” (Gumede: 289), potentially along ethnic lines, is not to happen. In this respect, remarks by supporters of Jacob Zuma that there is an anti-Zulu conspiracy to deny him the Presidency⁹² as well as Zuma’s own alleged “ethnic nationalism”⁹³ is not reassuring, especially if such resentment along ethnic lines continues during a possible Zuma Presidency.

The probability of a credible opposition party being formed or the future success of such a party furthermore depends on the level of satisfaction with Mbeki’s ANC-led government. There are different views on this, some finding that amongst other things decreasing voter turnouts prove that there is “limited trust in the President ... [and] parliament” and a growing disaffection with the ANC, life being seen by an increasing number as “better under the apartheid regime” (Butler: 107; Suzman, 2004; Bond, 2004). Others find that Mbeki’s personal performance ratings are high, and that poorer South Africans have “a higher level of trust in the president’s ability” than the middle classes or affluent South Africans.⁹⁴

6.3 Politics and ideology

Mbeki’s apparent change of ideology and his technocrat approach do not necessarily mean that he does not have a consistent ideological outlook. Mbeki’s apparent ideological u-turn in for instance the AIDS debate might be said to hide a more coherent ideological outlook that Jacobs calls Mbekism (Jacobs: 19). According to Jacobs, Mbekism combines African nationalist inclinations, seen in Mbeki’s promotion of the “African Renaissance” with that of orthodox economic neo-liberalism and centralist Leninist-derived, top-down leadership. This might explain the apparent changes in political outlook, from communist to liberalist and

⁹⁰ “Cosatu says it wants ANC to move left”, Mail & Guardian 1st of March 2007.

⁹¹ “ANC under pressure to tilt left”, Mail & Guardian 26th of April 2007; “Shape ANC policy, Zuma tells workers”, Business Day, 2nd of May 2007.

⁹² “Buthelezi warns against ethnic war”, Mail & Guardian 8th of October 2006.

⁹³ “South Africa: Bad Nationalism a Threat to Freedom of Expression”, Cape Argus 8th of April 2007; “SA’s leaders have cynically used nationalism for their own ends”, Business Day 13th of April 2006.

⁹⁴ “Poll shows Mbeki trusted by three in five”, Mail and Guardian, 9th of February 2007.

Africanist, the change being not a full-scale renouncement of the former standpoint, but rather a combination that absorbs certain elements of all three ideologies, although others see Mbeki's policies as based on an entirely pragmatic or strategic outlook (Jacobs: 263; Hadland: 130).

The purpose of chapter 6.3 in its entirety is to discuss the important aspects and manifestations of Mbekism and how it helps or inhibits the overturning of South Africa's legacy of apartheid, especially regarding economic inequality and feelings of black inferiority. The specific areas that I have seen as being most important in this regard are Mbeki's championing of an African Renaissance, his economic liberalism exemplified by GEAR, his attempted redistribution by way of Black Economic Empowerment, his AIDS policy, his policies towards Africa exemplified in those against Mugabe's Zimbabwe, and his non-racialism.

6.3.1 African Renaissance

Although Mbeki has toyed with the idea of an African Renaissance since the seventies (Hunter-Gault: 62), this idea precedes him. It has been a common theme in colonial Africa since the fifties (Meredith: 676), as well as inside South Africa, seen in the establishment of a nationwide Black Renaissance Convention⁹⁵ and Action Committee in 1974 (Maloka: 11) and Mandela's statement in 1994 that blacks had to transform their plight themselves, there being "no obstacle big enough to stop us bringing about an African Renaissance" (Meredith: 676). It must nevertheless be acknowledged that the credibility the notion of an African Renaissance has recently achieved, it having "an almost liturgical status in South African public life" (Lodge: 227-230), as well as having been promoted continent-wide, is mostly the work of Mbeki.

The idea of an African Renaissance is essentially a "neo-pan-Africanist mantra" (Hunter-Gault: 63) that advocates African self-reliance and self-sufficiency, disapproving of what its advocates see as the neo-colonial "begging bowl" policies of the past and present that rely to heavily on outside, mainly Western, aid and assistance. It is also an admission of "not [having] travelled very far with regard to the projection of frightening images of savagery that attend the continent of Africa", the dogma of (negative) African exceptionalism continuing to "weigh down the African mind and spirit" (Mbeki, 1998).

⁹⁵ Pro Veritate, Vol. 13, No. 12, 1975, p. 18-19.

As Kwame Anthony Appiah argues, all such pan-Africanist arguments imply “the notion, whether explicit or implicit, of Africa as a racialized essence” (Brown: 762), the idea of the African Renaissance therefore being simultaneously inclusive and exclusive, although others such as Ramphele “laud him [Mbeki] for having taken on the challenge of giving Africa a face of hope ... that initiative [the African Renaissance], if it were to reach its full potential, can make a huge difference ... to the whole continent” (Ramphele, 2002).

The NEPAD programme is an attempt to substantiate as well as facilitate the idea of the African Renaissance (Meredith: 679), it having been adopted as the economic development programme of the African Union, advocating sustainable growth and development, integration into the global economy, poverty eradication and the empowerment of women, as well as African integration and ownership. NEPAD's underlying principles of a commitment to Good Governance, democracy, human rights and conflict resolution further recognise that such principles are fundamental to the creation of an environment that will promote investment and long-term economic growth.⁹⁶ The attempted unification of Africa that saw the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) replaced with the African Union is equally consistent with the ideas of the African Renaissance, as is Mbeki's attempted mediation in African conflicts, some deemed successes, such as those in the Ivory Coast and initially Congo (Hunter-Gault: 81, 103), others, such as Mbeki's “quiet diplomacy” in Zimbabwe, deemed failures.

Critics argue that NEPAD is a form of African sub-imperialism, that it narrows the scope of the African Renaissance, foreign donors and investors being more likely to be benefactors of the trade liberalisation that NEPAD advocates than the African peoples, and that NEPAD fails to address human rights or AIDS or be able to solve crisis situations such as that in Zimbabwe (Maloka: 7; Gumede: 212, Saul, 2005: 213). They maintain that although the implicit acknowledgement of NEPAD that Africa's problems are not solely self-inflicted and that solutions to them are to be found inside Africa promises a solution that does not necessarily look to the West for answers or aid, NEPAD might “just as easily have been framed in the offices of the World Bank and IMF” (Saul, 2005: 252).⁹⁷ The left wing of the ANC sees the

⁹⁶ www.nepad.org/2005/files/inbrief.php

⁹⁷ According to the UK Foreign Office, development-wise, “we are dancing to their tune, but at least it is our own dance!” (Gumede: 206), and to former United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, right-wing Republican Walter Kansteiner (George W. Bush's “Africa hand”, responsible for U.S. foreign policy in Africa, as well as an avowed proponent of privatisation, private sector involvement, free trade and market liberalisation) NEPAD is “philosophically spot-on” (Bond, 2004).

African Renaissance as being “mostly about words” (Herwitz: 187; Gumede: 203), criticising the fact that NEPAD essentially advances an economic liberalism that does not solve the concrete problems encountered by the poor masses.

Such critics see the features of the African Renaissance as deliberately vague and “high on sentiment, low on substance” (Maloka: 2, 36; Jacobs: 125) and meant to distract attention from the real problems facing the country, poverty and unemployment, by “inflating words with the illusion of political force” (Herwitz: 187). According to such reasoning, any African renaissance “must end the economic discrimination the continent faces” (Jacobs: 130) to accomplish any real changes, its success being interconnected with that of economic and political advancement (Ramphele, 2003).⁹⁸ Whilst this is recognised by Mbeki, the fact is that the economic policies of NEPAD and the GEAR will probably not achieve such advancement. The African Renaissance might end up not benefiting those blacks that are meant to benefit from it, but instead ironically being “the best thing that has happened to South Africa’s (still overwhelmingly white) capital in a long time” (Jacobs: 115-116). One can therefore criticise the imitative nature of Mbeki’s economic liberalism for counteracting or contradicting the “proud” Africanism of the African Renaissance.

