

# THE AGE OF HOPE

Century of Struggle to Freedom 1906 – 2006



• Chief Bhambatha  
The Anti-Poll Tax  
Revolt – 1906



• Gandhi and the  
Birth of Satyagraha – 1906



• African Mine  
Workers' Strike – 1946



• The Women's Anti  
-Pass March – 1956



• The Treason Trial – 1956



• The Student Revolt – 1976



• Death of Samora Machel – 1986



• The Birth of the  
New Constitution – 1996







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and for more information on the topics covered in this book



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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Critically engaging with our past helps  
us to meet the challenges of today

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**Demonstration against passes, outside the City Hall, Johannesburg, 1957.**

## Introduction

The publication of “*The Age Of Hope – Century of Struggle to Freedom 1906 – 2006*” – Commemorating eight key historically significant events in 2006 by the Department of Education, aims at ensuring that all schools, educators and learners have access to and use information on these key historical events in the struggle for democracy in South Africa in the twentieth century. This creates the opportunity for all in the education system to familiarise themselves with aspects of our history in order that we may work towards building a common South African identity and the strengthening of our South African nation.

The key significant historical events are the following:

- The *Centenary of the Anti-Poll Tax Uprising (Bhambatha Rebellion)* of April 1906;
- The *Tenth Anniversary of the Adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* on 8 May 1996;
- The *Thirtieth Anniversary of the Soweto Youth Uprising* on 16 June 1976;
- The *Fiftieth Anniversary of the Women’s March to the Union Buildings* on 9 August 1956;

- The *Sixtieth Anniversary of the Mineworkers’ Strike* of August 1946;
- The *Centenary of the beginning of Satyagraha, Mahatma Gandhi’s passive resistance campaign*, September 1906;
- The *Twentieth Anniversary of the death of Mozambican President Samora Machel* on 20 October 1986; and
- The *Fiftieth Anniversary of the Arrest of 156 Anti-Apartheid Leaders* on 5 December 1956 that led to the Treason Trial from 1957 until 1961.

The Department of Education has committed itself to participate in and co-ordinate the national commemoration of the anniversaries of events of historical significance in schools during 2006. The national theme approved by an Inter-Ministerial Committee for this year’s national celebrations is “*The Age Of Hope – Through Struggle to Freedom*”.

All schools are encouraged to participate in the commemoration of the significant historical events during 2006, while continuing to observe South Africa’s national days and important international days. The Department





of Education hopes that schools and educators commit themselves to the values of the Constitution by preparing activities throughout the year that will highlight the sacrifices made by many South Africans in the struggle for freedom.

This campaign gives South Africans the opportunity to celebrate and at the same time review, in a variety of forms and occasions, the progress we as a nation have made in building a better and more united South Africa and strengthening our democracy. It is both a time for looking back to where we have come from and at what we have achieved, and for looking ahead to set the goals that we as a nation and as individuals wish to attain in the future.

The publication, *“The Age Of Hope – Century of Struggle to Freedom 1906 – 2006”*– Commemorating eight key historically significant events in 2006 provides explanations of the significance of each event in some detail, with relevant sources and suggestions for activities for the classroom and school. Classroom activities should be designed in such a way that they form part of the curriculum, and should not be seen as add-on activities.







# Chief Bhambatha

## The Anti-Poll Tax Revolt – 1906

### The Bhambatha Rebellion

#### Introduction

In the years after the Anglo-Boer War (South African War) White colonists in Natal were finding it more and more difficult to get Black people to work on farms. The colonial authorities needed to create a reason for men to move away to seek work as paid labourers, so they insisted that Black people pay taxes. This was expected to pressurise Black men to work for White farmers in an attempt to earn the money needed for the tax. Many Zulus resented these taxes. In 1906, a number of chiefs, amongst them Chief Bhambatha kaMancinza, head of the Zondi clan, decided to oppose the taxes. The Zondi clan lived in the Mpanza Valley in the Greytown district.

With the support of other chiefs in the area Bhambatha launched a series of attacks against the colonial forces. He used the Nkandla Forest as a base. His challenge to British colonial rule led to one of the most brutal and bloody suppression of the Zulu resistance campaigns against the British. The campaign has become popularly known as the Bhambatha Rebellion. The campaign reached its climax in a battle against the colonial forces at Mome Gorge. Here Bhambatha and his followers were finally defeated.

#### Events leading to the Rebellion

In 1887 Zululand was taken over and incorporated into the colony of Natal. The Zulu were slowly stripped of most of their fertile land. There was widespread poverty. The poverty was made worse by a series of natural disasters. In 1903 an epidemic of East Coast fever killed many cattle. Swarms of locusts and hailstorms caused enormous damage to crops in 1905. All these factors led to a serious economic depression. On top of this, Black people were expected to pay a *Hut Tax* and a *Dog Tax*. They were also subjected to a system of forced labour called *isibalo*, which caused widespread hardship and resentment.

White farmers occupied more and more land, establishing farms and sugar plantations. After the South African War (Anglo-Boer War) there was a shortage of agricultural labour. Rather than work for the White farmers, the Black workforce was increasingly attracted to the gold mines of the Witwatersrand, where they could earn better wages.

In 1905, in an attempt to force more Black men into becoming agricultural labourers, the Natal government, under the leadership of Charles Smythe, imposed a Poll Tax of £1 on all men over the age of 18. To pay the tax, African men would have to work for cash.



**Bhambatha with his brothers and two wives who were left in the care**

Chiefs and their subjects were required to report to the offices of the magistrates in their area to pay the Poll Tax on 1 January 1906. While some chiefs ordered their subjects to pay, many people simply refused.

#### The Rebellion begins

The first sign of open resistance to the Poll tax came when magistrate A.W. Leslie went to collect taxes from the





of King Dinuzulu during the rebellion. This later led to him being found guilty of treason.

Hlongwa and Cele clans in the Silverstream district. The Hlongwas refused to pay. They were taken to the Kranskop Court, where they were each sentenced to a term of imprisonment and 25 lashes.

On 20 January 1906 a White farmer from Camperdown was murdered after he took his labourers to Pietermaritzburg to pay their taxes. On 7 February of the same year Chief

Mveli of the Mgeni district tried to take members of the Fungi clan to the magistrate's office to pay taxes. A small group of protesters known as *Ibandla Lika Musi* (*Musi's clan*) resisted. Mveli reported the matter to the magistrate and police were dispatched to investigate. On 8 February, two police officers were killed trying to arrest Mhlongo, the leader of the resisters.



There were other instances of protest and resistance, and the White settlers demanded that the colonial government take action. In February martial law was introduced in Natal. Troops, under Colonel Duncan Mackenzie, were sent to restore order in Mgeni. They brutally crushed the resistance, burning down homesteads and seizing livestock. After this incident the Natal government was sure that the Zulu population had been beaten into submission. The troops were called back.

*Quote*

*“ In order to increase the Negro’s wants or to teach him the value of labour a hut tax have been imposed on him. If these imposts were not levied, this race of agriculturists living on their farms would not enter mines hundreds of feet deep in order to extract gold or diamonds, and if their labour were not available for the mines, gold as well as diamonds would remain in the bowels of the earth. Like, the Europeans would find it difficult to get any servants, if no such tax was imposed.” – Gandhi*

Chief Bhambatha kaMancinza, leader of the Zondi clan, was initially willing to pay the tax but held back when he discovered that his subjects were refusing to pay. He excused himself, saying that he was ill and promised to report to the magistrate at a later date.



**Colonel Royston, Chief of the Staff, questioning the indunas as to what part their men took in the recent disturbances**

On 11 March, when Bhambatha did not appear, the magistrate sent Major W.J. Clark of the Natal Police with 170 policemen to arrest him.

To avoid arrest, Bhambatha fled the Mpanza Valley with his family and sought refuge with King Dinuzulu kaCetshwayo in Zululand. Although Dinuzulu did not support the rebellion openly, he provided indirect support by allowing Bhambatha and his family to stay with him.

On his return from Zululand, Bhambatha found that the colonial

government had replaced him with his uncle, Magwababa. After overthrowing Magwababa, a very angry Bhambatha and a group of supporters retreated to the Nkandla Forest. There they were given refuge by 96-year-old Sigananda Shezi of the Ncube, a clan of iron-workers and assegai-makers. Instead of handing Bhambatha over to the authorities as he was instructed, Sigananda decided to join Bambaatha and the two leaders combined their forces to launch a series of guerrilla attacks against the British. They were later joined by other chiefs and hundreds of young warriors. As the



**King Dinuzulu  
(1868 – 1913)**

Dinuzulu kaCetshwayo succeeded Cetshwayo as the King of the Zulu nation in 1884. On 14 May 1887, the British annexed Zululand and the Zulu Reserve, extending the Native Law of Natal to the whole country. The Governor of Natal was to rule by proclamation; but it was clear that Dinuzulu regarded his status under the protectorate as unchanged. Dinuzulu ignored the magistrates who summoned him and fined him for continuing to administer the affairs of the nation as if his authority was supreme.

In June 1888 Dinuzulu openly rebelled against the Zibhebhu and defeated them at Nongoma. Pursued by British troops, he escaped to the Transvaal where he evaded capture for three months. In 1889, a court found Dinuzulu and his two uncles, Ndabuko and Shingana, guilty of high treason and exiled them to the island of St Helena. Dinuzulu was later released and installed as ‘Government Induna’ in 1898.

During 1906, Dinuzulu became implicated in the anti Poll Tax rebellion led by the minor chief Bhambatha Ka Mancinza. He was arrested in 1909 and accused of harbouring rebels. Dinuzulu was sentenced to four years imprisonment. Upon his release he was banished to a farm in the Middelburg district, Eastern Transvaal. He died in banishment in 1913.



revolt grew, the government stepped up its oppression of the locals as a counter measure. But this only caused more clans to join the rebellion.

Colonial troops under the command of Colonel Duncan McKenzie eventually tracked Bhambatha and his army to Mome George, where he was able to encircle them and defeat them on 10 June. Bhambatha was captured and killed during the battle. Siganda and his men surrendered. Bhambatha was decapitated and his head displayed as a trophy by the colonial troops.

The rebellion came to an end. By 1907 the Natal government was able to collect tax without encountering any form of protest.

### The aftermath

The Bhambatha Rebellion claimed the lives of 4000 Zulu and 30 Whites and cost the colonial government £740,000. Some Zulus died fighting on the side of the Natal government. More than 7,000 people were imprisoned and 4,000 were flogged. Chiefs who had supported the rebels were arrested and charged with high treason. They were initially sentenced to death, but their sentences were later changed to life imprisonment on the island of St. Helena. In 1910 they were granted amnesty and were allowed to return home and resume their roles as chiefs.

King Dinuzulu was arrested near Nongoma. His trial took place in Greytown. Although he was defended by William Philip Schreiner, a top lawyer from the Cape Colony, Dinuzulu was convicted of treason and sentenced to four years imprisonment. Upon his release he was banished to Rustenburg in the Transvaal, where he died.

While the rebellion had failed, Bhambatha's courage and the heroism of the rebels became a source of great inspiration to Black leaders. Blacks, Coloureds and Indians were excluded from any form of political participation in the Union. As a response to this, urban Black leaders, who had been exposed to European education and culture, worked

together with traditional leaders to build a Black unity against white oppression. This led to the creation of the South African Native Congress which later became known as the African National Congress (ANC). This was the first Black Nationalist organisation to challenge White rule. Over the years that followed Bhambatha continued to be a source of pride and inspiration to nationalists, socialist and anti-apartheid activists.

In June 2006 Bhambatha chieftainship was reinstated by President Thabo Mbeki at a ceremony held at his traditional homestead.



Post card widely produced and distributed after the Bhambatha Rebellion

### Chronology

1905	September	The Colonial Administration in Natal introduces the Poll Tax.
1906	1 January	The poll tax is paid for the first time.
1906	20 January	A white farmer is murdered in Pietermaritzburg.
1906	6 February	Chief Mveli of the Fungi clan takes his followers to pay the Poll tax.
1906	10 February	Two White police officers are killed near Richmond.
1906	11 March	Chief Bhambatha flees to Zululand to seek refuge with King Dinuzulu.
1906	4 April	Bhambatha gathers together his warriors and attacks a police patrol, killing four white men at Ambush Rock, on the road to Dundee, outside Greytown.
1906	May	Chief Mehlokazulu and his Qungebe clan joins the rebels.
1906	10 June	Chief Bhambatha is killed and his men defeated at the Nkandla forest.
1906	18 June	Chief Messeni and Ndlovu kaThimuni continue with a revolt at the Maphumulo district.
1907	December	King Dinuzulu of the Zulu royal house is charged with twenty-three counts of treason.
1909	March	Dinuzulu is sentenced to five years imprisonment and fined £ 100.
1910		Dinuzulu is released by Gen. Louis Botha and settled on a farm in the Middelburg, where he died in 1913.



## Chief Bhambatha of AmaZondi

(1865 – 1906)



Chief Bhambatha was born in Mpanza near the town of Greytown, Natal Colony. Bhambatha succeeded his father at the age of 25. He was occasionally in trouble with the law. After the introduction of the Natal-Poll Tax, the Natal government suspected that he had joined other Chiefs in the region who had voiced their discontent and rejection of the tax.

On 11 March 1906, Chief Bhambatha fled to Zululand and on his return, he learned that he was deposed and replaced with his uncle, Magwabagwaba. He took refuge at Nkandla forest and launched the rebellion from there. The rebellion was crushed in June 1906 and a government spy who had managed to infiltrate his forces reportedly killed Chief Bhambatha in the forest. However, some of his loyal supporters maintained that he escaped to Mozambique and lived in hiding there until his natural death around the 1920s. However, the Natal forces asserted that the man killed in Nkandla Forest was him and the head shown to the public was also his. DNA Laboratory tests conducted from DNA extracted from a lock of hair found in one of the Natal officers' belongings failed to conclusively prove whether the hair belonged to Chief Bhambatha.

## Chief Sigananda Shezi

(1810-1906)

Chief Sigananda was a son of chief Zokufa. Chief Sigananda was recruited as a warrior at the very young age and saw a great deal of military action in his lifetime. He witnessed the death of Piet Retief at the Mgungundhlovu in 1838. Sigananda fought against the British in the Zulu War of 1879 and also fought with Usuthu during the great Thukela Battle on 2 December 1856. He fled to Natal to seek refuge in the clan of Mancinza, who was the father of Inkosi Bhambatha. In 1871 He got an invitation from King Cetshwayo to come and live in KwaZulu, which Sigananda accepted. He fought for King Cetshwayo during the Zulu War, seeing KwaZulu restored in January of 1883.

