

**Forum:** Historical Crisis Committee

**Issue #05-01:** The aftermath of Apartheid: South Africa 1995

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## Introduction

Apartheid “rasseskeiding” was a part of the everyday lives of people in South Africa after the National Party gained power in 1948, who decided to name this The Population Registration Act, passed in 1950, which classified the South African population into three distinct categories, Bantu (Black African), White, or Colored (Mixed race). The category that a person would fall into would be shown on an Identity Number on their identity cards. This racial separation was also implemented with the act of establishing business and residential sections according to race, which then forbade individuals from other races to run their own business, own land, or live in an area of another race. This law was called the “Group Areas Act,” which was passed in 1950. The Group Areas Act as well as some other discriminatory laws passed in South Africa led to 80% of the land in South Africa being in the hands of the white minority.

Other laws were enforced intending to keep nonwhites out of the areas where white people would reside. In order for this plan to follow through, nonwhites were required to carry documentation with them whenever they were to go to an area which would be restricted to them. Further regulations were imposed which “forbade social interactions between races, authorized segregated public facilities, established separate educational standards, restricted each

race to certain types of jobs, curtailed nonwhite labour unions, and denied nonwhite participation in the national government." (Britannica). The Bantu Authorities Act passed in 1951 promoted self governance within tribal organizations of Black Africans. This act created 10 different Bantustans also known as African Homelands, four of which were given independence, and the remainders had diverse degrees of self-governance since they still were economically and politically dependent on South Africa.

Though the existing South African government was able to quell any opposition that they faced, there were still citizens who were unhappy with Apartheid and held strikes as well as demonstrations against the country's policies. Those protesting the government consisted mainly of Black African groups who also had some support of the whites. One of the most memorable demonstrations, due to its violent nature, was the one which took place in Sharpeville on the 21st of March, 1960. The Sharpeville demonstration, also referred to as the Sharpeville Massacre, was one of the first strikes against the Apartheid which resulted in the death of around 69 Black Africans, while wounding at least 250 people overall. Another demonstration was held, opposing the enforcement of Black African students having to learn Afrikaans in school, called the Soweto riots which took place in 1976 ensuing the death of 600 people in the hands of the army. White politicians were then forced to create the establishment of racial equality in South Africa.

Apartheid was also viewed quite negatively from an international perspective causing for South Africa to be forcefully removed from the Commonwealth in 1961 and then have economic sanctions imposed onto them from the United States as well as the United Kingdom in 1985. In a bid to address the growing movement against apartheid, laws which required nonwhites to carry documentation with them at all times were abolished in 1986, though Black

Africans were still not allowed to live in areas which were designated for whites. F.W. de Klerk who was the president of South Africa through 1990-1991 revoked legal basis' of the Apartheid as well as the Population Registration Act: removing racial segregation from the government, but not from everyday life. Eventually, the fight against Apartheid paid off and the all-race elections of 1994 created a coalition government led by a Black majority with Nelson Mandela as their leader.

## Definition of Key Terms

### **Apartheid**

A racially biased legislative system in South Africa that enforced dogmatically imposed segregation laws against South African individuals that did not feature white skin.

### **Afrikaners**

An ethnic South African group descended from the Dutch and European settlers that landed on the Cape of Good Hope in 1652.

### **Armed Resistance**

Any form of defence which employs the use of violent force to attempt to relegate an opposing side and defend collective rights and ideals.

### **African National Congress**

Political party founded in 1912 within South Africa that was composed of Black nationalists that sought to defend the civil rights of Black people.

### **Boycott**

Resistance from societal norms and services that has the core goal of assisting a

certain cause or movement.

### **Bantu**

Members of the various ethnic indigenous groups that occupy a vast majority of Africa.

### **European settlers**

The collective of Dutch and European individuals that settled on the Cape of Good Hope in the 17th century.

### **Colored People**

A denotation implemented by the Government of South Africa in the 20th century that saw people of mixed descent, Asian descent and Black ancestry placed under the same umbrella.

### **Group Areas Act**

Apartheid law that entailed the seizure of territory and disproportionate redistribution of land to those inferior to whites. This act was passed in 1950.

### **Population Registration Act**

Apartheid law that segregated people by placing them in one of three race groups. This law was passed in 1950.

