

↪ Round-table 02 ↩

Critical Times, Critical Race

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Abstract

This paper is presented in the form that it took as a roundtable, encompassing the key voices of the students involved in ‘Critical Times, Critical Race’, a research project that emerged from a series of discussion at the Centre for Critical Research on Race and Identity (CCRRI) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2013. The roundtable addresses questions of consciousness, decolonisation, complicity, Africanisation and the pitfalls of a national consciousness that does not take up its historical responsibility in fighting for the kind of liberation it promised the oppressed masses.

Keywords: race, consciousness, colonialism, White liberals, decolonisation, White monopoly capitalism

Introduction

In this roundtable, four researchers and scholars get together with the primary investigator of the project, 'Critical Times, Critical Race', which ran from 2013 at the Centre for Critical Research on Race and Identity (CCRRI), to discuss their research and scholarly work on race and its merge into discussions on decolonisation. Each of the researchers has their respective affiliations with political groupings within the country and put some of these forward; others are also critical of the very positions they support and openly speak of the shortcomings that they believe make decolonisation a complex matter, which most believe is not happening in South Africa, the country of their birth.

Methodology

A roundtable approach was sought to address questions that speak to the merge between and among race, racism and decolonisation in South Africa. This method of unpacking, where a speaker follows on from another, facilitated a discussion rather than a prescribed agenda or set of ideas which often streamline and limit spontaneity. An existentialist approach is utilised here as well as one that draws from autoethnography in bringing forth a broad range of inquiries to what it means to study relations of race and racism whilst simultaneously addressing questions of decolonisation and decoloniality. All of the students involved in the project named above participated in research activities ranging from focus group studies to interviews and questionnaires. It is, however, an approach that draws on experience as scholars who come to the position of researcher through lived experience, that is present in the discussion here and defines its critique.

Discussion

Rozena Maart chairs this discussion as the primary investigator of this project.

ROZENA MAART: When were you first acquainted with the objective of decolonisation?

JACKIE SHANDU: For me it was in the mid-2000s.

PHEZU NTETHA: I joined the student formation of the Black Consciousness Movement known as the Azanian Student Movement (AZASM) in 1988 when I was still at high school, when I was 15 years old, which means I practically grew up in the Black Consciousness (BC) tradition. Thereafter I was part of every wing of the movement from student, to youth formation, until the mother body. At one stage I was part of Azanian People's Organisation's (AZAPO's) 2-year youth cadetship (a programme composed of cadres) and this is where I was first acquainted with the objective of decolonisation.

PHILILE LANGA: I was first acquainted with the objective of decolonisation during my masters. Up until then, I had been socialised under the banner of post-apartheid integration, the rainbow nation, which I now consider a myth. The language around decolonisation was introduced to me during class, but it was outside of class that the core parts of the conversations on decolonisation started happening. The first and perhaps most important part of the objective of decolonisation is telling the truth. I think that due to the integration objective of the government in the first decade or so after our first democratic elections, we faced many half-truths about the history of our country. For example, I was taught that Steve Biko wasn't murdered by the apartheid government – he simply died in detention. And that Van Riebeeck founded a refuelling station in the Cape, he didn't colonise it. This was probably done in a bid to 'keep the peace' and not shift the power balance that had been 'negotiated' through CODESA (Convention for a Democratic South Africa, which was the period of negotiations to end apartheid that started on 04 May 1990 and ended on 27 April 1994).

AYANDA NDLOVU: For me it was in 2013. I was a member of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). I encountered people like Jackie Shandu, Phezu Ntetha, John Devenish and Dr. Guna Dharmaraja. Dr. Guna Dharmaraja from the Indian Maoist Party, a very pragmatic Maoist, who were comrades and friends. However, all these folks were into Marxism and Maoism. Dr. Guna and I would spend the whole weekend reading texts on Marxism and Maoism or attending NUMSA (National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa) or SACP (South African Communist Party) workshops. Meanwhile, the EFF's ideological position urged a 'Marxist-Leninist and a Fanonian' approach and introduced me to decolonial discourses, which were essential, especially when reading Frantz Fanon. I started questioning the importance of studying Marx-

ism and Maoism; I was impressed by Fanon's work. Later Dr. Guna took me to the Centre for Critical Research on Race and Identity (CCRRI), where Prof Maart was the director. The centre was new. I was overwhelmed by the portraits that were displayed around the centre when I entered the space for the first time. Prof. Maart's main office had a whole wall of Black thinkers on display: revolutionaries and philosophers, men and women. It was the discussions that happened in the centre that elevated my interest in decolonisation and the research groups that Prof. Maart started. I immediately joined the centre; it is also where I took part in the weekly seminars, the symposiums, the workshops on Fanon, Derrida, psychoanalysis and several projects run by Prof Maart, including discussion groups and events connected to the 'Biko Education Project', then later the project known as 'Critical Times, Critical Race'.

ROZENA MAART: Did you do readings in the area of decolonisation or were you already aware that this was going to happen post-1994?

JACKIE SHANDU: I read broadly and discovered the necessity and inevitability of decolonization through reading various texts.

PHEZU NTETHA: In the AZAPO youth cadetship programme we were taught and we read a lot of material on decolonisation and so we were prepared for what would happen in the post-1994 period.

PHILILE LANGA: I wasn't aware of any readings or aware of what was going to happen in terms of the decolonisation movement until late in my undergraduate years. My awareness was due to the classmates I had and the types of conversations that took place during my undergraduate and honours political science classes. Up until that point, I was aware of racism, race-based inequality and prolific White and Indian ownership of space in my part of the province. I didn't have the language to describe what I saw or experienced, but I was aware that something was deeply wrong with our country.

