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The Political and Social Change in South Africa Up to 1976

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Abstract:
This paper explores the unique historical trajectory of South Africa as a white-dominated, independent state defined by the racial segregation system of Apartheid. Unlike other African nations, South Africa's development was shaped by a substantial, deeply rooted European minority divided into English and Afrikaans communities who maintained complete political and professional dominance over the Black majority. The study addresses the origins of this multiracial society, the white minority's attachment to the land, the implementation of Apartheid laws, and the subsequent resistance from the African population. Chronologically organized into three chapters, the paper traces South Africa's evolution from early Portuguese, Dutch, and British colonial foundations up to 1910; the formalization of institutionalized segregation under the National Party from 1910 to 1961; and the escalation of state oppression alongside the rise of organized liberation movements like the African National Congress (ANC) between 1961 and 1976. Ultimately, the study exposes the inherent violence of Apartheid, framing it as a highly engineered, oppressive system designed to maintain two separate and unequal societies.

Keywords: Afrikaans, Apartheid, National Party, Segregation, South Africa, Resistance, Zulu

Introduction

Unlike other African nations, South Africa developed uniquely as a white-dominated, independent state on the continent. The white minority maintained a monopoly on political power through a system that strictly categorized individuals by race. This emphasis on race and skin color allowed European settlers to enforce a policy of segregation based on the separate development of racial groups. Ethnicity and class in South Africa is divided into four assemblies:
Race 1: Blacks (Bantu)
Ethnic-linguistic groups:
a. Sotho-Tswana: - Southern Sotho - Western Sotho (Tswana) - Northern Sotho (Pedi)
b. Nguni: - Zulu - Xhosa - Swazi - Ndebele - Northern Ndebele - Southern Ndebele
c. Tsonga: official Bantu language in South Africa.
d. Venda: spoken by Black Jews.
Areas
- Lesotho/Quaqua. - Botswana/Bophuthatswana/Western Transvaal/Northern Cape. - Lebowa / Northern Transvaal. - KwaZulu / Natal. - Ciskei / Transkei. - Swaziland / Kang wane. - Transvaal. - Kwa Ndebele. - East / North East Pretoria. - Lebombo mountains /
Eastern Transvaal. - South of the Limpopo River.

Race 2: Coloureds
Ethnic-linguistic groups/
a) Cape Coloured b) Malays c) Griquas d) Rehoboth Bastards.
Areas/
- Cape - Transvaal – Transkei

Race 3: Asians
Ethnic-linguistic groups/
a) Indians b) Other smaller groups
Areas/
- Transvaal - Orange Free State

Race 4: Whites
Ethnic-linguistic groups
a) British b) Afrikaners
Areas
- Cape - Transvaal - Transkei - Orange Free State – Natal

European South Africans are also unique on the continent for at least three reasons:

- Demographics and Influence: First, their population size is significantly larger than anywhere else in Africa, meaning they cannot be dismissed as an insignificant minority. Comprising 18% of the total population, they not only wield complete political control over the majority but also occupy the vast majority of skilled professional roles.
- Cultural Division: Secondly, they are uniquely divided into distinct English- and Afrikaans-speaking communities. Approximately 40 % of white South Africans speak English as their mother tongue, while 60% speak Afrikaans.
- Deep Historical Roots: Finally, they possess a long history on the continent, particularly the Afrikaners, who view South Africa as their true homeland rather than any European country. Consequently, without grasping this unique dynamic, it is impossible to understand South African history.

This brief summary of South Africa's history aims to foster a deeper understanding of this complex past by addressing several critical questions: Why did South Africa develop into a multiracial country? What factors deeply attached the white minority to this land? Why did they implement the policy of Apartheid, and how did the African population respond to these conditions?

Ultimately, the purpose of this study is to demonstrate how oppressive and violent the doctrine of Apartheid truly is. Developed and maintained by the white minority, this policy was engineered to create two separate and unequal societies: a powerful, dominant white community and a weak, oppressed Black majority.

Structural Overview of the Paper

To examine these dynamics, this paper is organized into three distinct parts:

I: Colonial Invasions (Up to 1910)

This part explores the early history of European colonial invasions in South Africa. It highlights the initial arrival of the Portuguese and Dutch, before focusing on the British settlement, which emerged as the most influential colonial force shaping the region.

II: The Road to Apartheid (1910–1961)

Covering a critical fifty-year period, this part discusses three major historical milestones: the creation of the Union of South Africa, the country's trajectory before and after the two World Wars, and the subsequent rise of the National Party alongside the formal implementation of Apartheid laws. These events are essential to illustrate the country's profound political and social transformations.

III: Resistance and Republic (1961–1976)

The final part examines the establishment of the Republic, the adoption of a new constitution, and the enactment of harsher discriminatory laws targeting the Black population. It further analyzes the emergence of African political organizations, such as the African National Congress (ANC), and other organized liberation movements that rose to resist the National Party's oppressive regime.