In 1906 he joined Chief Bhambatha and other chiefs in the rebellion against the imposition of the Poll Tax by the colonial government. During the rebellion, Sigananda's kraal was burned and his stronghold attacked by Zululand police. Many people fled their homes in fear. Bhambatha was killed, and Sigananda and Mangati became fugitives, successfully evading the government's troops for some time. Yet, knowing the loss would be too great for the fight to continue, Inkosi Sigananda surrendered and was immediately placed in prison. During his 38 day imprisonment, Chief Sigananda seemed in good health and quite communicative. Yet his body was unable to adapt to the changed circumstances of prison.

## Glossary



<b>Commute</b>	– Change a person's prison term to a less severe term
<b>Decapitate</b>	– To cut off somebody's head
<b>Decimate</b>	– Destroy completely
<b>Demobilise</b>	– Disband troops/ release from military services
<b>Oust</b>	– Drive out/ Throw out
<b>Outrage</b>	– Annoyance/Anger
<b>Plunge – Sink</b>	
<b>Resentment</b>	– Disappointment/Unhappy about something one thinks is unfair
<b>Retreat</b>	– Move back
<b>Tacit</b>	– Unspoken/ concealed, especially of support

## Classroom activities

Learning Outcome: Learners are able to identify bias and stereotypes; communicate knowledge and understanding by constructing own interpretation of the struggle in South Africa.

1. What were the political and economic reasons which forced the Zulus under Bhambatha to take up arms against the colonial authorities?
2. What was the reason for imposing the Poll Tax?
3. Why do you think the colonial authorities acted with such brutality towards the rebellion?
4. What in your opinion was the reason for King Dinuzulu being arrested, charged and banished in the aftermath of the rebellion?





Soldiers on patrol, Zululand



Armed rebel troops, Greytown District



# Gandhi and the Birth of



29 October 1913-Gandhi led 2000 striking miners from the Natal collieries, crossing from Newcastle to the Transvaal in

Gandhi's unique philosophical outlook, boundless energy and courage as a political leader made him one of the most influential anti-colonial activists of his time and one of the most memorable figures in human history. His concept of *Satyagraha*, non-violence or *passive resistance* was born out of the South African Indian community's struggle for justice and an end to discrimination. The Gandhian concept of *Satyagraha* had a profound influence on the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggle.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi came to South Africa as a young English-trained Barrister (lawyer). Gandhi's experiences in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 and in the Bhambatha rebellion of 1906 were a major turning point in his life. He sided with the British during these conflicts, but quickly saw that British colonialism was prepared to use brutal force to crush any opposition to its rule.

The Indian community had its own experience of ongoing oppression. This reached a height in 1906 with an

exceptionally humiliating law that enforced the registration of Indians in the Transvaal. The colonial government in Pretoria, supported by the dominant European community, was arrogant and adamant. The Government of India was indifferent and the imperial government in London was reluctant to intervene. Gandhi knew that something more than partitioning and quiet persuasion was needed.

On 11 September 1906, at a mass meeting held at the Empire Theatre in Johannesburg, the Indian community swore a solemn oath to defy the law. While this date is often recognized as the day when the concept of *Satyagraha* was born, it was actually a year later, after Gandhi had exhausted all the political alternatives, that he led the Indian and Chinese community on a campaign of passive resistance.

Gandhi maintained that when faced with a powerful enemy, the use of passive resistance could demonstrate that people were prepared to undergo great hardships and voluntary imprisonment in the process of

resisting injustice. It would show that they were not prepared to give up, no matter what violence was thrown at them. He believed that this would eventually force the enemy to have a change of heart.

Gandhi was in no doubt about one thing: the campaign was to be conducted without hatred and without violence. He argued that for *Satyagraha* to succeed the resisters had to be prepared to lose their wealth and possessions and give their whole selves over to the struggle for truth. This meant that the resisters needed to experience a spiritual change before they could help bring about a political change. It was both Gandhi's genius as a strategist and his personal courage that transformed his individual ethic into a tool for collective social and political action. Gandhi said of *Satyagraha*: "I coined the word '*Satyagraha*' in South Africa in order to give a name to the power with which the Indians there fought for a full 8 years (1906 – 1914). I spoke of '*Satyagraha*' in order to force a wedge between



# Satyagraha -1906



protest against the legal restrictions on Indians and the tax law.

*this power and the movement which was referred to in Great Britain and South Africa as 'passive resistance'.*"

While it can be said that very few of his closest and most dedicated followers wholeheartedly adopted and lived by Gandhi's philosophy of *Satyagraha*, it was the courage and sacrifices of Gandhi and his followers that won them the support of millions – especially in the struggle for India's independence.

## **The Satyagraha Campaign and the Black Act**

When Gandhi first arrived in South Africa in 1893, he experienced the harsh racist attitude of the White colonialists against Black people and Indian people. The Natal government at the time was in the process of creating racist legislation to control what they called, *the Indian merchant menace*. Two bills were passed in the following two years that severely restricted the rights of Indians:

The Immigration Law Amendment Bill stated that all indentured (contracted) Indians had to return to India at the end of a five-year contract period, or had to be re-contracted for a further two years if they wanted to remain in the colony. In addition, immigrants who had been contracted in the past but were no longer contracted could choose to remain in the colony if they paid an annual tax of £3. This bill came into law in 1895.

Another bill, known as The Franchise Amendment Bill, passed in 1894 curtailed the voting rights of Indians in Natal. It limited voting rights to those Indians who had already registered and prevented any further Indians from registering as voters. This bill caused outrage among the small Indian trader community.

The publication of the Franchise Amendment Bill was one of the defining moments in Gandhi's life. He called a meeting with the leading members of the Indian community and together they formed the Natal Indian

Congress (NIC) on the 22 August 1894. This was the beginning of Gandhi's political career, between 1894 and 1914 when Gandhi left South Africa he became the undisputed political leader of the Indian community and mounted numerous campaigns to protect their right to live and trade in South Africa.

In August 1906, the British administration in the Transvaal passed the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance. The aim of the act was to control the entry of Indians into the Transvaal. The new law, which became known as the Black Act, stated that every Indian man, woman and child older than 8 years had to register with a government official called the registrar of Asiatics. Indians and Chinese who did not register by a certain date would no longer be allowed to stay in the Transvaal. The law required Indian people to have their fingerprints taken in order to be issued with their registration certificates. The certificate had to be carried at all times and be



produced on demand to any policeman who asked to see them. An Indian who could not produce a certificate could be fined and sent to prison. It was this law that triggered the first mass action in the form of a passive resistance campaign.

Gandhi moved to the Transvaal and set up an office in Johannesburg. He wasted no time in mounting a campaign to oppose the new law. Gandhi contacted Leung Quinn, the leader of the Chinese community, to discuss the Black Act as it applied to them too. The majority of the Chinese people in South Africa were brought as indentured labourers to work on the Transvaal gold mines.

Within a few days, on 11 September, thousands of Indians and Chinese attended the meeting held at the Empire Theatre and vowed not to submit to the Black Act, no matter what the consequences and the government's threats. This vow came to be later known as the *Satyagraha* Oath, and it marked the beginning of the eight-year-long *Satyagraha* Campaign and the Birth of the *Satyagraha* movement.

The Transvaal government realised that it was not going to be easy to impose these harsh laws. General Smuts, the Prime Minister, sent a representative, William Hosken, to say that the Government would not change the laws. But, if the people obeyed these laws, General Smuts would be prepared to make minor changes. Hosken delivered his

message at a mass meeting. After he had finished speaking, Ahmad Cachalia, stood up and addressed the meeting:



Gandhi dressed as a Satyagrahi

*“Every Indian knows what the Black Act is and what it implies. I have listened to Mr Hosken attentively, and so have you. His speech has only confirmed me in my resolution. We know how powerful the Transvaal Government is. But it cannot do anything more than enact such a law. It will cast us into prison, confiscate our property, deport us or hang us ...”* Cachalia gave everyone a chance to absorb his words before he continued, *“... All this we will bear cheerfully, but we cannot simply put up with this law. I swear in the name of God that I will be hanged but I will not submit to this law, and I hope that everyone present will do likewise.”*

Cachalia was not afraid to go to jail, and he inspired those who shared his views. With a sense of growing spiritual commitment, many of the Indians and Chinese joined the Passive Resistance Campaign in 1907. The Campaign was carried out on many levels. Pickets were organised outside the government's Asiatic affairs offices and the priests in the mosques, temples and churches took a leading role in discouraging people from registering.

The Campaign was initially known as the Passive Resistance Campaign, but many people felt this name was inappropriate as the campaign was anything but passive. They were actively resisting oppression, even if they were doing so in a non-violent way. Gandhi ran a competition asking people to give the campaign a name and the term *Satyagraha* was chosen.

### A definition and three principles of *Satyagraha*

The derivations of the word also sum up the three principles upon which the concept of *Satyagraha* is based:

- **satya:** truth, implying openness, honesty and fairness
- **ahimsa:** refusal to inflict injury upon others
- **tapasya:** willingness for self-sacrifice.



Passive resistance leaders released from prison – Johannesburg Fort Prison, 1908



This was the name given to the campaign from 1907 onwards.

By the closing date of registration in terms of the Black Act, only 511 Indians had registered out of the total Indian population of over 13 000 in the Transvaal. The community regarded the 511 as traitors. Some of those who had registered felt bad about what they had done and tore up their permits. Querei, a Chinese man who had registered, felt so ashamed at the thought of letting down his community that he committed suicide.

The Smuts Government had expected resistance to their unjust Asiatic Laws, but they had not expected the passion and determination of Gandhi's campaign. They imprisoned Gandhi and hundreds of other people. They also deported many *Satyagrahis* to India, including people who had been born in South Africa.

Eventually, Smuts was forced to negotiate. In 1908 Smuts sent Albert Cartwright, the editor of the Johannesburg newspaper *The Transvaal Leader*, to speak to Gandhi and the other campaign leaders in prison. He delivered a letter proposing that Indians register voluntarily and participate in deciding on the details that should be entered upon registration. If Indians agreed to register voluntarily, Smuts promised to repeal (remove) the Black Act.

Gandhi discussed the terms of the settlement with fellow-prisoners Leung Quinn (from the Chinese Association) and Thumbi Naidoo (from the Transvaal British Indian Association). They made some amendments and signed the proposal.

On 30 January 1908 Gandhi was escorted from prison to Pretoria to meet Smuts. They agreed that Indians would register voluntarily, that formal negotiations would begin and that the Asiatic Registration Act would be repealed. Smuts also said that Gandhi was free to go home and promised to release all the other campaigners the next day. Gandhi was given a first-class train ticket to Johannesburg.



Gandhi and residents of Tolystoy Farm

Mir Alam was among the group who refused to register. He felt that Gandhi had betrayed the cause of the campaign by accepting the proposal. On 10 February, while Gandhi was on his way to register, he was attacked and injured by Alam and some of his friends. Recuperating at the home of his friend and first biographer, Rev Doke, he stuck by his decision to trust Smuts and registered from his sick bed.

Smuts did not repeal the Black Act as he had promised. His breaking of the agreement angered the Indian community and Gandhi sent a letter to Parliament, reminding Smuts of the terms of their agreement.



Passive resistance leaders released from prison, 1908



In the letter, Gandhi warned that if Smuts did not repeal the Act as promised the Indians would burn their registration certificates.

Gandhi gave Smuts until 16 August 1908 to respond. On this day, the Indian community held a meeting on the grounds of the Hamidia Mosque in Johannesburg. A three-legged pot stood in the corner of the grounds, waiting to be used to burn the registration certificates, if necessary. A telegram arrived from Smuts, saying that the government could not agree to the request of the community.

The certificates were burnt and the *Satyagraha* Campaign started again. Mir Alam, who had assaulted Gandhi, publicly apologised for the attack and threw his original registration certificate into the fire while the crowd cheered him. The newspapers gave vivid descriptions of the bonfire, in which more than 2 000 certificates were burnt.

summoned to court. However, Adajania was ordered to appear in court again on 10 July and warned to leave the Transvaal. He refused to do so and on 20 July was sentenced to a month's imprisonment with hard labour.

The following month, Sheth Daud Mahomed, the president of the Natal Indian Congress, followed Adajania's brave act of defiance. Together with a group of *Satyagrahis*, he, too, entered the Transvaal without a certificate. They were arrested on 18 August 1908.

These incidents encouraged more and more *Satyagrahis* to defy the discriminatory laws. A delegation was sent to Britain to seek the help of the British government in resolving the situation. Nothing came of this, and the Passive Resisters continued with their campaign.

### **The Campaign starts to lose momentum**

The *Satyagrahis* had pledged to fight until "victory or death". Both the *Satyagrahis* and the Smuts government were determined to stick to their positions. In June 1909 Gandhi left for London. The Indians in the Transvaal were unhappy about the settlement he had made with Smuts, and when he returned to South Africa in December 1909, Gandhi found that some of the key supporters, especially the leadership of the Natal Indian Congress (NIC), were openly opposing him.

The Campaign started to lose momentum even though the Smuts government was receiving bad press in Britain and was being pressurised to change. The *Satyagrahis* were beginning to get tired after their long struggle and the funds to provide support for the families of the *Satyagrahis* were quickly running out.

Many of these families, including Gandhi's own family, earned out a living at The Phoenix Settlement which Gandhi had established in 1904. The Phoenix Settlement was based on the ideals of communal living in a multiracial, multi-cultural community with no class distinctions.

### **Tolstoy Farm**

Gandhi spoke to his friend, the German born Jewish architect, Herman Kallenbach, about the possibility of building a place like the Phoenix Settlement in the Transvaal. In 1910 Kallenbach bought a farm of about 1 100 acres and gave it to the *Satyagrahis* to use. Kallenbach helped to build houses on the farm to accommodate 60 men and 10 women. He also built a house for himself, a workshop for carpentry and shoemaking, and a building which was used as a school.



**Gandhi recovering from an assault by dissident members of the passive resistance movement at Rev. Doke's home.**

### **The *Satyagraha* Campaign and the Transvaal Immigration Restriction Act**

In 1907 the Government passed another law which placed restrictions on Indians entering the Transvaal from any of the other provinces. Indians from all over the country were affected by this law.

A *Satyagrahi*, called Sorabji Adajania, informed the Government that he intended to break this law and entered the Transvaal without a permit. He was arrested and brought to court on 8 July 1908. The case was dismissed because Adajania had not been properly





**Gandhi his secretary Sonia Schlesin and his close friend and disciple Kallenbach.**

Gandhi went to stay on the farm with his family. He named the settlement Tolstoy Farm, after the great Russian writer, Leo Tolstoy, who was one of the most important sources of inspiration for the development of his philosophy of non-violence and communal living. Work was distributed evenly amongst the members of the community. A very important rule was that men and women should be treated equally. It was here that Gandhi changed his way of dressing from a suit and tie to a workingman's trousers and shirt, similar to a prisoner's clothes.

The school on the farm taught history, geography, writing, arithmetic, prayers, religious songs, and storytelling. Stories were told to involve the children and to build a spirit of friendship.