AYANDA NDLOVU: Of course, I read. What stood out was *The Wretched of the Earth*, as Stuart Hall remarked, ... this read was still the bible of decolonisation (Fanon 2004: xvi). However, during this time I was doing my undergraduate studies. I was more of an activist than a scholar. All I wanted at the time was to emulate Biko, Malcolm X, Anton Lembede and many other

young activists. I was under the influence of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and I was amongst the prominent members before I assumed a leadership position. I would say that I was charismatic and not afraid to challenge the injustices faced by students. At one time, I remember fighting for students to get NSFAS and access to residence that I myself did not have. In fact, there were numerous times when I thought I was going to be financially excluded because my financial situation was not stable and I had realised that as students, we were on our own. Instead of trying to meet students halfway, the University raised its tuition and residential fees. I became popular not only amongst students but to university management as I was challenging their reasoning for allowing students on their terms, then excluding us. I was determined to study but also agitated by the annual increase in fees, which was a yearly crisis. I saw it as a means on their part to prohibit myself and other poor students from studying. From this point onwards EFF student members started to rally behind me for EFF campus leadership because they saw I was more practical than theoretical. The first programme I initiated was to take our protest into university management offices. We wanted a more relaxed policy and a fair process. Then, this presented an opportunity to bring some EFF folks into the Centre for Critical Research on Race and Identity (CCRRI) under the Collegium, which was a reading group. I was a good organizer hence I was able to organize students. Prof. Rozena Maart introduced my group into diverse readings which included decolonial thought and figures such as Aimé Césaire, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, the Negritude thinkers and others. I can say that I was living decoloniality; at the time I was not able to contextualize my activities.

ROZENA MAART: What were the salient features of the #RhodesMustFall for you and how did you contribute to that discussion?

JACKIE SHANDU: The growing collective consciousness among oppressed people of the ultra-violence of colonial iconography and memorabilia of other forms of oppression (slavery, apartheid, genocide), stands out for me as the most fundamental tenet of #RhodesMustFall. The other equally crucial aspect was the call for justice: the demand for greater access to top Ivy League institutions for Black students, descendants of the enslaved and colonised people whose labour and mass plunder by the West produced monstrous wealth that built and sustains these institutions. My contribution to the discussion at the time was to insist that #RhodesMustFall movement must connect its

particular struggle with the general struggle of Black people for reparations with regard to slavery, colonialism, apartheid, genocide (I refer here to the Congo, Namibia, etc.) and the general massive plunder of Afrikan wealth as facilitated by the Berlin Conference of 1884 and subsequently by international financial institutions such as the IMF, World Bank and the social and economic catastrophes they caused through imposed Structural Adjustment Programmes in Afrika and other 'Third-world' nations. My strong view was, and still is, that student struggles cannot be isolated from the structural, systemic, economic, political and social conditions within which they occur.

PHEZU NTETHA: The #RhodesMustFall movement was an embodiment of the decolonial thought that was present in the country if one ever wondered what form and shape it would take: praxis is theory in action. Therefore its salient feature was the ability of its ideological content to appeal and resonate with youth and students, who then embarked on a programme of action. In many ways it was also a precursor to the #FeesMustFall movement. What I would contribute to this discussion is the form and shape the #RhodesMustFall took in terms of structure and organisation. The structure and organisation of #RhodesMustFall was that of a civil society organisation (CSO), and the weakness of CSO's is that they are spontaneous and fluid with a very short lifespan as opposed to ordinary revolutionary movements who have a permanent character to its existence. The ##RhodesMustFall was a unique organisation in that it was advocating for a radical approach and yet the liberal character of its structure and organisation compromised its existence and was a source of its premature downfall.

PHILILE LANGA: #RhodesMustFall was not just about removing the symbols of colonialism from the land, it was about reclaiming stolen land and lessening the power of White supremacy on African land. It was saying to all who listened, that the Black people of South Africa were not going to put up with being served crumbs from the table of White supremacist capitalism. And the movement dealt with capitalism specifically as White supremacist racial inequality was fortified and perpetuated through capitalism, which in turn dictated who had access to privileges in this country. Facing off against White supremacist capitalism also meant that students and their supporters were fighting for higher education to be a right and not a privilege, and that it was kept out of the reach of the most marginalised in the country, Black people.

AYANDA NDLOVU: I want to begin with #KingGeorgeMustFall which took place at UKZN University of Kwa-Zulu Natal and never gained enough attention. This movement was started by a group of us: Skhenza Mkhize, Nathi Phetha and I, along with several others. Our movement was first; I mean it was before the #RhodesMustFall Movement and #FeesMustFall. It was in December 2015 that we also discussed issues around outsourcing and exploited workers at Howard College, at UKZN in Durban. We then decided to co-ordinate meetings with workers (security guards and general workers) in residences. We planned a mass protest for February 2016, and we aimed to end outsourcing the labour of workers, student's financial exclusions and make a bid to open a students' parliament. The movement got momentum in February 2016 when the university wanted to exclude students from the university on a financial basis and by that time, we had organised the workers union affiliated to the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA). Workers started to join in the protests, and we had a strong front that was composed of students and workers, fighting against the university management. Everything began to spread, all forms of activism geared at taking on university management, across universities around the country. The intention was to unite students and workers and maintain mass protests so that we could make our demands heard. The #RhodesMustFall Movement received better attention because of Cecil John Rhodes' historical legacy in the country and the entire region; it was also at UCT, which is a historically White university. I believe it was Chumani's act of courage that made the world news when he flung human faeces onto the Rhodes statue. There was already an on-going protest outside universities across the country, which ended with a wave of statues being defaced along with the statue of King George at Howard College, UKZN. The intellectual basis and philosophical trends of these movements were the same, with shared similar ideals about how we should reclaim our space. We wanted to get rid of colonial symbolism that resulted in postcolonial anxieties and forced Indigenous people to be alienated from the land. We wanted to get rid and confront these traumatic histories of conquest. We wanted to influence the curriculum and pedagogical theories or methodologies that can easily penetrate our historical injustices and align graduates into job markets.

