

THE LIFE OF STEVE BIKO

Year Events in the life of Steve Biko

- 1946** 18 December: Bantu Stephen Biko born in Tylden, Eastern Cape, the third child of Mathew Mzingaye and Alice Nokuzola 'Mamcethe' Biko.
- 1948** Nationalist Party comes to power under DF Malan, propounding the ideology of apartheid.
- 1950** Steve's father, Mzingaye, falls ill and dies in Keiskarnmahoeck, St Matthews Hospital; Steve is four years old.
- 1957** At the age of 10, he starts at Charles Morgan Primary School (at Standard 3 level) followed by Forbes Grant School.
- 1960** Sharpeville uprising, in which 69 people are killed by apartheid police; African National Congress (ANC) and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) banned.
- 1961** Formation of the military wing of the ANC, Umkhonto weSizwe (MK). Biko (15) begins at Lovedale Institution near Alice, but within three months of starting, his older brother Khaya is arrested for suspected involvement with the PAC. Although entirely innocent, Steve is arrested soon after and interrogated by police. Khaya is later acquitted on appeal.
- 1964** Rivonia Trial: Mandela and most of the high command of MK are sentenced to life imprisonment. Biko enters St Francis College, a Roman Catholic Institution, in Mariannhill near Durban.
- 1966** Registers "at University of Natal Medical School (Non-European section), Wentworth, Durban. In July attends Congress of National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) as observer.
- 1967** Continued involvement with NUSAS; acts as delegate at NUSAS Congress at Rhodes, Grahamstown, where he challenges NUSAS to respond to the situation of segregated residential facilities.
- 1968** Breaks with NUSAS to form SASO (South African Students' Organisation). Barney Pityana and Biko attend a student meeting of the University Christian Movement in Stutterheim.
- 1969** Formal establishment of SASO in July, at Turfloop (University of the North); Biko is the first president.
- 1970** Appointed Publicity Secretary of SASO. In February Biko sends letter to SRCs of South African universities and national student organisations, describing the historical background, structure and agendas of SASO. In July Barney Pityana becomes the second president of SASO. In August, Biko begins writing his column 'I Write What I Like', signed 'Frank Talk'. Marries Nontsikelelo (Ntsiki) Mashalaba.
- 1971** Abe Bailey Conference in Cape Town, where Pityana and Biko deliver papers on Black Consciousness themes; increasing focus on political activities at the expense of his medical studies.
- 1972** Inaugural Black People's Convention (BPC) Conference. Biko is dismissed from medical school having passed three out of six years. In August, Biko helps found and becomes staff member of the Black Community Programmes (BCP).

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- 1973** Along with seven other SASO leaders, Biko receives a banning order (five-year duration), and is restricted to King William's Town. Although barred from travelling, speaking in public or publishing any of his ideas. Biko nonetheless establishes Eastern Cape branch of BCP. BCP sets up *Black Review* with Biko as editor; first issue printed in 1973. Dedicated to Biko and Bokwe Mafune. Written under Bennie Khoapa's name. Biko enrolls for a law degree at the University of South Africa.
- 1974** Biko is arrested and released several times; he is charged in some instances but ultimately acquitted.
- 1975** Establishes the Zimele Trust Fund, which provides support for released political detainees, and the Ginsberg Educational Trust. Additional clause added to Biko's banning order disallowing him from continuing with BCP activities. Detained and held for 137 days without charge.
- 1976** Biko becomes Honorary President of BPC.
- May: Biko speaks publicly for the first time in nearly three years when he testifies in the SASO/BPC trial of Saths Cooper and eight others arrested for celebrating the independence of Mozambique (trial lasts from 31 January to 21 December 1976). All nine accused are sentenced to terms on Robben Island. Between August and December Biko is detained in solitary confinement for 101 days under section 6 of the Terrorism Act. He is released in December, without being charged.
- 16 June: Student protest against Afrikaans as medium of instruction in schools.
- 1977** March: Biko is arrested, detained and then released. He is again arrested in July and charged, but is acquitted.
- 18 August: Biko and Peter Jones stopped at a police roadblock outside Grahamstown while on the way back from a visit to Cape Town. Biko is taken to Port Elizabeth, where he is kept handcuffed and naked. On 6 September, Biko is interrogated. He is subsequently driven to Pretoria, where he dies in detention on 12 September.
- 25 September: Biko's funeral.
- 14 November-2 December: Inquest into Biko's death. Magistrate finds that there is not enough evidence to charge security police officers with the murder of Biko, allegedly because there were no eyewitnesses.
- 1978** February: based on evidence given at the inquest, the Attorney General of the Eastern Cape announces that he will not be prosecuting officers involved in Biko's death.
- 1997/98** Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings on the death of Steve Biko. None of the security police who applied for amnesty were successful in their applications.
- 2003** October: Justice Ministry announces that the five policemen accused of killing Biko will not be prosecuted, both because of insufficient evidence and because the time limit for prosecution has elapsed.