

# Chapter Seventeen

## BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS

THE YEAR SAW a more solidified development of Black Consciousness in its implications and manifestations in the political, cultural, economic and theological spheres.

There was more effort to vitalise the theoretical potency of Black Consciousness within the basic historic situation prevailing in the country. Which is more, Black Consciousness was found to be contesting not only for political and economic power alone, but also for human power and morale against the white supra-structure. This came out more markedly in the face of Government bannings against protagonists of Black Consciousness.

SASO continued to help spread the message of Black Consciousness despite the political bannings imposed on its leadership.

BPC also had some of its leaders banned. Nevertheless the organisation developed and fought for more affiliation and increased membership.

The Black Theology Project through its spokesman, now banned, Dr Manas Buthelezi, continued to voice outspoken concern over the Black man's destiny.

The Black Community Programmes made projections into various fields in the community development of Blacks, despite bannings against its staff. (See Chapter on Bannings).

### **The Political Significations of Black Consciousness**

#### *Background*

By 1973 Blacks were already asking themselves on the more positive sides

of Black Consciousness that: since it was here, what did it really hold for the future?

Black Consciousness was found by many Blacks trying to articulate its implications to mean the identification of Blackness as seen by the Black men from his Black self and system of reference. There were:

- (i) the period of anger;
- (ii) the period of emulation;
- (iii) the period of criticism and
- (iv) the period of identity.

In the period of anger it was during the time following conquest when Blacks were angry with new white ways of thinking and doing things. The Blacks resisted conquest in many different ways, until, failing, they decided to emulate the white man's concepts. Many even tried to lead pure white lives. However, discoveries that white ways also had their shortcomings led Blacks into criticising their situation under white domination. This was when Blacks said everything they could say directly to the white man. Even student politics dominated by liberal bodies faced dire criticism from Blacks. But these Blacks were addressing whites.

Black Consciousness was found to be belonging to the fourth stage: the period of identity. Blacks addressing fellow Blacks were seeking ways and means of making their aspirations felt through common Blackness and solidarity. White cultural norms and ethics were being criticised amongst the Blacks themselves. The Black Identity was becoming the common goal Blacks wanted to reach. It was because of the existent situation that Black Consciousness protagonists thrust into the Blacks' political orientation.

The Black People's Convention grew and drew support from all the major centres in the country. This despite the bannings imposed on its leadership, i.e. Secretary General Mr Drake Koka and on Public Relations Officer, Mr Saths Cooper, in March. Since these bannings more members of the BPC have been silenced and restricted through Government legislation. This reaction from the Government has been seen as proof that it fears the spreading of Black Consciousness.

SASO has also suffered the onslaught of Government legislation for its upholding of anti-Government practices and for spreading Black Consciousness in the Black Community, especially amongst students. To date more than ten SASO members have been banned. At SASO's Annual Conference in July the theme of Black awareness as means towards power in the political struggle of Blacks was widely discussed.

A leading trend in Black awareness was the growing practice by Blacks of seeing Black Consciousness as a relative rather than absolute manifestation of National Consciousness. Black Consciousness had become differen-

tiated.

The righting of historic faults was highlighted when five tribal chiefs in the Drakensberg region resisted moved by the Natal Parks Board to oust the tribes from the area in terms of the Government's Consolidation Plans. The five chiefs are: Chief B. Miya of the Amazizi tribe near Bergville, Chief J. Hadebe of the Hlubi tribe and a direct descendant of Chief Sangalibalele, Chief M. Hlongwane of the Amangwane tribe, Chief V. Mabaso of the Drakensberg No. 1 location and Chief S. Mazibuko of the Drakensberg No. 2 location. A sixth chief was also involved—Chief H. Dlamini of the Amakhuze tribe.

The chiefs felt that they were being forced off the land of their forefathers and according to one of them it seemed the Parks Board was the most instrumental in wanting the Blacks to move out of the area. One of the chiefs said he did not understand why the whites showed such greed for land when instead there was land still owing to the tribesmen in terms of the 1936 Land Act.