ROZENA MAART: Is there a process of decolonisation in South Africa, as far as you are concerned?

JACKIE SHANDU: No. None whatsoever.

PHEZU NTETHA: The absolute truth is that there is no process of decolonization in our country simply because the state, as led by the congress movement, is captured by a very strong liberal grouping with White monopoly capital who are hostile to any form of transformation unless it involves cosmetic change and does not interfere with the status quo, which is how they live their lives as White people in this country.

PHILILE LANGA: From what I, my family and friends experience daily, there is no process of decolonisation in South Africa. There have been battles that have been fought and won, such as turning NSFAS (National Student Financial Aid Scheme) into a bursary fund from a loan fund. But ultimately, on the whole, White supremacy still has a lot of power in the country, especially in the traditional spaces such as certain universities. Traditionally Black spaces remain poor, with high rates of violence and underfunding. The concern with replacing White faces with Black ones in positions of power does not mean that decolonisation is taking place. If decolonisation is to take place, then there needs to be proper political will dedicated to the project, which there never will be as most of our politicians are satisfied with helping themselves with the crumbs of White supremacist capitalism.

AYANDA NDLOVU: I believe there is no project or initiative from the ruling elite in this country. Notwithstanding, it is paramount to acknowledge the work of students, especially, and scholars who have contributed to the decolonisation project. Decolonisation entails a courageous revolt that have taken place within student movements across the country. Hitherto, I can safely say, decolonisation in this country will only be achieved when vanguard student movements penetrate the ruling elite as is the case with our challenge, and what we fought and achieved with the Fallist movement. In fact, the leadership in this country is only interested in preserving the status quo and promoting the so-called Transformation agenda and Affirmative action.

ROZENA MAART: Is decolonisation a personal journey for you? Is it national, a political programme for the colonized and previously disadvantaged?

JACKIE SHANDU: Yes, decolonisation is deeply personal and an ongoing spiritual and psychological journey for me. It is a process of removing the proverbial white mask that Fanon says we Black people have been conditioned by colonialism to put on. It is a painful process of dismantling the DuBoisian double-consciousness syndrome, which has us looking at ourselves through the contemptuous and hateful eye of our oppressor. On a personal level, decolonisation means enacting what Sobukwe referred to as ‘fighting for the right to (re)own our souls.’ But the personal is political. There is always a mutually reinforcing relationship between the individual and the power-structure in the society within which he/she/they exist. My conception of decolonization, therefore, is that for it to be effective it must be a state-conceptualized philosophy, policy and programme of government, not unlike Nyerere’s Ujamaa. South Afrika is currently a neo-colonial state advancing a White-supremacist imperialist capitalist agenda, tied to Washington, London, Paris, Berlin and other important centres of global White supremacy. Decolonisation entails a new, fair and just, social, economic and judicial order, none of which exist in South Afrika. For instance, our constitution, law and criminal justice system is anchored in Roman-Dutch jurisprudence with its European values of hyper-individualism, competition and greed. This enables the courts to not only overlook but also rationalize and protect an economic order that has made South Afrika the most unequal country in the world in terms of wealth and inequality with regard to income. The wealthy White minority enjoys living standards comparable with the wealthiest in the US and Western Europe whilst the overwhelming majority of Afrikans are among the world’s poorest, subjected to the most grinding, humiliating abject poverty. From that prism, therefore, decolonization is nowhere to be found in the fabric and value system of South Afrika. It remains a vacuous abstraction in the corridors of ivory towers such as the university where empty academic sparring among scholars and students have neither links nor bearing with the lived experience of the masses of the people and their concrete daily struggles.

ROZENA MAART: What about you Phezu? What are your thoughts on this matter.

PHEZU NTETHA: Decolonization is a national political programme for the colonized and the oppressed, and the emphasis is on excluding the word ‘previously’ since it’s a contradiction of terms if one subscribes to the notion

that South Africa is now under neo-colonialism as opposed to being liberated. Again the only weakness is that the existence of any national political programme can only find expression in a form of structure and organization, otherwise it becomes an academic temporary political enterprise with a limited chance of advancing radical change.

PHILILE LANGA: Before decolonisation can be a national or political project, it needs to be a personal project. Only those who have conscientised themselves can help us as a country into a decolonial project. Decolonisation is therefore a personal journey for me, particularly with regards to how Black women live in this country. Politically conscious Black women are always the last to be considered in a project like this. We even have Black men who claim to be conscientized whilst also claiming that our issues as women are a distraction from what is really important: the dismantling of White supremacy. These men refuse to recognize that White supremacy is a patriarchal capitalist endeavour: you cannot dismantle the one without dismantling the other. And how can we claim to be conscientised if we continue to actively choose to step on the most vulnerable? That is not conscientisation. It is not decoloniality. It is simply changing the face of the oppressor.

