

Stephen Biko

On 12 September 1977, Stephen Bantu Biko died in a prison cell in Pretoria. The announcement of Biko's death by the South African government the next day sparked international and national protest. Steve Biko was not the only person to die in detention at the hands of the South African security police; yet, because of Biko's prominence as a charismatic leader of the Black Consciousness Movement, his case captured the attention of many South Africans and people throughout the world.

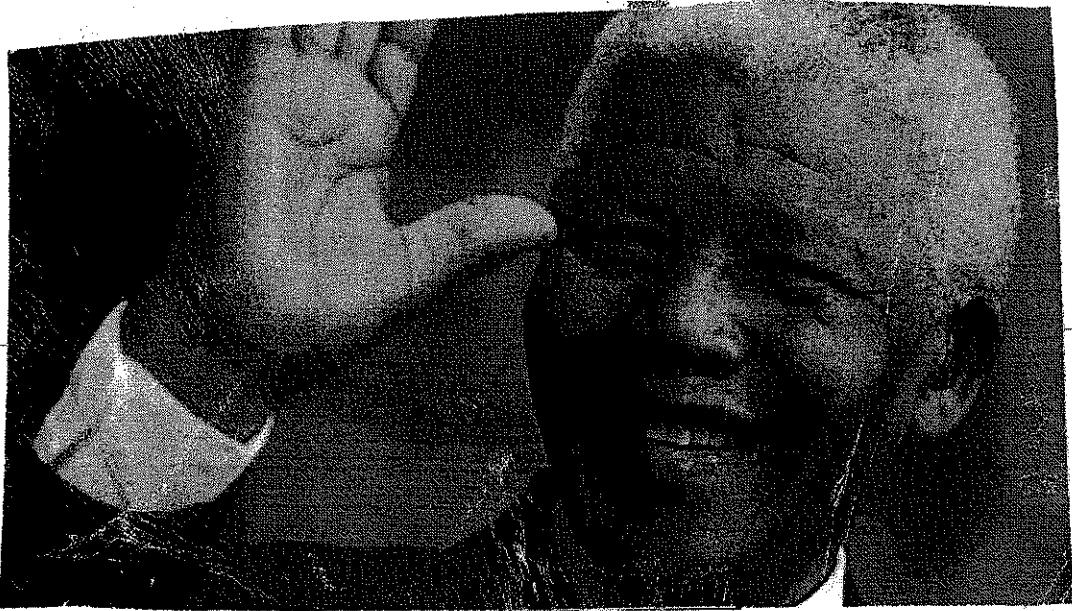
Biko was a founding member of the South African Student Organization (SASO), an exclusively black student organization that stressed the need for black South Africans to liberate themselves psychologically and to become self-reliant in order to change South Africa. The formation of SASO in 1969 marked the beginning of the **Black Consciousness Movement (BCM)**. This movement re-energized resistance to apartheid in the 1970s and spawned a number of other political and community development organizations. In 1973, the government restricted Biko to his home area, King William's Town in the Eastern Cape. He was not able to leave this area of South Africa. Despite this restriction, he continued his political work as a key figure in the BCM and helped implement several community projects.

In August 1977, Biko and his associate, Peter Jones, drove to Cape Town (violating Biko's banning order) to meet with members of other liberation movement organizations. On their way back through the Eastern Cape, the police stopped Biko and Jones at a routine road block near Grahamstown. When the police recognized the two men, they arrested them. The police interrogated them at security police headquarters, and several days later, Biko died on

September 12, at the age of 30, from brain damage sustained after a physical struggle with his interrogators, inadequate medical care, and inhumane treatment. (Peter Jones was released 533 days later, in February 1979, after solitary confinement and torture.)

1. In your own words, describe the importance of the South African Student Organization and the Black Consciousness Movement.
2. Why do you think the government placed such harsh restrictions on Steven Biko?
3. Why do you think the death of Steven Biko sparked both national and international protests?

Nelson Mandela



Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was born in a village near Umtata in the Transkei on the 18 July 1918. His father was the principal councillor to the Acting Paramount Chief of Thembuland. After his father's death, the young Rolihlahla became the Paramount Chief's ward to be groomed to assume high office..