6.3.2 Economic liberalism

The early nineties, in which the ANC outlined the policies that would move it from liberation movement to potential government party, was an era of liberal hegemony, caused by the downfall of socialism in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, and the beginning of the globalisation era.⁹⁹ Mbeki had already inherited Tambo’s and Harold Wilson’s social democratic ideology and came to adopt the “Third Way” of Tony Blair¹⁰⁰ that demanded “less government,

⁹⁸ According to Ramphele, “the ghost of racism will not be laid to rest unless we actively invest in addressing the unseemly socio-economic inequalities. Inequalities perpetuate an inferiority complex amongst the majority of black people, and a superiority amongst some white people in our society” (Ramphele, 2003).

⁹⁹ According to Amin, the reason neo-liberalism became the prevalent ideology was because of the crisis of Keynesian, statist capitalism and socialism, “the void created by this double crisis [leading] to a conservative offensive of so-called neo-liberalism” (Amin: 51). The success of East Asian countries such as South Korea threatened the logic and hegemony of neo-liberalism (Bond, 2000: 251).

¹⁰⁰ As had Blair, Mbeki professed a certain affinity for Thatcherism, as when exclaiming “just call me a Thatcherite” upon the launch of GEAR in 1996 (Saul, 2005: 249). Mbeki not only copied Blair’s policies but also the habit of “talking left” while “acting right” (Gumede: 125; Bond, 2000: 195), as well as employing some of Blair’s political advisors (Gumede: 127).

market-related delivery, greater distance from unions and close proximity to business”¹⁰¹ and the market being the main source of social improvement (Gumede: 39, 64; Jacobs: 258).

Mbeki thus sought “a compromise between globalisation and social democracy”, although this compromise is increasingly undermined by “dependence on global forces” (Carmody: 261). As had Blair, the ANC felt they had to prove to the business community that they were economically sound. The ANC had to prove that a black-led South Africa would be a secure place in which to invest or continue investing (Gumede: 73), as well as having to clean up the economic mess left by the Nationalists (Meredith: 649). Adopting stringent macroeconomic policies, amongst which an independent South African Reserve Bank (Central Bank) was paramount, was part of this, as was IMF loans with conditions of “prudent economic policies” such as market-led policies, wage controls, cutting government spending and trade and industrial liberalisation (Gumede: 77; Bond, 2003: 144).

The significant change from the developmental Reconstruction and Distribution Programme (RDP)¹⁰² in 1996 to the neo-liberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR) further proved that the ANC saw the establishment of macroeconomic stability, fiscal discipline, economic growth and foreign investment, as more important than, or as a precondition for, redistribution (Gumede: 87; Butler: 50; Basedau: 95). GEAR is in effect the RDP on its head, attempting to achieve redistribution through growth and not growth through redistribution, as had the RDP.¹⁰³ GEAR was planned in virtual secrecy together with the World Bank and the IMF (Gumede: 90; World Bank: 19; Adelzadeh: 67), but in effect the World Bank, IMF and WTO did not impose GEAR's Structural Adjustment-like policies (Gumede: 88; Bond, 2000: 189; Saul, 2005: 207) of trade liberalisation, tax-cuts and none-progressive tax restructuring, and privatisation (GEAR: 2, appendix 12; Saul, 2005:

¹⁰¹ The ANC disavowed “public expenditure driven growth” and “large-scale government spending” because they believed it would lead to “poor long term growth and employment prospects” (GEAR: appendix 5).

¹⁰² The RDP was based on a people-driven approach to achieving growth through redistribution (Gumede: 133) and was conceived and championed by the left, especially COSATU (Gumede: 257; Basedau: 94). The overall ideology of the RDP was built “on the [mixed economy] tradition of the Freedom Charter” (RDP Policy Framework: preface, 4.2.1), making “attacking poverty and deprivation ... the first priority of a democratic government” (1.2.9), as well as advocating, “increasing the public sector in strategic areas through, for example, nationalisation” (4.2.5.1).

¹⁰³ The goals of the RDP were nevertheless a compromise between the expectations of the masses and those of the ruling classes, vague on how such measures of redistribution were to be financed. GEAR can therefore be seen both as building upon the RDP (World Bank: 4), and as a “substantive abandonment of the RDP as originally formulated” (Adelzadeh: 67).

249; Gumede: 90, 105-111) on South Africa, although some pressure was applied.¹⁰⁴ The ANC's claim that its policies were dictated by globalisation (Bond, 2001: 418; Gumede: 89, 91) and that they were powerless to the influences of the marketplace are countered by such "pre-emptive" economic liberalism that often went beyond the demands of the multi-laterals, although for the poor who saw no difference in their lives, it probably makes no difference whether World Bank or IMF conditionality or ANC non-negotiability (Gumede: 90)¹⁰⁵ instigated such policies.

The fact that GEAR was also similar to the economic policy of the National Party outlined in a document released in 1993 and that of the Maastricht Treaty does not exactly weaken calls of (self-inflicted) neo-colonialism either (Gumede: 88; African Communist, 1996). On the other hand, Mbeki says he wants to reform the international system (Bond, 2001: 416) and "promote a global financial system more favourable to developing countries"¹⁰⁶ to end the dominance of what he sees as the North's lack of "human solidarity" (Bond, 2001: 418). This reformism of the ANC in government seems in stark contrast to the radicalism of the ANC as a liberation movement, the goal of the latter being to dismantle, not reform, apartheid. Maybe this is due to Mbeki seeing globalisation as "an objective outcome" and "technological determinism" (Bond, 2001: 419), not a deliberately imposed strategy, therefore seeking only to reform it by for instance democratising the IMF and World Bank and allowing the developing nations to join the present international system on more equal terms, not overturning it (Bond, 2001: 426-427).

Even though macroeconomic stability was achieved in some areas¹⁰⁷ and productivity has risen (Gumede: 99, 111), neither foreign nor local investment in South Africa flourished as promised, and nor was growth increase satisfactory (Butler: 48), disproving the logic of trade

¹⁰⁴ The ANC was pressurised by the World Bank and IMF, Western governments, as well as by national businesses such as Anglo American to adopt market friendly policies in the early and mid-nineties (Gumede: 72). Although many in the ANC initially "had a strongly negative image" of the World Bank (World Bank: 19), several ANC staffers, including present Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel, took part in "abbreviated executive training programmes" at amongst other places the World Bank where they were "fed a steady diet of neo-liberal ideas" (Gumede: 72, 74). South Africa's relatively low debt level meant, however, that it had "more freedom to pursue a heterodox development strategy" if it had chosen to do so (Carmody: 257). This is especially so since "the danger of retribution" from the multi-laterals for non-compliance with neo-liberal policies has waned in recent years (Bond, 2003: 275).

¹⁰⁵ "Finance Minister Trevor Manuel immediately declared the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) plan 'non-negotiable' in its broad outline" (African Communist, 1996).

¹⁰⁶ "Towards Ten Years of Freedom: Summary", The South African Presidency, 2003, p.9.

¹⁰⁷ Mostly in those areas crucial to big business such as inflation and fiscal deficit, the currency crashes and interest rate increases in the mid to late nineties undermining claims of having achieved overall macroeconomic stability (Bond, 2004).

liberalisation.¹⁰⁸ Seen against the background of failure of privatisation, rising unemployment, lost job opportunities, deindustrialisation, capital flight, tuition fees that make higher education unaffordable for most blacks,¹⁰⁹ cuts in welfare,¹¹⁰ user fees that bring about disconnecting of electricity and water, and rising income differentials; GEAR must be seen as a failure by its own standards, as well as by those of development and redistribution (Gumede: 85, 92, 107, 109, 215; Bond, 2000: 193; Saul, 2005: 209; Butler: 65, 67). This is perhaps unsurprising as GEAR “provided no targets for reducing inequality”, seeing education and job creation combined with “restricting wage increases” and non-universal, sector-determined minimum wages “as the main avenue for income redistribution” (Marais: 171; Adelzadeh: 84; GEAR: 19). The inherent contradictions and non integral nature of GEAR is here glaringly obvious, as public expenditure, including educational expenditure, was simultaneously to be cut and public sector jobs were to be discarded because of required “reductions in the fiscal deficit” (Marais: 172; Adelzadeh: 92; GEAR: appendix 12, 14). Besides, the fact that tax cuts were given to the middle classes and corporate South Africa and a 43.8 billion Rand arms deal negotiated made arguments that South Africa must retain economic stringency because of having to achieve macroeconomic stability prior to being able to afford welfare sound rather hollow (Gumede: 111).