AYANDA NDLOVU: Decolonisation should encompass both personal and collective spheres. The personal should also steer the collective discussion on decolonisation. It was not until I had sufficient intellectual knowledge of decoloniality that I began my consciousness-raising journey. The aim was not to be a catalyst of the movement but to challenge each and every person within our movement to contribute effectively to the discussion without fear. Remember, I was only 20 or 21 years old and all I could do was see how I could be Biko with my Cuban troops ready to tackle all social and political injustices deeply embedded in our communities. In essence, this became a significant journey that I can say today, across UKZN, that contributed to the conscientisation of most of my EFF comrades and peers. As I was getting more reading material, I began to realize how significant it was to share information. Thus, I ended up at Durban University of Technology to help comrades there to formulate a strong movement. We were not going to shy away from our decolonial principles. Now that I think about it, I contributed to the decolonial problem that did not even question why I was always surrounded by men cadres. Eish! Though all I knew was that I was charismatic and loved by my comrades.

ROZENA MAART: This is an interesting reflection Ayanda. It is good to talk about youth, and your youth was certainly very colourful. I think you were present and contributed to discussions that shaped South African history. Well, I hope you remember that contribution you made. How has decolonisation and/or decoloniality taken place at universities across South Africa. I know there are varied positions but let's hear from everyone. Jackie, do you want to go first?

JACKIE SHANDU: In the *German Ideology*, Marx poignantly opines: 'The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas (*The German Ideology* [1845] 2004: 127).

The South Afrikan academy emphatically and crudely depicts the above Marxian position, both in terms of the values upon which the universities are predicated and the hegemony enjoyed by Western epistemology across faculties and disciplines. South Afrikan universities still shamelessly perpetuate the colonial myth that thought is exclusively European and Afrikans can only offer experience, which either corroborates or disproves European thought. The tragic direct consequence of this tyrannical intellectual colonization is that our universities produce self-hating, dislocated and Eurocentric Afrikan intellectuals and professionals who not only do not see the need for decolonization but also actively oppose it. For this unforgivable treachery against their own people, our Eurocentric Afrikan academics in South Afrika are rewarded with prestigious and materially fulfilling jobs and leadership positions in both the private and public sectors, including universities. So, not only has decolonization not taken place within South Afrikan universities, the vast majority of managers, Vice Chancellors and lecturers have long been co-opted into the ideas of the White ruling class and openly weaponize their strategic positions and influential voices against decolonization.

PHEZU NTETHA: For me the answer is no! Decolonisation and/or decoloniality has not taken place at universities in South Africa. There were

few genuine experiences like the #RhodesMustFall which was a short-lived student experiment, and the CCRRI Biko Symposium which was also a short-lived partnership between students and one professor. Another dimension for instance is simply that decolonisation has had its fair share of contradictions through the manipulation of Afro-centric tribalism which is different from a Nationalist tribalism. The reason both the #RhodesMustFall and CCRRI Biko Symposium was short-lived is simply because they were undermined and contradicted by the university leadership cabal who use the misappropriation of Afro-centric tribalism that promotes the physical African identity, culture and ethnicity without the political identity. The aim of African misappropriation was to advance and protect 'White interest' in the so-called previously White universities.

The contradictions of this tribalism and misappropriation of African identity happens through the imposition of the 'new African recruit' and by overlooking the local intellectuals who are considered to be 'rebel radical Black thinkers'. The university replaces the Black radical thinker with the 'new recruit' African foreign national scholar who lacks the historical development and context of the struggle for total liberation in South Africa. The lack of this historical context of the struggle makes the 'new African recruit' vulnerable and an easy target for manipulation who undermines any decolonisation project because it is not in her or his interest.

Interestingly, it is this misappropriation of African identity and tribalism that proves that Black Consciousness (BC) as a political philosophy is even more relevant today. BC has always argued that any form of African identity that lacks and/or is not informed by a critical race consciousness is equally redundant when we advance our struggle for decolonisation. As a matter of fact, BC has a term for this kind of behaviour from the willing participants, they are referred to as 'non-whites'. The term is still relevant today when considering the context of decolonisation in the contemporary African university.

ROZENA MAART: All director positions are for a 3 - 5 year period, in most universities. There is much to be said about how academics who do work 'outside of the box', so to speak, get stopped by those in positions of leadership, which they take as positions of power, over which they rule with narcissistic authority and try to destroy people. That position then becomes their place of lashing out against other women, and the place where they try to restore their

fragile egos, which we all know works against any form of decolonisation anywhere in the world. A leader is someone who assists others, opens doors, creates possibilities for others, lends support to projects that others are doing, and not someone who tries to draw attention to herself all the time. I use a gendered positioning here as we often assume that Black men or White men act with this kind of ruthlessness and self-aggrandisement. In my experience I have experienced women act out the same script.

PHILILE LANGA: As a young Black woman who has performed tutor roles and assistant roles to academics in various fields, I have been exposed to more power hungry academics and university administrators, than leaders. Decolonisation would demand that they look beyond themselves and their own self-interest, see themselves in community with others. These power hungry people refuse to do this, and so decolonisation will never be on the agenda for them. Since we are not socialized to expect women to have these types of narcissistic tendencies, it comes as a surprise when they act in the same ways that men are expected to act. This applies to Black women too. It is in fact most insidious when it is a Black woman doing it, for me. This is because I've seen other Black people assume community with these power hungry types based on race, only to find out that these narcissists will use that assumed community for their own benefit.

AYANDA NDLOVU: I do not believe we have seen decolonisation in the academy yet. However, universities have a tendency of putting academics who come from other African countries first and claim, by doing so that they are embarking on the path of decolonial praxis. This is of course not a problem if it were true, but it is questionable. How can you embark on decolonial discourse with no historical knowledge of the country? What informs your position in decolonisation of the country that you do not belong to? The curriculum remains unchanged and most disciplines want nothing to do with decolonial theory. Universities have become a space where we reproduce the colonial canon and, some universities remain conservative in their pedagogical approaches. Instead we witness Black people who participate in the decolonial discourse yet who are not willing to motivate, mould or mentor Black students, but seek recognition from White folks. This takes us back because we are participating in what we are fighting against.