Chief B. Miya had this to say: 'Before I speak of removals, I want to lay claim to more than 400 ha. of land that has been taken from my people by the Natal Parks Board. I will not move. I hope the Parks Board gives back our land. How can we be expected to move from the graves of our forefathers and go to a place we do not know?'

Chief S. Mazibuko claimed that several white farmers in the Loskop area were living on land taken away from the Amangwe tribe. On a certain occasion, one of the chiefs stated, tribesmen had seen white surveyors come and change boundaries claiming the boundary fences had been wrongly propped. This way large pieces of land had got out of Black hands (*Daily News* 18/6/73). To sum up Black reaction, Chief H. Dlamini had simply burst out, 'I say hands off our land'.

Early in the year strikes by Black workers erupted in Natal and on the Rand, until they were widespread throughout the country. What was most significant about the strikes is that they burst out where least expected all the time: in the largely illiterate and semi-literate sectors of the African worker population. The strikes were also highly marked by their spontaneous character. No political organisation, trade unions or group of activists could lay claim to their eruption. Even the State failed to pinpoint scapegoats: 'communist agitators'.

Since the first major outbreak early in the year when hundreds of migrant labourers at the Coronation brick factory in Durban downed tools and demanded higher pay, similar action had spread all over the country by June.

Even the border industrial areas were affected by the wave of strikes. At Richards Bay at Alusaf, a factory sponsored by the Industrial Develop-

ment Council, workers demanded the rights to force the Bantustan leaders into a bargaining position against the white employers or into a confrontation; meaning the withdrawal of Black labour from certain factories. Chief negotiator in this tight situation was Minister of Community Affairs for KwaZulu, Mr B.I. Dladla. The brick workers at Coronation were addressed by the Paramount Chief of the Zulus, Chief Zwelithini, who promised their grievances would be met.

It was a sordid affair for Durban's whites when public services almost ground to a stop during the strike by municipal workers. The Corporation's busdrivers also added to the wounds when they threatened a prolonged strike unless their wage demands were met. Though a showdown was narrowly averted between the busdrivers and Transport Management, a highly successful one-day strike in November did show the potential of solidarity the workers had. In that one day all Durban's Municipal buses were at a standstill. Significant also is the fact that the strike was not over pay but over a grievance against management.

For the first time the Black workers felt their power as a distinctly identifiable group. With the spread of strikes to areas such as Charlestown, Harrismith, King Williams Town, Hammarsdale, the workers were learning a new lesson. They did have the potential of power—political and economic.

At Hammarsdale Black solidarity was expressed when all factories in the area, about 14 of them, shut down and effected what may be called a general strike on 7 February. This is when police used tear-gas against demonstrators. The strikes that had begun at the Hebox factories on Monday 5 dragged on until workers went back to work on Monday 12 February. On Thursday 8, at a mass meeting held in an open veld, the workers, though beginning to waver, supported the idea of common strategy based on their common situation. This was seen as an expression of Black solidarity.

Even the Bantustan leaders and others working within the framework of separatism have now and then failed to resist the pressure of Black awareness. The KwaZulu leader, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, called for Coloureds to identify with Blacks on his visit to the Athlone Trade Fair in Cape Town. Claiming that Coloureds were indigenous to this country, he urged them not to be ashamed of being called Africans (*Sunday Tribune* 18/2/73).

Chief Gatsha's move met opposition from the leader of the Coloureds' Federal Party who criticised Chief Gatsha for having placed him (Mr Swartz) in bad light to the Coloured people in favour of the Coloured Labour Party. Mr Swartz said he saw nothing good in talks on Black Consciousness. It is worth noting, though, that the Federal Party is the most vociferous against petty apartheid (see CRC).

