The Rhetoric of Revolution:
The Black Consciousness Movement and the Dalit Panther Movement

by

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Abstract

The liberation of oppressed people is a global struggle as liberation movements echo one another in proclaiming rights of equality, freedom and liberty inherent to all human beings. The marginalized constituents respond to oppression by donning the armor of struggle to wrest free from the chains of oppression and racism and/or white supremacy. The Black Consciousness Movement headed by Steve Biko, and the Dalit Panther Movement modeled after the Black Panther Party and influenced by the philosophies of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar create a need for pause as the worldwide implications and potentials of collective liberation are analyzed and realized for the empowerment of people of African descent across the globe. By using generic rhetorical criticism where the text is revolution, the author captures the response of these oppressed groups to the oppressor. Thus, the rhetoric of revolution spans critiques of religion, to identification of "friend-enemies," to acknowledging the collective struggle of people of African descent. This research contributes to the literature on revolution and African world uplift by analyzing factors associated with impacting change in the Diaspora.

Introduction

The liberation of oppressed people is a global struggle as liberation movements echo one another in proclaiming rights of equality, freedom and liberty inherent to all human beings which is indeed deserved, but not always realized by the marginalized. And thus, such marginalization in this construct leads constituents to response to oppression by donning the armor of struggle to wrest free from the chains of oppression and racism and/or white supremacy.

Therein, the Black Consciousness Movement headed by Steve Biko, and the Dalit Panther Movement modeled after the Black Panther Party and influenced by the philosophies of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar created a need for pause as the worldwide implications and potentials of collective liberation are analyzed and realized for the empowerment of people of color across the globe. Therefore, this realization is captured in the response of the oppressed to the oppressor, where the rhetoric of revolution (in a broad sense) spans from consciousness-raising to violent action and has been utilized as a strategy for liberation.

Methodology

Generic rhetorical criticism is utilized to investigate the rhetoric of the Black Consciousness Movement and the Dalit Panther Movement. Rather than looking at one specific speech or eulogy, I look at revolution as a meta-text. The specific words and actions of revolutionaries in the Dalit Panther Movement and Black Consciousness Movement, as well as the idea of revolution, serve as an intertwined helix of text and meta-text. Here leaders can apply rhetorical criticism to help understand and agitate for future revolutions to impact change; and the "observable, explicable and predictable rhetorical commonalities" of revolution thus serve as a genre by which leaders describe and devise methods to continue the struggle for equality and change (Kuypers, 2005).

The methodology herein considers similarities in the approach of revolutionary leaders, as well as the common collective heritage of the Dalits, South Africans, and other people of the African Diaspora. According to Rajshekar (1987), the Dalits are the descendents of the Africans who founded the Indus Valley Civilization and who were enslaved by fair skinned Aryans from the North. He goes on to state that the separation of the struggle of African Americans in the United States from other people of African descent in the Diaspora is deleterious to the collective uplift of a people. Rajshekar (1987) speaks of the similarities between Dalits and African Americans (and by extension, other people of African descent):

> *While feeling free to pronounce on human rights issues in relation to other countries, both India and the US strongly reject any outside "interference" (criticism) of their own minority relations. Both multi-ethnic states promote the ideal of nonviolence among their oppressed minorities while not hesitating to resort to violence either in relations with other states, or in repression of minority demands. And lastly and most perniciously, both seek to imply that the oppressed minority's current plight is due in some way to its own misdeeds…* (p. 5).

While Rajshekar speaks of African Americans and the Dalits, Black South Africans are also considered in this research; and in fact, the research has implications for people of the African Diaspora although it is more narrowly focused on the movements of the Dalits and South Africans.

Existing Literature

There is a plethora of research on revolution, including that which investigates how oppressed persons of African descent have conceptualized and begun to address the issues of racism/white supremacy. Kwame Ture's *Black Power*, Amos Wilson's *Blueprint for Black Power*, Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism*, and Kwame Agyei and Akua Nson Akoto's *The Sankofa Movement* have addressed revolution among people of African descent. These texts have provided a critique of American society, recommendations for black empowerment, and steps for psychological and physical revolution. The colonization of African people throughout the globe, including the United States (as explored by Kwame Ture) has set the tone for this literature to become manifest. And, it is through the deconstruction and reconstruction of revolutionary rhetoric that leaders can begin to highlight the challenges in bringing about change in the interest of the Black collective.