ROZENA MAART: This issue has been raised many times through the research project, and I think we all have very different points of view here. What would you say are some of the failures and/or misjudgements on the part of our freedom fighters?

JACKIE SHANDU: The ANC (African National Congress), as the first-born of our modern liberation movements, committed the fatal error of being ideologically deviated from the Afrikan Nationalism liberation philosophy as theorized and espoused by Anton Lembede and his contemporaries. This group of young and dynamic intellectual revolutionaries framed and articulated the South Afrikan National Question on the basis of the basic premise that South Afrika belongs to its native, Indigenous, Afrikan majority – and everyone else are guests. That is, Europeans as colonial-oppressive settlers and Indians as a foreign-immigrant national minority. In the mid 1950s the ANC was infiltrated and hijacked by Indians and Whites who, with the adoption of the Freedom Charter, made the ANC reframe the National Question as, ‘South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white’. Something totally false and ahistorical. South Afrika was invaded by European colonisers who violently dispossessed and oppressed the Indigenous people – the Khoi, the San and Bantu peoples. South Afrika will never belong to Whites.

On the other hand, Sobukwe’s error was his preoccupation with exposing race as something unscientific: biologically non-existent. Whilst he was wholly correct at a scholarly level, the South Afrika of his day was a society totally organized on the full application of the ideology of race, that is, the belief in the superiority of Whites and the inferiority of Blacks and the application of that belief: a rationalisation and justification of colonialism and apartheid. Denying the existence of race as a biological concept has the unintended yet problematic consequence of mystifying and obscuring the nature of the oppressor – the White population who use race to suggest that they are superior. Also, the PAC principle that anybody who gives allegiance to Afrika and Afrikans is highly problematic. No foreigner becomes Chinese merely by pledging allegiance and loyalty to China. The same is true for Arabs, Europeans and all others. Biko also wrongly revised the National Question when he claimed that South Afrika belongs to black people whilst his ‘black’ is inclusive of Indian immigrants who are a distinct nation - with a language, culture, religion and a homeland in another continent.

PHEZU NTETHA: Among other things included in the National question is voluntary unification and consolidation of unity regardless of nationalities. A more specific Marxist perspective would argue for the unification of the working class. The Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA) was responding to a racist ideology whose existence depended on separate racial development of at least four nationalities, that is, Afrikans, Indians, Coloureds and Whites. So the Black Consciousness revolutionaries advocated for the voluntary unification and consolidation of unity among the three nationalities for the emancipation project. The premise of unity was based on Black being a catalyst for collective action. The apartheid separate racial development setting was a colonial world. By introducing a political definition of Black, the aim of the BCM was to break and undermine this colonial world. The argument that Biko made a mistake is based on a false premise, at least on two counts. On the first count, it reduces BPC (Black Peoples Convention), SASO (South African Student Organisation) and the BCM (Black Consciousness Movement) to an individual that is called Steve Biko, as if the individual was a super-brand and a super-brain which is a false characterization of Biko who was a modest revolutionary leader. The relative truth is that BPC, SASO and BCM had a pool of equally gifted modest revolutionary leaders. The fact that Biko was at the forefront had more to do with the organization's strategy and tactics than Biko being a super-brain and a leading intellectual. There is documented evidence that Biko listened to reason and complied when given guidance and when others provided leadership. An example of such instance includes SASO inviting Uncle Zeph Mothopeng to give a lecture on the State of Education at the time.

On the second count, if someone really wants to review whether Indians are genuinely committed to the struggle for liberation then that person must also explain why SASO asked Strini Moodley, as a trained journalist, to establish its own publication. This is not because Strini Moodley designed it, he became the sole contributor and editor at the same time. The name of the publication was known as *Frank Talk* which became the most popular publication in the history of both SASO and BPC respectively. And when the judge asked Biko if he was the man behind this most influential publication, Biko said it was a SASO publication. If someone really wants to review the commitment of Indians then that person must explain why Abu Asvat was killed by the UDF (United Democratic Front) in an Afrikan township. If

someone really wants to review the contribution made by Indians then that person must explain why, when Afrikans wanted the first chairperson of AZAPO Durban Central branch to be an Indian woman, they elected Asha Moodley. I can go on and on listing 100 Indian folks but I doubt that the new Biko critics would be satisfied.

The point is not to argue and say Biko did not make mistakes – that would be ridiculous. The point is to make principled and constructive criticism. The last day when Biko was alive, he was with Peter Jones, a Coloured man from the Cape. For Jones being Black was not a theory but a lived experience. To that very last day Biko could still have chosen an Afrikan but that would have gone against SASO politics. If people want to discredit BC let them write a new political philosophy for our liberation struggle because isolating Indians is just a form of cheap politics which is lacking in substance.

Pierre Bourdieu gave us very useful information: ‘the ideational formation of any social formation has limits. Within these limits, systems of classifications reproduce their own logic, and the nature of the social world appears as both logical and natural’ (Bourdieu 1977).

PHILILE LANGA: Biko definitely made a mistake. It was a case of thinking that the oppressed could band together to fight the oppressor, but that is not realistic. The oppressed were pitted against each other from the second we came into contact with each other, and with the burden of being the most oppressed settling on the shoulders of Indigenous people. Being Black was therefore an identity that only we, as the Indigenous people, could claim. It is important to understand that we as Black people are on our own. We have little to no support from other races, and we don’t need it, not if we as Black people have truly understood the goal of defeating White supremacy and strengthening ourselves as a people.

