

INTERNAL DIMENSIONS
OF THE
STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID
IN
SOUTH AFRICA
1950 - 1990

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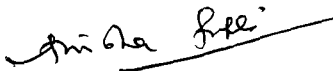
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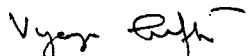
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation
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for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy
of the University, is her original work according
to the best of my knowledge and may be placed before
the examiner for evaluation.

E-NSO


(PROF. ANIRUDHA GUPTA)
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Supervisor

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Sujata Banerji
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C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page No.</u>
PREFACE	
<u>CHAPTER - I</u> : INTRODUCTION	1 - 19
<u>CHAPTER -II</u> : GROWTH OF RACIST INSTITUTIONS (1652-1950)	20 - 49
<u>CHAPTER-III</u> : GROWTH OF PROTEST MOVEMENTS AGAINST APARTHEID (1950- 1960)	50 - 77
<u>CHAPTER -IV</u> : GROWTH OF UNDERGROUND AND ARMED MOVEMENTS (1960- 1976)	78 -111
<u>CHAPTER - V</u> : RISE OF MASS DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENTS (1976-1990)	112 -145
CHAPTER -VI: CONCLUSION	146 -151
BIBLIOGRAPHY	i -vii

PREFACE

This is a study on the great struggle against apartheid in South Africa, which for forty years refused to be crushed by a monstrous state apparatus based on racial discrimination. Tens of thousands of lives have been sacrificed for the cause. It is interesting to trace the history of this remarkable movement from its amorphous beginnings to a stage when it became a threat to the powerful white racist state.

In my introduction, I have explained the meaning of the concept of apartheid and its many interpretations as well as what is meant by the anti-apartheid movement i.e. its composition and function. The changes in apartheid mentioned in this chapter and the factors that caused them grows clearer as the study unfolds. My hypothesis which I hope I have proved during the course of my dissertation is also stated here.

I have divided my work into time periods in accordance with the growth and changes in the anti-apartheid movement. In my second chapter I considered it necessary to discuss how the peculiar racist institutions in South Africa evolved before the constitutionalizing of apartheid in 1948. The years 1950 to 1960 was the decade of peaceful protest. The 1960s saw the beginning of armed struggle and underground movements while the late 1970s and the 1980s was the period of the Mass Democratic Movement in which the peoples' involvement was complete. The headings of the chapters are, in this sense, self-explanatory.

I hope I have been successful in bringing out the implications and the horrors of having to live in such a humiliating and suppressive environment as the blacks in South Africa. It has been my endeavour to highlight the courage, perseverance and enterprise, not only of certain individuals but of millions of nameless black men, women and even children to hold on, against all odds, to a dream that they considered more precious than life itself.

My study has been based on relevant books, articles from periodicals and newspaper reports printed in English. as well as some very important sources not available in Delhi that was made available to me by my supervisor, Prof. Vijay Gupta.

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Apartheid in South Africa has become a major problem of the 20th century. South Africa is the only country in the world where racial discrimination is enshrined in the constitution and actively pursued as government policy. The advocates of apartheid argue that this is the only means of maintaining the identity and existence of a European stock whose courageous pioneering made South Africa a habitable land. To accept political equality as the principle of white and black relationship would yield supremacy to the latter. Afrikaners describe themselves as having no other home but South Africa and if an attempt to drive out whites is made, as it was in Belgian Congo, they would be out in the sea.

A long history has gone to the making of the present situation. In order to make the background clear, I have traced the origins of apartheid right from the conquest of South Africa by the white coloniser in the Seventeenth century. In the period between 1652 and 1948, there was an upsurge of Afrikaner nationalism. The Africans were dispossessed of their land and work and a number of racist

institutions were created by the colonizers in order, at first, to survive in an alien land and later to maintain the privileges that they had reserved for themselves. This was finally insured when the National Party, after its victory in the 1948 election, rejected integration and apartheid was institutionalised as the guiding principle of the South African State.

The word "Apartheid" itself means "Separateness". Every race, according to this doctrine, has a unique destiny of its own. In the word of J.P. Omer - Cooper, the concept of apartheid, as practised in South Africa in later years, is "an amalgam of traditional South African practice, racial superiority, calvinist theology and a certain amount of Paternalistic philanthropy".¹ John Calvin, a thinker of the Reformation, had strongly believed in the doctrine of predestination. The South African practice of apartheid was thus based partially on the Calvinist belief that a natural order produces natural law

1. J.D. Omer - Cooper, Africa South of the Sahara 1987, p. 394.

and natural rights and this is the substructure of all legal and moral relationship between men. Man cannot change this order by any means. The "paternalistic philanthropy" of the whites approximated closely to the idea of "Gandhian trusteeship" in which the whites felt duty-bound to feel a paternal responsibility for the black "children of God".

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, the term apartheid means an official policy of South Africa with a view to promoting and maintaining white ascendancy, the motive of which is to create an apartness between whites and blacks. By maintaining such a gap, the minority government of South Africa has initiated a hate syndrome, and by doing so has significantly suppressed the economic and psychological growth of the native Black South Africans.² It is true, in general, that apartheid policy does generate a conglomeration of other socially unacceptable conditions

2. Chris Ana Oniourzeurike, "Black People and Apartheid Conflict", in *Journal of Black Studies*, September 1987, Sage Publishers, p. 215.

that have no less significant effect on well-being, self esteem and self concepts of black South Africans.

Apartheid policy can also be said to have been built upon the eugenistic concept that emphasises the superiority of the white race and the inferiority of the subordinate black race. This conception dictates the nature of association and relationship between white and black people the world over. This definition of apartheid and its implications suggest that white economic, political and social existence must have priority over the black socio-economic, political and psychological aspirations.

Since apartheid is based on beliefs and not on scientific principle, the policy was forced to undergo successive significant changes with changing circumstances. From 1948 to the end of the 1950s apartheid was openly based on the assumption that culture is genetically determined, the white race is inherently superior to others and race mixture the ultimate evil to be avoided. A long series of major laws such as Immorality Amendment Act, the Group Areas Act, the Bantu Education Act etc., provided for the rigid social and residential segregation of the races.

A major change in the approach to apartheid took place in 1959 when Dr. Verwoerd announced the promotion of Bantu Self-government Bill. The Central feature of the new approach to apartheid, also known as 'Separate development', was the idea that the "Bantustans" ("Homelands") must be encouraged to develop towards ultimate political independence. White domination in the rest of South Africa and the denial of normal civil rights to Africans would then be justified by imposing alien nationality on them rather than by reference to inherent race differences. The new approach implied the acceptance of a formal equality between white and black political leaders.

Internal economic developments initiated a significant further change in apartheid. By the 1970s changes in technology were making it no longer profitable for mines and industry to employ large numbers of unskilled workers at exceptionally cheap rates. With new machinery it was more profitable to employ fewer workers at higher levels of skill and responsibility and to pay significantly higher rates to ensure good performance. This change required that limitations on the skill and training of non-whites would no longer be so important; measure to make workers more contented and to develop a sense of loyalty

to their jobs would be required. The right to strike, although under closely circumscribed conditions was recognised for the very first time. Most significantly, the need to provide greatly increased opportunities for technical training and job advancement for African, coloured and Indian workers was openly recognised.

South Africa is the richest and economically the most developed country on the continent. It possesses vast natural resources: the most important of these remains the underpaid African worker whose labour provides the ruling European minority with the highest per capita income in Africa and one of the highest in the labour. In spite of this it has been estimated that the earnings of an African worker in the gold mine were no higher in real terms in 1966 than in 1911.³ The wages of Africans in industry are somewhat higher but they hardly share in South Africa's much touted economic 'boom'.

3. Brian Bunting, *The Rise of the South African Reich* Hammondsworth, Penguin, 1969.

Only 13 per cent of South Africa's 472,347 sq. miles has been allocated by the regime to Africans, who comprise 70 per cent of the population. The so-called 'Bantu' areas are impoverished rural ghettos; these form a fragmented horse-shoe shape around the Transvaal and Orange Free State. Within these areas there are no industries and no major towns or cities. Communications are poor, despite the high density of population in the North and South East African agriculture is mainly subsistence farming of maize and serghum on poor, eroded soils.

In the South African context, every black is a potential enemy of the state since it is believed that noone in his right sense would accept apartheid as a way of life. Most whites share the government's perception of a threatening world and agree with government policy in reaction to that perceived threat Afrikaner institutions - family, churches, schools, universities, newspapers and the South African Broadcasting Corporation - have projected this perception for more than four decades.⁴

4. John Seéler, "Towards a State of Scope?", in Africa Report, Vol. 28, July-August, 1983.

As a result racist laws are applied with extreme severity against those who are against racial discrimination and take active part in the struggle against apartheid. For instance, three ANC members were hung in June 1983 after being convicted of treason and murder by the South African court. South Africa ignored world wide pleas for clemency including one from U.S. President Reagan and carried out the execution at dawn inside Pretoria's Central Prison. The three men - Sumon Mogerane, 23, Jerry Mostololi 25 and Thabo Motaung 27 - were the first ANC members executed since 1979. The Government refused to give the bodies to their families for burial, fearing that it would spark off anti-government demonstrations.

Apartheid legislation since 1948 has attempted to systematise and extend the practical segregation embodied in early laws, particularly those of 1913 and 1936. Africans found themselves increasingly marginalised at a time of increasing prosperity. They observed their kind being daily humiliated by "whites only" signs and by the necessity of having to carry passes in order to move freely in their own country. Their children received inferior education, their men were separated from their wives and families,

demonstrators were shot while peacefully protesting and unaccounted deaths occurred in police custody. With increased state brutality and more oppressive laws, the resentment of the African increased until the two races, the blacks and the whites, were polarised into mutually antagonistic groups. The whites knew that in order to continue to live their comfortable lives it was necessary to maintain the status quo and continue exploitation of the Africans. The Blacks on the other hand, as they grew more organised realised that only by putting up a struggle and overthrowing the system of apartheid could they hope to be integrated in society as equals.

Anti-apartheid struggle is, thus, one of overthrowing the racist regime in South Africa and replacing it with a system based on racial, cultural and linguistic equality. All the forces that make up the movement have a shared commitment towards building up of a united democratic and non-racial South Africa. The ANC freedom Charter, which is written into its constitution guarantees national rights, individual rights, cultural rights and language rights to everybody. Everybody is equal before the law. The development of all cultures including the Afrikaner culture, will

be encouraged. Several Conferences on the Problem of apartheid have been held in different parts of the world over the years. There is a broad agreement that all the anti-apartheid forces have to reject both the ideology and practice of apartheid i.e. racial oppression, denial of basic human rights to the majority and the theories contrived to support the system.

Anti-apartheid unity, be it among progressive democrats or in a broad coalition, does not imply a monolith of "South Africans in general". It is based on actual classes and strata with common, different and sometimes, contradictory aims. To quote he Duan: "...Each class, for the sake of its own interest and common interest, joins forces with other classes within the front. Moreover, the common interest itself is viewed by each class from its own angle".⁵ Thus, struggles at different levels, at different sites and with different scope and political motivation coexist and overlap.

5. Denga, "For a Broad Coalition of Anti-apartheid Forces", The African Communist 3rd quarter 1988, no. 114.

The resolution of the problem of apartheid depends on the nature of contradictions in society and the resolution of these contradictions.⁶

The main contradictions in South Africa under apartheid is between the black majority and the ruling white majority. The practice of apartheid requires that the whites must enjoy supremacy in all spheres of life. This supremacy can be enjoyed only if whites enjoy a privileged position; and that is possible only by exploitation of an discrimination against the blacks who are a majority. The whites and blacks have an antagonistic relationship.

Contradictions sharpen with the changing co-relationship between two antagonistic forces. The exploitation and discrimination on a racial basis, necessary for apartheid, poses a threat to the system itself. Racial unity stands to challenge the privileged position of the whites, as such a unity no longer serve the interests of the reservation of certain jobs to white workers at very high pay, while black

6. Vijay Gupta, "Dialectics of the Southern African Crisis: Basic Contradictions", in Shanti Sadiq Ali and Anirudh Gupta (eds.), *Africa Dimensions of the Economic Crisis; An Analysis of the Problem and Constraints of Development*, New Delhi, Sterling Publications, 1984, p. 182.

workers are available, clashes with the interests of the white employers. These employers privileged position does not require exploitation of blacks only but of both and, if necessary, in unity with the blacks.

As the two antagonistic components begin to change their form and content and move from their previous positions, the relation between them changes and, as a result, the apartheid system undergoes changes. The antagonism takes a new shape and adopts a new character.

The contradictions between blacks and whites are reinforced by two other contradictions. The first is that between the white minority rulers and the powers who have made huge investments in South Africa and derive large profits. These powers tried to adopt a strategy to pressurise the racist rulers of Pretoria, to reach some kind of accommodation with moderate African leaders, so that their position is not jeopardised in case intolerable conditions make Africans revolt against all whites, including non-South Africans. Similarly, a second contradiction between the same powers and black Africans arises because an independent black regime in

South Africa would like to have full control over the state which may deprive the investing powers of special benefits that they enjoy in South Africa and this would be detrimental to their financial and other interests in the country.

The future of apartheid in South Africa is linked to the changing co-relation of these contradictory forces.

The fight against apartheid in South Africa is a unique one, involving external and internal forces.

Pressure against the South African regime has become a moral crusade in Western, ComCon and Third World countries in a manner unparalleled since the rise of Fascism and German National Socialism in the 1930s. Danish housewives spurn cape apples ; West Indian fans berate their talented but poor countrymen for playing cricket in South Africa; in New Zealand helmeted policemen club down frenzied citizens protesting against the South Africans playing rugby against the national team.

Apartheid has pursued the Union of South Africa to the broader stage of the United Nations. Resolutions have

been passed from 1946 by the Assembly condemning the racial policy of the Union. India has raised persistently the violation of human rights as enshrined in the U.N. Charter. The new African states have placed on the agenda questions scoring apartheid as a threat to world peace. A U.N. Commission of enquiry Report in 1955 formally indicated apartheid.

The connections between some of these measures and their intended results have a dialectical relationship as they provide a focus for campaigning and for building an anti-apartheid movement far from the scene of action but committed to Human Rights as chartered by the United Nations. They also provide moral support and action an element of upliftment to black South Africans who can sense that many sections of white opinion consider their cause just and the South African authorities' actions illegitimate.⁷

However, too much emphasis on the external dimension gives the impression that the black majority in South Africa

7. William Cobbelt and Robin Cohen (eds), *Popular Struggles in South Africa*, Review of African Political Economy, 1988.

is "disabled". The inbuilt assumption of foreign boycotts is that the local forces are unable to free themselves without help from outside. For example, Genevieve Knupfer was convinced of the black South African's inability to be the master of his own destiny. "...closely linked with economic under privilege is psychological under privilege; habits of submission, with ^{LITTLE} access to sources of information, lack of verbal facility (in English). These things appear to produce a lack of self confidence which increases the unwillingness of the low status to participate....".⁸

A similar idea was outlined by Plamenatz in the following words: "...The dull, the silent, the long suffering millions cling desperately to what is familiar not because they understand and cherish it but because they know nothing better".⁹

not

It is important to misunderstand. A vigorous and comprehensive sanction campaign must play a vital role in liberating South Africa. But the complex dynamics of

8. Genevieve Knupfer, "A Portrait of the Underdog", Public Opinion, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, Spring 1947, p. 103.

9. John Plamenatz, "On Alien Rule and Self-Government", London, Longman 1960, p. 31.

the struggles in South Africa and the unexpectedly negative or ambiguous results of some external acts in support of the black majority require that we conceive of the interplay between internal forces and external levers in a more guarded manner.

It is the analysis of the internal dynamics of the struggle against the apartheid state that provides the main thrust of this study. Through more than four decades of intensifying struggle, of failures and victories, of innovations and mistakes, bloody violence and gratifying displays of humanity, hundred of organisations committed to the destruction of apartheid and to building an alternative South Africa have emerged.

My study is divided into time periods, each period showing a higher degree of antagonism and consequently a more intense sharpening of contradictions than before. From 1950 to 1960, organised protest movement against apartheid was just beginning. By 1959, feelings had reached a fever pitch and a particularly bitter clash took place at Sharpsville in 1960. The 60s and 70s were the decades of underground movements and the beginning of armed struggle due to changed

circumstances. During the Rivonia trials, the African leaders for the first time, clearly articulated their views about the struggle and their dream of a future, egalitarian South Africa.

