

# SOUTH AFRICA, 1976 TO 1994

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## 1. Doubts about apartheid

By the end of the 1970s doubts arose within National Party ranks about certain aspects of the apartheid policy. Reforms begun by Prime Minister B.J. Vorster were continued by his successor, P.W. Botha. Several reasons may be forwarded why politicians wanted to reform the apartheid policy.

One reason was that it eventually became clear that many of the ideals of apartheid could not be realised. In 1958, for instance, Dr Verwoerd declared that the process of black urbanisation would reach a turning point by 1978. Thereafter the process would be reversed as Blacks would be returning to the homelands where sufficient employment opportunities would be available. This ideal was never achieved as the employment opportunities were in the "white" cities and black urbanisation increased rather than decreased.

The belief in apartheid as the answer to South Africa's race problem was seriously undermined by the international community's condemnation of apartheid as an evil and by the pressure applied to compel South Africa to relinquish this policy. Sporting ties with South Africa were severed; an arms embargo were introduced and apartheid was designated a threat.

It was also feared that apartheid would encourage radicalism. After the Soweto riots of 1976 black youth began to support Marxist principles and the Black Consciousness Movement in increasing numbers. The free market system in South Africa came under pressure and industrialists began to insist that the government should not estrange the black middle-class through apartheid measures. The private sector also took the initiative with the establishment of the Urban Foundation to improve living conditions in the black residential areas, while the South African Foundation attempted to improve South Africa's international image.

Job reservation led to a serious shortage of skilled labourers. There were not enough Whites to do the

work and Blacks were not allowed to perform skilled labour. The easing in the application of job reservation did not have the desired effect either, as other apartheid measures still restricted black labour.

The government appointed the Riekert Commission in August 1977 to investigate the effect of certain apartheid laws on the effective use of labour.

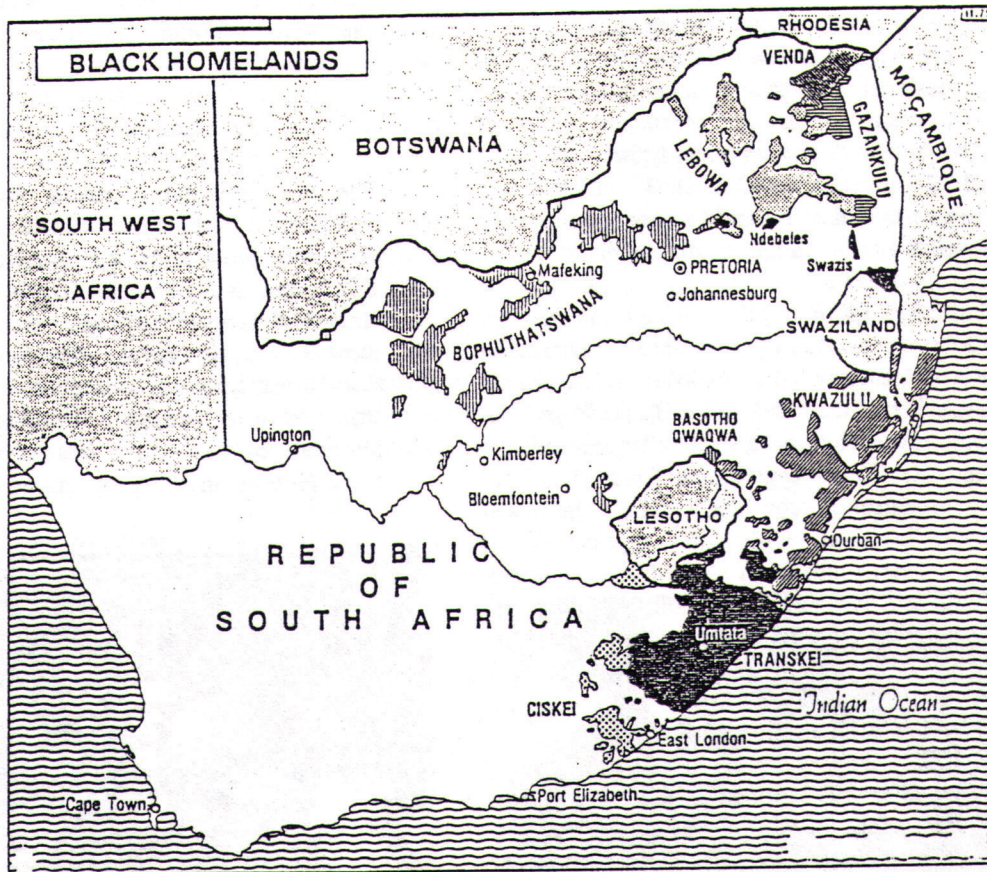
Black resistance to apartheid, like the Soweto riots of 1976 and the uprisings of 1984 to 1986, as well as Mangosuthu Buthelezi's refusal to accept independence for KwaZulu - thereby causing the homelands policy to fail - led to a decline in the belief that apartheid offered a solution for South Africa's problems.