AYANDA NDLOVU: I believe first, we must acknowledge and judge this based on the historical circumstances that these freedom fighters faced. Of course, now that we are in a different space and time, compare to the time these freedom fighters were in. For instance, Biko’s political definitions should not be moulded into contemporary terms as Biko drew his political position from his own historical subjectivity influenced by his social and political milieu. Lastly, I believe this should be elevated into the theoretical aspiration of the 1960’s. To be Black, not only meant pigmentation but, during the 1960’s, new

leftists wanted to consolidate the marginalized groups and in South Africa, the working class have always been understood to be Black. Not to claim that there is no White working class, but I want to simply stress that Whites remain entangled in their Whiteness as privilege because of the system of White domination, which Black folks do not have.

ROZENA MAART: Ayanda, you mentioned earlier that there was an outcry against Terblanche Delpont sharing his research on Sobukwe. We stopped the session at the time for the break. Shall we continue? Give us some details on the matter?

AYANDA NDLOVU: I believe we have a responsibility to confront and contest knowledge. Again, this goes to show how our own capable Black intellectuals are far behind in terms of preserving and writing their own histories. It is from this position that White folks de-intellectualise and de-philosophise our struggle stalwarts because we take no interest in writing their histories. These are the same folks who end up teaching us about what it means to be an African in Africa. Our ignorance of only being orators should stop and we should start to research issues on our lives and write our own encyclopaedias.

JACKIE SHANDU: The outcry was less about Delpont sharing his work but centrally about the platform he was intending to use, which is a political platform linked to the PAC and Robert Sobukwe. Black people who subscribe to Black radical thought were appropriately outraged at a settler coming to teach natives about the theory and practice of liberation, from settlers: a group to which he belongs and benefits from all the spoils of the enterprise of oppression. The Black radical tradition encourages well-meaning Whites to direct their efforts at the source of oppression – White society – and to leave Blacks to think and act on our own in the process of waging our national liberation struggle.

PHEZU NTETHA: The truth of the matter is that the PAC is dying if it is not dead already, and so the story of Terblanche Delpont sharing his research on Sobukwe and giving a presentation to the party is more of a stunt than anything. It would have been interesting if we were discussing the revival of the PAC as a liberation movement; of course the substantive issue is whether or not a Black

liberation movement should access insights brought forth by a White man. Unfortunately, the merits and insight from such a research study becomes irrelevant in the context of a dying party. It is like planting a seed in the desert and hoping for the best.

PHILILE LANGA: I am tired of White people being made into experts of Black people in any way. They keep studying us and are supported in doing so because ‘Blackness’ is seen as an ‘Other’, as if this was still the colonial era. This approach declares that their history is pure with no harm being done by the White people of this country or their ancestors. White people have a duty to take responsibility for that history, and reckon with what their ancestors have done, and what they themselves continue to do in this country. Why aren’t White scholars investigating the impact of White supremacy on patriarchy in the country? They are always the first to talk about the rape of Black women and demonize Black men in the process, but why won’t they investigate the role that White people have played in the vulnerability of Black women and the violence that we face? What about investigating the corruption of the apartheid government? How about admitting to the falsehoods they write about us and doing something about that? How about investigating the ways in which they have contributed to the maintenance of White supremacy on South African soil? When will White folks address the lived realities of this country and the fact that they have had a hand in the current state of things?

ROZENA MAART: Phezu, you have asked us to do an audit. Am I correct in thinking, as per your earlier question before we began the recording, that you are asking whether we have taken stock efficiently of our possessions in the country, of what we have and do not have, and whether we actually meet the ‘quota’ for our humanitarian needs?

PHEZU NTETHA: Let me address this since I raised the issue: Black people have two sectors, the taxi industry and football, as far as I am concerned. Unfortunately, the taxi industry’s operation is financed by White capital so in economic terms it cannot be regarded as a Black industry. One can try one’s luck and add the so-called Afrikan churches but I don’t know where that leaves us as Black people. If I restate the question: ‘have we taken stock efficiently of our possessions in the country and do we actually meet the ‘quota’ for our humanitarian needs? The answer is a big no! Black people have not established

anything in terms of institutions and infrastructure. Therefore, the notion of a 'quota' will be misplaced in the context of Black people in South Africa.

JACKIE SHANDU: With all due respect to my intellectual peer and friend, Phezu, but that would be an utterly futile exercise. Anybody with rudimentary political consciousness knows that South Afrika is an unjust, unethical, immoral and oppressive society built and governed on the basis of systemic race-based oppression and structural White privilege, with the constitutional democracy legitimizing-veil notwithstanding. The only antithesis to White oppression is Black Power – as Biko (1979) correctly posited. Race relations are power relations. Besides, there is a plethora of studies and data since 1994, pointing to the ever-worsening reality of gigantic White opulence standing as an island of luxury in a sea of Black misery, suffering and dehumanization. Moral protestations, no matter how persuasive, will not take us anywhere. We've been there, for a very long time.

ROZENA MAART: What kinds of measures should we introduce within the university context to ensure that decolonisation is actually going to take place from the position of South Africa's history and South Africa's people? Each time we had a symposium linked to 'Critical Times, Critical Race', students raised the same issue about the hiring of African nationals and how we need to be clear in our deliberations that we are not making a case for xenophobia. It has been said that African nationals are 'easier' for White South Africans to manage and to get on board their programmes; it has also been said that African nationals are there to keep South African Black folks in our place. Most do not identify as Black and for many the term African means that one is born on the African continent, nothing more. When we started this process, we talked about honesty. Since this has been raised over and over by so many of our research students, can someone address this?

