

# Christian Action and Black Consciousness Community Programmes in South Africa<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

Many scholars have examined the relationship between Black Theology and Black Consciousness in South Africa in the late 1960s and 1970s. This article analyses another Christian link. It argues that ecumenical organisations (such as the Christian Institute and the South African Council of Churches), foreign churches, radical priests, and local parishes occupied a position in society that allowed them to give significant material support to the Black Consciousness movement, particularly the Black Community Programmes (BCP), a development organisation run by Black Consciousness activists (including Ben Khoapa and Steve Biko). Drawing upon archival and oral history sources, the article first analyses the formation of the BCP, then discusses the financial contributions of churches that enabled the BCP to survive. Finally, it demonstrates how activists gained physical space, in-roads into communities, and moral support from local priests and parishes at the grassroots level in the Eastern Cape and Natal and Transvaal provinces.

## Introduction

When Peter Randall asked Ben Khoapa to serve as director of the Black Community Programmes (BCP) in September 1971, the latter responded, “quite bluntly”: “If I come in and work with you, I’m going to come in and work with you to address what I consider to be the core problem of this country which is the way black people are treated.” He felt that black people knew quite

well what the problems of apartheid South Africa were – “They were obvious to me, they were lying there” – but he and others did not have the resources to address them. “Therefore,” Khoapa said, “if the churches mean what they say, they would have to put in the resources behind this program.”<sup>2</sup> Through the ecumenical organizations sponsoring Spro-cas, the project Randall directed, many Christian churches did just that. Khoapa also steered the BCP into the Black Consciousness movement, the leading radical liberation movement in South Africa in the 1970s that energized the youth and revitalized the struggle against apartheid with its promotion of a positive black identity and black self-reliance. The BCP thus strengthened the unexpected link between the Christian Institute of Southern Africa – one of the founders of Spro-cas – and “the young generation of blacks who launched the *black consciousness* movement upon an unsuspecting white population,” thus helping the Christian Institute have “an impact way beyond what might be expected from a rather small group of people” (Cochrane 1990: 90, emphasis in original).

Many scholars have explored Black Theology which related Christianity more meaningfully to the experience of the black oppressed in South Africa, as it rose in conjunction with the Black Consciousness movement (Mosala and Tlhagale 1986; Hopkins 1989; Prozesky 1990; Pityana et al. 1991; Walshe 1995; Magaziner 2007; Denis 2010; Magaziner 2010). This article takes a different line by focusing on the less well-known history of the material support the Christian Institute, the South African Council of Churches, European churches, radical priests, and local parishes gave to the Black Consciousness movement. This support proved critical for the formation and continued work of the BCP, both at a national and local level. Churches often have the resources and networks successfully to carry out development and welfare projects when the state cannot. In South Africa in the late 1960s and 1970s, churches, ecumenical organisations, radical black and white priests, and local parishes greatly aided Black Consciousness activists who worked to uplift black people in opposition to the state and its ideology. Like organisations and movements inspired by liberation theology in Latin America under military regimes a decade earlier, South African churches and clergy occupied a relatively safe space in society that allowed them to speak out against the repressive apartheid state (for one example, see Mainwaring 1986).<sup>3</sup> The less-political nature of community health, economic, and education projects also attracted funding from churches desiring to contribute to liberation in South Africa at a time when the state had crushed most above-ground anti-apartheid movements.

The history of the BCP demonstrates how ecumenical organisations, churches, and radical or progressive clergy gave crucial support to South African social and political movements in this era, though they may not have been on the fore-front of out-right political protest. Drawing upon original archival and oral

history research conducted in South Africa, the article moves chronologically in analysing the relationship between Black Consciousness community projects and churches and clergy. It begins by examining how the Christian Institute and the South African Council of Churches, through Spro-cas, worked with Ben Khoapa (and even Steve Biko) to form this Black Consciousness organisation in 1971. Once the BCP became independent from Spro-cas in 1973, financial contributions of South African and European churches enabled the organisation to survive and grow. Subsequent state repression pushed the BCP to work more intimately with specific local black communities. The concluding section analyses how local priests and parishes gave space to the BCP, helped activists gain in-roads into communities, and provided important networking contacts and moral support at the grassroots level in the then Natal and Transvaal provinces and the Eastern Cape.

### **Black Community Programmes**

The Black Community Programmes (BCP) organisation grew out of two movements in South Africa developing in the late 1960s: the rise of Black Consciousness and the ecumenical, Christian drive to do more to address the negative effects of apartheid on society. The result was a seemingly unlikely alliance that produced a relatively well-resourced black-led community development organisation based on Black Consciousness principles.

Black Consciousness arose with black university students in the late 1960s, at a time when state repression and bans on other liberation movements such as the African National Congress, the Communist Party, and the Pan Africanist Congress, had rendered above-ground opposition to apartheid within South Africa virtually silent. Student activism and increasing numbers of black university students led to the formation of the South African Student Organisation (SASO) in 1968 and 1969, an exclusively black student organisation. By 1971, SASO students had formulated what they termed Black Consciousness – a philosophy that sought to refashion black people by awakening them to their inherent worth and potential. SASO students argued that a psychological liberation was needed in order to build a sense of human dignity and self-worth, and demanded to be treated this way by white South Africans. They also asserted black self-reliance both economically and in the sense that they must “go it alone” or reject white liberal leadership in the liberation struggle. One of the more original contributions of Black Consciousness activists was their redefinition of “black” to include Indian and Coloured South Africans. They believed a new positive black identity and unity was necessary to bring down apartheid. From its beginning, SASO engaged in community health, education, and economic projects, seen by SASO as important for preparing the way for liberation by

alleviating poverty and building black self-reliance and unity (Hadfield 2010a; Hadfield 2010b).

At the same time, South Africa saw a growing, bolder resistance by progressive or radical priests (particularly with the development of Black Theology) and ecumenical organisations supported, among others, by the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist churches (though often referred to as English-speaking churches, the majority of their members spoke their African mother-tongues). Christianity and its churches have generally been viewed as conservative forces in history. In South Africa, the Dutch Reformed Church supported apartheid theologically (Moodie 1975; Thompson 1985; Davenport and Elphick 1997). It took the above-mentioned Protestant churches and the Catholic Church as institutions some time before they spoke out against apartheid and addressed their own discriminatory practices. Even then, until the 1980s one could characterise the Christian churches as more talk than action as they passed resolutions and published studies, but did not put “bodies on the line.”<sup>4</sup> Yet, after the massacre of sixty-nine black protestors in Sharpeville and Langa in March 1960, liberal priests and ecumenical organisations began to speak out more strongly against apartheid and to express support for liberation movements. This came during a climax of a larger global movement in the late 1950s and 1960s in Christianity to focus on the poor and oppressed, led in large part by the Catholic Church. Catholic priests in South America defined a new form of evangelisation by building communities, promoting social justice, and making Christianity relevant to the majority by using vernacular languages. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), under Pope John XXIII, officially adopted this as part of church policy. Liberation Theology in Latin America and Black Theology in the United States (linked to the Civil Rights Movement) made Christianity speak to the liberation and social justice of oppressed peoples in the Americas. Ecumenical organisations, radical priests, and a new generation of black theological students in South Africa were part of this larger transnational movement, as exemplified by the University Christian Movement which was linked to its counterpart in the United States (Hopkins 1989; Prozesky 1990; Walshe 1995; John de Gruchy and Steve de Gruchy 2005; Hansen 2005; Magaziner 2007; Clarke 2008; Magaziner 2010).