From Tolstoy Farm, the *Satyagrahis* continued to defy the restrictive laws on a small scale: they sold fruit and vegetables without licenses to do so, and many crossed the Transvaal-Natal border without permits, but the government did not take any actions against them.

In 1912, Gokhale, the leading Indian nationalist leader, visited South Africa. He toured the country with Gandhi, talking to Indian people and listening to stories about their struggles. Gokhale also met some South African government officials who told Gokhale that they were prepared to abolish the Black Act and the £3 Tax and to make other concessions for Indians.

*“As soon as the Government makes these changes, you must come back to India...” Gokhale said to Gandhi, “We have problems in India and we need your help there.”*

Gandhi laughed at this. He told Gokhale how untrustworthy the Smuts government was and said that that political change might take a while.

### **Women and the Satyagraha Campaign**

In March of 1913 the Campaign got a boost when a judgement of the Supreme Court, Judge Searle, refused to recognise Hindu and Muslim marriages. Many Indian women were angered by this and joined the Campaign for the first time. The participation of women passive resisters and their role in the Satyagraha Campaign of 1913 – 1914 fundamentally changed the nature and the impact of the campaign.

Gandhi corresponded with the Ministry of Interior and warned that passive resistance would resume if the government refused to amend the Black Act and the Marriage Laws.

### **General JC Smuts: (1870 – 1950)**

Jan Smuts was not only a states-man and a soldier, but also a naturalist and philosopher. He was born near Riebeeck West in the Cape in 1870 and left South Africa to read law at Cambridge University. He returned in 1895 and became a supporter of the Rhodes-Hofmeyr partnership.



He was very disappointed with the Jameson Raid and became a republican and an Afrikaner nationalist. He also gave up his private law practice and became State Attorney and advisor to the Executive Council in Paul Kruger's government at the age of 28. Smuts was a man of daunting intellect and among his friends were Winston Churchill and Mohandas Gandhi.

By 1907 he was appointed Minister of Education and colonial secretary in the Botha government in the Transvaal Colony. Jan Smuts was largely responsible for the drafting of the Union of South Africa's constitution as a delegate to the National Convention. He was also Minister of Interior, Defence and Mines in the first Union Cabinet. Due to his reconciliatory attitude towards the English he was unpopular with his kinsmen. During the post-war (world war two) years he was involved in the formation of the United Nations. In South Africa support for the NP under D F Malan gained support and in 1948 the United Party was defeated. Jan Smuts died in Irene, near Pretoria, in 1950.





### Herman Kallenbach: (1871 – 1945)

Kallenbach was a prosperous German architect in Johannesburg, and the owner of Tolstoy Farm. He became a devoted friend and co-worker of Gandhi and he placed Tolstoy Farm at the disposal of *Satyagrahis*.

Kallenbach participated in the *Satyagrahis' great march* and confronted White protesters. He accompanied Gandhi to India and many years later he visited Gandhi in Sevagram Ashram. He finally settled in Israel.

The government's refusal to repeal the £3 tax on all ex-indentured Indians plus the grievances of Indian coal miners, were added to the demands of the Indians. The inclusion of these

new issues transformed the passive resistance campaign from acts of civil disobedience by small group of *Satyagrahis* into a mass based movement drawing on the majority of Indians.

One of the most prominent female protesters was Gandhi's wife, Kasturba Gandhi. She said that she *"would go to prison rather than be declared an unlawful wife"*.

Gandhi was surprised by the effectiveness of the women's role in mobilising the mine workers. He realised that women had greater responsibilities that men especially in regard to the taking care of the home and children. He promised his wife that he and the other men would take care of the children and all the household chores if the women went to prison as a result of protesting.

On 15 September 1913, the first day of the new campaign, Gandhi and the other men took over the kitchens at the Phoenix settlement. They prepared meals, did the washing and scrubbed the floors. They then accompanied the *Satyagrahi* women

to the Durban railway station, where the women began the first part of their journey by train to the Transvaal. This was a criminal offence for which they could be jailed for up to six months.

The group of 16 *Satyagrahis*, 4 women and 12 men (Parsee Rustomjee among them), were led by Kasturba Gandhi. When Kasturba's group of protesters arrived at Volksrust station in the Transvaal, they were ordered off the train as they did not have permits. They refused to get off, saying that they were prepared to go to jail.

The government knew that, by arresting these women, the *Satyagraha* Campaign would get a lot of publicity, so for several days they left them alone in Volksrust. But by 21 September the police had lost their patience and decided to deport them. The police took the group to a bridge on the border between Natal and the Transvaal and pushed the protesters across it. The group promptly marched back into the Transvaal. This time they were arrested.

On 23 September they were tried and sentenced to three months' imprisonment. For six days they were held in Volksrust before being

## Chronology

1905		The Immigration Restriction Act of 1905 is passed in the Transvaal. The Act provides for the Government's control of the entry of Indians into the Transvaal through a special permit system.
1906		Transvaal Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance, No 29 of 1906 (The Black Act) is proclaimed in the Transvaal and subjects all Indians to compulsory registration and identification by means of fingerprints. Registration Certificates (Passes) are to be carried at all times and must be produced on request to a police officer under penalty of a fine or imprisonment.
1906	1 January	A poll tax of £3 is enforced on Indians 18 years and over living in Natal.
1906	February - June	The Bambatha rebellion erupts in Natal in protest against the so-called "hut tax" levied by the Natal Government. The Natal Indian Congress (NIC), under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, decides on 24 April 1906 to establish an ambulance corps to assist the British in the campaign to put down the rebellion.
1906	11 September	First <i>Satyagraha</i> campaign began with a mass meeting at the Empire Theatre in Johannesburg in protest against proposed Asiatic Laws. Two of the resolutions adopted at the meeting respectively calls for a deputation to be sent to England and for non-violent or passive resistance ( <i>Satyagraha</i> )
1907		The South African Indian Committee, comprising of the Natal Indian Patriotic Union and the Natal Indian Congress, is established. At this time, both organisations are critical of Mahatma Gandhi.
1907	11 March	Indians hold a mass meeting at the Gaiety Theatre, protesting against the discriminatory treatment of Indians.
1907	22 March	The Black act is passed by the Transvaal Parliament. All male Asians are to be registered and finger printed and are required to carry registration certificates (passes) at all times, which have to be shown to the police on demand.
1907	29 March	Indians hold a mass protest meeting at the Gaiety Hall in Johannesburg against the "Black Act" and offer to register voluntarily if the Act is withdrawn.
1907	4 April	Mahatma Gandhi leads a deputation to the Transvaal Colonial Secretary, General J.C. Smuts and presents him with the resolutions adopted at the Indian mass meeting held on 29 March 1907 in Johannesburg.
1907	1 July	The Black Act, comes into operation. The first permit office is opened in the Transvaal and Indians are notified that they have to register within three months.



transferred to the Pietermaritzburg prison in Natal.

This act of protest by a relatively small group of *Satyagrahis* marked the beginning of another huge campaign. A few weeks after the arrest, they were joined by another group of women who lived in the Transvaal. These Indian women included Thambi Naidoo's wife, her mother and sister, and 16-year-old Valliama Munuswami Mudliar. Most of the women were

residents on Tolstoy Farm. Gandhi lovingly called these Johannesburg women the *brave Transvaal Sisters*. They left for Vereeniging along with Kallenbach on 2 October 1913. They crossed the Free State Border but were not arrested and proceeded to cross the Natal border. The Plan was to get to Newcastle to encourage the indentured mine workers to go on strike. No-one expected the massive support that these women would get from the miners.

Thambi Naidoo and Bhawani Dayal reached Newcastle first. On 13 October 1913, a new campaign was initiated in Newcastle in protest of the £3 Tax imposed on ex-indentured Indians.

On 15 October the *brave Transvaal Sisters* reached the coal mines near Newcastle. They addressed the miners. The women's courage and fiery speeches won over the miners and they decided to lay down their tools and join the women on the march to Newcastle.

## Chronology

1907	9 July	The Transvaal British Indian Association petitions the Transvaal Parliament on the Transvaal Immigration Restriction Bill.
1907	28 July	An Indian mass meeting held at the Hamidia Islamic Society Hall in Johannesburg protests against the Transvaal Immigration Restriction Bill and declares a day of hartal in the Transvaal.
1907	31 July	An open air Indian mass protest meeting is held in Pretoria against the black act. The meeting decides on passive resistance (Satyagraha) against the Act – to go to prison rather than to register, and, later, to hawk without licences.
1907	11 November	Ramsundar Pandit of Germiston becomes the first passive resister to be arrested for failing to register in terms of the black act. Mahatma Gandhi defends Pandit in court free of charge.
1907	30 November	Only 511 Indians out of the total Indian population of over 13 000 register by the closing date of registration in terms of the black act.
1908	1 January	The Black Act resistance, enters into force. A mass meeting is held at Surti Mosque in Fordsburg, Johannesburg.
1908	4 January	The Transvaal British Indian Association informs the Transvaal Government that, if Indians are not issued trading licences because they have not registered in terms of the Black Act, they will trade without licences. The Transvaal Colonial Secretary, General J.C. Smuts, declares that the Asiatic Registration Act will not be repealed and refuses to meet with Mahatma Gandhi.
1908	10 January	Mahatma Gandhi is sentenced to two months' imprisonment for violating a court order to leave the Transvaal after being charged with picketing. (his first imprisonment).
1908	28 January	Albert Cartwright brings the compromise terms with regards to the black act, from the Transvaal Colonial Secretary, General J.C. Smuts, to Mahatma Gandhi in prison. Gandhi discusses the terms of the settlement with fellow prisoners Leung Quinn (from the Chinese Association) and Thambi Naidoo (from the Transvaal British Indian Association). They make some amendments and then sign the proposal.
1908	30 January	The Transvaal Colonial Secretary, General J.C. Smuts, accepts the compromise with regards to the black act. Gandhi is released and taken to Johannesburg, where he addresses a midnight meeting at the Hamidia Mosque to explain the terms of the settlement.
1908	10 February	Voluntary registration by Asiatics commences as agreed under the Gandhi-Smuts agreement. Mahatma Gandhi is assaulted by Mir Alam Khan, an Indian extremist, for reaching settlement with Smuts.
1908	9 May	By the last day of voluntary registration of Asiatics, as agreed under the Gandhi-Smuts agreement, 8700 Indians have registered and 6000 were accepted by the Transvaal Government.
1908	27 June	A well-educated Parsee, Sorabji Shapurji Adajania tests the Transvaal Immigration Restriction Act, Act No. 15 of 1907, by entering the Transvaal from Natal without a permit. He was imprisoned on the 8 <sup>th</sup> of July
1908	31 June	The Transvaal Colonial Secretary, General J.C. Smuts, states that the repeal of the Black Act is preposterous and Mahatma Gandhi accuses the Transvaal Government of "foul play".
1908	2 July	Mahatma Gandhi warns the Transvaal Colonial Secretary, General J.C. Smuts, that the voluntary registration certificates (passes), which Indians had applied for under the Smuts-Gandhi agreement, will be burnt.
1908	20 July	A mass campaign of satyagraha begins in protest of the Black Act, the Transvaal Immigration Restriction Act, Act No. 15 of 1907, and the Transvaal Municipal Consolidation Bill. Satyagrahis are imprisoned for unlicensed trading.
1908	1 August	The Chinese Association officially joins the Satyagraha campaign against anti-Asiatic legislation in the Transvaal.
1908	16 August	After Smuts refusal, the second Satyagraha campaign began with bonfire of registration certificates. More than 2000 registration certificates (passes) are burned during an Indian mass meeting at the Hamidia Mosque in Fordsburg, Johannesburg, in reaction to the Transvaal Colonial Secretary, General J.C. Smuts' alleged breach of the Gandhi-Smuts agreement and continued refusal to repeal the Black Act. The Committee of European (White) Sympathisers is formed with William Hosken as Chairperson.
1908	18 August	Mahatma Gandhi meets with the Transvaal Prime Minister, General Louis Botha, the Transvaal Colonial Secretary, General J.C. Smuts, and members of the Progressive Party to discuss the Indian question.



The campaigners also gained the support of railway workers and on 16 October 1913, they joined the striking mine workers.

In one incident a mine manager set his dogs on the protesters and attacked the strikers with whips and bayonets, seriously injuring many men, women and children.

Thumbi Naidoo, Bhawani Dayal and the *brave Transvaal Sisters*, were all arrested for their involvement in encouraging the strike. By the middle of October 35 of the *Satyagrahis* were in prison. The 16 year old Valliama Munuswami Mudliar died of a fever which she contracted while in prison and she was given a martyr's funeral. Gandhi declared her as the first women martyr of the *Satyagraha* movement.

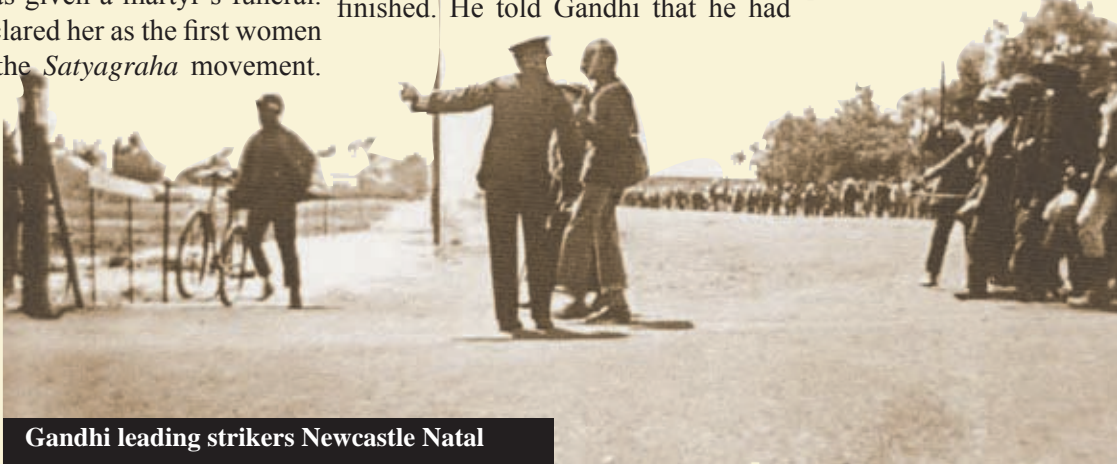
Transvaal. The march would take place in eight stages. Preparations for food and sleeping places were made at each of the stopping points.

The big march officially began on 6 November 1913 at 6.30 in the morning. 2037 men, 127 women and 57 children made up the long and determined line of marchers. During the march Gandhi was arrested and let out on bail three times, but the march continued. Later, P.K. Naidoo and other leaders were also arrested, but still the people marched on.