As Frantz Fanon famously observed: *"If colonialism is violence in its natural state, Apartheid represents the most perfect form of colonialism in the history of the world."* *The Wretched of the Earth, 1961, chapter 1, p.2.*

I / Colonial Invasions of South Africa (up to 1910)

In order to understand South African history, we go back to the first arrival of Europeans there. Prior to the European settlement in the Cape during the seventeenth century, the western half of the Cape Province was sparsely inhabited by the San and the Khoi people (they are called the Khoisan, are the original inhabitants of Southern Africa known as nomadic hunter-gatherers (the San) and pastoralist livestock herders (the Khoi)) . The eastern half of the Cape Province and the whole of the coastlands of Natal had been settled for many centuries by Bantu-speaking people.

At the time of the European advance eastward in the eighteenth century, the southwestward frontier of the Bantu lay approximately along the line of the Great Fish River. The first European contact with the South African coast resulted from efforts to find an ocean route to the Indies at the end of the fifteenth century, and it ended with the British settlement.

1. The First Attempts at Colonial Settlements

A. The Arrival of the Portuguese in South Africa

In 1488, a Portuguese expedition led by Bartholomew Diaz rounded the southern tip of Africa for the first time. Diaz's voyage ended near present-day Port Elizabeth before he turned back to Europe. It was only during the return voyage that the explorers discovered the Cape of Good Hope. Nine years later, Vasco da Gama opened the sea route

from Europe to Asia via the Cape of Good Hope and the East African coast in 1498–1499.

The major Portuguese objective in Southeast Africa was to exploit the gold resources of the Shona people. Therefore, the initial Portuguese intentions were exclusively commercial by the end of the sixteenth century. Trade routes to the gold-producing regions were to be opened from the coastal settlements of Sofala (is a Swahili trading port on the central coast of Mozambique) and Mozambique. The Swahili traders were to be expelled, while the rights of the indigenous Africans were to be respected. By the end of the sixteenth century, these commercial objectives had been partially achieved.

Using the Zambezi River as their principal route to the interior, the Portuguese founded and garrisoned settlements along the riverbanks at Sena and Tete (are two trading towns situated along the Zambezi River in Mozambique). These measures enabled them to secure the lion's share of the gold trade from the Shona (are indigenous Bantu ethnic group native to South Africa) territories.

In 1569, a new Portuguese king, Sebastiao, sent a thousand men under Francisco Barreto's leadership. Their orders were to gain control of the gold mines, ensure they were properly exploited, expel the Swahili traders, and secure safe access for Portuguese missionaries.

This episode showed that with their sixteenth-century firearms, the Portuguese could occasionally make impressive military demonstrations; however, they were unable to exert permanent control over the Shona. An initial attempt to establish direct rule over the Mwene Mutapa Empire (was a powerful Shona empire) was a complete failure.

Thereafter, the initiative in extending Portuguese influence passed into the hands of private traders. Some of them were Portuguese citizens, while others were of Indian descent from Goa (it is a small coastal state in India). These traders succeeded in persuading the Mwene Mutapa or other powerful rulers to put them in command of chiefdoms within their states. They ruled these chiefdoms through subordinate chiefs, who were generally the traditional rulers of the area.
Though they obtained their chiefdoms from African rulers, the traders wanted to maintain their Portuguese connections. Therefore, they formally offered their territories to the king of Portugal and received legal title from him. These states were known as Prazos which were large agricultural lands in the Zambezi River valley of Mozambique.
The Prazo owners were thus able to use their forces to intervene in succession disputes within the Mwene Mutapa Empire. However, they weakened their position by over-exploiting their subjects and the gold resources of the area.

Finally, in the 1690s, the Changamire (they were the powerful rulers and emperors who dominated Shona state and other territories in South Africa and Botswana from 1600s to 1830s) invaded and conquered most of the northern part of the Shona country, ousting the Portuguese from the entire goldfield area. Consequently, the Portuguese never returned in strength because they had not made better use of their opportunities in Southern Africa. Ultimately, they failed to create an efficient system of local administration, as most local officials used their offices for private profit rather than for the promotion of the Portuguese government.

B. The Dutch Settlement in the Cape

Portugal's power had begun to decline, and English and Dutch ships vied to replace the Portuguese on the profitable spice trade route.

Serious Dutch interest in the Cape was awakened after 1647, when a captain of the Dutch East India Company and his crew were shipwrecked there for several months. In 1651, the Company's directors dispatched an expedition under Jan van Riebeeck to establish a refreshment station. They landed at Table Bay (a natural harbor on the Atlantic Ocean coast of South Africa) on April 6, 1652, and it was from this nucleus that South Africa's settlement grew.

The Dutch East India Company initially consisted only of the Company's servants, comprising one hundred men and four women. However, it was soon decided to allow a few of these individuals to settle as free citizens with farms of their own. Gradually, their numbers increased. Then, under the governorship of Simon van der Stel, a deliberate policy of increasing the population was undertaken to strengthen it against possible attacks by France.
More Dutchmen came, and a party of French Protestant refugees fleeing religious persecution was also settled in the colony. These refugees introduced efficient farming techniques, but they eventually lost their language as they were absorbed into the predominant Dutch population.

The settlers began to drift away from the Cape, first trading with the Khoi for cattle, and later taking up farming themselves, often forcing the Khoi to abandon their lands. The main stream of expansion flowed up the East Coast where the rains were heavier. There, in the eighteenth century, settlers began to enter the area called the Zuurveld, near the Fish River, which the Nguni-speaking group was also just beginning to settle. When the colony was first founded, there was no intention on the part of the Company to encourage racial discrimination.