The view is also held that the decline of apartheid was the result of the so-called "silent revolution" of ordinary black people. A single example of this "silent revolution" is the rapid urbanisation of Blacks, an indication of the manner in which they made the pass laws and influx control measures unworkable. Since 1975, for example, thousands of squatters settled around Cape Town without passes. All government attempts to remove them failed and they remained there. Influx control was eventually abolished in 1986.

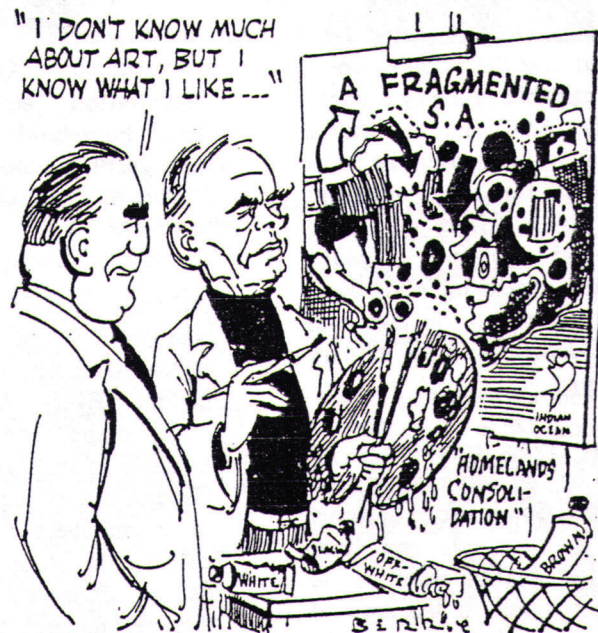
The rapid urbanisation caused the gradual breakdown of residential apartheid. Large numbers of black families moved into white residential areas as a result of the acute housing shortage in black residential areas. Flat owners were willing to accept black tenants because there were not enough white tenants. Thus the stipulations of the Group Areas Act were also made unworkable, and the strict application of the Act was waived.

A significant change of attitude among a large number of white Afrikaners was part of the process of change. They exercised a strong modernising influence on government policy, both from within and outside.





This map shows the area designated as homelands by the South African Government. The fragmented nature of the areas is clear. KwaZulu for example is divided into 29 separated pieces.



Abe Berry: The Star, 1,5,1973 [Minister B.J. Vorster and Minister M.C. Botha]



This self-criticism stimulated accelerated reform. The Afrikaans press demanded more enlightened policies, the Afrikaner youth insisted on less exclusivity and some professional Afrikaners and businesspeople insisted on change. A new Afrikaner mode of thought developed which was very different from the traditional "Boeresamelewing" of 1948; this reflected the accelerated urbanisation and increasing prosperity and intellectual vitality amongst Afrikaners.

The period after 1976 may be divided into several main events: the institution of the tricameral parliamentary system; the abolition of apartheid measures and laws; the rebellion of Blacks from 1984 to 1986, followed by an armed struggle between Inkatha and the United Democratic Front (UDF) as the front organisation for the ANC; increased international isolation with the application of sanctions; the unbanning of black political organisations and the release of political prisoners; and the assumption of government power by the ANC in 1994.

