

SASO to

SANSCO

South African National Students' Congress

**What connects Black
Consciousness to the
present?**

Timeline

- SASO is banned in October 1977
- Azanian Students' Organization (AZASO) meets 23 November 1979
- Shifts towards Congress movement in 1980
 - Renames itself SANSCO in 1986
 - Merges with NUSAS in 1991

SA Education in the 1980s

- Massive enrollment growth in African, coloured and Indian schools.
- Hopes of preventing student unrest via educational investment in a "black middle class."
 - Demand for technical workers.
- New campuses opened (MEDUNSA, VISTA, Transkei, Venda, etc.).
 - Increase in student bursaries.
- Increase in first-generation students, reaching 90% of UWC students in the early 1980s.

Stellenbosch in 1990

**755 black students
constituted 5.3% of the
student body.**

Continued police involvement

Many university and college administrations frequently summoned the riot police at the slightest sign of student opposition, and throughout the 1980s students were whipped, baton-charged and tear-gassed by police on campus.

Between 1986 and 1989 the University of the North came under military occupation by the South African Defence Force. A curfew was imposed, soldiers invigilated exams, and raids on student residences were common (WUS, 1989). In 1989, three students were killed by the army during a protest against the continued military occupation of their campus.

(Badat 207)

General context for Badat

As a consequence of the reformist objectives of corporate capital and the apartheid state, and particularly the goal of creating a black middle class, black higher education expanded tremendously during the 1976/ 1977 to 1990 period. New institutions were established and the numbers of black students in higher education increased dramatically.

Continued grounds for dissent

However, the poor conditions on many black campuses, authoritarian controls, the repressive measures of administrations and security forces and the broader political context contributed to a general disaffection among black students. This created fertile conditions for student formations like SANSCO to mediate the initiatives of capital and the state, project alternative agendas and to raise alternative demands.

**Shift away from Black
Consciousness/PAC
towards Congress
movement**

Freedom Charter (1955)

The Doors Of Learning And Of Culture Shall Be Opened!

The government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life;
All the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands;

Freedom Charter (cont.)

The aim of education shall be to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace;
Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children;

Freedom Charter (cont.)

Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit;

Adult illiteracy shall be ended by a mass state education plan;

Teachers shall have all the rights of other citizens;

The colour bar in cultural life, in sport and in education shall be abolished.

**Ambiguous
stance
towards this**

The precise character of the Freedom Charter was a matter of considerable debate. In some quarters, the document was criticised as a bourgeois manifesto, which ultimately safeguarded capitalism in South Africa. In other quarters, and often in response to the above criticism, the document tended to be presented as a manifesto that guaranteed a socialist future in South Africa.

SANSCO's own position was to reject both these interpretations of the Freedom Charter. Instead, its view was that the Freedom Charter was neither a bourgeois document nor as a socialist manifesto, but rather best understood as a revolutionary national-democratic programme. (230)

Analysis after Black Consciousness

"In a direct rebuttal of the AZAPO thesis that all blacks were workers, SANSCO also acknowledged the existence of class divisions among blacks and asserted the primacy of black workers "in the national struggle for democracy." (225)

Black non-racialism

SANSCO organised and was open only to black students and was thus an exclusively black formation, a seeming contradiction to its commitment to non-racialism in practice. SANSCO activists... saw no contradiction between a commitment to non-racialism and the organisation restricting itself to black students. In their view, political and organisational strategies were not shaped exclusively by ideological and political commitments but also material conditions. (223)

**Now for a bit
of reflexivity.**

**What is the purpose of
university education?**

**What do you observe
autoethnographically, as
a student in this module?**

**What is something you
would change about this
module?**

**What is something you
like about this module?**

Teaching assignments...

Learning about teaching

"Instead of reading my points to her in bullet form I could have created a better dialogue with her in my lesson as a way of increasing interest by involving her in the teaching more. Another way of improvement could have been asking her more questions about her experience throughout the lesson, instead of just at the end, as this can cause her to forget her points as the lesson goes on and thus less interaction."

Learning about teaching

"I think that making use of visual aids for the more theoretic work, rather than just reading it to him, would have better grasped his attention."

Learning about interest

"In terms of originality, I don't think my teaching was that successful, because the notion of teaching usually requires the student to have a certain level of ignorance towards the topic."

Learning about speed

"I believe that with improvement especially in slowing down what explaining and when talking about my chosen topic, learning the topic more by heart and being less nervous and keeping calm would help with the way my lesson was taught and will too help to keep my partner more focused and captivated."

Learning about relationships

"I would like to get to know my colleague better before my next teaching, so that we can be more honest and direct about what we are teaching."

Learning about boredom

"My student was polite enough to look attentive but in my honest opinion, I don't think she was particularly interested. She nodded and smiled as I spoke but it seemed to me that she didn't feel that the topic was particularly important."

Learning about history

"It feels like even with what is being taught within lectures feels as if the past of apartheid is never being left behind, and that we are not moving forward as a nation because of the constant bringing back of the evil deeds of the past which this generation had no part to play in."

Learning about being split

"In South Africa, the debate surrounding decolonisation and white supremacy is a very sensitive debate. The opinions on these topics are split quite drastically. The topic I chose to address in the teaching assignment was the class dynamic, and the absence of a complete inclusive class structure... The study of anthropology is doing more harm in the society, than good. It divides the races even more, creating either far leftist ideologies or infuriating rightists."

Learning about being split

"There is no engagement besides white guilt that is expressed when discussing such content due to the propaganda that is infused by the dominant white hetero-patriarchal system within most spheres of the Stellenbosch student community."

Learning about being split

"However the only negative that I would mention is in regards to how tiring and exhausting it was to educate a white liberal, on why the request of transcending race is impossible ... is to negate its impact on the lives of numerous people."

**What do we
do about
being split?**