

'We Shall Crush Apartheid': Nelson Mandela, Steve Biko and the Rhetoric of the South African Anti-Apartheid Jeremiad

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Abstract

This essay recognizes the social protest rhetoric of former President Nelson Mandela and Black Consciousness Movement founder Steve Biko as jeremiads that called for social change in the midst of the apartheid despotic structure. Although they employed varying methods while delivering their jeremiads, they sought to fulfill their missions as representatives of justice and social equality. The uncovering of an anti-apartheid jeremiadic discourse in South African social protest—a tradition characterized by a steadfast refusal to adapt to apartheid's perspectives—indicates a complex failure of the established order. Anti-Apartheid jeremiadic discourse in the South African social protest tradition sought to rebuild or restructure community politics void of apartheid's regime.

Apartheid is the embodiment of the racialism, repression and inhumanity of all previous white supremacist regimes. To see the real face of apartheid we must look beneath the veil of constitutional formulas, deceptive phrases and playing with words.

Nelson Mandela

Black Consciousness is an attitude of the mind and a way of life, the most positive call to emanate from the black world for a long time. Its essence is the realisation by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their oppression - the blackness of their skin - and to operate as a group to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude.

Steve Biko

Introduction: The Jeremiad Materialized in a Changing South Africa

As two of the most significant and laudable anti-apartheid advocates in South African history, former President Nelson Mandela and Black Consciousness Movement founder Steve Biko demanded and preserved their individual reputations via public speaking engagements, political treatises and actions that allowed them to display their skills as celebrated activists against European colonialism and hegemony. In a changing South Africa, both anti-apartheid activists relied heavily upon their aptitude and skill to shed light on issues concerning the ills of apartheid by using an amalgamation of techniques and styles of social protest rhetoric. The jeremiad, a form of rhetoric which surfaced from a perceived oppression and degeneration of a culture, played a vital role in the development of their anti-apartheid rhetoric. Mandela and Biko unwaveringly utilized the jeremiad to criticize the ills of apartheid because it violated the ideas of true democracy. Recent scholarship, however, has placed anti-apartheid discourse into important historical conversations and examined it in terms of present-day global politics (Sheckles, 2001; Grundlingh, 2004; Trabold, 2006; Thörn, 2006; Hostetter, 2007; Gilbert, 2007). Yet, no research has attempted to connect the jeremiad as a significant movement in South African social protest. Serving as an introductory approach to examining jeremiadic discourse in South African remonstrations, this article investigates

and identifies the rhetorics of Mandela and Biko as jeremiads that connected the moral, political and religious lamentations of their communities and held out hope that apartheid would cease to exist in the fully democratic South Africa.

Every nation or culture that has encountered the hands of oppression, imperialism, or expansionism has devised a way to contextualize its hardships and reveal to the public its calamities. Subsequently in a method to achieve social change; embedded in its polemics, a jeremiadic discourse materialized. The jeremiad included laments in which society's morals and ethics were bitterly criticized in a stern tone of continuous criticism, which contained a prophecy of things to come. As a rhetorical device, the jeremiad persistently stressed the need for social change and sought to unite an oppressed people by creating conflict between their envisioned idyllic society and ways in which the oppressors subjugated their culture.⁽¹⁾ No doubt a jeremiadic discourse previously existed in South African remonstrations. From the moment Europeans set foot at Cape Town in 1652 and set up a supply station and fortifications for the Dutch East India Company, South Africans formulated ways to contextualize colonization and their persecution.⁽²⁾ Rooted within their voices of dissent, the jeremiad found a place as a driving force for liberation and consciousness. The enforcement of apartheid, however, informed and aided in generating and sustaining Mandela's and Biko's jeremiadic discourse. Both activists, whether consciously or not, exhibited elements of the jeremiadic tradition as they criticized apartheid's despotic structure, called for a remaking or restructuring of South African democracy and lamented the injustices of their countrymen. Mandela's and Biko's command of jeremiadic discourse symbolized the jeremiad's zenith in twentieth century South African remonstrations against apartheid. Mandela's and Biko's advocating of social equality served as the foci for their beliefs that South Africa was indeed in need of social change and that apartheid was a parasitic organism eating away at true democracy. Their rationalization of the displacement of their people found its expression in the development of the Anti-Apartheid Jeremiad, which was a combination of lament and threat that condemned apartheid while at the same time demonstrated optimism for the future, and played a significant role in the development of what was to become the new democratic South Africa.

'Temporary Sojourners'; Uncovering Jeremiadic Discourse in the Midst of South African Segregation

Historically, jeremiadic discourse emerged as societies began to recognize that governments were not working for the betterment of the people. Jeremiadic discourse, then, was a distinguishing form that exchanged with cultures and governments to aid in the shaping of an idyllic society. Jeremiads reflected the perpetual tribulations of an oppressed people and held out hope for a brighter future in times of crisis. In Black South African remonstrations against apartheid, jeremiads were extremely political in nature as they sought to alter the social order of the day. The rhetoric of the jeremiad can aptly be applied to Mandela's and Biko's discourse of dissent as they blatantly attacked the moral fabric and affects of apartheid in South Africa. Of apartheid's structure, Stanley Uys, former political editor of the Johannesburg Sunday Times for the majority of the apartheid years, wrote:

The uniqueness of apartheid...is its assumption that society is a wholly plastic thing, that the economic base is as malleable as the political super-structure. No other political group in South Africa shares this outlook...[Apartheid] has segregated [South Africans] socially with scores of "Whites only" notices; it has denied them freehold tenure in the urban centres and devised intricate laws to emphasise their status as "temporary sojourners"; but all the time it permits the "White economy" voraciously to suck in as many able-bodied Africans as it needs. These contradictions within apartheid must lead at some stage to

conflict, and possibly to the breakdown of government by consent. (p.15)

The outcome of the 'contradictions' and 'conflicts within' the apartheid structure was a discursive jeremiadic discourse displayed through remarkable control of the oppressor's language. Therefore, authorities of Mandela's and Biko's anti-apartheid jeremiads were radically affected by a range of social and intellectual changes in the country.

Although apartheid's policy can trace its roots back to the beginning of European colonialism in South Africa and its terminology to the early 1900s, the attribution of its application laid claim to the 1930s and was used as a political slogan of the Nationalist Party in the early 1940s. After the Nationalist Party, which maintained the support of the majority of the Afrikaner peoples (Thompson, 187), came to power in 1948, the social practice of apartheid - racial segregation - became legalized by law. With the implementation, however, of the *Population Registration Act* (PRA) of 1950, apartheid became more noticeable. For example, PRA placed South Africans into racial classes: Black African (Bantu), White, and Coloured (mixed race) and a fourth class was later added, Asian (Indians and Pakistanis). Other laws passed in the 1950s began to further solidify apartheid's visibility: the Group Areas Act of 1950, which designated races to unique sections in urban areas, and the Land Acts of 1954 and 1955, which limited non-white accommodations to particular regions. These laws further restricted the already limited rights of Black South Africans to own land, entrenching the white minority's control of over 80 percent of South African territory (Thompson, 190, 194, 245).

Apartheid was condemned not only by South Africa's blacks, but also by some black political groups that were oftentimes supported by some compassionate whites (Shepherd, 4). As it began to gain international attention, apartheid's repressive structure was also reproached on a global scale: member states of the British Commonwealth who were judgmental of the apartheid regime required that South Africa withdraw in 1961; both the United States and Great Britain forced selective economic restrictions on South Africa in dissent of its racial policy in 1985 (Thompson 214, 239). The early 1990s, however, marked the beginning of the end for apartheid. President Frederik Willem de Klerk successfully began to dismantle apartheid when he lifted the 30-year ban on the leading anti-apartheid group, the African National Congress (ANC), the smaller Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the South African Communist Party. The year 1990 also saw the National Party government devoting itself to restructuring South Africa and the formerly banned black congresses, and the releasing of imprisoned black leaders of these organizations. South Africa's constitution was amended in 1994 and free general elections were held for the first time in the country's history. Nelson Mandela became South Africa's first elected black president. Upon assuming the position, Mandela took a bold new step. In his inaugural address, Mandela lamented, 'We must therefore act together as a united people, for national reconciliation, for nation building, for the birth of a new world' (*In His Own Words*, 'Inauguration as President', 70). Therefore, the uncovering of an anti-apartheid jeremiadic discourse in South Africa's black community—a tradition characterized by a steadfast refusal to adapt to apartheid's perspectives—indicated a complex failure of the established order. And as Biko would lament in *White Racism and Black Consciousness*, 'the powers that be have evolved a philosophy that stratifies the black world and gives preferential treatment to certain groups (p. 61). With this in mind, there was one prevailing objective of apartheid's structure: to control and preserve the exploitation of Black labor, and in the process, enhance and further reinforce a handful of ruling capitalist families in South Africa. Therefore, maintained through force and violence of the South African state (McCartan, 4), apartheid (derived from the Afrikaans word for 'apartness')

was a social and political course of action based on racial segregation and discrimination implemented by the white minority governments in South Africa from 1948-94. Not only a racial premise, apartheid was a way of life that propagated white power (Shepherd, 4). During its apex, the racial waters of South Africa's apartheid regime were fertile grounds for the jeremiad to nurture and flourish. Elements of the jeremiadic structure ascribed themselves effectively in anti-apartheid protest, and it was exactly those ingredients that came to the forefront of Mandela's and Biko's rhetoric forming the Anti-Apartheid Jeremiad. Through all of its transformations, though, the perseverance of anti-apartheid jeremiadic rhetoric substantiated a remarkable nationalized authority that the rhetoric itself revealed and fashioned.