Opposition to apartheid from ecumenical organisations gained momentum throughout the 1960s. The establishment of the Christian Institute came after the Cottesloe Consultation of 1960 held by the World Council of Churches and its South African member churches after the Sharpeville Massacre. The Consultation concluded that South African society did not conform to Christian ideals or teachings on the equality and liberation of humanity. In response, sections of the Dutch Reformed Church, which had provided theological support for apartheid, pulled out of the World Council of Churches. Beyers

Naudé, an Afrikaner cleric of the Dutch Reformed Church, emerged from the Consultation as a “prophetic figure” as he confronted his church, other denominations, and the state about the injustices of apartheid (Walshe 1991: 34; Hansen 2005). Naudé broke with the mainstream Dutch Reformed Church and launched *Pro Veritate*, a journal that acted as a forum for exposing the negative effects of apartheid and the need to reject racism. In 1963, he helped form the multi-racial ecumenical Christian Institute that sought to unite all progressive Christians against apartheid. In the meantime, the South African Council of Churches (SACC) – the national council of Christian churches, not including the Catholic Church which did not affiliate with ecumenical organisations – began to take a stronger stand against apartheid. In 1968, it published “A Message to the People of South Africa” that strongly rejected apartheid as being against the gospel of Christ. It affirmed that the message of Christianity was that God is love and that as Christ had liberated men from sin and had “broken down the walls of division between God and man,” he had also overcome the division between man and man. Yet, South African society had replaced faith in Christ with faith in racial identity and racial separation, “[amounting] to a denial of the central statements of the Gospel” and limiting the “ability of a person to obey the Gospel’s command to love his neighbour as himself.” The message asked Christians, “to whom, or to what are you truly giving your first loyalty, your primary commitment?” and called on them “to work for the expression of God’s reconciliation here and now” (SACC 1968).

In 1969, the SACC and the Christian Institute joined together to follow their own admonition to labour for a just society. To do this, they launched an initiative to analyse the effects of apartheid on Christianity and South African society, namely the “Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society” (Sprocas). The study was comprised of six commissions: Economics, Social, Legal, Politics, Church, and Education. Nearly 150 people took part in the research and reports of the commissions. It involved church leaders such as Catholic Archbishop Denis Hurley, and liberal or radical university professors such as Richard Turner (political scientist at the then University of Natal), Francis Wilson (economist at the University of Cape Town), and sociologists Lawrie Schlemmer and Frederick van Zyl Slabbert. The commissions’ reports provided academic evidence for what was obvious to many: apartheid bred stark inequality. Sprocas published each commission’s final report that concluded with recommendations for reform, such as overhauling the education system, redistributing land and wealth, giving workers the right to join trade unions, and allowing black people to share in political power (Randall 1973).

In the last volume summarising the commissions’ reports, Peter Randall argued that radical change was needed in South Africa and predicted that black people would initiate these changes (Randall 1973: 6). Up to that point, however,

Spro-cas itself had involved few black people. The establishment of the second phase of Spro-cas opened the door for black leadership to step in. As the first study project neared completion, Spro-cas came under criticism from members of the Christian Institute and the SACC to do more than just publish reports. Randall, Naudé, the Christian Institute and the SACC thus began to devise an action programme to “implement as far as possible those immediately practicable recommendations for change made by the six Spro-cas study commissions.”<sup>5</sup> They called this second phase “Special Project on Christian Action in Society,” or Spro-cas 2. By October of 1971, Spro-cas had secured staff to oversee the different divisions of the second project and had identified their priorities. These took shape under three main initiatives: Black Community Programmes; programmes geared toward the white community; and publications. Spro-cas 2’s broad aims were to concentrate on the areas that would be most effective in bringing about change – or to “promote black initiative” (while enabling white people to “respond creatively” to it).<sup>6</sup>

Randall proved to be a key figure in “promoting black initiative” in Spro-cas 2, as Black Consciousness activists ensured that the project would truly allow black leadership and would concentrate its resources in the black community. Randall had a liberal background and experience in conducting and publishing studies; thus, although he was not particularly religious,<sup>7</sup> he had a perfect curriculum vitae for the director of Spro-cas. While a student at the Natal Teachers’ Training College from 1954-1956,<sup>8</sup> he became interested in politics and spent time with the lecturer, Peter Hunter, in Sobantu village in Pietermaritzburg learning Zulu and helping to teach Afrikaans to teachers who were required, under the new Bantu Education Act of 1953, to use Afrikaans as medium of instruction. After spending some time working for the Natal Education Department and teaching in South Africa and Britain, he was hired by the South African Institute of Race Relations, a non-governmental organisation dedicated to investigating and reporting on the state of race relations in the country. From 1965-1969, Randall contributed to the Institute’s publications and gave talks on human rights and social justice. In 1969, he left the Institute to direct the first Spro-cas project.<sup>9</sup>

After the initial meeting between Randall and Khoapa described above, Randall worked with Khoapa, and later Steve Biko, in forming Spro-cas 2’s BCP.<sup>10</sup> During their private discussions and meetings with a number of organisations in the latter part of 1971, Randall felt Khoapa and Biko were very patient in giving him a political education.<sup>11</sup> Some, especially in the SACC, opposed the idea of having separate white and black programmes. It seemed to conform with apartheid. It was not the kind of racially integrated arrangement that white liberals preferred. Randall, Khoapa, and Naudé succeeded in convincing the SACC that allowing black people to direct their own programmes would be most effective. White community programmes would help white people respond

to those initiatives by educating them about their role in the current unjust system and working to change church, economic, or educational structures they belonged to.<sup>12</sup>

Paradoxically, the BCP stressed black leadership and authority while operating as part of a white liberal organisation.<sup>13</sup> The initial arrangement within Spro-cas was acceptable to Khoapa because he was given a “free hand” or “blank check” to determine the direction of the BCP.<sup>14</sup> Evidence suggests that Spro-cas sponsors and staff respected this. Khoapa sat with Randall on the Spro-cas Steering Committee and Liaison Committee made up of Spro-cas directors and representatives from the Christian Institute and SACC. He also received pay equal to the technical director, Reverend Danie van Zyl, of R6,000 per year.<sup>15</sup> Khoapa also devised the “suggestions for action,” hired staff, prepared budgets, organised conferences, and started work on a registry of black organisations. Randall continued to wrap-up Spro-cas 1 by publishing the reports of the commissions. Busy with their respective responsibilities, they worked largely independent of one another, holding occasional meetings, and seem to have had a genuine friendship.<sup>16</sup> Randall and Khoapa both spoke highly of each other in interviews in 2008 and 2009 and correspondence suggests they had friendly and respectful relations.<sup>17</sup> For example, in a letter to Randall in December 1973, Khoapa updated Randall on his work and life as a banned person and wrote, “Sorry to hear about your Bronchitis; you must be getting weak old boy. I think you could do with a ‘BAN’ – at least you can rest.” He concluded with greetings to Randall’s wife and family: “Say hello to Isabel and the children.”<sup>18</sup> Randall also understood and respected the need for black leadership and, along with Naudé, supported the BCP’s autonomy.<sup>19</sup>

With Khoapa’s links to Black Consciousness, the BCP’s goals were based on the movement’s principles. The BCP sought to address the psychological aspect of black development, build self-reliance and the black community’s united capacity to solve its own problems. From the onset, the BCP outlined its mission as:

1. to help the Black Community become aware of its own identity;
2. to help the Black Community to create a sense of its own power;
3. to enable the Black Community to organise itself, to analyse its own needs and problems and to mobilise its resources to meet its needs;
4. to develop black leadership capable of guiding the development of the Black Community.<sup>20</sup>

The first goal, fundamental to Black Consciousness, was to affect a change in the mind-set of black people – to awaken them to a consciousness of their value as human beings. This would then contribute to the realisation among black

people that they had the power to change their situation (the second goal). Similar to SASO students who argued that without a psychological liberation, black people could not attain freedom, the BCP wrote in a grant application to the Ford Foundation that real change could not occur as long as the “[black man] continues to harbour feelings of inferiority and inadequacy, has no skills and facilities as well as resources to make a positive contribution to his own self-awareness and self-development.”<sup>21</sup>

The BCP’s third goal addressed the need to give people the tools to exercise their newly discovered power – the ability to organise, analyse their needs and problems, and use their resources to address those needs in the way they saw fit. Cultivating this self-reliance was more important than a specific project.<sup>22</sup> It did not matter so much whether a project focused on obtaining a clean water source or helping Matric students pass their exams. As the fourth goal stated, what mattered was *how* the BCP carried out the project and whether indigenous leadership emerged to take over the programmes and to guide people to self-reliance.<sup>23</sup>

In its first year-and-a-half of existence, the BCP focused on creating opportunities for black people and organisations to come together to analyse their circumstances and coordinate their efforts. One of the first programmes was a Black Church Leaders conference held in May 1972 at the Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre in Pietermaritzburg. This conference involved leaders from different denominations of “so-called Multi-racial churches in South Africa, with the view to examining their role within these churches and ways and means of increasing the effectiveness of their leadership.”<sup>24</sup> Participants discussed the development of Black Theology among other issues of leadership and control, and the training of black ministers. As a result, ministers planned to form regional caucuses to work on literacy and social services projects.<sup>25</sup> The BCP employed similar strategies in offering leadership training at youth conferences. It also supported a project to mobilise workers and instituted a publications and research programme, including the annual *Black Review*, to facilitate communication between groups and create a programme of informal education needed for development (Hadfield 2010b). In 1972, Khoapa hired SASO members Steve Biko and Bokwe Mafuna as field officers to help carry out these initiatives, further entrenching the BCP as part of the Black Consciousness movement.

## BCP Autonomy and Church Funding

The end of Spro-cas 2 in 1973, as originally planned,<sup>26</sup> the success of the BCP, and the need for the BCP to be independent from white leadership on principle, all led to it becoming autonomous. The BCP officially became a registered non-



profit organisation, BCP Ltd., in September 1973. Yet, as a non-governmental and non-profit organisation, the BCP still had to rely on funding from those with resources and connections. This included Spro-cas sponsors, the SACC, the Christian Institute, European churches, and organisations such as the Dutch Interchurch Organisation for Development Co-operation (ICCO), the International University Exchange Fund and the World University Service based in Geneva. This material support allowed the BCP to draw upon a relatively substantial budget to build and sustain primary health care centres in the Eastern Cape and Natal, run a mobile clinic in Soweto, just outside of Johannesburg, provide jobs at an Eastern Cape leather-work cooperative, and produce and distribute a sizeable annual publication reporting on black experiences and perspectives.

Spro-cas gave the BCP the financial jump-start it needed and Spro-cas' moral support and international connections helped the BCP continue to attract donors after its independence, though this was not always an easy task. The lack of BCP records (either destroyed or lost under the apartheid government) makes it difficult to know precisely how much money it received and from where. As a project of the SACC, Spro-cas had access to the Inter-church Aid of the World Council of Churches. Khoapa explained that European churches which contributed a large amount to this fund tended to review individual proposals from South Africa instead of just giving the money to the SACC because they feared the funds would be confiscated.<sup>27</sup> Surviving Spro-cas records reveal that the BCP received most of Spro-cas 2's funds. Spro-cas had planned to direct most of its resources to the BCP and donors favoured a black-led organisation working in black communities. For example, the Church of Norway "made special emphasis on the needs of the [BCP]" when it made a donation at the end of 1972.<sup>28</sup> It wanted its money to be spent on grassroots programmes that would directly alleviate the needs of those in dire circumstances.<sup>29</sup> The BCP even argued it was growing out of Spro-cas because of the amount of funding it received. In the budget proposal for 1973, Khoapa reported that the BCP had outgrown its sponsorship by R10,000 in 1972 and predicted the 1973 budget would increase by twenty-five percent.<sup>30</sup>

The autonomous BCP relied upon former Spro-cas sponsors for funding beyond the life of Spro-cas and expanded its funding sources in Europe among churches and organisations like the Dutch ICCO. Dr. L. M. "Dubs" Msauli, the BCP Eastern Cape board member who oversaw fundraising and health projects, described Scandinavian countries, Germany, and Holland as his "happy hunting grounds." He said he did not find it very difficult to obtain donations because people were interested in funding health projects.<sup>31</sup> Community health, economic, and educational programmes were less political and thus safer recipients for those seeking to contribute to South African liberation without

political repercussions.

Khoapa estimated that the BCP received more money than any other above-ground organisation in South Africa at the time.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, it did have a sizable budget. Tor Sellström indicated that indirect donations to Black Consciousness organisations by the Nordic countries through church and non-governmental organisations almost doubled between 1972 and 1974 (from SEK175,000 to SEK295,000 to SASO alone), while the aid the African National Congress received remained the same (SEK150,000) (Sellström 2008: 471-476).<sup>33</sup> Khoapa estimated the BCP's budget of 1973 to have been about R245,000.<sup>34</sup> A police memo reported that the BCP received R154,150 in 1974 from mostly international sources; in 1975, R161,680; and R70,041 in 1976, a year when the student uprisings in Soweto against Afrikaans as the language of instruction shocked South Africa, and the death of Mapetla Mohapi (SASO leader and Zimele Trust Fund director) and detentions of many BCP staff members hindered BCP operations. From February to June 1977, the BCP reportedly received R217,843<sup>35</sup> and it had an estimated R200,000 in the bank alone when the government shut it down in October 1977.<sup>36</sup> Khoapa told Sam Nolutshungu that at the end of the BCP, it had a payroll of R66,000 for 50 permanent staff, a total operating budget of over R 5 million, with assets of over R 1 million (Nolutshungu 1982, p. 203). When converted to 2008 equivalents, R100,000 in 1975 would roughly be nearly R3 million or USD356,000; R100,000 in 1977 would roughly amount to R2,350,000 or nearly USD300,000.<sup>37</sup>

BCP funded its projects in an "ad-hocish" way, so not all funds came from foreign or church sources.<sup>38</sup> An Afrikaner heiress, Angela Mai (née Grinaker), donated money that covered the start-up costs for the BCP's health centre in the Eastern Cape. The BCP also accepted funds from the Anglo American Special Chairman's Fund for its major health centres, despite its contradictory source. These donations amounted to approximately R97,000 in 1976; and R91,174 in 1977.<sup>39</sup> The BCP was uncomfortable with its dependence on outside funds and accepting Anglo American funds stirred up some contention among the activists.<sup>40</sup> Financial independence became urgent as state repression threatened to cut off the organisation's international financial links. The BCP attempted to change its financial dependency in 1976 and 1977, in part by investing in a Cape Town clothing factory, but was shut down before this initiative got off the ground.

