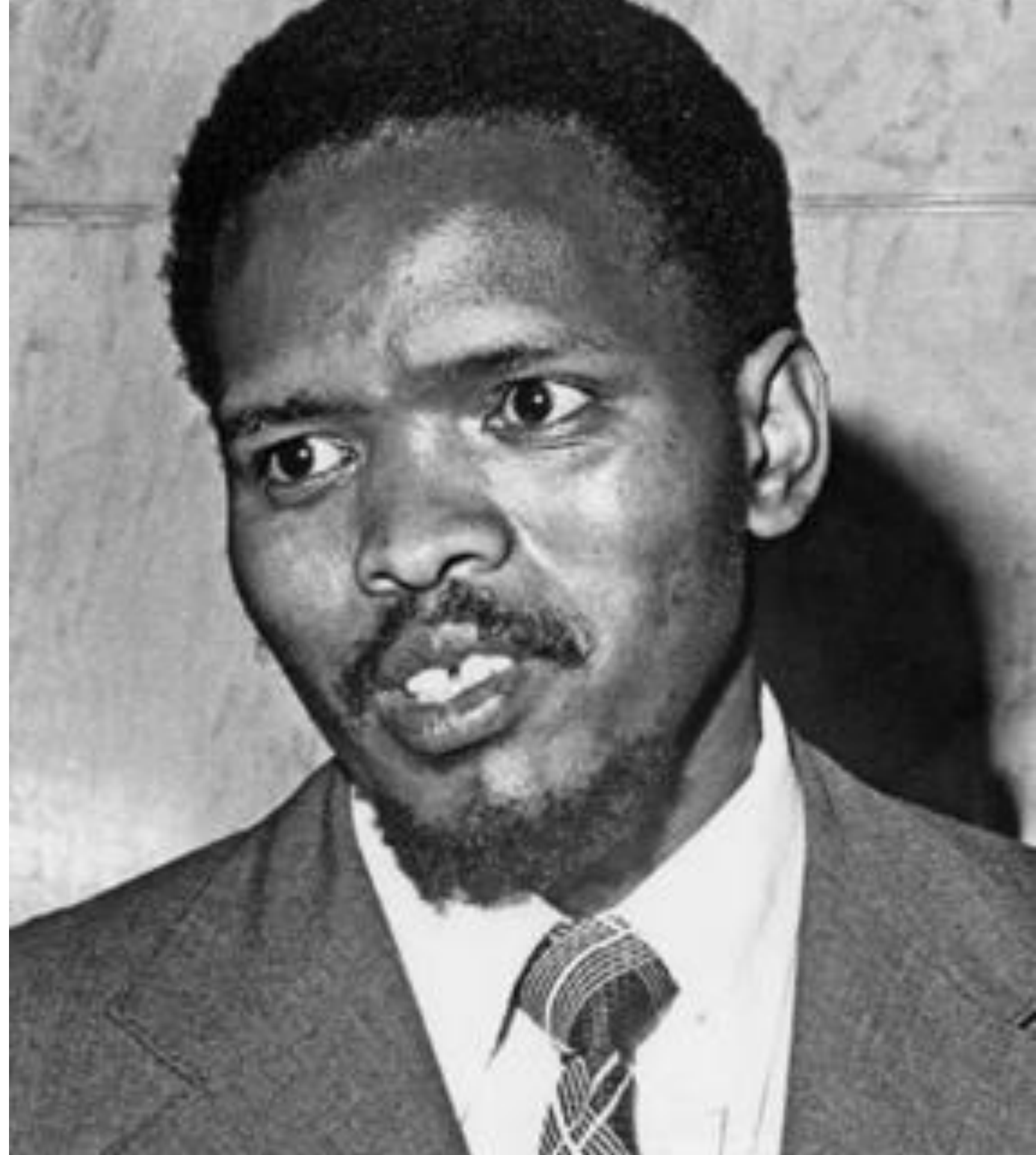


Steve Biko



Biography

Dec. 18, 1946 - Stephen Bantu Biko is born. *His father dies at age 4. Educated in a Catholic school.*

1966 - Enters Medical School of (white) University of Natal, Non-European section, Durban. Active in NUSAS (National Union of South African Students).

