



Education and Sport Development

Department of Education and Sport Development
Departement van Onderwys en Sportontwikkeling
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GRADE 12

HISTORY P2

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ADDENDUM

This addendum consists of 5 pages

QUESTION 1: HOW DID THE PHILOSOPHY OF BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS INFLUENCE THE POLITICAL THINKING OF THE YOUTH IN SOUTH AFRICA IN THE 1970s?

SOURCE 1A

This source is taken from a paper presented by Steve Biko for the South African Student Organisation (SASO) leadership course in December 1971.

... it has been argued that 'The most potent (powerful) weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.' To liberate themselves, Black people had to redefine their values, self-image, and entire outlook. It is also true that Americans contributed to the style and rhetoric (expression) of Black Consciousness. The very term 'black' came from the United States and referred to people previously known as Africans, Indians or Coloureds. Realising that his own skin prevented him from ever attaining privilege, the native despised his own blackness. However the phrase non-white defined Blacks in a negative form.

Ideas about Black unity and emancipation (liberation) are deeply rooted in the struggle Biko launched against apartheid since the 1960s. It should be emphasised that in South Africa, both the rhetoric and philosophy of Black Consciousness contradicted the fundamental principles of grand apartheid. In short, apartheid was designed not only to separate Whites from Blacks but also to foster black parochialism (narrowness) by segregating Blacks into ethnic and linguistic groups. Such a system was challenged by Biko, who then spearheaded a process that led to the formation of organisations that were representative of Black political interests and aspirations. Black Consciousness has therefore been defined by Biko as:

...the realization by the Black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their oppression, the blackness of their skin and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude. It seeks to demonstrate the lie that black is an aberration (deviation) from the normal which is white. It is a manifestation of a new realization that by seeking to run away from themselves and to emulate the white man, blacks are insulting the intelligence of whoever created them black. ...

[From [http://azapo.org.za/azapohistory/azapo-and-historical background](http://azapo.org.za/azapohistory/azapo-and-historical-background). Accessed on 22 February 2017.]

SOURCE 1B

The source is part of an interview with Murphy Morobe, a student activist at Morris Isaacson School, in Soweto. He recalls the influence that Black Consciousness had on his thinking.

Because of Black Consciousness I became more conscious of the situation of black people in this country and this township. I was able to go into town; I was able to see the contrast, the differences and all that raised questions in my mind. Amongst us, we began to develop a keen sense for wanting to discover more ideas about struggles, not only in this country, but also about what happened in other areas. There was always a list published of books that were banned and for us it meant that whatever government banned must be something good and it was part of our adventure as youngsters to actually go out to actively look for those books. The 1970s were not long after the major student uprising in France, Europe and the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement of the United States. 1974 was, of course, the year of the Portuguese defeat in Mozambique and Angola and, when that happened, I think it had a major boost on us. I remember trying to organise a meeting when many people were on the run, with the police all out to detain people. We all pretended to be swimmers and we had the meeting at the swimming pool in Orlando, dressed only in bikinis and swimming trunks. I must say it wasn't the most comfortable way to have a serious meeting but it was out of sight a list published of books that were banned and for us it meant that whatever the of the authorities.

[From *Soweto A History* by P Bonner

et al.]

SOURCE 1C

The photograph below shows students of Soweto embarking on protest action against the introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction on 16 June 1976.



[From <http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/sout-african-student-organisation-saso>.
Accessed on 22 February 2017.]

SOURCE 1D

This extract focuses on the influence that the philosophy of Black Consciousness had on the youth leading to the Soweto Uprising of 1976. It was written in 1978 by John Kane-Berman, who was a member of the SRC at the University of the Witwatersrand.

One of the principal factors explaining the new mood of assertiveness (self-confidence) so evident among black youth in many parts of the country is the growth of the Black Consciousness philosophy. This is one of the most important developments in South Africa in recent years... At about the same time, black students, after much soul-searching, broke away from the multi-racial but white-dominated National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) to form the South African Students' Organisation (SASO). After that, numerous organisations espousing (standing for) Black Consciousness were formed, including the South African Students' Movement (SASM) among schoolchildren and the Black People's Convention (BPC), a political organisation, of which Steve Biko was honorary president at the time of his death

...

The extent of allegiance (loyalty) to SASM and the degree to which school children in general identify with Black Consciousness are not readily measurable. Again, it appears as if the impact on both African and Coloured school goers, and particularly on their leaders, has been very considerable. A small but telling example of how blacks' self-images have been changing and of their growing readiness to act was provided by pupils at a Coloured high school in the Cape. In November 1976 more than 100 of the 180 pupils boycotted an examination on a book called *Swart Pelgrim* by FA Venter. In the past they had not objected to this book, but now they said it was biased because it showed blacks in an inferior light, and that it was frustrating and humiliating. The only good thing about it was that it showed how whites had been exploiting blacks. The students tore up and burnt copies of the book.

[From *SOWETO Black Revolt, White Reaction* by J Kane-Berman]