Whether Apartheid is petty or harsh in its implications, is hardly the point in the face of growing repression against the forces of Black Consciousness and Black solidarity. The list of Blacks banned in the past year reached 54 as far as is known.

A book relevant to the political significations of Black Consciousness came out in October 1973. Written by a Black clinical psychologist, Dr N.C. Manganyi, it deals with some positive aspects of Blackness. Dr Manganyi says, 'There are two important issues which should be raised relating to Black Consciousness and Solidarity. The first is the relationship between consciousness and action. This relationship is often neglected by exponents of black consciousness. This neglect of this aspect almost amounts to a lack of a clear formulation of the actual practical meaning of solidarity. In addition between mutual knowledge and solidarity, there exists the connotation of action in solidarity. In other words, one has to be thinking of a consciousness which leads to action' (*Being-Black in the World*—Page 21—Spro-cas).

Dr Manganyi's statement summarised the questioning on what true consciousness is. It was therefore no surprise to come across such notions in the assessments of the year: 'We have to be unified by our common desire to take the initiative in deciding and determining our future and that of the future generations of Black South Africans'. (Ibid).

### **The Economic Significations of Black Consciousness**

During the year it was more solidly proved that today's South Africa had basically become different from what it was before Sharpeville.

Whereas Blacks thought on purely nationalist lines before Sharpeville and slightly after, today's Blacks also think in terms of economic power. Thus opening the way towards national consciousness. The economic factor as an aspect of Black Consciousness proved to have come to stay.

A near conflict almost erupted when the Natal Chamber of Commerce accused the KwaZulu Government of intervening in the labour flow of Zulu workers. Registering concern over statements made by the KwaZulu Minister of Community Affairs, Mr B.I. Dladla, the Federated Chamber of Industries supporting the Natal Chamber of Commerce referred to 'undesirable activities of Ministers of homelands intervening with regard to labour disputes'.

Particular reference was drawn to:

- the addressing of 'Bantu' workers on labour matters in white areas;
- participation in industrial negotiations; and
- 'discrimination between employers in the supply of labour' by the KwaZulu Government.

The Chief Executive Councillor for KwaZulu, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, warned in reply that the white industrialists were 'playing with fire with these representations'. Saying it was within the framework of South African policy for KwaZulu to have control over labour, he stated that only fully-fledged trade union organisations for Blacks would help resolve labour issues (*Sunday Tribune* 2/12/73).

Chief Gatsha may not have been working from ethic of Black Consciousness but had found himself admist a growing restiveness of Black workers demanding their rights as workers.

Since the Durban dock workers strikes in October 1972, much has been said and circulated amongst trade unionists and students about the position of the Black workers in South Africa and their future role in the economy of the country. The November 1972 issue of *Reality* carried a surmise titled, 'What the Black Workers Think'.

The introductory part rejected the over-riding tendency of whites to patronise Blacks in trade union matters. This study was coming from a Black group of six theological students who had gone into various factories on the Witwatersrand to find out what Black workers really thought about their situation. Among the many facts that came out of the survey were:

the superiority complex and inferiority complex in white and black relations respectively;

the feeling that Black talent in industry, technology and invention was being stifled by the Government's policy;

the cynicism and fear in political discussions;

the arrogant white attitude of trying to put Africans into little boxes or compartment situation;

the miserably low wages Blacks were expected to eke out a living on;

the lacking sense of pride and accomplishment in work done for whites;

the fast-eroding faith in 'Christianity';

the suspicion held against trade unions—that they were being seen as an instrument 'to lull things'; and

the burning desire for some form of freedom (*Reality*, November 1972).

When, then, in 1973 white university students, mainly members of the Wages Commission formed by the Natal University students, met highly 'concerned' trade unionists and academicians, an Institute of Industrial Education was formed.

The Institute of Industrial Education concentrates basically on the

African worker and his industrial situation. Also as members of the Institute is the KwaZulu Minister of Community Affairs, Mr Barney Dladla.