There has also been research done to investigate the similar plights between people of African descent throughout the Diaspora, specifically in India. *The Black Panther Party Legacy & Alumni*, *African American Policy Forum*, work done by Vijay Prashad and Runoko Rashidi have begun to reveal the common plight of the Dalits, African Americans and other peoples of the African Diaspora. In Runoko Rashidi's *Global African Presence History Notes*, he begins to unravel the complex history of the Dalits and highlight the consubstantiality of the Dalits and other persons of African descent.

Socio-Political Environment

Understanding the socio-political environment in which the liberation movements of people of African descent occurred is central to grasping the subtle and not so subtle nuances of liberation movements. As the Black Power Movement received international attention during the mid-late twentieth century, the movement set the stage for concomitant and subsequent anti-systemic movements. Accordingly, this happened because movements do not exist in a vacuum and oppression has common features and is the reason why each of the liberation movements occurred essentially simultaneously (Wallerstein, 1999).

Thus, the movements of people and intellectual capital through the spread of education, international and transnational trade, and media have been instrumental in creating a connected society whereby peoples can be and are influenced by tangential, adjacent and direct causal relationships with other peoples around the world (Friedman, 2005). Therefore, it is no coincidence that the global milieu set the stage for concurrent action by people of African descent. Furthermore, the success and/or perceived success of these movements propelled each group to continued action. In this context, Wallerstein (1999) offers that movements occur because of the past success of other movements, and states:

> *No, it is not oppression that mobilizes masses, but hope and certainty—the belief that the end of oppression is near, that a better world is truly possible. And nothing reinforces such hope and certainty more than success. The long march of the antisystemic movements has been like a rolling stone. It gathered momentum over time. And the biggest argument that any given movement could use in order to mobilize support was the success of other movements that seemed comparable and reasonably close in geography and culture* (p. 3).

Therefore it can be said that these revolutionary movements were linked in the tapestry of global liberation movements. They also dovetailed on earlier movements of the African National Congress (ANC) is South Africa, Dr. Ambedkar's movement in India and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. The momentum of hope incited the people to action, so they could fight for equality and liberation.

Not only did these earlier movements impact the Dalit Panther and Black Consciousness Movement, but communism also impacted these movements (Franklin, 1994). And despite the nominal defeat of communism following the Cold War, Marxist philosophies would come to inform the movements of people of African descent and the Dalits in India. Essentially the sole nemesis of capitalism and arguably the basis of an entire World War, hence ideals of an egalitarian society would serve as a powerful force motivating the conscious efforts of the oppressed to transform society. Thus, communism as a philosophy and movement, along with the rhetoric arising from the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. Ambedkar's movement and the ANC became defining features of the philosophies of the later movements of the Dalit Panther Movement and the Black Consciousness Movement (Franklin, 1994; Biko, 2004; MacDonald, 2006). As people of color continue to recognize that the hegemonic construct of white supremacy and/or racism is truly global and connected, their collective economic and political power can begin to unravel the physical and psychological chains and system created for people of color.

White Supremacy and Oppression

The construct of white supremacy that oppresses people of African descent and people of color can largely be seen in myriad areas. White supremacy has dictated standards of beauty, assumes writing by Europeans as the highest indication of culture (to the dismissal of African oral and written traditions), and uses its religion to foster slave-based/unequal relations where the European proclaims divine rights to civilize "barbaric" and "uncivilized" peoples. Furthermore, what African Americans refer to as Wyllie Lynch Syndrome, what South Africa knew as apartheid and "separate development," what the Dalits acknowledge as casteism, and what the entire global community of colored people understand as a strategy of divide and conquer has taken varying forms to accomplish the same end—continued subjugation of people of African descent for the continued exercise of white supremacy and/or racism.

This white supremacy operates in a dialectical relationship to the collective consciousness and actions of people of African descent. That is, white supremacy exercises domination, Black Power responds. A synthesis of this dialogue plays out in specific black/white relations—antagonism, conciliation, forgiveness, etc. It is not necessarily that white supremacy predated Black Power in a global sense. Rather, Black Power exists as a reincarnated manifestation of an omniscient African reality. As Toni Morrison asserts, white supremacy is playing in the dark, against an African essence (Morrison, 1990). Therefore, white supremacy is not the originator nor is it more powerful than Black Power. The exercise of white power is simply experiencing a heyday for a short period of time in the long history of world civilizations. As such, understanding the rhetoric of revolution is central to understanding how this dialectical relationship of current domination/subjugation ensues.