### **Working with the Poor and Oppressed: The BCP and Local Parishes and Priests**

In February 1973, the apartheid government clamped down on Black Consciousness activists, banning nine leaders of SASO and the Black People's Convention (the political organisation of the Black Consciousness movement).

The state banished Steve Biko to the King William's Town district in the Eastern Cape and restricted Bokwe Mafuna to his home area in the Transvaal. Government banning orders were designed to render certain individuals politically ineffective. In addition to restricting their geographical movement, the state prohibited them from meeting with more than one person at a time, taking part in certain organisations, and from being published or quoted. Yet, Khoapa (who was himself banned to Umlazi, southwest of Durban, in October of 1973) stated that this turned out to have positive implications for the BCP. Ironically, the challenges the bans brought expanded the BCP's geographic reach, gave it a greater sense of purpose, heightened activists' creativity, and involved more people. Whereas before February 1973, the BCP had viewed itself primarily as an enabler and facilitator on a national level, state repression pushed the organisation to work at the local, grassroots level in different regions. Activists and employees in these areas relied on young male and female activists, neighbours and friends, and priests and parishes to establish and run its local programmes.

Whether it was the Anglican Church in the Eastern Cape, the Methodist Youth Centre in Soweto, the Congregationalist Church in Durban, or students and faculty at the Federal Theological Seminary in Alice in the Eastern Cape, churches provided space, entry points into communities, contacts, and moral support to activists and BCP employees. Giving space ranged from housing runaway activists to providing offices, land, and buildings for projects. This allowed the BCP to establish itself in communities where otherwise a lack of resources or opposition from local authorities would have acted as barriers. Despite the repressive political climate, white and black priests chose to work with and support activists and the BCP. These priests had a sense of social justice based on their religious beliefs and, like the BCP, ministered to the downtrodden and impoverished in black townships and rural homelands (or Bantustans). In the Eastern Cape, where the BCP had its most successful projects, it worked alongside the Border Council of Churches, often sharing offices, ideas, or human resources. Black radical priests adhering to Black Theology and white priests such as David Russell and Aelred Stubbs connected the BCP to resources. Without these forms of Christian resistance the BCP would have ceased operations long before the government shut it down in 1977.

One of the initial ways churches, parishes, and priests helped the BCP establish itself was by providing physical space for its projects. The United Congregational Church of South Africa allowed the BCP to set itself up in 1972 by renting an office to the organisation at Beatrice Street in Durban. Renting offices from a church made sense because the BCP was part of Spro-cas, a Christian project. Churches provided other critical office space and land after BCP became autonomous. For the Natal branch of the BCP, this may have been

facilitated by the clergymen serving on the organisation's advisory board. Many board members – skilled and educated black people “sympathetic to [the BCP's] ideology and approach,”<sup>41</sup> – were male church leaders chosen to “help in the planning and advise on content and direction.”<sup>42</sup> Reverend Benjamin N. B. Ngidi of the United Congregational Church and a lecturer at the Federal Theological Seminary (an incubator of Black Theology) was one of these board members for the Durban area. Given Ngidi's relationship with both the church and the BCP, he very likely played a role in securing office space for the BCP on the United Congregational Church's premises in Umlazi, after Khoapa was banned there. Here, the BCP developed a resource centre as part of the Natal regional activities. This centre was open for informal tutoring and served students, professional and self-help groups by holding a collection of newspapers, books and offering a conference venue to self-help and welfare organisations. In 1976, Ngidi took up the BCP Natal Branch Executive post, adding to his political activism.<sup>43</sup>

Biko's links to the Anglican Church proved extremely helpful in establishing the BCP in King William's Town after he was banned to this Eastern Cape town on the edge of the Ciskei homeland. Biko's mother was a devout Anglican and well known by the clergy in the area. Reverend David Russell remembered walking to Ginsberg early in the morning to tell Biko's mother of her son's banning order in February 1973. Russell was at the time living behind an old, unused Anglican Church on Leopold Street in King William's Town while he worked under the direction of black Reverend Stanley Walker Gawe and later his nephew, Reverend James Gawe, in the Parish of St. John's in Zwelitsha. The elder Gawe, a prominent African National Congress member in the Cape and an accused in the 1956 Treason Trial, had set the stage for cooperation with political activists. Russell was one of the few white priests who identified with and worked closely with black communities in the 1960s and 1970s, before the institutional church made real changes within their own structures and took stronger oppositional action.<sup>44</sup> For Russell, there was “no conflict whatsoever” between his religious beliefs and the struggle for liberation in South Africa. “My faith motivation and my political convictions were always completely and integrally connected,” he explained in 2008; his political activism “was motivated by the meaning of my faith, and of course, any sense of humanity.” After working for the Defence and Aid Fund for political prisoners in the early 1960s, he trained for the priesthood. As a new priest, he immersed himself in the rural Eastern Cape where he learned isiXhosa and worked under black priests in preparation for the work “I believed I should be doing as a person, as a priest, and as somebody wanting to make a difference in getting rid of apartheid.”<sup>45</sup> While he lived in King William's Town (from 1970 to 1973), Russell headed some of the welfare programmes of the Border Council of Churches and concentrated on bringing attention to the plight of victims of forced relocation from the Western Cape in Dimbaza. (For a

number of months in 1972, for example, he lived on R5 per month – the rations of those resettled at Dimbaza – to experience and reveal to the South African government and the media the horrendous conditions Dimbaza residents lived under.<sup>46</sup> Russell arranged with James Gawe for the BCP to obtain office space at the Leopold Street church.

15 Leopold Street thus became a hub for black people in the area, Black Consciousness activists and political visitors (Nqakula 1987: 21-24). Visitors interested in discussing politics ranged from Donald Woods and Australian ambassador to South Africa, Bruce Haigh, to students from Fort Hare and the Federal Theological Seminary, and Black People's Convention members from around the country.<sup>47</sup> In 1977, the BCP established a resource centre there that attracted local university and high school students, teachers, journalists and other community members. They also sold some of the goods made at Njwaxa and other home industries of the Border Council Churches.

The programmes of the Eastern Cape branch fell into two major categories: health and economic. The main health initiative was the Zanempilo Community Health Centre. At Zanempilo, the BCP took a holistic approach to answering the needs of the community which resulted in a number of extra economic cooperative programmes and community health education. The BCP could have chosen almost any place in the Ciskei region to build a clinic and it would have filled a great need for health care in the rural Ciskei.<sup>48</sup> The BCP's relationship with the local Anglican Church led the BCP to build the clinic in the village of Zinyoka, 9 kilometres from King William's Town. The Church owned a sizable piece of land near some freehold black farms in Zinyoka that fell under James Gawe's parish. A "dilapidated mud structure that passed as a church" stood on the plot.<sup>49</sup> The Anglican Church leased the land to the BCP and allowed it to build the clinic there. Construction was completed near the end of 1974 and clinic work began early the next year.

All of the BCP's community health projects were housed on church land. Many white and Indian doctors refused to enter Soweto during and after the student uprising that erupted in violence on June 16, 1976. To provide needed health care, the BCP started a mobile clinic, Empilweni, manned by voluntary doctors. Dr. Nthato Motlana, community leader in Soweto and a board member of the BCP, donated a caravan to act as the clinic. The BCP Transvaal branch executive, Ramsey Ramokgopa (a Sowetan native with ancestral ties to the Limpopo region) used his station wagon to drive the caravan to the Methodist Youth Centre in Jabavu. Aubrey Mokoena, a BCP programme assistant, SASO leader and active Methodist, also served as a programme assistant at the Youth Centre. It is likely that he found it easy to arrange for the clinic to occupy space at the centre, along with possible support from sympathetic priests who ran the centre.<sup>50</sup> At the centre, people could receive free health care (though a donation

was recommended). Ramokgopa worked with the doctors in the area to draw up a volunteer schedule. On the weekends, the BCP often took the clinic to Winterveld, a squatter settlement 32 kilometres outside of Pretoria where SASO had various projects, including work at the Mabopane Clinic in cooperation with a local Catholic parish.