## 2. P.W. Botha as Prime Minister

On 28 September 1979, in the aftermath of the Information scandal, P.W. Botha became the new Prime Minister of South Africa. He was convinced that apartheid had to be reformed in the interests of the Whites. Under his leadership the greatest number of apartheid laws were removed from the statute books. He was, however, not prepared to accept the idea of one-man-one-vote.

Although P.W. Botha hoped that the reforms would make South Africa more acceptable in the eyes of the world, he realised that the ANC and the United Nations would not cease their drive to bring the white government to a fall. Against this total onslaught from outside and inside South Africa the Botha government developed a total strategy - which included political reforms and attacks on ANC bases in South Africa's neighbouring states. In this total strategy the State Security Council and the military powers played an important part.

With the adoption of the 1983 constitution by parliament and its approval by the white voters in a referendum of November 1983, South Africa acquired a new constitution: the second republican constitution. The constitution was the result of the years of discussions and negotiations. It was initiated by Prime Minister B.J. Vorster, when he appointed the Erica Theron Commission in 1973. This constitution differed from the 1961 constitution with regard to the powers of the State President, the composition of the legislature and the executive authorities and the establishment of a President's

Council. Coloureds and Indians were for the first time given a limited say in the central government of the country.

## 3. The 1983 Constitution

The new constitution made provision for a single Parliament with three legislative Chambers: a Assembly for Whites, a House of Representatives for Coloureds, and a House of Delegates for Indians, all elected according to separate ethnic voting rolls. Furthermore, provision was made for an Executive State President (which combined the existing post of Prime Minister and State President), who was chosen indirectly by an electoral college of members from the three Houses in the proportion 4:2:1. Because the



Negotiations between Prime Minister John Vorster and homeland leaders, from left to right Mangosuthu Buthelezi (KwaZulu), Cedric Phatshi (Lebowa) and Lucas Mangope (Boputhatswana).

majority party in each House would choose all the representatives of the House, the majority party in the white Assembly had the majority in the electoral college. Every Chamber would be responsible for "own affairs" for legislation of its community, for example in matters of culture, education and health. General affairs legislation had to be approved by all three chambers. The President would appoint a cabinet consisting of members from Parliament. The President had to consult the cabinet but was not forced to accept their recommendations. For every chamber there was a Ministerial Council that would handle its "own affairs." Joint committees from the three chambers were appointed to propose legislation on general matters on the basis of consensus. Lastly, the President's Council, constituted by members chosen by the three chambers, would continue to function.



The President appointed a number of members of the President's Council. The President's Council could act in an advisory capacity and was meant to play an important part in breaking deadlocks between the chambers. The political aspirations of Blacks were not addressed by the constitutional changes.

There was varied reaction to the constitution. While the constitution was still in its planning stage a number of NP members, under the leadership of two cabinet ministers, Dr A. Treurnicht and Dr F. Hartzenberg, broke away and founded the Conservative Party. They objected to power sharing with Coloureds and Indians. This was the most serious split in the NP since its accession to government in 1948.

The New Republic Party (NRP) saw the constitution as a step in the right direction, while the other white opposition party, the Progressive Federal Party (PFP) rejected the constitution because Blacks were excluded from the new dispensation.

The new constitution laid down that the Assembly would, unchanged, become part of the new dispensation and that an election was therefore unnecessary. Elections for members of the House of Representatives and the House of Delegates took place on August 22 and 28 August respectively.

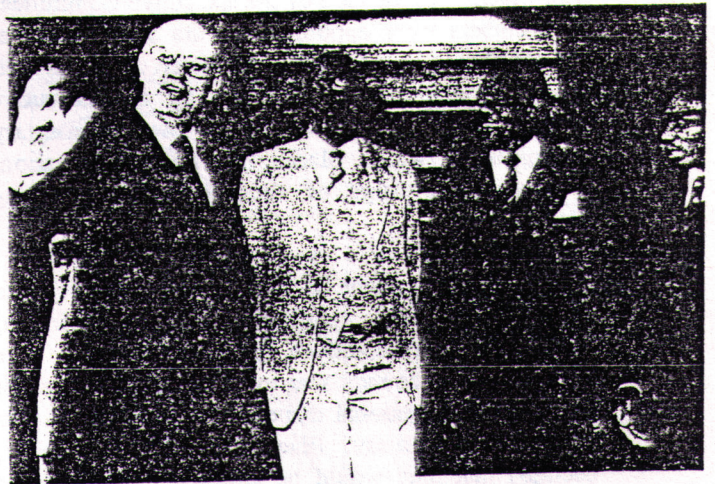
There was largescale disruption of these elections by those opposed to the constitution. They insisted that the Coloured and Indian voters boycott the elections. The most important of these organisations was the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the National Forum (NF).