Such subjugation of people of color by white supremacists can be seen in the process of separate development. Michael MacDonald (2006) asserts that separate development "sought to confine Africans in 'their' tribal cultures" (p. 15). These tribal communities were to be transformed into separate nations through "institutionalizing tribes as political units and fragmenting the unity of the oppressed that was immanent in the shared experiences of apartheid" (MacDonald, 2006, p. 15). Thusly, Africans were to be sectioned off into groups, created as essentially independent nations whose sovereign actions would work to negate any collective power and mobilization that might result from a unified Africa. Similarly, African Americans are still navigating subjugation in the areas of the politics of color, the "right" strategy for liberation, and various other ideological differences. The varna, or caste system of India, stemming from the Vedas and inevitably influenced by the Aryans and, although disintegrating, still bears the vestiges of discrimination and division.

While India's fading caste system is wrought with intraracial divisions, the oppression of Dalits is the struggle of Diasporic peoples of African descent. Paswan and Jaideva (2002) highlight the fact that Dalits are barred from access to resources that would allow them to enhance their position in the social, economic and political strata of Indian life. Paswan and Jaideva (2002) in speaking of Dalits state, "The people who almost die in building the terrestrial heaven are denied access to it and we [are] condemned to live in these nether lands forever, suffering silently and yet serving sincerely."

Where Paswan and Jaideva (2002) err, however, is by suggesting that the level of oppression suffered by Dalits is to a greater extent than enslaved Africans in America or enslavement of Africans in Europe because other places "were better placed in terms of certain minimum access to civilized life such as education and training" (p. 15). First, this statement reinforces oppression by creating division. To what extent is one African person's oppression greater than the next African person's? Second, it suggests that Paswan and Jaideva (2002) do not have an accurate portrayal or have not done a thorough investigation of slavery in the states where enslavers went to great depths to ensure that Africans, similar to the Dalit experience, were not afforded the opportunity of literacy. Finally, while noting that oppression is oppression, it is nevertheless important to note that the Maafa (trafficking and enslavement of African peoples) was a global phenomenon never seen before in history. Still, Paswan and Jaideva's (2002) assertion that the Dalits are vulnerable to "domination, exploitation and oppression by powerful, aggressive, and arrogant self serving socio-economic and political interests" forces one to reject trivializing the oppression of people of African descent.

The institutionalization of white supremacy and/or racism/intraracism ensures that it thrives and perpetuates itself to maintain the status quo. Declarations of Marxist and Communist rhetoric are even supported by such a system where there is authorized dissent so that the masses have a productive and nonviolent exercise of pseudo-freedom. However, the extent to which members of oppressed groups may rise through the ranks to attain real power to empower the collective seems to be slim. Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Robert Sobukwe, Steven Biko, Nelson Mandela—assassinated or imprisoned. Institutional racism creates pass laws and answers any resistance with genocide; it forces the language of the oppressor as the national language of the people; it denies access to employment and then screams reverse racism at attempts of affirmative action; it creates reservation/segregation in education; it forces the oppressed groups to subhuman living conditions in townships and ghettoes. This is the reality of institutionalized oppression and is the favorite tool of a formerly overt—currently subversive system of racism.

MacDonald (2006) discusses the institutional racism rampant in South Africa, where the entire system of South Africa depended upon the subjugation of blacks and the elevation of whites—from education, to economics, to religion, to politics. Where education was concerned, many native Africans were forced to Bantu education which was an inferior form of education that did not venerate African heritage. Furthermore, South African whites attempted to preserve Afrikaans by forcing the language as the official language to be taught in schools. This attempt failed.

Regarding religion, whites sought to institutionalize an unequal society in the name of civilizing the noble savage. In South Africa it was, in part, the use of Christianity that promulgated the dehumanization of black South Africans, thus justifying the denial of rights and citizenship to black South Africans (MacDonald, 2006). Biko (2004) highlights one of the fundamental flaws of forcing Christianity on African peoples. He asserts that it reinforces the alleged inferiority of the African by relegating him/her to a position of inferior receptacle who must rely on the white man to teach the Black South African Christianity. Rather than act with authority, the Black South African must accept the expertise of those who are imposing this religion, which comes with political, economic, and cultural implications, guidelines and institutions. Biko (2004) states:

> *If, the white missionaries were right about their God in the eyes of the people, then the African people could only accept whatever these new know all tutors had to say about life…thus if Christianity in its introduction was corrupted by the inclusion of aspects which made it the ideal religion for the colonization of people, nowadays in its interpretation it is the ideal religion for the maintenance of the subjugation of the same people* (60-61).

