

ON A QUEST FOR ONE AZANIA, ONE NATION: THE MINIMUM PROGRAMME OF THE AZANIAN PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION (AZAPO)

1. INTRODUCTION

This programme of the Azanian Peoples' Organisation (**AZAPO**) is inspired by the noble history of the struggle of the people of Azania against imperialism, settler colonialism, the brutal and racist system of apartheid and its attendant system of economic exploitation. It is motivated by the fortitude of the people of Azania and their enduring optimism despite the betrayal of the promise of their liberation struggle which is evident in their current material conditions characterised by poverty, high unemployment, lack of housing, lack of access to adequate health care, poor education and general lack of service delivery.

AZAPO draws inspiration from our people's refusal to be rendered objects, spectators in a game they should be playing. The thousands of service delivery protests that our people have embarked upon are an indication of our communities' unwillingness to continue experiencing the indignities of dealing with unreceptive and unresponsive ruling party politicians whose only intention is to corruptly reap the spoils of their positions.

This quest by ordinary people to reclaim their power has become a global phenomenon evident in the uprisings against dictatorships whether benevolent or malevolent. Ordinary people have also risen up in protests against: the disproportionate influence of the wealthy in all spheres of life, the prevalence of a system of patronage in politics and the descent of capitalism into cronyism.

This programme seeks to present **AZAPO's** vision for South Africa as articulated through the slogan **One Azania, One Nation**. Through this programme **AZAPO** re-affirms its values and sets forth a programme, with a set of minimum demands, that will be the basis for all its political work which entails educating and mobilising our people for One Azania, One Nation. To educate, organise and mobilise our people for the achievement of the demands set out herein, this programme recognises the need to build **AZAPO** as a People's Organisation committed to building, harnessing and multiplying the power of the people – the majority of whom are poor as well as socially and economically marginalised – in pursuit of their social, political and economic well-being.

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2. ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH WE CONDUCT OUR STRUGGLE

Internationally, the environment in which we find ourselves is one where there is one dominant ideological paradigm – neo liberalism and its economical manifestation of Global Capitalism. With the fall of the Soviet Union, many in the west, chief among them is Francis Fukuyama, have argued that human history, as a record of a struggle between contending ideologies, has ended and liberal democracy and capitalism have won the day. This was said despite the fact that many in the political left had, as early as the 1940s and 1950s^[2], stopped looking at the USSR as the shining beacon of egalitarianism and true democracy. Amidst this triumphalism of Global Capitalism, resistance has arisen, one motivated by religious fundamentalism and the other by ever deteriorating material conditions of the working class and the poor.

The financial crisis that began in 2008 with the sudden failure of icons of global financial capitalism has now become global, affecting all parts of the world in varying degrees. The American-style of free market enterprise, which has been proclaimed for years as the most perfect form of economic organisation, has been shaken to the core.

At the same time the financial crisis has helped lay bare the inhumane logic of American style capitalism as it “privatize profits and socialize losses”. With ever-increasing home foreclosure, in the United States, many have come to see how the system works – “making Wall Street whole while leaving Main Street fractured”. The spread of the financial crisis has left the financial solvency of some European countries in doubt, with various governments implementing painful austerity measures.

The financial crisis has led, none other than Francis Fukuyama, to declare that “what the crisis did, however, was to underscore the instability inherent in capitalist systems – even ones as developed and sophisticated as the United States. Capitalism is a dynamic process that regularly produces faultless victims who lose their jobs or see their livelihoods threatened.”^[1] In all parts of the world the cozy relationship between politicians and big business has been laid bare. Politicians in many countries have been found to be in the

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pockets of big business and at the service of the wealthy. This has once more helped tarnish the often idealized image of politics as a “place for the pursuit of noble causes”.

In South Africa, the neo-liberal paradigm which took hold in 1996 has, despite the “Polokwane Coup” which rhetorically, promised change, continued to entrench itself. The vile and contemptible rise of corruption, cronyism, ineptitude and entrenchment of a system of patronage continues unabated. This has been coupled with the manipulation of instruments of the State to serve personal and party political interests.

Meanwhile the levels of poverty, inequality and unemployment continue to rise unabated. The health and education systems continue to crumble while the government feebly twiddles its thumbs. The poor service delivery that is the daily experience of most of the poor and working people of this country is a complete betrayal of the promise inherent in the liberation struggle, one for which many gave their lives.

Democratic practice in South Africa is progressively under threat, as the result of the ever increasing influence of the plutocrats who use their wealth to influence politicians, officials and political party oligarchs. Different cliques, particularly within the ruling party, vie for power within the party so that they can capture and control the government in order to enrich themselves. The consequence is an entrenchment of malignant corruption and undemocratic practice.

2. TWO SIDES OF THE SAME LIBERAL COIN

The global ascendancy of neo-liberalism has inculcated an era characterised by an attitude of ‘there is no alternative’ (TINA). The TINA attitude finds expression in the fact that both the ruling party and the official opposition of South Africa offer the same liberal vision for South Africa albeit, for the ruling party, one couched in radical phraseology.

The radical African American intellectual Dr Cornel West has identified the difference between radicals and progressive on the one hand and liberals on the other as one where “radicals and progressives talk about oligarchs and plutocrats and liberals tend to be subordinate to oligarchs and plutocrats as they pay lip service to justice”. He continues “as a political tradition liberalism has been magnificent in terms of talking about rights and liberties

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in the face of absolutists forms of power but has not really talked about those powers in the economic realm.”

Herein lies the seductive and, at the same time, dangerous aspect of liberalism, as it speaks about rights and liberties in the social and political realm but does not question the systems and structures of oligarchic and plutocratic power in the economic realm. Thus, liberalism cannot provide true liberation as constituted by economic and social justice.

In South Africa today liberalism, in its centre left and centre right manifestation, represents the dominant ideological outlook of both the ruling party and the official opposition. At the core of the ideological outlooks of both the ruling party (a centre left party) and the official opposition (a centre right party) is the unquestioned belief in the supremacy of the market and private property rights – to a point where rights to property arising from the apartheid dispensation were recognized by the ruling party in the Kempton Park negotiations thus legitimising the apartheid wealth distribution and marginalisation of black people of this country.

Upheld by both parties is the belief that a thriving economy, in a “national democratic society” – to use the ruling party’s formulation – is one based on the market. Differing slightly, the centre right party believes that markets are efficient and the centre left party believes that markets are largely efficient but need intervention to ensure efficient allocation.

The difference between the party of the centre left and that of the centre right, thin as it is, lies in what each sees as the role of the state in the economy. The party of the centre-left advocates for an active and developmental state while the party of the centre-right advocates for minimal intervention – if at all. Even this difference must be treated with suspicion, as not too long ago, leading voices within the highest echelons of power in the party of the centre-left suggested that the role of state is to “create a conducive environment for business.”

The one thing that is telling of the party of the centre-left’s fundamental belief is the fact that it does not even set forth egalitarianism as its belief and long term goal.

