

Steve biko social justice hall of fame assignment



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That said, every once in a while, individuals such as Steve Biko, at the risk of losing their lives, garner enough courage to publicly put forward their views regarding the equal rights that every human being is entitled to. Steve Biko is a hero of social justice, who, despite impossible working conditions, used all of his energy to try and improve the way of life for over two-thirds of South Africans population.

Not only did he set the pace for revolution, but he stirred up enough motivation to keep others motivated, such as Donald Woods, even after his own passing at the hands of his opposers. Since the first Dutch colonials arrived in South Africa in the mid 1600s, the original inhabitants of South Africa have been repressed, mistreated, and considered as secondary citizens. The Africans' living conditions are horrid and more than often, they are forced to live in slums with no clean water, no sanitation services, little if any health care, and poor child care.

In the movie Cry Freedom, such living conditions are highlighted and compared to the way of life of the whites who, during this era, for the most part, are treated with privilege, provided with good jobs, and make enough money to afford nice houses with black servants. Unbelievably, or understandably in apartheid's case, there are even a variety of laws in place that support such oppression. For example, Bantu laws state that the "Minister of Labor [may] 'reserve' retain occupations for whites only" and that there may be "no minimum wage for blacks. Without a doubt, any jobs reserved for whites are the more desirable jobs that provide a living wage. This, compounded with the fact that around 47% of black people couldn't get any job while only 4% of whites were unemployed truly promised a great

state of poverty (Country Studies, Labor force in South Africa). Simply put, these are the circumstances that Bike could not tolerate. He believed in equal rights and sincerely thought that white man shouldn't be respected more and be more comfortable just because of their color.

He once said, " So as a prelude whites must be made to realize that they are only human, not superior. Same with blacks. They must be made to realize that are also human, not inferior. " What Bike is attempting to proclaim is that due to the high standard of living of the whites and the extremely crude living conditions of the blacks, they are made to believe that they are bad people when in fact, this is what the apartheid government wants so that the minority of the population may enjoy the majority of the country's wealth.

Bike, throughout his career, knew that blacks are treated unfairly, and, unlike any, was able to identify the unfairness. Steve Bike was a philosophical man. He subsisted on many ideas describing his various views on social rights. His most well known belief is of black consciousness. Essentially, black consciousness is the view that black people are human beings, should think of themselves as individuals, and that they should take pride in who they are.

Black consciousness was also a movement started in the mid 1960s in which people got together and attacked what they believed as traditional white values which, under apartheid, are very negative and include extreme racism and an affluent lifestyle. Bike was convinced that blacks should not feel like outcasts in their own country: " The basic tenet of black consciousness is that the black man must reject all value systems that seek

to make him a foreigner in the country of his birth and reduce his basic human dignity. While he did try to maintain faith in the majority of the population, he certainly did not want blacks to lose hope in themselves. Alas, this condition was exasperated by the unjust laws of South Africa which Bike believed so firmly should not exist. Such laws as the Bantu Laws Amendment CT which permit whites to imprison unemployed Africans from cities and the pass laws which require Africans to carry a degrading form of identification with them at all times make it seem as if they cannot be trusted in their own country which can make Africans feel bad about being who they are.

Bike would not stand for this and made it his mission to make Africans feel appreciated. As Steve Bike was very passionate about ending apartheid, he was also exceptionally motivated to take action against its upholders. One of the main things he was known for were his speeches. Thousands of people would ether, wherever it was that he could be, to hear him speak. He was always incredibly moving and really pushed people to want to end unjust rule even though he was always at great risk Of getting arrested.

Bike was also a rebel against the unjust laws, which were previously described, of South Africa. Like Martin Luther King Junior and Ghanaian, he did not want to follow rules that were simply in place to oppress an innocent people. Bike urged all African- South-Africans to do the same and said, “ Merely by describing yourself as black you have started on a road towards emancipation, you have committed ourselves to fight against all forces that seek to use your blackness as a stamp that marks you out as a subservient being. In this case, the forces are the white man and his laws that are in place to depress blacks and their culture. In order to diminish such

depression and to show whites that Africans are intelligent and can fend for themselves, Bike took it upon himself to build resource centers, health clinics, and social networks for African-South- Africans. For example, he set up a small hospital outside of King Williams Town for poor blacks who could not afford or simply who could not battle whites to get care from doctors in the city.

He also set up a center where classes could be taught for African children and people could gather and help each other out because the schools set up by the government for Africans were not sufficient. Unfortunately, one of Bike's greatest accomplishments in ending apartheid was his death which truly showed the evil nature of the government. His death urged the international community to take action against the cruelty occurring in South Africa. There are many who agree that Bike should be admitted into the Social Justice hall of fame and of course, there are many reasons why he should be.

Not only did he dedicate his short life to the achievement of social justice, but he swayed many others in the notion of positive change as well. An unidentified person stated on the History of South Africa, " None will be remembered so greatly as Steven Pico, as he paved the way for revolution through a river that could not be parted" (History of South Africa). Sources state that Bike hardly ever considered himself in anything that he ever did. He made dangerous, inculcated decisions just so that he may help others such as the night that he attempted to travel by car to Johannesburg and got stopped at a road block. Bike served as a martyr to the country of South Africa and shall always be remembered as the man who believed in better. "

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Such are the views of Steve Bike, a man who did everything to improving the nation he loved. Had Steve Bike survived, he likely would have become a valuable member of the government. However, due to his untimely and horrific death, he was able to serve as a reminder of the dangers of corruption. Throughout history, very few people have been so outwardly opposed to something as great as an entire government.