Contradictions continued to sharpen when the 1972-73 strikes lead to renewed confidence and strength among African workers as they pressed for reforms in the work place. The Soweto revolt brought the struggle to the people; besides the liberation movements such as the ANC, PAC and the black consciousness groups, the local population - men, women and children - became actively involved in the fight against apartheid. The mass democratic movement sharpened contradictions to the extent that the anti-apartheid position became acceptable to a large numbers of the South African population and resolution of contradictions became necessary to prevent chaos. Steps towards resolution of contradictions begin to take place by slowly deapartheidizing society. Political parties were unbanned, African leaders were released, desegregation was initiated and, for the first time in the history of South Africa, black and white leaders sat together on a negotiating table to try to

pave the way to "....raise a free, intelligent, harmonious nation, each part acting with, and for, the benefit of the other....".¹⁰

As to the participants in the struggle, few would wish to challenge the major historic role of the ANC or question the regard in which it is held by black South Africans. However, numerous contemporary struggles inside the country cannot be reduced to a simple extension of ANC aims. Independent, or relatively autonomous actors have articulated local priorities under the impact of local pressures. These perception demand at the very least, a sympathetic hearing by those from outside the country.

These organisations have had to learn rapidly from their mistake. They have had to identify new tactical spaces and devise new strategies - sometimes to advance the common struggle, at other times merely to survive. In so doing, these organisations have adopted relevant

10. Oliver Schreiner in "Closer Union 1908" quoted in Hildegard Spothswoode (Compiler), Africa The Road Ahead London 1960.

examples and theories from all over the world. Where none existed they have displayed a remarkable degree of innovation in adapting themselves to the particular demand of the movement. It is these realities that demand recognition, and the sacrifices of these INSIDE the country which entitle them to have a primary say in what support is necessary and how it best can be applied.

CHAPTER - II

RISE OF RACIST INSTITUTIONS (1652-1950)

RISE OF RACIST INSTITUTIONS (1652-1950)

On 7 April 1652, the first Dutch colonists, landed in South Africa under the leadership of Jan Van Riebeck and established a station at Table Bay to 'provide that the East India ships.....may (procure) ...herbs, flesh, water and other needful refreshments'.¹ In 1657, the Dutch East India Company encouraged 'free burghers' as distinct from Van Riebeck's band of company servants, to grow cattle, corn and wine. The burghers turned into boers (farmers), Veeboers (cattle farmers) and Trekboers (nomadic frontiersmen) By 1682, 700 European were living in the settlement, producing wine and wheat for export as well as re-victualling the ships. The original small nucleus was expanded by further assisted immigration. The Dutch settler were joined before the end of the 17th century by Huguenots, fleeing religious persecution in France. Thereafter it continued to expand by natural increase. The Dutch East Indian Company was pushed out of the Cape by the British in 1795, never to return;

1. Walter Fitzgerald, Africa, London and New York, Methuen and Dutton 1957, p. 187.

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and that important link between the farmers and the country of origin was severed. Serious British occupation began in 1806 but did not really develop until the mid 19th century with the discovery of diamond and gold.

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The occupation of the country was achieved by military conquest of the African people, and the steady dispossession of their land and cattle and the forced use of their labour. As the white population grew, it sought constantly to expand the area under its control at a rapid rate. With each generation the white settlers encroached upon more and more land from the indigenous population and either absorbed them as squatters or farm workers or drove them into smaller areas.

The farmers were frontiersmen rather than townsmen; their economy was based upon pastoralism, their religion based upon each man's ability with a musket; and their society based upon companionship of their own kind. As pastoralists they had to travel light, having fewer material comforts than townsmen; but they also travelled light intellectually, since schools and colleges and universities were not available for them.² The grandsons of the first white settlers differed



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2. David Denoon, South Africa Since 1800, Longman 1972, p. 44.

markedly from the original Dutch farmers; they were more efficient militarily, less tolerant of government, less well educated and much more self reliant. To that extent they became less European and in the rough conditions of the Cape they began to develop a new identity altogether.³

Most obviously, the farming community defined themselves as non-African: they were Christian while the Africans generally were not; they were European as distinct from African and they were white.⁴ Essentially it was a biological, popularly referred to as racial distinction, as increasing numbers of coloured and African families became Christian. Their sense of having a separate identity was quickly cultivated by the existence of a large and "alien community amongst them. When the extension of British colonial law threatened to blur the distinction between the races, that also encouraged the farmers to assert the distinction and to assert it, more boldly and arbitrarily than had previously been necessary. Yet however, loudly the techboers proclaimed their non-Africanness, they were steadily becoming

3. Ibid., p. 44.

4. Ibid., p. 46.

"Africanised" as they became less "European". At first they described themselves in terms of their economic activity, boer - and in that way avoided the question whether they were European or African. However, to make profits from pastoralism they necessarily adopted pastoral habits not unlike those of their African neighbours. With passage of time only biological characteristics or race remained as a reliable distinction between the two communities.

The Boer Great Trek:

The influence of British missionaries and their supporters in Britain and of a few boers in the colony spurred the introduction of liberal measure that had far reaching consequences.

The changes began in 1828, when an African ethnic group known as the Hottentots were assured legal rights equal to those possessed by whites and in 1834 when Slavery was abolished. In 1852, the grant of representative government opened the possibility of full participation in politics by those Africans and coloured who could meet non-racial property qualifications and , after 1892, educational tests.⁵

5. Thomas Karis and Giwendolen M Carter, (eds), From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, Vol. I, Hoover Institute Press 1972, p. 3.

The measures that heartened non-whites antagonised substantial numbers of whites. By the 1830s, thousands of boers had begun the Great Trek to the north to escape what they called "oppression" at the hands of the British. In the Boers efforts to open new areas and establish new states in which their strict superiority system could be perceived they came into direct and often violent contact with Africans that previously had not felt the sustained direct thrust of organised white settlers.

Early Resistance:

The Africans put up gallant resistance to European thrust. The Zulus, the Besotho the Bapedi, the Mpondomise, the Batlaping and other African ethnic groups fought bravely against the British and Dutch colonialists to preserve their land and independence. Throughout the history of South Africa, examples of militant form of struggle in the fight for independence abound.

In 1879, at the Battle of Isandhlwana, King Cet. Shwayo's regiments armed with spears defeated the powerful British Army marking the highest point in a 200 year protracted struggle against the white colonizers. The

Bambata rebellion of the Zulu people in 1906 (which was brutally suppressed) was the last war of resistance to be fought in the old style.⁶

Emergence of Afrikaner Nationalism:

Overcoming African resistance and fending off intermittent British efforts at control, the Boer trekking community finally captured large areas in South Africa and organised these areas into two provinces, on the Transvaal and the other the Orange Free State. The colonizers ruled that no Africans or other non-whites could participate in the politics of these provinces.⁷

When they began to move out of the Cape Colony in 1830, the frontier farmers had developed a substantial and separate tradition of their own, distinct from that of the British and even the European farmers in the immediate vicinity of Cape Town.⁸ The British colonists insisted upon

6. Joc Thloloe Tribune, Chandigarh 21st September, 1984.

7. Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Carter, op. cit., p. 4.

8. David Denoon, op. cit., p. 47.

describing them as "emigrant farmers" and treating them as reluctant British subjects. Later these people came to be called Africander, (then Afrikander and eventually Afrikaner). This was a much more accurate description. The term implied a European community adapted to an African environment, which was precisely what the 'emigrant farmers' had by that time become .

Their attitudes towards Africans were already well entrenched. They thought of themselves as superior human beings. These boers, the white man in South Africa, claimed his superiority to be "born of race and faith a quality divinely given which could not be transmitted to other race or acquired by them".⁹ The Afrikaner developed resentment to the British colonial government and were opposed to the latter's liberalism. In the process they sided with a distinctive economic, social, military system which had already been created. They were not yet fully conscious of a separate nationality (their numbers were still too small for that to be possible) and they had yet to tackle the problems of state formation which

9. C.W. De Kuywet, A History of South Africa, Social and Economic, London 1941, p. 20.

immediately pressed upon them. When they cast off the authority of the British. The Afrikaner's desire to free themselves from the British was prompted by their wish to continue to own slaves, to be able to discriminate between white and non-white, to re-establish the patriarchal relationship between master and servant which had existed from the time of Van Riebeck and which the British seemed to be destroying. It was with this view in mind that the Afrikaner established new republics in Orange Free State and the Transvaal. However, the establishment of these republics did not end British harassment and intervention.

Beginning of Organised African Resistance:

The discovery of diamond at Kimberley in 1867 and Gold in Witwatersrand in 1886 marked the beginning of a new colonial attitude towards South Africa. South Africa now became a land of opportunity and profit. New finances poured into South Africa creating new economic pressures. These pressures combined with the policies of white colonial and republican governments and the influence of missionaries to wrench apart still further the fabric of African life

Simultaneously drawn by the promise of cash earnings and impelled by the necessity to pay new taxes imposed by the white governments to force African to take up wage labour, the Africans migrated in increasing numbers out of the crowded African "reserves" and clustered around the new white dominated urban economic centers where they became the unskilled core of the emerging South African proletariat or, in the case of a few, the first members of the minuscule and truncated African Urban bourgeoisie.¹⁰ The Africans congregated in shanty town and were forced with discriminatory treatment in wages, in work, residence, medical facilities and in compensation at the time of accidents. As a result they began organizing themselves into trade unions and political organisations. Against this backdrop organised political activity began to develop in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

By the close of the nineteenth century two African approaches to politics were apparent.¹¹ The dominant

10. Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Carter, eds., op. cit., p. 4.

11. Ibid., p. 8.

approach included both the organisational agitational activity of the IMBUMBA and similar groups as well as the journalism and lobbying of Jabavie and IMVO. Within this approach African organised themselves and worked with sympathetic whites to secure an expanding role in what they believed was an evolving British system that could result eventually in fully non-racial, representative government. For these Africans, the slogan "equal rights for every civilised man South of the Zambese", provided the guide to legitimate political activity. They ignored the fact that the author of the famous slogan, Cecil Rhodes, intended it at first for Afrikaners, then for coloured, and only ambiguously for Africans.

Counterposed to the optimistic hopes of those who accepted the implication of cape liberalism were those of the Ethiopian persuasion. They argued that African self-preservation and advancement could best be realised through exclusively African organisations acting without reference to standard of "civilisation" as defined by whites in South Africa. Ethiopianism can be seen as a forerunner of subsequent African philosophies and groups whose main thrust was to challenge white power through black unity. In

contrast, the other approach placed reliance upon some form of cooperation with sympathetic whites. Neither position was completely exclusive of the other, but they were two distinct poles on which much in South African politics was to focus.

During this same period, a number of future African leaders were receiving training overseas. In the Negro community of the U.S. South Africans came under the influence of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois. In the writings of two South African students John L. Dube (who studied in Oberlin College and in Rochester N.Y.) and Pixley Ka I Seme (who studied in Columbia and Oxford Universities), it was possible to see new views evolving in response to overseas experience.¹²

The South African War:

In the aftermath of the Great Trek British policy vacillated between the alternatives of annexing the new areas of white settlement in the interests of protecting

12. Ibid. p. 8.

indigenous peoples and maintaining peace in the sub-continent, and leaving whites and Africans to fight it out on their own in the interests of economy.¹³

The discovery of diamonds came at a time when British policy makers were becoming convinced of the desirability of going back on the policy of abandonment and fostering a federation of white states in South African under the leadership of the Cape. To make this possible the diamond field areas were annexed in 1872. Resistance to the idea of federation from the Cape, which had been granted responsible government in 1872 resulted in frustration which prompted the British authorities to attempt to break the deadlock by annexing the Transvaal Republic. This dramatic move merely hardened opposition in South Africa to a British inspired move to federation.

Thus when the Transvaal farmer rose in rebellion and defeated British forces in a number of engagements, Britain reverted to a policy of withdrawal and the internal

13. J.D. Omer Cooper, *Africa South of the Sahara* 1989, pp. 896-7.

independence of the Transvaal was restored. This marked the beginning of a South Africa-wide Afrikaner nationalist movement.¹⁴

With the discovery of gold, transvaal replaced the Cape as the most powerful state in the sub-continent. To preserve British paramountcy against international competition it now seemed essential to extend a measure of British control over the Transvaal in case it should draw the other South African States into its orbit. To achieve this, Cecil Rhodes was given support to enable his British South African company to occupy Rhodesia (Now Zambia and Zimbabwe) and create a new dominant British position to the north of the Transvaal.

When it became apparent that Rhodesia was not going to outclass the Transvaal as a gold producer, but was relatively poor, Rhodes was given government support for his schemes to promote a rebellion among the foreign white miners in Johanuesburg and to lead a column of British South African company forces to support the rebels.

14. Ibid., p. 899.

Thereafter the British government brought increasing pressures to bear on the Transvaal to make concessions which would effectively destroy the republic's independence. Realising that the British government would be satisfied with nothing less than this, the Boer republics in desperation declared war and invaded the British colonies on 12 October 1899.

The Union:

The most urgent problem in the minds of the victorious British authorities as the war drew to a close was to ensure that South Africa should remain firmly within the British empire. In the place of Vereeniging in 1902 the British negotiators agreed that the issue of non-European voting rights in the former republics could not be raised until these had been restored to responsible governments. The British governments desired to reduce its responsibilities and to achieve reconciliation with the Boers override its solicitude for African interest.¹⁵

15. Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Carter, op. cit., p. 10.

The post war situation provided additional impetus for local whites to unite under a single national South African government. In October 1908, white representatives of four colonies met in Durban in the South African National Convention to draft the terms of Union which eventually came about in 1910.

With the formation of the union the Hetvolk Party in the Transvaal, the Orangic Unie Party of the OFS and South Africa Party in the Cape amalgamated under the name of the South Africa Party (S.A.P.) dominated by the two Boer leaders, Louis Botha and Jan Smuts. Their aim was to bring English and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans together as a united ruling caste. With the same party, however, a group represented by Hertzog saw the Afrikaans speaking group as a nation in itself and looked back with nostalgia to the Boer Republics. This created tensions within the S.A.P. that led to a split in 1912 and in the following year Hertzog and his followers formed the National Party.

The African National Congress:

The year 1912 also saw the foundation of the first continuing African political organisation. In that year,

the South African Native National Congress; later renamed the African National Congress (ANC) was born. Its membership was at first very restricted, including mainly educated professional men and chiefs and it made very limited demands aiming mainly at gaining social and political acceptance for African elite within the structure of white dominated society. The year after its foundation, however, the ANC was faced with a major issue.

The Struggle for Land and Work:

One of the major steps taken by the South African Union government in the direction of evolving racist policy was the Natives Land Act of 1913. This act aimed to consolidate white possession of land in South Africa outside the areas delimited as African Reserves and to destroy the independence of African peasant farmers and force them on to the cheap labour market.

The struggle for possession and use of land has been a central theme in South African race relations.¹⁶

16. David Denoon, op. cit., p. 128.

Until the discovery of minerals in the 1860s, for a white man to be landless was to be without ability to produce wealth or independently to sustain life. Despite the growth of industries during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the overwhelming majority of all South Africans were dependent upon agricultural production for at least part of their incomes. Africans were deliberately debarred from flowing into the urban areas and thus remained much more a rural community than did whites. Africans under the land Act of 1913 were denied the right to purchase land in white areas, and the system under which Africans had been allowed to continue living on white owned land as share croppers or rent paying tenants was outlawed. Africans were evicted on a massive scale from white owned lands, especially in the OFS. Loss of their homes frequently involved loss of stock as they wandered in search of somewhere to pasture them. Many families were reduced to destitution.

The South African Native National Congress in a document on October 2, 1916 reacted in the following way ".....while the ostensible aim of the Natives Land Act is that of territorial separation of the races,.....the ulterior object of the Government as well as the real desire of the

white population of the country is:-

To deprive the Natives as a people of their freedom to acquire more land in their own right: To restrict or limit their right to bargain mutually or even terms for the occupation of or settlement on land: To reduce by gradual process and by artificial means the Bantu people as a race to a status of permanent labourers or sub-ordinates for all purposes and for all times with little or no freedom to sell their labour by bargaining on even terms with employers in the open market of labour either in the agricultural or industrial centres: To lessen their chances as a people of competing freely and fairly in all commercial enterprises".¹⁷

First World War and Depression:

In the post WWI era, as prices fell, large numbers of weaker and less efficient farmers became insolvent and were forced to leave the land for the towns, just as opportunities for employment there were contracting White South

17. Document 26 "Resolution Against the Natives Land Act 1918 and the Report of the Natives Land Commission", cited in Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M Carter, eds., op. cit., pp. 86-7.

