

# Apartheid Policy and the Prospect of Majority Rule in South Africa

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## Introduction

The policy of Apartheid practiced today in South Africa could be traced back to the period of white in South Africa in the 17th century and their subsequent suspicion of the nature and interaction of the black native in the sub-region.

Having found the area to have had a conducive atmospheric conditions and fertile agricultural land, the settlers began to really settle down for business. After various wars with the black tribemen, the whites, through their superiority in fire arms and their good organization, were able to defeat the blacks through various forms of rebellions that never ceased to be breaking out since the time white hegemony was installed on South Africa. The first step to confine the blacks to the Native areas they occupy came in 1913 with the introduction of the land act which was meant to perpetuate racial segregation of land between blacks and the whites.<sup>1</sup>

Apartheid became the official policy of the Republic of South Africa in 1948 following the election of the Nationalist Party led by Dr. Malan. The main plank in the Nationalist election platform has been apartheid, separateness, a word newly coined to replace the old segregation.<sup>2</sup> The system was to mean physical separation of races into distinct territories with each section being homogeneous. Apartheid could then be regarded as a modernized form of segregation justified by scripture adapted to industrialization and implemented by the formidable machinery of a contemporary state.<sup>3</sup>

Before the union of 1901, at least in the Cape Colony, blacks were given the power to vote, though their voting power was reduced in 1930 with the extension of franchise to South Africa's white women. However, the electoral strength of the Blacks could not earn them a seat in the House of Assembly, hence they were given the right to elect three whites into the House to represent the Blacks. In 1959, in the Cape Colony, representation was abolished while the representation of the coloured was abolished in 1968 and 1970. There were no Black or coloured representative in the House to compensate these non-whites for their loss of Franchise instead, they were given representative bodies.

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In 1979, Prime Minister P.W. Botha came up with proposals for reforms which gave the appearance of change. Among others was his proposal for a new Parliament which would include seats for Indians and the coloured but excluding the blacks. He called for a new constitution that invites coloured and Indians to join a tricameral Parliament. After the November 2nd referendum of 1983 on the proposed constitution it was agreed upon to give the coloured and Indians some access to a racially segregated three chamber of Parliament which still guarantee domination by white government. The ratio for representation in 4:2:1 for the whites, coloured and Indians respectively.

Since the government of South Africa was voted into power by the white electorate, and since in its operations the government is only mostly catering for the interests of the whites, the other races in the republic are bound to be dissatisfied, discontented with the resent its rules. In the light of this, the white government has employed the use of the army, police, judiciary and the prison to implement and sustain apartheid.

The army and the police are merciless institutions, highly trained and equipped with the sophisticated weapons and machinery of torture and death. Their main function is to defend apartheid and the regime is determined to free its hands for whatever kind of atrocity is required of them. By 1979, the police was made immune by Parliament like the army and the prisons services from public scrutiny. That was why Albie Sachs says that,

"White domination was achieved by the gun and is maintained by the gun, and to some extent South Africa have in recent years gave out on their way to emphasize their military capacity"<sup>4</sup>

The blacks recruited into the police have to power whatsoever. White and black policemen were trained at different institutions. A superior black officer cannot give orders to an inferior white recruit, neither has he the power to arrest a white offender. Since 1972 however, blacks have been trained for anti-guerrilla activities and placed under white control at boarders. The native, however, engaged itself in arrest and brutal suppression of riots and strikes by blacks. For more elaboration of the brutality see table 1.

**Table 1: Effects of Brutality in South Africa,**

Year	Place	Occurrence/Event	No of blacks killed
1949	Rand	Pass and beer raids	6
1950	Witziesbock	Rotal Protest	16
1952	Rand	May day Protest	18
1952	Kimberly	Crowd Revolt in location	14
1960	Sherpeville	Anti pass law Protest	69
1960	Langa (Cape Town)	Anti pass law Protest	2
1960	Durban	Protest over Sherpeville	3
1973	Carletonville	Gold mine strike	6

Source: A. Sachs, *Justice in South Africa*.<sup>5</sup>

The cases of political detainees dying as a result of torture is another common occurrence in South Africa. Some of the effects of torture of political detainees in detention is in table 2.

**Table 2: Deaths Due to Torture of Political Detainees: 1963 -1984**

Year	Total No of Death
1963	3
1964	1
1965	2
1966	4
1967	1
1968	1
1969	8
1971	2
1976	12
1977	14
1978	1
1980	2
1981	2
1982	2
1983	2
1984	5

Source: "South Africa: A People on Trial"<sup>6</sup>

#### Activities of Nationalist Movements in South Africa

The formation of liberation movements in South Africa was a reaction to the oppressive rule of the white minority. The need for equality of all races, democratic government of all races and free movement for all are the factors that geared the oppressed people of South Africa to form liberation movements. The liberation movements have one thing in common, the desire to overthrow the status quo. The most notables among the liberation movements are the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan African Congress (PAC) and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM).