1968 - Breaks with NUSAS to form SASO (South African Students' Organisation).

Biography, cont.

July 1969 - Elected first SASO President.

March 1973 - Banned to Kingwilliamstown.

1976 - Detained August-December under the
Terrorism Act.

1977 - Detained 18 August; killed by police, dies
September 12.

Higher Education under Apartheid

Native education should be based on the principles of trusteeship, non-equality and segregation; its aims should be to inculcate the white man's view of life, especially that of the Boer, which is the senior trustee.

Quoted in Badat (1999:50)

Higher Education under Apartheid

1959 Extension of University Education Act

Forbids Black and Coloured students from registering at previously “open” universities.

1959-61: "Bush Colleges" opened (e.g. University College of the Western Cape, University of the North).

Functions of black higher education

- To produce teachers for black populations.
- To produce doctors for black populations.
- To enlist black elites in the Apartheid project.

University racial demographics, 1948

- 950 black university students: 4.6% of student body
- 6499 students at African teacher training institutions
 - 1133 coloured and Indian students

University racial demographics, 1959

- 1656 black students at white English-speaking universities
 - 2064 at UNISA
 - 489 at Fort Hare
 - Total university enrollments 39,390 (89.3% white)
- (Badat 1999:51-52)

Critique of NUSAS

- Critique of white dominance in the membership.
- Critique of white monopoly on leadership roles.
 - Critique of (white) liberalism in general.

NUSAS in 1969

There are those who would say that all is peaceful in South Africa. Let them remember the thousands of banned men and women, who lead twilight existences in our land.

There are those who would say that the African is happy in South Africa. Let them remember Sharpeville.

There are those who would say that the African is well-treated in South Africa. Let them look to the filth of the African locations.

There are those who would say that South Africa is a sunny, healthy land. Let them look to the dead in Limehill.

**NUSAS spoke about
Africans but not *as*
Africans.**

SASO's Aims

1. To crystallise the needs and aspirations of the non-white students and to seek to make known their grievances.
2. Where possible to put into effect programmes designed to meet the needs of the non-white students and to act on a collective basis in an effort to solve some of the problems which beset the centres individually.

SASO's Aims, cont.

1. To heighten the degree of contact not only amongst the non-white students but also amongst these and the rest of the South African student population, to make the non-white students accepted on their own terms as an integral part of the South African student community.
2. To establish a solid identity amongst the non-white students and
to ensure that these students are always treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

SASO's Aims, cont.

1. To protect the interests of the member centres and to act as a pressure group on all institutions and organisations for the benefit of the non-white students.
2. To boost up the morale of the non-white students, to heighten their own confidence in themselves and to contribute largely to the direction of thought taken by the various institutions on social, political and other current topics.

(4-5)

Biko on Black Consciousness

Black people under the Smuts government were oppressed but they were still men. They failed to change the system for many reasons which we shall not consider here. But the type of black man we have today has lost his manhood. Reduced to an obliging shell, he looks with awe at the white power structure and accepts what he regards as the "inevitable position".

Biko on Black Consciousness, cont.

Deep inside his anger mounts at the accumulating insult, but he vents it in the wrong direction---on his fellow man in the township, on the property of black people. No longer does he trust leadership, for the 1963 mass arrests were blameable on bungling by the leadership, nor is there any to trust. In the privacy of his toilet his face twists in silent condemnation of white society but brightens up in sheepish obedience as he comes out hurrying in response to his master's impatient call.

Biko on Black Consciousness, cont.

In the home-bound bus or train he joins the chorus that roundly condemns the white man but is first to praise the government in the presence of the police or his employers. His heart yearns for the comfort of white society and makes him blame himself for not having been "educated" enough to warrant such luxury.

Biko on Black Consciousness, cont.

Celebrated achievements by whites in the field of science---which he understands only hazily---serve to make him rather convinced of the futility of resistance and to throw away any hopes that change may ever come. All in all the black man has become a shell, a shadow of man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity.

Biko on Black Consciousness, cont.

This is the first truth, bitter as it may seem, that we have to acknowledge before we can start on any programme designed to change the status quo. It becomes more necessary to see the truth as it is if you realise that the only vehicle for change are these people who have lost their personality.