African officialdom is fond of using the term influx to describe the movement of African labourers. The term suggest a natural spontaneous process which does not make clear the almost/satisfiable historical demand for black gang labour by the mines or the massive recruitment agencies and other labour supplies. In so far, however, as an "influx" suggests an unanimate, depersonalised phenomenon, a kin to a rising tide, it would seem only right and proper that the representative "civilisation" should erect Dykes and canals to control this threat.¹⁸ Naturally white opinion sought more rigid segregation and control of Africans in the town to protect their own health (as a consequence of the appalling death rate in 1918 caused by an influenza pandemic) and interests. The Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 left Africans with no right to live in towns except in so far and so long as their services were required by whites. With 1913 Natives Land Act, it established the fundamental principle on which the South African Social System rests.

18. Robin Cohen, *Endgame in South Africa, The Changing Structures and Ideology of Apartheid*, UNESCO 1986, p. 48.

After the Anglo-Boer war, white skilled workers were able to entrench their position by securing legislation prohibiting the employment of non-European in certain categories of work. As prices fell, with the depression, the Chamber of Mines preferred to do away with the stand still agreement and the white workers, caught between the aspiration of the African workers and the interests of the mine owners reacted desparately.¹⁹ A series of strikes culminated in open rebellion in 1922. Smuts rushed troop and the Rand rebellion was crushed. Defeated militarily, the white workers turned to political action through the Labour Party. An alliance was now forged between the labour party and the National Party representing the more conservative farmers. It was a natural alliance. Both groups disliked and feared English and Jewish bigbusiness which dominated the towns and seemed to threaten their economic interests, social status and culture. Their constitution excluded the great majority of Africans from the vote, hence this 'populist' alliance was able to gain a parliamentary majority in the 1924 elections.

19. J.D. Oner - Cooper, op. cit., p. 893.

The Nationalist-Labour Government:

The Pact government, led by Hertzog decided to take two lines of actions simultaneously: to increase the total urban employment available, and to preserve a greater proportion of this total for whites only. Africans were removed from employment in some areas and replaced by whites.

Thus, the pact government laid the foundation and sketched the outline of the policy which later came to be known as apartheid.

By 1929, some leaders of the Labour Party under the influence of socialist ideas began to see African workers as part of the working class, rather than simply as a threat to the living standards and status of white workers. This change in attitude was not shared by labour voters who tended to shift their votes to the N.P. and after 1929, the Labour Party ceased to be an major political force.

In March 1933, a coalition was brought about between the N.P. and the S.A.P. After a resoundingly victorious election the two parties fused in 1934 to found the United

Party. Hertzog, who remained Prime Minister, altered the entrenched clause protecting non-white voting rights. Another major element of Hertzog's segregation policy adopted by the United Party, the 1936 Natives Land Act reinforced and extended the principles of the 1913 Act while slightly extending the land provision for the Reserves.

The United Party and the "Purified" Nationalists:

The fusion of the Nationalist Party and the SAP was not acceptable to a small group of extreme nationalists lead by Danial Malan. In 1934, they broke away to form the "Purified" Nationalist Party now known simply as the National Party. The group expressed the better nationalist feeling born of the Afrikaner sense of disinheritance in the new industrial society.

Under the impact of World War II, the independence of South Africa's different racial groups could not be ignored and rather more liberal attitudes to racial matters began to be expressed in the ruling circles of the United Party.

The opposition, on the other hand, became even more

extreme in its attitudes and the nationalists, having emerged the main leaders of extreme Afrikaner nationalism, began to systematize their attitude to racial matters in terms of apartheid.

The Meaning of Apartheid Before 1948:

The theory of Apartheid required that each racial group should have part of South Africa in a homeland in which it can develop its own culture. The areas contemplated as homelands for the great majority of the total population were simply the Native Reserves as consolidated under Hertzog's 1936 Land Act. They constituted only 13 per cent of the surface area of the whole country and were without significant industrial centres, major mineral deposits or a major part. They could not conceivably support more than a very small portion of the African population. Whatever their political status, they could only be labour reserves for the white dominated part of the country. In practice, therefore, Apartheid was simply a more dogmatic and extreme formulation of segregationist principles that had been followed by all governments since the Union.²⁰

20. J.D. Omer - Cooper, op. cit., p. 894.

Several studies of Apartheid²¹ attribute the power and appeal of the term to the fact that it accomodated the distinct interests of each member of the Afrikaner nationalist alliance within a single policy blue print.

Deborah Posel in her paper. The Meaning of Apartheid before 1948: Conflicting interests and Forces within the Africaner Nationalist Alliance²² - despites such a view of the meaning of apartheid before 1948 and its complications for the nature of policy making after 1948. She argues that while Afrikaner nationalists shared a single (albeit rudementary) ideological discourse an apartheid and a basic commitment to white supremacy, they had conflicting ideas about how white supremacy was best preserved. The term Apartheid won the support of Afrikaner nationalism across the board because it successfully described and legitimised

21. For example, W.A. De Klerk, "The Puritanial African", London 1975; D O'Mera, "Volkskapitalisme" Cambridge 1983; D. Hudson, "The Pass System and the Formation of the Urban African Proletariat: A Critique of the Cheap Labour-power Thesis" PHD University of Suzzex 1983).

22. Journal of Southern African Studies, October 1987.

the Afrikaner cause in an ideological discourse sufficiently ambiguous to accomodate these conflicting versions of apartheid policy.

In O'Meara's words, however by 1948 apartheid although still a "vague concept", nevertheless already crystallised and condensed the responses of various class forces.... It reflected the farmers' concern over their declining labour and inability to compete for labour against the higher wages paid in industry and commerce. It encompassed the concern of emerging Afrikaner business for a labour supply to ensure their own accumulation. And it pandered to the fears of specific strata of white workers at being displaced in the "new industrial division of labour".²³

O'Meara argues moreover that the development of the "apartheid idea" was bound up first and foremost with the economic movement in deference to the economic priorities of the Afrikaners capital.

23. D.O'Meara, *Volkskapetalisme*, Cambridge, 1983, p. 173.

"Except for a few intellectuals locked in the Afrikaner Ivory Tower apartheid....was never intended to imply the total economic segregation of the races. It was designed to secure and control the supply of labour for all capitalists, not to deprive any employer of it."²⁴

Baaskap:

The results of the 1948 all-white general elections were: the Nationalist Party - 70 seats; the United Party - 65 seats; the Afrikaner Party - 9 seats; the Labour Party - 6 seats; Native Representation - 3 seats.²⁵

A stunned nation listened to the broadcasting of the results that night. The Nationalist - Afrikaner Party came to power by winning 79 seats to a total of 74 by their opponents.

Integration or apartheid - that was the issue put to the voters in the 1948 elections. Nobody could be quite sure as yet what apartheid meant, but at least everybody was quite

25. Brian Bunting, *The Rise of the South African Rich*: Penguin Books 1964, p. 119.

clear what it did not mean. It did not mean equality, it did not mean race mixing, it did not mean integration and the extension of rights to the non whites. Fundamentally the Nationalist Party stood for baaskap, and everybody in South Africa knew what that meant.²⁶ (sh p).

Many an ex-serviceman thought to himself: Was this the fruit of victory, that the admirers of Hitler should come to power.²⁷

It is commonly agreed that 1948 marks an important turning point in South African history. In practice, the break was less sharp than is commonly supposed, and much of

26. Mastership.

27. When war broke out in 1939, there was a considerable pro-German sentiment at work among Afrikaners. This flirtation with fascism infected Afrikaner thinking thereafter and provided an ideological rationale for policies which were adopted in the first place out of racial self interest. Verwoerd, who later became Prime Minister was found by the courts during the war to have disseminated Nazi propaganda. J.B. Vorster, who succeeded Verwoerd as Prime Minister, was interned by the Smuts government for his fascist activity.

what the Nationalist government had done since simply continues along lines laid down by a variety of earlier governments.

From the arrival of the Settlers in 1652 to the Nationalist Victory in 1948, the seeds of apartheid were carefully sown. The process began by dispossessing the Africans of land. The Land Act of 1913, the Natives (urban Areas) Act 1923 were all means by which the Africans lost control over their own land. Section 10 of the Bantu (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1946 stipulated that no African could remain in an urban or peri-urban area for longer than 72 hours unless such a 'visitor' 'qualifies' to be there.²⁸ The manner in which that land passed out of their hands deserves some attention. In 1652, white people owned and used none of the land, by 1952 they owned over 80% of it.²⁹

At the heart of the South African control system is the pass - in effect an internal pass part which serves as an identity document, an indication of work and residence

28. Robin Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

29. David Denoon, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

status, an indication of nationality (including the fabricated 'homelands' nationality later accorded to most blacks) and equally importantly a police record.

The period since Union 1910 to 1948 illustrates also the success of white workers and the failure of African workers, to secure for themselves a comfortable standard of living and reasonable working conditions. The explanation for this difference is that the success and failure of working men to better themselves is almost entirely a matter of political power. Both black and white workers have tried and failed in their industrial strike actions, but the white workers were able to fall back on political action whereas the voteless Africans have not.³⁰

The years 1910 to 1948, especially was a period in which different interest groups of the WHITE community jostled each other for positions within the privileged enclosure and the blacks were being slowly but effectively marginalised. The creation of the Union in 1910 did not, by itself, make the white community secure from all possible challenges internally but it did provide that community with the means for enhancing its powers.

30. Ibid., p. 136.

The entrenchment of white power within the Union was not only a matter of governments passing a series of discriminatory Acts. Since Union, the white electorate has become increasingly intolerant of a diversity of racial opinion even within the white political parties.

The Nationalist governments in South Africa from 1948 onwards carried previous lines of policy to their logical conclusions, leading to further sharpening of contradictions.

In 1948:

Asiatic Laws Amendment Act - With drew Indian representation in parliament.

Electoral Laws Amendment Act - Made more stringent the conditions for registering coloured voters.

In 1949:

Citizenship Act - Lengthened the period of residence to 5 years for Britain subjects and 6 for aliens prohibition of

Mixed Marriage Act - Made marriages between whites and non-whites illegal.

Asiatic Land Tenure Act:

Unemployment Insurance Amendment Act - all those whose earnings did not exceed £182 a year (majority of African

workers) were excluded from the benefits of this act.

Native Laws Amendment Act - created special labour bureaux for African to restrict their flow into towns.

In 1950:

The Population Registration Act - established a racial register of the population. The population was to be classified into - Europeans, coloured and Africans.

Suppression of Communism Act - Outlawed the Communist Party.

Immorality Amendment Act - Prohibited illicit carnal intercourse between white and non-white. The original 1927 Act prohibited intercourse only between white and Africans.

Group Areas Act - Provided for the establishment of racial ghettos in which ownership and occupation of land would be restricted to a specified population group.

Nationalist legislation was aimed, on the one hand, at preventing all forms of integration which might lead to the establishment of a United South African nation with a

common citizenship and loyalty irrespective of race, and on the other hand, at promoting the "Separate development" of the various races and ethnic groups "in their own areas" There are 16 million South Africans, but the Nationalist government never envisaged that would ever constitute a single nation.³¹

31. Brian Bunting, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

CHAPTER - III

GROWTH OF PROTEST MOVEMENTS AGAINST APARTHEID (1950-1960)

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Among the most serious effects of the development of basskap apartheid in the 1950s was the destruction of hope in peaceful progress through individual effort and its replacement with frustration and anger. While economic progress and prosperity continued in the country, black and brown South Africans found themselves severely hindered by purposeful and deliberate legislation or government action from making the best of opportunities in the work place. They found themselves even more opposed to the whites than before. Their sense of pride and self-worth was daily more bitterly affronted and insulted by the multiplication of "whites only" notices.¹

The intensification of discrimination at a time of growing political consciousness and rising expectations among black and brown Africans provoked an organised movement of mass peaceful defiance on a scale far in excess of anything that had ever happened in South Africa before. In June 1951 planning began for a massive and sustained campaign of passive

1. J.D. Omer Cooper, *History of Southern Africa*; David Philip, James Currey, Huhemann 1988, pp. 203-4.

resistance against discriminatory measures. A three-staged plan was envisaged. In the first stage, a number of carefully selected volunteers were to break selected discriminatory laws in major cities openly and court arrest. In the second stage, the number of volunteers were to be increased. In the third stage the movement was to spread from the urban areas to the country-side as well. This was to be supported by strike and demonstrations until the whole system of apartheid collapsed.

The year 1952 stands out as the year of an upsurge of national consciousness. The campaign began on 26 June 1952 with small batches of law breaking volunteers courting arrest. It spread from Port Elizabeth and East London to the smaller towns of the Eastern Cape and from Johannesburg to 12 other cities on the Rand. It got to Cape Town and a number of centres in the Western Cape in August and made an impact in Bloemfontein and Durban in September. The campaign steadily gained momentum until October.

Tragically, the campaign was infiltrated by agents provocateurs anxious to discredit congress and riots broke out in Port Elizabeth which spread to East London and Kimberley. These disastrous riots provided the

government with an excuse for taking severe measures against an otherwise peaceful movement.² The Criminal Laws Amendment Act was rushed through parliament giving the government powers to impose heavy sentences upon people involved in breaking trivial regulations for a political purpose.

This legislation was followed by the Public Safety Act which allowed the government to declare an emergency and rule by decree if necessary.

In addition, the government acted against individual leaders by dismissing them from government employment (and so Luthuli was deprived of his chieftancy) or by banning them in terms of the Suppression of Communism Act 1950. This defined communism so widely that almost any one could be described as communist or in favour of communist policies.³

2. David Denoon, South Africa Since 1800, Longman 1972, p. 189.

3. Ibid., p. 189.

Political Effects of the Campaign:

Although the campaign against unjust laws was eventually broken by strong state repression it had a number of important political effects.

Firstly, it generated mass support for the African National Congress. Within a few months its membership rose from 7000 to nearly 100,000.⁴ The inter-racial cooperation of the Congress helped to emphasise and publicise the non-racial aspirations of the Congress and its allies. It proved that racial discrimination really did affect every South African at every point in his or her life and demonstrated this before a world audience.

Secondly, it saw the beginning of organised joint action with other political groupings representing different race groups, which eventually gave rise to the Congress Alliance: the coordinated Politics of the ANC, South African Indian Congress, the Coloured People's Congress, the Congress of Democrats (an organisation of democratic white) and after 1955 South African Congress of Trade Union (SACTU), under the leadership of the ANC-Representative of the four Congresses

4. Rob Davies, Dan O' Meara and Sipho Dlamuni (compilers). The Struggle for South Africa. A Reference Guide. Zed Books Ltd., 1984, p. 286.

met in 1954 and arranged to hold a Congress of the People in 1955.

That meeting at Kliptown near Johannesburg, adopted a Freedom Charter which defined the aims of the allies. The main demands of the Freedom Charter were as follows:

The People shall govern.

All National Groups have equal rights.

The People shall share in the country's wealth.

The land shall be shared among those who work it.

All shall be equal before the law.

All shall enjoy equal human rights.

There shall be work and security for all.

The doors of learning and culture shall be opened.

There shall be houses, security and comfort.

There shall be peace and friendship.⁵

Whilst the charter proclaimed democratic changes of a far reaching nature it was subsequently made clear by those concerned that it was by no mean a blue print for a socialist

5. Ibid., p. 286.

state but a programme for the unification of various groupings amongst the people on a democratic basis. "It is true that in demanding the nationalization of banks, the gold mines and the land, the charter strikes a fatal blow on the financial and gold mining monopolies and farming interests that have for centuries plundered the country and condemned the people to servitude. But such a step is imperative because the realization of the charter is inconceivable, in fact impossible, unless and until these monopolies are smashed and the national wealth of the country turned over to the people. To destroy these monopolies means the termination of the exploitation of vast sections of the populace by mining kings and land barons and there will be a general rise in the living standards of the people".⁶

The Congress of the People evoked a dramatic government response. On 5 December 1956, leaders of all the participating race groups were arrested and charged with treason and put on trial. There was little reason to expect

6. Nelson Mandela, No Easy Walk to Freedom. Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1965, p. 57.

conviction and every one of the accused was eventually acquitted. The real effect of the treason trial was to disrupt leadership since the trial lasted for four year. According to some interpretations the dynamism and momentum of the Congress alliance was largely lost during those four years.⁷ However, it is a fact that the arrests and trials left a deep impact on the alliance and its various partners.