### **Suppression of Communism Act**

Apartheid law that condemned overt or covert resistance against the regime. This law was passed in 1950.

### **Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act**

Apartheid law that condemned matrimony between whites and members of other races. This act was passed in 1949.

## **Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

Commission established in the office of Nelson Mandela centered around establishing righteousness within South Africa by condemning human rights infractors during times of Apartheid. The commission was established in 1994.

### **General Overview**

#### **Truth & Reconciliation Commission**

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established in 1994, after the inauguration of Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first democratically elected president. The commission's main focus was to create order and dole out consequences to violators of human rights during the years Apartheid was enacted. The commission had several separate committees focusing on different issues regarding Apartheid: the Committee on Human Rights Violations, the Amnesty Committee, and the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee. The Committee on Human Rights was focused on investigation, double checking the testimony of victims that would come in for questioning. The Amnesty Committee was focused on amnesty and deciding whether or not certain violators of human rights deserved to receive it. And finally, the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee focused on creating and drafting policy suggestions for the South African government.

These policy ideas would often promote a sense of racial intergration and combat the harm done during Apartheid. The committee was also focused on coming up with reparation ideas to help victims of Apartheid; these reparations could range from symbollic to financial or even community focused. The commission was also representative in nature, as it was made up by individuals from across the political spectrum. Some members who were anti-apartheid

worked hand in hand with members with more right wing leanings. As was commonplace under Mandela's leadership, the commission made sure to promote a sense of cooperation and unity among individuals in South Africa, despite their race and/or political views.<sup>1 2</sup>

### **Government of National Unity**

The South African Government of National Unity was overseen by the African National Congress from the years of 1994 to 1997. The interim constitution of South Africa, conceptualized before the 1994 election, ensured the establishment of this government under Clause 88. The idea of this government came from the ANC, who saw it as a vital way to maintain fairness and inclusivity as the final traces of Apartheid were dismantled. The Government of National Unity, commonly known as the GNU, was composed of members from all political parties who gained 10 percent or more of the electorate. The GNU oversaw the creation of the new South African constitution and also was responsible for the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.<sup>3</sup> Once Apartheid was finally dismantled and the new constitution was finalized, the National Party left the GNU to become the ANC's formal opposition.

### **Major Parties Involved and Their Political Views**

#### **African National Congress**

As explained by South African History Online, The African National Congress, commonly known as the ANC, was a Black nationalist political party in South Africa and an active participant in the fight against Apartheid. The party predates its political opponent, the National Party, by a few years, having been founded in 1912. The party, originally known as the South African Native National

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/african-national-congress-anc>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/African-National-Congress>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/south-african-government-national-unity-gnu-1994-1999>

Congress, took a stand against racial discrimination and mistreatment of black and coloured individuals in South Africa. The most notable of these instances could be seen post 1948, when the National Party came into power and introduced Apartheid.

The ANC made their disdain for Apartheid clear and united with the South African Communist Party to create a military wing known as the Spear of the Nation (or MK). Due to the armed struggles with the MK and the party's vocal opposition, the National Party decided to label the ANC a terrorist organization and jailed many of its leaders, including the infamous anti-apartheid activist Nelson Mandela. Though the National Party tried its best to dilute the impact left by the ANC, the support and recognition they had gathered nationwide was undeniable. Eventually the ANC was reestablished as a legitimate political party and the National Party was forced to enter negotiations with them on matters regarding the transitioning of the South African government. This resulted in one of the ANC's most prominent political leaders, Nelson Mandela, becoming South Africa's first democratically elected president, after a landslide victory in 1994.

### **National Party**

The National Party was a political party in South Africa and governed the country from 1948 to 1994. It was a nationalistic party focused on promoting a white supremacist agenda, exemplified by their support and enforcement of Apartheid and the racial segregation of Coloureds in South Africa.

Encyclopedia Britannica explains how the origins of the National Party date all the way back to 1914, when J.B.M Hertzog created it as a response to the euro-centric policies of Louis Botha and Jan Smut's government; members of the National Party wanted South Africa to be a republic detached from the British commonwealth, while people like Botha and Smut believed South Africa must

stay as part of the commonwealth. In 1924, the soon to be National Party, at that time referred to as a Nationalist-Labour coalition, defeated the Smuts government for control of South Africa. Eventually, Hertzog and Smut agreed to unite their visions and form a coalition government under the unified name of the United Party.