The Mabopane Clinic operated by a Catholic parish is one example of how churches and priests, acquainted with the plight of their congregations and seeking to uplift them, took services such as health care and schooling to areas where the government could not – or, more accurately in South Africa, would not. This was the same with mission schools and hospitals in rural areas designated as African homelands.<sup>51</sup> The BCP hoped Zanempilo would inspire other rural community comprehensive social health centres.<sup>52</sup> The Solempilo Community Health Centre in Natal improved on the work and experience of its name sake in the Eastern Cape. By 1976, the BCP had conducted a feasibility study and drawn up plans for the physical facilities. The grounds included “experimental” or “demonstration” gardens with an animal husbandry section, a workshop, and a market stall for the extra programmes the centre would house in addition to the clinic.<sup>53</sup> The building was constructed on land owned by the Adam’s Mission.<sup>54</sup>

Working closely with church leaders helped the BCP secure a foothold in communities, especially in the Eastern Cape. *The Crozier*, the Grahamstown Anglican diocese’s periodical, reported on the opening ceremony of Zanempilo held on April 20, 1975. The dedication of the clinic was conducted by Anglican Bishop Lawrence B. Zulu, from the Federal Theological Seminary in Alice, and attended by an estimated 5,000 people from “as far afield as Durban, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, and East London.”<sup>55</sup> This support by respected church leaders was critical for the BCP in Zinyoka. At the time, the Ciskei government was just establishing a clear administrative authority. Having a Black Consciousness organisation working within the Ciskei threatened homeland leaders like Sebe and his loyal village headmen. Zinyoka headmen openly opposed the clinic and security police forces constantly harassed the clinic and its staff. In an effort to offset the BCP’s influence, the Ciskei built a rival clinic in the village. Other tactics used to undermine Zanempilo were to withhold an operation license<sup>56</sup> and deny access to free immunisations.<sup>57</sup> Had the BCP not had access to church land and enjoyed the support of Russell, Gawe, and Zulu, the government could well have expelled the BCP from Zinyoka much earlier than 1977, and might even have prevented it from opening the clinic at all.

The most important economic initiative of the BCP in the Eastern Cape was a leather-work cooperative in the village of Njwaxa, near Middeldrift. The history of this project reveals the interrelated networks of Black Consciousness and Christian activists at the local level. The BCP was brought into this project

through its connections at the Federal Theological Seminary. Several members of the Anglican “The Community of the Resurrection” order from England took a politically progressive stance with activists against apartheid and served on the seminary’s staff. These priests included Trevor Huddleston, ardent opponent of forced removals in Sophiatown in the 1950s (Denniston 1999), and Aelred Stubbs, friend to Biko and other Black Consciousness activists. Father Timothy Stanton, a member of The Community of the Resurrection, served as the Rector of St. Bartholomew’s Church in Alice and was also on the faculty of St. Peter’s College, the Anglican section of the seminary.<sup>58</sup>

As the Rector of St. Bartholomew’s, Stanton and his colleagues looked after three congregations in villages close to Alice. The largest congregation was in Njwaxa, near Middledrift, where the desperate poverty he encountered moved him to start a home-industry project. Priests and the Border Council of Churches increasingly introduced these small cottage industry programmes in the late 1960s and 1970s in an effort to give the people a means of earning an income within their village instead of relying on handouts.<sup>59</sup> Stanton wrote, “[e]xcept for a few who had work locally, and due to the migrant labour system, most of the able-bodied men were away. The population consisted of the elderly, women and many children. I was appalled at their extreme poverty. In various ways I tried to help.”<sup>60</sup> He began with a sewing project, then decided to take advantage of a connection to a local tannery and introduced leather-work in Njwaxa. He set up shop in the mud house in the St. Augustine’s Church yard and employed a small number of women who made purses, belts, and shopping bags.<sup>61</sup>

As the project developed, “[k]eeping [the women] supplied with materials and coping with marketing problems” became “too much” for Stanton.<sup>62</sup> He even failed to gain financial support through the SACC.<sup>63</sup> Bishop Zulu, Stanton’s colleague at the seminary, suggested that Stanton talk to Steve Biko for the BCP to take over the project. Biko agreed to take on the Njwaxa project and Malusi Mpumlwana, the BCP Eastern Cape programme assistant, took charge of it. From there, the small home industry grew into a proper factory. In 1976, after a visit from an ICCO representative from Holland, the organisation pledged to fund the construction of an official factory building on church premises.<sup>64</sup> The building was completed in 1977.

The relationship between the BCP, the Federal Theological Seminary, and the Border Council of Churches strengthened the efforts of the various activists and their organisations. Black Consciousness activists had become friends with radical white priests and young black theological students and priests through Biko’s connections, the University Christian Movement, and the rise of Black Theology. Students from the seminary and the University of Fort Hare in Alice often joined the groups of religious and Black Consciousness activists working in the Alice, Fort Beaufort, Middledrift, and King William’s Town areas. For



example, Mantuka “Tiny” Maisela, a Fort Hare student and SASO member, became involved with the BCP and Border Council of Churches programmes in the area by leading home-industry sewing groups.<sup>65</sup> Theology students fulfilled a practical theology requirement by helping priests minister to different congregations. The seminary also served as a haven for neighbouring Fort Hare students escaping the security police. In his article on the relationship between black seminaries and Black Consciousness, Philippe Denis quoted Njongonkulu Ndungane (the future Anglican archbishop of Cape Town) who remembered attending a lecture on ‘how to be non-violent in a violent world’ and looking out of the window and watching police chasing and beating students from Fort Hare. The lecture was interrupted as the seminary students had the opportunity to practice what they were being taught (Denis 2010: 171).<sup>66</sup> In addition to their engagement with Black Theology, Denis argues that the Federal Seminary staff and students were more inclined to political mobilisation and to support Black Consciousness activists because the previously separate training centres had been negatively affected by apartheid, members of the Anglican order of The Community of the Resurrection had an affinity for the activists, and it was geographically close to Fort Hare (Denis 2010). The government forced the seminary to leave Alice at the end of 1974 because of its political activism.

The BCP also came to work closely with the Border Council of Churches as activists and priests both worked in the area to alleviate poverty. Another progressive ecumenical initiative, the Border Council of Churches was formed in 1963. The Anglican Church, with the leadership of Reverend Stanley Walker Gawe, was a pillar of the Border Council of Churches, but the Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Congregational Churches also participated.<sup>67</sup> Ecumenical-inclined priests hoped to work together to promote unity between the denominations and alleviate poverty in the Border region, home of the Ciskei, one of South Africa’s neglected rural African homelands, devastated by drought and the effects of migrant labour. This also meant that they often became involved in out-right political matters. In the latter 1960s and early 1970s, the Border Council of Churches distributed food and wood supplies to victims of forced removals in Dimbaza, Sada, and Ilinge. It also established home-industries, gardening projects, assisted with burials, and helped provide money to the families of political prisoners through its Dependant’s Conference.