The third political effect of the 1950 disobedience campaign was that the defiance campaign stimulated strategic thinking by part of the ANC leadership, particularly the group around the President of the Transvaal ANC, Nelson Mandela. "Mandela showed at an early stage that he had a good mind and a shrewed sense of strategy", said Tom Lodge, Witswatersrand University specialist on Black politics.⁸ The foresaw that the ANC might have to operate under ground one day and in the 1950s devised a programme called the M-plan, for establishing cells in every street in the black townships that would enable the organisation to continue functioning

7. David Denoon, op. cit., p. 140.

8. Quoted in Allister Sparks, Above Pleasure and Beyond Pain. Tribune 28 November, 1985.

if its national and branch leaders were imprisoned. The aim of the M-plan was:

To consolidate the Congress Machinery;

To enable the transmission of the important decisions taken on a national level to every members of the organisation without calling public meetings, issuing press statements and issuing circulars. To build up in the local branches themselves local congresses which will effectively represent the strength and will of the people.

To extend and strengthen the ties between the Congress and the people and consolidate congress leadership.⁹

"If the ANC had managed to implement the M-plan properly, the government would have found it much more difficult to crush the organisation's structure after banning it in the 1960s", Lodge noted.¹⁰

The "Acts" of Apartheid:

The attempt to reorganise South African Society in

9. Nelson Mandela, op., cit., p. 28.

10. Allistev Sparks, op. cit.

accordance with the principle of apartheid was embodied in a long series of inter-related laws which were framed not only in the light of apartheid dogma but also with a view to the interests of the white population in general and specifically those sections of the white people - Afrikaner farmers, Afrikaner workers and Afrikaner businessmen - from whom the National Party derived its main political support.¹¹

The main aim of apartheid required that rights of permanent residence and property ownership outside the reserves should be denied to Africans. Above all, it was required that the influx of Africans in urban area be brought under closer control and ultimately halted. Steps in this direction was taken with the 1952 Native Laws Amendment Act, which defined more narrowly those categories of Africans which had a right to permanent residence in the towns. Section 10 of the Act limited this right to those who had been born in a particular town and had subsequently resided there or been employed there continuously for not less than 15 years or those who had been continuously employed by the same employer for a period of not less than ten years.

11. J.D. Omer - Cooper, op. cit., p. 196.

The main instrument for the control of African Urban influx was tightening of the system of passes.¹² In 1952, an act which was ironically called the Abolition of Passes and Consolidation of Documents Act was introduced. In place of the many different passes, Africans had now to carry a single reference book including a photograph and full information on his place of origin, employment record, tax payments, and encounters with the police. Failure to produce the pass when required was a criminal offence. Women and certain other group who were previously exempted from carrying passes were now obliged to do so.

In the war years new squatter settlements, often in close proximity to white working class areas, had grown. The National Party government launched a massive scheme to rehouse Africans in fully segregated townships well away from white residential areas and to facilitate this the Native Resettlement Act was passed in 1956. A number of long established African settlements in Johannesburg were destroyed and their inhabitants were forcibly shifted to new government-built townships which formed part of the

12. Ibid., p. 147.

huge complex to the South-West of Johannesburg, known today as SOWETO (from the initials of South-Western Townships). These were soul-less agglomeration of standard houses in rigid geometric patterns.¹³ Their occupants, moreover, had to travel great distances to work and had no security of tenure of their houses. No stone was left unturned to completely alienate Africans from the mainstream and make apartheid felt in every sphere of life. The following measures were calculated to psychologically demoralise even the most apolitical African.

In 1950, under the Group Areas Act, the government could lay down that any area of the country could be reserved for a particular race group. Members of any other race group who lived or owned business in that area had to dispose off their property and move to another area.

Parallel to the series of measures limiting the right of blacks and brown South African in town were others aimed against independent black peasants in predominantly white owned rural areas. The step was taken with the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act in 1951, which gave the

13. Ibid., p. 198.

Minister of Native Affairs powers to compel African tenant to move from public or privately owned land and be allocated to resettlement camps.

Social and cultural segregation was increased largely by administrative action.

Post Offices were required to provide separate entrances for members of different races and separate coaches for different races were provided on the Cape Town Suburban railway station where facilities had previously been used in common. The facilities were, and still remain, qualitatively different. In the words of Derek Ingram:

"The black railway booking hall is crowded and dark and grimy . The white one is spacious and empty with a soaring Cathedral - like roof and piped music. The white urinals are long and spot-less, with soap and towel and shiny wash bowls. The black ones could only be imagined".¹⁴

In 1957, The State Aided Institutions Act gave power to enforce segregation in libraries and places of entertainment. A Natives Law Amendment Act gave the government power to

14. Derek Ingram in Deccan Chronicle, 6 January 1985.

prohibit the holding of classes entertainment or even church services if they were attended by blacks in white areas. Sport was fully segregated and in particular any inter-racial physical contest in which a black might defeat a white was strictly prohibited. This, even when a black South African, Jake Tuli, became commonwealth boxing champion, he was not allowed to compete against whites in his own country.¹⁵ In the pursuit of greater segregation public park benches and also beaches were set aside for people of different colours. Ambulances for blacks could not carry white patients and vice versa even in an emergency. It was even seriously proposed that blood from a member of one race should not be given to a member of another in blood transfusions.¹⁶

A fundamental principle of apartheid as propagated by the Nationalist Party was that the different races should enjoy separate political, economic and social development. In 1953, the first steps were taken in this direction with the Bantu Authorities Act. This made provisions for the

15. J.D. Omer - Cooper, op. cit, p. 200.

16. Ibid., p. 200.

establishment of political authorities in African demarcated areas or reserves. The authorities were dominated by chiefs with considerably increased powers. As the chiefs were appointed by government the increase in their powers was widely resented by the Africans residing in the reserves.

The white rulers impregnated all aspects of life by introducing the apartheid theory that different races should develop along different lines in accordance with their inherent cultural properties. The Nationalist Party Government holding the principle that different races required different types of education changed their education policy with far reaching laws in the 1953 Bantu Education Act. Dr. Henrik Verwoerd, then the Minister of Native Affairs said in 1955, "When I have control of native (black) education, I will reform it so that natives will be taught from childhood to realize that equality with Europeans (whites) is not for them".¹⁷

Elaborating his case further Verwoerd said, "What

17. Quoted in New Strait Times, (Kualalumpur), 9 May 1990.

is the use of teaching a Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice?... That is absurd. Education is not after all something that hangs in the air. Education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life.... It is, therefore, necessary that native education should be controlled in such a way that it should be in accordance with the policy of the state".¹⁸

He was very firm in that "People who believe in equality are not desirable teachers for natives".¹⁹

The real aim of this education policy was not, obviously to help the African to develop his own culture as was maintained by the government but to reduce the black to an unequal position so that he fails to compete with whites and qualify for jobs that are wanted by whites with their better education. The Africans thus continued to be a reservoir of cheap, easily available, unskilled labour.

As a result of the bill since 1955, few schools were built and few teachers were trained and less money was spent

18. Quoted in Brian Bunting, *The Rise of the South African Reich*, Penguin Books Ltd., 1964, p. 202.

19. *New Strait Times*, op. cit.

on school teaching aids while the black population grew. The African schools, many of which had previously been run by church missions was brought under strict government control and was required to conform to the government prescribed syllabus.

In 1957 the move towards educational apartheid was taken to its logical conclusion with the introduction of legislation designed to put an end to the situation in which some of the white universities (mainly the universities of Cape Town and wits waters rand) admitted blacks and browns to common university programmes with whites. Instead separate universities were to be provided for Indian and coloured students and for each of the main African ethnic groups. The ironically named Extension of University Education Act was vigorously opposed by South African Universities but finally became law in 1959.

The attitude of the ANC to this bill was very clear and unequivocal. Nelson Mandela stated:

"We declare our firm belief in the principle enunciated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that everyone has a right to education; that education should be directed to the full development of the human personality, and to the

strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among the national, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. The parents shall have the right to choose the kind of education that should be given to their children".²⁰ With the passage of these acts a new type of society emerged. The Africans were hostile to these negation of democratic principles. The policies became a rallying point to bring all races together and expanding the movement. The movement became a movement against apartheid rather than merely one for more rights.

Emergence of the Pan-Africanist Congress:

A new trend was introduced when dissensions appeared in the efforts of the anti-apartheid forces to remain united against the apartheid system. The Pan-African Congress emerged out of this dissension. In order to bring about an inter-racial alliance ANC leaders had, from the beginning, been willing to allow their Congress allies equal

20. Nelson Mandela, op. cit., p. 26.

representation in decision-making, despite the grave inequality in the size of the respective allies. As against that policy, there was a strong body of opinion, describing itself as Africanist, which looked askance at such restraint by the ANC. The Africanists further alleged that the ANC was not sufficiently militant and more action was required in the situation.

During the late 1950s, events moved out of the control of the ANC leadership. When the government implemented its Bantu Education policy, the ANC tried to organise a boycott of schools. However, few parents were prepared to risk having their children shut out of school altogether and the boycott quickly broke down. Similarly the ANC objection to the segregation of universities into racial institutions affected only a small minority of Africans. In both cases, the issues appealed more to white liberals than to African peasants and industrial workers. Without an effective nation-wide organisation, ANC leaders were obliged to let the initiative pass to local groups, and then decide whether or not to lend ANC support to the particular movement. The leaders on trial

had not yet arranged for decisions to be taken by anyone else. The Africanists were able to argue that the ANC leadership was incapable of uniting urban and rural grievances into a united movement.²¹ Although the PAC did make a dent, the ANC Freedom Charter continued to have a strong hold on the people's imagination.

The break came towards the end of 1958, when Robert Sobukwe split away to create the Pan-Africanist Congress. P-AC was equally unable to coordinate urban and rural unrest. Throughout 1958 and 1959 riots in the Northern Transvaal countryside, violent protests in the Natal districts, an attempted boycott of schools in the Eastern Cape, violent protest in Pondoland - all separately could not put any pressure on government policy.

The Sharpville Massacre:

By the end of the 1950s, both the ANC and P-AC required a boost to their morale. The successful potato boycott of 1959, though a significant achievement was not the sort of action that would mark a dent in the government armour.

21. David Denoon, op. cit., p. 191.

Not surprisingly, it was resentment of the pass laws, which roused Africans to new heights of protest and plunged South Africa into the Sharpeville crisis, so that the name "Sharpeville" has become like "Amritsar", "Saint Bartholomew" or "Peterloo", a symbol of massacre.²² More prosaically the word is now used by South African stockbrokers to refer to industrial and gold-mining share prices as "pre-Sharpeville" and "Post Sharpeville".²³

The campaign, Sobukwe declared in a press interview, would operate under the slogan "no bail, no defence, no fine", and the leaders of the P-AC would be the first to take part.

The date eventually fixed for the showdown was Monday March 21, a date influenced by the fact that the U.N. had declared 1960 to be the year of Africa. P-AC called on Africans on that day to leave their passes at home and to surrender to the police. Africans behaved with dignity, with a sense of purpose - and in defiance of laws.²⁴ Had the

22. Edward Roux, *Time Longer Than Rope: A History of the Black Man's Struggle for Freedom*. The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1964, p. 405.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 405.

24. David Denoon, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

police not lost their nerve and opened fire at Sharpeville it seems probable that the campaign would have fizzled out, as so many had done before, and there would have been no crisis.²⁵

It was estimated that about 10,000 people including many women and children, surrounded the Sharpeville police station. They demanded to be arrested for not having passes. The police barred the gates, some of the crowd were falsely accused of throwing stones. "The police opened fire" said a newspaper report, "Volley after Volley of 303 bullets and sten gun bursts tore into the crowd. The bodies began to waver - as scores of people fell before the hail of bullets soon they were routed. They fled so quickly that 100s of shoes, trousers, jackets - and even chairs - were left behind. The police came out from behind the wire in front of the police station. The wounded fled into backyards and side streets. Then came ambulances - 11 of them. To truckloads of bodies were taken to the mortuary".²⁶ Some 67 people were killed and 186 injured in Sharpeville. In Langa, a site of another similar demonstration, 2 were killed and 49 wounded.

25. Edward Roux, op. cit., p. 406.

26. Rand Daily Mail, 22 March 1960.

In most countries such a scandal would have lead either to resignations in the government or at least to a reprimand against the police.²⁷ The South African Government decided to blame the Africans, which were immediately prescribed, which hundred of political activists were detained without trial. In the Western Cape, Africans were coerced back to work, so that the Government could claim that normal conditions had been restored. In the subsequent official enquiry into the shooting captain Vander Bergh said he had tried without success to find out who fired first. Nobody had admitted to being the first to shoot. He also tried unsuccessfully to find out who shouted "shoot".²⁸ It was

27. David Denoon, op. cit, m p. 193.

28. In the report of the One-man Commission of enquiry into the disturbances at Sharpeville, Mr. Justice P.J. Wessel gave his general view that there was no organised attempt by the crowd to attack the police on the day of the shooting. Referring to evidence that the crowd was at no time hostile and to police evidence that they were forced to ward off an attack, Mr. Wessels' report states: "The two lines of evidence were in direct conflict and could not on the whole be reconciled with each other." It was impossible to ascertain with any measure of accuracy when the order to fire at Sharpeville was given. The Commission was of the opinion that almost immediately after the first shots were fired Lieutenant-Colonel Punaar and other police officers took steps to stop the firing. It was clear that some time elapsed between the giving of the order to cease fire and actual stopping thereof.

possible that some of the policemen were conscious of what had happened at Cato Manor only two months previously when Africans there, constantly raided by the police on Sunday afternoons while beer drinking, had turned on the police in anger, killing 9 of them on January 24, 1960.²⁹

The effect of the events at Sharpeville and Langa was to rouse politically minded non-Europeans and their white supporters through out the country to carry out demonstrations and protests. Sporadic demonstrations, riots and arrests continued for the next month or so. On April 8, the P-AC and ANC were banned under the newly passed Unlawful Organisations Act.

The "State of emergency" proclaimed on March 30, continued for some months. The detainees languished in prison. Among them were members of all the parties and groups to the Left of the progressives, as well as some who belonged to no party but had merely at some time or the other shown sympathy with the Africans.

29. Edward Roux, op. cit., p. 412.

In August the authorities began to release the detainees in batches and the last of them gained their freedom in August 1960, when the emergency ended. In the meantime, leaders of the ANC and P-AC and many rank and file members who had taken part in the anti-pass campaign were sentenced to imprisonment and fines. Robert Sobukwe was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment for incitement and Albert Luthuli was fined £ 100 for burning his pass.

In some ways, the Sharpeville affair seemed to have more profound effects beyond the country's border than in South Africa itself. Already the target of European and American liberal criticism and of the Afro-Asian block, on account of its policy of apartheid, the South African government now found itself even more unpopular. Following Sharpeville there were repercussions on the stock exchanges of the world and for a time overseas investments in South Africa practically ceased leading to a stock market crash. Just one day after the tragedy, on March 22, 1960, the United States State Department took the extraordinary step of issuing a statement in which it declared:

While the United States, as a matter of practice,

does not ordinarily comment on the internal affairs of governments with which it enjoys normal relations, it cannot help but regret the tragic loss of life resulting from the measures taken against the demonstrators in South Africa.³⁰

In March and April 1960, the Parliaments of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands - the two countries with the most intimate connections with the people of European origin in South Africa - expressed their sorrow and displeasure. Similar expressions of concern came from other countries like Canada, New Zealand, Nigeria, Denmark, India etc.

Although, shaken by these reactions, the government's hold on the country was as powerful as ever. Liberalists might demonstrate on Trafalgar square in London or resolutions of condemnation might be carried by overwhelming majorities in the United Nations. But it made no difference to the confidence of the exclusively white electorate and that was all that really mattered as far as domestic policies was concerned. In spite of internal opposition and external protests the white leadership

30. E.S. Reddy, Apartheid. The United Nations and the International Community, Vikas Pub. House Pvt. Ltd., p. 2.

became now firm than even in pursuing the policy of apartheid and all attempts to win democratic rights continued to be handed in a high handed manner.

CHAPTER - IV

GROWTH OF UNDERGROUND AND ARMED MOVEMENTS (1960-1976)

GROWTH OF UNDERGROUND AND ARMED
MOVEMENTS - (1960 - 1976)

The ANC had been undergoing a useful learning experience which was unfortunately cut short by the early 1960s crackdown by the South African state. In the meantime, the earlier techniques of non-cooperation and defiance had received a severe set-back, both physically and psychologically: after a brief flurry of underground activity, the anti-apartheid movements found many of their strongest leaders on Robben Island and most of the rest in exile. The ANC began, while going underground to lay the groundwork for military activity, but it suffered because, although never entirely absent inside the country during the 1960s and early 1970s, it was still considerably distanced from the scene and the exile conditions took its toll.