In Standerton they stopped to rest and to eat. Gandhi was handing out food when a magistrate came and stood quietly at his side until he had finished. He told Gandhi that he had

Gandhi joined the march again, but before they reached Balfour he was re-arrested, this time by the chief immigration officer. The workers continued the march. They arrived in Balfour, to find that there were three trains waiting to deport them back to Natal. They were given two choices: either get on the trains or go to prison. They chose prison.

In prison, Gandhi met a *Satyagrahi* called Harbatsingh, who was 75 years old. Gandhi was very moved by his courage. "You should be at home, old man," Gandhi said kindly. "Hah!" said Baba Harbatsingh, "Sit at home when you, your wife and even your sons are in prison for us! I would rather die in prison than sit at home." Harbatsingh



**Gandhi leading strikers Newcastle Natal**

The news of the violent response to the strike and of the disgraceful treatment of the prisoners spread across the country and Indian workers all over Natal joined the strike. By the end of October the number of strikers had swelled from 5000 to 6000. Gandhi was taken by surprise by the massive support and he began preparing for a huge March from Natal into the

come to arrest him. Gandhi turned to him calmly and said, "It would seem I have received promotion in rank, as magistrates take the trouble to arrest me instead of mere police officials." In court, he found that five other marchers had also been arrested. They were kept in prison but Gandhi was released on bail of £50.

Harbatsingh died in a Durban jail on 5 January 1914.

By the end of November, produce markets in Durban and Pietermaritzburg had come to a standstill, sugar mills were closed and hotels, restaurants and homes were without domestic workers. In India, reports of the arrest



### **Ahmad Muhammad Cachalia (1863 – 1918)**

Cachalia joined the *Satyagraha* struggle in the Transvaal. He was an extremely wealthy man and was used to a life of luxury and comfort, yet he was one of the strongest supporters of the *Satyagraha* Campaign.

Cachalia was imprisoned repeatedly during the struggle, and was reduced to poverty as a result of his activism. He went insolvent when his White creditors put pressure on him to punish him for his role in the Indian resistance. Many people in the Indian Community admired and respected Cachalia's courage, and Gandhi himself described Cachalia as one of the most steadfast and courageous people he had met. He succeeded Essop Mia as the Chairperson of the British Indian Association in September of 1910. His son Ali lived at Tolstoy Farm with Gandhi.



of Gandhi and the brutality of the police caused an uproar.

Eventually, in response to pressure from the British government, the Minister of Justice, Jan Smuts, decided to set up a commission to investigate the grievances of Indians in South Africa. The commission's report led to an agreement between Gandhi and Smuts in early 1914. Gandhi agreed that the Satyagraha Campaign would stop and the government agreed to abolish the £3 Tax, recognise Indian marriages, abolish the Black Act and to allow Indians to move freely into the Transvaal.

Indians considered the Gandhi-Smuts agreement of 1914 an important victory, even though it did not mean an end to all the oppressive laws against them. It had been made possible by the bravery of thousands of people who, led by Gandhi, had made many sacrifices to achieve it.

### The role of Satyagraha in the struggle against apartheid

The *Satyagraha* Campaign, led by Gandhi on South African soil,

influenced the thinking of leaders of all the oppressed people in the country. Many Black people were inspired by the Indian passive resisters. In 1913 Black women in the Free State mounted a similar campaign against the carrying of passes and that same year, African mine workers in the Transvaal went on strike.

In 1946 the South African Indian Congress mounted a massive passive resistance campaign. Thousands of people led by Dr Dadoo and Dr Naicker participated in the campaign 1710 passive resisters served prison terms. Of these 279 were women. The resisters served between 20 days to seven months in prison. Some resisters served as many as four prison terms.

While the 1946 Passive Resistance campaign did not achieve any real change, it proved that a well organised political organisation that had leaders who were prepared to sacrifice and were capable of leading a non-violent struggle could organise people in a way that posed a real challenge to the state.

The 1946 passive resistance campaign and the Mine workers strike was a major catalyst for the African National Congress to re-think its strategy towards working with Indian, Black and Coloured organisations.

At the end of 1949, the ANC went through a transformation similar to that of the Indian Congresses in 1945/46. The ANC Youth League led by Mandela, Sisulu and Tambo, assumed leadership of the parent organisation and secured the adoption of a Programme of Action. As Nelson Mandela explained in his autobiography: "... we thought the time had come for mass action along the lines of Gandhi's non-violent protests in India and the 1946 passive resistance campaign... The ANC's leaders, we said, had to be willing to violate the law and, if necessary, go to prison for their beliefs as Gandhi had."

After the massacre of peaceful African demonstrators in Johannesburg on May Day 1950, the ANC and SAIC, together with the Communist Party, organised a national stay-away on 26 June, in protest against new, repressive



Women passive resisters



### Valliama Munuswami Mudliar (1897 – 1914)

The participation of women passive resisters was a key element of the *Satyagraha* Campaign of 1913 - 1914. Angered by the Supreme Court judgement in March 1913, in which Judge Searle refused to recognise Hindu and Muslim marriages, Indian women joined the Campaign for the first time.

Mudliar's parents owned a fruit shop in Doornfontein, Johannesburg. At the age of 16, she was among a group of women who travelled from mine to mine in Natal, urging indentured workers to strike. In 1913 Mudliar was one of the hundreds of female volunteers who joined the final *Satyagraha* Campaign led by Gandhi in South Africa in 1913. Along with many others, she suffered imprisonment. She was released from the Pietermaritzburg prison suffering from a fatal fever. She died soon afterwards, on 22 February 1914.

Mudliar was a charismatic speaker and came to symbolise the courage of women who cast aside their traditional seclusion and participated in mass action risking arrest and imprisonment.



legislation and in mourning for those who had lost their lives in the struggle for liberation. This united action by the African and Indian Congresses was followed by further discussions, leading to the great Campaign of Defiance against Unjust Laws in 1952. This was a non-violent campaign in which over 8,000 people of all races went to prison.

The option of peaceful protest as a method of struggle was part of the legacy created by Gandhi's 1906 – 1913 passive resistance campaign. In the years that followed, the Freedom Charter campaign, the 1956 Women's Anti-Pass March to the Union Buildings and the 1960 ANC and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) anti-pass campaigns all continued mass action in the form of non-violent protests.

The era of non-violent mass action came to an end on 21 March 1960 when thousands of people had gathered at Sharpeville to burn their passes and voluntarily go to prison. The police opened fire on the passive resisters, and 69 people died. The subsequent banning of the ANC and the PAC, as well as the detention and imprisonment of many leaders, shook the confidence of the liberation movements and challenged the idea of passive resistance and peaceful protests as a strategy for change. Many believed that an *armed struggle* was the only solution and the Communist Party, the ANC, the PAC and many small socialist and other left wing groups started preparing for armed struggle. The use of passive resistance as a weapon of struggle was abandoned. It was only revived with the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Mass Democratic Movement.

It can be argued that the legacy of passive resistance had a profound effect on how the ANC conducted its armed struggle.



**Police attack striking workers, Ladysmith, 1908**

It took great care to avoid loss of life. Non-violent resistance continued in new forms despite intense repression.

The influence of Gandhi may also be discerned in the spirit of reconciliation that followed the release of Mandela in 1990 and the establishment





of a democratic government in 1994. Gandhi's unique method of non-violent struggle or the *Satyagraha* movement were tried and tested in South Africa and put to dramatic

effect in the struggle for liberation in India and the Civil Rights movement in America and elsewhere in the world. The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the birth of *Satyagraha* is the time for *Gandhi and the Birth of Satyagraha*

the world to reflect on and adopt Gandhi's message of the use of peaceful method of struggle to bring about change.





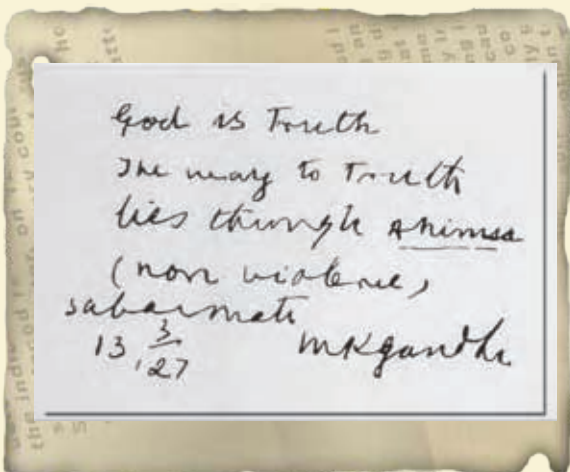
## C.K Thambi Naidoo

Was born in Mauritius where his parents had been indentured from Madras. He had no formal education and became a building contractor and trader. He was a fluent writer and speaker of English. He spoke Tamil, Telegu, Hindustani and Creole. Energetic chairman of the Tamil Benefit Society from 1912.

Gandhi commended his physical strength, his ready wit, his tireless energy, and his patriotism to India and said that he could have led the Indian community but for his quick temper. He suffered observably when his wife had a miscarriage while he was in prison. His children and grandchildren played prominent roles in the apartheid struggle.

## Glossary

- Barrister** – A lawyer admitted to plead at the bar in the superior courts
- passive resistance** – Resistance by nonviolent methods to a government, an occupying power, or specific laws, as refusing to comply, demonstrating in protest, or fasting.
- Amendment** – The process of formally altering or adding to a document or record. A statement of such an alteration or addition: *The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution gave women the right to vote.*
- Campaign** – A series of organised activities that are all meant to achieve a certain goal
- Anglo** – England; English “Anglo-Boer “ means war between England or the English and the Boers.
- Colony** – A country that is controlled by another country. After 1910, South Africa was a British dominion and part of the British Commonwealth until 1961. It then became an independent republic and was called the Republic of South Africa.
- Bill** – A design for a new law that the government wants to bring in. When Parliament and the Constitutional Court approve a bill, it becomes a law.
- Colonialism** – A system in which a state claims sovereignty over territory and people outside its own boundaries, often to facilitate economic domination over their resources, labour, and markets.
- Imperialism** – Imperial government: Regarding or associated with supreme ruler or empire. A policy of acquiring independent states and bringing them under control. A policy of extending a country’s influence through trade, diplomacy etc.
- Federation** – A union of several states or provinces.
- Repeal** – To revoke or rescind, especially by an official or formal act.
- Defiance** – Open disobedience.
- Deport** – To expel from a country



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Passive resistance leaders outside the Johannesburg Fort prison, 1908



	A Chronology of Passive Resistance Movements in South Africa after the Satyagraha Campaign
1946	<b>The Passive-Resistance Campaign of 1946:</b> The Indian passive resistance of 1946 - 48 was a landmark in the history of the South African liberation struggle. It was the first episode in a continuous and determined mass movement for liberation from racist tyranny and the training ground for many Indians who went on to make great contributions to the national liberation movement. It initiated the mobilisation of world public opinion in support of freedom in South Africa. - ES Reddy.
1952	<b>The Defiance Campaign:</b> The period 1950 -1952 began with a commitment to militant African nationalism and mass action, to the tactics of boycotts, strikes and civil disobedience. This period culminated in the Defiance Campaign, the largest scale non-violent resistance movement ever seen in South Africa and the first campaign pursued jointly by all racial groups under the leadership of the ANC and the South African Indian Congress (SAIC).
1956	<b>The Women's March to the Union Buildings in 1956:</b> An Anti-Pass Campaign organised by FEDSAW.
1960's	<b>The Anti-Pass Passive Resistance Campaigns of the 1960s:</b> The ANC named 31 March 1960, as Anti-Pass Day, when it mobilised its supporters to protest against the pass laws.
1989	<b>The Defiance Campaign of 1989:</b> In August 1989 the UDF and MDM organised the first major national campaign since the start of the State of Emergency. A defiance campaign similar to that of 1952 was organised, and people took part in civil disobedience campaigns across the country.

## Classroom activities

Learning outcome: To better one's research ability and the ability to make use of outside resources. Strengthen one's ability to define and make use of new terms/words. To better one's essay writing and comparison ability.

1. How does Passive Resistance or the concepts of the *Satyagraha* Campaign differ from armed resistance? What makes Passive Resistance such a powerful means of protest?
2. What is a martyr and why were Valliama R Munuswami and Swami Nagappen Padayachee considered to be martyrs?
3. There were two laws that the South African Indian Community were protesting against in the Campaign prior to 1913. Describe and name these laws and write a paragraph on why you believe that these laws were so humiliating.
4. There is a picture in this section of the booklet of Gandhi 'recovering' at Rev Doke's house. What was he recovering from? What caused this event?
5. What helped the *Satyagraha* Campaign gain much needed momentum once more in 1913?
6. Gandhi's treatment of women can be described as extremely forward thinking for the times. Discuss whether you agree or disagree with this statement.
7. What was the aim of the Campaign led by Gandhi's wife Kasturbai and how did they achieve it?
8. Write an essay on the final stage of the Campaign (the coal miners' strike) explaining how it progressed and eventually led to the Gandhi-Smuts agreement.



Gandhi and other passive resistance leaders posing outside Johannesburg Fort Prison, 1908



# African Mine Workers' strike of



In 1946, two years before the National Party (NP) came to power, tens of thousands of Black mine workers embark on a week of industrial action. They were responding to a call by the African Mine Workers' Union, under the presidency of John Beaver Marks, to protest against the poor wages and the working and living conditions of mines housed in strictly controlled mine workers' compounds.

Conditions in the compounds caused a great deal of suffering amongst the workers, as did their extremely low wages. The government employed

brutal methods to crush the strike, but the workers were inspired to prolong their defiance, in the desperate hope of changing their situation.

The political atmosphere of the time also influenced the strike profoundly. World War II had just ended and there was a renewed consciousness of freedom and democratic rights. This helped create a context for the mine workers to express their frustrations by striking. Union leaders tried to engage the employers on several occasions, but had no success. They eventually decided to strike.