The Institute was welcomed with reservations by Black Organisations such as SASO, BPC and BCP.

Industrial education was seen as being a basic necessity and a part of the upliftment of Black workers. But Blacks did not like to see whites coming to educate Blacks when any Black student or academician who went into the workers' situation could not do so without being followed and perhaps being picked up by the Security Branch. Were whites therefore protecting their white interests by going to African workers? It was claimed by some students that some whites were so arrogant as to approach Black students and ask of any 'unknown' unions. 'Unknown' interpreted to mean not known by the very legislative system that made the position of the Black worker what it was.

The conclusion reached on worker education was that such education could not work outside the present status quo. In as much as it was reformist it exposed the liberal's disregard for the South African reality of separatism whilst accommodating for it by channelising workers from a white basis. Therefore it was felt this education could be and was perhaps being, used for negative purposes: the stemming of national awareness.

On the aims of the Industrial Institute, it was held that the giving of formal trade union education under existent conditions was not in keeping with the priority of Blacks, whose rights were fast disappearing through Government legislation under different guises. Formal education within the status quo would be white in essence, liberal in outlook and reactionary in content, approach and aim. It would exclude true national awareness.

Another major point of departure brought out by one Black student was that the gap existing between whites and blacks in the industrial environment and trade union orientation was the white man's creation in the first place. And liberal academics, a group of students claimed, could not be honest to Blacks. Firstly, their academic researchers were largely financed by industrial concerns. Secondly, liberal academics had always worried more about research and academic involvement than with any true situation. Thirdly, a spokesman of a Black organisation said, liberal academics believed in lulling radical thinking amongst Blacks because, fourthly, the liberal's first enemy was the Black independent thinker, i.e. the one outside the scope of white thinking.

On the 'Diploma in Trade Unionism' to be issued by the Institute to Blacks workers, the same group of students said Blacks did not need to qualify through diplomas to know what their basic needs were. Even as a short-term objective the Wages Commission did not give Black workers the

power to gain more wages. And in any case the problem went far beyond wage demands which inflated prices and brought the worker back to where he had been.

The proposed labour library, according to the Black student group, would largely be filled with literature meant for white middle reading and watered down stuff for the patronised Black worker. Blacks could hardly afford the time. It was white middle class suburban expansion that made Blacks live so far away from their working places. How could they be expected to get reading time? Moreover, since all trade unionism included inter-mediation the Black workers did not need whites or Bantustan leaders to mediate on their behalf. White liberals were part of the white establishment; many of them were shareholders in various companies. The Bantustan leaders were working within a system created for prevalence of adverse worker conditions. Only the workers themselves, together with Black students, could undertake true bargaining with the white employers.

The Academic Panel included by the Institute of Industrial Education was considered 'irrelevant'. On the other hand the very formation of the Institute had been prompted by the understanding that the Black workers had become impatient, said one student. (Ref. Pamphlet Inst. of Ind. Education).

Some Blacks were asking what goodwill the whites had if a surplus of the banana crop could only be spared through the intervention of the Minister of Agriculture, Mr H. Schoeman? (*Daily News* 4/12/73).

The anxiety prevailing amongst Blacks over their position as workers also stemmed from the fear that with the growth of border industries, the entire African population was destined to theoretically become migrant (*Rand Daily Mail* 14/9/73), either in the border areas or in the white centres.

The Minister of Labour had according to a newspaper report said that job reservation would not be abolished. He guaranteed the white workers' position over Black workers. (*Daily News* 5/10/73). Such fears against whites not wanting to realise the aspirations of Blacks greatly disturbed Blacks, especially as regards trade unions. White trade union organisers were suspected of coming to confuse the Black worker. Since they being part of a problem created by them as whites were working from a position of privilege.