However, this would not last since 20 or so years later, World War 2 began and rifts formed within the United Party, as various factions of the party went their separate ways to follow their specific agendas. The National Party did eventually reorganize and win the 1948 elections, and with this newfound power decided to enact the South African Apartheid, a flurry of racially discriminatory legislation determined to exacerbate the segregation between White South Africans and Non-white South Africans. As seen on South African History Online, this continued for years, until they eventually lost power to their rival party, the ANC, in 1994. In 1995, the last traces of the Apartheid regime were eroded away, leading to a new constitution being created and adopted by the ruling South African government in 1996. Shortly after this, the National Party left the national unity government to formally become the ANC's opposition; in 1998, they renamed themselves The New National Party.

## Timeline of Events

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>1948</b> | The National Party comes to power in South Africa and Apartheid is introduced and established  |
| <b>1950</b> | The Population Registration Act is passed. This groups South Africans into distinct groups based on their skin color and racial orientation. |



- 1960** The Sharpeville Massacre occurs. Peace driven protestors are mercilessly shot by police officers. This event terminates the lives of numerous women, children and men.
- 1964** Mandela-led ANC party executes and establishes resistance against the Apartheid government
- 1964** Nelson Mandela and various integrals of the ANC are given life sentences.
- 1970** The Soweto massacre is carried out and more than 500 people are killed.
- 1990** Nelson Mandela was released from prison after 20+ years of captivity.
- 1993** A democratic constitution is established by which every member of South Africa is allowed a vote.
- 1994** Nelson Mandela becomes the president of South Africa after the African National Congress wins the elections.
- 1996** The Truth and Reconciliation Commission starts hearings on the human rights abuses that took place during the Apartheid government's reign.
- 1998** Apartheid is established as a crime against humanity by the Truth and Reconciliation commission.

**1999**

Thbao Mbeki becomes president of the ANC.

## Different Pathways For The Committee:

### Assessing Consequences for Human Rights Violators

A possible pathway the committee could take could be human rights centric, with the delegates deciding on consequences for violators of human rights during the years Apartheid was active. This could lead to various perspectives clashing, creating an interesting debate and problem solving process, as delegates must come to an agreement despite their political beliefs. In order not to give the commission too much power, we could say that the consequences agreed upon in the commission will be sent off to the president's office for President Mandela to approve or disapprove.

### Conceptualizing Reparations for Apartheid

Another possible pathway the committee could be creating proper reparations for those who suffered under Apartheid. Having the conference move this way would allow a wide array of issues to be explored, since reparations can span through economic, social, and even symbolic aspects.

### Mediating Protests and Social Uprising

Another possible pathway which would bring great debate would be to focus on protests in South Africa and ways the delegates could mediate them. Rich debate on whether or not they should listen to the protestors could also guide the conference in interesting directions and, depending how the delegates

respond to these protests, the severity of the social demonstrations could increase or decrease, which would be very interesting as well and could lead to interesting crises inside the conference.

## When the Committee Begins

It is March 1995 and it has been ten months since the formal end of Apartheid and the start of Nelson Mandela's presidency. South Africa is recovering and redefining its place in the world, but the idea of a new nation rebuilt on democratic ideals is more complicated than it seems. Hard questions with innumerable answers need to be asked and answered. How much should the nation invest into the newly formed Truth and Reconciliation Commission and how much power should the TRC have? How should the nation focus its efforts to raise millions Black South Africans out of poverty? What will the education system look like? Will the horrors of Apartheid be taught to the post-apartheid generations?

Let the crises ensue.

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## Appendix

- I. Article providing detailed introduction into Apartheid  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/apartheid>.
- II. Educational source that dives into the laws of Apartheid  
<https://www.cortland.edu/cjis/suzman/apartheid.htm>.
- III. A deeper look into the history (and present) of the ANC  
[www.britannica.com/topic/African-National-Congress](http://www.britannica.com/topic/African-National-Congress).
- IV. Extremely useful BBC article that helps understand major events and context of South Africa during the 1900s  
[www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094918](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094918).
- V. Useful introduction into the basics of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that was started after Apartheid  
[www.law.cornell.edu/wex/south\\_african\\_truth\\_commission](http://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/south_african_truth_commission).