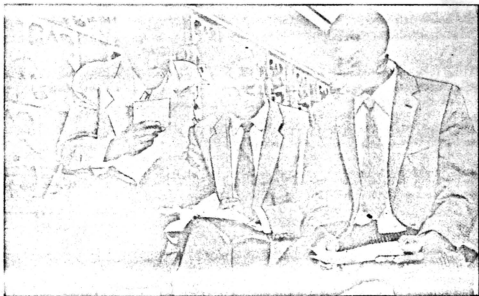


"STUDENTS POLITICS

BLACK POWER, NEW MOVEMENTS AND NEW APPRAISALS

A number of people (students and others) are being prosecuted for taking part in the recent Wits march on John Vorster Square in Johannesburg; new student organisations are setting themselves up; the old bodies NUSAS and the Afrikaans Studentebond are scratching their heads in puzzlement; and there are ominous signs of Black Power thinking among non-white students. All these factors add up to new urgencies—and new arguments—in South Africa's student politics. And while the older ranks of politicians are taking stock of their own, tired brand of politics, they had better take note as well of the stirrings on the country's campuses."



(Photo and captions kindly acknowledged from News / Check; 10th July, 1970)

MESSAGE

SASO sets out to express the needs and aspirations of the Black Students. It seeks to establish the identity of the Blacks through which they can find the fulfilment of their being and to recognize their identity as being distinct and unique. We refuse to believe that Blacks are merely those beings who are not White, as the word "Non-White" seems to suggest, that would be a denial of our being, an affront to our human dignity and worth and inability to recognize the positive value which God accords to each member of His human creation of which we are an integral part.

SASO therefore sets out to affirm our being in a positive way by establishing group identity to which all black students should owe their primary allegiance, trying to prove that even the "wretched of the earth" have a place in the Divine dispensation. It is possible to realize this dream in our time.

The black cohesion that we wish for is not just an eschatological myth but an achievable goal.

The failure of the "open" organisations heralded the birth of this organisation. The realization by the Black students that their aspirations cannot be well met within the so called open organisation was an affirmation of the great truth that White persons cannot faithfully represent the interests of Black persons.

Whether or not we realize our aim will depend in the last resort on the willingness of the black students to pave the way to self-determination through black consciousness.

L. MABANDLA.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

— The emergence of SASO was a manifestation of a mood which had been spreading in the black campuses ever since the collapse of other black students' organisations which preceded SASO.

The complexity of the South African scene makes it impossible to have a pluralistic organisation that satisfies the aspirations of all member groups. Social and political stratification in the country coupled with preferential treatment of certain groups results in different aspirations prevailing in the different segments of the community. Thus it often becomes almost impossible to show allegiance to both sides of the colour line. Attempting to keep both opposing segments more often than not results in internal strifes within the organisation. This is the mood in which black students have decided on several occasions to go it alone.

Dissatisfaction with the white dominated NUSAS led to the establishment of several black student organisations. The Durban Students' Union and the Cape Peninsula Students' Union who later merged to form the Progressive National Students' Organisation, were fanatically opposed to NUSAS initially and adopted the emotional slogan of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) — "non-cooperation with the collaborators." The CPSU refused to co-operate with NUSAS in their protests and other forms of activity. They saw NUSAS as a student wing of the imperialist front whose interest was to control the blacks.

In 1961 and 1962 the African Students' Association (ASA) and the African Students' Union of South Africa (ASUSA) were established. Both ASA and ASUSA were concerned much more with national issues and saw themselves as student wings of the national movements. The differences between ASA and ASUSA were ideological. Attempts to unite the two organisations failed. Perhaps the fact that the blacks never attained a strong solidarity on the campus was attributable to these divided loyalties. Lack of co-ordination prevented progress in any recognisable direction as the various groups were bound to compete with each other. Moreover at the time NUSAS was by no means a spent force on the black campuses and commanded quite a following which capitalised on the differences of opinion between ASA and ASUSA. The fact that this was coupled with intimidation and victimisation of the individual leaders of these organisations served to hasten the collapse of both ASA and ASUSA.