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Instead, in its definition of its vision of a national democratic society it says

A national democratic society is, by definition, made up of various classes and strata. The NDR [National Democratic Revolution] seeks to eradicate the specific relations of production that underpinned the national and gender oppression of the majority of South Africans. It does not eradicate capitalist relations of production in general. It should therefore be expected that in a national democratic society class contradictions and class struggle, particularly between the working class and the bourgeoisie, will play themselves out. As such, a national democratic state will be called upon to regulate the environment in which such contradictions manifest themselves, in the interest of national development including fundamental socio-economic transformation[[ii](#)].

The word “fundamental” in the last sentence of the above quote is misleading as there is nothing that constitutes fundamental socio-economic transformation in what the party of the centre-left proposes. Without proposing the reconstitution of the social relationship between the working class and the poor on one hand and the owners of the means of production on the other, any “transformation” will be superficial. In fact, in the envisioned national democratic society of the party of the centre-left, class exploitation will persist. It is also interesting how the party of the centre-left defines the role of the state as to “regulate the environment”[\[3\]](#).

This view resonates with what Engels had defined as the role of the bourgeoisie state when he wrote:

The state is, therefore, by no means a power forced on society from without; just as little is it ‘the reality of the ethical idea’, ‘the image and reality of reason’, as Hegel maintains. Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of

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'order'; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state."

What happens when we remove the façade of interventionism and developmentalism in the party of the centre left's conception of the state and its role? What is left is a conception of the state which is exactly the same as that of liberals, a liberal bourgeoisie state which concerns itself with managing not resolving class contradictions.

3. THE BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT – A LEADING LIGHT IN THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION

The 19th Century Danish Philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard said "life must be lived forwards but can only be understood backwards". So, to understand the Black Consciousness Movement and its vision of One Azania, One Nation a cursory look at its pre 21st century history – one marked by tenacity and fortitude -, in the struggle for the total liberation of Black people from the racist and tyrannical rule of the apartheid regime and for building a humane society, is necessary.

In 1968 Black Students attending a University Christian Movement conference met separately, ostensibly to discuss the 72 hour clause which forbade them to remain in a white area for more than 72 hours at a stretch. However once together they discussed for the first time, formally, the idea of forming a black organisation[[iii](#)]. This meeting set the course for the launch of the South African Students Organisation (**SASO**) which Sam Nolutshungu writing in 1982 described as " the single most important development in the internal politics of South Africa in the period 1967 -76".

The South African Student Organisation, the Black Peoples Convention (BPC) and various other organisations that formed part of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), through their formation and mobilization of black people, broke the political lull that existed in South Africa since the banning of the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress in 1961. The launch of **SASO** lead to the introduction of Black Consciousness philosophy into the South African political landscape.

The Black Consciousness Movement and the philosophy of Black Consciousness went on to mobilise and create the impetus for the 1976 uprising that would lead to the exodus from

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South Africa of many young people who would join the ranks of the exiled liberation movements. Thus was born a new phase of the South African liberation struggle.

Following the mass banning of all BC organisations on the 19th of October 1977, the Azanian People's Organisation was launched in April 1978 to be the torch bearer of black consciousness and to lead the struggle for a free Azania.

With many of the young people who went into exile following the 1976 uprising supporting the Black Consciousness philosophy, a need for a BC organisation in exile soon arose. This led to the formation of the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania **BCM(A)** in 1980 in London. The **BCM(A)** grew to have chapters and offices in Botswana, where Onkgopotse Tiro was assassinated, Zimbabwe, England, the United States of America, Canada, France, Belgium and Germany. While **AZAPO** mobilized within the country, the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (**BCMA**) waged a political struggle in exile. Through the formation of the Azanian National Liberation Army (**AZANLA**) the **BCMA** also wage an armed struggle. It sent BCM militants for military training in, amongst others, Libya, Eritrea, and China. With their training complete, fighters of the Azanian National Liberation Army engaged the forces of the apartheid regime in many theaters within the country.

Post the banning of BC organisations in 1977 and into the '80s, the black consciousness movement continued to play a leading role in the struggle for liberation. Following the 1977 bannings, the black consciousness movement reorganised and launched various organisations that pursued the struggle and organised different sectors of society. Very few people today know that organisations such as the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), the Azanian Students Organisation (AZASO, the precursor of SASCO) and the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (PEBCO), amongst others, were formations of the black consciousness movement.

Betraying a mentality that persists until today, the ANC through its formation the United Democratic Front (UDF) sought neither cooperation nor co-existence but destruction of other liberation movements with different ideological perspectives. To achieve a hegemonic position, it used violence. Many black consciousness activists lost their lives through the UDF's rapacious drive for hegemony, many falling victim to necklacing – a burning tyre put

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around a person's neck – a weapon favoured by UDF activists. The feud that broke out between the ANC aligned UDF and **AZAPO** was a direct consequence of the vicious drive for hegemony by the former and was ostensibly launched by **AZAPO**'s 1985 campaign against Ted Kennedy's Tour of South Africa^[iv].

Remaining true to its philosophical precept of unity of the oppressed, **AZAPO** pursued cooperation which led to the formation of the National Forum(NF). The NF sought to offer different tendencies within the liberation movement an opportunity to air their views. Essentially the forum aimed to narrow the difference between the liberation groups.

Saths Cooper, former **AZAPO** President, described this development as follows: “[There has been] a tremendous degree of ideological ferment and confusion. We think we need mature, sober consideration of all the issues in the liberation struggle and while principles should not be sacrificed, partisan approaches should take a back seat.”^[v] The National Forum, a call for which was made at and **AZAPO** Congress in February 1983, sat in June 1983 with 800 delegates representing 200 organisations. After two days of discussion the Azania People's Manifesto was adopted.

In the face of the hardships arising from the feud, **AZAPO** launched the Azanian Students Movement (**AZASM**) and Azanian Youth Organisation (**AZAYO**) which, respectively, dominated student and youth politics and helped mobilise students and the youth in the struggle against apartheid. In the same period **AZAPO** successfully campaigned for the isolation of apartheid South Africa by tirelessly and vigorously waging the cultural boycott in the country.

As the 1980s drew to a close, it was becoming increasingly apparent that the apartheid regime could not continue as it had. The struggle mounted inside the country, the sanctions and increasing isolation of the regime were having a negative impact on the country. The regime could no longer govern the country as it had and the economy was in a free fall, with high levels of capital flight, decline in the international exchange rate of the Rand and steep rise in inflation.

Against this background, groups of Afrikaner intellectuals began exploring the possibilities of a negotiated settlement with the ANC in exile. These talks lead to the Dakar Conference of

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1987 were "61 South Africans met in Dakar, Senegal, the majority were Afrikaans-speaking South Africans and 17 were members of the ANC"^[vii]. The discussions with the exiled ANC were an addition to the discussions that had been ongoing with Mr. Nelson Mandela while he was incarcerated in a house on the grounds of Victor Vorster Prison.

By end of August 1989 the OAU's Subcommittee on Southern Africa had adopted the Harare Declaration which stated:

We believe that a conjuncture of circumstances exists which, if there is a demonstrable readiness on the part of the Pretoria regime to engage in negotiations genuinely and seriously, could create the possibility to end apartheid through negotiations ... We would therefore encourage the people of South Africa, as part of their overall struggle, to get together to negotiate an end to the apartheid system and agree on all the measures that are necessary to transform their country into a non-racial democracy.