With this commitment and background, those in the Border Council of Churches found it easy to align themselves with Black Consciousness activists also working to uplift poor black communities in the Eastern Cape. Russell and later Reverend Temba Sibeko consulted and collaborated with Biko, Malusi Mpumlwana, and other activists in King William’s Town, where the Border Council of Churches had offices at Leopold Street. Sibeko had originally worked in the local Bantu Education administration, but obtained a position



as an assistant to the Registrar at the Federal Theological Seminary after leaving that post because of the corruption in the administration. Sibeko participated in the seminary's fieldwork projects in neighbouring townships and villages and soon, he and his wife Cybil began running agricultural and gardening projects in rural villages on their own. In the late 1960s, they naturally became involved in helping the people in Dimbaza, which led Sibeko to become a field officer for the Border Council of Churches. His desire to help the victims of apartheid and the friendships he built as he worked alongside Black Consciousness activists made his work political. Even when "rank-and-file" church members avoided associating with him or when other churches would not hold funerals for political activists, he risked detention and police harassment in order to uplift and bring relief to his people.<sup>68</sup>

Having offices on the same premises presented opportunities for conversations and the sharing of ideas. Russell remembered taking Biko with him to visit Dimbaza and recalled their discussions regarding the nature and role of welfare versus self-help projects.<sup>69</sup> Sibeko also remembered visiting BCP projects, BCP employees visiting his projects, and discussing management issues with Biko. Being office neighbours also facilitated some collaboration, though in this regard, the BCP support seemed to be more important for the Border Council of Churches. In 1974, the BCP reported that they had acted as a sort of sales agency by helping the Border Council of Churches with supplying and marketing their home-industries in Dimbaza, Alice, and at the St. Mathews Mission in Keiskammahoek. Mxolisi Mvovo, Biko's brother-in-law who joined the BCP staff in 1974, headed the sales and promotion for the home-industries of the BCP and the Border Council of Churches.

Finally, the establishment and funding of the Zimele Trust Fund further exemplifies the way political activists and religious figures worked together and shared and improved on ideas. It also highlights the significant role of Father Aelred Stubbs in supporting Black Consciousness activists. Biko established the Zimele Trust Fund to improve upon one of the Border Council of Churches projects. The Council of Churches Dependant's Conference was designed to provide monetary assistance to the families of political prisoners or those just returned from prison who faced bleak employment prospects. Black Consciousness activists were well acquainted with this initiative. Biko's sister, Nobandile, worked for the Border Council of Churches with SASO member Thenjiwe Mhintso who held the position of Church Worker for the programme.<sup>70</sup> Biko, Mapetla Mohapi, and others felt a fund to cover start-up costs for income-generating projects, in addition to money for educational or basic necessities, would improve the political prisoners' self-reliance. They thus established the Zimele Trust Fund which had some success, particularly with a brick-making scheme in Dimbaza (Biko 1996: 183-185; Pityana et al. 1991: 49, 168-169). Records indicate that

Stubbs was influential in rounding up resources for Zimele as well as the BCP. As a member of the clergy, he had international connections to sympathetic people with resources. He spoke in support of the BCP and Zimele in Europe (Stubbs 1996: 185) and kept in touch with “friends overseas” about the progress and financial needs of the organisations.<sup>71</sup> Like other members of The Community of the Resurrection in South Africa and progressive staff of the Federal Theological Seminary, Stubbs also provided personal moral support for young black activists. He kept up a long correspondence with Biko and often helped activists in need of transportation, refuge, or financial assistance, even when he was based in Lesotho (Ramphela 1996: 114, 126-128, 138; Stubbs 1996).<sup>72</sup>

## Conclusion

A police memorandum on the Black Community Programmes described the organisation as giving the impression that it “[promoted] the interests of the black man in the RSA in the areas of religion, education, welfare and arts and culture... [to] cultivate in the black man a sense of independence and responsibility.” Yet, upon further investigation of the origins and support given the BCP, the police found that “there was great emphasis on the concept of ‘change’ and the role of so called change-agents.” The police believed this was dangerous because those seeking change in recent decades had been radical Marxists. Through the police’s study of the BCP, the Christian Institute, the University Christian Movement, and Spro-cas staff were all implicated in what the police deemed the third phase of a programme for radical change in South Africa.<sup>73</sup> On October 19, 1977, a month after Biko’s death at the hands of the security police, the security police shut down the BCP and all other Black Consciousness-associated bodies, including the Christian Institute, youth organisations, and the *World* newspaper. These organisations had now been declared illegal. The leaders of those organisations, such as Beyers Naudé and Peter Randall, also received banning orders.

It was fitting that the Christian Institute, Naudé, and Randall were all banned along with the BCP, SASO, the Black People’s Convention, and numerous other Black Consciousness organisations. Christian resistance in the form of material support to the BCP significantly contributed to liberation in South Africa in the 1970s, although the institutional churches and Christians in general did not seem to put “bodies on the line.” The security police correctly recognised the important financial backing and organisational impetus the Christian Institute and the SACC through Spro-cas gave the BCP and by extension the Black Consciousness movement. Yet, the South African government could not punish the foreign churches who gave significant funds to the BCP, and although the Federal Theological Seminary and its staff suffered from harassment from the

state, it was not immediately shut down. Local clergy and parishes who had given space and moral support to the BCP and helped it and other activists with connections and resources for their health, economic and other development projects continued to be relatively immune from harsh state repression.<sup>74</sup> These were some of the ways Christianity, what many view as a conservative force in society, partnered with this radical social and political movement in South Africa and set the stage for institutional churches and prominent leaders to increasingly confront the state into the 1980s.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> My research during 2008 was generously funded by a Fulbright grant from the Institute of International Education, USA. I would like to thank reviewers for their constructive criticism, the organisers and participants of the “In the Presence of Faith” symposium, students and faculty at the University of Fort Hare in 2008, and members of my doctoral dissertation committee (particularly Peter Alegi and Peter Limb) for their feedback, questions, and insights.
- <sup>2</sup> Ben Khoapa, interview with the author, June 4, 2008, Durban, South Africa.
- <sup>3</sup> Of course, this did not mean that all churches and religious figures were immune from state repression. The banning of the Christian Institute and Beyers Naudé alongside Black Consciousness organisations in October 1977 is the example most relevant to this article.
- <sup>4</sup> David Russell (radical Anglican priest and former Bishop of Grahamstown), interview with the author, 15 May, 2008, Cape Town, South Africa. Christian resistance to apartheid generally moved from acting as a witness against the effects of racial discrimination, to identification with the oppressed, and then to active protest. In 1963, John Carter wrote, “...we must declare that South Africa’s racial structure of society is incompatible with Christian values. But pronouncements are not enough; the social order must be changed.” He continued, “we criticise...we deplore...we find it tragic...we regret...we declare...we are concerned...” Carter argued that more decisive action needed to be taken, yet he concluded at the time that since the church was caught between the “rival nationalism” of Afrikaners and Africans, it could only be a “confessing” church (see Cochrane 1990: 88-89).
- <sup>5</sup> Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand (hereafter Cullen), A835 SPRO-CAS 1969-1973, C1: “Minutes of Spro-cas 2 Planning Meeting: 15-16 October 1971”; Center for Research Libraries, The Black Consciousness Movement of South Africa: Material from the collection of Gail M. Gerhart (hereafter GG), 1979, Reel 3, SPRO-CAS, “Black Community Programmes,” n.d. Randall and Christian Institute and SACC members held meetings with the black-led Association for the Education and Cultural Advancement of the African People of South Africa (ASSECA), the Institute of Race Relations, and white professors who had taken part in the first Spro-cas commissions.
- <sup>6</sup> Cullen A835, C1: “Spro-cas 2 Planning Meeting: 15-16 Oct 1971.”