'To Speak Together of Freedom': The Anti-Apartheid Jeremiad Emerged

Because of the creation of the apartheid structure, the complexity of anti-apartheid rhetoric has continued to attract interests today. At its very nucleus, however, apartheid was a domineering and tyrannical structure that impeded every echelon of black life in South Africa. Politically, economically, and religiously, apartheid regarded blacks as less than second-rate to everyone else within South Africa's social order. Opposition to apartheid, however, was an ongoing struggle. Even though Black South Africans detested apartheid, most gravely disagreed on ways to eliminate it (Shepherd, 4). Apartheid's formulation in 1948 gave birth to the cultivation of countless organizations and movements within the black community that sought to 'crush' the regime. It was in the hands of South Africa's black youth to give the movements the momentum needed to strengthen their attacks on apartheid. For example, the traditionalist direction of the ANC was deposed by the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) in 1949. Led by Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, and Nelson Mandela, the ANCYL advocated a radical Black Nationalist agenda which united the Africanist beliefs of Anton Lembede with Marxism. After taking control of the ANC, the ANCYL advocated - for the first time - a policy of open rebelliousness and opposition to the apartheid structure. The result of this 1950s resistance movement was intermittent violent conflicts. When Congress of the People met near Kliptown in June 1955, however, a number of organizations - including the South African Indian Congress, the Congress of the Democrats, and the ANC - sought to 'prepare to send' delegates to 'The Congress of the People' convention. The purpose for the meeting was to bring together 'representatives of all races' to 'speak together of the things their people need to make them free...to speak together of freedom.' The representatives at the meeting, hence, approved a Freedom Charter which expressed a vision for a South Africa inevitably dissimilar to apartheid's separation policy: the Charter's prophetic vision was meant to serve as a 'guide to those "singing tomorrows" when all South Africans will live and work together, without racial bitterness and fear of misery, in peace and harmony' (Nelson Mandela: *The Struggle Is My Life*, 'Congress the People', 48). The Charter became the fundamental document of the anti-apartheid struggle because it necessitated equal rights for all in spite of race. As resistance to apartheid's policies remained persistent, 156 leading members of the ANC and allied organizations were arrested in 1956 by the government in response to 'The Congress of the People.' Those arrested included almost all of the management of the ANC, including Mandela; the resultant 'Treason Trial' ended with their exoneration in 1961.

Social movements like the ones described above have previously been viewed primarily as incidences that occur in the midst of sudden outbreaks of collective behavior and formal structured organizations. Because social movements in South Africa's black communities typically set out to undo or resist existing policies and were usually involved with democratizing the nation, jeremiadic discourse, then, was closely linked with democratic

political systems as it sought to alter the existing philosophies of perceived repression. As a social movement, the Anti-Apartheid Jeremiad developed and emerged because the South African government's system to denationalize its masses was viewed as unjust by activists and the South African populace. Its polemics presented a quandary in that the Anti-Apartheid Jeremiad, as it is customary in jeremiadic discourse, included elements of both peril and optimism. For example, after his release from prison, Mandela lamented:

The majority of South Africans, black and white, recognise that apartheid has no future. It has to be ended by our own decisive mass action in order to build peace and security. The mass campaign of defiance and other actions of our organisation and people can only culminate in the establishment of democracy. The destruction caused by apartheid on our sub-continent is incalculable. The fabric of family life of millions of my people has been shattered....Our economy lies in ruins and our people are embroiled in political strife... We express the hope that a climate conducive to a negotiated settlement will be created soon as that there may no longer be the need for the armed struggle...the future of our country can only be determined by a body which is democratically elected on a nonracial basis. Negotiations on the dismantling of apartheid will have to address the overwhelming demand of our people for a democratic, nonracial and unitary South Africa. (*In His Own Words*, 'Release From Prison', 60-61)

Mandela's speech chimed with echoes of jeremiadic discourse: he critiqued apartheid; he mourned for his people; and he held out optimism for the future of South Africa. As demonstrated in his rhetoric, the Anti-Apartheid Jeremiad called for an array of actions designed at supporting those individuals and organizations that endured most under the apartheid regime. Mandela believed in a future where democracy in South Africa would be selected on a nationalized basis.

The Anti-Apartheid Jeremiad also sought to affect economic demands of the apartheid structure to the degree of influencing political transformation. For example, Mandela lamented 'there must be an end to white monopoly on political power and a fundamental restructuring of our political and economic systems to ensure that the inequalities of apartheid are addressed and our society thoroughly democratised' ('Release from Prison' 62). His faith in South Africa's democracy for blacks furthered the development of the Anti-Apartheid Jeremiad because he offered an extensive agenda for investigating how changes in political outlook, organizational resources, and collective insight gave rise and purpose to anti-apartheid activism. 'We call on our white compatriots to join us in the shaping of a new South Africa,' exclaimed Mandela:

The freedom movement is a political home for you too. We call on the international community to continue the campaign to isolate the apartheid regime. To lift sanctions now would be to run the risk of aborting the process towards the complete eradication of apartheid. (*In His Own Words*, Release from Prison, 62)

When he prophesized that the 'dispute between the government and my people' would be 'settled in violence and by force,' (*In His Own Words*, 'Posterity Will Prove That I was Innocent', 22) Mandela became an influential jeremiadic writer and speaker in South African social protest. His motivational rhetoric laid the framework for future Anti-Apartheid jeremiadic discourse employed by other activists such as Biko.