JACKIE SHANDU: The university is a microcosm of the larger South Afrikan society; it accurately mirrors and reproduces power relations and establishes ways of doing things in South Afrika. The university, under capitalism, is a little more than an intellectual and academic superstructure of the ruling class, where ideas are developed to modernize, reinvent and further tighten the ruling class's stranglehold on the thinking and behavioural patterns of the society. Needless to say, the ruling class in South Afrika is exclusively White. So, while it will obviously be difficult to decolonize universities as a

fully neocolonial polity, the government as a key funder of universities can insist that decolonization is a crucial and legislated requirement for government grants, in the similar manner that redresses legislation such as Black Economic Empowerment and Affirmative Action have been introduced in the realm of the economy.

The flooding of South Afrikan universities with foreign Afrikan academics and managers is a deliberate manoeuvre on the part of the White ruling class and its key objective is to slow down decolonization, if not totally block it. Attempts to conscientize foreign Afrikan academics on the struggles of Black South Afrikans within the academy have not achieved anything. Interventions such as #PutSouthAfrikansFirst seek to counter this sly divide and conquer tactic and pits Black South Afrikans against foreign nationals who come from the Afrikan continent. This movement demands that the South Afrikan government reserve certain jobs and sectors of the economy strictly for South Afrikans. This approach may also help within the sphere of the university system.

PHEZU NTETHA: Universities are an extension of the capitalist mass production system, similar to a police college in a capitalist justice system, granted they had their moments like when they became a BC breeding ground and established radical movements like SASO, BPC, etc. Their liberal philosophy makes people hostile to our liberation struggle. For liberal institutions like universities to advance radical changes there is a need for a structured implementation plan, initiated by a trained and disciplined youth cadre training. For instance, there is a need to establish an affiliate academic programme or institution that can carry out this work. The designated affiliate programme will serve as an alternative university admission course accredited for an annual enrolment of a group of graduate cohorts who will study toward their undergraduate and/or post-graduate studies. This affiliate academic programme would train graduates in radical political philosophies like Black Consciousness, Pan Afrikanism, decolonial thought, etc., and they would become an advance section whose mandate is to infiltrate universities and drive a radical transformation agenda. That is an extreme but a practical measure that could be taken up if we are serious about decolonial thought in these liberal universities.

PHILILE LANGA: Non-South African Africans should recognise the fact that they are not of this country, recognise the fact that their history is different from ours, and that therefore they should not take up any positions of leadership in our country's higher education institutions. They cannot claim the benefits of the labour of Black people if they do not contribute to that labour when they come here. Also, when foreigners of any race or nationality take up positions of power in South African universities, they are actively blocking the advancement of decolonisation. People who do not have a stake in the positive progress of Black people in this country should not be put into positions of power in this country. At the same time, we should not assume that Black South Africans are invested in decolonisation. Even historically Black universities and campuses struggle with having Black South Africans in positions of power who have been detrimental to the positive progress of black South Africans.

AYANDA NDLOVU: I believe decolonisation is a humanising process and universities are spaces where humanism should be reclaimed. Reaffirming this process demands humanistic efforts to go beyond precincts offered by universities. Henceforth, I would assume that decolonisation discourse in universities will only take place once there are people who have committed themselves to an intellectual initiative that can get all people involved simultaneously – I mean the government, political organizations, intellectuals and civil society. To defend the country's future and to undo the historical legacy would need a strong front. This goes to say, even in universities people will be appointed to develop the country not to be placed for personal gains. As Thabo Mbeki once asked, in 2006, 'where is Black Intelligentsia today?' (The Guardian: 2006). He was aiming at endorsing the new generation of Black thinkers that can inspire and steer the country towards new decolonial-praxis and reaffirming Blackness as a political identity that can breed intellectuals given the history of the country.

JACKIE SHANDU: I want to address this question of ReAfrikanisation of the South African Education system because the current Afrikanisation process is nothing but a brand of tribalism. ReAfrikanisation of the South African education system is a historical necessity if South Africa is to totally uproot the legacy of almost 400 years of European oppression and racial domination. It must be remembered that Western education was introduced in Africa as part of the agenda to Westernize Africans, i.e., remove them from the grounding of

their native value systems, deter them from native languages and discourage them from practicing indigenous African spirituality. This was done ultimately to weaken if not entirely cripple the capacity and willingness of Africans to resist European colonialism and all related oppressive and violent activities. Nkrumah poignantly defined the most fundamental objective of education for Africa in the post-colonial epoch:

Our youth from the primary schools, through the secondary schools to the universities must be taught to know the workings of neo-colonialism and trained to recognize it wherever it may rear its head. They must not only know the trappings of colonialism and imperialism, but they must also be able to smell out the hideouts of neo-colonialism (Nkrumah 1973: 190 and <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/revolutionary-path-kwame-nkrumah>).

As part of the decolonization process, Afrikans need to therefore cleanse themselves of all the self-deprecating indoctrination that has caused them to self-loathe, self-doubt and associate everything African with failure and incompetence. Western racist propaganda, presented as indisputable scientific truth, has infected Africans with a chronic racial low self-esteem which also makes them disloyal to their own race and willing collaborators with western forces of neo-colonialism.

