



pretending that everyone who acted intelligently in struggle was an honorary leader of a “movement” which had been left behind. The real history made by the masses was hierarchically accorded a substitute history — the history of mass support for the BCM; and it was this substitute history that the partisans of BCM proclaimed as the black proletariat’s essence and truth. “Mass support,” the BCM’s own corrective to hierarchical leadership, in fact became a rubric by which the really hierarchical leaders of the BCM affirmed their success and their authority in just about everything. This “success” and “authority” became an abstract standard for measuring all struggle.

Thus the Black Consciousness Movement found a refuge in the myth of its power, which was inversely proportional to its practical effectiveness. The further it became separated from practical contestation, the more important the myth became. The BCM never claimed to be a monolithic organisation; in actuality it was premised on the fact that it was not a monolithic organisation. The myth that Black Consciousness incorporated the activity of every rebellious black South African was exactly what became the semantic substitute for the monolithic organisation toward which the BCM logically tended, but whose inevitable symptoms of stultification the BCM leadership was sophisticated enough to want to avoid for as long as possible.

In mid-1979, however, the tireless bureaucratic work-mules in various BCM bureaucracies, realising that the ideology of mass support could no longer suffice now that the organisations were banned in South Africa and visibly decaying in exile, steered the BCM to its logical conclusion. The reality of organisation as a substitute for real struggle could no longer be diffused, and instead was affirmed openly. The BCM was made into an official liberation movement, with headquarters in Gaberones, and chapters in London, Bonn and New York. And the ideological *raison d’être* for its existence? To mediate, but not in a traditional leninist style, but rather in the wishy-washy fashion of a UN peace-keeping force. To mediate not between theory and practice, or between the masses and power, but to mediate between the ANC and the PAC. From the sublime to the most absolute form of cretinism! All the worms have crawled out of the corpse. The BCM’s official proclamation as an organisation spells out unfailingly that in its true colours as ideology and hierarchy, it is an enemy of real black proletarian struggle in South Africa.