That the Structural Adjustment-like advice of the World Bank and IMF has been part of the reason for South Africa's relatively poor economic results (Gumede: 100) should not come as a surprise to Mbeki, however, as Structural Adjustment policies have often had dire results in developing countries (Gumede: 108; Cypher: 518-520; Madeley: 58; Saul, 2005: 207),¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ “Investment in South Africa has been low ... compared with successful developing countries” (16-17% of GDP by 2003/04), little of it being in greenfield projects, and the country has actually suffered “a net outflow” of investment in the first ten years of ANC government (Bond, 2003: 141). South Africa has nevertheless achieved its highest growth levels during the past couple of years (Mbeki, 2007). South Africa is ranked 122nd by the CIA World Factbook's investment as % of GDP ranking.

¹⁰⁹ GEAR demands “reductions in subsidisation” and “greater private sector involvement in higher education” because of a “need to contain [education] expenditure” (GEAR: 15).

¹¹⁰ That GEAR refers to as “restructuring the welfare system” and “scaling down of activities which cannot be provided to all or which could be undertaken effectively by the private sector” (GEAR: 10).

¹¹¹ According to Heine Marais, “there exists no example internationally where neo-liberal adjustments of the sort championed by GEAR have produced a socially progressive outcome” (Marais: 171). The success of the Southeast Asian and East Asian countries such as South Korea and Japan “contradict the efficacy of financial liberalization” (Marais: 170) as they were based on “conscious state involvement such as subsidies, tariffs, selective construction of infrastructure, labor training and prohibitive trade restrictions”, as well as investment in education and health services (Cypher: 85, 208; Lundkvist: 33; Martinussen, 2002: 138) and simultaneous growth and decreasing inequality (Adelzadeh: 85). South Korea achieved “tenfold growth of per capita income ... in three decades” with “heavy doses of government involvement”. According to Joseph Stiglitz the financial turmoil of the nineties that left South Korea's and other East Asian countries' economy in trouble were “in part ... the result of departing from the strategies that have served these countries so well” (Chomsky: 32).

although Structural Adjustment often turns out to be a good idea for the companies of those (Western) countries who advocate the programmes. Liberalisation, privatisation and the selling off of state-owned assets that SAP's entail is problematic for countries such as South Africa because of the resulting limited control over resources and social and educational services needed by the poor and because these measures only address the symptoms and not the underlying reasons for Africa's socio-economic crisis such as low production capacity.

A "GEAR shift" has been announced by the ANC where the focus will be more on the social problems of the country, macroeconomic stability having allegedly been achieved and foreign investment in South Africa having been disappointing (Gumede: 116). Should this happen, it will surely be more than welcome by those many South Africans who have not benefited socially and economically from the post-apartheid era, although Mbeki has claimed until now that they are to be solved without "tampering with GEAR" (Gumede: 117). If the policies of the ANC's 2007 "Policy Discussion Documents" are implemented as actual policy by the ANC government, however, such a "GEAR shift" could indeed be underway.

Besides, part of the whole reasoning behind GEAR is more ideological than economic. Together with Mbeki's African Renaissance, the neo-liberalism of GEAR amounts to what Xolela Mangcu¹¹² calls a "liberal Africanism" that unwaveringly adheres to individualism (Mangcu: 6). Privatisation is thus used as a tool to advance black interests and self-assurance by kick-starting the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) programme, offloading government owned companies cheaply to blacks (Gumede: 107, 109; Carmody: 264).

6.3.3 Black Economic Empowerment

Given the discriminatory nature of apartheid at all levels of society, some form of affirmative action that complements the overall economic strategy is generally deemed necessary to enable more social cohesion and to unravel the structural inequities of South African society (Butler: 143; Alexander: 5; Arnold: 19), at least as a transitional programme.¹¹³ The question

¹¹² Xolela Mangcu was previously a Director of the Steve Biko Foundation and is currently a Visiting Fellow in the Public Intellectual Life Project of the University of the Witwatersrand.

¹¹³ The South African Constitution allows affirmative action at a level probably higher than anywhere else in the world, both public and private institutions being forced to become more racially representative, in stating that, "to promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken" (section 9). The affirmative action programme in South Africa is not seen as being transitional by everyone, some seeing it as a more permanent feature. Labour Minister Membathisi Mdladlana thus claims that, "contrary to Parliamentary calls by opposition Democratic Alliance (DA), affirmative action and current employment equity legislation would never be repealed but would be intensified instead", Mail & Guardian 4th of March 2007.

is therefore not if some form of affirmative action is necessary, but if the ANC's particular solution to this problem, the Black Economic Empowerment programme (BEE), is helping to achieve broad-scale black advancement and social cohesion.

While accepting this as a point of departure, there are psychological aspects of affirmative action that are problematic, namely that it can “reinforce racial identification” (Zegeye: 340), create a culture of black entitlement and be seen as applying lower standards to blacks than to whites. Whilst affirmative action and BEE are understandable from a socio-economic point of view, they are thus problematic from a psychological, in so far as respective black and white inferiority and superiority complexes have not disappeared.

Others have criticised BEE as being “reverse racism” (Hunter-Gault: 49) and a “short-sighted approach” (Melville: 22) that is perpetuating racial identities by its preoccupation with racial quotas, whites, and to a lesser degree Coloureds and Indians, feeling discriminated against job-wise, and senior jobs sitting “unfilled because no one's willing to employ a white”.¹¹⁴ Still others see it as akin to the self-empowerment drive of the Afrikaners after the Boer War, and a “necessary first step toward deracialisation of the economy” (Hunter-Gault: 53), accusations of “racism” being seen to belittle the severity of the impact of apartheid, as well as the white racist affirmative action it pursued. Both sides might have a point; affirmative action being necessary, but that the actual effects of the policies of BEE are potentially skewed and ineffective without complimentary measures such as education and skills training.¹¹⁵ To judge the success of BEE, one must therefore look at its results in achieving black empowerment as well as be mindful of potential negative effects hereof.

The goals of BEE were to “transform the position of Black people and women in public and private sector employment” (Butler: 63) by creating a “sizable middle, entrepreneurial and business [class] among the black majority” (Gumede: 222). Disappointingly, BEE has so far mostly empowered and enriched a small number of blacks,¹¹⁶ many of whom only “lend their faces to white companies so that [these companies] can satisfy the requirements for

¹¹⁴ “Skills shortage”, *Business Day*, 6th of March 2007; “Shadow of rage - desperate high hopes, South Africa has failed to create a racially blind society”, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 20th of August 2006.

¹¹⁵ According to Mamphela Ramphele, “there was a thought early in the transition that simply by transferring equity to black shareholders you make people wealthy – you don't. You have to also bear in mind the importance of managerial capabilities, the ability to participate in the economy, which doesn't come by simply transferring money” (Ramphele, 2002).

¹¹⁶ Although this is seen as more or less inevitable by Alec Erwin, Minister for Public Enterprises who claims, “you need people to advance in the capitalist system. There's going to be a limited number of them, and clearly there will be a few of them who will probably get a lion's share of the deal. That is how the system [of Black Empowerment] works” (Erwin, 2007).

government tenders” (Gumede: 224). Having joined the mainly white middle class, they furthermore tend to forget the plight of the struggling masses they used to belong to and claim that the poor are responsible for their own predicament (Gumede: 222, 285).