The UDF was founded at a mass meeting in Cape Town under the leadership of Dr Allan Boesak, a minister of the NG Missionary Church and President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. The UDF was not a political party and drew its members from existing organisations on a local level. A wide spectrum of organisations - educational, religious, social groups, labour unions and even sport clubs - joined the UDF. The leadership corps of the UDF identified themselves with the aims of the ANC and accepted the Freedom Charter as its basic policy document. The UDF experienced huge growth at grassroots level and by March 1984 more than 600 organisations, with a membership of over two million people of all classes and races, were affiliated to the UDF.

In August 1984 the National Forum (NF) was founded by Saths Cooper and Neville Alexander to expound the ideals of Black Consciousness. The National Front was an umbrella organisation with a

supposed membership of 200 organisations. The organisation sided against the ANC because of its commitment to multiracialism and its bonds with communism.

The elections produced an exceptionally low poll, namely 30,9 percent among Coloureds and 20,2 percent among Indians. Many explanations can be offered for the low polling percentage: intimidation by election boycotters; the exceptionally high number of political parties, creating confusion among the voters; lack of experience, time, organisation and finances to obtain maximum participation; the policies of the parties differing so little that it complicated the voter's choice; and the general



**President P.W. Botha with Presidents George Mantanzima (Transkei), Lucas Mangope (Bophutatswana) and Patrick Mphephu (Venda).**

opposition to the new constitution.

The new constitution was promulgated in September 1984, with P.W. Botha as State President. For the first time in history a Coloured and an Indian became members of the cabinet, namely the Rev. Allen Hendrickse and Amichand Rajbansi, both leaders of majority parties in the House of Representatives and the House of Delegates.

#### **4. Political power for Blacks outside the homelands**

The 1983 constitution allocated no political power or rights to Blacks within the traditionally white regions as the government still took the view that they could



practise those rights in the homelands. The majority of Blacks, however, lived outside the self-governing homelands and their demands for political rights in the areas where they lived could no longer be ignored by the government. That was why President P.W. Botha promised further reforms at the opening of Parliament in 1985. The government now for the first time acknowledged Blacks living in so-called white areas as permanent residents of South Africa. The government also declared that these Blacks had to be given the right to manage their own affairs on local, provincial and central government levels.

To carry this into effect multiracial Regional Services Councils were instituted in 1985. At provincial level Provincial Councils were done away with and multiracial Executive Committees were appointed. That was the first attempt of government at power sharing with Blacks. In the case of the Executive Committees the members were appointed by the State President and not chosen in a democratic manner. This, as well as the stipulation that decisions by the Executive Committees could be vetoed by a parliamentary committee in which Blacks had no representation, lowered the prestige of these committees among Blacks.

At central government level the government tried to establish a national statutory council, consisting of government representatives and black leaders. The purpose of this council was to advise the government on a new constitutional dispensation in which Blacks would also have a say. Black leaders, like Buthelezi, declared that they would be willing to serve on the council only if Nelson Mandela and other leaders were released from detention. This the government was not prepared to do and nothing came of the proposed council.

## 5. The black uprising, 1984-1986

In September 1984 serious riots broke out in black residential areas of the Vaal Triangle and rapidly spread to other parts of the country. These riots lasted longer, claimed more lives and caused greater damage to property than any earlier riots in South Africa. By the end of 1986 the riots were under control, but the number of unrest-related incidents remained disturbingly high up to 1989.

The reasons for these black riots were fourfold: the economic recession of the mid-eighties that heightened the climate for unrest; the unpopularity of the black city councils, which were seen as instruments of the white government, some of their members being guilty of corruption; the increase in rent in the black residential areas of the Vaal Triangle

at a time of economic recession - the spark in the powder-keg that led to the unrest and seized on by the ANC to increase the discontent; and resistance by the UDF and the NF to the implementation of the 1983 constitution. Simultaneously with the uprisings of 1984-1986 school, consumer and rent boycotts were organised which caused further chaos and disruption.