It is within the context alluded to above that we advocate for the reAfrikanization of the University of KwaZulu Natal and our conception of reAfrikanization entails three fundamental components:

1. Decommodification of Education through removal of tuition fees and introduction of state subsidies for prescribed textbooks, accommodation and living expenses for all students.
2. An afrocentric curriculum prioritising African scholars, writers and philosophers in all disciplines and academic programs offered in UKZN as well as in all other institutions of higher learning in South Africa. Also, it must become a precondition for students to take one native language as a module before they are eligible for graduating.

3. ReAfrikanization of institutions of higher learning, however, must neither be misconstrued nor distorted as a narrow racial/ethnic chauvinist program. It is thus concerning to learn of Zulu nationalist elements masquerading as decolonials at UKZN, in pursuit of narrow, self-serving agendas which have nothing to do with the noble historic mission of ensuring African educational institutions in their look, feel and output center and reflect the values, principles and aspirations of the African people.

PHEZU NTETHA: Nyerere says ‘the purpose of education is the liberation of men’ so what is the point of decolonial thought if it cannot be put into practice. In order to illustrate this point I shall make reference to SASO’s formation, where consultation began at different student conferences including NUSAS conferences. The informal consultations continued until a point where a SASO national gathering was convened for its launch To say ‘we don’t have any organizational and funding partners there is nothing that can done to build a decolonial programme’, therefore speaks to a lack of discipline on our part.

Why don’t we go back to the drawing board and make the Biko symposium an annual event? We can choose a particular university or rotate; it will depend on our strategic approach. What is stopping the Biko Symposium from nominating a secretariat whose role is to organize an annual event until it becomes part of the country’s calendar of national gatherings. The BCM has materials in its history archives of how to organize through self-reliance methods. The Biko Symposium could just be a beginning because we don’t know unless we organise once again and see how many people attend. A tree will never grow unless someone plants a seed.

ROZENA MAART: Students who don’t carry out their commitment to the projects by writing for publication, producing, and offering the necessary accountability ... is one way of stopping this symposium from happening.

PHILILE LANGA: Let me get back to the earlier question: As a Black woman, I’m tired of it being my responsibility to talk about the fact that there can be no decolonisation without patriarchy being addressed. I have to bring this to the table each time, even to Black men who recognise the intricate entanglement of various oppressions. If I as a Black woman I don’t talk about gender politics, no one else will. It’s as if Black men do not have a gender, or

are not oppressors in their own way. Well they are gendered, and the way that they are gendered has privileged them in this society, even though they are racially oppressed. So why can't they understand the position that Black women are in? We as Black women see their Blackness and recognise them as one of us, which is why we help them fight battles, even those that have little to do with us. Yet this is not the case for us; Black men don't see Black women as being one of them. Why can't the Black man's decolonial project include the dismantling of the same White supremacist patriarchy that has helped to position them, encourage them and benefitted them into being violent towards their own?

Conclusion

Five scholars participated in this roundtable and as such it is apt that our conclusion reflect all of our views, which as evidenced in the exchanges, are varied just as much as they share similarities. We have asserted the significance of not making assumptions of what Blackness means, or what an intellectual community means, simply because of a person's racialised or gendered identity. What some of us have noted quite firmly is the need to understand why, when a Black person embraces Black consciousness it is not the same as a Black person who is conscious of being Black. To all of us, what Black Consciousness has meant in our lives varies but what is overwhelmingly similar is how we embrace it, via the work and agency of Bantu Stephen Biko, who laid out the path for our conscientisation. In addition, how we consider the foundations set forth by SASO in the generations of activism it spurred from the 1970s to the present day, is key in all of the work undertaken in the research groups, especially 'Critical Times, Critical Race', which all of the five scholars participated in. For many young Black radical thinkers, Blackness is one that situates the Black man as central to the conception of Black subjectivity and Black experience ... knowingly or unknowingly; for Black women in this roundtable, Black womanhood is often forgotten, or drawn in under compulsion but not necessity. When confronted, many would agree that among Black radicals there is an overwhelming oversight of the mechanisms of decolonisation that are upheld by young Black men scholars of decoloniality, who seek out the work of White men scholars as a means to thrust themselves forward, still with the belief that if they have mastered the thinking of their master, they can master Blackness.

Some of us have asked questions about the lack of support for Black scholarship that poses serious questions to the current decolonisation agenda, especially of projects claiming to be focused on Africanisation when in fact they are pursued at the backdrop of vulgar appropriations of tribalism that lack historical accuracy of South Africa's peoples. The merge of African Philosophy and Black Existentialism are strong currents in all of the contributors' work, and through these trajectories we see approaches to studying and tackling decolonisation and decoloniality by questioning both the coloniser and the colonised, the settler-colonial and the African liberal claiming African liberalism at the detriment of the Black masses in South Africa that have not been granted what we fought for – for all of us, this is not the freedom we envisaged, and any form of decolonisation needs to situate South Africa's history of usurpation and settler-coloniality at the forefront of its purpose. For most of us, university spaces remain both contradictory and contentious, as it is where many of us do our scholarly work; it is also not the only space that we consider key to decolonisation but one of the many that we believe should be held accountable for discourses of freedom that offer false hope to a generation of students whose parents have invested in them as human capital to drive the programme of liberation on their behalf, and the families who died trying.

Universities are part of the broader society within which we live; universities are as such sites within which we have seen apartheid measures be reproduced, and find expression among academics who are not necessarily scholars but who band together to assert authority over students, forgetting that they were once students, and forgetting that their generation where infused by the protests of 1976 in ways very similar to what #FeesMustFall means to the students of the decolonial era. In the words of the one of the contributors, 'If decolonisation is going to be taken seriously, be implemented and succeed, it is not something that will happen in the ivory towers of the university ...'.

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