Dissent to apartheid further intensified with Biko's stanchion. While maintaining that blacks did not need to work under the umbrella of white liberals, his jeremiadic discourse argued

that the universal oppressive doctrines of apartheid should have united the entire black community to action. Biko's voice concerning black resistance to apartheid was made clear in 'Fragmentation of the Black Resistance', (Biko, *I Write What I Like*, 1978), which was published in the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) newsletter in June 1971. Among its many aims, SASO - an organization Biko co-founded in 1968 and subsequently became its first president - sought to 'crystallize the needs and ambitions of the non-white students and [sought] to make known their grievances' (*I Write What I Like*, 'SASO—Its Role', 4). In his opposition against apartheid, however, Biko prophesized that blacks in South Africa would one day rise above its despotic constraints. Darkness of the moment was imbedded in his rhetoric:

Slowly the ground is being swept off from under our feet and soon we as blacks will believe completely that our political rights are in fact in our "own" areas. Thereafter we shall find that we have no leg to stand on in making demands for any rights in "mainland White South Africa" which incidentally will comprise more than three-quarters of the land of our forefathers. (*I Write What I Like*, 'Fragmentation of the Black Resistance', 36)

As ominous as the warning and as imperative as the manifesto from which it was delivered, Biko lamented that the problem facing South Africa's black community was that they were so involved in the resistance movement, they would formulate 'even our most well-considered resistance to fit within the system both in terms of the means and of the goals.' Because the 'new generation' had accused anti-apartheid activists with association in their own annihilation, Biko prophesized that if black 'political astuteness' did not sharpen, 'we are fast approaching an impasse.' Although Biko did not consider himself a prophet, his judgment resulted from the declension of the South African government and its failure to protect the rights of its black populace. This position was tantamount with Biko's prophetic rhetoric as he lamented the 'powers that be had to start defining the sphere of activity' of their 'apartheid institutions.' If they had not, Biko further predicted 'a time will come when these stooge bodies will prove very costly not only in terms of money but also in the terms of the credibility of the story the Nationalists are trying to sell.' Blacks were already beginning to 'realise the need to rally around the cause of their suffering—their black skin—and to ignore the false promises that come from the white world' (*I Write What I Like*, 'White Racism and Black Consciousness' 62). The radical reform rhetoric of Biko's Anti-Apartheid Jeremiad, then, discouraged 'people from the left' from joining apartheid's 'various cocoons of repression' (*I Write What I Like*, 'White Racism and Black Consciousness' 62) and warned them of its effects: 'In laying out a strategy we often have to take cognizance of the enemy's strength,' Biko exclaimed, 'and as far as I can assess all of us who want to fight within the system are completely underestimating the influence the system has on us' (*I Write What I Like*, 'Fragmentation of the Black Resistance', 37). The foundation for this type of transformation in apartheid's structure Biko called for would include the South African government's readiness to alter its beliefs concerning ideas of a true democracy.

The evolution of anti-apartheid rhetoric embedded in jeremiadic discourse progressed into a highly structured and effective vehicle that Mandela and Biko utilized to implant a sense of self-importance, which provided a source of inspiration important to the continuance of structures aided to serve their cause. Mandela's and Biko's jeremiadic discourse played a pivotal role in shaping South Africa's changing democratic mission. The structure of their Anti-Apartheid Jeremiads were prescribed by their premise to oppose apartheid as they developed a common rhetoric, formed an array of new political agendas, and eventually created a viable new nationalized place for South Africans.

'The Struggle is My Life': Mandela's Anti-Apartheid Jeremiad Reproached Apartheid's Structure

Mandela exhibited the characteristics that made the jeremiad in South African social protest feasible: he combined lament and call to consciousness in sustaining South Africa's democratic mission. His ultimate success depended upon his rational appeal to those who saw his course of action would be the most sensible choice. Born on 18 July 1918 in a village near Umtata in the Transkei, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was endowed with the prospect to serve and make his 'own humble contribution' to his people's 'freedom struggles.' These resistances helped to shape and formulize not only his politics, but also his jeremiads. His employment of the jeremiad, then, was more conciliatory in tone than Biko's. For example, Mandela revealed that 'the structure and organisation of early African societies' in Transkei 'fascinated' him and 'greatly influenced the evolution' of his 'political outlook.' Mandela's father was the foremost councilor to the Acting Paramount Chief of Thembuland. The council was so 'completely democratic that all members of the tribe could participate in its deliberations.' Although Mandela confessed that in such a society there existed certain primitivisms and because of these the society could never 'measure up to the demands of the present epoch,' he readily admitted that within this kind of society there existed 'the seeds of revolutionary democracy in which none will be held in slavery or servitude, and in which poverty, want and insecurity shall be no more.' It was this kind of 'primitive' society, Mandela declared, that inspired him in his 'political struggle' (*In His Own Words*, 'Posterity Will Prove That I was Innocent', 20). 'The struggle is my life,' he lamented and vowed to 'continue fighting for freedom until the end of my days' (*Nelson Mandela: The Struggle is My Life*, 'The Struggle is My Life', 121).

In his June 1935 article written for *Liberation*, a monthly journal, Mandela lamented that because of the 'recent political events' that had 'split into two hostile camps' amongst South Africa's populace, 'there can be no middle course' between the 'oppressor and oppressed.' His rhetoric was consistent with the common tenor of the Anti-Apartheid Jeremiad: the deniability of rights; the obligation of the government to protect its citizens' rights; and the deviation of apartheid from human rights. Mandela lamented that a commitment to struggle and mobilization was needed to defeat apartheid:

We must accept the fact that in our country we cannot win one single victory of political freedom without overcoming a desperate resistance on the part of the Government, and that victory will not come of itself but only as a result of a bitter struggle by the oppressed people for the overthrow of racial discrimination. (*Nelson Mandela: The Struggle is My Life*, 'The Shifting Sands of Illusion', 44).