The Harare declaration was followed by the unbanning of liberation organisations and the announcement of the pending release of Mr. Mandela. By 4th of May 1990 the apartheid regime and the ANC met at the Presidential residence in Cape Town and agreed on what is called the Grooter Schuur minute. This meeting was followed by another in August 1990 which produced the Pretoria minute.

Ever alive to the possibility for the betrayal of the liberation struggle the **BCM(A)**, **AZAPO** and the PAC met in Kadoma, Zimbabwe to assess the situation and determine their position with regards to a road map to negotiations. The Kadoma consultation passed resolutions on the negotiations, among others, which noted a "common desire of our people for unity" and resolved to "work towards the establishment of a broad-based principled Patriotic Front". It was also agreed that "all organisations of the oppressed that accept the democratic Constituent Assembly formula be invited to participate in the conference to launch the Patriotic Front." The "Patriotic Front" was to be the forum through which consensus on both the negotiation process and the final outcome of the negotiations could be achieved ,amongst 'patriots'.

The Kadoma Consultation re-iterated that "the only mechanism that can genuinely democratise the system in our country is the Constituent Assembly elected on a one person,

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one vote basis with all Azanians over the age of 18 voting on a common voters roll in a unitary state". It further resolved that "the only kind of negotiations that the **AZAPO**, **BCM(A)** and PAC will be amenable to is to discuss the transfer of power from the minority to the majority through an elected Constituent Assembly [and that] such a meeting must take place at a neutral venue under an impartial chairperson."

Despite its reservation about the process leading up to negotiations the BCM was adamant that it would not "give others a free hand to negotiate our birthright away ... if invited to the negotiating table under acceptable circumstances, it would participate"^{lviii}. It would however insist on open negotiations as opposed to confidential ones and It would refuse to compromise on, one person, one vote in a unitary Azania, and a formula for the redistribution of land and wealth^{lviii}.

Maintaining the same principled stance, **AZAPO**, a member of the steering committee of the Patriotic Front, issued a letter to all those bodies participating in apartheid structures, demanding their withdrawal from those structures as a pre-condition to their admission to the launch conference of the "Patriotic Front". The then Democratic Party demanded that **AZAPO** must withdraw the letter and apologise for its contents, failing which, it (the Democratic Party) would not attend the Conference. When **AZAPO** refused to withdraw the letter and apologise, the ANC and PAC expelled it from the convening committee.

As if to prove true the reasoning behind the objection of **AZAPO** to the inclusion of Bantustans leaders and others who participated in apartheid structures, the National Party organized its own meeting with its allies in November 1991. The attendees to this meeting included some of the Bantustan leaders and parties from the tricameral parliament which were founding members of the Patriotic Front.

In bilateral discussion between the ANC and the National Party, the two agreed on multi-party talks and on who should be invited. The first multi-party constitutional talks were then scheduled for end of November at the World Trade Centre in Kempton Park. These were called the 'Convention for a Democratic South Africa' (CODESA). The CODESA agenda included, amongst others, a discussion on general constitutional principles, a constitution-making body or process, transitional arrangements or an interim government.

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This agenda clearly fell afoul of the agreement between the PAC, **AZAPO** and **BCM(A)** in Kadoma and the declaration of the Patriotic Front which called for a constituent assembly elected on one person one vote to draft the and adopt the new constitution of the country. When **AZAPO** received an invite to participate in CODESA it rejected it again maintaining a principled stance.

Rather late in the game, the PAC, which was in the steering committee of CODESA, walked off the steering committee due to concerns that all decisions were subject to bilateral agreements made between the National Party and the ANC. This had been preceded by the PAC accusing the ANC of violating the Patriotic Front Declaration when the latter had agreed to multi-party negotiations. However, the PAC would, after its walk out, later rejoin CODESA I and II discussions and the Multi Party Negotiating Forum thus, itself, violating the Patriotic Front Declaration.

In 1993 **AZAPO** decided not to participate in the "historic" 1994 general elections. **AZAPO** rejected the interim constitution that would govern the elections and the period leading up to the adoption of a new constitution. The interim constitution was based on agreements reached during what is now commonly referred to as the World Trade Centre or Kempton Park negotiations.

AZAPO argued that these agreements would not deliver substantive freedom to the black people of South Africa. The agreements entrenched property rights effectively legitimising the dispossession that black people had experienced over a period of close to four centuries. The government positions held by the apparatchiks of the apartheid regime would be retained as per the agreements. The government set up after the election would not be a true reflection of wishes of the people as a government of national unity was guaranteed up until the next elections. Further to this, the parliament formed as an outcome of the elections would not have the power to change the interim constitution.

AZAPO was certainly not opposed to elections as a tool in the democratic enterprise. Indeed, Steve Bantu Biko, one of the fiercest proponents of BCM, called for "one man, one vote" as early as the 1970s. **AZAPO** recognised suffrage as one of the oldest demands of our people

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dating back to the 19th century. What **AZAPO** was opposed to, was the meaningless gesture of electing a government that will not be able to make any meaningful material deference to the lives of black people.

The idea of what type of freedom would be brought about by the elections represented a fundamental difference in the conception of freedom between **AZAPO** and many of the liberation movements that participated in the elections. The difference simply lay in, the liberal notion that freedom is 'freedom from' as opposed to the radical conception of freedom as 'freedom to.'

The 1994 elections certainly brought about freedom from legal discrimination and legally condoned oppression.

Yet, what **AZAPO** conceived as freedom and still does, extends beyond civil rights to the right to realise one's full potential in cooperation with others. We want to see freedom and democracy extending to all spheres of life.

Following the return of those who were in exile, the **BCMA** and **AZAPO** merged in the 1994 historic Shaft 17 Congress and the name Azanian People's Organisation(**AZAPO**) was retained . In 1999, **AZAPO** participated in the National Elections for the first time. This decision was based on strategic consideration and the fact that it was now possible to change the constitution

Resulting from the adoption of the 1996 South African Constitution which made it possible for a party of coalition of parties with a two thirds (2/3) majority in parliament to change it, **AZAPO** entered electoral politics through participating in 1999 General Elections. Committed to the improving the lives of Black people and all South Africans, **AZAPO** allowed its then President Cde Mosibudi Mangena to serve in government as Deputy Minister of Education and as Minister of Science and Technology.

To this day, **AZAPO** remains the leading exponent of the Black Consciousness philosophy in South Africa and draws inspiration from eminent sons and daughters of this soil such as Steve Biko, Onkgopotse Tiro, Strini Moodley, Abu Asvat and Vuyelwa Mashalaba. **AZAPO** remains

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committed to the struggle for total liberation which aims for the total abolishment of any form of political oppression, economic exploitation and marginalisation and social degradation of Black people (as defined by Black Consciousness). To this day **AZAPO** mobilises Black people and all people of conscience for the ushering in of a state and society where all forms of oppression, exploitation and marginalisation shall be done away with, where the free development of all is a necessary condition for the free development of one.

4. BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS – OUR GUIDING LIGHT

The realisation that “the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed”, laid the basis for the development of the Black Consciousness (BC) philosophy in South Africa.