Because of its disappointing record, BEE has been criticised for focusing too little on blacks or indeed poor people as a whole,¹¹⁷ the enrichment of a few blacks or the creation of a buffer against black anger apparently being an end in itself. An illusion is thereby created of black inclusiveness, whereby the black middle class is supposedly acting “in the best interests of” the masses. This is true, regardless of the positive psychological effect that BEE might have on blacks in general in “celebrating the success of a small elite” (Gumede: 230). According to Mangcu, Mbeki’s “liberal Africanism” that epitomises BEE and GEAR should be replaced by an “African liberalism” that focuses less on an individualistic approach than on a “black worldview ... that may in fact enrich and sustain liberalism” and “give [it] a more human face” (Mangcu: 6), echoing Biko’s sentiments that “the great gift still has to come from Africa - giving the world a more human face” (Biko, 1996: 47).

The fact that the left of the ANC managed to have a broader definition of BEE (the so-called Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment) signed into law in early 2004 might rectify some of these shortcomings, as well as be part of the reason for its relative success since 2004.¹¹⁸

The Broad Based programme claims to be,

“An integrated and coherent socio-economic process that directly contributes to the economic transformation of South Africa and brings about significant increases in the number of black people that manage, own and control the country’s economy, as well as significant decreases in income inequalities.”¹¹⁹

That Finance Minister Trevor Manuel recently conceded that even the Broad Based BEE was “flawed and in need of a review”¹²⁰ indicates that such relative success far from outweighs its failures, however. Apart from the alleged abuse and tokenism of the programme, the fundamental problem is that BEE and GEAR are functionally antagonistic. GEAR works against economic equality and broad based education by advocating an

¹¹⁷ A growing number of ill-educated poor whites are no longer protected by the job security apartheid gave them nor the “affirmative action [that] is geared to assist the far larger numbers of poor or disadvantaged blacks” (Arnold: 17). 4% of all whites presently live below the poverty line (Zabalaza, 2006: 8).

¹¹⁸ The proportion of the market owned by blacks increased from 3% in 2004 to 5% in 2007 (Mbeki, 2007).

¹¹⁹ “Strategy for Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment”, Department of Trade and Industry, page 12.

¹²⁰ “Manuel calls for review of BEE”, Mail & Guardian 10th of April 2007.

inefficient redistribution programme and cutting expenditure on education, and BEE works against overall economic growth because its preferential appointment of lesser-qualified labour harms competitiveness (Alexander: 5-6).

6.3.4 AIDS

Another aspect of South African society that is opposed not just to economic development but development in general is that of AIDS. The epidemic proportions of AIDS in South Africa present an increasing problem to virtually all areas of South African society, casting “a shadow over economy, society, and politics alike” because of, among other things, “increasing numbers of sick and dying workers” (Butler: 165; Cole: 605).¹²¹ A successful socio-economical and developmental outline for the future of South Africa is therefore unthinkable without attempting to contain or solve the problem of AIDS, although moral and constitutional arguments¹²² are obviously no less significant. According to Posel, “the lack of recognition, compassion and dignity [afforded to AIDS-victims] falls far short of the idea of life embodied in the constitutional right to life”, the government thus being obliged to act with more vigour (Posel: 314). Nevertheless, the record of the ANC's AIDS-policy is decidedly unsuccessful and doused in remnants of apartheid-like racial animosity and denialism.

The first reports of AIDS occurrences in South Africa came in 1983, though the disease only assumed epidemic proportions in the mid-nineties (Karim: 371). Where the National Party's strategies to combat AIDS in the eighties and early nineties were “half-hearted” and “discriminatory”, the ANC's pre-1994 analysis was based on it seeing AIDS-treatment as a right (Karim: 374-375). Yet as election time drew closer, AIDS was no longer a significant political priority for Mandela and the ANC, the AIDS problem being virtually ignored publicly on cultural grounds. Mandela had not wished to offend “culturally conservative constituencies” during the run-up to the 1994 election that saw sexual matters as an inappropriate subject for public discussion (Karim: 376; de Waal: 44).

Mbeki's views on AIDS, on the other hand, were coloured by his African Renaissance-related views that Africa must solve its own problems. This is exemplified by his dislike of

¹²¹ South Africa is ranked as the country with the 5th highest AIDS rate by the CIA's World Factbook, and as the country with the largest number of people (5.3 mil.) living with HIV/AIDS (Karim: 31). According to the South African government, “there is currently no clear evidence on the actual economic impact of HIV and AIDS in South Africa”, “HIV and AIDS and STI Strategic Plan for South Africa, 2007-2011” (p. 42).

¹²² According to the South African Constitution, “everyone has the right to have access to ... health care services” and “no one may be refused emergency medical treatment” (section 27).

what he saw as Western cultural and universalistic neo-colonialism, exemplified by AIDS being blamed on Africa, as well as expensive Western drug-related solutions. As a result of this, AIDS became politicised during Mbeki's presidency (Gumede: 158-159).

Although initially accepting HIV as the cause of AIDS and successfully attempting to lower prices on anti-retroviral drugs, Internet research by Mbeki,¹²³ including the works of dissident scientists, led him to ask whether not "immune deficiency is also caused by other things" (Mbeki, 2001) and if poverty not HIV was the primary cause of AIDS. This arguably caused him to "grab defeat from the jaws of victory" in the battle against highly priced medicine (Gumede: 158; Bond, 2001: 426). His Health Minister Tsabalala-Msimang's announcement that AIDS should be fought with "a diet of garlic, lemon, olive oil and the African potato" not drugs,¹²⁴ on top of cuts in AIDS funding and unspent budgets, further indicated that the members of the Mbeki administration were either pursuing the dissident views of their President (Gumede: 160-161; Karim: 541) or that they are generally ignorant about AIDS.¹²⁵ This combination of questionable science and ignorance severely undermined any campaigns to advocate caution and condom use as ways of stopping the spread of HIV. According to Mamphela Ramphele, medical doctor and managerial director of the World Bank at the time, "the policy the [South African] government was pursuing [on Aids] was really tantamount to criminal irresponsibility" (Ramphele, 2002).

Financial and political cynicism towards the poor, rather than just ideological unsoundness or accusations of racism, might also be partially to blame for the Mbeki-administrations denialist views on AIDS, an example of which is Mbeki's Finance Minister Trevor Manuel's announcement that "it doesn't make financial sense to spend money on people dying [of AIDS] anyway" (Gumede: 163).¹²⁶ The fact that ANC MP's were taking Anti-Retroviral medicine paid by the state (Gumede: 168), however, undermines any of the explanations for not providing this medicine to the general public, as well as smacking of hypocrisy. "Mbeki's

¹²³ Mbeki, amongst other web sites discussing AIDS, studied the virusmyth.net site (Gumede: 158) that claims, "there is no proof that HIV causes AIDS" and "that the virus is indeed harmless".

¹²⁴ Tsabalala-Msimang also claimed, "nutrition is one of the integral parts of the government's strategy to combat HIV and AIDS" (Tsabalala-Msimang, 2003), although the focus on nutrition was later downplayed.

¹²⁵ During his rape-trial, "ex-Deputy President Jacob Zuma said he showered after sex with an HIV-positive woman, thinking this ... 'would minimise the risk of contracting the disease' [HIV]"; "SA's Zuma 'showered to avoid HIV'", BBC News 5th of April 2006.

¹²⁶ Although the Anti-Retroviral medicine Nevirapine "had ... been offered free ... to the governments of developing countries for use in the public health service in 2000" by its manufacturer, "the South African Department of Health refus[ed] the offer", calling the drug dangerous (Karim: 543, 545).

response [in 2001] was merely to warn the ANC MPs that the drugs could be toxic” (Gumede: 168).