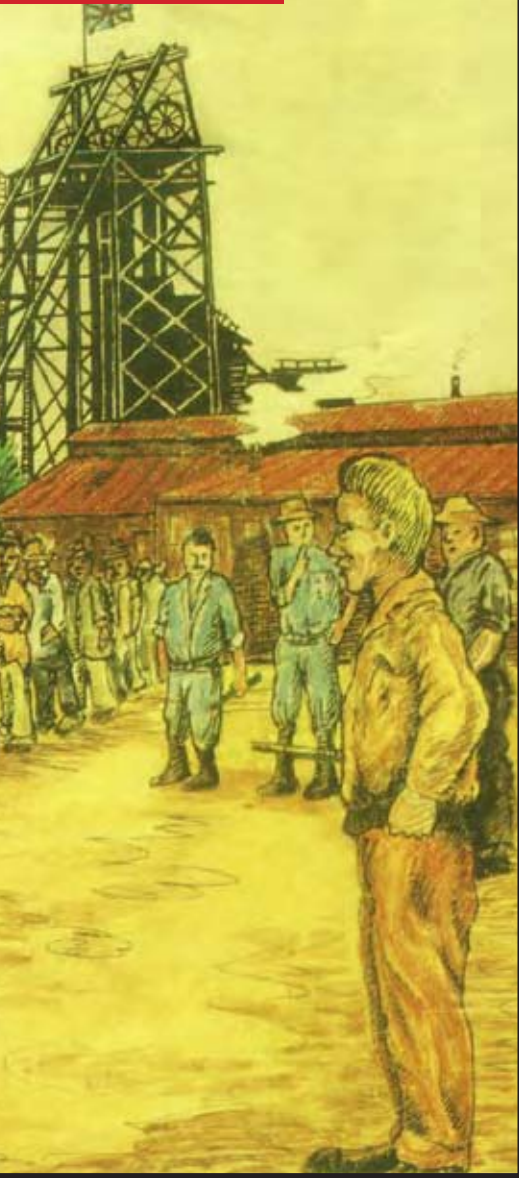
## Events leading up to the strike

### The Formation of the African Mine Workers' Union (AMWU)

Since African mine workers were not unionised, leaders from two main liberation movements, the African National Congress (ANC) and the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) undertook to organise mine workers and form a trade union that would work towards their interests. Gaur Radebe and Edwin Mofutsanyana, members of both the ANC and the CPSA, spearheaded



# 1946



(AMWU). Marks of the CPSA was elected President and James Majoro of the, Witwatersrand Native Mine-Clerks' Association was elected Vice-President.

The AMWU experienced a quick rise in its membership. In 1944 it had about 4000 members. The Union embarked on an aggressive campaign to highlight the hardships experienced by African Mine workers.

When the AMWU was formed in 1941 there was a huge difference in wages between Black and White mine workers. Black workers were taking home R70 per annum, while their White counterparts received R848.

The Chamber of Mines (CM), the employer's organisation, was extremely hostile towards the new union. The CM refused to acknowledge the existence of the AMWU or to meet its representatives. In spite of the challenges and frustrations posed by the CM and by the authorities, Black mine workers persisted in highlighting their hardships.

In order to prevent the rising unrest, the government set up a Commission of Inquiry in 1943 to investigate working conditions on the mines. Judge Lansdowne was the chairperson. AA Moore, the president of the mostly White Trades and Labour Council, was also a member of the Commission. The AMWU presented the case of Black workers and their demand for a living wage.

The report of the Commission, which was made public in April 1944, proved to be a shameful document. It accepted the argument of the mine-owners and recommended the preservation of the system of cheap labour. It made a further claim that the miners' wages were not intended as living wages, but as supplementary income. Evidence put before the Commission of Starvation in the Transkei and other reserves was ignored. The Commission's report was received with dismay and bitterness by the Black workers.

Both the government and the mine owners rejected the Union's recommendations. These were:

- An increase of five pence per shift for surface workers and six pence per shift for underground workers, on the basic rate of 22 pence per shift, which had obtained for nearly a generation;
- A cost of living allowance of 3 pence per shift;
- A boot allowance of 36 pence for 30 shifts;
- Two weeks' paid leave per annum for permanent workers; and
- Overtime wages of time and a half.

In contrast to the Commission's recommendations, Prime Minister Smuts announced a 4% increase for the surface workers and a 5% increase for the underground workers. Smuts further announced that the government would help to carry the cost of the extra wages by reducing taxation on the mines. The CM also agreed to overtime pay. All the other recommendations were dismissed.

Smuts sensed that this would not be enough to minimise discontent among Black workers, so he proclaimed War Measure No 1425. This made any gathering of more than twenty workers on mine premises, without special permission, illegal. In December 1944, a few months after War Measure No 1425 was proclaimed, AMWU president Marks and other two officials were arrested for holding a meeting at the Durban Deep Compound on the Witwatersrand. Another two Union organizers, P. Vundi and W. Kanye, were arrested in Springs for the same offence. All the arrested men were found not guilty, as it could not



the process. In August 1941 the ANC Transvaal Provincial Committee organised a conference to talk about the formation of the new union. The conference was well attended. 80 delegates from 41 organisations agreed to create a union. The conference also received sympathetic support from White unions.

A fifteen-member committee, which consisted of high-ranking ANC and CPSA members, was set up to raise funds for the union and manage its development. The result was the African Mine Workers' Union





**Striking workers and police in mine compound**

be proved that they had attended a meeting of more than twenty people.

Despite these difficulties the AMWU support base continued to grow on many mines around the Witwatersrand. Workers were showing signs of losing patience. On 19 May 1946, a conference of workers' representatives instructed AMWU National Executive Committee to approach the CM to present a demand for a minimum wage of 10

shillings a day, the withdrawal of War Measure No. 1425 and improved rations. If these demands were not met, the workers would take some form of mass action.

From May until July the Union attempted to get the CM to see reason. Despite continuous talks, the Union failed to have any of its demands satisfied. The only reply they got was an acknowledgement of the receipt of their demands.

The workers held a decisive conference on Sunday 4 August 1946, where more than a thousand delegates gathered at the Newtown Market Square. The conference was also attended by political leaders, including the ANC General President, Chief Albert Luthuli. The conference emerged with bold resolutions:

*“Because of the intransigent attitude of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines towards the legitimate demands of the workers for a minimum wage*



### **John Beaver (JB) Marks (1903 – 1972)**

John Beaver (JB) Marks was born on 21 March 1903 in a small town in Western Transvaal known as Ventersdorp. He was politically inspired by his father who was a staunch supporter of the African National Congress (ANC). In 1928 he joined the ANC and became the President of the Transvaal Branch of the ANC. In 1942 he was elected the president of Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions and later in the same year he became the president of the African Mine Workers' Union. In 1946 he led the union into a major African mine workers' strike ever witnessed in South Africa. In 1952 Marks was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act, but he defiantly remained politically active. He assisted in the establishment of the South African Congress of Trade Union (SACTU) and continued to take part in the 1952 Defiance Campaign.

He left the country in 1963 after the ANC National Executive Committee ordered him to leave. He ended up in Tanzania after going through Bechuanaland.



of 10 shillings per day and better of work, this meeting of African miners resolves to embark upon a general strike of all Africans employed on the gold mines, as from August 12, 1946.”

Speaker after speaker took to the stage and demanded immediate action. One worker said:

“When I think of how we left our homes in the reserves, our children naked and starving, we have nothing more to say. Every man must agree to strike on 12 August. It is better to die than go back with empty hands.”

Immediately after the decision to strike was made, Marks emphasised the significance of the decision. He called upon workers to ready themselves for the possibility of harsh repression by the government. “You are challenging the very basis of the cheap labour system,” he told them, “and must be ready to sacrifice in the struggle for the right to live as human beings.”

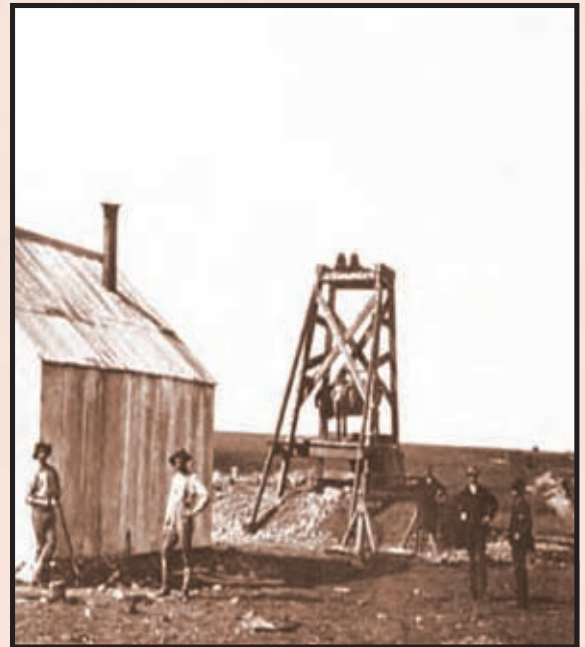
The secretary of the Union, J.J Majoro, also announced to the gathering that “their repeated efforts to secure improvements by means of negotiation had always ended in failure, owing to the refusal of the Chamber of Mines to recognise the existence of the Union”. There was little doubt, he warned, that the regime would attempt to suppress the strike by brute force.

### The Strike begins

The letter to the Chamber of Mines containing the Union’s decision to go on strike, and requesting an audience, was ignored as usual. After a mass meeting was held on 4 August, the Union spread the news of the strike to all its contacts. On 12 August, tens of thousands of mine workers went out on strike to demand ten shillings a day. The strike proved to be successful when it brought operations on almost all the gold mines on Witwatersrand to a halt.

The government and the mine owners, represented by the CM, agreed to use the police to try to calm the situation and get workers back to their shafts. The police behaved brutally. In spite of severe beatings, the workers continued with the strike and managed to put other mines out of operation.

The police opened fire on a peaceful procession of African workers who were marching from East Rand to Johannesburg, an incident that became known as Bloody Tuesday.



Early Johannesburg mining activity

### Chronology

1941	August	The conference under the auspices of the African National Congress (ANC) is convened to inaugurate the African Mine Workers’ Union.
1943		Government set up the Commission of Inquiry under the chairmanship of Judge Lansdown.
1944	April	The report of the Commission, which was made public in April 1944, proved to be a shameful document.
1946	14 April	2,000 delegates at the AMWU conference put adequate food and 10s per day as their main demands during the forthcoming strike.
1946	15 May	The AMWU demand arbitration and make a strike threat at the meeting attended by 500 miner workers.
1946	19 May	The AMWU calls a meeting at the Newtown Market Square to give report back on miners demands.
1946	4 August	Over one thousand delegates assemble at the Newtown Market Square and make a decision to embark on strike.
1946–.	12 August	60 000 African mine workers in Witwatersrand respond positively to the call by the African Mine Workers’ Union to go on strike.
1946	13 August	A peaceful procession by African workers from East Rand ends in a bloodbath.
1946	14 August	Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CONETU) decides to call general strike in Johannesburg.
1946	15 August	CONETU calls a mass meeting of workers at Newtown Market Square.
1956	16 August	All Striking Workers are beaten back.



A number of workers were killed. At one mine, workers went down the mine and staged a sit-in until they were forced out by the police. 32 of the 45 mines on the Rand were affected. Marks and other executive members of the Union were arrested, leaving the strikers leaderless.

Police brutality did not stop the mine workers, but encouraged workers and unions from other industries to join the strike. At a CONETU conference, Ambrose Makiwane of the African Gas and Power Union announced the decision to call a general strike on Wednesday 14 August. The proposed general strike never succeeded because the Johannesburg City Council sent a deputation to plead with CONETU to maintain essential services. Organisers had also failed to get the message to the targeted workers.

The follow-up mass meeting, called by CONETU on 15 August, was dispersed by the police in terms of the Riotous Assemblies Act. A procession of female tobacco-workers who were marching to this meeting was attacked by the police and one pregnant worker was bayoneted.



**Interior of mine workers' hostel**

The strike was also negatively affected by the newspaper reports. On Monday 12 August, the *Rand Daily Mail* published an edition with a headline declaring that the strike was “a complete failure”. The report was an obvious lie as the strike had not even begun at that time. However, on the very same evening, *The Star* newspaper ran a different tale about the strike:

*“Tens of thousands of workers were out on strike from the East to the West Rand. The Smuts regime had formed a special committee of Cabinet Ministers to deal with the situation; and thousands of police were being mobilised and drafted to the area.”*

## **Newspaper reports**

### **Day to Day breaking of the strike**

**Monday: August 12**

**From the *Rand Daily Mail***

***Several Injured in Skirmishes: Police Take Swift Action:***

*Attempts were made last night at several mines on the Rand to prevent the native shifts from going on duty. Swift action by mine officials and contingents of police, who had been standing by all day, resulted in the shifts going down for their normal duties. A number of natives who were on their way to work are believed to have been injured in the skirmishes. The police have made a few arrests, and many more arrests are expected...*

*At City Deep... some of the agitators attempted to storm the main gates to the mines in an effort to prevent the natives*

*going on duty. The mine officials acted promptly, and policemen from Johannesburg were sent to the area to assist them. On the arrival of the police everything became quiet, but the police made an arrest.*

*At Robinson Deep a number of agitators shouted insults and catcalls, attempted to induce the miners to return to their compounds. Once again the officials stepped in quickly, and soon had the backing of a strong force of policemen. The shift went on duty...*

*It is thought that yesterday's trouble was a sequel to a meeting held a week ago at the Newtown Market Square, when 1,000 natives agreed to call a general strike of native mine workers... A number of meetings were held on various mines yesterday to confirm this decision. The natives are demanding better conditions and an increase in the daily wage to ten shillings...*

### **From *The Star***

*There is a total stoppage of work at West Springs, Van Dyck, Van Ryn, Vlakfontein, New Kleifontein, and Modder B; and a partial stoppage of work at Brakpan, City Deep, Robinson Deep, Nourse Mines and Sub-Nigel. Generally natives are remaining quietly in their compounds.*

*The arrest of three natives in connection with the mine strike in the Benoni area resulted in a demonstration of several thousand natives outside the Benoni Police Station... Police reinforcements were sent from other centres... About 200 police assembled with rifles and fixed bayonets; they dispersed the natives to their compounds. There were a few minor casualties ...*



**Tuesday August 13**

**From the Rand Daily Mail**

**45,000 Natives Strike at 11 Mines**

**Police in Baton Charges Disperse Benoni Mob**

*Late last night there were indications that further compounds were likely to join the strike early this morning... It is estimated that between 45,000 and 50,000 natives are already on strike for a daily wage of ten shillings... Eleven mines are involved. Some have closed down, while others are only partially affected.*

*... The strike is likely to spread. Strong police detachments are being sent to danger spots this morning to prevent this development. A Rand Daily Mail representative who toured the area found the strikers treating the occasion as a Sunday. They sat or lay about in blanketed groups, sunning themselves behind compound walls out of the wind... The only sign of abnormal conditions were the lorry-loads of armed police arriving from training depots at Pretoria, from Johannesburg and elsewhere.*

*At Vlakfontein, twenty natives who refused to go to work were arrested ... When night shifts prepared to go underground at several of the East Rand mines... police were on the spot and made several arrests. On State mines... police drove the malcontents back to their rooms, and order was restored. The largest number of arrests was made at Springs Mine No. 1 Compound where 400 natives were rounded up. When they intimated they were willing to return to work, however, they were released. At City Deep about 100 agitators had gathered near the main gates... About twenty arrests were made.*

### **Mine Strike Discussed by Cabinet**

*The Prime Minister, Smuts, presided over a full meeting of the Cabinet at Union Buildings yesterday... The meeting was not called because of the strike... but it is understood that the matter was discussed.*



**Mine workers on strike**

## **Edwin Thabo Mofutsanyana**

**(1899 – 1995)**

Edwin Thabo Mofutsanyana was born in the Witzieshoek area of the Orange Free State in 1899. In 1926 he joined the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), becoming one of its most loyal African adherents in the years that followed. He served as the general secretary of the CPSA until 1939 when Moses Kotane assumed the position. In the 1940s he chaired the party's Johannesburg district committee and also served on the central committee. He was one of those charged with fomenting the African Mine workers' Strike of 1946.