The first conference on nationalist movement was held in 1912 under the auspices of the South Africa all Native Convention (SAANC) which latter

and we have no choice but to hit back by all means in our power in defence of our people, our future and our freedom".<sup>8</sup>

The armed wing of the PAC was also formed in 1963.

The formation of the armed wings for the liberation organizations marked a turning point in the history of the liberation movements in South Africa. They began to a mass arms and ammunitions for guerrilla warfare since they cannot withstand the military might of the white government in a conventional warfare. Having established their headquarters in nearly all the friendly states in the world and have obtained international recognition, the liberation organizations established military bases inside the frontline states in Southern Africa, most especially in Angola, and also began mass recruitment of able-bodied men into their ranks. The organizations carried out series of attacks on installations and bases. Examples of these include the assaults on Sasol oil installation and Voorbekkerbooghe military base. In May, 1963, a bomb blast in Pretoria, the administrative capital of South Africa, was reported to have killed at least 18 people and injured almost 200 others.<sup>9</sup> The blast was blamed on the ANC by the government. The ANC was reported to have over 8,600 guerrillas with about 1,600 operating in South Africa and the armed wing was reported to have committed more than 150 acts of sabotage during the first 18 months of existence.<sup>10</sup>

The liberation movements engaged themselves in a propaganda warfare with the Public of South Africa. They disseminated their propaganda by spreading leaflets of news in cities and establishing their own newspapers. The liberation fronts also used the newspapers. The liberation fronts also used and continue to use the news media of countries like Tanzania and Zambia to counter the propaganda of the apartheid regime. The liberation organizations are also striving hard to get support from many countries..

The road to liberation in South Africa is not a smooth one. There are series of problems ranging from shortage of funds and materials, defaulting African states, weak South Africa neighbours, the military strength of South Africa, the hostile African states to the use of spies by he racists as a powerful force against the freedom fighters in South Africa. However, the savannah vegetation which covers South Africa is not conducive to guerrilla warfare because it gives rooms for quick detection of the guerrillas.

#### Problems of Majority Rule

The black majority in South Africa today are under the subjugation of the white minority. The need to put the blacks into perpetual subjugation was necessary for the whites if they are to retain their privileged position in the

became the African National Congress (ANC). It was not based on common language or culture but on a common racial identity and a shared experience of subordination. Among the words of its founder, the ANC's objective were to

"bring together into common action as one people all tribes and by means of combined efforts and united political organization to defend their freedom, rights and privileges"<sup>7</sup>

The ANC remain the premier African Nationalist Movement and Revd. John Dobe was its first President. In the early years of existence the ANC was conservative body only responding to and not initiating events. One of the few resistance campaigns launched by the ANC in the early years of its existence was against the pass law. The ANC began to relinquish its conservative attitude from 1940 forwards especially with the advent of Dr. A.B. Xuma as the President, the other was the influence of the ANC Youth League in 1943. The Youth League, though a radical pressure group was Africanist in outlook, believing that blacks should take the initiative of restructuring South Africa.

The various nationalist movements that were formed had to have an alliance which was formerly sealed by joint acceptance of the Freedom Charter in 1955 at Kliptown. The Charter reiterated the ANC demand for one man one vote, equality of all races and the end of racial discrimination.

There was however, an in-fighting within the ANC which led to the formation of the Pan-African Congress from the ANC members that broke away. The PAC stressed a commitment to African exclusivism and anti-communism hence it is dissatisfied with the ANC alliances with other congress and the communists. Apart from the afore-metioned difference in ideology, the ANC and the PAC agreed on their objectives as well as tactics. The two organizations continues their fight, though separately, against racism. The two organizations were however banned on March 31, 1960.

Both the PAC and ANC therefore started operating, since their ban, as underground organizations have series of secret branches in the big towns and reserves. The ban showed however that the liberation of the blacks in South Africa cannot be achieved through non-violent means. This led in December 1960 to the formation of the armed wing of the ANC, the Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation). Their manifesto as published in December 16,1961 reads,

"This time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choice - submit or fight. That time has now come in South Africa. We shall not submit,

Republic. Consequently the whites are leaving no stone unturned to maintain the present status quo. However, the ever growing political awareness of the blacks and their optimism to overthrow the majority government in South Africa is a serious threat to the whites. The blacks are decided to employ everything within their reach to bring about the end of racism, oppression and discrimination in the Republic. There are however series of obstacles and problems that are facing the replacement of a minority to a majority rule in South Africa.