At the height of the Second World War a small group of young Africans, members of the African National Congress, banded together under the leadership of Anton Lembede. Among them were William Nkomo, Walter Sisulu, Oliver R. Tambo, Ashby P. Mda and Nelson Mandela. Starting out with 60 members, these young people set themselves the formidable task of transforming the ANC into a mass movement, deriving its strength and motivation from the unlettered millions of working people in the towns and countryside, the peasants in the rural areas and the professionals.

Their chief contention was that the political tactics of the old guard's leadership of the ANC, reared in the tradition of constitutionalism and polite petitioning of the government of the day, were proving inadequate to the tasks of national emancipation. In opposition to the old guard's, Lembede and his colleagues espoused a radical African Nationalism grounded in the principle of national self-determination. In September 1944 they came together to found the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL).

It was only when all else had failed, when all channels of peaceful protest had been barred to us, that the decision was made to embark on violent forms of political struggle, and to form Umkhonto we Sizwe...the Government had left us no other choice."

In 1961 Umkhonto we Sizwe was formed, with Mandela as its commander-in-chief. In 1962 Mandela left the country unlawfully and travelled abroad for several months. In Ethiopia he addressed the Conference of the Pan African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa, and was warmly received by senior political leaders in several countries. During this trip Mandela, anticipating an intensification of the armed struggle, began to arrange guerrilla training for members of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Mandela was convicted and sentenced to five years imprisonment. While serving his sentence he was charged, in the Rivonia Trial, with sabotage. Mandela's statements in court during these trials are classics in the history of the resistance to apartheid, and they have been an inspiration to all who have opposed it. His statement from the dock in the Rivonia Trial ends with these words:

"I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die".

Source: <http://www.anc.org.za/people/mandela.html>

1. Why is Nelson Mandela a significant figure in the Anti-Apartheid movement?
 2. Describe the tactics that Nelson Mandela used at the beginning of the Anti-Apartheid movement. How did these tactics change?
 3. What is the significance of the quote at the end of the excerpt? What happened to Nelson Mandela shortly after this statement was made at his trial?

Desmond Tutu



Desmond Tutu was born in Klerksdorp, in the South African state of Transvaal. The family moved to Johannesburg when he was 12, and he attended Johannesburg Bantu High School. Although he had planned to become a physician, his parents could not afford to send him to medical school. Tutu's father was a teacher, he himself trained as a teacher at Pretoria Bantu Normal College, and graduated from the University of South Africa in 1954.

When the government ordained a deliberately inferior system of education for black students, Desmond Tutu refused to cooperate. He could no longer work as a teacher, but he was determined to do something to improve the life of his disenfranchised people. On the advice of his bishop, he began to study for the Anglican priesthood. Tutu was ordained as a priest in the Anglican church in 1960. At the same time, the South African government began a program of forced relocation of black Africans and Asians from newly designated "white" areas. Millions were deported to the "homelands," and only permitted to return as "guest workers."

Bishop Tutu promoted a national platform to denounce the *apartheid* system as "evil and unchristian." Tutu called for equal rights for all South Africans and a system of common education. He demanded the repeal of the oppressive passport laws, and an end to forced relocation. Tutu encouraged nonviolent resistance to the *apartheid* regime, and advocated an economic boycott of the country. The government revoked his passport to prevent him from traveling and speaking abroad, but his case soon drew the attention of the world. In the face of an international public outcry the government was forced to restore his passport.

Two years later, Desmond Tutu was elected Archbishop of Cape Town. He was the first black African to serve in this position, which placed him at the head of the Anglican Church in South Africa, as the Archbishop of Canterbury is spiritual leader of the Church of England. International economic pressure and internal dissent forced the South African government to reform. In 1990, Nelson Mandela of the African National Congress was released after almost 27 years in prison. The following year the government began the repeal of racially discriminatory laws.

Source: <http://www.achievement.org/>

1. How did Tutu define the system of apartheid? What does this mean for the people?
2. Why was Tutu unable to work as a teacher? How did he respond to this action?

3. Describe the tactics used by Desmond Tutu to end the system of Apartheid in South Africa. How did these tactics differ from Nelson Mandela's?
4. How did Desmond Tutu gain international attention to the system of apartheid?