The movement consolidated its links abroad, not only in Eastern Europe, which provided most of its military equipment and training and the Western Communist parties, but also in much of Africa, and among many Western trade union, church, independent left and even governmental circles.

The reason for the ANC's "gravitational pull" in the South African revolution is the fact that it had been

central in the long history of resistance since 1912 and particularly since 1943 when the youth wing of the ANC was formed by Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela. Also, it stood by its principle of peaceful change and only after peaceful means failed did it turn to armed struggle. Even then it continued to stand by the Freedom Charter.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, support for the nationalists racial policy among the whites increased in the early 1960s. The overwhelming majority of white South Africans were now clearly conservative on the colour question. Those who pursued the idea of a multi-racial society and the extension of rights to non-whites after 1960 did so with a new conviction but their numbers were few. Between the minority and the bulk of the white electorate, there was no common basis for political intercourse.¹

The Referendum and the Strike of 1961:

Pressure mounted on the British government by other members of the commonwealth to keep South Africa out of the

1. Janet Robertson, *Liberalism in South Africa, 1948-1963*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1971.

commonwealth and this led to South Africa's withdrawal in 1960. In order to salvage its self-respect and make the withdrawal appear to be their own decision the South African government held a referendum to "decide the commonwealth issue" in October of 1960. Coloured voters, by this time on a separate role, were not consulted but white voters in South-West Africa (Namibia) participated.

It was interesting to see how close the voting was in spite of the National Party's huge majority in parliament: 849,958 voted for a republic and 775,978 against.² In March 1961, Dr. Verwoerd attended the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference in London and there announced South Africa's withdrawal. The proclamation of the republic was postponed till May 31, 1961, the 51st anniversary of the Union of South Africa. This was called "Republic Day".

After coming out of the commonwealth South Africa adopted a republican constitution. It was the nature of the republic that was the problem. It meant a South African

2. Edward Roux, *Time Longer Than Rope: A Black Man's Struggle for Freedom in South Africa*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1964, p. 423.

constitution that would exclude, once again, black people, Indian people and coloured people. There was a 'sharp reaction to this among the Africans.

An All - in African Council met in Orlando and then at Pietermaritzburg . The latter meeting was attended by a large number of delegates. The most prominent person on this occasion was Nelson Mandela. Since he had taken a leading part in the Defiance campaign, he had been placed under a series of bans which prevented him from attending meetings. His latest ban had ended a few days before the Pietermaritzburg meeting and, by some oversight on the part of the police, had not been renewed. A leader of his calibre and prestige had hitherto been lacking. His dramatic appearance roused the enthusiasm of the delegates and he had little difficulty in persuading the All - in council to call for a 3 day stay at home starting on "Republic Day".³ It was hoped that this would lead to negotiations on the political structure of the country.

The stay-at-home was not an unqualified success. It was smashed by an unprecedented police and army mobilisation. They drove armoured cars up and down township with

3. Ibid., p.423.

mounted machine guns and flashing searchlights.⁴ The only centre that responded at all was Port Elizabeth. In Johannesburg a number of people stayed away from work on the first day but by the end of the day everyone assumed that the protest had ended.

The government to show its strength proceeded to punish the guilty. Eleven of the organisers of the stay-at-home were charged with disseminating documents, "to further the aims of a banned organisation", namely, the ANC. They were declared guilty by a Johannesburg magistrate and sentenced to a year's imprisonment each. They appealed against the sentence, and in April 1962, Mr. Justice Trolling in the Supreme Court in Pretoria reversed the magistrate's decision. The judge said the provisions relied on by the state were designed to end the activities of the ANC, but noting in the statute penalised a person or a body for trying in its own way, to achieve the same objects or aims as those of the ANC.⁵

Armed Struggle:

The banning of the ANC in 1960 did not lead immediately

4. *The Struggle in South Africa*, New Outlook, 28(4) (244), April 1985, p. 32.

5. Edward Roux, *op. cit.*, p. 424.

to the Congress leaders' endorsement of violence. That decision was not reached until June 1961. Until then the majority of the ANC leaders had insisted on the necessity of fully utilising the non-violent tactics endorsed in the Programme of Action - that is, passive resistance, boycott and strike action. But the government's reaction - in fact, white reaction in general - to the stay-at-home strike sponsored by the ANC in May 1961 destroyed the Congress faith that strike action could be a non-violent means of effecting change. The stay-at-home was unsuccessful in its purpose of bringing the government to the conference table, despite a spectacular response in some areas. The limited success was due to the whites' monopoly of power and the government's use ^{of} multiple strong arm tactics. The General Law Amendment Act (1961) enabled the government to detain without trial. 10,000 Africans were detained.

At this time, ANC began to receive support from larger sections. When massive attempts to impose passes on African women culminated in the presentation of a huge petition to Prime Minister Verwoerd in Pretoria by 10,000 women who went to the union building to present the petition, the police, who were ostensibly there to ensure that there would be no disorder set their German shepherds on the women. The dogs ripped their dresses (the women had dressed

finest clothes for the occasion.⁶ The episode caused a large section of women to join the struggle. It was clear to them that there was a gradation with the white man at the top and the African woman at the bottom - with the African women earning no more than 8 per cent of the wages of white men.⁷ It was also clear that their oppressors were not black men but the apartheid system.

Political meetings were banned throughout the country and extra police was deployed on the townships to "encourage Africans to ignore the call to strike".⁸ For instance, during the night "Helicopters flew low over townships flashing searchlights down on the match box houses and rough roads".⁹ Instead of measures to accommodate grievances the government used suppressive methods. Later Mandela reacted to the increasing violence by declaring: "In the end if the strike did not materialize on the scale which it had

6. New Outlook, op. cit.

7. E.S. Reddy, Apartheid: The UN and the International Community, Vikash Pub. House Pvt. Ltd., 1986, p. 56.

8. Mandela's Speech in the trial of October 1962, No Easy Walk to Freedom. Heinemann Educational Book Ltd., 1965, p.153-4.

9. Mary Benson, South Africa: The Struggle for a Birthright, London, Penguin Books, 1966, p. 236.

been hoped it would, it was not because the people were not willing, but because the overwhelming strength, violence and force of the government's attack.....had for the time being achieved its aim of forcing us into submission....."¹⁰

It was their recognition of this which drove the ANC leaders to review their policy of non-violence in the days of fresh disillusionment following the peaceful 1961 strike. There were still those - though now a minority - who considered that non-violent techniques of resistance had not been sufficiently explored. But there were those, and Mandela was among them, for whom the outcome of the strike was conclusive proof of the inadequacy of the existing ANC strategy. There had been, of course, earlier instances of South African governments using force to crush non-white demonstrations which had been deliberately non-violent.

But it was the cumulative effect of years of frustration which induced the change in 1961. In the ANC view, denial of armed struggle was 'denial of the right of the oppressed to redress the force equation'. It was

10. Nelson Mandela, op. cit, pp. 154-5.

tantamount to enjoining the people to surrender.¹¹ Mandela later explained: "We have been conditioned to our attitude by the history which is not of our making. We have been conditioned by the history of white governments in this country to accept the fact that the Africans, when they make thier demands, strongly and powerfully enough, to have some chance of success, will be met by force and terror on the part of the government."¹²

Congress leaders clearly felt that if they showed an unwillingness to modify ANC policies, in the changed circumstances, the status of their organisation among Africans was in danger.¹³ They judged that popular opinion had swung decisively if not in favour of violence, at least to a point sufficiently anti-white to make violence "inevitable". The prospect of spontaneous outbreaks of non-white terrorism was as much a nightmare to Congress leaders as it was to whites. They envisaged civil war as the likely result, and probably judged that such an eventuality would be political suicide for the ANC, since it was scarcely possible that a multi-racial democracy would be salvaged from such a situation.¹⁴ Congress now appeared to

11. Teboyo Kyope in the African Communist, 2nd Quarter, no. 117, 1989, p. 21.

12. Nelson Mandela, op. cit., p. 155.

13. Janet Robertson, op. cit., p. 228.

14. Ibid., p. 228.

have no alternative but to acquiesce in the use of violence.

Thus the ANC's decision to endorse the use of violence was a last resort - a tragic Hobson's choice: their reluctance is borne out by the manner in which they implemented their design. December 16th is known to Afrikaners as the Day of the Covenant (Officially Heroes' Day)" and everybody else as Diganes' Day. Diganes was a Zulu King who had been defeated by the Afrikaner Vootrekkers on December 16, 1838. The Africans celebrate that day as a commemoration their heroic resistance to conquest. December 16, 1961 was chosen as the day for launching the actions of the Umkhonto We Sizwe (Spear of the Nation).¹⁵ The manifesto read: "The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices: Submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we shall have no choice but to hit back by all means in our power in defence of our future and our freedom".¹⁶

15. New Outlook, op. cit., p. 32.

16. African Communist, 4th Quarterly, no.119, 1989.

The ANC was not, as a body to be involved in violence which would be left to its guerilla wing. This would operate as a subsidiary and was to have a small, carefully selected membership, only some of whom were congressmen.

Moreover of the four forms of violence which seemed possible - sabotage, guerilla war - fare, terrorism and open revolution, the ANC initially consented to only the first since among their sympathisers were a number of moderates and a section of whites. The acts of sabotage were to be directed against "the economic lifelines of the country" and against government buildings and other "symbol of apartheid".¹⁷ It was hoped that such acts would, without alienating white sympathy, sober the government sufficiently to bring them to the conference table.

On the day of Umkhonto's inauguration, explosives went off in various places. Posters were put up explaining the purpose of the "Spear of the Nation" - to show that people were no longer prepared to take the repression heaped upon

17. Rovonia Trial Statement. Nelson Mandela in No Easy Walk To Freedom, op. cit., p. 170.

them. By early 1963, it was realized that there was a need to step up the military activity and planning started for active guerilla warfare in South Africa.

After the pro^Scription of the Pan-African Congress, following the Sharpeville tragedy, a secret organisation gained members in various locations, particularly at Mbekweni. The organisation, as subsequently created was named Poqo and its aims were frankly terrorist, a means rejected by the Umkhonto. It was certain that the PAC and Poqo, if not identified, were linked in many ways.

In the meantime, the government continued to hurriedly push through fresh legislation, even more comprehensive and draconian in scope, in order to maintain its upper hand.¹⁸

18. The General Law Amendment(Sabotage) Act which was passed in June 1962, appeared to be reply to the various acts of sabotage which had occurred in the previous year. The new law provided an extremely wide definition of sabotage and made it a capital offence.

Simultaneously, with the publication of the sabotage act, the Congress of Democrats was banned with the unlawful organisation Act (September, 1962).

The Rivonia Trial:

The security police achieved their first triumph in the use of their new powers with the arrest of Nelson Mandela, the leader of Umkhonto We Sizwe. Following the meeting at Pietermaritzburg, Mandela had gone underground and organised the stay-at-home.

In 1961 and 1962, he left his hiding place in South Africa, was smuggled across the border and turned up at the Adis Ababa Conference of the Pan - African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa to expound before the delegates the policy for struggle of the ANC and the South African people.¹⁹

Mandela then went home to survive a perilous underground existence for 18 months in which he played hide-and-seek with the police while also managing to issue statements and give clandestine interviews. This earned him the name of "Black Pimpernel". His biographer Mary Benson recalls Mandela driving her around Johannesburg in the role of a black chauffeur to a white sub-urban madam.²⁰

19. Oliver Tambo in *No Easy Walk to Freedom*, op. cit., p.xii.

20. Allister Sparks, "Above Pleasure and Beyond Pain", *Tribune*, 28 November 1985.

Capture was inevitable and eventually Mandela was betrayed on 5th August 1962 and sentenced to 5 years imprisonment for his leadership in the 1961 strike and for leaving the country illegally. Whilst in jail he was brought to trial, as the principle accused in the Rivonia trial along with the other ANC leaders and further sentenced to life imprisonment on 12 July 1964 on being found "guilty" of planning acts of sabotage and guerilla warfare against the apartheid state.²¹

The Rivonia trial was probably the most important single event contributing to the Mandela image. Placed on trial he used the occasion to pronounce a devastating condemnation of the South African system. He challenged the right of the court to hear his case. He considered that he would not be given a fair and proper trial, and that he was neither morally nor legally obliged to obey laws made by a parliament in which he as a black man was not represented. In his words: "Whatever sentence your worship sees fit to impose upon me for the crime for which I have been convicted before the court, may it rest assured that when my sentence has been completed. I will

21. Patriot, (New Delhi), 7 July 1986.

still be moved, as men are always moved, by their consciences I will still be moved to dislike of the race discrimination against my people when I come out from serving my sentence, to take up again, as best as I can, the struggle for the removal of those injustices until they are finally abolished once and for all.²²

With crowds attending the court each day, he conducted himself, in the words of one of the defence lawyers "in a manner that was almost regal".²³ ending with a socratic address to the court which has become part of the litany of the black resistance.

Mandelâ spoke of his ideal of a democratic and free society in which all people could live together in harmony and with equal opportunities and then declared: "It is an ideal that I hope to live for and to achieve But if need be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die".²⁴

22. Edward Roux, op. cit., p. 426.

23. Allister Sparks, op. cit.,

24. Ibid.

The trial of Nelson Mandela was an occasion for further attempts by former congress alliance supporters to stage public protest. A "Free Mandela" committee came into being. The government reacted by serving "house arrest" orders on Helen Joseph (previously of the Congress of Democrats), and on Ahmed Kathrada, General Secretary of the Transvaal Indian Congress and Secretary of the "Free Mandela" committee. A ministerial order banned all meetings in connection with the trial. However, there was a whisper campaign originating from the crowds of people attending the trial everyday and Mandela's words spread far and wide among the eager African people. Mandela explained the ANC's stand and the circumstances that forced it to adopt armed struggle.

In the course of his address to the court, Mandela said: "Already there are indications in this country that people, my people, Africans, are turning to deliberate acts of violence and of force against the government, in order to persuade the government in the only language that it shows, by its own behaviour, that it understands".²⁵

25. Edward Roux, op. cit., p. 426.

Although there was no widespread violence there were certain stray incidents such as the one in Paarl.

The Paarl Unrest:

The town of Paarl lies thirty miles from Cape Town in a Valley famous for its vineyards. As a result, a large wine and fruit canning industry had developed in this region and numerous factories came into existence. The factories relied mainly on African labour, mostly Xhosas from Trankei, and a sort of African settlement came up at Mbekweni, a little distance from the centre of Paarl.

The Food and Canning Workers' Union had established a local branch in Paarl under the leadership of an African woman, Mrs. Elizabeth Mafikent. She proved to be an apt pupil of the left and visited Bulgaria, Poland and China as a workers' delegate. Following the policy of removing prominent leaders, the government in November 1959 decided to remove her to the Vryburg district in Northern Cape. This sparked off riots in the Paarl township of Huguenot.

Thousands of Africans and coloureds demonstrated in protest. Bands of children marched along the street carrying sticks and shouting "Afrika". The police attacked the crowds with batons when they refused to disperse. Shots were fired, not by the police it was said, but by white civilians.²⁶ The riot was finally suppressed with the use of armoured cars, but not until a number of shops had been gotted and set on fire. Elizabeth Mafekerg escaped in a car and took refuge in Basutoland.

Unrest continued in Paarl and was accentuated when the government began to implement its policy of removing Africans from the area. According to government statements, in 1960 there were 150,000 Africans in the Western Cape; between 1959 and 1962 some 26,000 were "endorsed out".²⁷ The government began departing the Xhosa women, the wives and the consorts, leaving the African men to live a kind of barrack life of frustration and resentment.