- <sup>7</sup> Peter Randall, phone interview with the author, May 13, 2009.
- <sup>8</sup> Randall subsequently studied through the University of South Africa and the University of the Witwatersrand to earn his BA, Masters of Education, and PhD.
- <sup>9</sup> For his biographical information, Randall referred me to a Wikipedia article written by his daughter and a colleague of hers (Randall and van Schalkwyk 2009).
- <sup>10</sup> A trained social worker born in rural Transkei, Khoapa had worked as secretary for the YMCA's segregated Africa programmes. His professional experience and link to the church made him a good candidate for the position of BCP director. Khoapa had been drawn into Black Consciousness circles while based at the YMCA office in Durban. Some SASO students heard him speak at a seminar of the South African Institute of Race Relations and subsequently invited him to a debate on the meaning of blackness (Khoapa, interview with author, June 4, 2008). Throughout 1970 and 1971, Khoapa engaged in many discussions with Biko and his fellow SASO students and began to share the same views. Khoapa's biographical information is drawn from three different interviews: with Gail Gerhart and Thomas Karis, June 16, 1989, New York, USA (Center for Research Libraries, Karis-Gerhart Collection: From Protest to Challenge, 1964-1990, Part 1: Interviews, Reel 2); with David Wiley (2006); and with the author, June 4, 2008, Durban, South Africa.
- <sup>11</sup> Randall, interview, May 13, 2009.
- <sup>12</sup> Cullen A835, C1: Peter Randall, "SPRO-CAS: Motivations and Assumptions", reprinted from *Reality* March 1973; Cullen A835, C1: "Spro-cas 2 Planning Meeting: 15-16 Oct 1971." In the October 1971 meeting it was stated that Black programmes "may call on white experts who can contribute insights etc.," perhaps reflecting an initial hesitation or uneasiness about the BCP acting independently.
- <sup>13</sup> This meant that Biko and Neville Curtis – a former president of the National Union of South African Students (1970-71), the organisation from which SASO had broken away – sat in at least one meeting together (see Cullen, A835, B10.ii: Minutes of Spro-cas staff meeting, July 28, 1972).
- <sup>14</sup> Cullen A835, C1: "Spro-Cas Black Community Programmes Budget Proposals – 1973"; Khoapa, interview, June 4, 2008, respectively; see also Randall, interview, May 13, 2009.
- <sup>15</sup> As Spro-cas director, Randall earned R6'600 per year. Biko and Mafuna as field workers received pay equal to those in corresponding positions (Cullen A835, C1: "SPRO-CAS 2: Budget for 1972-1973," Spro-cas 2 booklet, p. 6).
- <sup>16</sup> Like the working environment at the multi-racial South African Committee for Higher Education (Sached), described in Diana Wylie's biography of Thami Mnyele, relationships between black and white staff did not always go very deep and black staff found ways to assert their self-sufficiency (Wylie 2008: 53-55, 86-90). Khoapa remembered, "[s]ometimes the black staff felt that it was a major self-assertion to say we don't need to do any of these things with you. But they were very polite to each other; we had very good relationships" (Khoapa, interview with the author, October 8, 2009.)
- <sup>17</sup> Randall, interview, May 13, 2008; Khoapa, interview June 4, 2008. See also Cullen A835, C9: Letter from Ben Khoapa to Peter Randall, Dec 3, 1973; and Cullen A835, B9.ii: Letter from Brian Brown to Ben Khoapa, Sept 5, 1972.

- <sup>18</sup> Cullen A835, C9: Letter from Ben Khoapa to Peter Randall, December 3, 1973. Randall himself was banned like Khoapa along with most of the leadership of the Christian Institute in October, 1977.
- <sup>19</sup> Randall, interview, May 13, 2008; Randall, 1973; and Cullen A835, C1: Peter Randall, "SPRO-CAS: Motivations and Assumptions", pp. 2-5. See also Khoapa, interview, June 4, 2008. Spro-cas itself wanted to concentrate mostly on black initiative, but also on helping white people "respond creatively" to that black initiative (Cullen A835, C1: "Spro-Cas 2 Planning Meeting: 15-16 October 1971"). See also Cullen A835, B5: Letter from Peter Randall to Beyers Naudé, May 29, 1973; Cullen A835, C9: Letter from Beyers Naudé to Ben Khoapa, March 8, 1973.
- <sup>20</sup> Center for Research Libraries, GG, Reel 3, Ben Khoapa, "Spro-Cas 2: Black Community Programmes: Tentative Suggestions for Action," p. 2. See also p. 3.
- <sup>21</sup> Cullen A835, C9: Spro-cas Black Community Programmes, Proposal to the Ford Foundation, 1973, p. 2. The BCP also wrote that it must direct "relevant black work" at "eradicating the psychological oppression of blacks by their own over-sized mental image of the white man and his abilities and by their exaggerated feeling of powerlessness which results in lack of creative initiatives" (Cullen A835, C1: "Spro-Cas Black Community Programmes Budget Proposals - 1973").
- <sup>22</sup> Center for Research Libraries, GG, Reel 3, Ben Khoapa, "Spro-Cas 2: Black Community Programmes: Tentative Suggestions for Action," p. 6.
- <sup>23</sup> See numerous documents, especially Cullen A835, C9: Proposal to the Ford Foundation, p. 5.
- <sup>24</sup> Cullen A835, C1: Report of Conference for Black Church Leaders at Edendale Lay Ecumenical Centre in Pietermaritzburg, 15-18 May 1972.
- <sup>25</sup> Cullen A835, C1: Report of Conference for Black Church Leaders. See also Aluka Digital Library, Karis-Gerhart Collection in Struggles for Freedom in Southern Africa (hereafter KG-Aluka): BCP, "1972 Year Report"; and KG-Aluka: BCP, "1973 Report". The BCP held a follow-up meeting in August and organised a conference on Black Theology in 1973.
- <sup>26</sup> Spro-cas hoped its publications would continue to sell, but told its subscribers that police harassment and financial pressures prevented them from continuing on. Peter Randall, Danie van Zyl, and Beyers Naudé founded Ravan Press at the end of 1972 to act as the printer for Spro-cas and the Christian Institute with the view of evolving into a full publishing house (de Villiers 1997).
- <sup>27</sup> Khoapa, interview, June 4, 2008.
- <sup>28</sup> Cullen A835, B9.ii: Letter from Beyers Naudé to Peter Randall and Ben Khoapa regarding the Church of Norway donation, December 21, 1972.
- <sup>29</sup> Cullen A835, B9.ii: Letter from Peter Randall to Beyers Naudé, June 29, 1972.
- <sup>30</sup> Cullen A835, C1: "Spro-Cas Black Community Programmes Budget Proposals - 1973," pp. 9-11.
- <sup>31</sup> Dr. L.M. "Dubs" Msauli, interview with the author, June 24, 2008, Mdantsane, South Africa. Aelred Stubbs was also a fruitful contact for obtaining funds for BCP projects. See for example, KG-Aluka: Aelred Stubbs, "Second Report on Black Community Programmes and Zimele Trust Fund," November 1976, to friends overseas.
- <sup>32</sup> Khoapa, interview, June 4, 2008.