The overseas visits by the homeland leaders were being regarded as futile and propagandist. Especially since these homeland leaders themselves opposed boycotts and ending of foreign investments. There was also lots of worrying about possible military ties between the United States and South Africa. Following the tendency of intensified foreign investment in South Africa by Western powers such as the U.S. it was being seen to be leading to



further ties between these countries and South Africa. A report 'urging' such ties did come out in a South African Sunday newspaper. It was made through a military journal—and quoted in that paper (*Sunday Times* 2/9/73).

Efforts to gain maximum bargaining though communal buying grew as Blacks resorted to bulk purchasing so as to beat the rising cost of living. In the townships there were 'societies' formed by women. The best known group of this nature is ASH (Association for Self-Help) at Merewent.

Advertisements came in for sharp criticism from Blacks. Many groups strongly criticised the white sales promotions that lowered Black ethics. Even advertisements meant for whites were being exposed as negative and out of touch with reality. One Sunday school group was shown an advertisement which was completely contradictory to normal values in communal life. The advertisement went this way: 'Save petrol with Edblo Fantasy. Stay in bed tomorrow'. The speaker then asked: 'Is this meant for you children of God who are here this Sunday morning to celebrate the Sabbath day? Is it also meant for your mothers and fathers, your uncles and aunties who early tomorrow will be holding queues about 100 yards long on their way to work so that you do not starve—whilst those bosses employing them are being brought tea in bed?'

It was fast becoming obvious that Blacks were becoming aware of their economic position and the power potential in it.

### **The Cultural Significations of Black Consciousness**

In the cultural sphere the Black Community moved further in defining itself with identifiable cultural values. Blacks were found to be suffering certain handicaps against them in the cultural field because of their lack of facilities. Most townships and semi-urban areas had inadequate facilities for the staging of plays, the organising of music shows and the showing of films.

*Recreation:* For outdoor recreation Africans had only been given free access to the first game reserve with full facilities at the Masinda Camp in the Umfolozi-Hluhluwe Game Reserve. Only camp facilities are provided at Manyeleti in the Kruger National Park.

Indians were recently granted chalets, camp facilities and a restaurant catering for Indian taste at Midmar Dam near Pietermaritzburg. Full facilities will be provided at the resort being developed on the North Coast at the Hazelmers Dam.

Albert Falls, it was said, would be granted to Coloureds as their resort spot with all facilities provided.

*Arts:* Blacks went deeper into their cultural roots. In a bid to dig up the lost cultural values that are fast being buried by Western norms and affluence,

conscientisation of the Black Youth was pioneered by the DASHIKI, a musical group that promotes Afro-jazz and Black verse. Led by an energetic young man, Lefifi Tladi, Dashiki have toured the whole country giving some backing to poetry readings, reading Black poetry (Lefifi's) and exhibiting sculpture by Lefifi.

This Ga-Rankuwa based group is all in for Black Consciousness; to the point of rejecting commercial approaches for the recording of their music. As the group put it, as if with one voice, 'Our music is too precious to us. We owe it to the hope we hold in our people, the Blacks of this country. For all they have suffered and for a brighter technological machinery to mass produce. And in the process polluting and debasing it'.

Dashiki has been seen as an encouraging development in the Black Community; when a white cultural group, the Natal Performing Arts Council (NAPAC), did not allow Blacks—those interested, to see its Christmas show 'Alice in Wonderland'. NAPAC had no directive to serve any other population group other than the white group, NAPAC's director stated. But Durban's Town Clerk readily revealed that Durban's Blacks also contributed to NAPAC in the R20 000 granted annually to NAPAC by the Durban City Council. The Blacks' contribution was through the rates they also paid (*Sunday Tribune* 1/6/73). Such attitude as that shown by NAPAC has been seen as being all more reason why Blacks have to organise their own cultural clubs and associations.

Two critiques on the now banned book *Eye of the Needle* by Dr Richard Turner (published by Spro-cas) a former lecturer at the University of Natal, appeared in the January issues of *Reality*. Dr Turner's book had stimulated much thinking in the Black Youth and reaction to it was varied and controversial. For the book brought several questions into focus. One of the two critiques in *Reality* was by a Black, the other by a white. The inclusion of the two reviews side by side was proof that Blacks were not letting issues affecting them go by without being scrutinised.