Introduced by **SASO** to the South African political landscape, with Steve Biko as its leading theorist and communicator, BC sought to do away with the alienation- from- self that afflicted the being of the oppressed Black people of South Africa. It sought to free the mind of the oppressed and as Mabogo More puts it “[Black Consciousness] was and still is a struggle for a new consciousness, a reawakening of a self-consciousness, a re-appropriation of black self-consciousness from the clutches of an appropriative and dominating white consciousness, a rediscovery of the black self which lay buried beneath white consciousness imposed on blacks by cultural, political, economic, linguistic and religious domination” **[ix]**.

In a society where Black people were referred to as non-Whites, Black Consciousness gave the oppressed their own separate identity that had no one else as a point of reference. It then infused that identity with pride that enabled Black people of South Africa to assert, along with Frantz Fanon that they are not a potentiality of someone else, they are wholly who they are.

Writing in an **AZAPO** newsletter in 1981 Quraish Patel described Black Consciousness as “a negation of white superiority, not a negation of whites as people. Black Consciousness is at the same time a positive assertion of our being what we want to be... [Black Consciousness aimed to] restore our being human even if the environment is hostile and inhuman for it prepares us for participating in the historical movement towards a free society.” **[x]**

Black Consciousness reinvigorated the inherent agency of Black people that had been thwarted by apartheid and placed Black people at the centre of their liberation. John Alan

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and Lou Turner, writing after Biko's death observed that "what is powerful and new about Biko's ideas is that he always centers the possibility for change within the subjectivity of the oppressed person, and not simply within the South African economy or the hierarchy of the system"[xi].

Unlike the race based construction of identity that typified apartheid, Black Consciousness defined Black on the basis of political and socio-economic factors. Black people, in the Black Consciousness philosophy, were defined as those who are by law or tradition, discriminated against, politically oppressed, economically exploited and socially degraded and who identify themselves as a unit in the struggle for their emancipation.

Drawing from the Fanonian tradition, Black Consciousness added to the South African landscape an analysis and characterisation of racism as "discrimination by a group against another for purpose of subjugation or maintaining subjugation"[xii]. In elaborating, Biko said, "Racism does not only imply exclusion of one race by another – it always presupposes that the exclusion is for purpose of subjugation."[xiii]

With this understanding it is therefore no wonder why Black Consciousness would reject mere integration as the answer. As Biko put it,

The myth of integration as propounded under the banner of the liberal ideology ... works from the false premise that, because it is difficult to bring people from different races together in this country, achievement of this is in itself a step towards the total liberation of the blacks. Nothing could be more misleading.[xiv]

With racism being about subjugation, and inherent in that the power to subjugate, integration – particularly false integration which is "a breakthrough into white society by blacks, an assimilation and acceptance of blacks into an already established set of norms and code of behavior set up and maintained by white people"[xv] would not solve the situation of black people nor would it allow them to be fully who they are.

The rejection of false integration does not mean Black Consciousness is against integration. To the contrary, Black Consciousness is and has always been for true integration which is, according to Biko, "free participation by all members of a society, catering for the

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full expression of the self in a freely changing society as determined by the will of the people.” **[xvi]**

One of Black Consciousness' achievements was to introduce the 'subject' in the thinking and execution of the liberation struggle in South Africa. Black Consciousness paid critical attention to the ideology of apartheid and how it operated in society reinforcing racist acts while simultaneously minimising resistance from Black people by promoting alienation from self, a loss of identity and agency.

Black Consciousness unequivocally emphasized the need for psychological liberation. For Black Consciousness the struggle began with the person coming to self or coming to consciousness. By understanding one's history, culture and humanity one could understand the unjustness and evil of apartheid, and to understand it as a human construct meant to achieve and maintain privilege and power. For the Black Consciousness philosophy, with the understanding of self and self-worth Black people would have taken a major step in the path to their liberation.

As a philosophy, Black Consciousness is grounded in the reality of South Africa but draws from the experiences of the African liberation struggle and the struggles of Black people throughout the world. It is this geneology that gives BC a strong internationalist and Pan African orientation and sensibility. As Biko put it:

...by Black Consciousness I mean the cultural and political revival of an oppressed people. This must be related to the emancipation of the entire continent of Africa since the Second World War ... I feel that the Black people of the world, in choosing to reject the legacy of colonialism and white domination and to build around themselves their own values, standards and outlook to life, have at last established a solid base for meaningful cooperation amongst themselves in the larger battle of the Third World against the rich nations **[xvii]**.

Biko continued and quoted Frantz Fanon, who said “the consciousness of the self is not the closing of the door to communication ... National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension.” **[xviii]**

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While BC focused its attention on the liberation of Black people, this struggle is, in the BC perspective part of the broader struggle for “true humanity” as evidenced by the title of one Biko’s essay, “Black Consciousness and a Quest for True Humanity”.

The quest for true humanity in the BC perspective is unlike the quest of traditional humanists. The Black Consciousness quest is for a radical humanism which seeks to destroy social and economic inequality and societal structures that entrench inequality and to build a society founded on egalitarianism.

In the march ahead, BC remains as relevant for the 21st century as it was for the 20th. Relevant today as they were in the last century are BC’s eminent qualities which are:

- Ability to interrogate and surface the operations of power,
- Ability to decipher acts aimed at marginalising African norms and values and supplanting them with ones meant to alienate Black people from themselves and thus perpetuating subjugation,
- Its ability to bear witness to human suffering and exploitation and its advocacy and struggle for a society and a world based on radical humanism where exploitation of man by man or of nation by another nation is done away with and forms no part of human and nation to nation interaction,

The 21st century has, so far, not been marked by the dispersal of power to all, but by its further concentration in the hands of the few. It has not seen the destruction of oligarchies but their increase in political and economic affairs and it has seen former liberation movements become self-serving entities that sacrifice the needs of the masses through abuse of state resources and corruption.

It is BC that remains the hope for the poor and marginalised people – particularly Black people in the South African context – its power to awaken and to give the oppressed a critical consciousness and to restore their agency, their power to act, is what holds the promise for a different society.

5. REAFFIRMING OUR VISION – One Azania! One Nation!

In the execution of the struggle, the BCM defined its vision – encapsulated in the slogan One Azania, One Nation – and defined its mission as the liberation of black people from mental

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slavery and oppression, by the minority white racist regime, which manifests in social degradation, political oppression and economic exploitation.

One Azania, One Nation encapsulated a vision of a united, truly open, democratic, anti-racist, anti-sexist egalitarian society[4]. In response to an interview question about an egalitarian society, Steve Biko elaborated on the vision of the BCM in a manner displaying foresight such that his words remain particularly salient, even today.

I think there is no running away from the fact that now in South Africa there is such an ill distribution of wealth that any form of political freedom will be meaningless. The whites have locked up within a small minority of themselves the greater proportion of the country's wealth. If we have a mere change of face of those in governing positions what is likely to happen is that black people will continue to be poor, and you will see a few blacks filtering through into the so-called bourgeoisie. Our society will be run almost as of yesterday. So for meaningful change to appear there needs to be an attempt at reorganizing the whole economic pattern and economic policies within this particular country.

BPC believes in a judicious blending of private enterprise, which is highly diminished, and state participation in industry and commerce especially in industries like mining- gold, diamonds, asbestos and so on- forestry, and of course complete ownership of the land. Now in that kind of judicious blending of the two systems we hope to arrive at a more equitable distribution of wealth[xix].