The first is the notion of white superiority. It was in-built in every white South African, the belief of his or her superiority over the other races especially the black race. Except for a small number of them (including Catholic priests and some intellectuals), non of the whites is advocating equality of all races. The Dutch Reformed Churches reinforced the idea of white supremacy, so also is the South African secrete society called "the Broederbund" which is regarded as the custodian of the belief in white superiority. Powerful officials in South Africa are members of this organization.

Secondly is the disunity among the Africans. The inability of the ANC and the PAC to unite together and fight a common cause shows discounty among the blacks. Some African countries themselves are seen discriminating against the liberation movements. At the same time, some of these states feared the ANC because of its close association with the South African Communist Party. Moreover, some African countries are purely anti-revolutionary. These African states include Mauritania, Morocco, Zaire, Senegal and Cote d'ivoire, with the last three states (all francophone) supporting dialogue with the racists.<sup>11</sup> Morocco was reported to be purchased armoured, vehicles from South Africa despite the call to African states to desist from trading with the racists.

The third obstacle is the Western interests in South Africa. The Western nations supporting the South African racist regime are the U.S.A., U.K. France, and Western Germany. Though, a host of others like Israel, Canada, Belgium, Italy etc. Still engage themselves in trade with the regime. South Africa possesses large deposits of uranium, gold, diamond, coal etc. These minerals are of great value to the West. Uranium is used for building nuclear installations, hence the West is concerned with steady supply of it. A lot of Western companies are firmly established in South Africa. It was said that here are about 1,500 Western Multinational Corporations doing business in the racist Republic.<sup>12</sup>

It is difficult if not impossible to persuade these Western powers to desist that supporting South Africa because of their huge economic interest there. U.S.A. investment in 1960 was put at \$284 million and it grew to \$1,025 million in 1972 making the U.S.A. the second largest investor in South

Africa, after British whose total investment was put at \$ 3 billion.<sup>13</sup> South Africa still ranks third among France's trading partners in Africa (After Nigeria and Algeria).<sup>14</sup> British and French nationalized banks still make loans available to South Africa. The companies operating in South Africa are able to reap huge profits for their respective countries. This is due to their ability to use cheap black labour made available under the policy of apartheid.

The strategic position of South Africa has encouraged continuous support for the white government against the black majority. The U.S.A. and its allies, in view of the cold war between them and the communist powers, are aware of the influence of the USSR in Africa especially as regards the anti-apartheid struggle. The west is also aware of the growing threat of the USSR on the Indian ocean where the Soviet naval manoeuvres are on the increase. With regards to the Soviet threat on the Indian Ocean, the U.S.A. was set at protecting its economic interest in South Africa. The closure of the Suez Canal led to oil cargoes carrying about 80% of Western oil passing through the cape route.

Ideologically, the white government in South Africa identifies with the West. This is because of the former's pursuance of capitalism on Western lines. However, the two prevailing ideologies in the World today are Communism and Capitalism and since the whites in South Africa are pro-Capitalist, they are seen by the Western capitalists as natural allies against the Eastern Communists. The West always entertain the fear that South Africa under black rule will be pro-Communist which will not augur well for the Capitalist.

Finally, another obstacle is the Military factor. The racists retain their present position through their effective control of the instrument of coercion. Western countries, despite the UN embargo on South Africa continued to pour arms and ammunition into South Africa. U.S.A. France, Israel and Western Germany are the most notorious of the countries., Britain, Canada and Italy are also engaged in secret arms dealing with the racists. The interest of the U.S.A. in South Africa grew during the World War II when the former gained access to the latter's uranium deposit.

It was at this time that the U.S.A was busy holding up its nuclear arsenal. All together, the Americans bought 43,000 tons of uranium for their nuclear weapons programme at a cost of \$1,000 million.<sup>15</sup> The U.S.A. Atomic Energy Commission (USAEC) have since the mid - 1950's trained 88 South Africans in various aspects of nuclear technology. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) could not be left out in the smuggling of war equipments to South Africa.

For example, the GS manufactured in South Africa is describe as the best canon in the world. The Israelis, the C.I.A., the Pentagon, and the U.S.A. State department shipped illegally the artillery and the technology for its manufacture to South Africa.<sup>16</sup> The U.S.A imports aircrafts to South Africa from time to time to boost the South Africa's defence (see table 3)

Table: 3: U.S.A. Aircraft Export to South Africa: 1967 - 1972

Year	Number	Value (\$ USA)
1967	333	23,483,380
1968	300	30,398,229
1969	284	42,503,604
1970	180	25,621,562
1971	135	70,357,608
1972	144	80,485,712

Source: Colin an Legium, *South Africa: Crisis for the West*<sup>17</sup>

At any one time, there are around 300 Israeli officers and men in South Africa helping to train soldiers, sailors and airmen. However, there are South African soldiers in Israel being trained on equipments purchased by the racist. France, Western Germany and Britain also supply some war equipments needed by the racists South African government and cooperated with South Africa in the field of nuclear research. No country in Africa can boast of enjoying tremendous military collaboration and support from the world powers as South Africa. Consequently, South Africa has stood up as the strongest country, militarily, in Africa. In May 1968, the South African Parliament passed legislation to enable the government establish a state owned armament industry; the Armament Development and Production Corporation of South Africa (ARMSCUR) which now has its factories and 800 subsidiaries.