The persecution and harassment of those who dared question Mbeki's line on AIDS, such as that of the president of the Medical Research Council Malegapuru Makgoba who was threatened and accused of “betraying his race” (Gumede: 294), ensured that most people dared not criticise the ANC's dissident stance, whatever their personal convictions.

Mbeki's u-turn on his previous AIDS-policies, approving the distribution of anti-retroviral drugs to over 5 million South Africans weeks before the 2004 election (Gumede: 150), may prove to be a turning point. But whether this was done to appease poor voters, the increasing number of civil society protests and campaigns against his position on AIDS, and the increasingly baffled international community, the latter whom might not otherwise see South Africa as a suitable investment partner, or because he finally recognised the urgency of the AIDS situation is unclear.

Having changed his policy on AIDS, there are still indications that Mbeki has not changed his mind and still “remains unconvinced that HIV causes AIDS” (Gumede: 172), believes the disease to be mainly poverty-related,¹²⁷ and consequently does not take AIDS as seriously as the epidemic proportions of the disease merits, as well as the poverty problem that it engenders (de Waal: 45). Such a standpoint by the President will surely undermine the attempt of present and future AIDS awareness and prevention campaigns to disavow the stigma and discrimination that AIDS still carries in South Africa. Additionally, the promised drugs are still inaccessible to many South Africans because of such “lack of political will” and government sluggishness (Karim: 567, 569-570).

6.3.5 Mugabe

Mbeki's championing of NEPAD and the AU shows his rhetorical commitment to democratising Africa and pan-Africanism. Whether it is more than just a rhetorical commitment is to be judged by whether democracy and pan-Africanism are actively promoted, especially seen in the light of the misuse of the terms by other African presidents such as Nkrumah and Mugabe in their attempts to remain in power (Hunter-Gault: 99). If not,

¹²⁷ The “HIV and AIDS and STI Strategic Plan for South Africa, 2007-2011”, released by the ANC government on the 12th of march 2007, claims that “whilst the immediate determinant of the spread of AIDS relates to behaviours such as unprotected sexual intercourse ... the fundamental drivers of this epidemic in South Africa are the more deep rooted institutional problems of poverty” (p. 10-11).

the AU and programmes such as NEPAD are nothing but continuations, albeit with more potential, of the largely self-congratulating OAU that was high on rhetoric and low on substance. Mbeki's handling of the Zimbabwean crisis is a case in point.

The Zimbabwean economic and governmental crisis was exacerbated by land invasions of mainly white-owned farms by so-called "war veterans", spurred on by Mugabe¹²⁸ and ZANU-PF's "systematic intimidation" of the recently formed Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in connection with the Zimbabwean general election in 2000 and presidential election of 2002 (Meredith: 639-42). Mugabe's ZANU was thus in violation of the principles of democracy, Good Governance and human rights spelled out by NEPAD, as well as of those of prudent economics. Being faced with the problem of a political and economic crisis on South Africa's doorstep that led to millions of refugees entering South Africa illegally and of potential unrest throughout the region, South Africa furthermore had a special interest in helping resolve the Zimbabwean crisis.

Yet Mbeki did not attempt do this by way of sanctions or other more radical measures, as did the West,¹²⁹ claiming instead that sanctions would hurt poor Zimbabweans the most, although Mbeki and others in the ANC had suggested to the same Western countries that sanctions were necessary to pressurise the apartheid regime. This is despite the fact that South Africa has "a unique ability to bring pressure to bear" on landlocked Zimbabwe because South Africa has "transport links, electricity supplies" and other services "vital for Zimbabwe's welfare" (Meredith: 672).

Mbeki instead followed a policy of "quiet diplomacy", attempting to influence Mugabe by resolving differences privately whilst not criticising him publicly. An example of this was that Mbeki's deputy Jacob Zuma declared Zimbabwe's 2002 presidential election "legitimate, valid, free and fair", something that was later qualified by Mbeki, though most other observers, including international observers but not some African heads of state, claimed it to be unfair (Human Rights Watch: 7, 33).¹³⁰ Perhaps Mbeki's reason for "quiet diplomacy" is an acknowledgement of the problem of slow land reforms that the two countries share and

¹²⁸ Mugabe, in 2000, called white landowners "white devils" and vowed, "to take all they owned" (Meredith: 641).

¹²⁹ That the West advocated and enforced sanctions against Zimbabwe might in fact be one of the reasons why Mbeki choose not to do so. Mbeki could have reacted against what he saw as a patronising Western intrusion on an "African solution" for this particular "African problem".

¹³⁰ "South Africa puts pressure on Mugabe", BBC News 15th of March 2002. There is however a decreasing tendency amongst African leaders to defend Mugabe, Zambian President Mwanawasa for instance comparing Zimbabwe to the Titanic; "Zimbabwe's crisis 'like Titanic'", BBC News 21st of March 2007; "Mbeki to tackle Zimbabwe crisis", BBC News 29th of March 2007.

fear of a potential spillover effect of the Zimbabwean crisis, South African land reforms having begun at an even slower rate than those instigated during Zimbabwe's first decade of independence, prompting some land invasions inside South Africa (Jacobs: 268). Perhaps it is due to an unwillingness to criticise another African head of state, reflecting Mbeki's African Renaissance approach to African politics. It certainly cannot be said that Mbeki is protecting Mugabe because of personal affinity nor because of any friendship between the ANC and ZANU-PF, relations between the two parties having been tense since the ANC chose to support rivals ZAPU because of a common Soviet affinity and backing (ZANU-PF was backed by China) (Gumede: 187).

Whatever the reason, Mbeki's "quiet diplomacy" has so far been ineffectual and whereas the "megaphone diplomacy" of the Western countries has been equally so, Mbeki and other African Union leaders arguably have greater influence that could be brought to bear on Mugabe. Mbeki's lack of decisive action towards Mugabe might have pleased South African Africanists "who celebrated Zimbabwe's example of giving the whites a good kicking", but it won South Africa no friends among the business community that Mbeki depended upon to boost his foreign investment-driven neo-liberal policies or elsewhere (Meredith: 673). The repeated breaches of agreements by Mugabe and the negative effects Mbeki's "quiet diplomacy" towards him were having on foreign investment temporarily forced Mbeki to apply stronger rhetoric towards Mugabe (Gumede: 189-190), although such "strong rhetoric" has since been discontinued. Mbeki thus pre-emptively claimed the 2005 Zimbabwean general elections would be free and fair despite reports of large-scale intimidation and arbitrary arrests of MDC members (Human Rights Watch: 7), and he remains strangely uncritical of the general deteriorating political and economic situation in Zimbabwe, in effect maintaining his policy of "quiet diplomacy".¹³¹ Mugabe, on the other hand, continues his intimidation, systematic abuse and bad-mouthing of members of the opposition and of journalists, as well as his "blatant disregard for the basic human rights of [Zimbabwe's] citizens", unabatedly (Human Rights Watch: 1, 7, 17, 30-31).

Mbeki has thereby laid himself open to criticism because of the apparent disparities between the rhetoric of a NEPAD that he had an central part in bringing about and his policy towards Zimbabwe, which in effect if not in purpose allows Mugabe to continue to violate the human rights, democratic values and Good Governance that NEPAD promotes as necessary

¹³¹ "Beatings, arrests 'skyrocket' in Zim", Mail & Guardian 2nd of May 2007.

for African economic development. Even more damning is the fact that Mbeki and the AU have been criticised, rightfully or wrongfully, for following the example of their predecessors in the OAU in not being willing to criticise a fellow African head of state for the blatant disregard of the rule of law, thereby employing “a typically blind Third World loyalty” and “group solidarity” (Woods, 2000: 220; Meredith: 673)¹³² that has damaged the credibility of Mbeki's notion of “African solutions for African problems”. Democratic Alliance¹³³ and opposition leader Tony Leon sees this as ironic because Mbeki, “by refusing to speak out against Mugabe ... reinforces the Afro-pessimists' worst stereotypes”.¹³⁴

6.3.6 Non-racialism

Having been criticised for employing Africanist “group solidarity”, Mbeki is nevertheless an avowed non-racialist and globalist who speaks of the necessity of international free markets and of an inclusive South Africa. It is sometimes hard to determine whether Mbeki believes his own inclusive statements about how white South Africans have an equal claim to being African, whether he is being politically opportunistic by playing the “Africanist card when it suits him” and beating the “Africanist drum when it's politically expedient to do so” (Gumede: 44, 242; Hadland: 120), whether he is truly an exclusivist Africanist of the Lembede mould, or whether his Africanism is more “realistic and assertive” unlike former Africanist leaders such as Nkrumah and Nyerere (Hadland: 144), however. Some of this confusion comes from Mbeki seemingly having two definitions of “African”.