The Azania we seek is one characterised by an open society that is:

- Tolerant and democratic –not only in its form but also in its substance,
- Encourages and supports participation of its citizens in decision making,
- Anti-racist and
- Anti-sexist.

Unlike liberal notions of democracy that limit the application of democracy to the political realm, in the Azania we seek democracy shall be extended to the economic realm. We therefore aim to build a society wherein oligarchs – of any kind – will not have the power to shape the nation's economic life.

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Azania will be a nation that values and pursues egalitarianism, one that recognises individual achievements within the context of societal inputs that went into making that individual success possible. Azania will be a society that is in continuous pursuit of a true humanity in its social, political and economic life.

6. OUR MINIMUM DEMANDS

From its inception the Black Consciousness Movement adopted a set of demands based on the pressing needs of the oppressed black people of South Africa. Even now, the pressing needs of the working class and poor are what inform the demands of the Azanian People's Organisation as it continues to wage its struggle for One Azania, One Nation.

Despite the advent of the "New South Africa", the principles and demands articulated hereunder are still, in the main, the same that were, based on the pressing need of the oppressed black people, articulated by the BCM at its inception. Their fulfillment is still a wish for many in our country and they still inspire **AZAPO** to wage an unrelenting struggle until they are fully achieved.

The principles and demands set out below are based on the fundamental belief that every man, woman and child is entitled to live and enjoy his or her life and develop his or her potential to the maximum, in a state of full well-being devoid of poverty, material want, anxiety over possible ecological disasters brought about by global warming and limitations on a person's real opportunities to achieve their desires.

Phrased as rights, the principles and minimum demands of our people whose continuing struggle is waged by **AZAPO** are:

- 1. The right to meaningful and participatory democracy and a receptive, responsive and accountable government.**

Nepotism, corruption, unreceptive and unresponsive government are what currently characterises governance in South Africa. The State and its institutions have been used and manipulated to serve individual and party political interests at the expense of strengthening

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and building the legitimacy of these institutions so that they are empowered to deliver services and strive to serve the developmental agenda of our nation.

AZAPO believes that building a just, inclusive, democratic and egalitarian society requires the establishment of a political culture and system that empowers people to meaningfully participate in decision making.

Elections, held in five year intervals, do not constitute the democratic practice that builds and encourages an engaged and empowered citizenry. The current electoral practice in South Africa only entrenches disengagement and demobilization of citizens. The absence of a vigilant and mobilized citizenry able to hold government accountable further entrenches the unresponsiveness and unaccountability of government.

Therefore, at a minimum we demand:

- The direct election of the President of the country and Mayors;
- The introduction of a hybrid electoral system that incorporates proportional representation with constituency representation; and
- The introduction of recall in the country's system of governance.

2. The right to a job

The right to make a living and sustain life and well-being is the most basic of all rights. In the current system – economic, political and social – it is impossible to satisfy all human needs without a steady, good-paying job.

There is certainly plenty of work to be done – building schools, hospitals, housing, roads, mass transportation, water and sewage systems, communications networks and other public facilities, which will, not only improve the lives of poor and working people, but ensure job creation.

The role out of massive public works programmes aimed at improving the infrastructure of the country and providing people with jobs is what has been needed since 1994. We believe

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that full employment is still attainable under the current capitalist economic system and is an objective government should pursue.

The masses of unemployed and under-employed citizens of our nation, continue to demand the right to decent, sustainable employment through which they will have the means to build better lives.

3. Workers rights and the right to a living wage

South Africa's high unemployment rate is deliberately being used to wage an assault on progressive workers' rights and to drive down wages. In proposing economic growth strategies, members of the governing political elite have gone as far as proposing a dual labour market, with workers in one market enjoying workers rights as prescribed by current labour laws and workers in the second market having significantly reduced rights.

The assault on the workers by the ruling elite is not only on the policy front but has now taken on a murderous turn where mine-workers who were on strike for a wage increases were shot and killed by the police. It is important, at this point, to recall the ruling party's strategy and tactics document which declares the role of the "National Democratic State" as being to *"regulate the environment in which such contradictions [between the working class and the bourgeoisie] manifest"*.

The Marikana incident gives expression to how the "National Democratic State" aims to "regulate the environment" by unleashing its 'body of armed men' to do the bidding of the capitalist elite which is well represented in the decision making fora of the ruling party.

Guided by the needs of the workers, we demand:

- That current labour laws and rights be maintained and upheld;
- That as a country we progressively move towards a maximum five day working week with a maximum six hour working day;
- A net minimum wage to be decided on the basis of what is required to provide for the physical, educational and cultural needs of a worker and two children.

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4. The right to high-quality health care

The right to high quality health care is a right which is not enjoyed by most of poor and working people who rely on the public health care system. The South African health care system is crumbling and the ruling elite seem unable to do anything about it. A document compiled by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation on the successes and shortcomings of the South African health sector from 1994 to 2010[5], found that effectiveness of the public health system has been eroded by the *“generally weak health systems management and low staff morale. The result is poor health outcomes relative to total health expenditure”*

The document highlights further failing of the health system as:

- *Insufficient prevention and control of epidemics*
- *Emergence of MDR-TB and XDR-TB*
- *Persistently skewed allocation of resources between public & private sectors*
- *Inequitable spending patterns compared to health needs*
- *Insufficient health professionals in public sector*
- *Weaknesses in health systems management*
- *Poor quality of care in key programmes*
- *Operational inefficiencies*
- *Insufficient delegation of authority*
- *Persistently low health worker morale*
- *Insufficient leadership and innovation*

AZAPO believes that it is the responsibility of the state to provide health care services to all and therefore echoes the voices of our people when they demand:

- Universal health care coverage
- An efficient, effective and trusted health care system
- Training and deployment of medical personnel
- Sufficient provision of equipment and medicines aimed at meeting the needs of the people.

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- That general working conditions of health professionals and all health workers be optimal to encourage staff retention, boosting of morale and increase efficiency and efficacy of the public health system.
- That the rural footprint of the public health system be increased
- Continuous investment in innovation and upgrading of medical technology

5. The right to safety

We believe that the exercise and maintenance of democracy and freedom in any country is necessarily associated with the safety of citizens.

The high level of crime in South Africa inhibits the free exercise of our freedoms. Driving one's car without fear of it being hijacked, leaving your home without being afraid that it will be broken into and walking down the road without concern of your personal safety, are normal expectations that have long been forgotten by most South Africans.

Crime and fear of its manifestation has become a major influence and shaper of choices we make with regard to how we live our lives and which personal and public spaces we occupy. It is mainly the poor who are vulnerable to criminality and it is them who enjoy less protection from the police.

We therefore demand visible policing and equal allocation in all areas, particularly those where poor people live and introduction of legislation to disarm civil society.

In order to rid society of criminal acts and with a view to addressing this challenge at its core, **AZAPO** believes conditions of poverty and deprivation amongst the majority of citizen be addressed. This means that all our further demands will contribute significantly to reducing levels of crime in the country.

6. The right to decent and affordable housing

The non-availability of affordable and decent housing remains a major failing of Government, both previous and current. This is evidenced by the *mikhukhus* which form part of the South African landscape.