26. Ibid., p. 427.

27. Ibid.

S.A.S.O. and Black Consciousness:

In the period following the Rivonia trials not very much was happening - there were occasional strikes, incidents of violence such as the one described above, and acts of sabotage. Stray outbursts of anger at illegal detentions, arrests and imprisonments continued. Increasingly larger and larger numbers of Africans were now getting affected by the policies of the apartheid state. The security police had started adopting torturous methods on people accused of having connections with Umkhonto. There was widespread misuse of the anti-communism act and anyone demanding democratic rights was detained. In 1969, helplessness at their condition and the consolidation of "Separate Development" as well as the inspiration of the black power movement in the US lead to the emergence of a new nation-wide black political movement. In that year Steve Biko lead a breakaway of black students from the multi-racial National Union of South African Students Organisation (SASO). SASO represented all black students in institutions of higher learning - colleges, technical institutes, universities and so on. This in turn gave rise to a wider political movement called the

Black People's Convention. The student leaders gradually evolved the philosophy of Black Consciousness. A synthesis of black South African and Afro-American thought, black consciousness posited the view that all South Africans who are oppressed because of their race or ethnicity are first and foremost black. It rejected white participation in the black liberation movement on the grounds that it tended to perpetuate the complex of racial dependency among blacks; and even those white who have intellectually and politically rejected the doctrine of racial supremacy continue to derive material benefit from the racist system by virtue of their skin colour.²⁸

The Black consciousness Movement differed from the Congress alliance of the 1950s in that it rejected the politics of organisational coalition in favour of a strategy of organic integrated black unity. And so whereas the Congress alliance consisted of distinct organisations that maintained their individual identities. Within the context of the alliance, Black consciousness advocated a single

28. Gail M. Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology*, Berkely and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978, p. 257.

political unit that would organise African "coloureds" and Indians on an individual basis. Both SASO and the BPC led the way in the practice of black organisational integration. Although the black consciousness movement wanted an exclusive organisation for the blacks as against the Congress which emphasized the unity of separate alliances, it was still part of the same snow-balling movement against apartheid and was a great help in enlarging the movement.²⁹

While the black consciousness movement was widening its impact, international capital, which had been withdrawn following the Sharpeville massacre, staged a comeback operating through multinational corporations. A combination of foreign and domestic capital - the latter now including for the first time under government sponsorship, a significant Afrikaner component - managed a vast

29. In 1971 the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) was resuscitated and came about as an attempt to organise Indians. Many within the Black Consciousness Movements were opposed to this because it was felt that this was really playing into the government's policies of divide and rule.

expansion of the South African economy around 1963 to 1973.³⁰ This return of capital had two effects: one, it gave the impression of renewed support to the white regime and second, there was a change in technology, leading to a shortage of skilled and semi-skilled workers, which brought about a corresponding change in the recruitment policy. Consequently, non-whites were recruited as skilled workers due to pressure from employers and were given those jobs which had been reserved earlier only for whites. An indirect impact of the new investment was the enlargement of the area of support for the anti-apartheid movement since the increasing dependence of industry on black and brown workers to carry out skilled operations meant that the bargaining power of these workers was growing in spite of legal prohibition on all strike action by blacks.³¹ Just how far this had gone and how effectively blacks were organised in spite of the laws denying them the right to recognised trade unions became obvious in 1972-73, when the era of industrial

30. John Saul and Stephen Gelb. *The Crisis in South Africa: Clars Defense Class Revolution*. New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1986.

31. J.D. Omer - Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

peace in the post 1960 era came to an abrupt end. At the end of October 1972, there was a strike by dock workers in Durban. Towards the end of that year the situation was ripe for a general strike in the Durban area. This took place particularly in January and February 1973.³² The whole of Durban was at a standstill in all sectors: including transport and essential services. It spread subsequently inland of Vaal Triangle. It involved all black workers, Indian "coloured" and ethnic African.³³

Though the strike was put down—in one case troops were brought in — significant pay increases were granted. The possibility of Africans being granted some measures of Trade Union rights was raised evermore important, Vorster announced that greatly increased educational opportunities to Africans to acquire advanced skills must be made available so that South Africa could make full use of the abolition of all its peoples.

32. The 1973 strikes which were notable for their lack of coordination and leadership, provided the basis of contemporary black labour movement in South Africa.

33. The media responded by playing up certain racial stereotypes which were untrue, saying that in some places there was conflict between Indians and Africans.

This meant that the government had at last recognised the strength and unity of the working class and openly admitted the growing dependence of the economy on black and brown workers, not only as unskilled labour but in highly skilled and responsible positions. It meant the abandonment of one of the basic principles of baaskap apartheid and separate development. It implied a need to build up a new relationship with the black, Indian and coloured work force which would involve later a whole series of further policy changes.³⁴

Beside encompassing workers into the anti-apartheid movement, the ANC, P-AC and black consciousness groups also enlarged their base among the petty bourgeois. Hanf's survey shows that in term of political affiliations, the radical organisation like the Pan-African Congress (P-AC) the African National Congress (ANC) and Black consciousness groupings have greater increased their support among the affluent and better educated blacks.³⁵ In a case study of

34. J.D. Omer - Cooper, op. cit., p. 223.

35. T. Hanf, South Africa: The Prospects of Peaceful Change, Rex Collins, 1981, pp. 356-7.

One section of educated labour, Watts emphasised the support for Black consciousness among African Medical Students and doctors.³⁶ In her study, Gerhart states that among the 28 top executive positions in the ANC and P-AC, all but four were filled by people from the 'professional elite' and other middle class'. Only two were not university educated.³⁷

Bandustans and Its Impact:

By this time, apartheid as understood by the post-1948 Nationalist ideologists had demonstrably broken down. The statistics tell us a clear story: The percentage of black labour employed in secondary industry increased spectacularly from 57.6% of the work force in 1936 to 66.5% in 1951 and 70.3% in 1967.³⁸ One of the means by which the government sought to tackle this problem was through "Separate Development" or "Bandustans" or "reserve" set aside for the black population.

36. H. Watts, "The African Doctor: His role in Community", in Van den Berfje, *The Liberal Dilemma in South Africa*, pp. 97, 99-100.

37. Gail Gerhart, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

38. Yusuf Mohamed Dadoo, *South Africa's Freedom Struggle*, Sterling Publishers (New Delhi, 1990), p. 208.

The conditions in these reserves were deplorable as Michael Acott, assistant editor of The Cape Times, describes. "They are usually dark, dingy and dangerous. They are often, by apartheid decree, far from the work place. Black employees rise before dawn and return after dark; travelling long distances by bus, train and on foot.

Schooling is inferior....facilities are inadequate and overcrowded. They are always subject to the fear of falling foul of influx control or the pass laws".³⁹

Yet the government hopped for success in its scheme of turning back the clock and reverse the process of permanent black urbanisation and to create conditions in which the black reserves could be used as reserves pools of labour and also as a means of transferring the urban proletariat once again into a semi-migratory force with direct or indirect economic links with the reserves.⁴⁰ The government used new devices such as encouraging industries to the borders of homelands so as to reduce

39. Barry Steak, "Apartheid Under Seige", African Report January-February 1985, p. 56.

40. Yusuf Mohammed Dadoo, op. cit., p. 210.

the number of Africans in the towns whilst keeping them integrated into the white economy. It also propagated the fiction that every black worker had a "citizenship" in a homeland so that even those born in urban areas (the vast majority) worked there as "foreigners" at the pleasure of the white man and could expect no political rights. In spite of these and the stepping up of political terror the regime did not succeed: in every sphere of life the white state had become more not less, dependent on a permanently urban-base of black proletariats who were beginning to show strength and unity. The efforts to give substance to Bandustans reflected the pressures on, and weaknesses of the regime.

Revolt in Soweto:

The crisis of apartheid was reopening and contained within it the seeds of even more fundamental sharpening of contradictions between the people and white supremacy. Wider sections of people were beginning to show a readiness to speak but and act, partly due to the absolute and relative deterioration in their living conditions. No longer was there any sign of the fear that had dogged people during the 1960s and early 1970s. Conditions were ripe for an

outburst, an explosion and the revolt in Soweto was inevitable only the dismantling of the system of the apartheid could have prevented it.

The revolt in Soweto began on June 16, 1976. A few thousand school children gathered to protest a decision by the authorities to introduce the teaching of half of all the subjects at high and secondary schools in the Afrikaans language.

An organisation called the South African student movement was formed in Soweto in 1970 on the initiative of students of three high schools. Set up legally, it gave high school students an outlet for airing their grievances and, to some extent, speaking of their involvement in the social affairs and interests of Soweto's adult inhabitants. The decision to hold a demonstration on June 16, 1976, to protest against instructions in Afrikaans was adopted at a meeting of representatives of all Soweto schools convened by the SASM branch in the township of Naledi on June 13.

The participants began gathering at a higher secondary

at a higher secondary school in Orlando West on the morning of June 16. By 8.00 A.M. there were about 10,000 pupils. When the demonstrators, carrying placard , bearing words, "Down with Afrikaans ", "Afrikaans - language of Oppressors " etc. were about the march to a stadium where a rally was scheduled, a squad of police appeared.

This police did not even warn the demonstrators to disperse, as they had always done on previous occasion. As soon as they appeared they attacked the children. This was attested by eyewitnesses. Willie Bokata, a reporter, said he saw a white police officer pick up a stone and hurt it into the crowd. The children in the front rank turned and scattered.⁴¹ Asked whether the police had first fired into the air, a senior police official at Orlando p lice station said, "No, we fired into the crowd. Its no good firing over their heads".⁴²

By 10.00 A.M., anguished and furious by the killing of their mates, crowds of school children scattered throughout Soweto, hurting stones, erecting barricades and setting

41. Barunch Hirson, Years of Fire, Year of Ash , The Soweto Revolt: Roots of Revolution? Zed Press, London, 1979, p. 156.

42. The Times, London, June 17, 1976.

fire to administrative buildings. Observer commented that the youth seemed oblivious of the danger. They kept advancing on the police and pelting them with any object at hand.⁴³ This continued for three days - until June 18 - and police terror intensified.

Unrest broke out next in Alexander where people marched in the streets expressing their protest and anger. Later it spread to the very heart of Johannesburg - something neither the authorities nor the police could have foreseen. Nor did Pretoria, the capital of South Africa and citadel of Afrikaner nationalism, escape unscattered: Unrest began in it on June 21.

Thus the week beginning on the Wednesday of June 16 saw perhaps the longest and most violent of eruptions. Police minister Kruger announced that in that week 176 people were killed and 1,139 were wounded.⁴⁴ Few believed these official figures. Crowds went to police station and the morgues in search of missing relatives, parents looked for their children and in most cases found them dead. Some were never found.

43. Baruch Hirson, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

44. Sunday Times, London: June 27, 1976.

During the funeral for the police victims, slogans were chanted, speeches were made and young people marched with upraised fists. Soon after the initial demonstration, the whole Soweto township community, not only school children but also adults, became involved in the ferment.

For its part, the racist regime revealed the brutality and in-humanity of apartheid. According to official data, in the period between June 16 and August 30, alone more than 16,000 rounds of ammunition were fired by the police at blacks in Soweto.⁴⁵

By the close of 1978, the intensity of the uprising had clearly declined. The ruthless mass repressions had made themselves felt. The government prepared itself to celebrate victory. In January 1977, police minister Kruger declared in parliament and to the pro-government journal to the point that the worst was over and that "as far as the security position is concerned it is better now than at any time during the last year."⁴⁶

45. A Survey of Race Relation in South Africa (Annual) 1977, p. 85.

46. To the Point, Johannesburg, January 28, 1977.

The level of mobilisation of people had been low in the 1960s. The main reason was that there was no political organisation after the ANC and P-AC were banned and most established leaders were either arrested or had gone underground. Certain major events did, however, take place. For instance, the December 1961, bombings by the ANC military wing, the 1963 Poqo uprising and then the Rivonia trials. But after the period, to the end of the 1960s, there was absolute quiescence. It was a period that has been described variously as "a vacuum, as a lull, although certain Stalinist historians would like to portray that period as if a lot of activity just continued."⁴⁷

This was a period when people like Helen Suzman⁴⁸ was the one white voice representing black interests. And people were being directed by the liberal columns of the Rand Daily Mail and other newspapers about what the struggle should be. The Black Consciousness groups believed

47. Saths Cooper in South Asia Bulletin, op. cit., p. 115.

48. For many years Helen Suzman was the sole representative to Parliament of the Progressive Federal Party, the official opposition Party until 1987.

that that would lead to total seclusion for the black.

People were afraid to go to Robbin Island which was portrayed as a terrible place. The almost here was full of tension and there was a feeling of helplessness. They were afraid of being thrust into exile or languishing in prison for 90 days and 180 days in indefinite detention. Despite this, a very large number of people were arrested and detained and sent to prison on somepretexted or the other. The black townships were like Smouldering Cauldrons.

In the 1970s, the workers gained strength and a certain amount of bargaining power with the successful strikes of 1972-73. They realised, for the first time, their vital importance to the working of the South African economy.

It was the revolt at Soweto, however, that proved to be the turning point. In the effort to suppress the upheaval the security forces killed large numbers of young black. Hundreds of arrests were made and there were followed by suspiciously large number of 'suicides' and unexplained deaths of people held in custody.⁴⁹ In response

large numbers of black youths fled the townships and escaped across South Africa's borders into Botswana or Swazeland. Many of them proved eager recruits for the guerilla forces of the liberation movements.

Though ANC propaganda and the rhetoric of black consciousness may have contributed to the mood underlying the Soweto upheaval, yet they were certainly not planned nor controlled by any exile nationalist movement. The reaction they met from the police left in their wake a situation very favourable to the expansion of guerilla warfare. Most importantly, not only did the liberation movement have access to greatly increased numbers of recruits, but they could now count on strong local support from the mass of the African population.

The seeds for a mass democratic Movement were sown.

CHAPTER - V

RISE OF MASS DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENTS 1976-1990

RISE OF MASS DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENTS 1976-1990

The historic uprisings in Soweto and elsewhere in the country during 1976 promoted a heightened political awareness throughout South Africa. Despite continuous state repression¹ there was a mass upsurge of people who refused to submit. The government used everything at its disposal to crush the movement but failed. The movement developed into a sustained struggle - not a day passed without people demonstrating, without people getting killed. And yet more and more people kept joining in inspite of the fact that they could be picked up at any time, detained, tortured and killed.

Soweto had caused politicization of the nation's black students and these students and unemployed youth continued to be a dynamic element as the government continued to fumble with the issue of black education. The rate of black unemployment rose. There was a new and higher level of self organisation within such elements as was witnessed by the emergence of youth "Congresses" in many townships and the impressive and effective role played by the Congress of South African Students (COSAS)

1. In addition to the banning orders - restricting movement & association - served on individuals, 18 black organisations including the SASO and the Black People's Convention (BPC) as well as the multi-racial Christian Institute was banned in October 1977. At the same time, two black and a black magazine were shut down by the government.

until its ban in September 1986. Equally fascinating was the emergence and evolution of "civic association"² which helped quarterback the boycotts of the apartheid structure and producing the postponement of elections, low polls when elections to occur, resignation by Councillors and even direct physical reprisals against the most compromised of local participants.³ They also became a mobilising force for rent strikes, bus boycott and the like.

Most importantly, it was just such organisations that became the primary building block for the alliance like structure of the United Democratic Front (UDF). It was evident that the formation of a national coalition of organisations opposed to the government's plans was clearly an idea whose time had come.

The United Democratic Front:

At the beginning of 1983, after a call by the President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Dr. Allan Boesak, a steering committee was set up to form a

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2. There were township political groupings formed precisely to resist, both the "neo-colonial" political structures exemplified by the local authorities and the various policies perpetrated by the White government and its local puppets vis-a-vis township dwellers.
 3. John S. Saul and Stephen Gelb, The Crisis in South Africa, Zed Books Ltd., 1986, p. 215.

broad based umbrella body which was later called UDF. Initially about 400 community based organisations, trade unions, churches, youth bodies, women's groups, professional organisations, cultural bodies and various interest groups supported the coalition and on August 20, 1983, the UDF was formally launched in Cape Town.

It was the biggest single black political opposition grouping formed since the birth of the Congress alliance in the 1950s. One of its most important characteristics was that it cut across racial, ethnic, cultural, economic and religious lines. There was widespread support for the organisation from the Christians, Churches and several prominent Muslim clerics had given the UDF their blessing. On the day before its launch in 1983, the Friday Khutba in many mosques was devoted to informing muslims about the UDF. Cape Town's Imam Hassan Solomons declared that there was "nothing unIslamic in joining forces with the UDF...no Muslim can have anything to do with a system of government based on the division of people into coloured, Indian, white and black ...all muslims must categorically reject a system of government based on this. It is contrary to and in violation of the basic belief of Islam."⁴

4. Imam Hassan Solomons, "Not Un-Islamic to join the UDF in a special edition of UDF News (Cape Town) University of Cape Town, SRC Press, 1983, p.2.