The situation started to change after 1716, when the Company decided to allow the free importation of slaves. Enslaved Black people were brought from West Africa, Delagoa Bay, and Madagascar. Consequently, the White settlers began to develop the attitude that they were naturally superior and entitled to rule over those they deemed inferior. The white population felt extremely isolated, surrounded by large numbers of slaves and Khoi servants who might easily turn against them. They believed the only way to protect themselves was to support one another at all times against the non-European population and keep them firmly suppressed.
Therefore, the attitude of White superiority and non-White inferiority (which was heavily reinforced by fear) established a deep hold on the minds of the settlers and deeply impacted the Black population, who were condemned by this racial division.

C. The Khoi Reaction to the Cape Colony Expansion

As the colony expanded, the land of the San and Khoi indigenous populations was taken away. Within a few years of the colony's establishment, a war broke out between the Dutch East India Company and a Khoi group who protested that their lands were being seized. The war lasted from 1658 to 1660, and the Company emerged victorious.

Later, Khoi numbers were severely reduced by devastating smallpox epidemics. Their political system and culture were further undermined by contact with white traders, who tempted them to sell their cattle for strong drink, tobacco, and other European goods.

As they lost their cattle, many of them gave up their land with little resistance; they either entered the service of the white settlers as herdsmen or drifted further into the interior. However, others were forced by the loss of their cattle to revert to living by hunting and gathering, and they were called Bushmen and Hottentots. Historians have tended to

confuse Bushmen and Hottentots with the San, who resisted white encroachment with fierce determination, launching lightning raids on stock, and killing herdsmen with their poisoned arrows.

In response to Khoi and San resistance, the settlers developed the Commando system. Though the commandos waged a war of extermination against the San and the Khoi raiding bands, hunting them down like wild animals, they did not succeed in destroying them.

2. The British Settlement

Since Great Britain won the war against France, which dominated the Netherlands, it took all the possessions of the Dutch in Cape Town. The British The Khoi reaction to the Cape Colony expansion

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Once the Cape passed again under British control, the importation of slaves into the British Empire was forbidden, and many slaves were freed. This action was led by the abolitionist movement in Britain. They applied this rule because they needed workers in Cape Town. After 1807, Black and Coloured people were better treated by the British, especially the Coloured population, who were privileged to own land and move freely in Cape Town.

Conditions were not attractive to British emigrants, however, until the discovery of diamonds in 1867 and the Witwatersrand gold in 1886.

A. The Missionaries' Role in the South African Territory

Missionaries first arrived in Xhosa territory in 1799, marking the beginning of a growing missionary presence in the region. By 1845, the London Missionary Society had established at least seven permanent mission stations. Missionaries developed a written Xhosa alphabet to facilitate the translation of the Bible and founded village schools to promote literacy and Christian education. In 1841, the Lovedale Seminary, located in the Eastern Cape, was created to train both European and African teachers who would serve in mission schools.

Beyond their religious objectives, missionaries sought to introduce modern agricultural practices and challenge traditional Xhosa gender roles, in which women were primarily

responsible for cultivation while men focused on hunting, herding, and warfare. They also encouraged participation in a cash-based economy by creating demand for manufactured goods that could only be purchased through the cultivation of cash crops or through wage labour on White-owned farms. As labour shortages increased on Boer farms, the colonial government responded in 1828 by easing restrictions on Xhosa workers entering the colony through a system of labour passes.

Besides translations of religious Christian books in the vernacular, the missionaries brought about an advantage that would change traditional society. They fought to maintain the vernacular at the first level of education and that in spite of the government and even the people's preference for English. This attitude could seem strange when one knows that the missionaries believed in the superiority of their own culture and its vehicle, the language.

B. The Application of British Rule

In 1833, British traders entered Port Natal to conclude a treaty with the Zulu chief, Shaka. The latter did not agree because of his fear of the British. In 1836, the Boers wanted to settle in the Northern half of Natal. But, the blow to Boer hopes for new lands for their sons, came when they were beginning to feel seriously the cultural and legal impact of British rule. The Boers reacting to the situation, they found it increasingly intolerable. They decided to leave Cape colony for a new land of their own where they hoped to be free of British interference. As a result, the Great Trek began. A great number of Boers went into the Transvaal and North of the Orange River, but these areas were also taken by the British in 1848. So, the Boers rejected British rule. In 1852, the British saw the necessity to give independent states to the Boers by signing the Sand River Convention.

C. The Growth of Boer Republics

The signing of the Sand River Convention in 1852 marked an important step in the political development of the Boer communities in the Transvaal. Following the convention, Boer leaders adopted a constitution that established a centralized government with a president, executive council, legislature, and high court, all based in Pretoria. Despite these efforts, political unity remained fragile, as some settlers formed short-lived independent republics in the Soutpansberg Mountains and at Lydenburg. Although elected president, Pretorius struggled to unite the various Boer factions. In 1872, he was succeeded by T.F. Burgers, who introduced several reforms aimed at improving the republic's economy, though with limited success.