Similarly, Contursi (1993) speaks of the political theology of the Dalit Panthers, where she asserts that the Panther's ideology was infused with and/or comprised of Buddhist and Marxist philosophy. Because Buddhism spoke to retaining Indian heritage by way of questioning the caste hierarchies and essential historical teachings and Marxism spoke to revolution, each offered means of and aspirations of transforming society. The philosophies expressed in Buddhism and Marxism existed as the antithesis to the Hindu practice of societal relations and challenged the status quo. In adopting this amalgamated ideology, the Dalits were able to express and embody a freedom of religion formerly repressed by the historical and current oppression of the existing Indian society. Contursi (1993) sums up Dr. Ambedkar's Dhamma, which explains the difference between religion and Dhamma (or the assumed political theology of the Dalits):

> *Thus Ambedkar perceives an essential contradiction between religion and dhamma: religion is personal, dhamma is social; religion explains the world, dhamma reconstructs the world; religion is concerned with god, soul, and salvation, dhamma is concerned with ending human suffering. Dhamma in other words, is moral action for social change. Like other forms of liberation theology, Amdedkar's Buddhism indicts the powerful and the privileged for the inequality and suffering of society, views the poor as the victims of exploitation, and calls for the elimination of suffering through social action* (p. 325)

Religion is thus given historical and contemporary context. Deconstructing the institutional oppression of religion is essential to understanding both the oppression of South Africans and Dalits. It has been through metaphysical and symbolic power that material power has manifested, from the Hindu caste system, to the divine right of kings, to the religious right. Religion is used epistemologically; it is a way of knowing the world and understanding hierarchies and it stands upon its own bottom, accepted and needing no justification. This is precisely because the existence of an omniscient and omnipresent force that relegates races, cultures, peoples to specified lots in life can not be proved or disproved. There in lies the paradox. The practice of Christianity and Hinduism as an exercise of power has historically oppressed and arguably continues to oppress others to solidify the authority of the oppressing group, whites and higher caste Hindus respectively. The material manifestation of wealth, political representation, cultural hegemony, is authorized by some ever-present, all knowing entity. A God/gods who believe in institutional oppression, cultural repression, economic exploitation and religious domination need be reexamined.

In addition to the institutions of religion and education, the political economy is also implicated in maintaining oppressive structures. According to MacDonald (2006), the political economy of South Africa was such that big business did not necessarily support state interference in business matters, including interfering with the privileging of white workers in employment and increased wages for white workers (particularly unionized workers). However, big business also understood that the economy was based on race. The success of big business—the profit derived from the political economy—depended upon race relationships of white superiority and black inferiority. It was not a purely capitalist system in that it was not an entirely free market. Nevertheless, it was capitalist in that there were private businesses and exploitation of the African masses for the benefit of the white minority (MacDonald, 2006). In essence, the capitalist political economy depended on maintaining racialism and racism to support its economic, political and cultural dominance (MacDonald, 2006). In reconfiguring South African society, the Black Consciousness Movement addressed the underlying assumptions and beliefs that maintained such a political economy.

The lack of economic and political opportunity faced by the Dalits despite the contributions of their labor to the market, based in part on the large proportion of the population of which they comprise, is indicative of the political economy in various parts of India. Their exploited labor and simultaneous lack of representation in government became a major platform of Dr. Ambedkar's political protest and the Dalit Movement of the 1920s. Morever, Paswan and Jaideva (2002) point to the dominant oligarchy of higher caste Indians who control the state power and the resources. This same constituency finds complicity with such institutions as the police and the judiciary to the detriment of the Dalits.

Conditions for Revolution

What then have been the conditions for revolution and the response of the oppressed to oppression? Wallerstein (1999) asserts that the "movements had to organize within a political environment that was hostile to them, one that was quite often ready to suppress or constrain considerably their political activity" (p. 23). The development of the Dalit Movement and Black Consciousness movement stemmed from various discriminatory and racist practices that created an intense irritation in the people, an irritation that incited them to action. Misguided interpretations of human rights declarations and bills of rights in Indian society denied Dalits certain rights by concluding that Dalits were not human beings and thus not entitled to the rights of such declarations, bills and constitutions. Dalits have been and continue to be forced to slums without basic humanitarian conditions. In South Africa, only whites had political power because black South Africans were denied citizenship. Such acts as the Native Land Act restricted land ownership where only 7.2% of the land was allotted to blacks while whites owned the remaining land (MacDonald, 2006). Whites also restricted the movements of blacks through the pass laws (MacDonald, 2006). These existing conditions set the tone for the revolutionary rhetoric and movement of the mid to late twentieth century.