While the internal black organisations confronted the government directly, the ANC remained the most important symbol of black resistance. Although the organisation could not operate inside the country, had few active guerillas operating internally and probably did not play a great role in the township uprisings, its "armed propaganda" was effective. At large protest meetings it was the ANC flags, photos of ANC leaders and ANC songs that were visible and audible. In 1983 the ANC continued with low-intensity military action. The most important incident took place in May 1983, when an ANC bomb was detonated outside an army building in Pretoria, killing 19 people and injuring 215. The government retaliated by attacking an ANC centre near Maputo, when 41 members of the ANC and 17 Mozambique citizens were killed. The year 1984 was one of mixed success for the ANC. Although its leaders tried to diminish the importance of the Nkomati agreement (a non-aggression treaty concluded between South Africa and Mozambique on 16 March 1984), it was a setback for the organisation. According to the treaty Mozambique not only forbade ANC bases in its territory but also searched ANC homes in Maputo, deported 200 ANC members and limited the ANC to a small diplomatic representation. The ANC could also not succeed in finding other bases on the South African border. Zimbabwe, Botswana and Lesotho were sympathetic but feared reprisals by South Africa if they should accommodate the ANC. Swaziland was totally unsympathetic towards the ANC. In spite of all this the ANC did succeed in infiltrating guerillas into South Africa. They concentrated on attacks on government and business property, and also devoted themselves to the training of juveniles in guerilla tactics. The most important development, though, was the increasing public attention secured by the ANC. By 1985 the prestige of the ANC had risen to the extent that most Whites were probably in favour of some form of negotiation with them.

The ANC also reviewed its position in exile. They were eager to extend their activities in South Africa and declared 1985 the "Year of the Cadre". A large conference was also held (at Kabwe in Zambia) in June 1985, where the most important matters under discussion were military strategy, the role of labour and underground organisation. It was agreed that military attacks could also include soft targets (citizens such as prominent government supporters,



state witnesses and farmers in border areas) and that a "people's war" should be waged. The acceptance of the "people's war" strategy was a change of direction from attacks on economic and strategic installations to mass participation and military action to undermine state administration. The masses were no longer to be mere spectators but were to become involved through support of the cadres, the disruption of labour, the establishment of local authorities, and resignation from government posts. The conference rejected dialogue with the government (unless apartheid was abolished altogether), called for attempts to co-operate with the PAC, and appealed for labour union unity so that industrial action could be launched to bring down the government.

Although the government did not deny the need for further reform, it saw the actions of the UDF and Azapo as part of a communist and ANC-inspired attempt to make the country ungovernable and ripe for revolution. The "total onslaught" idea was replaced by the "revolutionary onslaught". As the conflict spread and intensified throughout 1985 and 1986, the government strove to suppress it through security measures on the one hand and, on the other hand, the application of further reform.

To end the conflict P.W. Botha proclaimed a countrywide state of emergency on 12 July 1986. The freedom of the press was restricted, the army and police were given extensive powers to arrest agitators and keep them in custody for extended periods without a hearing, and they were given the power to forbid any gathering. The UDF was banned. Although the uprising was suppressed by 1986, the unrest-related incidents continued and the state of emergency was extended every year. Only in June 1990 did F.W. de Klerk, President Botha's successor, end the longest state of emergency in the history of the country.