Mandela believed that it was up to the 'non-European liberation movement,' which sought 'the complete renunciation of "White supremacy,"' to affect the adamant and unwavering mass struggle to defeat 'fascism and the establishment of democratic forms of government' (*Nelson Mandela: The Struggle is My Life*, 'The Shifting Sands of Illusion', 45).

Mandela's Anti-Apartheid Jeremiad illustrated his sanguinity that blacks in South Africa must come as a united people for national reconciliation to build a new South Africa. His jeremiads mourned the lack of humanity and togetherness. At the onset of his presidential inaugural opine, for example, Mandela expressed hope for South Africa's 'newborn liberty.' He believed that South Africans had to alter the perception of South Africa in order to obtain universal reconciliation:

Our daily deeds as ordinary South Africans must produce an actual South African reality that will reinforce humanity's belief in justice, strengthen its confidence in the nobility of the human soul and sustain all our hopes for a glorious life for all. (In His Own Words, 'Inauguration as President', 68)

In his address, Mandela called for collectivity among the South African people as he reminded them of the anguish they had suffered throughout apartheid's regime: 'That spiritual and physical oneness we all share with this common homeland,' he sermonized, described the intensity of the 'pain we all carried in our hearts as we saw our country tear itself apart in a terrible conflict' (In His Own Words, 'Inauguration as President' 68). Mandela looked forward, though, to the opposition that lay ahead. Believing that South Africa had achieved its 'political emancipation,' Mandela's jeremiads cried out for unity as he implored his countrymen to continue supporting the nation while confronted with the challenges of 'building peace, prosperity, nonsexism, nonracialism and democracy.' The time 'for healing the world,' not just South Africa, Mandela lamented, 'has come' (In His Own Words, 'Inauguration as President', 68).

However, after Mandela was sent to prison in 1962, black politics in South Africa was void of leadership. It was in the later 1960s that Stephen Bantu Biko would fill the void (Wood 45) as he not only strengthened the social movements toward eradicating apartheid, but also continued the employment of the Anti-Apartheid Jeremiad, although he referred to apartheid as 'separate development' ('We Blacks', 27).

'We Blacks': Biko's Anti-'Separate Development' Jeremiad Called for a New Outlook on Black Life in South Africa

When the Anti-Apartheid Jeremiad sought to disparagingly further condemn apartheid, it found refuge in the rhetoric of one of South Africa's most profound activists. Biko grieved that 'every other facet of [his] life had been carved and shaped within the context of separate development' (*I Write What I Like*, 'We Blacks', 27). Born on the eve of the launching of the Nationalist Party, Biko's life was engrossed in the separation doctrines of apartheid and led him to believe that the 'logic behind white domination was to prepare the black man for the subservient role.' Because of his life experiences, Biko discovered the racial division that made multiracial collaboration and gradual assimilation unattainable (Jukes 123). In his political dissertation 'We Blacks,' the elements of the jeremiad existed and readily articulated Biko's jeremiadic discourse: he expressed grief over the condition of his people; he criticized the structure of apartheid for hindering a true democratic South Africa; and he prophesized the beginning of what he called the 'limits of endurance of the human mind.' For example, Biko lamented:

.....all in all the black man has become a shell, a shadow of a man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity.

Biko criticized the system of apartheid for blacks' lowly condition. Apartheid, he exclaimed, merited 'condemnation and vigorous opposition from the indigenous peoples as well as those who see the problem in its correct perspective. He considered, however, that necessary steps needed to be taken before blacks could begin any 'programme designed to change the status quo.' They must initially accept this as 'the first truth,' he lamented. Biko's aggressive, demanding anti-'Separate Development' jeremiadic rhetoric, then sought to galvanize blacks to a consciousness concerning the attainment of their own liberation. This meant formulizing a concrete political strategy based on class interests, by suggesting that

the first step to accepting this 'truth' was to 'make the black man come to himself.' Biko believed that this could be achieved by impelling 'back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity.' His 'inward-looking process,' he wrote, became his 'definition of "Black Consciousness"' (*I Write What I Like*, 'We Blacks', 27, 29, 30).

The rhetoric of Biko's anti-'Separate Development' Jeremiad was not only developed through his ideology of 'black consciousness,' but it also expressed a message of self-respect which would assist him in mobilizing blacks to push forward in their time of crisis. To assist in influencing 'black consciousness' as a collective mass movement, Biko reached back through African struggle and advancement and concluded that 'a people without a positive history is like a vehicle without an engine.' He, therefore, praised African culture in order to move Black South Africans to a consciousness about the oppressive realities of apartheid. If Africans in general could build an awareness of 'belonging to the community within a short time of coming together,' they could also easily organize for a new chapter of struggle and freedom. Therefore, Biko's search for 'black consciousness' sought 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 to be fooled by white society who have white-washed themselves and made white standards the yardstick by which even black people judge each other. (*I Write What I Like*, 'We Blacks', 30)

Within the confines of Biko's definition of 'black consciousness,' South Africans could find a progression from the deficiencies of community life to the ultimate South African community, and perhaps the prophetic reassurance toward a promise to end apartheid: "Black consciousness" therefore seeks to give positivity in the outlook of the black people of their problems. It works on the knowledge that "white hatred" is negative, though understandable, and leads to precipitate and shot-gun methods which may be disastrous for black and white alike. It seeks to channel the pent-up forces of the angry black masses to meaningful and directional oppositions basing its entire struggle on realities of the situation. It wants to ensure a singularity of purpose in the minds of the black people and to make possible total involvement of the masses in a struggle essentially theirs. (*I Write What I Like*, 'We Blacks', 30-31).