Further proof of this Black approach was the publication of a book *Being-Black-in-the-World* written by a Black clinical psychologist, N.C. Manganyi. Significant about Manganyi's effort is that he showed further impetus in the Black's wanting more to argue their case dialectically and therefore from an objective and more basic stand-point. The system of reference was no more based on white terms of reference but on Black terms.

A collection of Poetry consisting of Black poems by various Black South African poets appeared in November. Titled *To whom it may Concern* the anthology includes early poems by Black poets such as Oswald Mtshali, Mongane Serote, Mafika Gwala and Mafika Mbuli. There were also poems by Mandlenkosi Langa, Casey Motsisi, Sepamla, Ndebele, Stanley

Mogoba and others.

The outstanding character about the collection was that it contained background poetry—the writings from which developed Black Consciousness themes in poetry by Blacks. It is hoped more Black poetry of the Black Consciousness period is going to be published. As more and more Blacks are showing interest in Black literature, Blacks are definitely creating their own initiative.

The development of cultural activities in Black areas was being distributed by the unsettled position of Blacks in most urban areas. In many areas no facilities were available. At other places the people did not enjoy any sense of security. Even the Bantustan leaders have had to react to this.

The Minister of Community Affairs for KwaZulu, Mr B.I. Dladla, accused the Bantu Investment Corporation of encroaching on African freshhold areas. He was commenting on the buying of 3 sites at Clermont by the Corporation (*Natal Mercury* 5/6/73).

In music new groups were busy battling to infuse soul music with Mbaqanga elements. One group soul sounds had mbanqanga adapted into soul in their 'Next to You'. The Movers have tried to do pieces recorded by Masekela and groups such as Afrique and Osibisa.

The interest shown by associations such as Black Community Programmes in the upliftment of cultural values in the Black Community helped in the realisation of several projects. (See Self-Help and BCP).

SASO published its first book 'Creativity and Black Development' in March. This book, based on the talks during the 1972 annual conference of SASO, has been banned. The collection of Poetry 'Cry Rage' by James Matthews was also banned during the year.

Despite the bannings Black Consciousness continued to develop and spread.

The mutual knowledge implicit in Black Consciousness was seen as natural lead to Black solidarity. And to the awareness of Black Consciousness as a transient force. As Manganyi had to say, 'Black Consciousness is time bound'. Further, 'in its expression of the present, it is first of all mutual knowledge about its historicity'.

The significant factor about Black behaviour and aspiration was that Blacks had to be unified by common desire to take the initiative in deciding and determining their future generations of Blacks. The creative potential of Blacks would be measured against their action potential.

### **Theological Significations of Black Consciousness**

In 1972 a wide attempt was made by the various religious and cultural bodies in the Black Community to co-ordinate all work in the field of Black Theology in South Africa. So that Blacks could work on their

interpretation of the Gospel as Blacks, with a common approach. The Black Theology Agency formed last year was to fulfil such a function.

Blacks in the Theological field had come to the conclusion that in the persuance of the Scriptures as written in the Gospel:

1. The white man was not the norm or yardstick to humanness;
2. the Church had itself helped the Black realise he was a man; but
3. it was white-controlled Church institutions that refuted the equality of humans before God;
4. Black Consciousness meant Blacks being aware of all that stood in the way of freedom;
5. Black Consciousness was not necessarily a whip-back against whites although whites had to realise the harm they had meted out against Blacks;
6. there could be no talk of Black Consciousness in any form without it being a reference to white racism;
7. Blacks were rejecting white ethical values and learning to do things for themselves instead of waiting for white handouts;
8. Blacks had to come into a new relationship with whites—one based on love and mutual respect; but
9. that mutual respect could only come when Blacks had taken the power to demand their rights and then move from a strong position;
10. Blacks were waking up and working towards a solidarity that would support and sustain them; therefore whites had to take suggestions from Blacks—not vice versa (Ref: *Pro Veritate*, Vol. 11 No. 11 and Vol. 13 No. 12).