A major turning point came with the discovery of gold near Lydenburg in 1872. Concerned by the economic potential of the region and influenced by mining interests, the British government developed plans to annex the Transvaal. To facilitate this objective, Theophilus Shepstone, a British official, was sent to negotiate with the Boers. He received support from President Burgers, who viewed British annexation as a solution to the republic's persistent financial problems. However, many Boer leaders, particularly Paul Kruger, valued political independence over economic benefits and strongly opposed British control.

Tensions eventually erupted into the First Anglo-Boer War (1880–1881). Under Kruger's leadership, the Boers rebelled against British rule and achieved a decisive victory at the Battle of Majuba Hill, where British forces suffered a major defeat and their commander was killed. Unable to sustain the conflict, Britain agreed to a ceasefire. In 1884, the Boers expanded their influence by claiming a large portion of Zululand, citing a treaty with the

Zulu king that allegedly granted them extensive territory, including access to the sea. They established the New Republic in northwestern Zululand, which was later incorporated into the Transvaal. During this period, the term Afrikaner gained wider acceptance as a marker of Boer identity.

The discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand further intensified tensions between the Boers and the British. In April 1899, foreign miners petitioned the British government for protection against what they considered discriminatory policies under Kruger's administration. Negotiations between Kruger and the British High Commissioner, Sir Alfred Milner, failed to produce a compromise. British demands for recognition of their authority, combined with the arrival of military reinforcements, increased hostility between the two sides.

On 11 October 1899, the Transvaal declared war on Britain, initiating the Second Anglo-Boer War. Boer commandos achieved significant early successes, advancing into both the Cape Colony and Natal. Nevertheless, they were unable to capture key British strongholds such as Kimberley and Mafeking. As the conflict continued, Britain deployed substantial reinforcements and adopted a harsh scorched-earth policy, destroying farms and placing Boer women and children in concentration camps.

The severe suffering experienced by Boer civilians, together with the diminishing prospects of military victory, persuaded Boer leaders to seek peace in 1902. Following negotiations with Lord Kitchener, they agreed to surrender and recognize British sovereignty. In exchange, Britain promised to grant internal self-government at a later stage. These terms were formalized in the Treaty of Vereeniging, signed on 31 May 1902.

After the war, Sir Alfred Milner was appointed High Commissioner and governor of the newly acquired colonies. He introduced administrative reforms aimed at establishing a new governmental system. However, after the fall of the Conservative government in Britain in 1905, Milner was recalled. The incoming Liberal government sought reconciliation with the Boers and granted self-government to the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. Political participation, however, remained restricted to White voters, excluding Black Africans, Coloured people, and Indians from meaningful representation.

The new administrations took office in March 1907, with former Boer generals Louis Botha and Jan Smuts emerging as leading political figures. The pro-Afrikaner political movement also achieved electoral success in the Cape Colony in 1908. Recognizing the advantages of cooperation, the governments of the three colonies supported the creation of a unified South African state, believing that political and economic strength could best be achieved through union.

II/ The New British Policy in South Africa (1910–1961)

A national constitutional convention was held in which all four colonies (Cape Colony, Natal, Orange Free State, and Transvaal) were represented. A number of former Boer leaders met in 1908 and 1909 in Cape Colony, coming out strongly in favor of a unitary rather than a federal government, in the hope of securing the dominance of the Boers. They proposed a constitution that would concentrate power within the national government. Furthermore, they requested a guarantee of legal equality between the languages of the British and Afrikaner communities. The proposed constitution was strongly endorsed by the separate colonies and was enacted by the British Parliament in September 1909.

1. The Creation of the Union

The new state came into being as the Union of South Africa, a dominion of the British Empire, on May 31, 1910. The key date here was 1910. In that year, the British imperial government in London withdrew Britain's political power from South Africa and handed it over to the two White minorities: those who spoke English and those who spoke Afrikaans. While the White populations of the four former states disagreed on many issues, they were firmly united against the Black African majority, as well as the Coloured and Asian minorities.

The granting of representative government to the colonies provided the opportunity for Afrikaner nationalism to seize political power.

A. Political Shifts in the Provinces:

The Transvaal: Het Volk (a Boer party) led by Louis Botha and Jan Christiaan Smuts won a large majority.
The Orange River Colony: Control passed into the hands of the Orangia Unie Party (OUP) under J.B.M. Hertzog.
The Cape: The strongly pro-British administration was defeated by the Afrikaner Bond, which installed the government of John Xavier Merriman.

Although nationalist in sentiment, if not always in action, none of these Afrikaner parties were prepared to break entirely with the British. Smuts, Botha, and even Merriman were willing to create the Union of South Africa in association with the British; however, over time, the force of Afrikaner nationalism became much more visibly apparent.

B. The 1911 Election and Political Realignment:

The first elections under the new constitution were held in 1911. The Afrikaner parties of the four provinces merged to form the South African Party under Botha and Smuts, which won the election. J.B.M. Hertzog, a former Boer general, was initially included in the Cabinet but broke away in 1912 to help form the National Party. The opposition at the time was deeply divided along class lines:
English-Speaking Unionists: Represented commerce, finance, mining, and Natal agricultural interests.
The Labour Party: A small party dominated by English men and led by Colonel Creswell, which represented the restive White working class (within which Afrikaners were a growing minority).

