

SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS MOVEMENT'S HISTORY

In 1971 some high school and secondary school students came together and decided to form a movement that would cater for students' needs and interests at school. This movement was called the African Student Movement (A.S.M.).

In an attempt to implement some of their resolutions they discovered that they should first establish themselves in schools. Thus they went on to establish branches at Orlando High, Orlando West, Diepkloof, Morris Isaacson, Sekano-Ntoane, Masi High, Meadowlands High and a few Secondary schools.

Diepkloof High school acted as the co-ordinator of these branches though the activities were not so cross-pollinated.

A.S.M. resolved that they would discourage irrelevant bodies that used African students for their own needs. The typical example in this regard was the Students Christian Movement (S.C.M.). Generally this was a disorganisation and a lull finally resulted also due to the low sense of commitment by the leadership.

After A.S.M. had been in operation for some time, approximately a year, the South African Students Organisation (S.A.S.O.) at their G.S.C in December 1972 drew a resolution that a well organised organisation or movement that should cater for the needs of High and Secondary school students should be formed. A.S.M. as such was contacted and a general feeling was that A.S.M. was limited in scope and should be widened so as to cover the Black community at large. Therefore A.S.M. was changed to the South African Student Movement (.S.A.S.M.).

S.A.S.M. had community projects which were aimed at increasing the scope of involvement and consciousness in the community. These were and are basically self-help projects directed at instilling self-reliance in the Black Community.

These were based mainly on the reef, in the Transvaal because of difficulties encountered in expanding the organisational network. In 1971-1972 S.A.S.M. offered assistance in terms of man-power in a S.A.S.O. community project at Winterveld near Pretoria.

S.A.S.M. also had an annual Winter School running whenever schools closed in June. This project suffered severe set-backs when the

S.C.M. tried desperately to counter by organising similar projects. Teachers and students were intimidated by the Security police from attending. This project was stopped for financial reasons.

Our health and physical projects could not get off the ground because of a dire lack of technical assistance and finance.

Our Home educational Scheme was in operation for about a year. This proved to be one of the most successful projects ever because students benefited greatly, especially educationally from it.

In May 1973 S.A.S.M. printed a newsletter. In the same year S.A.S.M. printed a t-shirt with the emblem as reflected on the newsletter cover.

Our secretary Mathe Diseko was banned in September 1973. There was a temporary disorganisation and executive members fell off. Thus the organiser found himself the only one left, he was tempted to take power into his own hands and as a result he committed a number of irregularities which led S.A.S.M. into troubled waters.

So in June 1974 he was called to order in communal meeting of S.A.S.M., S.A.S.O., Black Peoples Convention (B.P.C.), National Youth Organisation (NAYO) and there an interim committee was elected, from S.A.S.M. members, to look into the question of straightening the affairs of S.A.S.M.

This interim committee convened a G.S.C. in September 1974 where the road towards good organising started. An executive committee was elected comprising of:-

President	: Doctor Moloto
Vice-President:	Zwelinzima Sizani
Secretary	: Nkosiyakhe A. Masondo
Organiser	: Billy Masetlha
Treasurer	: Mefi Morobe

S.A.S.M., especially Johannesburg branch, was aware that her activities needed to be intensified and co-ordinated especially after the problems mentioned above. Our next step was to organise a conference where the student bodies would be a force to be reckoned with. S.A.S.M. (Johannesburg) convened a conference in Durban in 1974.

South African Black Students Association (SABSA) which was operating in the Western Cape was contacted and invited to the conference. The

The conference went on with SABSA's and the Eastern Cape branch of S.A.S.M. absent thus Durban and Johannesburg Regionals were forced to go on. These two regions resolved to convening a national conference in the Eastern Cape (Kingwilliamstown) during the Easter Weekend of 1975.

The arrangements were made to have the expected delegation represented at this conference. Natal and Western Cape failed to send delegations thus were not represented. Eastern Cape and the Transvaal went on as arranged and thoroughly participated to make the whole conference a success. The results and deliberations were as follows

(a) Progress reports

(i) Transvaal and Eastern Cape progress reports

(b) Matters arising from Progress reports

After the progress reports were read, it became clear that the students were faced with a common problems in the affairs of S.A.S.M. as a whole.

(i) The launching of S.A.S.M. as a student movement within school campuses was now a difficulty experienced everywhere.

(ii) Confrontation had become inevitable.

(iii) There had been a need for fluid communication from Region to Region; Region to Local Branches; branch to branch (local).

(iv) Finance had proved to be the major stumbling block for the smooth running of the movement.

A paper was read on the basis of the Formation of an organisation, for this conference was aimed at fully nationalising S.A.S.M.

See paper titled FORMATION OF AN ORGANISATION

After this paper was read, the following questions were asked; and the house divided into two commissions both dealing with both questions.

Questions : (a) What are the aims and goals of a student movement in National sense?

(b) Draw up in constitutional language aims and objectives of a national student movement.

Aims and goals of a national student movement. To liberate the Black community as a whole i.e. physically and psychologically, the movement shall have:

(a) To promote the spirit of self-reliance amongst the students i.e. by writing Black poetry and organising relevant symposiums.

(a) To promote the spirit of fraternity amongst the student i.e. by solving financial problems facing individuals especially among students within school premises.

(c) To heighten the sense of awareness amongst the students i.e. by

the publication of newsletters and reading of poetry.