## 6. Sanctions

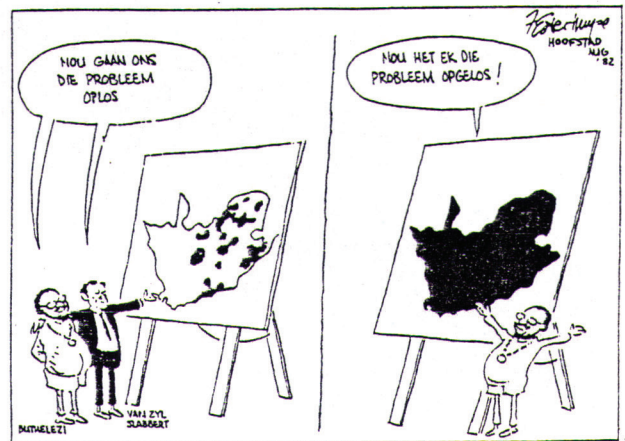
International criticism of the forceful suppression of black protest increased as unheard of media coverage of the violence and confrontation in black residential areas elicited increasing public reaction abroad. For that reason the speech that President P.W. Botha would deliver at the Natal congress of the National Party on 15 August 1985 was keenly anticipated. The expectation was that he would indicate how his party would finally relinquish the apartheid policy. His "Rubicon" speech was an anti-climax.

Banks abroad reacted immediately by demanding the repayment of their loans to South Africa. The rand was devalued and the Johannesburg Stock Exchange

had to close down temporarily. The USA and the European Economic Community introduced selective sanctions, with a warning that further sanctions would follow if apartheid was not abolished.

In 1985 the Commonwealth leaders demanded that the South African government abolish apartheid, lift the state of emergency, free Nelson Mandela and other leaders unconditionally, legalise the ANC, and move in the direction of a non-racial government. Furthermore a group of seven - the so-called Eminent Persons Group (EPG) - was sent to South Africa as mediators between the South African government and the ANC.

The Botha government initially allowed the EPG into South Africa in February 1986, but their mission, however, failed and they left the country a few months later.



Frans Esterhuyse, Hoofstad, 6.8.1982.

The sanctions campaign against South Africa was now increased and reached its climax with the passing of the **Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act** of 1986 by the USA Congress. Imports and exports to and from South Africa were terminated and several major American firms like Coca-Cola, IBM, Ford and General Motors withdrew from South Africa.

## 7. Inkatha and the ANC

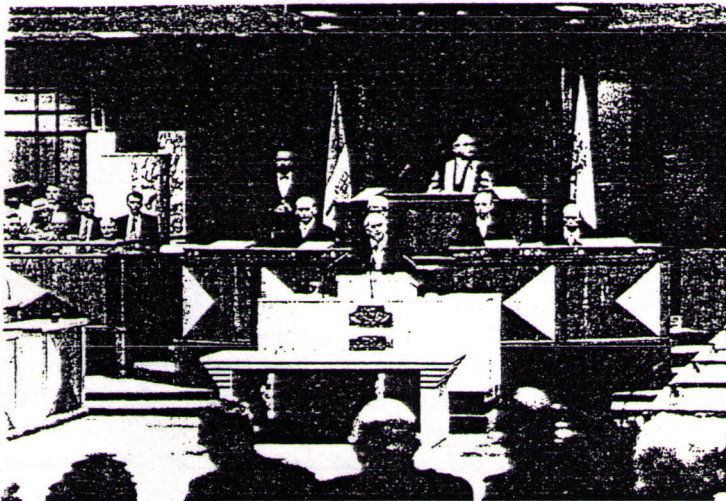
An important characteristic of black politics in the 1980s was the power struggle between the ANC and Inkatha, which later resembled a civil war. The struggle continues to this day (1996). Between September 1987 and December 1991 more than 8 000 people lost their lives, approximately three times more than had died in the uprising of 1984-1986.

The ANC was founded in 1912, while **Inkatha Yenkululeko Yesiswe** was founded in 1975 by the Chief minister of KwaZulu, Mangosuthu Buthelezi.



Inkatha was originally founded as a cultural organisation for the Zulus, but it soon became involved in politics. In December 1990 it became a political party, the **Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)**. Membership then stood at 1,8 million. Initially an exclusively Zulu organisation, membership was opened to all Blacks and others in 1977.

Inkatha, like the ANC, was opposed to apartheid, but the organisations differed fundamentally in the strategies adopted. While the ANC declined any co-operation with the structures of apartheid, Inkatha was prepared to function within those structures with the purpose of undermining them. That was why Buthelezi's refusal to accept full independence for KwaZulu caused the homelands policy to fail. The ANC was a proponent of armed struggle, while



Pres. F.W. de Klerk addressing Parliament, 2 February 1990.