Biko's 'black consciousness' ideology also entailed an awareness that Black liberation would not only come from envisioning and struggling for formal political changes, as previous movements like the ANC had done, but also from psychological alteration in the minds of Black people themselves. Blacks must 'come to realise the urgent need for a re-awakening of the sleeping masses,' Biko lamented. 'Needless to say,' he continued, 'it shall have to be the black people themselves who shall take care of this programme' (*I Write What I Like*, 'We Blacks', 32). Biko believed that apartheid was a transgression from a fully democratic South Africa and that blacks were moving toward their own 'realisation of self.' He lamented: 'The anachronism of a well-meaning God who allows people to suffer continually under an obviously immoral system is not lost to young blacks' (*I Write What I Like*, 'We Blacks', 31). Biko warned that the 'ground for a revolution is always fertile in the presence of absolute destitution.' Just as Mandela had done in 1962, Biko utilized the prophecy element of the jeremiad to forewarn those who supported apartheid that revolution was the only outcome of the maltreatment of a people:

At some stage one can foresee a situation where black people will feel they have nothing to live for and will shout unto their God "Thy will be done." Indeed His will shall be

done but it shall not appeal equality to all mortals for indeed we have different versions of His will. (*I Write What I Like*, 'We Blacks', 30)

Since 'separate development' was a bold effort which sought to break down the expansive African nationalism (Worden, 128), Biko's anti-'Separate Development' Jeremiad demonstrated the distress for the existential struggle of black people as human beings, dignified and proud of their blackness, in spite of the oppression of colonialism: "Black Consciousness" seeks to talk to the black man in a language that is his own' (*I Write What I Like*, 'We Blacks', 32).

Within the walls of Biko's anti-'Separate Development' Jeremiad there also existed a call for inclusion into mainstream South African society. Especially revealing in his discourse was his emphasis, however, on the kind of integration he preferred: collective effort. He lamented:

If by integration you understand a breakthrough into white society by blacks, an assimilation and acceptance of blacks into an already established set of norms and code of behaviour set up by and maintained by whites, then YES I am against it.....If on the other hand by integration you mean there shall be free participation by all members of a society, catering for the full expression of the self in a freely changing society as determined by the will of the people, then I am with you. (*I Write What I Like*, 'Black Souls in White Skins?', 24)

In Biko's 'freely changing' South Africa, the aim of his Anti-'Separate Development' Jeremiad was to re-establish 'black consciousness' and South African consciousness, which he felt had been suppressed under colonialism. His investigation into the ills of apartheid proposed that if black people believed in democracy, but did not believe in their own value, they would not truly be committed to gaining power.

'To Attain the Envisioned Self': Biko's Anti-'Separate Development' Jeremiad Underlined His Black Consciousness Movement

Perhaps one of the most noteworthy organizational developments in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa was Biko's Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). Formally the SASO, BCM was a proletariat anti-apartheid liberal movement that emerged out of the political vacuum formed by the decimation—jailing and banning—of the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) leadership. Since the 'banning and harassment of black political parties,' Biko lamented, 'a dangerous vacuum has been created' (*I Write What I Like*, 'Fragmentation of the Black Resistance', 34, 35). During this 'brief spell of silence' between the decline of the ANC and PAC and the rise of his BCM, Biko lamented that 'political activity was mainly taken up by liberals' and that 'blacks started dabbling with the dangerous theory—that of working within the system' of apartheid. The BCM represented a social movement for political consciousness among South Africa's oppressed populace and an effort to bridge the gap between the banishment of the ANC and PAC. Biko's leadership, however, in Black politics in South Africa was a different type from the political outlook Mandela envisioned. In his political theory, Biko provided his audience with the prospect of understanding the full constant fight for human self-respect in South Africa (Arnold, xv). Being a unique product of South African's history (Woods, 21), Biko lamented that 'being black is not a matter of pigmentation—being black is a reflection of a mental attitude' (*I Write What I Like*, 'The Definition of Black Consciousness', 48).

Repeatedly in Biko's Anti-'Separate Development' Jeremiad opposition to the many edifices of apartheid surfaced: open and rebellious denunciation of apartheid and unwillingness to associate with its politics. Biko's Anti-'Separate Development' Jeremiad sought to instill in

the Black community self-importance and self-reliance by rejecting 'the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude' (*I Write What I Like*, 'The Definition of Black Consciousness', 49). He intended to illustrate that within whites' consciousness, there existed a tarnished elucidation of what represented the problem of race relations in South Africa. Of all the actions to which Biko's BCM may have contributed, the divisiveness of Biko's Anti-'Separate Development' Jeremiad was profoundly illustrated in his dirge 'The Definition of Black Consciousness.' Biko defined Black Consciousness as:

The realisation by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their operation...It seeks to demonstrate the lie that black is an aberration from the "normal" which is white. (49)

In Biko's understanding of 'Black Consciousness,' blacks would find the propensity needed to come to the realization that when they 'emulate the white man,' they, in fact, are slighting the aptitude of 'whoever created them black.' Therefore, his Anti-'Separate Development' Jeremiad offered blacks hope that by accepting his call to realization, 'Black Consciousness' would take 'cognizance of the deliberateness of God's plan in creating black people black.' His perception of black consciousness was nationalistic in nature: he implied that blacks were the chosen people, as it was God's plan to create them that way. To achieve this unity, Biko established the need to instill the black community with 'a new-found pride in themselves, their efforts, their value systems, their culture, their religion and their outlook on life' (*I Write What I Like*, 'The Definition of Black Consciousness' 49).