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South Africa currently faces a minimum housing backlog of about 2.3-million houses and many of the brick *mikhukhus* – so called RDP houses – that have been built in previous year are already in need of work to rectify the their many faults. The situation is all the more shameful, when we realise that houses built by the apartheid regime are of better quality than the RDP house built post 1994.

The housing backlog means, at a minimum, about 12-million people (i.e. over 20% of the population) are currently without decent housing. This situation cannot continue and we demand that decent and affordable housing be made available to the poor and the working class. We further demand that houses accommodate a family of four and are not less than 60m² with electricity and clean tap water.

7. The right to transportation

A significant percentage of the income of the poor and working people of this country is spent on transportation to and from work. The continued failure of the State to provide reliable and affordable public transport system has meant that poor people have had to rely on unsafe and costly transport providers.

The forceful introduction of e-tolling will further increase transportation costs and this will further decrease disposal income available to poor households. To avoid the costs of e-tolling, the poor will be forced to use, in most case, unsafe and longer alternate routes.

We therefore demand an inexpensive, safe and reliable public transport system. We demand that e-tolls be scrapped.

8. The right to basic services including, utilities and refuse removal

In many of our communities regular and reliable access to clean water remains a dream.

Communal taps with an inconsistent supply of water are still the norm in most rural areas. In addition to supply, water quality (particularly its state of cleanliness) has been another problem facing communities.

The failure of municipalities to provide such services is clearly evident. In townships, the collection of refuse, where available, is sporadic. Raw sewage is allowed run openly as there

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is no proper maintenance of the sewage system. Many communities continue to rely on pit toilets and the bucket system.

It is further evident that this situation exists, not because municipalities lack financial resources, but because of poor management.

The current government's inability to ensure the effectiveness and efficacy of municipalities to provide the most basic services is also negatively impacting on the country's attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Assessments by the United Nations shows that other African country's with a lower GDP are making more progress than South Africa.

We therefore demand efficient and professional provision of utilities including electricity, water, refuse removal.

9. The right to quality education and training

The demand for quality education and training has been consistent since the inception of the BCM. The **AZASM** slogan "Educate to Liberate" reflected the BCM's attitude to education and its centrality in the struggle for Azania. This contradicted the "Liberation Now, Education Later" espoused by COSAS.

Lack of access to quality education and training does more than impoverish the intellectual life of an individual, it plays an important role in the individual's ability to make a decent and sustainable living. It also impacts negatively on the ability of a nation to achieve its developmental objectives and ensure its economic sustainability and viability.

Research conducted by a team from Stellenbosch University (van der Berg, S. *et al.* 2011) found that "there are already very large gaps in the performance of children in the top 20% of the population (top quintile) versus those in the bottom 80% (bottom four quintile) ... the education system generally produces outcomes that reinforce current patterns of poverty and privilege instead of challenging them." Critically, the research found, that amongst others, "the legacy apartheid appears to have endured" **[xx]**.

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It is no wonder the legacy of apartheid endures when, both National and Provincial Departments of Education fail to deliver textbooks to children of Black people, and the Minister of Basic Education reacted to this crisis by saying she is responsible for policy and not delivery of textbooks. It is even more tragic since the province in which this occurred, Limpopo, was put under administration by National Government in January 2012. What did this achieve? The ANC government continually takes decisions that further serve to disempower and disadvantage the very people it claims to be serving.

To safeguard a generation of children from poor and working class community, from ineptitude and blatant disregard of their future, we continue to demand for all our people:

- The right to free and compulsory universal education at all levels – primary, secondary and tertiary – in conducive learning conditions.
- We demand that learners at all levels be empowered and capacitated with the necessary and relevant tools and aids to facilitate their optimal learning.
- A vigorous early childhood development programme is put in place in all communities with creches and day-care centres established to alleviate the burden of working mothers.
- A feeding scheme is made available for pre-primary and primary school children and that it is managed so that the funds are used for the intended purpose.
- Basic adult education is implemented to tackle the high rate of illiteracy within African communities;
- All schools are provided as a matter of course, with water, electricity, toilets and computer training facilities and that mud schools are eradicated;
- All schools from higher primary level upwards are provided, again as a matter of course, with well-equipped libraries and laboratories;
- A uniform system of education applies throughout the country;
- Special emphasis is placed on vocational, technical and technological education;
- All educational, cultural and sporting facilities are opened to all children
- Educational curricula are designed to serve the cultural, social, intellectual and industrial needs of the country to support its growth imperatives.

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10. The right of women to develop to their full potential in optimal conditions

Women have multiple roles and can at any one time be mothers, leaders, students, decision-makers, workers and much more. In each of these roles the ability to, be educated, be healthy, have a voice, have influence, and to enjoy opportunities and choices are critical to them living fulfilled lives and building sustainable, successful communities.

1. Education for girl children and women

The United Nations has determined a direct correlation between education and human rights. In fact, educated girls tend to become women with greater economic independence, with an increased ability to negotiate and bargain in home, community and economic life. Educated girls and women tend to participate more in public life, and can manage natural resources in a more sustainable manner and experience greater ease in finding formal sector employment, and earn higher incomes

Research has found that a one-year increase in schooling of all adult females in a country is associated with an increase in gross domestic product per capita of around US\$700. In addition, a country failing to meet gender education targets is expected to suffer a deficit in per capita income of 0.1 to 0.3 percentage points.

In South Africa, statistics show that there is gender parity between the numbers of girls and boys who go to school. However, female learners are particularly at risk of experiencing violence and abuse in the school context. A recent study by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention found that 5% of girls at secondary school were likely to have been sexually assaulted or raped. The experience of violence at school can influence girls' decisions about schooling and can result in "fear of school and of their classmates, [and] the inability to concentrate on learning".^[xxi]

The South African Human Rights Commission also believes that "the results of [sexual, gang and other] school based violence are reflected by the large numbers of school drop-outs, academic underperformance, increased risk of teenage pregnancy and the transmission of HIV and AIDS". Gender parity data therefore masks a number of other gender-related issues

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that the South African education system has to deal with to provide truly equal and safe access to education for both boys and girls.

1. Women and unemployment

South Africa's Census 2011 has revealed that black women have the highest rate of unemployment and the lowest employment opportunities. Official unemployment for black women stands at 41.2% (however the expanded definition of unemployment puts the rate for black women at almost 53%.)

2. Women and food security, including land acquisition

Women play a pivotal role in ensuring food security for their families. With increasing effects of climatic changes, women must be supported in their efforts to feed their families. The assistance must necessarily include the reformation of policies to ensure equitable property and resource ownership rights for women. Without title to land, women are often denied access to technologies and resources – such as water resources, irrigation services, credit, extension, and seed. Legal reforms can however, only translate into greater food security and reduced poverty if they are enforced.

Interestingly, a 2002 research paper^[xxii] surmised the following:

“...the observation that the South African land reform programme is not adequately meeting the needs of the poor and landless, and that the needs of women in particular continue to be neglected even within this limited land reform programme. Further, it's unclear whether land and agrarian reform projects and processes unfolding outside of the government land reform framework are addressing gender issues and bringing real benefits to poor rural women.”