South Africa also invests a huge amount of money on researches on weapons. A huge sum of money is also being spent in the defence of the regime. In April, 1969, the Minister of Defence stated in a white paper that over the next five years nearly \$1,647 million would be spent on Defence.<sup>18</sup>

The African countries bordering South Africa could not afford to spend a sum as large as South Africa could afford on defence. Consequently, they are not able to have a strong and well equipped army. Hence, they are unable to withstand South Africa's occasional incursion into their territories. Table 4 illustrates the numerical strength of Armed Forces of selected countries in Southern African Countries.

Table 4: Numerical Strength of Selected Southern African Armed Forces

Country	Army	Airforce	Navy	Total
Botswana	1,000	-	-	1,000
Madagascar	9,550	350	600	10,500
Mozambique	22,800	500	700	24,000
South Africa	48,500	10,000	4,750	63,250
Tanzania	50,000	1,000	700	51,700
Zambia	12,800	1,500	-	14,300
Zimbabwe	20,000	1,500	-	21,500

Source: IISS: The Military Balance 1974 - 1980.

The table shows that each of the neighbours of South Africa apart from their armed forces being ill-equipped do not have a numerical strength up to that of South Africa. The military factor, however remains the insurmountable barrier on the path of majority rule in South Africa.

#### Prospects of Majority Rule

The prospects of majority rule in South Africa depend on the way the United Nations Organization (UNO) and other International Institutions handle the issue of apartheid. If the UNO in particular can compel at nations of the world to adopt anti-apartheid policies, it might help in bringing peace and majority rule in the Country. However, it is difficult for the UNO to persuade the Western nations from aiding the whites in South Africa because of their interest in the region.

It is doubtful however, whether the guerrillas can overthrow the racists. The Republic has a far more powerful industrial base and far more formidable military equipments than any government that has been overthrown by guerrilla forces. The effectiveness of guerrilla activities is hampered by the 'openness' of the forests in that region, that is Savannah (veldt) vegetation which allows for quick detection of guerrilla positions. The capacity of African States to launch military offensives against South Africa is limited by domestic, economic and political weakness and also by inter-state rivalries. The liberation of South Africa is one that concerns the whole world and require collective actions of UNO members against the racists. The effectiveness of such a move will always be hampered by powers of the West 'vetoing' actions against the racists. Since the guerrillas may never defeat the racists in conventional warfare, they can only force the racists to grant concessions to the blacks in the long run.

#### Recommendations

All nations of the world should contribute their own quota towards the elimination of racism in South Africa. The Afro - Asian states should

take the initiative first by stepping-up diplomatic campaign seriously at the UNO. The issue of apartheid should be raised on virtually every occasion and not only when the matter comes up for debate. This will show more seriousness over the issue by the Afro-Asian States.

Efforts should be made to involve all nations to deny landing and overflying rights to airlines which serve South Africa. All multinational corporations trading with the racists should be banned in all countries that are opposed to apartheid. These countries can also nationalise any branch of a multi-national corporation in their countries today in South Africa. This was done in 1977 by Nigeria when she nationalized the shell-BP and Barclays Bank because of their investments and involvements in South Africa and were subsequently renamed African Petroleum and Union Bank respectively.

More so, there should be concerted efforts to involve all other races in the struggle against apartheid. This could be done by enlightening all the races in the world about the real situation in South Africa as regards the ways the blacks are being treated. The acts of enlightenment could be achieved by setting up a body to coordinate this efforts. This body could be publishing books, journals and articles with pictures of oppression on South Africa.

In addition, there should be embargo on industrial supplies to South Africa and a suspension of gold buying from the racists. This will surely bring a total economic collapse of South Africa. Moreover, all the nationalist movements in South Africa should mend their ways and come together to unite against the common enemy which is the apartheid regime.

If all these failed to yield better fruits, there should be a total trade embargo on South Africa. This will bring apartheid regime to its knees if enforced since it will be difficult for them to sell all things they are producing. To enforce it, there should be a naval blockade of South Africa by the great powers of the world. These countries should put in their minds that the restriction of democracy in South Africa is a task that must be accomplished by collective action and cooperation.

## NOTES

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