Believing that the most resilient and successful movement against apartheid should emerge from South Africa's black community, Biko maintained that blacks must join forces to fully defeat all of the systems of apartheid. He stressed that blacks should not be satisfied with any reforms:

Blacks are out to completely transform the system and to make of it what they wish. Such a major undertaking can only be realised in an atmosphere where people are convinced of the truth inherent in their stand. Liberation therefore, is of paramount importance in the concept of Black Consciousness, for we cannot be conscious of ourselves and yet remain in bondage. We want to attain the envisioned self which is a free self. (*I Write What I Like*, 'The Definition of Black Consciousness', 49)

As evident in his rhetoric, Biko believed that a movement of this magnitude was vital to the resistance of apartheid. He proclaimed that racism was so inclusive and all-encompassing in South African society, and that it was so deep-rooted within the white consciousness, whites could never wholly identify with all of the materializations of their perpetuated bigotry. In a classic jeremiad approach, which was to reprimand the white race for their hand in 'separate development,' Biko lamented 'the white man's quest for power has led him to destroy with utter ruthlessness whatever has stood in his way.' Therefore, he encouraged blacks to 'live through these trying times' (*I Write What I Like*, 'White Racism and Black Consciousness', 61, 72). White racism, he lamented, was the cause of South Africa's problems:

We recognise the existence of one major force in South Africa. This is White Racism. It is the one force against which all of us are pitted. It works with unnerving totality, featuring both on the offensive and in our defence. Its greatest ally to date has been the refusal by us to club together as blacks because we are told to do so would be racist. (*I Write What I Like*, 'The Definition of Black Consciousness', 50)

Biko forewarned that White racism would fade against inevitable forces of progress. He combined his messianic nationalism with his millennial South African faith when he prophesized:

Over the years we have attained moral superiority over the white man; we shall watch as time destroys his paper castles and know that all these little pranks were but frantic attempts of frightened little people to convince each other that they can control the minds and bodies of indigenous people of Africa indefinitely. (*I Write What I Like*, 'White Racism and Black Consciousness', 72)

Despite Biko's extremism and the extent of its judgment, there was an element of hope in his jeremiadic discourse: 'The future will always be shaped by the sequence of present-day events,' he believed (*I Write What I Like*, 'The Definition of Black Consciousness', 52). When he maintained his optimistic stance, Biko later wrote that 'one cannot but welcome the evolution of a positive outlook in the black world' (*I Write What I Like*, 'White Racism and Black Consciousness', 72). His prophetic vision, however, was not pragmatic for the times but was intended to 'work out schemes' to not only correct 'false images' of blacks' 'in terms of Culture, Education, Religion, Economics,' but also to further become their 'own authorities rather than wait to be interpreted by others' (*I Write What I Like*, 'The Definition of Black Consciousness', 52).

Biko's BCM sought to continually implant blacks with the optimism needed to eliminate the 'various cocoons of repression' maintained by apartheid's fascistic structure. Throughout all of this, however, Biko still held out optimism:

[Black Consciousness] is more than just a reactionary rejection of whites by blacks. The quintessence of it is the realisation by the blacks that, in order to feature well in this game of power politics, they have to use the concept of group power and to build a strong foundation for this...The philosophy of Black Consciousness, therefore, expresses group pride and the determination by blacks to rise and attain the envisaged self. (*I Write What I Like*, 'White Racism and Black Consciousness', 68)

Biko's Anti-'Separate Development' Jeremiad effectively called for black solidarity—that blacks must connect in order to affect any transformations in South African politics. It was, in his own eyes, 'the most positive call to come from any group in the black world for a long time' (*I Write What I Like*, 'White Racism and Black Consciousness', 68).

'To Create a Climate of Understanding': Mandela Continued the Anti-Apartheid Jeremiad

If black self-reliance in South Africa could be gauged by the vivacity of the presence of a jeremiadic tradition, the rhetoric and public address of Mandela seemed to indicate that such faith flourished throughout anti-apartheid protest. As President of South Africa from May 1994 until June 1999, Mandela officiated over the switch from marginal rule and apartheid to gaining international admiration for his promotion of national and international reconciliation. During his inauguration as president, Mandela concluded his Anti-Apartheid Jeremiad by combining lament and prophecy. Interestingly, he passionately exhibited humility for all of Africa, not just South Africa:

Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another and suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world. Let freedom reign. The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement!
God bless Africa! (*In His Own Words*, 'Inauguration as President', 70).