3. Maternal and infant mortality

The African Economic Outlook 2012 report observes that:

South Africa has the necessary policies and resources to improve human resource indicators such as under five mortality and maternal mortality. However, it lacks the implementation capacity to translate these policies into broad based results. Decline in both measures of human welfare has been slow.

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A 2011 Human Rights Watch report entitled, "Stop Making Excuses: Accountability for Maternal Health Care in South Africa^[xxiii]" has found that:

"The South African health care system faces many challenges that undoubtedly impact maternal health care ... South Africa is one of only six countries in sub-Saharan Africa that made no progress in reducing maternal deaths by 2008, and one of five (together with Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe) that experienced the largest percentage increases."

Nothing speaks more to how women from poor and working class backgrounds, who rely on the public health system, are failed by the ruling elite than the fact that there are still women who die from giving birth because of the failures of the health system.

We therefore demand:

- That all babies have equal access to optimal healthcare, from utero.
- That all children, with particular emphasis on girl children, have equal access to nutrition so ensure optimal development of their minds and bodies.
- That girl children have equal access to education from primary to tertiary and that their physical security be provided for in schools .
- That a women's reproductive rights are protected and that their lives are not endangered as a consequence of having children
- That women have equal access to formal employment opportunities for which they receive equal remuneration
- That women are able to access arable land (and appropriate funding) so they are able to ensure food security for their families while being able to access opportunities to increase their income

11. The right of the youth to receive quality healthcare, nutrition, education and skills development to contribute meaningfully to society as adults

Census 2011 has found that South Africa still has a young population with most of the nearly 52-million citizens, under 39 years of age. In addition, over 5.6-million South Africans are under the age of four, while 4.8-million children are aged five to nine, and close to 4.6-million

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are between the ages of 10 and 14. 73.5% attend a public educational institution, while the proportion attending private educational institutions has increased to 7.3%.

A young nation must necessarily mean the formulation and development of policies that promote their development to the extent they become healthy, productive adults able to contribute meaningfully to society.

However current socio-economic indicators show that government is failing to ensure the development and wellbeing of the country's young people, particularly in terms of education and employment.

This is evidenced by the results of Census 2011 which show that the:

...proportion [of the population] which had some primary level education has slightly decreased from 16.0% in 2001 to 12.3% in 2011.

Further evidence is provided by the African Economic Outlook 2012 which has observed that:

Among the young, the unemployment rate is double the national average, having risen from 45% in 2008 to 50.5% in 2010. A survey by Statistics South Africa in 2010 offered the following profile of youth unemployment in South Africa:

- *About 42% of young people under the age of 30 are unemployed compared with fewer than 17% of adults over 30*
- *Only 1 in 8 (13%) of working age adults under 25 years has a job, compared to 40% in most emerging economies*
- *Unemployed young people tend to be less skilled and more inexperienced: almost 86% do not have formal further or tertiary education, while two-thirds have never worked.*

Compared to nations at similar stages of economic development, South Africa has an unusually high unemployment problem – in general and among the young. Only 40% of those of working age have jobs, compared to 65% in Brazil, 71% in China and 55% in India. The emerging market average is 56%.

The report continues:

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Besides a shortage of skills, lack of work experience has also tended to impede the job prospects of young people.

The young people of this country therefore demand:

- The right to quality healthcare, including nutrition to ensure optimal development of their bodies and minds
- The right to free and universal quality education from primary to tertiary to ensure their optimal mental development
- The right to skills development that would enable them to contribute meaningfully in society and to the economy to ensure the sustainable development of the country.

8. PRINCIPLES, STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Principles, strategy, tactics and the needs of the poor and working people constitute the fundamental guidelines to the conduct of our struggle.

Every action taken to secure the needs of our people must have been subjected to the decision sieve made up of principle, strategy and tactical considerations. While principles, strategies and tactics are important, they have never, in our movement, been ranked as equal.

Every action has had to, first and foremost, be in line with the fundamental principles of our movement. Secondly it has had to be consistent with our strategic outlook that informs the execution of our struggle. Thirdly it has had to be consistent with the tactical demands of the situation at hand.

Our organisation has, many times, forsaken what could be deemed tactically expedient and strategically prudent for what is consistent with our principles.

So was the case when **AZAPO** decided not to participate in the 1994 elections despite the benefits that would have accrued to the organisation, including possible inclusion in the Government of National Unity.

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Commitment to principle is what separates **AZAPO** from other organisations. It is the very same commitment to principles that distinguishes the ethical and moral conduct of our members from that of members of other organisations which is often characterised by corrupt and immoral behaviour.

Informed by principles, conscious of the pertinent objective and subjective conditions at the time, cognisant of the limitation placed by Bourgeoisie Parliamentary Democracy on the aspirations of our people but alive to the opportunity, limited as it might be, presented by the possibility to change the constitution, **AZAPO** took a strategic decision to participate in the 1999 elections.

Thus taking heed of Lenin's words when he wrote to Charles Naine, a member of the International Socialist Committee in Switzerland, that:

Who does not know that we Social-Democrats are not opposed to fighting for reforms, but that, unlike the social patriots, unlike the opportunists and reformists, we do not confine ourselves to the struggle for reforms...? We are not opposed to elections and reforms for the purpose of reducing high prices, but we attach primary importance to telling the masses the truth, namely that it is impossible to combat high prices excepting by appropriating the banks and the big factories, i.e., by social revolution.

Being attentive to Antonio Gramsci when he urged revolutionaries to engage in a war of positions – i.e. consistently trying to transform the state and the conditions of society into what revolutionaries want – in the short term, during non-revolutionary times, **AZAPO** entered Parliament with minimum objectives which were articulated by the first parliamentary representative of **AZAPO** when he said in his maiden speech:

We should work purposeful and diligently towards the dissolution of the two nations into one. That can only be done by making the majority nation meaningful owners and controllers of the economy in this country. The government must lead the way in our charge towards that objective.

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The delivery of social services will help, but it cannot be an end in itself. More needs to be done. This House [Parliament] and the government of the majority should not be allowed to be mere manjikelane over the property of a minority nation

In the struggle for social and economic justice, aimed at instituting radical democracy which is not limited to the political realm but extends to the economic sphere, **AZAPO** will take a number of strategic positions and make a number of tactical manoeuvres based on real concrete conditions and principles.

The strategic path adopted by **AZAPO** for the current conditions is to work within and with civil society to build a critical and radical consciousness that will enable the poor, marginalised, working class and those who love freedom and substantive democracy to mobilise for change and make demands on the State.

At the same time **AZAPO** will participate in elections with the aim of attaining State power in order to radically transform it and its institutions so that the State enables satisfaction of human needs and the institutionalisation of radical democracy.

9. BUILD AZAPO – BUILD A PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION, A PEOPLE'S ALTERNATIVE

The theme of the 18th National Congress of **AZAPO** held in Hammanskraal in 2006, *Building a People's Alternative*, accurately captured the nature and type of an organisation **AZAPO** is, and intends to be for the foreseeable future – **A People's Organisation, A People's Alternative**.

Saul Alinsky, in his book *Reveille for Radicals*, gives a good characterisation of a people's organisation when he says:

Its sole reason in coming into being is to wage war against all evils which cause suffering and unhappiness. A People's Organization is the banding together of large numbers of men and women to fight for those rights which insure a decent way of life... A People's Organization is dedicated to an eternal war. It is a war against poverty, misery, delinquency, disease, injustice, hopelessness, despair, and unhappiness.