Newsletters should:

- (i) Criticise all racial segregated sport bodies.
- (ii) Criticise government created bodies like bantustans, crc, saica
- (iii) Criticise and discourage foreign investments.
- (iv) Bear clarity on the back ground of culture and education of the Blackman.
- (d) Promote seminars.
- (e) Organise and comemorate eventful days such as Heroes Day.

The student can organise community projects such as:-

- (i) Giving clthing to needy individuals.
- (ii) Organise soup feeding schemes.
- (iii) Organise literacy projects
- (iv) Initiate Black Theology

Draw up in constitutional laguage the aims of a national student mo vement consisted with the goals mentioned above.

For the liberation of a Blackman, the national student movement shall

- 1. Heighten the sense of awareness.
- 2. Promote the spirit of fraternity, self-reliance and communalism.
- 3. Spread its tenacles by means of periodical Newletters wich should reflect everything written under heading "Newsletters should"
- 4. Organise seminars.
- 5. Organise and observe eventful days in the struggle of a Blackman in Azania.
- 6. Organise community projects.

AIMS:

- (a) To help encourage the students to understand their work by organising study groups.
- (b) To promote mutual understanding and discussions and activities about the liberation of a Blackman.
- (c) To promote fluid communication between students and the staff where applicable.
- (d) To instill the spirit of sharing hardships and happiness with parents
- (e) To instil the spirit of belonging in students.
- (f) To conduct research in the cultural background of a Blackman.

GOALS:

- (a) Developement of character and objectivity.

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(b) To promote the spirit of understanding and respect for our parents.

(c) To promote a spirit of sharing with national aspirations of the Black community as a priority.

(d) To encourage Black Awareness.

(e) To promote Black Solidarity among the community.

Another paper was read on Operational Strategies. See paper titled 'Operational Strategies'.

After this paper another one was read; See paper titled 'Principles of Programme Planning'

1975 - Action Programme

NATIONAL PROGRAMME PLANNING

1. To have well informed specialists lecturing to students in various subjects ~~xxxx~~ as to display a sense of selflessness for the good of the community.
2. To be simple and tolerant with manual labour at school.
3. To observe eventful days where Black people were massacred.
4. To enable the Black community to analyse its needs.
5. Fundraising
6. To undertake community projects within the capabilities of the organisation.

A pamphlet which was distributed by the Johannesburg Region sometime back was adopted as a policy manifesto, and it read thus:-

BLACK STUDENT: WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU? WHERE ARE YOU?

To S.A.S.M. :

(a) A student is first Black before starting to read.

(b) Not the one who has emibed the greatest amount of Bantu Education but.....

(i) One who directs his schorlastic career towards changing his (Black Opressive) surroundings.

(ii) Is one who is aware that he is holding the key to unlock the chains that mantle his people.

(iii) One who objects to his Culture being termed barbaric.

(iv) One who will not be given direction but helped seek it.

THE PART HE IS TO PLAY WITHIN THE CAMPUS :

(a) Student solidarity (Sharing sorrow and Happiness) i.e. during victórious times all must be happy even in sorrowful times they must be together i.e. a Form V should be in symphaty with the student in Form I and a Form I should do the Same.

(b) S.A.S.M. shall be in symphaty with the student and the student

with S.A.S.M.

STUDENT TEACHER RELATIONSHIP

To S.A.S.M. :

a teacher should not hinder a student's mental developments and otherwise; a student shall ask questions and a teacher respective answers.

STUDENT - COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP :

to S.A.S.M. :

- (a) A student is part of the community and should identify himself with the community.
- (b) A student shall identify and play an active role in the Community development projects.
- (c) A student shall have principles relevant to the liberation of the blackman.

Conclusion:

S.A.S.M. believes that a student's mind is sharpened by the teacher's and so is the teacher's by the student's.

We therefore expect the utmost co-operation from the personnel and the student.

After all these discussions, speeches and deliberations the conference approached its end, the following were elected into the executive committee :

President : Vusi Tshabalala
Vice-President: Zuzile Cindi
General Secretary: Billy Masetlha
Organising Secretary: Nkosiyakhe Masondo

This Executive functioned without hindrance until late July 1975 when the vice president, Zuzile Cindi, sought refuge in Botswana due to the intense harrasments and detentions on him, by the Security Police.

A further blow was inflicted when the Organising Secretary, Nkosiyakhe Masondo, was detained on the 15-9-75 (SEE Paper cutting titled : Masondo joins detainee list).

During this period the fascists were on a detaining spree of S.A.S.M. AND NAYO members, which was working closely with us because of their youth programmes (SEE Paper cuttings: 2 More detained ; 4 pupils missing after SP visit).

These arrests resulted in most of S.A.S.M. and MAYO members playing hide and seek with the SP, Some eventually seeking political assylum in Botswana. Those who were arrested are facing trial under the Suppression of Communism Act and Terrorism Act and others held incommunicado with the hope of using them as State witnesses.

The two remaining National Executive members Billy Masetlha and Vusi Tshabalala, Sec. Gen, and Org, Sec. respectively, co-opted five members into the National Executive, who are at present running the movement, namely :-

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| President | :Vusi Tshabalala |
| Vice-President | :Ciko Sipho Mbatha |
| Secretary General | :Nkululeko Xelithole |
| Organising Secretary | :Zwelinzima L. Sizani |
| Additional Members | :Billy Masetlha |
| | Kabelo Mofokeng |
| | Themba Majoka |