The Blacks within the Church were merely gaining back their spiritual rights of participating in religion and fighting against white domination even in worship.

After all the years spent on the true interpretation of the Gospel it had been discovered that, 'the Church needs to do something concrete. She needs to join Christ in His struggle for the poor, the oppressed and the hungry. She needs to write more theology along that line. There was a gap. This slot Black Theology is filling' (Rev E. Baartman—*Pro Veritate*, Vol. 13 No. 12).

### **White Reactions to Black Consciousness**

Reactions to the spreading of Black Consciousness came from different quarters during the year.

Opinionated newspapers and journals such as *Pro Veritate*, the *South African Outlook* and *Reality* continued to have their focus on the develop-

ment of Black Consciousness. They admitted the understanding and support of Black Consciousness. *Reality*, though, took on a guarded line bordering on the downright conservative on some aspects of Black Consciousness.

In a Spro-cas publication, *A Taste of Power*, the situation of the Black workers and their future was spelled out to mean that whites 'must recognise and entrench the rights of Black workers in trade unions—and accept a radical re-allocation of land wealth and income' (Peter Randall *A Taste of Power*, Chapter 4). The Spro-cas report was seen as a strong recommendation for Black Consciousness and Black initiative for the realisation of radical change to achieve a fundamental redistribution of power and wealth.

General white reaction to Black Consciousness ran along these lines:

1. That the initiative for change was passing into Black hands;
2. that there was basic consensus amongst all white groups to maintain white domination and hence white power and privilege;
3. That there were widely significant developments that would decide the future of the country viz:
  - (i) the growing impatience of homeland leaders and repeated calls for a common strategy;
  - (ii) the growing militancy of Black students and their ability to secure the support of their community;
  - (iii) the growing totalitarian measures being applied by the State to internal dissent;
  - (iv) the growing guerilla threat to Southern Africa's white regimes;
  - (v) increased foreign pressure against South Africa;
  - (vi) the growing militancy and bargaining power of the Black workers;
  - (vii) the socio-economic changes being made to meet these developments.
4. That South Africa's administration of Blacks was based on a parasitic and soulless bureaucratic machine that often decided vital policy on Black lives;
5. that the apparent divisions and tensions between the different exponents of Black solidarity had their own dynamics that would decide what trend solidarity took amongst Blacks;
6. that South African society was, apart from being racists also characterised by deep class cleavages;
7. that owing to the need for whites to find relevant role in social change there was developing white consciousness as a response to

**Black Consciousness and Black solidarity;**

8. and that whites had to make meaningful adjustments before the major initiative was wrested from their hands (Ref: *A Taste of Power*, Spro-cas final report).

A book dealing with workers' democratic participation and workers' control in the management and general running of factories came out in 1972 (R. Turner, *The Eye of the Needle*, Spro-cas). This book was later banned in 1973. As highly suggestive as this book was, it missed the point when it brought in solutions beside the true perspective of the developments in the country which could be misleading to the average Black in the face of historic, social, economic and political reality in Southern Africa. The criticism from Black Consciousness circles was that Blacks were by now quite aware that radical stance was one thing and radical action quite another thing. Only Blacks could move into solidified action, not the whites—by virtue of their privileged position (*Reality*, January 1973).

In the face of a growing polarisation by Blacks in their political contact with whites, the Spro-cas Political Commission findings on the present political position in South Africa was found to be lacking by those Blacks orientated towards a more realistic approach. Its chief failure was the non-definition of Blacks within a reference system created by people interested in keeping a position of power and privilege.

It was, nevertheless, hoped the findings of the Commission would help those whites who are honest about working towards progressive change to work on the factors brought out by the Commission.