Mofutsanyana attended the meetings of the All African Convention (AAC) in 1935 and 1936, each time being elected to the AAC's executive committee. His long-term concern, however, was to build the ANC into an effective organisation, and in 1937 he joined J. B. Marks, S. S. Tema, and others in reviving the Transvaal ANC. Under A. B. Xuma, he served on the African National Congress's (ANC) national executive committee as an advisor on labour matters. After he was banned he left South Africa for Basutoland (now Lesotho), where he was still living in the 1960s.



### **From The Star**

*It is the opinion of observers that the great majority of the strikers are anxious to return to work. The mines on which there is a complete stoppage today are Van Dyck, Van Ryn, Vlakfontein and Modder B – all totally stopped the previous day; and Brakpan, City Deep and Nourse Mines – all partially stopped the previous day; and Marievale – where there was no stoppage the previous day. There has been a partial return to work at New Klipfontein, Sub-Nigel and Springs – all totally stopped previously. Robinson Deep is still partially stopped and Simmer and Jack and Rose Deep – where there were no stoppages previously – are also partially stopped... A handful of natives went on strike at Sallies mine this morning... An attempt described as half-hearted was made to picket the shaft head at Government Areas mine last night and the shifts were late this morning.*

*Police escorting natives to work at Betty Shaft of Sub-Nigel Mine were attacked by 1 500 strikers this morning. Armed police opened fire on the strikers, picking their targets and six natives were wounded. The strikers dropped their weapons and made a rush for the compound. 'The police were forced to open fire in self defence', a police official told the Star, 'and six natives were wounded. Six other natives were crushed to death in the ensuing panic'. At 11 o'clock, the natives at this compound had already decided to return to work.*

### **Wednesday, August 14th From the Rand Daily Mail**

*On Monday, the workers of Nol Shaft, City Deep, after being driven out of their compound, went underground, where they held a 'sit down' strike.*

*Hundreds of police with drawn batons fought the native strikers at the Robinson Deep and Nourse mines at 6.20am, when they refused to go to work. During the night strikers were told that they were expected to go on shift. But they refused and took up so threatening an attitude towards mine officials that the police were called in. About 320 policemen were sent to Chris Shaft, Robinson Deep Mine, where they were also involved in a fight with the strikers. A baton charge was made into the rooms in the compound... At Nourse Mines the police had to baton charge against 700 Shangaans who had changed their minds after setting out for the shaft, and tried to return to the compounds.*

### **4,000 Strikers Try to March on Johannesburg**

*Armed with choppers, iron bars, knives and an assortment of other dangerous weapons, 4,000 strikers forming a six mile long procession attempted to march on Johannesburg from West Springs yesterday afternoon... They were intercepted by police near Brakpan. When they refused to turn back they were attacked by police. Three of them were seriously injured and scores received minor injuries. The purpose of the march is not known. All available policemen on the East Rand and in Johannesburg were ordered to intercept them on the way and drive them back to their compounds... Reports were received that the natives were making straight for their compounds and had decided to return to work.*

### **From The Star**

*General Smuts told the Transvaal head committee of the United Party in Pretoria today that he was not unduly concerned over what was happening on the Witwatersrand gold mines, because the strike was not caused by legitimate grievances but by agitators. The government would take steps to see that these matters were put right... The agitators were trying to lead the natives and the country to destruction. The natives had to be protected from these people.*

### **Thursday, August 15th From the Rand Daily Mail**

*Yesterday about 4,000 natives from Simmer and Jack began a march on the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association's compound in Johannesburg, where they intended to demonstrate in support of their claims for an increased wage. The column was intercepted by two forces of police. One body of police charged the main group of strikers. Most of the natives escaped...but... many natives hiding in the holes in the vicinity were rounded up. The second body of police cornered 800 natives in the angle formed by a deep donga and an old ash dump... Eventually the whole group indicated its willingness to surrender, putting up their hands. 500 strikers from Van Ryn... set out from Benoni yesterday morning on a march to Johannesburg 'to see the Chamber of Mines'. They were met by police near Elandsfontein. A fight ensued, in which the natives were routed and sent scurrying over the veld... A number of strikers were injured. At Chris Shaft, Robinson Deep... when there was no move by the natives to go on duty, the police were ordered into the compound to clear the rooms. The Pundos... leaned out of their doors laughing and jeering and hurling insults. A detachment armed with rifles with fixed bayonets and revolvers appeared, the attitude of the Pundos changed, and they returned to their rooms... The police were ordered to clear the rooms. Many of the natives adopted a defiant attitude, and in some cases the police were compelled to use force. Hundreds of natives streamed out of the compound gates...*

### **From The Star**

*All but two of the Rand's 45 producing mines are now working normally... There is total stoppage at one, Nigel, and partial stoppage at one, Robinson Deep. Strikers Sit at Bottom of Two Shafts.*

*There was trouble at City Deep this morning, when one compound refused to resume work. Police cleared the compound, and batches of natives were escorted to the shaft heads. At two shafts, the first batches of natives staged a 'sit-down' strike a mile under the ground and refused to let any further batches leave the cages... there has been similar experience at Nigel mine this morning... There has been no violence. The natives say they will maintain their sit-down strike at the bottom of the 2, 700 foot shaft until four o'clock this afternoon when they are due to come up.*



**Friday, August 16th**  
**From the Rand Daily Mail**

*More than 400 policemen went 1,000 feet underground in the Nigel goldmine yesterday to deal with 1,000 natives who were staging a sit-down strike. This is the first time in South African history that the police have been compelled to take such action... A fight developed in the stopes. They drove the natives up, stope by stope, level by level, until they reached the surface... Afterwards the strikers indicated their intention of resuming work. They were sent underground, and no further trouble occurred.*

*5,000 natives at the Main compound, City Deep, were involved in a fight with police yesterday, and afterwards went underground readily.*

*At noon, the police chased strikers at Chris Shaft, Robinson Deep, off near by dumps. They surrendered, and said they would return to work.*

*Some native strikers were injured in the main compound of the Rose Deep mine yesterday as a result of a baton charge by about 200 policemen. The police moved forward to the attack, and using batons and heavy sticks, drove the natives back... They decided to return to work. In batches of about 100 they were marched to the shaft heads, there was no further trouble. More than fifty natives and two policemen were slightly injured in a clash between 400 policemen and 5,000 strikers at the main compound at City Deep yesterday. Native Mine Strike Likely to Peter Out There is every prospect that all Rand mines will be working normally today.*

**From The Star**

*There was trouble at New Pioneer mine this morning when all the natives there refused to work... About 70 police arrived and tried to arrest the ringleaders. There was an intense struggle for about an hour, during which time twenty natives were injured... The worst elements scattered into neighbouring dumps, and the rest of the natives started work.*

*The strike of native mineworkers on the Rand has ended. In all, seventeen mines were involved in varying degrees... Only Robinson Deep was affected throughout the whole period. It is estimated that at least 1,000,000 man hours were lost in the strike... The Deputy Commissioner of Police had at his disposal 1,600 men to deal with the situation...*

*In an interview, the Director of Native Labour and Chief Native Commissioner for the Witwatersrand, JM Brink, said: 'My chaps were on the spot from the word go... to point out that the stoppage was illegal and a breach of contract; that the affair was instigated by agitators; that they could not possibly expect ten shillings a day... Whenever police action was finally taken, it was only after repeated attempts to get the workers back in terms of their contracts by other means.'*

**The aftermath**

By 16 August all workers on strike were beaten back to their work. All AMWU National Executive Committee members, the entire Central Committee of the Communist Party and leaders of the ANC provincial and local structures, were arrested and charged with treason and sedition. The offices of the unions in Durban, Cape Town, Kimberley, East London and Port Elizabeth were raided. The homes of the ANC, CPSA, Indian and Coloured Congress members and union leaders were also searched.

Though the strike was not successful, it caused considerable changes to the political landscape and to the attitudes and approaches of the liberation movements of the time. They abandoned the compromising, concession-begging and moderate approaches they had employed in dealing with the government. The South African Indian Congress sent a delegation to the United Nations General Assembly. It consisted of H. A. Naidoo, Sorabjee Rustomjee and Senator H. M. Basner. They made use of the opportunity to describe the experiences of the mine workers to the United Nations member states. The delegation also included the ANC president Chief Luthuli.

Prime Minister Smuts finally gave in to pressure from the Native Representative Council and undertook to amend legislation to recognise the Black trade unions. Unfortunately, this recognition did not include the Black mine workers. He referred their issues to the Inspectorate functioning under the Department of Native Affairs.

After considering this proposal, the Native Representative Council leaders stated:

*"It is asking for too much to expect the African people to believe that this new Inspectorate, whatever the grade of officers appointed, will make a better job of protecting the interests of the mine workers than the Inspectorate has done in the past. The African mine workers demand the right to protect themselves through the medium of their own recognised and registered organisation".*

The charges against the strike leaders were withdrawn in 1948. The Nationalist party when it came into power in 1948 abandoned all pretension of extending trade union rights for African workers and embarked on a campaign to vilify the Communist Party and eventually passed the 1950 Suppression of Communism Act which outlawed the organisation. The mine workers never recovered from the strike and the Mine Workers' Union was only revived and became a powerful force in the 1980s.

Records of the numbers of workers who participated in the strike differ according to different accounts. According to the government Director of Native Labour, 75 000 took part, while the Union gave an estimate of approximately 100 000. Nine people were officially reported dead and 1 248 were injured.





**JB Marks, (right, with back to camera) distributing leaflets outside a mine compound**

**Acronyms** [A word or name that is formed by joining the first letters (the few letters) or a series of words]

- NP** – National Party
- AMWU** – African Mine Workers' Union
- ANC** – African National Congress
- CPSA** – Communist Party of South Africa
- CM** – Chamber of Mines
- CONETU** – Council of Non-European Trade Unions
- AGPU** – African Gas and Power Union
- SAIC** – South African Indian Congress

**Links**

<http://www.liberation.org.za/themes/campaigns/mine46/strike.php>

**James Madlophe Phillips (1919 – 1987)**

James Phillips was born in Sophiatown into a working class family on 11 December 1919. Phillips became involved in politics in 1940 when was elected chairperson of Garment Workers' Union of the Transvaal. He became actively involved in the formation of the Transvaal Council of Non-European Unions in 1941. In 1940 Phillips joined the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA).

He was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act. In 1954 Phillips was helped to leave the country and made his way to England. In 1960 he managed to set up a home in London with his first wife Maude, which later became a refuge base for the ANC members. In 1987 Philips passed away. The funeral was attended by the Congress members, anti-apartheid activists and Communists,

**Glossary**

- Divergent** – Different
- Discontent** – Lack of dissatisfaction/ Unhappiness
- Dismay** – Disappointment/Shock
- Disparity** – Inconsistency/ a great different
- Envisage** – Visualise/ form a mental picture of something
- Flimsy** – Unconvincing/Insubstantial
- Gallant** – Brave/Courageous
- Industrial action** – Strike/Work stoppage
- Preclude** – Prevent something from happening or someone from doing something
- Refute** – Prove something to be wrong/ Dismiss as untrue/
- Reiterate** – Repeat something
- Sedition** – Incitement to rebellion
- Spearhead** – To lead the process, movement or attack
- Succumb** – Give up/Surrender



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For more info





**Policemen arrest striking mine worker**



## **Classroom activities**

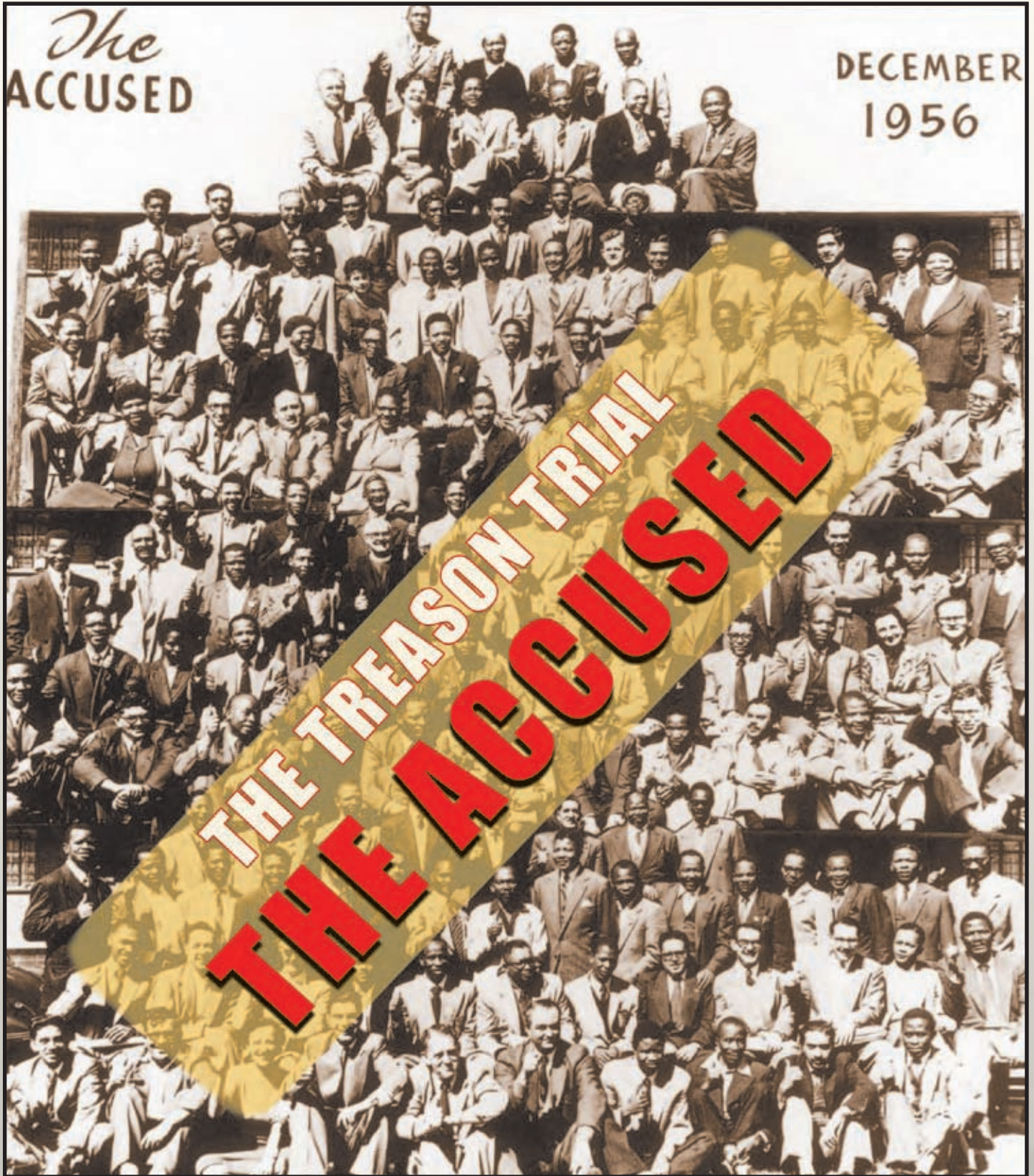
Learning Outcome: Learners must be able to understand the Socio-Economic challenges faced by the African people.