His *inclusive* definition of “African” identifies Africans as those with an emotional attachment to the continent, those “who view the continent as their home” (Lodge: 237), “South Africa belong[ing] to all who live in it” (Mbeki, 1996). In refusing “to accept that our Africanness shall be defined by our race, colour, gender or historical origins”, stating that he is “formed of the migrants who left Europe to find a home in our native land” and that in his “veins courses the blood of the Malay slaves who came from the east” (Mbeki, 1996), Mbeki is furthermore stating that South Africanness consists of a multitude of cultural and racial components, including those South Africans of European and Asian descent, prompting Afrikaner liberal van Zyl Slabbert to state that he was an African “because my president told

¹³² “African leaders break silence over Mugabe's human rights abuses”, The Guardian 4th of January 2006.

¹³³ The Democratic Alliance is the heir to the Progressive Party, having merged several times with other parties such and the now defunct New National party since the seventies.

¹³⁴ “Leon slams Mbeki's ‘racial myopia’”, Mail and Guardian, 23rd of March 2007.

me so”.¹³⁵ Mbeki has also claimed that he “sincerely wants to provide a political home for Afrikaners and white English-speaking liberals” (Gumede: 243), calling for “a new patriotism ... which would include ... an all-embracing effort to build a sense of common nationhood” (Hadland: 187).

Mbeki also calls for Africanist solidarity with Africa, however,¹³⁶ his *exclusive* definition seemingly aiming to Africanise South Africa by “Africanist historical nostalgia” where “African culture is equated with black African culture” (Lodge: 240). Whereas Mbeki outlines an inclusive concept of Africanness in his “I am an African” speech, he contradicts this in the same speech and elsewhere.¹³⁷ His actions also seem to reveal a much more exclusivist South Africa that challenges his inclusivist concept of “African”. Effects of this can be seen in the previously mentioned fact that whites, and to a lesser degree Coloureds and Indians, feel discriminated against job-wise because the effects of BEE make it difficult for them to be considered for senior positions. They can also be seen in the race-orientated accusations made to amongst others the president of the Medical Research Council of “betraying his race” and “not being a real black person”, because he dared to dispute Mbeki’s policy on AIDS, as well as the remark that “we don’t need a white messiah”, made to SACP deputy general secretary Jeremy Cronin because he had criticised Mbeki for losing touch with the ANC’s grassroots, made by members high up the ANC hierarchy that were not publicly rebutted by Mbeki (Gumede: 294).

There could be several reasons for the inconsistency of Mbeki’s signals, although the notion that Mbeki is an outright racist does not seem to be one of them. The strategy of the ANC that preserved the racial terminology of apartheid to address apartheid’s legacy by the affirmative action policies of BEE, whilst at the same time attempting to embrace an overarching, inclusive South African identity, is certainly one plausible explanation (Zegeye: 340).

¹³⁵ “What is wanted is not residence, but solidarity”, Mail and Guardian, 11th of December 2006.

¹³⁶ Mbeki states that he is “born of the people’s of the continent of Africa. The pain of the violent conflict that the peoples of Liberia, Somalia, the Sudan, Burundi and Algeria [suffer] is a pain I also bear. The dismal shame of poverty, suffering and human degradation of my continent is a blight that we share.” (Mbeki, 1996).

¹³⁷ Mbeki uses the term “*African South Africans*” (Kunnie: 158), speaks of “the exclusion [by apartheid] of the *African* mother and child, historically the most disadvantaged section of our population” (Mbeki, 1996), concludes that “[with independence] at last, *Africans* were governing themselves”, that “61 per cent of *Africans* are poor with the figure among Whites being 1 per cent ... the figures for Coloureds and Indians are 38 and 5 per cent respectively”, and that “*Africans* occupied 6,18 per cent of management positions and blacks, as a whole, 12,57 per cent” (Mbeki speech, 1998, quoted in Hadland: 197, 199).

The previously mentioned strategy of “playing the Africanist card when it suits him” is another potential reason, Mbeki's Africanism being nothing but a cover up and detraction from the lack of improvements felt by the majority of South Africa's population who are black Africans. Mbeki is thereby being seen as being playing a game employed by many post-independence African rulers such as Mugabe, where all Africa's problems are blamed on colonialism or neo-colonialism, Western imperialism and white racism and not on their own poor governance (Ayittey: 6, 27; Kunnie 155).¹³⁸ The ANC government's “clampdown on ‘illegal immigration’” that results in the arresting and deportation of thousands of sub-Saharan African nationals (Kunnie: 110) further disavows Mbeki's Africanism. Regardless of this, his inclusivist statements do not necessarily defeat this reckoning as they can be seen to serve the populist function of making the ANC appear to be a party that represents everyone.

A third more sympathetic view could see his inconsistent statements as belonging to someone damaged by the legacy of apartheid (Tutu: 154-155) as well as being sincerely angry at the continuing manifestations of its Eurocentrism. Mbeki's exclusivist statements might therefore be caused by his experience of apartheid's racism and denigration, the continuation and belittlement of which he still sees represented by whites such as Tony Leon (Gumede: 155, 249; Hadland: xi; Arnold: 11) and which he abhors. In 2001 he thus declared, “the world did not fight against apartheid racism and white domination to create space for them to continue to be subjected to dehumanising, demeaning and insulting racism”.¹³⁹

The subtleties of the distinction between hating white notions of superiority and whites in general is easily lost in a country with a history of defining most things along racial lines such as South Africa. White South Africans tend to “interpret criticism of white domination as criticism of white people” (Hadland: 107), and Mbeki is obviously sensitive towards what he (rightly or wrongly) sees as instances of racism and Afro-pessimism such as claims that AIDS originated in Africa, criticism of the ANC for not doing enough about the high rates of rape or that the 2002 Football World Cup went to Germany, not South Africa.¹⁴⁰

It is likely that Mbeki's inclusive statements are anchored in a genuine hope for and belief in the righteousness of an inclusive South Africa that can only come about when the significant remnants of racism that exist in South Africa, even amongst self-proclaimed non-

¹³⁸ Claud Ake claimed as early as 1965 that “instead of contributing to economic development, Pan-Africanism retards it by diverting attention from domestic failures” (Ake, 1965: 536).

¹³⁹ ANC Today, Volume 4, No. 42, 22-28 October 2004.

¹⁴⁰ “Mbeki slammed in rape race row”, BBC News 5th of October 2004; “Mbeki labels World Cup decision racist”, CBC Sports 10th of November 2000.

racial white liberals (Arnold: 11), have disappeared. Consequently, the criticism of Mbeki is not necessarily to be levelled at his sincerity in setting all-inclusive goals that are most likely held by many South Africans, but at the way he is trying to reach them, including the problematic nature of confusing statements regarding the inclusive or exclusive nature of the South Africa he wants to bring about and his tendency towards what Appiah refers to as Afrocentrism (Maloka: 90).