A unique feature of this kind of cooperation which black people had recently developed through the UDF, was the joint funeral and other services held by Christians and muslims. This was unparalleled in the country's history. The UDF and a number of other organisations captured the mood of the majority of black people. The Black Consciousness Movement that flourished in the 1970's was popular but confined to certain sections of the populace and it did not have as much grass roots support as the UDF.

In 1983, the UDF became the main link that finally provided cohesion for the country wide groupings. The essential difference between this kind of political coalition and the conscience-raising movements of the 1970s was that the UDF mainly provided a platform for communication and coordination.

Almost immediately after UDF's launch, harassment of its members began and the UDF's activities were subject to bannings and the spread of anonymous disinformation and propaganda. It was claimed that the UDF was backed by ANC. Because the ANC and organisations sympathetic to its ideology had the backing of at least 50 per cent

of urban blacks.⁵ This claim was irrelevant in black society. In reality, any overlapping between the goals and ideals of the UDF and those of the ANC was purely a manifestation of the militant popular mood. Well before the emergence of the UDF, South Africa had witnessed a renewed consciousness of the traditions of the 1950s resistance struggle.⁶ The Freedom Charter was accepted, ANC song and slogans were heard at meetings and its flags and colours flaunted. In spite of this the UDF was careful to keep a certain distance between itself and the ANC, in order to escape imminent banning. Thus its secretary general stated, "We must say categorically that we have no relation with the ANC and do not envisage one because we are operating legally and it is banned. The methods we are using to oppose the state also differ fundamentally. The ANC used violence; we are dedicated to non-violence".⁷ However, the UDF expressed its appreciation of the fact that the ANC was forced to resort to acts of violence only after it was exiled.

5. According to the 1984 poll conducted by the Human Science Research Council.

6. Julie Frederikse, *South Africa, A Different kind of war*, Manbo Press (Gweru) James Currey (London) and Ravan Press (Johannesburg) 1986, p. 182.

7. David Wilsh, "Constitutional Changes in South Africa", *African Affairs*, Volume 83, No. 331, April 1984, p. 160.

While the UDF made its presence felt in the South African Political scene, its members were well aware that its true effectiveness would be measured by its success in linking grassroots political campaigns. The UDF's most ambitious campaign was the 1984 effort of gathering a million signatures against the government reforms.⁸ This goal was not approached as an end in itself, but as a vehicle to educate people about government strategy, to mobilise support for the UDF and to lay the basis for future resistance.⁹

The million signature campaign was a failure in that only 400,000 signatures were collected before the exercise was overtaken by other events. But by other criteria, the campaign was a success since it provided a licence for UDF members to move into the communities and discuss issues on an individual basis with people who might never have ventured into a public meeting or mass rally.¹⁰ The campaign not only educated people about

8. The Government proposed legislation which became known as the Koornhof Bills, after the cabinet minister responsible for black affairs at the time. There were laws aimed at tightening up the already severe control of the movement and settlement of black people.

9. Julie Frederikse, op. cit., p. 151.

10. Ibid., p. 152.

the UDF but also helped UDF members to discover the grievances of their constituency. The government did not take the campaign lightly. Scores of UDF members were arrested while collecting signatures, thousands of forms were confiscated and the police issued unsubstantiated allegations that the million signature campaign forms were being passed on to the ANC for use in recruiting new cadre.

There was no doubt that the UDF made its presence felt in a climate extremely conducive to its existence. Dr. Boesak, during his keynote address at the launch of the UDF to an audience of about six thousand people said:

"In a sense the formation of the UDF both highlights and symbolised the crisis apartheid and its supporters have created for themselves. After a history of some 33 years of slavery, racial discrimination, dehumanisation and economic exploitation, what they expected were acceptance of the status quo, docility and subservience. Instead they are finding a people refusing to accept racial injustice and ready to face the challenges of the movement..."¹¹

11. Sylvia Vollenhoven, "South Africa and the Crossroads", *Third World Quarterly*, 8(2), April 1986, p. 489.

The National Forum:

In June 1983, a coalition smaller than the UDF was initiated by the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO)¹² and called the National Forum.

Unlike the multi-racial UDF, the 200 affiliates of the NF were exclusively black, although the prominent National Front academic and ex-Robben Island Political prisoner, Dr. Neville Alexander, spoke out forcefully against the automatic exclusion of whites. He said that he believed that the leadership of the organisations engaged in the struggle for liberation should remain in the hands of the black working class but that whites who were committed to the ideals of freedom should not be excluded from the rank and file.¹³

After the formation of the UDF and NF, the politicisation of the masses escalated. Mass meetings, political publications and coordinated grassroots activity helped people to acquire increasingly more sophisticated political analysis of the South African situation. The problems

12. AZAPO was launched in 1979 and was the largest and most important black consciousness organisation in the 1980s.

13. Sylvia Vollenhoven, op. cit., p. 491.

of high rent, low wages, "gutter education", rising unemployment were no longer merely the concern of special interest groups - for example, student bodies or trade unions - but were seen in proper perspective. The declining economic situation coupled with total expanded awareness meant that people were more easily mobilised into political action and increasingly prepared to voice their anger at the system of apartheid. Black people could now clearly link their powerlessness and and problems to their non-participation in the political system. For this reason, the UDF's initial short term aim was to coordinate opposition to the then new^{ly} introduced tricameral parliament involving the creation of a coloured House of Representatives and an Indian House of Delegates to meet and debate in parallel with the White House of Assembly.

Troubled Elections:

The first display of the effectiveness of the growing black opposition to government's efforts to press ahead with unacceptable and cosmetic reform, was the dismal failure of the coloured and Indian elections for the tricameral parliament. In the run-up to the elections in August 1983 both NF and UDF groups held mass rallies country-wide. On the weekend before the election 20,000

people attended rallies in protest in all the country's main centres.¹⁴ By comparison the electioneering parties confined their meetings mainly to rural and peri - urban areas. Gatherings held in cities were badly attended and often interrupted by anti-election groups. Tension mounted and the day before the coloured elections on 22 August 1984, the police clamped down on the UDF detaining 35 of the organisation's leader and supporters.¹⁵

The official percentage poll of the coloured election was 30.9% with the labour party taking 75 seats. The South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) which monitors a wide range of political and apartheid related events in the country estimated that the real poll was 18.1% when the 'eligible' rather than registered votes were taken into account what is more important is that the majority of the people classified officially as coloured live in the Cape Peninsula where an 11.1% poll (the lowest in the country) was recorded. In the Indian elections, 15.2% of the potential voters went to the polls, while the official figure based on those who registered was 20.9%.

14. Carole Cooper, Jannifer Shendler, Collean McCaul, Frances Potter and Melanie Cullum in the South African Institute of Race Relations 1984 Annual Survey (Johannesburg: SAIRR 1985), p. 118.

15. Cape Times, 22 August 1984.



The New Constitution: Reform and Repression

Despite the clear rejection of the new ideals, the government went ahead with its constitutional reforms. At a time when nothing less than dismantling of apartheid was acceptable, the government's decision to make only relatively minor social reforms could only be expected to heighten polarisation or racial conflicts.

Side by side with the so-called reforms was unimaginable repression. The reform - repression dichotomy was epitomised by the following contradictions: the government offered to release Nelson Mandela and others as long as they reject violence as a solution, while in the same breath Botha ordered the detention of UDF leaders who had publicly rejected violence, on treason charges; the government offered leasehold rights to urban workers while vigorously enforcing pass laws; and it promised to halt the denationalization of blacks while continuing the homeland policy.

The South African Institute of Race Relations documented that in the 16 months from September 1984 to the end of 1985 nearly 1000 people died in township unrest.¹⁶

16. John S. Saul and Stephen Gelb, op. cit., p. 221.

When the state of emergency was declared in many parts of the country in July 1988, it gave the forces of repression a freer hand. The minimum total number of emergency and security detainees between January 1 and December 12, 1985 at one time, reached a figure of 10,836 with 1000 still being held, including a large number of children. Moreover, during that period at least 85 people died in police custody. The UDF found 2/3rd of its members out of action through death, detention or trial.¹⁷

The government regarded its reforms, halting and grudging though they were, as necessary, but always from above, the initiation of the regime and by no means as a matter of compromise or concession. Negotiations, when they took place, were introduced only from a position of strength.

The central motivation behind the constitutional reforms was the realization by both the government and capitalists that the narrow base of capitalism must be expanded. It was hoped that the basis of a black buffer middle class with a vested interest in stability must be generated through

17. Ibid., p.222.

the cooption of certain petty bourgeois elements in the Indian and coloured communities, making them shareholders in apartheid, partners in their own oppression. The youth of these communities, having been given a taste of the fruits of apartheid, could then be conscripted to defend the system in the townships.¹⁸

Thus while the government tried to project itself as a paragon of moderation, the facts told a different story. The situation at the end of 1986 resembled that described by Gramsci when he wrote: "If the ruling class has lost its consensus, that is, is no longer "leading" but only "dominant", exercising coercive force alone, this means precisely that the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies and no longer believe as previously. The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear".¹⁹

18. Adelman, "Recent Events in South Africa", *Capital and Class*, 1958, p. 23.

19. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebook*, New York: International Publishers, p. 210; quoted in Heribert Adam, "Prospects of Compromise between African and Afrikaner Nationalists: Reflections on ANC Perception". *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, July 1988.

Consolidating the Liberation Struggle:

Despite these hostile tendencies the anti-apartheid movement survived and periodically showed signs of energy. It was recognised by them that the increased state repression and the state of emergency had not only been an expression of state power, but also of state importance and vulnerability.²⁰ Black fury continued to mount. The clamour for an end to apartheid and even a hardening of attitudes towards the Botha regime, coming from the unlikeliest quarters have to be examined against the backdrop of a steadily continuing economic decline. Consequently, in many places whites sided with and even joined blacks. A sharp decline in profits, double digit inflation and growing unemployment was now affecting, for the first time, even the whites. The investment climate was getting more and more unattractive with the refusal of major donor banks to roll over debt payments, which stood at \$12 billion at the end of 1984, the vicious circle grew even more vicious.²¹

20. Stanley B. Greenberg, "Resistance and Hegemony in South Africa", in Wilmot G. James (ed.), *The State of Apartheid*, Lynne Runnar Publishers, Inc. 1987.

21. Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 27 February, 1986.

Participating in the final stage of the struggle, along with the UDF, were the trade unions, the church, the ANC and not surprisingly, considering the circumstances, a section of democratic whites.

Trade Unions:

This phase saw the phenomenal resurgence of the black trade union movement, the increasing cohesion of black worker resistance to employers and a growing support given by the black working class to the mass democratic struggle. According to estimates more than 5.5 million working days were lost through strikes during the first 8 months of 1987, compared to around 1.3 million for all of 1986.²² A successful strike of railway workers lasted 12 weeks.²³ The largest strike to hit the public sector involved some 16,000-20,000 union members and demonstrated the potential for politicizing labour's grievances.

But by far the largest strike in the country's history involved the National Union of Mine workers (NUM).²⁴ In

22. Weekly Mail, Vol. 3, No. 50, (October 9-15, 1987), p. 4.

23. Hareen Singh, "Public Sector Workers Strike Back", Work in Progress, No. 48, July 1987, pp. 38-9.

24. "Disciplined Mine Strike a Test of Strength", Work in Progress, No. 49, September 1987, pp. 34-5.

August 1987, between 240,000 and 340,000 workers went on strike. A policy of mass dismissals and ^{use of} security force achieved little tangible gain for either side yet the trade union movement demonstrated its potential power and disruptive muscles as well as its discipline.

The Trade Union Movement which was growing in size and organisation was led chiefly by COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions). COSATU sought to consolidate unions and make sure that there was ^{only} one union in every industry. It polarised union activity and adopted the Freedom Charter as a "guiding document that reflects the views and aspirations of the majority of the oppressed and exploited in (their) struggle against national oppression and economic exploitation".²⁵ COSATU sought a more structured alliance with UDF and other political and community organisations. It called for comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against South Africa and it identified with the aspirations of the ANC.

It is evident that at the time that the government choked the community-based organisations, organised labour

25. Yunnus Carrim, "COSATU: Towards Disciplined Alliances", Work in Progress, No. 49, Sept. 1987, pp. 11-8.

took on the mantle of mass political protest and resistance. Industrial action replaced township struggle.²⁶ The UDF and its affiliates called for a working class leadership of the liberation struggle. This proved to be an effective substitute during times of intensive state suppression.²⁷

The Church:

There are many black independent Churches which emerged in the last century as a reaction to racial and other forms of domination by the missionary churches. These are also known as separatists and prove to be indigenous and truly African in nature. Their roots were firmly planted in protest or in reaction to Western domination; a new movement started from a Christian tradition but it drew sustenance from Africa. Those churches combined the ideology of Pan Africanism and black ideology.²⁸

26. Kenneth W. Grundy, "South Africa: The Combatants Regroup", *Current History*, May 1988, p. 208.

27. In response, the government introduced the labour relations Amendment Bill to counteract the gains that the unions had made in the last ten years.

28. Hope & Young, *South African Churches*, No. 3, p. 15; quoted in A.K. Shrivastava, "South African Churches in an Explosive Situation", *Africa*, Vol. 1, No. 1, July 1989, p. 31.

South African churches in this phase became much more outspoken on national issues like emergency, finings and bannings and participations in demonstrations, protest boycotts, strikes and most prominently funerals. Fiery sermons against apartheid were preached. Church ministers commanded a lot of reverence and respect and what they said went a long way in shaping social attitudes.

The churches, therefore, emerged as a dominant and potent force to support those organisations which truly represent the grievances and demands of the people. Cooperation with those opposing apartheid had become an important daily practice in the churches. African churches now identified themselves completely with the rising anger and bitterness of the black community against apartheid as they accepted the belief that no race had the right to consider itself superior because the bible explains that "Jesus Christ has broken down the wall of division between the race".²⁹

29. Verkuyl, J. (DP), "Incompatibility of Christianity and Apartheid", U.N. Objective Justice, Vol. 6(3), p. 13; quoted in A.K. Shrivastava, op. cit., p. 33.

After 1984, the church leaders had not taken a firm stand on the option of violence and non-violence and continued to express the hope that the revolution would be as peaceful as possible. However, subsequently a church representative was forced to admit: "Apartheid is violent. I oppose violence but I accept there may come a time, because of an unjust system, when all else has failed, that the church might say to its members it is justifiable to fight against an unjust system".³⁰

Democratic White Opposition to Apartheid :

Whites had been excluded from involvement in black student politics since 1968 when Steve Biko formed a walk out of black students from the white dominated National Union of Students and blacks formed their own organisation. It was more than a decade before non-racialism again took root among white youth; by the early 1980s, black and white students were plotting joint strategy in anti-government campaign. In areas where blacks lacked resources, progressive white students stepped in and used their resources towards printing of pamphlets and other things.

30. Carol Lazav, "Man on the Run", Weekend Argus (Cape Town), November 16, 1985, p. 15; quoted in Sylvia Vollenhoven, op. cit., p. 491.

The emergence of the UDF vindicated the right and duty of whites to join in the fight against apartheid. "Democratic Action Committees" and "Area Committees" were formed in white suburbs, affiliated to the UDF but devoted to the 'conscientization' of the white community.³¹

Previously, the whites on the left usually spurned all potential white opposition, from the women volunteers of the Blacklash pass offices to businessmen disgruntled with the soaring tax bill caused by the government's burgeoning bureaucracy. They were concerned with trying to educate whites to the understanding that the true forces of change in South Africa would not come from a tri-cameral parliament, but from those who are excluded from political decision making.

The most potent issue for mobilising white opposition among ordinary people was that of military service which affiliated all young males and their families. A survey showed that 60% of students opposed military conscription.

31. Julie Frederikse, op. cit., p. 161.

In late 1984 big business began openly criticising government - a reflection of growing private sector dissatisfaction with ideological policies of the government which was seen as running counter to economic realities. In September 1985, in an unprecedented move, a delegate of top business leaders held talks with the ANC in Zambia.³²

African National Congress:

The ANC banned for nearly three decades was "virtually unbanned by the people".³³ Throughout this phase the people demonstrated with ANC flags, sang ANC songs and openly gave a call to join ANC colours though it was a criminal offence to do so. The ANC's main objective was to "continue and escalate black nationalist offensive to smash the organs of the apartheid state and power and constructing organs of people's power".³⁴

32. The government's need to nulify white involvement with the ANC is tied to the deep rooted racist assumption that all blacks need whites to tell than what to do. For example, when the ANC launched a spectacular rocket attack on the Voortrek Kerhoogte military base in Aug. 1981, the chief of the Security Police claimed that sabotage had been plotted by whites who infiltrated South Africa from Europe and North America.