Inspired by the 2009 Johannesburg Commitment, the key priorities in growing **AZAPO** are:

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i. Develop and Strengthen Political Awareness and Activism

The biggest challenge facing our country and our people today is a lack of political awareness, education and activism. This has enabled the growing decline in the quality of political engagement. The lack of political activism has enabled those who hold political power to ride roughshod over the masses of our people. It is in the interest of the ruling elite to ensure that there is no political activism and there is general de-mobilisation. This phenomenon of lack of political activism and demobilisation is all pervasive, affecting not only the general public but also our movement, albeit to a lesser extent.

In building **AZAPO**, it is crucial that the political education of our members is enhanced. It is important that our members develop a critical consciousness rooted in the need to protect and advance the interests of the poor, marginalised and the working class. It is this same critical consciousness that our members, must work to develop in the people and communities they work with and within.

ii. Build A Fighting Organisation For Our People, Build **AZAPO**

“Our people are powerless because they lack organization,” were the words of the late Cde Kwame Ture when he visited South Africa over ten years ago. His words remain true today as they were when spoke them.

The spontaneous protests over service delivery and other failings of the State have lacked an organisation to coordinate and sustain the struggle of our people with the result being a fizzling-out of these struggles even before enduring victories are won.

For a number of reasons **AZAPO** has failed to play this coordinating and organizing role for the struggles of our people.

Chief amongst which has been the non-existence of **AZAPO** at ward level. Too many of our branches are still structured on the basis of town or city. This old structure has meant the leadership which is the main coordinator of **AZAPO** activities is spread too thin. To ensure

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that **AZAPO** is strengthened as a fighting organisation for our people, greater focus must be placed on building ward branches which are closer to the people. Building branches on the ward basis must be accompanied by a strong recruitment of new members.

iii Devote All of Our Sweat and Blood For An **AZAPO** Government –Develop an Efficient and Effective Electoral Machinery

For now and for the foreseeable future, the avenue open for the transformation of State power is mobilization and activism of 'civil society' and electoral victory. Participation in elections with the aim of seizing political power is a strategic objective of **AZAPO** and one that it has pledged to devote its efforts and energy in attaining.

Thus, in pursuit of that objective, it is imperative that the organisation develop an efficient and effective electoral machinery that will ensure electoral success.

Equally important is the development of a mindset amongst our members that is geared towards winning elections. Therefore, Provinces, Regions and Branches must ensure that they build capacity within their structures and plan and undertake electoral campaigns.

10. CONCLUSION

"Tomorrow Begins Today" declared the Zapatistas in an invitation to the "First Intercontinental Meeting for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism".

Tomorrow begins today is a call we make to those who love freedom, justice, democracy and humanity. The dream and the promise held by our liberation struggle is not dead, but simply buried in the rubble that is corruption, nepotism and self-serving behavior of those in power.

The time to defer to those in power is gone!

The time to accommodate their betrayal, failure and disregard for the poor and working people of this country is over!

ON A QUEST FOR ONE AZANIA, ONE NATION: THE MINIMUM PROGRAMME OF THE AZANIAN PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION (AZAPO)

The time for Action is Now!

The people of this country are beholden to no one for their 'freedom', they sacrificed for it, suffered for it with each teardrop they cried and each drop of blood that was spilt.

The time is now for each one of us to: mobilise our communities, hold those in power responsible and accountable, resist abuse of power, expose corruption, speak out so we can be heard, educate our fellow citizens about the exploitative nature of the system!

Join **AZAPO** in this fight and help us to implement this programme and achieve its demands.

The vision for a just, anti-exploitation and humane society is within grasp if only we can take action, and reach out.

Remember Frederick Douglass' words

"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress."

One Azania, One Nation is possible, work for it today!

Tomorrow Begins Today!

[1] This minimum programme was accepted by the 21st National Congress of **AZAPO** for further discussion by all **AZAPO** structures. It was adopted by the June 2013 Newcastle Session of the Central Committee

[2] As an example, see The Frankfurt Declaration of 1951, also see Foster, J.B. 2005. **The Renewing of Socialism : An Introduction**. Monthly Review Vol 57 No. 3 (July – August)

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[3] Events like the killing of Andries Tatane, who lead a protest against poor service deliver, and the Marakana massacre, where workers were killed while protesting for better working conditions and better wages, show us how the ANC Government intends to “regulate the environment” by using the police to kill citizens of this country.

[4] Egalitarian has its roots from the French word *égal* which means equal. In the BCM when referring to egalitarianism or egalitarian society we are referring to a belief in a society that recognises that all human beings are equal in their fundamental worth and are equally deserving of a good life and that it is society's responsibility to promote prosperity and wellbeing for all its members through collective social provisions (e.g. universal access to health care, education)

[5] Link to document: <http://www.doh.gov.za/docs/reports/2010/overview1994-2010.pdf>. The findings of this research have been echoed by an article in the Mail and Guardian of Friday 23 November 2012 (page 3 of health supplement) wherein members of the medical profession in South Africa express their concerns about the state of healthcare in the country.

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[i] Birdsall, N. and Fukuyama, F. 2011. The Post-Washington Consensus – Development After the

Crisis. P48. March/ April issue of Foreign Affairs

[ii] African National Congress. 2007. Strategy and Tactics of the ANC: Building a National Democratic Society – revised draft

[iii] Biko, S. 1996, I write What I Like p11

[iv] Gibson,N. 2004 . Black Consciousness 1977 – 1987; The Dialectics of Liberation in South Africa

p19 Centre for Civil Society , Durban South, Africa

[v] Ibid, p15

[vi] http://www.idasa.org/our_products/resources/output/a_common_vision_for_sa/

[vii]Mangena, M. writing on behalf of the Central Committee of the **BCM(A)** in an Internal Memo to all

regions of the **BCM(A)** on the Changing Situation in Azania

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[viii] Ibid

[ix] More, M.P Biko:Africana Existentialist Philosopher in Mngxitama,A. Alexander,A. and Gibson, N.C. 2008. Biko Lives! Contesting the Legacies of Steve Biko, p50

[x] Quoted in Gibson,N. 2004. p13, *Op. cit.*

[xi] Alan, J and Turner, L. quoted in Gibson,N. *Op. cit.* p9

[xii] Biko, S. 1996 *Op. cit.*

[xiii] Ibid

[xiv] Biko, S. 1996. *Op. cit.*p22

[xv] Ibid, p24

[xvi] Ibid, p24

[xvii] Turner, L. Self-Consciousness as Force and Reason of Revolution in the Thought of Steve Biko

In MMngxitama, A. *et al* ,p69 *Op.cit.*

[xviii] Ibid.

[xix] Biko,S.1996 *Op. cit.*

[xx] Van der Berg, S. *et al.* 2011 Low Quality Education as a poverty trap

<http://www.andover.edu/gpgconference/documents/low-quality-education-poverty-trap.pdf>

[xxi] Source: <http://www.childrencount.ci.org.za/indicator.php?id=6&indicator=45>

[xxii] Source: <http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2002/landgender.pdf>

[xxiii] Source: <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/sawrd0811webwcover.pdf>