One stumbling block to such goals is that Mbeki appears to see everything in an “over-racialised framework”,¹⁴¹ wanting “African solutions to African problems” so badly that he seems to have developed a blind spot for African “solutions” that do not solve African problems, exemplified by his AIDS policies and his policies towards Mugabe’s Zimbabwe. Whereas Biko disavowed both Eurocentric universalism and Negritude, Mbeki, according to Ivor Chipkin,¹⁴² is promoting “a new kind of [“Afrocentric”] universalism – that the African more than any other person in the world embraces the true universal”.¹⁴³

The paradoxical combination of the ANC’s multiculturalist nationalism that sought to build a South Africa of different cultures¹⁴⁴ and Mbeki’s inclusivism is another stumbling block, although the two are not necessarily contradictory notions. As was discussed in chapter 2.3.2, equality sought at group level, not at the level of individuals, highlights differences and runs the risk of furthering a cultural essentialism not unlike that of apartheid’s separate “races”, as does pan-Africanist, Negritude-like notions of “African”.

The matter is perhaps more complex than that of psychological factors regarding inclusivism and exclusivism, but whatever the answer is; it is obvious that the psychological aspects of South African politics are interconnected with the political and economic. In this regard, Mbeki only seems to have managed to successfully bring about a narrow political liberation. The psychological and social liberation that the BCM saw as necessary for a true liberation has not been sufficiently pursued. Whereas the ANC used non-racialism to achieve multiculturalism, what the BCM insisted on was practically the opposite, that of initial black

¹⁴¹ “South Africa: Proof that politicians are often the worst enemies of their people”, *Business Day* 22nd of March 2007.

¹⁴² Ivor Chipkin is a chief research specialist in the Democracy and Governance research programme and has previously worked at the University of the Witwatersrand in the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research.

¹⁴³ “Do South Africans really exist?”, *Mail & Guardian* 26th of April 2007.

¹⁴⁴ The ANC’s 1994 election manifesto called for the building of a nation “by developing our different cultures, beliefs and languages as a source of our common strength” (Chipkin, 2003: 27). The constitution furthermore asserts the “right of self-determination of any community sharing a common cultural and language heritage, within a territorial entity in the Republic or in any other way” in section 235.

political exclusivity, necessitated by centuries of colonial and apartheid conditioning, to achieve a South African society where race was not supposed to be an issue. People were differentiated along the lines of oppressor and oppressed, not along racial or group lines, as with the ANC. Xolela Mangcu in suggesting that his “staunch non-racialist background” is due to his “black consciousness background”, whereas the present climate favours “a form of racial identity and exclusivism tied to essentialism and ultimately tied to power”¹⁴⁵ implies that Black Consciousness, or a similar psychological inward-looking process, was and is necessary to achieve true non-racialism.

The fact that Black Consciousness was only partially successful in achieving its goals, and that a non-racialism that failed to sufficiently question apartheid racism prevailed in the liberation struggle, is therefore partially to blame for the present resurgence of exclusionism. It is because of the combination of the ANC's multiculturalist and non-racialist approach that the ANC seemed to give little thought to the problem of getting from the racially and economically divided society of post-apartheid to something more inclusive, or indeed to problems of inferiority. This in turn seems to have led to a move towards a more exclusive Africanism and the danger of black or African inclusiveness and exploitation (Gibson: 164), akin to the essentialism that Fanon warned against. Mbeki and others in the ANC accordingly still cast their “solutions for South Africa in a racial framework” (Jacobs: 114), even though the elimination of the absolute divisiveness of apartheid and creation of a small wealthy black elite belies the illusion of absolute solidarity along racial lines.

Although the Africanism of Mbeki's African Renaissance might be a well-meant albeit mistaken attempt at belatedly dealing with such unresolved matters, it might also, as previously mentioned, be a strategy to stop the poor from defining themselves along more income-related or class lines.¹⁴⁶ Perhaps the fear of such antics was why Biko advocated a common black resistance until apartheid was no more, after which there was to be “no reference to race” (Biko, 1996: 123), the psychological problems of affirmative action being another potential reason.

¹⁴⁵ “ANC needs to revive non-racialism”, Cape Times 30th of November 2006.

¹⁴⁶ Class identity is on the rise in South Africa, however, as is national identity, identity along racial lines simultaneously declining (Netshitenzhe: 85).

6.4 The future

Mbeki's future goals, mentioned in his State of the Nation Address on the 9th of February 2007, include amongst other things speeding up land redistribution, identifying defects in poverty reduction,¹⁴⁷ strengthening national belonging, reducing crime, intensifying the campaign against HIV and AIDS and increasing access to education (Mbeki, 2007). Whereas these are all necessary steps to improve the lives of poor South Africans, an overarching and integral strategy that acknowledges the interdependency of South Africa's problems is necessary to be able to achieve these goals.

That such a strategy is not being pursued can be seen in Mbeki dissociating South African crime from politics or the legacy of apartheid, implying that crime has nothing to do with the poverty or psychological problems of poor South Africans. Hence crime is to be fought with "effective organisation, mobilisation and leadership of the mass of law-enforcement, intelligence and corrections officers, and functionaries of the justice system", as well as by "modernising ... border control", "further expanding ... the South African Police Service", building "more corrections facilities" and generally making "life more difficult for the criminals" (Mbeki, 2007).

Although Mbeki, by measuring "the success of [South African] democracy" against "the quality of life of the most vulnerable in [South African] society" (Mbeki, 2007), at least seems intent on finding a solution to important social problems such as crime, it is hard to see how this will be possible to a larger degree than presently, especially while he is still following the dictates of GEAR and NEPAD (Mbeki, 2007) that are largely to blame for the lack of poverty reduction (Van der Walt, 2000: 75) or not sufficiently prioritising AIDS.¹⁴⁸ Black Consciousness, on the other hand, related crime directly to poverty. Biko insisted that although "no-one ever attempts to relate [crime] to poverty, unemployment, overcrowding, lack of schooling and migratory labour" although poverty "is the basis of the vandalism,

¹⁴⁷ Both relative and absolute poverty has risen in the post-apartheid period according to government statistics (Bond, 2004), although there has been a relative decline since 2000 (Netshitenzhe: 12). The South African government therefore claims to be changing track and looking at ways to improve the social security system, the Minister of Social Development, Zola Skweyiya conceding that "there are many lessons to be learnt from the Nordic countries", "South Africa: Nordic Countries Highlight Importance of Social Welfare", BuaNews (Tshwane), 15th of March 2007.

¹⁴⁸ Mbeki and the ANC have begun reluctantly attending to South Africa's AIDS problems. In the 2007 State of the nation Address, Mbeki thus "commits [the government] to intensify the campaign against HIV and AIDS and to improve its implementation of all elements of the comprehensive approach" (Mbeki, 2007), although such an important subject of AIDS is only discussed in this one instance, the word "AIDS" only being used twice in the entire speech.

murder, rape and plunder” (Biko, 1996: 57, 75). Any solution to the problem of crime would thus have to go beyond that of the symptoms of crime and deal with its root causes.

That South Africa has retained much of apartheid's socio-economical structure and psychological problems confirms that Black Consciousness has not yet served its purpose. Instead of the struggle achieving the liberation of both the oppressed and the oppressor, the ANC might have simply replaced one elite with another, the possibility of which both Fanon and Biko warned about. Where Biko claimed that true liberation needed social change, the ANC government ensured “that property rights were respected and orthodox economic policies were adopted” (MacDonald: 178). The belief of Black Consciousness that blacks must build up their own value systems (Biko, 1996: 49) and that they must participate both politically and economically in the power structures of South Africa is therefore belied by GEAR, the fact that white businesses was able to retain their power over the economy and the tokenism of BEE.