- <sup>33</sup> The large amount of aid coming into the country was one reason why the government launched the Schlebusch Commission investigation into organisations such as the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) and the Christian Institute that led to restrictions on the amount of foreign aid received by organisations considered subversive (Badat 1999: 136; Karis and Gerhart 1997: 63). This was under the Affected Organisations Act of 1974 that made it illegal for organisations to accept money from foreign sources for political purposes.
- <sup>34</sup> Khoapa, interview, June 4, 2008.
- <sup>35</sup> UNISA Library Documentation Centre for African Studies (hereafter Unisa), AA153 Black Consciousness, Box BPC, Student Movements, Black Consciousness: Security Police [Brigadier P.J. Coetzee?], "Memorandum: Black Community Programmes," n.d., sec. 65-66 and 70.
- <sup>36</sup> "R300 000 BCP assets seized," October 21, 1977, *Daily Dispatch*, East London.
- <sup>37</sup> These numbers are based on inflation rates recorded in Rossouw (2007) for 1975-1981; Stats South Africa StatsOnline CPI History-rebased from 1982-2008 ([www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za); accessed June 18, 2010); and an average exchange rate in 2008 of R8.25 to the US dollar.
- <sup>38</sup> Khoapa, interview, June 4, 2008.
- <sup>39</sup> Financial registers for "Zanempilo Community Health Clinic - 1" and "Black Community Programmes (Solempilo Community Centre) - 17" provided to me in March 2010 by Tshikululu Social Investments, the agency that the Chairman's Fund evolved into. The total for 1976 includes R12'000 for Zanempilo and R85'000 listed for the BCP's other clinic in Natal, Solempilo.
- <sup>40</sup> Peter Jones, interview with the author, May 14, 2008, Somerset West, South Africa.
- <sup>41</sup> Khoapa, interview, October 8, 2009.
- <sup>42</sup> Cullen A835, C9: Proposal to the Ford Foundation, pp. 17-18. See also the BCP yearly reports for names of panel and board members (footnote 25 above).
- <sup>43</sup> Apparently Ngidi was also a member of an underground ANC cell in the Hammarsdale region in the Natal Province (SADET 2006: 549).
- <sup>44</sup> Russell even led the push for an initiative in the Grahamstown Diocese in 1968 to equalise black and white salaries for clergy. Michael Scott (who worked in Sophiatown, Natal, and Namibia in the 1940s and 1950s) and Trevor Huddleston (Sophiatown in the 1950s) are among others who dedicated their service to black communities and took part in social and political campaigns, such as protesting forced removals before the 1970s and 1980s.
- <sup>45</sup> Russell, interview, May 15, 2008. He also frequented the Federal Theological Seminary in Alice and interacted with the priests and Black Theology proponents there.
- <sup>46</sup> Russell left King William's Town at the end of 1973. After some time at a contemplative community in Lesotho, he moved to Cape Town where he worked with the squatter camps in the area known as Crossroads. His activities led to numerous arrests, detentions, and a five year banning order.
- <sup>47</sup> The security police also frequented the office. They routinely followed activists, often searched the premises and came to arrest or detain people. They disguised at least one nighttime visit as criminal vandalism (for more on the break-in of the offices in

- 1976 see Thomas 2007: 193-196; and Donald Card, interview with author, October 15, 2008, Gonubie, South Africa).
- 48 Clinics and hospitals for black people were few and far between, there was a shortage of health care professionals, and children suffered from diseases of malnutrition (Hadfield 2010b; Saldru Community Health Project 1983).
- 49 Msauli, interview, June 24, 2008. Later, in return, Biko and the BCP arranged for a new chapel to be built.
- 50 Ramokgopa speculated that Manas Buthelezi helped them as well. Buthelezi was a Lutheran priest and theologian who was one of the first and strongest proponents of Black Theology. He was based in Soweto at the time (Ramsey Ramokgopa, interview with the author, November 10, 2008, Johannesburg).
- 51 Of course this was not without cultural and social ramifications, as many historians have demonstrated, most prominently Comaroffs and Comaroff (1991); (see also Davenport and Elphick 1997).
- 52 Yet this was not the first social medicine experiment in South Africa (Tollman and Yach 1993; Marks 1997; Jeeves 2000; Jeeves 2005).
- 53 Unisa AAS20: BCP Limited, "Projects and People," 1977; KG-Aluka: BCP Limited, "BCP 1976 Report," pp. 6-7.
- 54 The BCP did have some problems with the local priest at the Adam's mission, but it appears to have been the only place where this was an issue (Khoapa, interview with the author, November 3, 2008, Durban).
- 55 "Community Project Dedicated," November 1975, *The Crozier*, p. 4.
- 56 Peter Jones, interview with the author, April 22, 2006, Athens, Ohio, USA.
- 57 Msauli, interview, June 24, 2008.
- 58 Stanton served in Alice from 1968 until the end of 1974, when the seminary was "expropriated" (Fr. Timothy Stanton, personal correspondence by email, January 24, 2009).
- 59 Cullen AC623 SACC, 4.3: Letter from T. H. Sibeko to Mrs. C. Koza, May 24, 1974.
- 60 Fr. Timothy Stanton, personal correspondence by email, January 24, 2009.
- 61 Njwaxa residents also said Stanton sold food – milk, soup, and sweets – at a very cheap price and helped the community build a dam (Nakase and Cola, interview by the author and Lindani Ntentseni, July 3, 2008, Njwaxa, South Africa; Njwaxa Group interview, September 18, 2008).
- 62 Fr. Timothy Stanton, personal correspondence by email, January 24, 2009.
- 63 Cullen AC 623 SACC, 4.3.3: Letter from T.H. Sibeko to Inter Church Aid administrator, September 9, 1974; Cullen AC 623 SACC, 4.3.3: Letter from T.H. Sibeko to John Reese, April 22, 1976.
- 64 Jones, interview, May 14, 2008.
- 65 Maisela later became a project leader in the BCP's Transvaal branch office, and sold the goods her women's sewing groups made at the SACC building on Jorrissen Street through Dev Craft (Development Craft), a shop run by the SACC to sell goods on behalf of women from various groups (Mantuka Maisela, interview with the author, July 24, 2008, Sandton, South Africa).
- 66 Also, Temba and Cybil Sibeko, interview with the author, December 15, 2008, Fort Beaufort, South Africa.

- <sup>67</sup> The Border Council of Churches was first named the Ciskeian Christian Council. The first annual report of the council listed the following churches as founding members: African Methodist Episcopal, Bantu Presbyterian, Berlin Lutheran Mission, Church of the Province of South Africa, Congregational Union of South Africa, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Methodist Church of South Africa, and the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. See "Ciskeian Christian Council First Annual Report, covering the period September 1963 to August 1964," AC 623 4.3, Cullen.
- <sup>68</sup> Sibeko, interview, December 15, 2008.
- <sup>69</sup> Russell, interview, May 15, 2008.
- <sup>70</sup> Cullen AC 623, 4.3.3: Letter from John Rees to Thanjiwe Mtintso, September 23, 1974.
- <sup>71</sup> KG-Aluka: A. Stubbs, "Second Report on BCP and Zimele Trust Fund 1976".
- <sup>72</sup> Also, Voti Samela, interview with the author and Lindani Ntenti, August 4, 2008, Kwa Gcina, South Africa.
- <sup>73</sup> Unisa AA153: Security Police, "Memorandum: Black Community Programmes."
- <sup>74</sup> The Anglican Church even fought the government to reclaim the land where Zanempilo was built after the state had taken over the clinic.

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