1. What does SAMWU stand for?
2. When did the African Mine Workers' strike take place?
3. What caused the African Mine Workers' strike in 1946?
4. Did the strike achieve desired results?
5. Who helped to establish SAMWU?
6. List the names of people who were arrested and charged with sedition?
7. Was the brutality that police exercised on the striking miners justified? Explain your answer.
8. Briefly explain the state of labour movements in South Africa after the African Mine Workers' strike in 1946.



*The*  
ACCUSED

DECEMBER  
1956



## *The Treason Trial*

In 1955 brave volunteers travelled the country collecting people's demands for a new South Africa. They travelled to farms, factories, mines, townships, etc. asking ordinary South Africans what changes they would like to see. These demands were collected and summarised and became the Freedom Charter that was adopted in Kliptown, at the Congress of the People on 25 and 26 June 1955. Over 3000 delegates from all over the country risked police violence

to attend this meeting – the most democratic meeting ever held in South Africa.

The Freedom Charter declared:

*“We the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know: that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people.”*



In response to the adoption of the Freedom Charter the government arrested key leaders and activists. This was almost the entire executive of the African National Congress (ANC), the Congress of Democrats, the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the Coloured People's Congress (CPC) and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU). These organisations were working together as the Congress Alliance. On the night of the 5th December 1956, the police arrested 144 people in raids across South Africa, including Chief Albert Luthuli (president of the ANC) and Nelson Mandela. The following week another 12 people, including Walter Sisulu, were arrested. Of the total of 156 arrested, 105 were Black, 21 were Indian, 23 were Whites and 7 were Coloured.

Those arrested were charged with *'high treason and a countrywide conspiracy to use violence to overthrow the then present government and replace it with a Communist state'*. The punishment for high treason was death. The accused were represented by a legal team, which included Izrael Maisels, Sydney Kentridge, Vernon Berrangé and Bram Fisher. The trial sent shockwaves through the liberation movement and there was an immediate international outcry. A Treason Trial Defence Fund was started by Bishop Ambrose Reeves, Alex Hebble and the writer and head of the Liberal Party, Alan Paton. This helped to pay the bail and living expenses of the accused and their families.

The trial had two stages: a preparatory examination and the trial itself. In the preparatory examination the state had to convince the court that there was sufficient evidence to support a trial. Meanwhile, despite the seriousness of the charge, the accused were released in December 1956 on a small bail of £250 for Whites, £100 for Indians and Coloureds, and £50 for Blacks. The preparatory examination was held in the Drill Hall in Johannesburg and lasted over a year, until January 1958. At the end of the preparatory examination charges against 61 of the accused were dropped and the remaining 95 leaders

had to face the charge of treason in the Supreme Court in Pretoria.

## Preparatory examination

### The first indictment argued, August - October 1958

In Pretoria, a special criminal court of three judges listened to all the legal arguments that supported the first accusation, or *indictment*. Proceedings were temporarily suspended when the prosecution withdrew the first indictment. This was described by one observer as something that had never happened before in English legal history.

Before the indictment was withdrawn, its scope was defined more narrowly. Originally it had said that the accused were guilty of high treason because they had conspired and acted 'in concert and with common purpose' to overthrow the State by violence. The indictment had also included two alternative charges of disobeying, or *contravening*, the Suppression of Communism Act. These charges were concerned more with promoting Communism rather than violent treason. The Court

## Mary Ranta (1922 - )



After leaving school, Mary Goitsewang Ranta worked as a 'tea girl' at the Pretoria Mint, and later took employment as a typist for the African Iron and Steel Workers' Union. By the early 1950s she was an active trade unionist and shop steward for the Garment Workers' Union. She joined the African National Congress (ANC) in 1948, was elected to the Transvaal executive of the ANC Women's League in 1954, and in 1955 became the League's national secretary. She was also on the executive committee of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) and played a leading role in protests against the extension of passes to women in the mid-1950s. In December 1956 she was one of the 19 women charged with treason, but charges against her were dropped in December 1957.



**Break in the Treason Trial, Dawood Seedat, Ruth First and other Treason triallers outside court, October 1958, Pretoria**



rejected, or 'quashed', one of the two charges and ordered the prosecution to supply additional information regarding the other. The Court also ordered the prosecution to tell each of the accused how he was affected by the difference between the allegation of 'conspiracy' and the allegation of 'concert and common purpose'.

The prosecution's response was to drop the remaining charge under the Suppression of Communism Act, leaving only the main charge of high treason and the accompanying allegation of conspiracy. Both the Court and the defence team still assumed that, if conspiracy could not be proved, the prosecution would attempt to establish the guilt of each of the accused for separate acts of high treason. But on 29 September the leader of the prosecution announced that he was relying on adherence to 'conspiracy pure and simple'. *"If the Crown fails to prove conspiracy," he said, "then all the accused go free."*

During the argument, the court appeared to side with the defence in its view that the planning of violence was necessary for treason and that the prosecution should supply the facts upon which it based its inference that

the accused intended to act violently. The prosecution, on the other hand, accused the defence, and indirectly, the court, of failing to co-operate in 'streamlining' the indictment. The prosecution may have avoided a rejection of the indictment by withdrawing it.

### **The second indictment argued, January - June 1959**

The trial was resumed in a more manageable form under a second indictment against only thirty defendants. Under the new indictment, issues of the trial were narrowed still further. The prosecution's case was now, and for the remainder of the trial, limited to proving the intention of the accused to act violently. The heart of the matter was actually whether or not violence was the policy of the ANC, and its allied organisations, to which the thirty accused belonged. Therefore, it was actually the ANC that was on trial.

Of the ninety one originally accused, fifteen had been members of the Communist Party and thirty of these were Whites or Indians. However, only two of the Communists and five of the Whites and Indians were included



**Accused taken by the police**

among the final thirty accused. Only a few of the Black people accused were ANC leaders of importance. The period in which the thirty were supposed to be part of a conspiracy was a shorter period of time than the period of time covered by the original indictment. Instead of 1 October, 1952, the period began on 1 February 1954 and ran until 13 December 1956. But the prosecution's evidence against the thirty covered the longer period and included speeches and documents of the persons originally accused and the co-conspirators. There was no evidence for a particular conspiracy involving the thirty accused.

After argument on the adequacy of the second indictment was concluded, the court refused to dismiss the indictment and ordered the prosecution to supply particulars, which became known as the 'violence particulars'.

The official announcement in November 1958 that the trial would proceed against only thirty of the accused had stated that the remaining sixty one would also be re-indicted on a charge of treason, and that their trial would begin on or after 20 April 1959. Presumably, the accused were to be tried after the conclusion of the trial of the thirty. On 20 April 1959, the sixty-one appeared in court. They had been divided into two groups, each facing an indictment that was essentially the same as that faced by the thirty in January but totally lacking in any particular details. Because of this



**Public contributing to Treason Trial fund**



the court quickly and surprisingly granted the defence motion to dismiss the indictment. However, the sixty-one still faced re-indictment. Speaking later, on 12 May 1959, about 'the ordinary course of Justice', the Minister of Justice said: *"This trial will be proceeded with, no matter how many millions of pounds it costs.... What does it matter how long it takes?"*

### The Treason Trial started on 3 August 1958

Two years and eight months after their arrest, the thirty accused were at last in court to face the charges against them. Each pleaded not guilty. For over two months, some 150 witnesses for the prosecution testified concerning more than 4 000 documents. For nearly six weeks the witness stand was occupied by Andrew Murray, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Cape Town. He was the prosecution's expert witness on Communism. The prosecution concluded on 10 March. The Defence called its first witness a few days later and began the examination of Chief Luthuli on 21 March.



Accused in the Johannesburg Drill Hall

In courts of that time the representatives of the government were known as representatives of *"the Crown"*. The Crown produced over 12,000 items of documentation, collected over a three-year period. It took almost a month for the submissions alone. Among the more curious exhibits were two signs taken from the Congress of the People: *"SOUP WITH MEAT"* and *"SOUP WITHOUT MEAT"*.

Evidence presented by the Crown included several first-hand accounts of speeches given at the Congress of the People. These were given by both Black and Afrikaner detectives. Under cross-examination it was revealed that many of them could not understand English, the language in which the original speeches were made. They had in fact been provided with notes on the speeches by the Crown.

The prosecution attempted to show that the Freedom Charter was a Communist tract and that the only way it could be achieved was by violently overthrowing the present government. Unfortunately, the Crown's expert witness on Communism admitted that the Charter was *"a humanitarian document that might well represent the natural reaction and aspirations of non-Whites to the harsh conditions in South Africa"*.

The main piece of evidence against the accused was a recording of a speech made by Robert Resha, the Transvaal Volunteer-in-Chief, who said, *"When you are disciplined and you are told by the organisation not to be violent, you must not be violent ... but if you are a true volunteer and you are called upon to be violent, you must be absolutely violent, you must murder!"*. During the defence it was shown that Resha's viewpoints were the exception rather than the rule in the ANC, and that the short quote had been taken completely out of context.

Within a week of the start of the trial one of the two charges under the Suppression of Communism Act was dropped. Two months later the Crown announced that the whole accusation was being dropped. It then issued a new accusation, or *"indictment"* against 30 people, who were all members of the ANC. There was a threat of additional indictments against another 61 people, but this was never carried out. Chief Albert Luthuli and Oliver Tambo were released for lack of evidence. Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu (the ANC Secretary-General) were among the final 30 accused.

The trial entered a new phase after the shooting at Sharpeville on March 21. A national State of Emergency was declared and both the ANC and the PAC were banned. The accused were among some 1 900 political suspects arrested in early-morning raids. Oliver Tambo, the ANC's second-ranking official, managed to escape from the country. When the court met again late in April, the Defence Counsel withdrew at the request of the accused after the court had overruled protests that witnesses would be imperilled if they testified during the Emergency. Duma Nokwe, the first Black person to become an advocate in the Transvaal, and one of the accused, said, *"We do not believe that a political trial can be properly conducted under conditions amounting virtually to martial law."*

Nokwe and others among the accused continued to examine witnesses. The accused marked time by examining one White, one Indian, and one Coloured witness regarding



conditions in South Africa and avoiding testimony on the ANC's policy. Many questions were asked by the judge, Justice Rumpff. With the easing of emergency conditions and at the request of the accused, one of the defence counsel returned on 18 July.

On 29 March 1961, Justice F.L. Rumpff interrupted the Defence's summary with a verdict. He announced that although the

ANC was working to replace the government and had used illegal means of protest during the Defiance Campaign, the Crown had failed to show that the ANC was using violence to overthrow the government, and its members were therefore not guilty of treason. The Crown had failed to establish any revolutionary intent behind the defendant's actions and the remaining 30 accused were discharged.

While the apartheid state failed to make its charge of treason stick, the Treason Trial was a serious blow to the ANC and the Congress Alliance. Their executive members were out of circulation for a long period of time, and the movement had to spend a great deal of time raising money to fight the case.

Most significantly, the weakened ANC was now faced with a concerted effort by its Africanist wing to abandon its alliance with the other congress organisations. The dissent group was led by Robert Sobukwe, who argued that the ANC was being controlled by Indians and Communists. He then broke away from the ANC to form the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC).

Nearly all the defence counsels returned on 1 August. Later in the month, the Defence challenged the impartiality of one of the judges, Justice Rumpff, on the grounds that the cumulative effect of his interventions gave the impression of unfairness. The judge rejected this challenge and the Court gave permission to appeal if the trial resulted in a verdict of guilty.

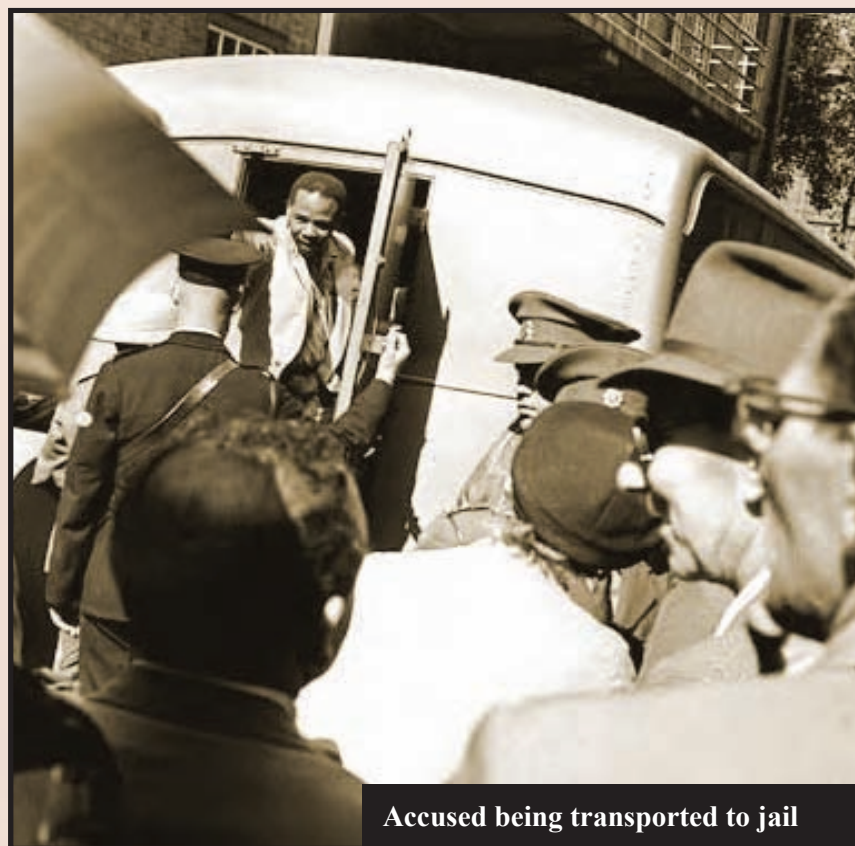
With the end of the State of Emergency on 31 August, and the release of the accused from jail on that day, the proceedings were almost back to normal. The ANC was still banned. The defence closed its case on 7 October.