But are more left-leaning policies a credible alternative to Mbekism? Anisur Rahman suggests that the “romantic collectivism” that much of the left has previously embraced is unrealistic, at least in the present conditions of market hegemony, and should be replaced by a “pragmatic collectivism” that attempts to progressively change the system, calling “for strategies for the people to develop power over the market” (Rahman, 2004: 20). Biko's Black Consciousness and African Communalism can perhaps be seen in this light: as a moderate left-leaning alternative to the economic neo-liberalism of Mbeki that bases its practical policies on the fact that “Africa is still a communal society” (Ake, 1993: 243), not on rhetorical references to a concept of Africanness such as that of Mbeki's African Renaissance. The communalistic notions of solidarity and ubuntu already exist in South African society, in the present South African constitution¹⁴⁹ and in Mbeki's world outlook. This does not necessarily mean that notions of solidarity and ubuntu are paramount in practical government

¹⁴⁹ The present South African constitution “obliges its citizenry, the state and the constitutional court, to take the idea [ubuntu] very seriously” (Posel: 313). “The concept “ubuntu” appears for the first time in the post-amble, but it is a concept that permeates the Constitution generally and more particularly Chapter Three which embodies the entrenched fundamental human rights”, Constitutional Court of South Africa, 6th of June 1995. Ubuntu was also promoted as the basis for social welfare in the Department of Welfare's White Paper for Social Welfare, August 1997, and has been acknowledged to be part of the South African “world outlook” by Mbeki in his 2006 Nelson Mandela Lecture and by Trevor Manuel in his 2007 Budget Speech (Manuel: 3, 28). The ANC Policy Discussion Documents also recently (March 2007) mentioned “the major spiritual component of the Continent of Africa ... the deep primal human concept of ubuntu” and “liberating values of ubuntu thinking”, claiming that “an economy which ensures that most people lack the means to provide enough food, housing, clothing, and health care to sustain life ... demands the justice of an ubuntu society” (PDD, The RDP of the Soul, p. 2, 3, 6).

policies or in all parts of South African society, however, according to Mbeki, in fact, “the traditional value system of Ubuntu had been greatly eroded”.¹⁵⁰ Nor does it mean that they are easily achieved in the future, especially if they are counteracted by policies such as GEAR and BEE that work against such solidarity. What it does mean is that anyone attempting to use a communalistic approach to try and solve South Africa's problems are on solid ground constitutionally, as well as culturally. Ubuntu or Black Communalism should not only be seen as an already existing basis of South African cultural heritage on which a future society can be built, but as a target that has yet to be reached, however. That Mbeki and other ANC members still fail to acknowledge the intellectual contribution of Biko as well as the potential positive role of Black Consciousness in contemporary South Africa (Ramphela, 1995: 183-184)¹⁵¹ is consequently problematic in two ways: Firstly because Biko has a different vision of how to achieve a non-racialism in South Africa that has so far been elusive, and secondly because he outlines a South Africa that is essentially built around the concept of ubuntu.

7.1 Conclusion

As with all other former colonies, especially those on the African continent, South Africa still has a colonial legacy. Whereas this legacy is believed to be different to that of most if not all other postcolonial nations because of apartheid, it is in fact surprisingly similar to that of other countries with a history of colonialism. The main difference was that the South African white colonisers, especially the Afrikaners, unlike most other colonisers had created an identity that was separate from that of the “mother country” and that South African colonial oppression increased during the fifties and sixties where most other African colonies gained their independence. In doing so, the Afrikaner-dominated National Party instigated a uniquely rigid structure of separate development, that of apartheid. As was colonialism, apartheid was built on the premise of racism, denigration of black history and culture, white superiority as well as on the physical subjugation of its black citizens. Resistance and transcendence of the legacies of colonialism and apartheid in contemporary South Africa therefore requires confronting both its material and psychological aspects.

One of the main objectives of this thesis was to re-evaluate the usefulness of Bikoism and Black Consciousness in confronting material and psychological matters that verifiably still

¹⁵⁰ ANC Today, Volume 7. No. 7, 23 February - 1 March 2007.

¹⁵¹ “How Mbeki is hampering the renaissance”, Mail and Guardian, 9th of June 2000; “South Africa: Dream behind Biko's smile will outlive current crop of leaders”, Business Day 5th of April 2007.

exist in contemporary South Africa. The analysis in this thesis had shown, however, that any exclusive advocacy of Bikoism to the detriment of Mbekism or vice versa is not viable.

To put it crudely, the ANC focused and focuses overwhelmingly on dismantling the material and Black Consciousness primarily the psychological legacy of apartheid, although admittedly Mbeki's African Renaissance attempts to deal with the psychological aspects of apartheid that the ANC had largely neglected, and the Black Communalism of the Black Consciousness Movement meant to constitute the political second leg of its two-tiered approach. Both organisations thus to some extent neglected to take important aspects of colonialism and postcolonialism into account. The ANC either ignored psychological liberation or believed that it would automatically be brought about by material liberation whereas Black Consciousness assumed that integration would automatically follow in a just and free society, that a process of consciousness-building would be a large part of bringing about such liberation and that the "dirty work" of the armed struggle should be left to the ANC.

Whilst not disregarding the dissimilarities between the two, there is common ground between Mbekism and Bikoism, rhetorically if not in practice. Both speak of the disabling effects of colonialism and the need for retaining the best values of South Africa's indigenous culture(s) and society such as ubuntu, although Mbeki's rhetorical commitment to such themes are sometimes in direct opposition to his actual policies of GEAR and NEPAD that signify a highly individualistic political approach.

There are also significant differences, an example of which is the organisational bottom-up approach that Black Consciousness advocated that is contrary to the centralist, top-down approach that the ANC have practised under Mbeki. As indicated above, the Black Consciousness of Steve Biko further maintained that psychological liberation was a precondition for full liberation, and saw proof hereof in the dormant nature of a liberation cause that had neglected to take into account the notions of black inferiority and white superiority that existed, and still exist, in South Africa. Moreover, Black Consciousness adopted a "strategic essentialism" that insisted on a non-racial South Africa that fused the lifestyles of the different groups after apartheid had been dismantled whereas Mbeki and the ANC have done virtually the opposite. The latter insisted on non-racialism during the liberation struggle but adopted the Africanist approach of the African Renaissance and Black Economic Empowerment once political liberation had been achieved, possibly in belatedly

attempting to deal with the fact that racialism had not simply “withered away” by itself. That these approaches are problematic can be seen in their potential essentialism and reinforcement of racial identification, as well as in the culture of black entitlement and furthering of Afro-pessimism that the latter generates.

Black Consciousness can mainly improve or inform present South African politics in psychological and organisational matters, although admittedly Black Communalism can be seen as an alternative or complementary set of policies that stands in opposition to the individualistic neo-liberalism of the Mbeki administration. Insisting that the eradication of the complexes of white superiority and black inferiority is a precondition for true non-racialism is important if the preoccupation with group and racial identities that continues to exist in South Africa is to be transcended, although this should obviously not lead to a neglect of material aspects of liberation.

A more integral solution to South Africa's problems than has hitherto been attempted, one that accepts the interrelatedness of the political, social, economic and psychological aspects of South African politics, is of paramount importance. True liberation needs transformation in all four areas if South Africa is not to end up replacing or complementing a white elite with a small black one, something that Biko warned against and which is seemingly already happening. Even so, the “liberal Africanism” of Mbeki is not necessarily to be wholly transformed and replaced for true liberation to happen but must at least be given what Biko calls “a more human face” of indigenous cultural traits, although these must encompass individualism as well as communalism to avoid the reactionary tendencies of pre-colonial societies. Furthermore, if the common humanism that is implied in both Bikoism and Mbekism is to be attained, the goals of the universal must be disengaged from the particularism of Eurocentrism. What is truly paradoxical is that all countries, including South Africa, must nevertheless move through the particular to reach the universal. If South Africa is to succeed in bringing about a true non-racial Rainbow Nation where “heterogeneity does not preclude harmony”, and not simply a multicultural society of parallel communities, however, the dangers of overemphasising black African culture and thereby promoting an “Afrocentric” universalism that both Mbekism and Bikoism can easily slip into are to be avoided as much as the Eurocentrism that it is meant to replace.

8.1 References

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