A period of isolation of the black campuses followed the collapse of ASA and ASUSA. The new University Colleges which had been established in 1960 for blacks were born into a tradition of restriction. Their SRCs were under strict surveillance and served more the function of a prefect body than that of student representatives. Not one of the Colleges was allowed any interaction with NUSAS although branches existed underground on some of the campuses. In the meantime NUSAS assumed the role of being a Spokesman for these campuses. More often than not this accompanied debates on the "Separate Universities" Act.

The formation of the University Christian Movement in 1967 gave black students a greater chance of coming together. Because of its more radical stance and also because of that stage it had not developed a "bad" complexion politically in the eyes of the black campuses' authorities, UCM tended to attract more black students to its conferences and this opened channels of communications amongst the black students.

Amongst the black students, one of the most talked about topics was the position of the black students in the open organisations like NUSAS and UCM. Concern was expressed that these were white-dominated and paid very little attention to problems peculiar to the black student community. In fact some people began to doubt the very competence of a pluralistic group to examine without bias problems affecting one group, especially where the unaffected lot is from the oppressor camp. It was felt that a time had come when blacks had to formulate their own thinking, unpolluted by ideas emanating from a group with lots at stake in the status quo.

At the 1968 UCM Conference about 40 blacks from Fort Hare, Ngoye, Bellville, Theological seminaries, Turfloop, UNB and teacher training colleges resolved themselves into a black-caucus and debated the possibility of forming a black students organisation. The UNB group was asked to investigate the chances of holding a conference of black student leaders that same December.

Back at home the UNB representatives openly argued the case for a closer co-operation amongst the black centres and as a result the student body mandated the SRC to convene the Conference.

SASO was ultimately formed at the 1968 Mariannhill Conference of black student leaders and inaugurated at the July SASO Conference at Turfloop. At both conferences the student leaders were faced with a complex problem. On the one hand there were accusations by the right wing elements on the black campuses to the effect that the move to establish a blacks-only student organisation was a manifestation of conformism. This attitude was more expressed in liberal White circles.

Then, too, there were several warnings from the middle-of-the-roads that SASO wouldn't survive for long and therefore

In the face of this the SASO leadership adopted a cautious approach to the "relations" question. While still maintaining their recognition of NUSAS as a National Union, SASO constantly took a very critical stand regarding NUSAS and refused to consider the possibility of affiliation to the organisation. They maintained their distance from NUSAS and gradually explained themselves to their black campuses with whom they quickly found favour.

its establishment did not warrant the breaking of old ties.

In the 1970 SASO Conference the attitudes that had been carefully hidden came to the surface. At once SASO withdrew its recognition of NUSAS as a National Union believing that "the emancipation of the black peoples in this country depends on the role the black peoples themselves are prepared to play (and) . . . aware that in the principles and make-up of NUSAS, the black students can never find expression for the aspirations foremost in their minds." Since the 1970 Conference SASO has been much more positive in its outlook and is working towards a much more intimate involvement with the black community.

SASO AS IT IS TODAY

AIMS :

- (a) SASO sets out to crystallise the needs and aspirations of the black students and to seek to make known their grievances.
- (b) Where possible to put into effect programme designed to meet the needs of the black students and to act on a collective basis in an effort to solve some of the problems which beset the affiliated centres individually.
- (c) To heighten the degree of contact not only among the black students but also amongst the black and the rest of the South African students.
- (d) To make the black students accepted on their own terms as an integral part of the South African Student community.
- (e) To establish a solid identity amongst the black students and to ensure that these students are always treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.
- (f) To boost the morale of the black students, to increase their confidence in themselves and to contribute a great deal to the direction of thought taken by the various institutions on social, political and other current topics.