C. Economic Landscape and Segregationist Policies:

From the outset, the new government sought to influence the direction of economic growth. In the first few years of the Union, the economic breakdown of national income was as follows:
Mining: 27%
Agriculture: 17%
Manufacturing: 7%
The first Union census in 1911 highlighted shifting demographics, revealing that one in eight Africans, alongside half of the European, Coloured, and Indian communities, were living in urban towns.

D. The Central Policy of the Union:

The chief objective of the Union was to drive Africans into labour-service for White farms, White industries, and White families.

One of the harshest of these new racist laws was the Natives Land Act of 1913, which severely limited the areas in which Black citizens were allowed to own land in the future. These strictly delimited zones constituted less than 10% of the country's total area.

Domestic exports were worth; two-thirds of this came from gold and the remainder from diamonds, wool, and agriculture. In such discrimination, farming was still low. Most White farmers were poorly educated, and their techniques were often inefficient and liable to damage the environment.

The most important way in which the government subsidized White enterprise was by helping to mobilize African labor while keeping down its price. It also required Africans remaining on White property to provide 90 days' labor each year for their landlord. But this Act was invalid after a few years because it had not been passed by the two-thirds majority needed to curtail these rights.

So, for most of the Urban Africans, conditions were very bad; malnutrition was widespread in the reserves, on White farms, and in the expanding slums.

Drawing on experience gained at the 1909 Convention, Blacks formed the South African Native National Congress in January 1912, under the leadership of J.L. Dube and R.I. Seme. They united all the smaller organizations and associations into a national body. Their aim was to demand equal rights and justice, and to put forward the political demands of Black people prior to their entrance into the First World War.

2. South Africa Prior to and After the Two World Wars

In August 1914, the First World War broke out. South Africa, with a German colony on its borders (South West Africa), was at once involved, and the war aggravated the tensions within the Afrikaner community. Botha and Smuts affirmed their support for Britain. Boer commandos rebelled when Botha ordered South African forces to invade the German colony. The rebellion was to provide symbols of British oppression and to show a good deal of Afrikaner feeling against Smuts and Botha. The forces under Botha's command invaded the German territory, completing their conquest by the middle of 1915. South Africa became a charter member of the League of Nations in 1919. Prime Minister Botha died in the same year and was replaced by General Smuts.

A group of Marxists split from the Labour Party in 1915 to form the International Socialist League of South Africa (ISLSA), which became the South African Communist Party (SACP) in the early 1920s. Under the pressure of rising costs in late 1921, the Chamber of Mines announced a plan to reduce the wages of White workers and to hire Blacks for semi-skilled jobs, which were previously reserved for White workers. A strike was immediately called by the Mine Workers Union, a majority of whom were Afrikaner republicans. The strikes and riots lasted ten weeks, and then they were crushed by government troops.

One of the new government's first acts was to propose the creation of a state-owned steel industry. The Nationalists felt that the creation of their own steel industry would end the country's dependence on Britain for its steel needs. Parliament passed the Iron and Steel Industry Act, which set up the South African Iron and Steel Corporation (SAISC). This

encouraged the National Party to favor state involvement in future major industrial development projects.

In the same period, the private economic enterprises of the Afrikaners were beginning to challenge English dominance in a number of other fields. South Africa's independence from British control was further underlined by other political and economic moves under the Nationalist government. In 1931, the British Parliament passed the Statute of Westminster, which assured that the British government could not exert ultimate control over the acts of the Union government, and that the British ambassadorial delegation was separated from the office of the Governor-General.

Acts specifically aimed at protecting White workers from Black competition included, for example, the Mine and Works Act of 1926, which legally barred Blacks from holding skilled positions in the mines.

Therefore, South African participation in World War I had greatly affected the outlook of many Blacks in the country. In the years after the War, the primary objects of Black interest were the numerous and complicated pass laws. They were aimed at directing and controlling every movement of Blacks. The Labour Party, in trouble for some time, split in 1928 on the issue of supporting the Nationalists who won the elections of 1929. For the first time, racial issues, introduced in such a way as to capitalize on the traditional fears of White voters, divided the White parties.

The Nationalists were firmly committed to preserving White political and social dominance in South Africa. They criticized Jan Smuts and the South African Party, accusing them of being willing to extend political rights to Black South Africans and suggesting that such policies could eventually lead to the territorial division of the country between White and Black populations. Despite these concerns, the National Party itself opposed any form of territorial separation between racial groups.

The effects of the Great Depression reached South Africa in 1931, causing widespread unemployment and severe hardship, particularly in rural communities. Public dissatisfaction was largely directed at the government. Concerned that the Nationalists might suffer electoral losses in the upcoming 1934 elections, J.B.M. Hertzog sought cooperation with Smuts in order to address the economic crisis. As a result, their respective political organizations merged in 1934 to create the United Party (UP). Nevertheless, not all members supported the merger, and factions from both sides chose to remain independent.

Among the opponents was D.F. Malan, a prominent Afrikaner nationalist, who established the Purified National Party (PNP). At the same time, many of Smuts's supporters formed the Dominion Party (DP). The Purified National Party later gained additional support from Hertzog followers who opposed South Africa's participation in the Second World War. During this period, many Afrikaners sympathized with Germany, and some nationalist organizations adopted structures and ideas inspired by the Nazi movement, attracted by Adolf Hitler's claims regarding the superiority of the Germanic race.