Inkatha favoured peaceful negotiations with the government. The ANC was a proponent of socialism, Inkatha of capitalism. While the ANC pleaded for sanctions against South Africa, Inkatha was an outspoken opponent of sanctions because it would be the Blacks that would suffer most.

In spite of these differences the relationship between the ANC and Inkatha was initially friendly. The turning point came, however, when an ANC delegation under the leadership of Oliver Tambo met an Inkatha delegation led by Buthelezi in London in 1979. The purpose of this three-day conference was to discuss strategies against the apartheid government and also to discuss closer co-operation between the two organisations. The high level of the delegations from both organisations confirmed that the conference

was a show of power, symbolising that neither wanted to subject itself to the other.

The ANC - then still a banned organisation in South Africa - alleged that Buthelezi attended the conference in order to improve Inkatha's international credibility. Buthelezi in turn saw the meeting as an opportunity to establish co-operation with the ANC and create a workable relationship.

It seems likely that the two organisations each posited its own strategies for violent and non-violent resistance and that neither was prepared to make concessions. Buthelezi also appealed to the ANC to cease its criticism of Inkatha, stigmatising it as an inferior organisation. Talks further centred on the funding of Inkatha from abroad, while Buthelezi insisted on ANC recognition of Inkatha as a national liberation movement at the expense of the Black Consciousness Movement. The ANC ignored this request.

The discussions revealed a permanent rift between the ANC and Inkatha and they openly attacked each other in the press.

The founding of the UDF in August 1983 increased the tension between the ANC and Inkatha. The UDF, which supported the ANC, declared that Inkatha was not welcome in the organisation. In October 1983 this tension ended in violence on the campus of the University of Zululand.

Relations between Inkatha and the UDF further deteriorated with the establishment of the **Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu)**. Cosatu made it clear that it did not want to co-operate with Inkatha. A motion was also passed in which homelands and those who functioned within them were rejected. This motion therefore eliminated Buthelezi and KwaZulu.

In response to this snub Inkatha founded its own trade union, the **United Workers Union of South Africa (Uwusa)** in May 1986. In contrast to Cosatu's preference for socialism and its propagation of sanctions, Uwusa was in favour of capitalism and was opposed to sanctions against South Africa.

The founding of Uwusa was a triumph for Buthelezi, but it further divided the Blacks in Natal: in one camp was to be found the ANC-UDF-Cosatu alliance and in the other Inkatha and its trade union Uwusa. Friction between Uwusa and Cosatu deteriorated into open fights in 1986 during a strike at Hlobane near Vryheid. Thereafter the fights increased and also spread to the rest of Natal.

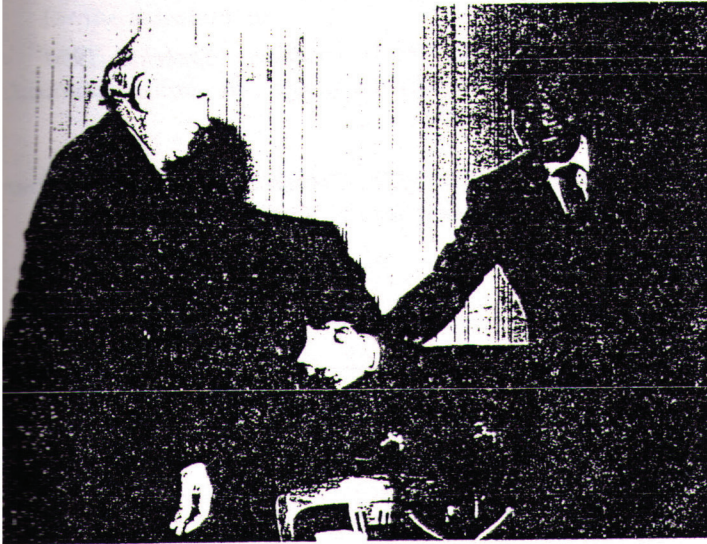


In July 1990 the war also spread to the Witwatersrand. The Inkatha supporters on the Witwatersrand are mainly migrants who live in hostels. The violence therefore took the form of clashes between hostel dwellers and the inhabitants of the black residential areas. Whereas the war in Natal was one between Zulu and Zulu, the war on the Witwatersrand took place between Zulu and non-Zulu, seeing that all Zulus there were regarded as Inkatha members.

