

HSC • MODERN HISTORY

APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA



1960 - 1994

“Malan’s platform was known as apartheid... a new term but an old idea. It literally means ‘apartness’ and it represented the codification in one oppressive system of all the laws and regulations that had kept Africans in an inferior position for centuries.”

- Nelson Mandela

Leadership of the ANC:

- joined in 1944, leading the Youth League
 - helped revitalise policies and the organisation of the Committee
 - helped draft the Freedom Charter
 - frequently targeted by authorities due to his public opposition to apartheid
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Mandela as the Head of the MK:

- key figure in organising the MK as the most important asset of the ANC's resistance following Sharpeville
- helped launch the **Defiance Campaign**
- pushed the MK towards sabotage and guerilla tactics
- the banning of the ANC meant he had to work in secret and underground
 - often disguised himself and trained soldiers in secret

- Rivonia Trial, imprisonment on Robben Island, 'Free Mandela' campaign

OPERATION MAYIBUYE:

- the MK and Mandela's leadership came to a swift halt when the MK executive was arrested in 1963
 - Mandela and Sisulu included
 - arrested because the police found the hiding leadership in Rivonia
- during the arrest, police found evidence that the Mk was planning an organised and large-scale military operation - *Operation Mayibuye*
 - "the white state has thrown overboard every pretence of rule by democratic process" (Mayibuye Document)

THE RIVONIA TRIAL:

- the arrested were charged with treason against South Africa and sabotage
 - also highlighted the involvement of the communist party as a further crime
- all received life sentences
 - Mandela used the Rivonia Trial as a platform to respond to the oppression
 - made a historic address:

- SADF illegally occupied Namibia.
- SADF assisted UNITA, a military opposition force in Angola which was supplied with arms by the USA, and raged civil war against the newly independent government of Angola.
- SADF also supplied arms and financial aid to the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR), an opposition military force in Mozambique that was waging a civil war in the country.

South Africa continued to try and destabilise their other neighbours.

- To continue the secret war in Angola, South Africa was forced to use conscripts.
- The war in Angola became a war of high patriotism for each side.
- The 'Boys on the Border' were protecting white South Africa from the black Communists to their north.
- SA worked to build a 'ring of steel' around itself and its allied neighbours

○ [international responses to South African policies](#)

1940s-50s

- The racism of most South Africans and their government was commonplace and accepted.
- Many British people were opposed to immigration from the West Indies.
- Australia had the 'White Australia Policy', Aborigines were still dealt with under the Flora and Fauna Act.
- The Civil Rights Movement in the USA began in 1955 after years of racial prejudice against blacks.

In the late 1940s - King George VI visited, South Africa was a part of the Commonwealth, sporting teams and entertainers were happy to tour the country

- in this time, notions of racial superiority and policies that promoted racial segregation were becoming unacceptable.

Post WWII:

- Decolonisation was occurring around the world = White minority rule was no longer acceptable.
- Apartheid was no longer accepted.
- Opposition to apartheid across the world was increasing year by year as the violent suppression of black became more widely known.

NELSON MANDELA WALKS FREE:

- February 1990
 - Extraordinarily emotional day for South Africans.
 - He was 71 years old.
- In March he declared his aim was not merely to end apartheid but also to transform South Africa into a real democracy.
 - In March he went to Lusaka to meet ANC leaders.
 - He assured them he remained firmly committed to ANC goals.
 - He became Deputy President of the ANC, but was effectively leader as Tambo had suffered a stroke.

NEGOTIATION, BREAK DOWN AND NEAR CIVIL WAR:

- Talks began between the government and the ANC; power-sharing was discussed.
 - De Klerk repealed the remaining key apartheid laws
 - e.g Separate Amenities Act, Natives Land Act and the Group Areas Act.
 - BUT, at the same time the country was becoming enveloped in ever-increasing violence.
 - Mandela attacked De Klerk for not controlling the violence, but many at the time believed he was just not fully in control of his people.
 - Mandela felt he could not trust De Klerk - that he had introduced reforms that would ensure power for the Afrikaner, not as a step towards giving up power.
- Violence continued across the country.

March 1990 - **Sebokeng** Massacre.

- 11 killed, 400 injured.
- A large pro- ANC crowd, marching from Sebokeng to a white area of Johannesburg were fired on by police and armed white civilians.