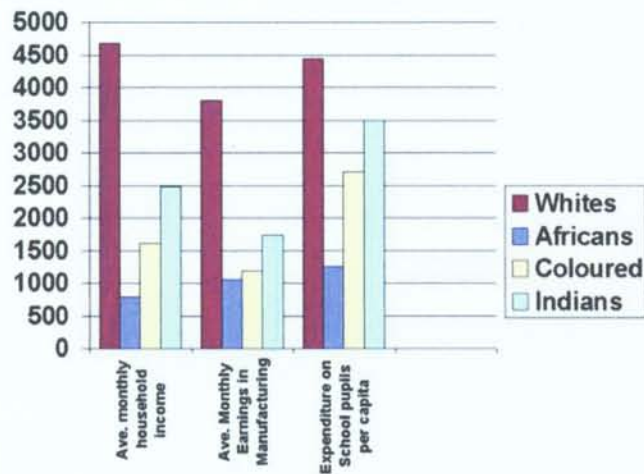


Apartheid

The official policy of racial segregation practices until the 1990's in the Republic of South Africa, involving political, legal, and economic discrimination against nonwhites.

After the Boer War, Britain granted the area of South Africa its independence in 1910. The white-controlled government then instituted apartheid. The 1913 **Native Land Act** provided that the Bantus (native people) could own land only on reservations which usually contained poor soil. Bantus were required to carry passes. Later, Bantus found themselves barred from the best mine jobs. In 1912 the middle-class, urban-based professionals and chiefs organized the **African National Congress (ANC)**, the foremost South African nonviolent civil rights organization. The ANC tried to use legal means to bring about change but without success. Two major leaders of this organization were **Bishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela**.

Nonwhites—classified as Bantu (black), colored (mixed), or Indian—did not share full rights of citizenship with the white minority (for example, black people could not vote in parliamentary elections), and many public facilities and institutions were until 1990 restricted to the use of one race only. The establishment of **Black National States** was another manifestation of apartheid. The term “apartheid” was coined in the late 1930s by the South African Bureau for Racial Affairs (SABRA), which called for a policy of “separate development” of the races. It was first legislated 1948, when the **Afrikaaners** (Dutch) and their **Afrikaner National Party** gained power from the British.



The legislature gave certain tribes “homelands” – much like the American Indian reservations but reserved the best jobs and lands for whites and made political participation for blacks impossible. In 1950 the **Group Areas Act** created ten homelands for blacks, but they contained only 20% of the land for the Blacks who were 80% of the population. This restrictive legislation led to the Sharpeville Massacres in 1960. Peaceful demonstrators were fired upon and over sixty died. In response Mandela formed the “**Spear of the Nation**” movement, an underground military command. It campaigned against the symbols of apartheid.



Anti-Apartheid poster

In 1964 the government sentenced Mandela to life imprisonment. He became the symbolic leader of the nationalist movement. A 1976 protest in Soweto over the required use of Afrikaans (the language of the Afrikaaners) touched off months of racial violence which drew international attention to the apartheid issue.

Internally, organizations opposed to apartheid—for example, the African National Congress and the United Democratic Front —were banned, and some leading campaigners for its abolition were, like Steve Biko, killed, or, like Archbishop Tutu, harassed. Anger at the policy sparked off many uprisings, from Sharpeville 1960 and Soweto 1976 to the Crossroads squatter camps 1986.

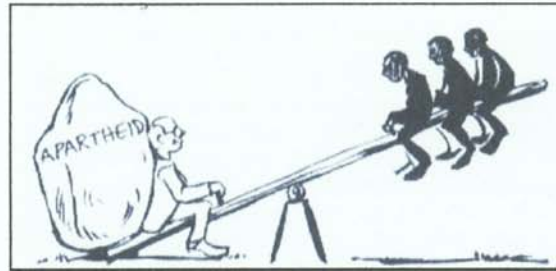


A typical squatter camp



A typical white, middle-class house

Overseas, anti apartheid movements sprang up in many countries. In 1961 South Africa was forced to withdraw from the Commonwealth of Great Britain because of apartheid; during the 1960s and 1970s there were calls for international sanctions, especially boycotts of sporting and cultural links; and in the 1980s advocates of sanctions extended them into trade and finance.



Apartheid Cartoon

The South African government's reaction to internal and international pressure was two-fold:

- It abolished some of the more hated apartheid laws (the ban on interracial marriages was lifted 1985 and the pass laws, which restricted the movement of nonwhites, were repealed 1986)
- It sought to replace the term "apartheid" with "plural democracy".

Under states of emergency 1985 and 1986 it used force to quell internal opposition, and from 1986 there was an official ban on the reporting of it in the media.

In general Soviet Arms went to the blacks and U.S. arms to the whites. Only after Berlin fell in 1989, ending the Cold War did the white president of South Africa, F.W. de Klerk, begin discussions with Nelson Mandela. This paved the way for an end to apartheid and the beginning of rule based on racial equality. In October 1989 President F W de Klerk permitted anti-apartheid demonstrations; the Separate Amenities Act was abolished 1990 and a new constitution promised. In 1990 Nelson Mandela, a leading figure in the African National Congress, was finally released.



Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk

In 1991 the remaining major discriminating laws embodied in apartheid were repealed, including the Population Registration Act 1950, which had made it obligatory for every citizen to be classified into one of nine racial groups. Finally, multiracial elections were held for both the state presidency and the new non-racial assembly April 1994. Apartheid was now over!