All attempts at creating peace in Natal have so far failed as a result of the complicated nature of the struggle.

#### 8. On the way to a new South Africa

On 15 August 1989 F.W. de Klerk was elected as



F.W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela extending hands.

State President to succeed P.W. Botha. At the opening of the parliamentary session on 2 February 1990 President De Klerk announced that the ban on the ANC, the PAC and the South African Communist Party would be lifted and all political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela, would be freed. The purpose was to set in motion a negotiating process for a new constitutional dispensation.

Several reasons are cited as to why President De Klerk decided on this step. Firstly, since the inauguration of the 1983 constitution the government could rule only by means of a state of emergency. That probably convinced De Klerk that there would be no peace in South Africa until Blacks had the same

political rights as Whites. Secondly, since a new constitution would be achieved through negotiations, it would be better for the government to negotiate while the initiative was still in its hands. Thirdly, the increasing sport, arms and cultural boycotts, as well as trade and financial sanctions, made it ever more difficult for the government to survive. Fourthly, the fall of communism in Russia made it easier for De Klerk to negotiate with the ANC. Lastly, the election

results of 1989 showed that the NP was losing votes among the White voters. That was an indication that the White voters wanted to see a clear stand on the political direction the party would be taking.

De Klerk's speech set off a multi-party negotiating process that led to the formulation of a transitional constitution, which came into effect on 27 April 1994.

Unlike the constitution of 1983, this constitution granted the vote to all citizens who were 18 and it included a Declaration of Human Rights. The race-based tricameral parliamentary system of the 1983 constitution was replaced by a legislative authority consisting of a National Assembly and a Senate. These two Houses together constitute a Constitutional Assembly that has to negotiate a new constitution within two years.

The executive power rests with the President, one or more Deputy Presidents, and a cabinet of a maximum of 27 members, to be appointed by the President.

The election under the transitional constitution took place on 26-28 April 1994. The ANC gained 62,65% of the votes, the NP 20,31%, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFVP) 10,54%, the Freedom Front (FF) 2,17%, the Democratic Party (DP) 1,73%, the PAC 1,25% and the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) 0,45%. On the basis of these results the 400 seats in the National Assembly were allocated as follows: ANC 252, NP 82, IFP 43, Freedom Front 9, DP 7, PAC 5 and the ACDP 2.

On 10 May 1994 Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as President at the Union Buildings in Pretoria. The Third Republic of South Africa was inaugurated.



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## TYPICAL QUESTIONS

1. Write short explanatory notes on each of the following:

Africanism  
Charterists  
Defiance Campaign  
Freedom Charter

(4x5=20)

2. Why was the Youth League of the ANC in the forties dissatisfied with its leadership? (5)
3. In what way can the Programme of Action (1949) be described as a militant step? (5)
4. Write an essay in which you discuss the origin, content and meaning of the Freedom Charter. (60)
5. Does the Sharpeville incident represent a major event in contemporary South African history? Do you think that the event justifies commemoration by a public holiday? What is the current name of the public holiday? Do you think the name is justified? (20)
6. Write an essay in which you discuss the role of the Pan Africanist Congress between 1959 and 1963. (60)
7. Which countries took the lead against South Africa at the United Nations Organisation? Which countries tried to assist South Africa in relieving the pressure? When and why did they also decide to put pressure on South Africa? (15)



8. How was the general public also mobilised in the campaign against the South African government? (5)
9. Explain each of the following concepts/names:  
NUSAS; Black People's Convention; AZAPO;  
protest politics; Black Consciousness. (5x2=10)
10. Discuss in an essay why the Soweto Riots of 1976 can be regarded as a major dividing line in resistance politics and the liberation struggle. (60)
11. Discuss in an essay the concept of Black Consciousness and the role it played in the resistance to apartheid. (60)
12. Write an essay on the South African government's efforts up to 1976 to contain the protest and to provide alternative ways for political expression. (60)

**Please note that the section in the syllabus covering the period 1976 to 1994 is not part of the prescribed work for the examination.**