Biko on Black Consciousness, cont.

The first step therefore is to make the black man come to himself; to pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth. This is what we mean by an inward-looking process. This is the definition of "Black Consciousness".

(28-29)

SASO on Black Consciousness

Black Student Policy Manifesto, adopted June 1972

4 (a) SASO upholds the concept of Black Consciousness and the drive towards black awareness as the most local and significant means of ridding our lives of the shackles that bind us to perpetual servitude.

SASO on Black Consciousness, cont.

(b) SASO defines Black Consciousness as follows:

(i) Black Consciousness is an attitude of mind, a way of life.

(ii) The basic tenet of Black Consciousness is that the Black man must reject all value systems that seek to make him a foreigner in the country of his birth and reduce his basic human dignity.

SASO on Black Consciousness, cont.

- (iii) The Black man must build up his own value systems, see himself as self-defined and not defined by others.
- (iv) The concept of Black Consciousness implies the awareness by the Black people of power they wield as a group, both economically and politically and hence group cohesion and solidarity are important facets of Black Consciousness.
- (v) Black Consciousness will always be enhanced by the totality of involvement of the oppressed people, hence the message of Black Consciousness has to be spread to reach all sections of the Black community.

SASO on Black Consciousness, cont.

(c) SASO accepts the premise that, before the Black people join the open society, they should first close their ranks, to form themselves into a solid group to oppose the definite racism that is meted out by the White society, to work out their direction clearly and bargain from a position of strength. *SASO believes that a truly open society can only be achieved by blacks.*

(African Liberation Reader Vol. 1, 121)

Our Strategy for Liberation

We speak as one combined whole, directing ourselves to a common enemy, and we reject anyone who wishes to destroy that unity. (147)

On Black Unity

We are of the view that we should operate as one united whole toward attainment of an egalitarian society for the whole of Azania. Therefore entrenchment of tribalistic, racialistic or any form of sectional outlook is abhorred by us. We hate it and we seek to destroy it. It is for this reason therefore that we cannot see any form of coalition with any of the bantustan leaders... (147)

You speak of an egalitarian society. Do you mean a socialist one?

Yes, I think there is no running away from the fact that now in South Africa there is such an ill distribution of wealth that any form of political freedom which does not touch on the proper distribution of wealth will be meaningless. The whites have locked up within a small minority of themselves the greater proportion of the country's wealth. If we have a mere change of face of those in governing positions what is likely to happen is that black people will continue to be poor, and you will see a few blacks filtering through into the so-called bourgeoisie. Our society will be run almost as of yesterday. (149)

Do you see a country in which black and white can live amicably on equal terms together?

That is correct. We see a completely non-racial society. We don't believe, for instance, in the so-called guarantees for minority rights, because guaranteeing minority rights implies the recognition of portions of the community on a race basis. We believe that in our country there shall be no minority, there shall be no majority, just the people.

(149)

A "race first" analysis

In analysing South African society, SASO viewed "race" as the primary line of cleavage. Class divisions were not seen as important and there was little recognition of gender issues. There was no grappling with the simultaneity of racial and class divisions and the articulation of "race" and class oppression, let alone with the interrelationship of "race", class and gender factors in the shaping of South Africa's social structure.

(Badat 1999:87)

On Death (1977)

You are either alive and proud or you are dead, and when you are dead, you can't care anyway. And your method of death can itself be a politicizing thing. So you die in the riots. For a hell of a lot of them, in fact, there's really nothing to lose---almost literally, given the kind of situations that they come from. So if you can overcome the personal fear for death, which is a highly irrational thing, you know, then you're on the way.

On Death (1977)

And in interrogation the same sort of thing applies. I was talking to this policeman, and I told him, "If you want us to make any progress, the best thing is for us to talk. Don't try any form of rough stuff, because it just won't work." And this is absolutely true also. For I just couldn't see what they could do to me which would make me all of a sudden soften to them.

On Death (1977)

If they talk to me, well I'm bound to be affected by them as human beings. But the moment they adopt rough stuff, they are imprinting in my mind that they are police. And I only understand one form of dealing with police, and that's to be as unhelpful as possible. So I button up. And I told them this: "It's up to you." (152)

Questions?