

The Rise and Fall of Apartheid

In 1910, the Union of South Africa was formed by the combination of two British colonies and two Boer republics, and although the British and Dutch colonists were given considerable rights to self-government, blacks were entirely excluded from the political process. In 1923, residential segregation was established and enforced. In 1926, blacks were banned from work in certain skilled occupations that whites wanted for themselves. When South Africa won its independence from Britain in 1931, the racial policies didn't improve. In fact, a system of **apartheid** (separation of the races) was established in South Africa in 1948 as an all-encompassing way of dividing black, which made up 80% of the population and whites. By the late 1950s, apartheid was extended to the creation of homelands, areas of the country that were "set aside" for blacks. The homelands were in the worst part of the country, and comprised less than 15% of the nation's land. The whites were given the cities, the resource-rich mines, and the best farmland. While many blacks were compelled to move to the homelands, others stayed in the cities, where they were segregated into black slums.

1. What are some problems that were beginning to appear in South Africa?
2. Define apartheid.

In response, the black community organized. In the 1950s, Nelson Mandela became leader of the African National Congress, an organization determined to abolish apartheid. At first, he advocated peaceful protest, following the example of Gandhi. But in 1960, after the Sharpeville Massacre in which 67 protestors were killed, the African National Congress supported guerilla warfare. At Sharpeville, blacks were protesting a policy that forced them to carry passes to be in the cities in order to go to their jobs. The passes were issued at places of employment. This meant that if you worked and your wife didn't, you couldn't go into the city with her because she does not have a pass. The massacre rallied the anti-apartheid movement. Mandela was arrested in 1964 for his role in the anti-apartheid violence and sentenced to life in prison.

After decades of increasing pressure from the black majority and the international community, South Africa finally released Mandela in 1990 and agreed to negotiate on the policy of apartheid. The government more than negotiated, it crumbled. In 1994, after apartheid was abolished, Mandela was elected president of the first free and open election in the nation's history.

1. What happened and the Sharpeville Massacre?
2. What did the African National Congress resort to and why?
3. Describe the 1990s in South Africa.