

Editorial

Soggot: Mr Biko, still talking about the question of inferiority, you, if I may introduce this point in a certain way, an article "I write what I like" by Frank Talk . . . "Fear — an Important Determinant in South African Politics", who wrote that?

Biko: I wrote that.

Judge Boshoff: Is it Annexure 8? Is this by Frank Talk?

Biko: That is right.

Judge Boshoff: Isn't number 9 (Strini Moodley) Frank Talk?

Biko: No, no, he was never Frank Talk, I was Frank Talk. (Laughter).

Soggot: M'lord, the Indictment alleged that he compiled and/or wrote it, but in fact it was never ever suggested that Number 9 wrote this. Annexure 9, Focus — "Ugandan Asians and the lessons for us"?

Biko: Yes.

Soggot: Who wrote that?

Biko: I wrote that.

Through him and his fate a whole spectrum of South African reality is exposed. Perhaps it was always visible; but now it comes sharply into focus. What was confusing is clarified. What was obscure is revealed. In the fate of Steve Biko is encapsulated the truth about South Africa today, and the truth about its twenty-six million citizens, four-fifths Black and one-fifth white." (April 1978). Biko's death shows that our oppression is total and that those who oppress us jointly and severally agree on the perpetuation of evils against us, from the "simple white man" to the real destroyers of black lives in the "House of Assembly", in the South African Defence Force and in commerce and industry. When the chips are down, they will all go to unbelievable lengths to protect their white interests. Otherwise how does one explain the total connivance of police, the courts and doctors in the murder of Steve Biko?

ABBREVIATIONS USED

ANC	— African National Congress of South Africa
BC	— Black Consciousness
BCM	— Black Consciousness Movement
BPC	— Black People's Convention
BT	— Black Theology
PAC	— Pan Africanist Congress of Azania
SASO	— South African Student's Organization

Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement filled a palpable political vacuum by translating the existential experiences of the oppressed into a revolutionary philosophy whose watchword was and is revolutionary action. To those demented liberals in black masks who wish to reduce the significance of the Black Consciousness Movement to "a surface-operating complimentary movement" to the historical organizations, we bring Steve Biko as our witness:

"In a sense, the Black People's Convention is the most powerful organization amongst Blacks, but this is hard to determine exactly, since the ANC and the PAC are banned as organizations, which means that they have a kind of generation gap problem: there is a whole generation now that has not been influenced by the ANC and the PAC. In any case, the actual identification of people with the BPC is strong. When I put it this way, I do not want to give

the impression that the relation between these organizations is one of competition. There will be **one** movement of revolt against the system of injustice. To be sure, there are the usual divisions due to background, but in terms of the revolution there is unity."

—(Interview with Bernard Zylstra, July 1977).

It is worth noting that one of the cornerstones on which the Black Consciousness Movement is built is the belief that the cultivation of any 'personality cult', however well-intended, is always, in the final analysis, detrimental to the principles of self-reliance and self-determination for which the Movement stands. We do not believe in glorifying the past *per se* or in wallowing self-indulgently in the past. Our immediate task is in the present and our responsibility is to future generations. But to know where we are going, we must also know where we have come from.

While it goes without saying that Biko's contribution to the development of BC is remarkable indeed, it is of the essence of BC that all his work be thoroughly scrutinized. We do not wish to encourage slavish acceptance of Biko's views nor do we wish to suggest that a particular view of Biko was necessarily the view of the pre-1977 BCM. The most eloquent testimony to Stephen Bantu Biko is that he set in train the Black Consciousness Movement and contributed to both its revolutionary outlook and strategies.

Conor Cruise O'Brien remarks:

"Many people hailed as martyrs, and almost would-be martyrs, have been more or less crazy. Stephen Biko was as far from crazy as it is possible to be, and he neither wanted nor even expected martyrdom. He became a martyr nonetheless: one who bore witness, both through his life and through his death, to the faith and the love that were in him.

"If we can assume the existence of a God who is Love, Biko is a martyr in the full, traditional, spiritual meaning of the word. Without that assumption, and extending the word in a legitimate secular sense, Biko remains a martyr: not just a passive victim, but one whose life-and-death testimony gives out to the world and changes it."

 **ONE PEOPLE ONE AZANIA**

Steve Biko was elected Publicity Secretary of the South African Students Organization (SASO) in July 1970. The **SASO Newsletter** began appearing in August 1970 carrying articles by Biko (and others) entitled "I write what I like" and signed "Frank Talk". The above extract is from the SASO/BPC trial.

This magazine is proud to be associated with the name of Stephen Bantu Biko and the legacy that he left for Azanians and for lovers of humanity everywhere. The life and the death of Biko are an inspiration to revolutionaries wherever they may be.

The Black Consciousness Movement has demarcated the 6th to the 12th of September every year as "National Black Consciousness Week" and the 12th of September is commemorated the world over as Biko day.

This issue of **Frank Talk** focuses on the life and death of Steve Biko and offers a sampling of his writings. The works of Biko chosen for this issue concentrate on the principles of Black Solidarity and non-collaboration: in the light of the magnificent victory of the oppressed and the exploited in rejecting the sham elections perpetrated by the Botha regime and its minions, these principles of Black Consciousness have shown their durability and their viability in the face of devilish efforts to perpetuate an obsolete social structure.

It has been asserted that Stephen Biko "is our magnifying glass.