33. M. Molla, Sunday Observer (Bombay), August 11, 1985.

34. Holiday (Dacca), June 16, 1987.

On June 3, 1985, Nelson Mandela was offered freedom on the condition that he gave up the struggle against apartheid. His reply was predictable:

"I cherish my own freedom dearly but I care even more for your freedom", said his letter read aloud at a public meeting in Soweto by his daughter Zindzi. "Too many people have died since I went to prison. Too many have suffered for the law of freedom. I owe it to their widows, to their orphans, to their mothers and their fathers who have grieved and wept for them.... I cannot sell my birthright, nor am I prepared to sell the birthright of the people to be free....Your freedom and mine cannot be separated...."³⁵

The ANC's first public statement in 1984 was to exhort all South Africans to make South Africa ungovernable: "We must make ourselves ungovernable. We must be difficult to control, we must render the instruments of oppression difficult to work. We must escalate all forms of resistance".³⁶

35. Sunday Observer, July 17, 1989.

36. ANC Weekly News Briefing, Vol. 8, No. 3, African National Conference of South Africa, London.

Ironically, the ANC gained in appeal and stature at a time when its promise to intensify the armed struggle had not materialised. Armed Struggle of the ANC, in fact, hardly deserved its name. In the one year period between July 1986 and 1987, 84 people were killed in guerilla attack and 349 injured in a country of 35 million.³⁷ But the ANC still maintained its central position within the movement. The thirtieth anniversary of the Freedom Charter was celebrated enthusiastically by all UDF affiliates who had created a sort of youthful political sub-culture which was the foreground in funerals, church services, cultural events, mass meetings and had incorporated into their slogans, songs and dances the iconography provided by the heroes of Robben Island, especially Mandela and the soldiers of Umkhonto. In addition, 43% of whites polled in an HRSC survey, expressed themselves in favour of negotiations with the ANC, thus testifying to the organisation's increased legitimacy.³⁸ As Tom Lodge has concluded:"....(The ANC) has largely won the battle of ideas".³⁹ It was the ANC that carried on the negotiations for the dismantling of apartheid with the government right up to the end.

37. Herebert Adam, op. cit., p. 376.

38. John S. Saul and Stephen Gelb, op. cit., p. 230.

39. Tom Lodge, "The ANC after Nkomati", address to the SAIRR, Johannesburg, June 26, 1985; circulated as SAIRR "Topical Opinion", Paper, p. 8.

Mounting Pressures on the Regime:

By the end of the 1980s there was no doubt in anybody's mind that 5 million whites could not indefinitely keep 25 million black and coloured inhabitants in subjugation. The mounting internal and external pressures on the racist regime to bring about radical reforms made the government retreat with its back to the wall.

Internally, there was a mass upsurge of people who showed no signs of toeing the line. Violence became part of South African daily life. The minister of law and order confessed that "as far as we are concerned, it is war, plain and simple".⁴⁰ The polarisation between the blacks and racist whites was extreme. We have seen how much pressure there was from students, civic associations, trade unions and the like. South Africa had become as "ungovernable" as it could be. Even official brutality was unable to deal a sharp death blow to resistance.

There was also constant pressure from those close to the National Party government to conduct talks with Mandela and other ANC leaders to find out the possibility of settlement.

40. Julie Frederiks, op. cit., p. 179.

The agitation programme against the all-white elections in September 6, 1956 included mass action to challenge the segregation in health services, defiance of other racial discriminations in education, housing etc. as well as several nationwide demonstrations and rallies with open display of the insignia of all banned organisations. The militant mood was evident.

The OAU endorsed a programme drawn up by the ANC outlining preconditions for talks with the South African government and proposals for an interim administration which could draw up a new constitution. It called for the release of all political prisoners the unbanning of political organisations, the removal of troops from the townships and an end to all political executions and trials.⁴¹

In 1987, several leading white South African academicians resigned from the ruling National Party in protest against the failure of President Botha to initiate genuine reform. In a statement thirty of them called upon the government to declare its "unambiguous intention" to share power effectively with blacks.⁴²

41. News Time (Hyderabad), November 4, 1989.

42. Quoted in Vijay Gupta, "The Racist Dilemma: Frontline, September 30-October 13, 1989.

As world wide condemnation of apartheid grew in proportion to the mounting violence, oppression caused by the regime, international pressure increasingly made itself felt. One effect of this was an international campaign for trade sanction against South Africa which had a most disturbing effect on South Africa's economy. Gerhard de Kock maintained that "continued political and constitutional reforms are pre conditions for optimal real growth, low single-digit inflation, balance of payment equilibrium, a strong currency and, in general, economic prosperity and rising living standards."⁴³ Agreeing with the view, Finance Minister Barend du Plesis described apartheid as "an albatross around our necks".

In a belligerent television address to the nation. President Botha declared that his country was quite prepared to "go it alone" and would not "crawl before anyone" to avert the threat of international economic sanctions. But there was no doubt that sanctions had hit his country hard .

Several multinational corporation firms started

43. Michael Hornsby, Times (London), June 13, 1986.

pulling out, or intending to pull out of South Africa and the official currency the Rand was experiencing steady devaluation which added to the determination of frontline states to stand up against the machinations of Pretoria.

Against such a background of a state of emergency contradictions sharpened. With violence, large scale detentions, a stagnant economy and increasing international isolation it was essential for the regime to start thinking seriously about the country's political future.

The Reforms:

The increased antagonisms leading to increasingly sharpening contradictions ensured political reform in South Africa, more rapid in its tempo, more comprehensive in its involvement of all communities than ever before. The regime was in a crisis, not really capable of conceptualising a way out of the morass in which it found itself.⁴⁴ Every concession forced from the state in the struggle created space and opportunity for further organisation among anti-apartheid forces and the articulation of further demands. The need to resolve contradictions had become overpowering.

44. Adelman, op. cit., p. 25.

The process was set in motion by the swearing in of Frederic W De Klerk as South Africa's acting President in August 1989 after Botha's abrupt resignation. Mr. de Klerk pledged a "new era" in which the cycle of racial conflict and world isolation would be broken.⁴⁵

At first the government released a 3 year reform plan to provide for the easing of apartheid laws while maintaining the principle of racial segregation. The new plan, billed as a Broadening of Democracy was rejected by blacks as it was evident to them that Mr. de Klerk was primarily concerned with 2 things -

- 1) He was trying to create an impression on the minds of the West that he was really introducing significant reforms.
- 2) He was as eager as Botha to convince the bulk of white voters that they need not apprehend any real dent in the existing power structure if he was elected as President.

At the same time, he offered sops to the liberal elements among the Afrikaner and English speaking segments of the whites.

45. International Herald Tribune, August 16, 1989.

It was made amply clear to de Klerk by all groups concerned that without the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners peaceful change would remain as black as ever.

The government finally agreed to release unconditionally eight prominent black prisoners, the most prominent being Walter Sisulu⁴⁶ in June 1989. This was expected to lead to the release of Mandela.

Constant discussions took place between the government and Mandela about the date^{and} circumstances of release. Mandela refused to be released into a state of emergency. He also demanded that de Klerk broaden the definition of political prisoners that he had agreed to release to include those convicted of acts of violence.

On Sunday February 11, 1990, after 27 years in prison, Nelson Mandela was unconditionally released. Before that on February 2nd de Klerk lifted the thirty year old ban on the ANC. Restrictions on some 30 other organisations including

46. The other prisoners released were Ahmed Kathrada, Andrew Mlangeni, Raymond Mhlabe, Elias Motsoabedi, Wilson M. Kway and Oscar M Petha.

the Community Party was lifted, political prisoners freed, the death sentence suspended and emergency restrictions on the media abolished.

In October 1990, the South African government formally abolished racial segregation and public amenities and warned rightist town councils against legalistic "funny tricks" to maintain this most visible form of apartheid. The National Party was now a multiracial party. President de Klerk demilitarised the country and limited the use of brute white violence by dismantling Botha's hated State Security movement system. He formally asked the police to "stop fighting in the front trenches in political battles and halved the period of conscriptions of whites into the armed forces. Later he permitted political activity by lifting censorship of the written hand, shortened the period of detention without trial and sanctioned peaceful protest.⁴⁷

The ANC still had two important demands:

1. A system of one man-one vote, and
2. Release of all political prisoners.

47. Hindustan Times (Delhi), October 18, 1989.

Problems:

However, Mr. de Klerk, like his predecessors opposes the one-man-one vote system that could lead to black majority rule. He envisions some mechanism through which whites will maintain a veto power over major decisions, something Mr. Mandela, Sisulu and their colleagues find unacceptable. Mr. de Klerk stated his position in the following words: "Things must change drastically and fast....but whites must not go from doing the dominating to being the dominated.

"One man-one vote....will inevitably lead to (black) majority rule and domination. That is unjust towards white electorate and totally unacceptable".⁴⁸ Mandela made it clear that "Not until my people have achieved political equality, economic equality and freedom can we lessen ^{the} struggle.... freedom cannot be given in doses".⁴⁹

Four other legislative acts were expected to be repealed but were still pending:

- The land acts of 1913 and 1936
- The Group Areas Act of 1956
- The Population Registration Act of 1950
- The Development of Black Communities Act of 1904

48. New Strait Times, (Kuala Lumpur), August 5, 1989.

49. Indian Express, (New Delhi), February 13, 1990.

With the February 2, 1990 unbanning of many political groups, the government accomplished what it had been unable to do with repression: it marginalized the UDF.⁵⁰ The once mighty coalition with its 700 affiliates and more than 2,000,000 activists was disbanded, effective 20 August, the 8th anniversary of its foundation. Many of its leaders returned to the ANC, now operating as an open and legal political party. Others have returned to the their unions and municipalities and still others have been sidelined. "There is a sense of relief that they feel they have achieved enough to wind down their opposition, signalling an end to the most repressive era in South African history", said Azhar Cachalia, National Treasurer of the UDF.⁵¹

In reality, however, the work of none of the liberation organisations is really over. The task of fighting against human rights violations will continue. South Africa does not yet have a Bill of Rights which is capable of preventing the recurrence of the savage state of affairs of the 1980s. There must be a plan aimed at resolving the inequalities created by apartheid over the last 50 years. It must be made sure

50. Southern Africa News Features, SARDC Service, Southern African Research & Documentation Centre, Harare Zimbabwe, March 1991.

51. Ibid.

that the kind of suffering that South Africa experienced for over 40 years is never repeated again.

As apartheid is dismantled on paper, the united resistance movement is breaking down into different political parties with differing ideologies.

Students of multi-racial societies, where whites enjoyed privileges as they held political power by controlling levers of economy, fear the following:

1. that even after achieving one man - one vote South African may end up with a factious government which does not represent the African or majority point of view because
2. militant leadership will be increasingly replaced by moderate leadership which
3. may be willing to "share" power creating a group of black as well as white elite and the conditions of the masses may not change.
4. The democratic movement may find it difficult to mobilise people against the creation of such an elite. This "Privatization of Apartheid" would lull the democratic struggle.

The economically powerful will continue to dominate. They may come from all racial groups: Whites, African, Asian and coloured, sharing both economic and political power, exploiting the poor, the down trodden peasants, workers and urban dwellers.

CHAPTER - VI

CONCLUSION

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More than 100 years of racial segregation and 40 years of apartheid sired a state with a deeply entrenched racial structure. Its Institutions were expressly created to control and regulate the private and public lives of black people, and a battery of laws under wrote and conferred a jurisprudential legitimacy to authority and to the most flagrant violation of democratic principles. As the state developed, more and more controls were added, loopholes in the system were closed and inconsistencies ironed out so as to create a political order with the most extensive and elaborate set of racial institutions in the world. This is the modern racial machine of apartheid which derived its logic from the desire to oppress the majority.

Black people were identified, treated and abused as mere objects. They were shunted and told where to live, instructed where to school their children, discriminated against and when they did not do as they were told, they were faced with the cold brutality of the police.

This type of discrimination turned the blacks completely against the whites. The black minority began, tentatively at first, and then more confidently, to form the foundation

of an organised anti-apartheid movement. The struggle was by no means easy - it was a struggle against a white state which in terms of its industrial base, its accumulated wealth and resources, its technology, its armament industry and the size of its army was the most powerful state in Southern Africa. In case of need it could mobilise upto 400,000 men. Clearly the blacks were much weaker and not yet in a position to strike out against white hegemony. The contradictions between 2 groups can sharpen only when one is in a position to strike the other.

Barrington Moore once stressed that moral outrage was a precondition for rebellion. Such outrage is usually caused by extreme brutality, clear violation of justice in comparison with the treatment expected or with dissapointed expectations. Moral outrage is a condition felt by all black South Africans. By the time apartheid was inaugurated through the 1948 victory of the National party, an extra-parliamentary terrain of mass opposition was already established and in the 1950's the blacks began hitting back at the regime in earnest through strikes and peaceful resistance. The anti-pass campaign in 1960 and the gruesome massacre at Sharpeville led to an irrevocable polarisation of the majority blacks and the minority white regime.

The mobilisation of blacks in the 1960's was low because of the callous police crackdown after the Sharpeville massacre. There was a systematic onslaught of an expanded apparatus of coercion and repression and this crushed the movement till the mid 1970's. Opposition groups were driven underground and they were compelled to reconsider strategy and tactics. This was the time when both the ANC and P-AC took to armed struggle.

More and more people and groups were joining the anti-apartheid struggle as it was increasingly realised that every black man, woman and child was affected by the practice of apartheid. The strategic task was the destruction of the apartheid regime and the transfer of political power to the people. The Natal Workers strikes of 1973 and the Soweto students revolt of 1976 heralded the return of extra-parliamentary mass struggle after a period of lull. There was a growing support given by the black working class as well as students and unemployed youth to the mass democratic struggle. During this period, state created institutions and structures within non-white communities functioned at the whim of the masses and their representatives who were able to render them ineffective at will.

The next period in the struggle against apartheid was inaugurated by the establishment of the tri-cameral parliament in August 1984. The previous year had seen the birth of remarkable coalition, the United Democratic Front (UDF) with more than 700 affiliates. Many people in these organisations kept alive the impossible dream through detention, imprisonment, torture, exile and death.

The government came up with a package of cosmetic 'reforms' but the movement was unwilling to accept anything short of the dismantling of apartheid. There was a existence of so-called reforms and extreme suppression side by side throughout this phase. State brutality, however, was incapable of breaking the backbone of the now very well developed movement against apartheid.

The rigid, merciless dogmatism, blindness and brutality of nationalist doctrines and administration became anathema to the overwhelming majority of the worlds population as witnessed by the rising tide of pressures for the application of international sanctions. Instability made people reluctant to invest in South Africa; many multinational cooperations were starting to move out. Economic sanctions highlighted the sharpening of contradictions between the minority white

regime and the investing powers.

African labour is crucial to the processes of capital accumulation. From staying away from mines, to factory stay aways, to boycott of white shops and non-manning of counters- the modes of protest was leading to decline of business and industrial productivity. Even whites began to see that apartheid was not in anybody's interest, including their own. Certain groups had begun to say: We can no longer afford the cost of maintaining the ideology of Afrikaner Nationalism - it is ruining the country.¹

As I have stated in my introduction a time comes when contradictions can sharpen to an extent when resolution is essential to prevent chaos. That time had arrived in South Africa and the regime could not but recognise this fact. steps towards resolution of contradictions were taken by changing many apartheid laws, releasing political prisoners, lifting the emergency and unbanning political parties. Complete resolution of contradictions will only take place when President de Klerk of South Africa gives political equality to the blacks by agreeing to a system of one man-one vote which will necessarily lead to a black majority regime in South Africa.

1. David Goldberg, "The Struggle in South Africa", New Outlook, April, 1985, p. 32.

With change a society throws out its worst elements and retains the best but the worst continues to show its head from time to time. Simply changing laws is not enough. While the blacks struggle to overcome internal divisions² whites will have to learn to practice and not merely discuss racial integration.

Some may consider that there may be new contradictions in South African in the future - between the rich and the poor, the blacks who rule and the masses. However, these are probably natural contradictions of a developing society and the greatest need of the hour in South Africa is the need to increase facilities and improve the quality of life.

2. Factional fighting between followers of Mandela's ANC and the Inkatha Movement of the Zulu leader Mango Suthu Buthelezi took hundreds of lives in 1990 itself.

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