The environment had indeed been hostile; the response, nevertheless, has been an amalgamation of the spiritual, intellectual, and emotional. What MacDonald (2006) notes is that the white South African government, the National Party, forced blacks to revolutionary action. The National Party ruled with such a heavy hand that the only recourse South Africans were afforded were revolutionary strategies, as seen in the Soweto Rebellion of 1976 (Africans in townships rebelling against poor housing and economic conditions, as well as political disenfranchisement) (MacDonald, 2006). Similarly, the Sharpeville Massacre (the government violently suppressed Africans protesting pass laws), indicated the strategy South Africans would take to have their needs met (Biko, 2004). Physical violence became the outcome of the fight against oppression in these instances and yet what must also be taken into consideration is the language and rhetorical strategies of the leaders of the Dalit Panther Movement and the Black Consciousness Movement.

Rhetoric of Revolution

Biko uses the master's tools to challenge the racist hierarchy by taking an intellectual approach to understanding racism. Biko, who uses the Hegelian theory of dialectic materialism to call attention to the relationship between the practice of power (embodied by whites and whiteness) and perceived/practiced powerlessness (embodied by blacks/people of color and blackness). Biko's construction of white racism (thesis), black solidarity (antithesis) and balance (synthesis) causes the investigation of the practice of power and the necessary outcome of liberation struggles. Biko speaks to the psychological ramifications of white supremacy and the need for blacks to create for themselves definitions of black and blackness and to use political action to materialize and defend this blackness (Biko, 2004). MacDonald (2006) summarizes Biko's stance: "To be black was to be militantly black, openly, proudly and defiantly" (p. 118). In essence, much of Biko's approach was psychological and intellectual. He identified the enemy, the criteria for the victor or protagonist and set about describing the conditions of victory by skillfully using language, ideology, and philosophy.

And yet, his strategy can not be so narrowly defined. He also employs tactics of ethos, where he challenges blacks to appreciate their worth and understand their cultural roots. This call for self-esteem and self-love is endemic to any empowerment/liberation movement, precisely because the method by which the oppressed people have been subjugated has been fashioned by means of attempting to and successfully deteriorating the oppressed groups' sense of self worth. Biko, therefore, grounds South African morality in a traditional African culture and spirituality. He asserts that South Africans, and all blacks for that matter, had spirituality, a morality, a code of ethics before becoming indoctrinated with Western religions and ways of thought. Biko speaks of the spirituality of the African song, of the collective approach to life, the harmony with nature. He also delineates that the standard of success and progress is indeed a black standard, not a white one. He states, "Here again, 'black consciousness' seeks to show the black people the value of their own standards and outlook. It urges black people to judge themselves according to these standards and not be fooled by white society who have whitewashed themselves and made white standards the yardstick by which even black people judge each other" (p.33).

The Dalit Panther Movement which has been reshaped over the years retains the fiery rhetoric of revolution as seen in current literature of the Dalit Panthers. One proclamation of contemporary Dalit Panther Party rhetoric as indicated by *Dalit Oppression* states:

We will not be satisfied easily now. We do not want a little piece in the Brahmin…We want the rule of the whole land. We are not looking at persons but at a system. Change of heart, liberal education, etc., will not end our state of exploitation. When we gather a revolutionary mass, rouse the people, out of the struggle of this giant mass will come the tidal wave of revolution.

The level of passion demonstrated in this excerpt typifies the response of oppressed people to their conditions. It no longer becomes acceptable to accept concessions and compromise with conservative elites who encourage marginalized people to be patient with process. Rather, revolutionaries begin to take measured steps to make their demands known and to bring those demands to material manifestation.

Instrumental in the rhetoric and strategies of the liberation movements has also been the illumination of what will be termed here the "friend-enemies" of their respective movements. Biko's friend-enemies are white liberals and Ambedkar's, Gandhism. One of the tools of persuasion and liberation rightly used is the dismantling of the disguises of the "enemy." Biko and Ambedkar hold a light to the pseudo-benevolent actions of these friend-enemies. They identify the ideologies and motivations that may have deleterious consequences for the masses of oppressed people in their fight for liberation.