Mandela not only sought to demolish the ills of apartheid and serve his people, but he also sought to build and instill within his people optimism about the future. In his 'Inauguration as

President' speech, Mandela illustrated that the time had come to:

".....enter into a covenant that we shall build a society in which all South Africans, both black and white, will be able to walk tall, without any fear in their hearts, assured of their inalienable right to human dignity" (69).

In 1996, the newly formulated South African government adopted a new, more liberal constitution that would protect gender and human rights. The last days of apartheid opened doors for the prompt development of South Africa's previously small black middle class in commerce and other vocations, promoted by affirmative action procedures and strategies (Worden 164). Mandela lamented:

We cannot build or heal our nation if - in both the private and public sectors, in the schools and universities, in the hospitals and on the land, in dealing with crime and social dislocation - if we continue with business as usual, wallowing in notions of the past. Everywhere and in everything we do, what is now required is boldness in thinking, firmness in resolve and consistency in action. (*In His Own Words*, 'Healing and Building', 157).

Mandela's jeremiadic discourse successfully transformed from the 'freedom fighters speaking the language of opposition to a statesman speaking the language of inclusion and commonality' (Sheckels, 87). The ethos of Mandela's jeremiads was recognized through the words he employed in his discourse. For example, on Freedom Day, 27 April 1995, Mandela lamented:

The ultimate goal of a better life has yet to be realised. But if any one day marked the crossing of the divide from a past of conflict and division to the possibility of unity and peace; from inequality to quality; from a history of oppression to a future of freedom, it is 27 April 1994.⁽³⁾

On this day, you the people, took your destiny into your own hands. You decided that nothing would prevent you from exercising your hard-won right to elect a government of your choice. (*In His Own Words*, 'Freedom Day', 71)

Embedded in Mandela's discourse was a display of harmony as his rhetoric undeniably encouraged pride and compassion. Even in his speech commemorating the twentieth anniversary of Biko's death delivered 12 September 1997, Mandela held out hope that by 'forging a new and prosperous nation,' South Africans were 'continuing the fight in which Steve Biko paid the supreme sacrifice' (*In His Own Words*, 'Steve Biko', 456). In his jeremiadic discourse, Mandela never vacillated in his dedication to democracy and egalitarianism for all South Africans. Mandela continues to employ the jeremiad as social protest whether on education, national building, culture, health, peace or AIDS, making him a preeminent Jeremiah protesting for South African democracy.

Conclusion: Symbols of Optimism for South African Democracy

With the application of apartheid in South Africa, Nelson Mandela and Steve Biko utilized the jeremiad as driving forces to decrease the universal suffrage of South Africa's non-white populace. As Mandela's rhetoric transformed from radical to conciliatory in tone while seeking to unite all South Africans, Biko's radical message sought to mobilize Black South Africans in the common cause of eliminating apartheid in a collective effort. The jeremiad was inextricably embedded in their social protest rhetoric as they sought to fulfill their missions as negotiators of justice and social equality. Their anti-apartheid jeremiads as social protest could not have functioned as well as they did had it not been for their actions and

their structured organizations. Recognition of anti-apartheid jeremiadic rhetoric in South Africa, then, must identify the importance of the jeremiad and its role in the continuing changes in restructuring South African politics. Anti-Apartheid jeremiadic discourse in the South African social protest tradition imagined the continuation of customs, communal beliefs, and collectivity, as it sought to rebuild or restructure community politics void of apartheid's regime.

What an examination such as this adds to the discussion of anti-apartheid rhetoric is a sense of what Mandela and Biko accomplished in unifying South Africans and keeping them optimistic about their nation's future. To uncover the jeremiads found rooted within Mandela's and Biko's anti-apartheid rhetoric would reveal that their employment of this distinctive rhetoric signified that resistance to apartheid was more than just a movement; it was a way of life as they positioned themselves as symbols of optimism for South African democracy.

Notes

1. For a discussion on the social and religious implications of American jeremiadic discourse, see Perry Miller's *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, 1956); Sacvan Bercovitch's *The American Jeremiad* (Madison, 1978); Wilson Jeremiah Moses', *Black Messiahs and Uncle Toms: Social and Literary Manipulations of a Religious Myth* (University Park, 1983), and David Howard-Pitney's, *The Afro-American Jeremiad: Appeals for Justice in America* (Philadelphia, 1990), and his revised edition, *The African American Jeremiad* (2005). Although these scholars discuss the development of the American Jeremiad, I argue here that the jeremiad was appropriate for Mandela's and Biko's social protest rhetoric. I am not suggesting, however, that there is a connection between the South African Anti-Apartheid Jeremiad and the American Jeremiad. The associations, I believe, are palpable. Biko, for example, connected William Edward Burghardt Dubois' 'double-consciousness' ideology to the struggles of Black South Africans and echoed many of DuBois' ideas, who, as Howard-Pitney suggested, utilized the jeremiad to 'criticize white racism and demand[ed] black civil rights' (*The Afro-American Jeremiad*, 87).
- 2 See T. Keegan's *Colonial South Africa and The Origins of the Racial Order* (Charlottesville, 1996) and L. Thompson's *A History of South Africa* (New Haven, 2000).
3. April 27th commemorates freedom and is held in observance of the first democratic post-apartheid elections held on that day in 1994. Although the speech quoted is from 1995, Mandela was therefore referencing the historical event of April 27th in 1994 .

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