The factors that emerged from the Commission were:

1. The continuing erosion of Black political rights through stringent white legislation.
2. The growing legislation aimed at protecting white power and white privilege.
3. The breaching of ethical principles in the long history of extraordinary executive powers being wielded over Blacks.
4. The growing legislative measures made in the name of maintenance of law and order but in fact curbing individual freedom in its various aspects.
5. The disregard and non-recognition of 'political prisoner' rights in the Government's dealing with persons convicted of political offences.
6. The growing centralisation of State Government whilst the latter sought to maintain control over Blacks through the creation of homeland 'states-within-states'.

7. The corrosion and destruction of Christian ethics in a white society that seeks to justify the implementation of white power and white privilege. (Ref. Chapter on 'The Present Political Position in S.A.' in *South Africa's Political Alternatives*—Spro-cas publication).

A leading member of the Progressive Party, Mrs Helen Suzman, was forced into conceding that South Africa's future lay in the Black man's destiny. 'Whatever changes are going to take place', she said, 'the future probably lies with the Black leaders'. This concession from a white member of the whites only parliament came at the time of crucial soul-searching by Blacks; when even the homeland leaders who work within the Government-created platforms had been forced to come together at Umtata and try to thrash out a common plan on the future of Bantustans. This was to be followed by a meeting of all race groups at East London.

On the other hand Black Consciousness was being identified with Black nationalism. A leading liberal, Mr Leo Marquard, said that Afrikaner nationalism had the same characteristics. 'I do not like Black Consciousness and its offspring, black nationalism, for the same reasons that I have never liked nationalism of any kind because it is a self-seeking doctrine that, however much it may protest to the contrary, thrives by the oppression of other groups' (*Reality*, September 1973, page 10).

The Justice and Reconciliation Committee of the South African Council of Churches said at its half-yearly meeting that Black Consciousness needs to be encouraged and supported by the churches.

Reasons for this open agreement on Black Consciousness were given as follows:

1. It would help Blacks throw off 'oppression by consent'.
2. It would help Blacks overcome their fear.
3. It would help Blacks realise their dignity.
4. It would urge Blacks to exercise their initiative and also support each other in acting on their convictions; and
5. It meant the Black had to first liberate himself and develop his attitude so that he can operate without the lead of the white man' (*Post*, 16/12/73).

The December issue of *Pro Veritate* carried resolutions made by churches of Southern Africa affiliated to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. The resolutions passed by the Synod itself in 1968 at Lunteran and adopted by the Southern African member churches in 1972 March, were directly relevant to Black Consciousness on the following points in numerical sequences:

**The Church should speak courageously and relevantly on issues of the day:**

**In the proclamation of the Word, the Church to whom has been entrusted the message of Christ's Kingdom, should speak courageously and relevantly on the issues of the day, both for the edification and correction of the activities and policies of Governments and organisations.**

**Christians' responsibility towards all who suffer from poverty, under-development and political oppression:**

**Christians in general and the Church in particular bear a responsibility towards members of all races who suffer from poverty, under-development and political oppression.**

**Believers should be willing to bend every effort to alleviate the suffering of such peoples.**

**Churches to test conditions in own churches by these norms:**

**With a view to the great tensions in race relations in the world today, Synod urges the member-churches to test conditions in their Churches and countries by the norms set forth in the resolutions, to hold regional conferences in which the aforementioned decisions may be put into effect and to report to the next Synod'.**

The Archbishop of Cape Town, addressing Black Students at the University of the Western Cape, said that 'poverty is not cured by prayers or speeches but by providing all people with housing, education, training and employment opportunities' (*Argus*, 26/11/73).

*Poetry and Politics* by Ric Beattie (published by Spro-cas) showed in verse form the abhorrent situation existing in the country. Culture in South Africa, the small collection posed, was close to a standstill. Or, had come to a standstill.