As in the United States, the whites have the privilege, cleavage and comfort of a racist society whereby they can live vicariously through liberation movements of the oppressed without sacrificing their own comfortable accommodations. Biko acknowledges that it is impossible for the oppressor to fight the system of oppression that gives it its privilege. To what extent is it desirable to rid oneself of power so that another race may have equality, where the threat of role reversal is imminent, and where the racist classed society is the basis of economic, political and cultural institutions and systems? These are the inevitable considerations of whites generally, whether subconscious or conscious, whether conservative or liberal. Biko astutely states the position of the white liberal and why the white liberal cannot fight the struggle for Blacks:

The liberal is in fact appeasing his own consciousness or at best is eager to demonstrate his identification with the black people only so far as it does not sever all his ties with his relatives on the other side of the colour line. Being white he possesses the natural passport to the exclusive pool of white privileges…yet since he identifies with the blacks, he moves around his white circles…with a lighter load, feeling that he is not like the rest, yet at the back of his mind is a constant reminder that he is quite comfortable as things stand and therefore should not bother about change. (p. 71)

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Thus, Biko has uncovered the false pretenses of white liberals, whose liberalism can have a detrimental effect on the cause of Black liberation. Similarly Ambedkar points to the fallacious ideologies and perceptions about Gandhism, which has in fact perpetuated a classed Indian society. He makes the distinction that those who fight in the interest of Independence of India from the British (Gandhi) are not necessarily fighting for the equality and liberation of all of India's people. He highlights the fact that Gandhism maintained that classed society was natural and desirable, used a strategy of glorifying the lot of the lower class in order to deter any rebellion and create contentment with one's class, supported segregation between the castes, and barred employment of lower casts from various professions. Ambedkar highlights these egregious faults in Gandhism because it maintained a consciousness of oppression among the oppressed Dalits. In order to be liberated, Ambedkar exposed Gandhism as an imposter not necessarily working in the interest of all oppressed people.

In essence, what Biko and Ambedkar attempt to do is illuminate the erroneous misconceptions and strategies that may hinder resistance and liberation of Dalits and South Africans in the grand scheme. This is no different than what occurred in the Black Power Movement, where the efforts of white liberals and "Uncle Tom" negroes were exposed as anathemas of the struggle. It became important to highlight these misconceptions and falsified ideologies because the ignorance of the masses might lead them to perfunctorily maintain and substantiate, by self reinforcement, the oppression that had been inflicted upon them.

Defining the Black Consciousness Movement and Dalit Panther Movement were declarations of a common plight among all oppressed peoples. According to Contursi (1993), the Dalits identified internationally with African Americans, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Africans. Contursi (1993) points to the Dalit Panther Manifesto in which it is stated that the Dalits "are members of scheduled castes and tribes; neo-Buddhists, the working people, the landless and poor peasants, women and all those who are being exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion" (p. 326).

In like kind, MacDonald (2006) interprets Biko's definition of Black as inclusive, where people could become "black without first being African" (p. 118). This is because the liberation struggle was and was not unique to Africans; it spoke to a universal oppression of people of color, as well as the very particular struggle of Africans in apartheid South Africa. The significance of acknowledging a global struggle is the force it gives to the movement and the increased potential for success. When social movements are viewed as isolated, fragmented incidences, the full import of the struggle for justice becomes diluted. However, when movements are seen as collective action momentum is given to the core of a united struggle.

Conclusion

The rhetoric and action of the Black Consciousness Movement and the Dalit Panther Movement set precedence for future liberation movements. By understanding the recipe for the political and social movement of the oppressed, it becomes possible also to understand the oppressor and the institutional oppression that threatens the Diaspora. These movements existed in a hostile environment in which oppression was political, cultural and economic. Therefore, the leaders and influential actors in these movements, namely Biko and Ambedkar recognized the global import of their actions and the common oppression of people of African descent. Thus, the strategies were connected and comparable. They spoke of "friend-enemies," self-empowerment, global struggle, fallacious religious teachings—all to highlight the abysmal conditions of these predicaments as well as the hope of liberation.   These movements did not exist in a vacuum and future movements will also be connected.

People of African descent must recognize the international and transnational implications of moving as a collective and must develop strategies and movements that will address the unique nuances of a connected world. As there is a continuing investigation of revolution and continuing agitation of change, there will be need to move from mobilization to organization. Understanding the rhetorical strategies that have been used gives a gauge of the successes and challenges of revolution, and while revolution is more than words, words (and experiences) are what raise consciousness and make action possible.

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