Although a significant number of Afrikaners within the United Party opposed South Africa's involvement in the war, the PNP took a more radical position by openly favoring a German victory. Its leaders believed that the defeat of Britain would create an opportunity to transform South Africa into an independent Afrikaner republic. Hertzog initially attempted to maintain South African neutrality, but a majority in Parliament

supported Smuts, who consequently aligned the country with Britain and the Allied war effort.

In the wartime elections of 1943, the United Party secured another decisive electoral victory and remained in power. However, the reorganized National Party (NP) intensified its preparations for the 1948 elections, presenting itself as the defender of White interests and promoting a new political program designed to preserve White supremacy in South Africa.

3. The National Party and the Rise of the Apartheid Policy

The new policy of the National Party was in line with the theory of H.F. Verwoerd, which called for the "separation of the races" in South Africa through rigid barriers. This segregation in multiracial areas was to be carried into every field. The National Party's platform stressed an aspect of Apartheid that would preserve a market for White labor, in which non-Whites could not compete. The 1948 elections drove the Nationalists from a small minority to a commanding position with seventy legislative seats.

From 1948 onward, governments controlled by the NP enacted legislation to implement the Apartheid philosophy, aiming to create an Afrikaner-dominated state in which all liberal appositions would be effectively silenced. Consequently, various discriminatory legislations were introduced:

In 1949: Interracial marriages were declared illegal by the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (often associated with the Immorality Act), and sexual intercourse between Whites and non-Whites was made punishable by up to seven years in prison.

In 1950: The Population Registration Act provided for the classification of the South African population by race. This was based on family history, social acceptance, and appearance, which determined an individual's status in all areas of social, economic, and political life.

In the same year: The Group Areas Act was introduced, aiming to separate residential areas and community centres of each ethnic group, so that persons of any other group were disqualified from owning property or living there except by special permit. There were nine group areas for eight ethnic groups who were expected to practice their civil rights in their own areas. They had their own schools, hospitals, shopping centers, sports fields, and other facilities.

In 1952, Black Africans were required to carry passes or a "reference book" which included information necessary in terms of the law governing control into urban and industrial areas. A Black African might visit a White urban area for up to 72 hours without obtaining an employment permit. However, those with employment permits, or those qualified by residence to live in these areas, could be accompanied by their wives and unmarried children under the age of eighteen.

The Bantu Education Act of 1953 enforced the separation of races in all educational institutions, and many mission schools had to close. Black children were to receive an education markedly different from that given to White children. This educational system was carried out despite Black protests against the degradation of their educational standards.

In 1956, the Industrial Conciliation Act authorized the Minister of Labor to create regulations reserving jobs for members of specified races, effectively excluding Black people from such jobs.

Subsequently, the National Party (NP) won the general elections of 1953 and 1958. D.F. Malan retired in 1955 and was replaced by J.G. Strijdom. The United Party (UP) lost more and more of its Afrikaner adherents to the Nationalists because it was continually accused of wanting to improve the position of Black people at the expense of Whites.

In 1959, the government announced that the Black local governments in the reserves were now strong enough to be considered the representative voice of the Black population, and that representation in parliament was therefore redundant.

Prime Minister Strijdom died in 1958, and he was replaced by Hendrik Verwoerd, the foremost proponent of Apartheid and an equally strong supporter of demands for the creation of a republic.

III/ Political Life, Consciousness, and Resistance in South Africa (1961–1976)

The South African political system is unique, and its particular characteristics are likely to affect all of us. White people of European origin, numbering one-fifth (1/5) of the total population, monopolize all the vital decision-making roles, and the rest of the population; most of whom are Black people, are restricted to subordinate roles and discriminated against in many aspects of their daily lives.

1. The Creation of the South African Republic

The constitution of the Republic of South Africa was enacted by the parliament of the Union and came into force on May 31, 1961. But 1961 did not mark a break in South African constitutional and political continuity. The change to a Republic, outside the Commonwealth, necessitated the creation of a new Head of State.

Formerly, the South African monarch was also the monarch of the other kingdoms in the British Commonwealth; he was normally represented by a Governor-General. The Monarch has been replaced by "a State President" who holds office for seven years, unless he resigns or is removed for misconduct by resolution of both the Senate and the House of Assembly.

The State President is declared to be the Head of the Republic and the Commander-in-Chief of the Defense Force, and to have the power to convene parliament, to dissolve either or both of its Houses to make ministerial and other appointments, to confer honors, to pardon offenders, to appoint and receive ambassadors, to enter into and ratify treaties, to declare peace and war, and to possess the prerogative powers formerly possessed by the Queen.

However, the constitution also ensures that in exercising each of these powers, the State President is normally the creature of the Executive Council. Every official instrument signed by the State President requires the countersignature of a Minister, which means that he is to act on ministerial advice whenever possible.

When the new constitution was being debated in Parliament, Prime Minister H.F. Verwoerd said it was the government's intention that the State President should be above politics—a symbol of national dignity and pride. The constitution vests the real executive power in an Executive Council of not more than eighteen Ministers, each of whom is the head of one or more departments of State.