STRUCTURE :

- (a) **General Students Council (G.S.C.) :**
This body is the highest policy making body for the organisation. It meets once a year during the winter vacation. It is composed of delegates from the different black campuses who fall into the following categories :

Method of Affiliation :

- i. an SRC affiliating on behalf of its student body;
- ii. a majority student body decision to affiliate;
- iii. individuals affiliating in a non-affiliated centre may still constitute a Branch.

- (b) **The Executive :** this body is composed of :

The President
The Vice-President (National)
The Vice-President (International)
The General Secretary (Full time)
The Assistant General Secretary
Regional Representatives* (E. Cape, W. Cape, Transvaal, Orange Free State and Natal)
Director of Education
Director of Publications
Director of Cultural Affairs
Director of Field Work
National Sports Director

- (c) **Standing Committee :** This body consists of :

- i. the voting members of the Executive of SASO, i.e. The President, the Vice-President (National), the Vice-President (International), the General Secretary and the Assistant General Secretary.
- ii. SRC Presidents (or persons to whom they delegate their authority) of constituent centres and bona fide representatives of centres without SRCs.

PROGRAMME 1971

Executive Tours :

1. PRESIDENT'S TOURS

Turfloop	March 8 - 9th
Hammanskraal	" 10th
Transvaal College of Education	" 11th
Ngoye	" 12-13th
Maphumulo	" 14th
U.N.B.	" 15th
Fed Seminary	" 18th
Fort Hare	" 19th

VICE-PRESIDENT (NATIONAL) :

Turfloop
Hammanskraal
Transvaal College of Education
Ngoye
Belville
Maphumulo
U.N.B.

FRESHERS' RECEPTION :

U.N.B.	Feb. 25th—9th Mar
Turfloop	" "
Ngoye	" "
Fort Hare	" "

3. FORMATION SCHOOLS :

National	May 21st - 23rd	May Dec. 1st - 5th Dec.
Regional :		
E. Cape projected	Mar. 26th - 28th	Mar.
E. Cape	Sept. 3rd - 6th	Sept.
Transvaal	Sept. 10th - 12th	Sept.
Natal	Sept. 17th - 19th	Sept..

4. REGIONAL FIELD WORK :

1. E. Cape (Dimbaza)	May 1st - 2nd
	May 8th - 9th
	May 15th - 16th
2. Natal Field Work Schemes	
Limehill	April 23rd - 30th
Valley Trust
3. Transvaal Projects	July 13th - 17th
4. Transkei Projects	" "

COMMEMORATION SERVICES :

Sharpeville Day	March 21st	Fact Sheets
	Day of Mourning	
SASO Day	Symposium	
	May 10th	
Republican Protest	Symposium	
	May 30th - 31st	
Day of Compassion	Black Attire	
	August 24th	

CONFERENCE (G.S.C.) :

Fort Hare	July 4th - 11th
Standing Committee (JHB) :	March 7th
	Dec. 6th - 7th
Executive Meeting	July 2nd - 3rd
	Nov. 29th - 30th

MEET THE EXECUTIVE

PRESIDENT : Barney Pitjana (25)
Law Student, UNISA.

VICE-PRESIDENT (National) :

L. Mabandla (26), Arts Student, Fort Hare.

VICE-PRESIDENT (International) :

Dr. C. Sibisi (21), Medical Student, U.N.B.

ASST. GENERAL SECRETARY (Hon.) :

Miss Vuy Mashalaba, Medical Student, U.N.B.

REGIONAL DIRECTORS :

EASTERN CAPE	Perry Mothlabane
TRANSCAAL & O.F.S.	Pry Moshidi (17)
NATAL	Mncedisi Jekwa

DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS :

PUBLICATIONS	Steve Biko
EDUCATION	Dr. Chappie Palweni
CULTURAL AFFAIRS	Job Mathunyane
FIELD WORK	Frank Hlangwane, (17)
INTERUNIVERSITY SPORTS	Olaf Baloyi
SECRETARY (Full Time)	Josephine Mjwara

