

Reflection on NUSAS and the Christina Institute by Horst Kleinschmidt

A personal, referenced, recollection by Horst Kleinschmidt, who served as Vice President of National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) when black students left the organisation to form South African Student Organisation (SASO). He traces his relationship with the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) as a white activist before and after the Black walkout. Between 1968 and 1970 he frequently stayed in Durban with the founders of what became the BCM. In 1972 he started working for the Christian Institute (CI) of Beyers Naude and its Study Project of Christianity in Apartheid Society (SPRO-CAS). He was sent to Durban when detentions increased after the 'Curries Fountain' event. He authored several reports on the use of torture by the Security Police.

When the SASO/BPC trial took place he raised funds for the payment of the defence team and provided support for the families who attended the proceedings in Pretoria. Through his paper the author traces his own radicalisation and his continuing support for BCM. The paper covers white student political education and protest, his refusal to testify before the Schlebusch Commission of enquiry, initial connections with men released from Robben Island, support for them as banned and banished individuals following their release and his initial contact with the ANC. The author was detained in 1975 and fled South Africa in 1976. In exile he worked with the underground structures of the ANC and became director of the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa (IDAF).