Though the words "Responsible Government", "Prime Minister", "Cabinet", and "Party" have no place in the Written Constitution, this means a system of responsible government as practiced in the United Kingdom and most of the countries of the British

Commonwealth. However, if a Prime Minister decides to free himself of a colleague, he can easily do so. Normally, the Prime Minister's request suffices, but if the colleague refuses to resign, the Prime Minister has only to tender his own resignation to the Head of State, who will then invite him to form a new Cabinet from which he will exclude the recalcitrant Minister, as Louis Botha did in 1912 when he excluded Hertzog.

Another system of local government has emerged. The control and administration of Native Affairs gave the Governor-General-in-Council the wide power over Africans that was previously possessed by the colonial governors. As a result, the President of the Republic is the "Supreme chief" over all African inhabitants. In the practice of Bantu Administration and Development, by White Bantu Affairs commissioners, and by "Bantu Authorities", the Bantu Authorities form hierarchies from Tribal Authorities, through District (in the Transkei) and Regional Authorities, to Territorial Authorities. The government has appointed Commissioners General to supervise these "emergent national communities."

2. The Emergence of African Political Parties

For generations, the South African government's suppression of basic human rights led Black citizens to believe that their conditions were hopeless. Yet, there had always been individuals with a revolutionary mindset to guide others toward a better understanding of their situation. The origins of a solid policy based on the principle of non-White organization can be traced back a long time, to when a new generation of African intellectuals began to lose patience with the established leadership.

The South African Native National Congress (SANNC) was formed in Bloemfontein in 1912. Its members came from all over the country and were dedicated to promoting national rather than ethnic unity; most of them were lawyers, teachers, clergymen, and journalists. Although a few were traders and farmers, some had traveled to Britain and the U.S.A., including John Dube, who was elected president.

There was a growing political awareness, but the Union of South Africa remained a White man's country in which there was no room for Black politicians. The Coloured community expressed its objection to the terms of the Union through the African Political Organization (APO), which was led by Abdullah Abdurahman. When the first Native Congress deputation arrived in Cape Town in 1912, it met with the APO executive, and both organizations called for annual consultations.

The politics of the Indian community were dominated by Mohandas Gandhi, who had founded the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) in 1894 and spent a significant amount of time in South Africa before finally returning to India in 1914.

In 1909, he went to London to voice the opposition of the NIC to the color-bar clauses in the draft South Africa Act. However, in 1913, the Union government banned further immigration from India, except for the wives or children of Indians already domiciled there. Gandhi did not quarrel with this in principle, as his preferred tactic was non-violent resistance.

In 1912, the ANC represented the interests and aspirations of a people who had been recently overcome by force, and whom the constitution of the Union of South Africa excluded from the political process. As Oliver Tambo put it:

"The South African constitution excludes the Blacks.... There is nothing we can do about the decisions, the policies, the regime.... This is not a civil rights struggle at all. If we

were citizens like any other, then of course there would be rights to fight for. Our struggle is basically, essentially a national struggle."

Forming a youth league in 1944, those men gained control of the ANC. In 1949, when the National Conference adopted their program, it included the use of strikes and civil disobedience. Despite this change, the ANC consistently followed a policy of non-violence for 50 years, regardless of attacks and persecution designed to provoke its members and leaders into violence.

The regime interpreted the movement's peaceful political program as a sign of weakness. The ANC had three major demands:

- The imprisoned leadership of the ANC must be freed.
- Organizations that had been banned must be legalized and given full political rights.
- The Apartheid system—which is a crime against humanity—must be unconditionally dismantled in favor of a democratic system of government.

The African Peoples' Organization (APO), representing South African Coloured people and formed in 1902, similarly called on the Union of South Africa to stop its brutal system. They were being expropriated from their land by White colonists and by the State. They were deprived of political rights and of the right to freedom of movement. They were subjected to the most brutal forms of racial and class oppression.

The Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), formed in 1959 under the leadership of Mr. Robert M. Sobukwe, aimed to achieve fair treatment for Africans in shops.

Its core ideal was to make the African people conscious of the fact that they had to win their own liberation and rely on themselves, instead of relying on "sympathetic" Whites. Mr. Sobukwe was sentenced to imprisonment in 1960.

The South African Indian Congress (SAIC) was born out of the long struggle of Indians to win recognition for themselves as part of the South African community. Its leader was Dr. Yusuf Dadoo.

The South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) was a federation of a number of smaller White and non-White trade unions, operating mainly in secondary industries. It tried to implement the ideal of inter-racial trade unions based on freedom of association. There was also the White Congress of Democrats, which was an organization of White citizens who were prepared to speak up against the doctrines of White supremacy. They dreamed of a new South Africa based on a democratic system where men and women of all races would enjoy equal opportunities in all fields of life.

The Liberal Party was formed in 1953, serving as an active party that drew its support from all races. Its leaders included distinguished South Africans like Alan Paton and Peter Brown. Its purpose was to achieve a democratic government representing all races.

The African Resistance Movement (ARM) was born in 1960. It was a multi-racial organization consisting mainly of young, White professional men and students. In 1963, it committed acts of violence in the hope of frightening the government into making concessions, but it was subsequently banned.

In these circumstances, there was no noticeable way in which new revolutionary leaders could emerge or new revolutionary organizations could be created. However, it was the rise of Black Consciousness that proved to be more fruitful in the revolutionary struggle.

3. Resistance in South Africa

Facing segregation and injustice, Black South Africans fought back. Their resistance began well before 1948; the year Apartheid became an official state policy. The events of the Second World War, and the subsequent victory over Nazi Fascist racism, had brought new hopes of democratic progress to Black people in South Africa. However, the ruling White minority had no intention of consenting to any such progress. They were determined to maintain their dictatorship over Black people in order to exploit Black labor and land.

In response, Black people turned to peaceful protest. In 1946, African mine workers in the Transvaal gold mines went on strike demanding improvements to their very low wages, but armed police forced them back to work, killing thirteen miners. African farmers also protested that same year against discriminatory laws that harmed them, but they too were crushed. Following these passive protests against the pass laws, all Black protest was automatically declared illegal and banned.

The African National Congress (ANC) subsequently transformed into an action group. In December 1951, a convention was held to challenge the forced displacement of Black people from urban areas. In 1952, the ANC and the SAIC (South African Indian Congress) joined forces in a campaign of mass defiance against the pass laws. Consequently, 8,000 volunteers; including Black, Indian, and Coloured citizens, willingly violated the pass and segregation laws.

Even peaceful demonstrations were now met with gunfire. Furthermore, the government introduced harsh new laws to punish non-violent protesters with imprisonment, public whipping, or both. This state violence prompted the formation of an alliance of anti-racist groups representing Black, Coloured, and Asian communities in 1955, known as the Congress of the People. This coalition demanded that the government put an end to racial discrimination, but police intervened and arrested 156 members of the Congress.

In 1960, in the township of Sharpeville, police opened fire on a crowd of Black people demonstrating against the pass laws, a protest led by the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC). Sixty-seven men, women, and children were killed. This massacre shocked the world, but to African leaders in South Africa, it brought a new conviction that peaceful protest of this kind cost lives but won nothing. Consequently, they turned to counter-violence. They began to organize sabotage, but they were betrayed and tracked down. Some of their most outstanding leaders, including the ANC leader Nelson Mandela, were imprisoned for life. With this setback, a pause in African political resistance occurred within the Apartheid state.

The final years of the 1960s seemed to be a "time of silence". Inside South Africa, the leaders of the anti-apartheid movement were either in prison, banned from public life, or dead. However, workers across many industries launched mass strikes against starvation wages, and this time, they were too numerous for the police to force back to work through gunfire. Thousands won higher wages. Although repression ruled as before, it was now met with a new spirit of resistance.

This new spirit also appeared among Black students in secondary schools. Student leaders, such as Steve Biko, saw the need to work for unity against the "divide and rule" system of "tribal" colleges. In 1969, they formed the SASO (South African Students' Organization). Then, looking for a way forward for political action in spite of the repressive laws, they launched the Black Consciousness movement in 1970.

The successful strikes of 1972–73 gave them fresh encouragement. Black Consciousness was not a Black racist reaction to White racism; rather, its aim was to raise African self-confidence after the defeats of the 1960s. In April–May 1976, the school students of Soweto declared a boycott of their schools in protest against discriminatory education, organizing the movement themselves. This was not because they did not want to learn, but because they refused to be taught their lessons in the language of their oppressors, the Afrikaner rulers. Many students were killed or wounded. Many others escaped abroad by going secretly across the frontiers. They joined the ANC there, training for guerrilla actions against the racist system. After 1976, they began returning secretly across the borders. Back in South Africa, they launched sabotage actions, attacking police stations, railway lines, and various other instruments of state repression.

At the same time, the strike movement achieved significant gains beyond better wages. For the first time, Black factory workers succeeded in forming independent trade union groupings, such as the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU). Throughout the 1970s, the struggle in South Africa continued to move from one painful chapter to the next, but the likelihood of eventual success increasingly shifted to the side of the anti-racist movement.

The final word should rest with Mandela himself, who wrote these words in the aftermath of the Soweto uprising:

"From all rulers we can expect nothing... vague promises, tinkering with the machinery of Apartheid, constitutional juggling, massive arrests, and detentions side by side with renewed overtures aimed at weakening and forestalling the unity of us Blacks and dividing the forces of change. These are the fixed paths along which they will move." ("Message from Robben Island" an official publication by the ANC, June 1980, p.18.)

Conclusion

The political and social change in South Africa up to 1976 can be understood through three distinct historical periods.

Before 1910, South Africa was recognized as a resource-rich land that attracted various European merchants and navigators from Portugal, Germany, and England, who later became its settlers. While the British imposed their rule on the Native population, the Boers rejected British dominance. As a result, the British granted independent states to the Boers through the Sand River Convention.

From 1910 to 1961, the British and the Boers formed the Union of South Africa. During this time, the British and Afrikaner (Boer) communities united against Black South Africans. The Afrikaners established the National Party, which exercised complete political control over the country. Additionally, they implemented the policy of Apartheid to enforce their supremacy in South Africa. This policy was maintained through various oppressive laws that restricted Native rights and dominated South African politics.

From 1961 to 1976, the Afrikaners became the most powerful community in the country. South Africa left the Commonwealth to become a Republic under a new constitution, introducing new racist laws that consolidated their policy of segregation and discrimination. However, after a long period of passive resistance from the Black community, various political parties were banned. Consequently, Africans resolved to overcome this policy through boycotts and active struggles, sacrificing their lives for freedom, equality, and justice.

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