The Prosecution's closing argument, interrupted by several adjournments, extended to 6 March. While the defence was in the fourth week of its final argument, the Court interrupted to announce a unanimous verdict of not guilty. At this stage, the defence had completed its legal submissions but had only just commenced its argument on the evidence. The remainder of



## Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (1918 -)

Together with Sisulu, Lembede and Tambo, Mandela participated in the foundation of the ANC Youth League in 1944 and in 1948 he served as its national secretary. In 1949 the ANC endorsed the 'Programme of Action' submitted to its annual conference by the Youth League, and the national executive of the ANC changed character when more radical members like Mandela and Sisulu were elected to it. In December 1952 Mandela and a number of others were arrested and charged under the Suppression of Communism Act. In December 1956 Mandela was one of 156 political activists arrested for and charged with high treason. In 1962 Mandela was smuggled across the border and on 11 January made a surprise appearance at the Pan-African Freedom Movement Conference in Addis Ababa. Mandela was one of the Rivonia Trialists, who was sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island. He was released on 11 February 1990 after 27 years in prison. On 9 May 1994, he was elected the first democratically elected president of South Africa. In 1999 he stepped down as President of the country and retired from active politics in 2004. Since then he has been active in promoting educational and health issues through the Nelson Mandela Foundation.



Accused being transported to jail



this argument would have taken many weeks. The court had found it impossible, said Justice Rumpff, to conclude “*that the African National Congress had acquired or adopted a policy to overthrow the State by violence, i.e. in the sense that the masses had to be prepared or conditioned to commit direct acts of violence against the State*”. Since the verdict was on a question of fact and not of law, the prosecution could not appeal.

In his biography, Nelson Mandela suggests that the Treason Trial verdict pushed the South African government into a new level of conflict with anti-apartheid organisations. “*During the Treason Trial, there were no examples of individuals being isolated, beaten and tortured in order to elicit information. All of those things became commonplace shortly thereafter.*”

During the period of the Treason Trial a number of significant political events occurred. The National Party (NP) won another election. The ANC and PAC were declared illegal under the Suppression of Communism Act. The South African government held a “*Whites only*” referendum on the question of whether or not South Africa should become a republic. The PAC initiated anti-pass demonstrations, one of which ended in the Sharpeville Massacre.

### **The aftermath of the Treason Trial**

Minister of Justice, Oswald Pirow, said during the Treason Trial that the racial situation at the time of the arrests in December 1956 was ‘*explosive*’. The situation continued to be unstable, but control had been increasingly tightened since the end of the Trial and things appeared to be calm on the surface.

South Africa became a Republic two months after the trial ended. This was an opportunity for the government to assess many of its policies. The government felt that the few limited opportunities that existed for Blacks to express themselves politically should no longer be regarded as “*safety valves*” in an explosive situation, but as dangerous loopholes that needed to be closed. The government increased its acts of oppression and violence and removed even the few civil liberties that Blacks enjoyed. With the so-called Sabotage Act of 1962 the government extended its powers for dealing with those it saw as troublemakers. The offence of ‘*sabotage*’ now carried the death penalty like treason. People banned from attending public gatherings could no longer be quoted. Traditional places for outdoor public meetings were closed. New Age and other left-wing periodicals were banned and new publications were blocked.



**Treason trialers share a joke with police during court recess**

In 1963 new legislation made it possible for the government to detain people for 90 days without access to a lawyer if they were suspected of a political crime or if they had information useful to the Security Police. In the next two years 1000 people were detained in solitary confinement under this law. Torture, including electric shock, started to become routine forcing statements, which used to be voluntary. Between 1963 and 1990 at least 100 people died in detention.

On 11 July 1963 the Security Police provided a major setback to the underground opposition when they raided the Communist Party safe house at Rivonia, and arrested key leaders of MK, the Communist Party and the ANC.



**Walter Sisulu and Rusty Bernstein**



By the time of the third anniversary of the end of the Treason Trial, in March 1964, the so-called Rivonia Sabotage Trial was underway. Nelson Mandela, former president of the ANC in the Transvaal, Walter Sisulu, former Secretary-General of the ANC, and Ahmed Kathrada, a leader of the South African Indian Congress and seven others were put on trial as leaders of the ANC underground. Mandela, Sisulu and Kathrada were all among the thirty accused in the final stage of the Treason Trial. Some of their alleged co-conspirators, including Oliver Tambo, Robert Resha, Moses Kotane, and Duma Nokwe, were in exile.

According to the prosecution's opening address, the ANC had "*decided to embark upon a policy of violence and destruction in the latter half of 1961*". It had formed Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). According to the prosecution, the ANC was completely dominated by the Communist Party. MK had recruited and trained people in the use of explosives and in guerrilla warfare,



**Nelson Mandela with supporters outside the court at the end of the trial**

committed acts of sabotage, received money from supporters in Africa and elsewhere, received promises of assistance from Moscow, and planned the operation of thousands of trained guerrilla warfare units – all activities that were to be followed-up by an armed invasion

by foreign communist powers. The group arrested in Rivonia were accused of committing sabotage and planning violent revolution. They were sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island. "*Free Mandela*" eventually became a rallying cry for the liberation movements.



**Crowds of supporters outside the court**





**Ruth First and well wisher at the trial**

## Acronyms

A-G – Attorney General

ANC – African National Congress

CA – Congress Alliance

MK – Umkhonto we Sizwe

NLC – National Liberation Committee

NP – National Party

PAC – Pan Africanist Congress

SACP – South African Communist Party

SAIC – South African Indian Congress

## Quotes:

*“We were all enthusiastic to get there and see this Boer bass and tell him that we are not going to carry those things.”* Veteran marcher Dorothy Masenya calls to mind.

*“We walked to the Union Building, we sat in the garden,”* Veteran marcher Rahaba Moeketsi recalls, *“Our leaders went inside the building to submit memorandum to Strijdom but they did not find him”.*

*Ngoyi used to remind the women of an old African proverb: Mangoana o tsoara ka bohaleng (The mother grabs the sharp edge of the knife to protect her child) – Mrs. Maggie Resha.*

## Chronology of Treason Trial

1956	5 December	One hundred and forty people of all races are arrested on a charge of high treason.
1956	7 December	Bail application is refused.
1956	12 December	Sixteen more are arrested.
1956	19 December	Preparatory Examination begins. Police fire on crowd outside the Drill Hall, which has been converted into a huge court.
1956	21 December	Fresh application for bail is granted and court adjourns until January.
1957		Preparatory examination continues throughout the year.
1958	January	Ninetyone people are committed for trial. Charges withdrawn against sixty five.
1958	1 August	Trial opens in Pretoria before a Special Court composed of Justice Rumpff, Justice Kennedy and Justice Ludorf.
1958	1 August	The accused are charged with high treason and two alternative charges under Suppression of Communism Act.
1958	1 August	I. A. Maisels leader of the Defence team asks Justice Rumpff and Justice Ludorf to recuse themselves.
1958	4 August	Justice Ludorf recuses himself and is replaced by Justice Bekker. Justice Rumpff declines to recuse himself.
1960	10 March	The Crown (government) case ends.
1960	14 March	The Defence opens its case.
1960	21 March	Sixty-six people shot dead by the police during anti-pass demonstration at Sharpeville.
1960	28 March	ANC calls a one day strike in protest against Sharpeville massacre.
1960	30 March	State of Emergency is declared.
1960	1 April	The trial is adjourned as a result of the State of Emergency.
1960	26 April	The court rules that the trial must go on. The Defence conducts their own trial.
1960	August	Defence Counsel are recalled, Advocate Fischer applies to have Justice Rumpff recuse himself. Application is refused.
1960	31 August	State of Emergency is lifted and accused are released from jail.
1960	1 September	Crown makes unsuccessful application for re-arrest of all accused.
1960	7 October	The Defence closes its case.
1960	7 November	Crown argument begins.
1961	March	The Crown argument ends after four full months. The Defence argument begins.
1961	13 March	Elias Moretsele, the oldest of the accused, dies of heart attack.
1961	23 March	The court is adjourned after three weeks.
1961	29 March	The Court unanimously finds the accused not guilty and they are discharged.



## Stella Madge Damos (1930 - )



She was a leading trade unionist. During the government's race classification of Coloured people she organised a protest meeting and was charged with assaulting the police and fined £20. She was a member of the South African Congress of Trade Unions and member of the Consultative Committee of the Freedom Charter (Eastern Cape) in 1955. In 1954 she was secretary of Freedom Charter Consultative Committee and in 1954-1955 a committee member of the South African Congress of Trade Unions. She was one of the Treason Trialists.

## Lionel Bernstein (1920 – 2002)



He was secretary of the Labour Party League of Youth and an ex officio member of the Labour Party's national executive committee. He joined the Communist Party in 1939, while a part-time student at the University of the Witwatersrand. From 1940 he was in charge of propaganda in the CPSA's Johannesburg office and a member of the Johannesburg committee. He served in World War II with the Sixth South African Division in Europe. He was involved in the African mineworkers' strike of 1946. Although banned from all political activity by the mid-1950s, he played an important role in drafting the Freedom Charter in 1955, which resulted in his arrest for treason in 1956. He was also detained in 1960 and placed under house arrest in 1962. He was arrested in the Rivonia raid in July 1963. Bernstein died in Kidlington, Oxfordshire, on June 23, 2002, aged 82.

## Treason Trialists

Here is an alphabetical list of the people who were finally charged with treason:

Adams, Farid Ahmed, Arenstein, Jacqueline, Asmal, Mohamed (Bob) Suleman, Barenblatt, Yetta, Barsel, Hymie, Bernstein, Lionel (Rusty), Beyleveld, Pieter, Bokala, Isaac, Bunting, Sonia Beryl, Busa, Julius Phumelele, Calata, James, Carneson, Fred, Chamile, Andries (General China), Conco, Winston Z., Damos, Mrs Stella Madge ,Dawood, "Asa" Ayesha Bibi, Dichaba, Gabriel, Dlamini, Stephen J. C., Esakjee, Suliman, First, Heloise Ruth, (Fish) Keitsing, Forman, Lionel, Frances, Baard, Fuyani D.,Gawe, Walker Stanley, Gumede, Archibald, Gxowa, (Mashaba) Bertha, Hadebe, James John, Hlapane, Bartholomew, Hodgson, P. (Jack) J., Hoogendyk, Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr, Horvitch, Isaac Osier, Hurbans, Gopallal, Hutchinson, Alfred (Tough), Jasson, Christina, Joseph, Helen, Joseph, Jack, Joseph, Paul ,Kathrada, Ahmed (Kathy), KaTshunungwa, Thembekile Enoch, Kepe, Lungile, Khumalo, Jerry Dibanhlele, Kotane, Moses M., Kumalo, Joseph (Anti-Pass) M., La Guma, Alex, Lee-Warden, L. B., Letele, Arthur **Elias**, Levy, Leon, Levy, Norman, Lollan, Stanley B., Luthuli, Albert John, Mafora, Jacob B., Mahlangu, Aaron, Make, Vus'umuzi, Makhohliso, Charles,Makiwane, Tennyson Xola, Makue, Joshua, Malele, Elmon, Malope, Daniel (Sampie), Manana P. S. J., Mandela, Nelson (Madiba) Rolihlahla, Masemola, Balelekeng Sam, Mashaba, July, Mashibini, Philemon, Massina, Leslie, Mathole, Philemon, Mati, W.,Matlou, Jonas Dinous, Matomela, Florence, Matthews, Joseph G., Matthews, Z. K., Mayekiso C. J. ,Meer, Ismail I. C.,Mei, Pious Goodman, Mfaxes, Elliot Nzimeni, Mgugunyeka, David H., Mini, Vuyisile, Mkalipi, Simon P., Mkhize, Bertha,

## Glossary

- Freedom Charter** – Is the policy document adopted by the Congress Alliance at the Congress of the People in Kliptown, South Africa on 26 June 1955. The document is notable for its demand for and commitment to freedom, democracy and non-racialism, and the Charter has remained the guiding policy of the ANC and its allies.
- Martial law** – Temporary rule by military authorities, imposed on a civilian population especially in time of war or when civil authority has broken down.



## James Calata (1895 – 1983)



As secretary of the ANC from 1936 to 1949, Calata contributed much to the revival of the ANC after its decline in the 1930s. He was signatory of the 1949 Programme of Action, but he, like Xuma, found the proposal of the Youth League too extreme. Chosen as ANC senior chaplain in 1950, he later also acted as Congress speaker. During the Defiance Campaign of 1952 he was banned from attending gatherings but was eventually allowed to carry on with his church work, although not without government harassment. He was jailed during the 1960 state of emergency. Shortly afterwards, during a raid on his home, the police found no papers but noticed two historic photographs of ANC leaders on his wall. They became exhibits in one of the earliest cases under the Suppression of Communism Act, and he received a six months suspended sentence.

## Walter Ulyate Max Sisulu (1912 – 2003)



In 1940 Sisulu joined the ANC and later became treasurer of the ANCYL. In 1946, at the time of the African Mineworkers' Strike, he tried to organise a general strike in support of the protestors' demands.

In December 1949 he was instrumental in the ANC's acceptance of the Youth League's programme of action, and at the same conference was elected Secretary-General of the ANCYL. In December 1952 Sisulu, Nelson Mandela, Moroka and others were tried under the Suppression of Communism Act for their leadership of the Defiance Campaign. They were sentenced to nine months' imprisonment with hard labour, suspended for two years.

During 1955 Congress of the People congress, which drew up the Freedom Charter he was legally unable to participate, due to banning orders. In December 1956 Sisulu was amongst the 156 people arrested for High Treason. On 11 July 1963 Sisulu and others were arrested when the police raided Liliesleaf Farm, the ANC's secret headquarters. He was charged in the Rivonia Trial in October 1963 and on 12 June 1964 sentenced to life imprisonment for planning acts of sabotage. The following day Sisulu, Mandela and other convicted Rivonia trialists were sent to Robben Island. He was released in October 1989.

Mkwayi, Wilton Z., Mntwana, Ida Flyo, Modiba, Frank, Modise, Johannes, Mohlakoane, Martha, Molaoa, Patrick Mosell, Molefi, Joseph Sallie Poonyane, Monnanyane, Leslie Sonny Thusbo, Moolla, Moosa (Mosie) Mohammed, Moonsamy, Kesval, Moosa, Hassen (Ike) M., Moretsele, Elias Phakane, Morolong, Joseph, Morrison, Lionel E., Motala, Mahomed Chota, Motshabi, Obed, Mpho, Motsamai Keyecwe, Mpoza, Joseph, Mqota, Temba D. A., Mtini, John, Musi, Theophilus Kgosikobo, Naicker, Gagathura (Monty) Mohambry, Naicker, Marimuthu (M.P.) Pragalathan, Naicker, Narainsamy Thumbi, Nair, Billy, Nathie, Suliman (Solly) Mahomed, Ndimba, Thembile Benson, Nene, Mangisi Pheneas, Ngcobo, Abednego Bhekabantu, Ngotyana, Greenwood Dumisa, Ngoyi, Lilian Masediba, Ngwendu, William, Nkadimeng, John K., Nkamenji, J., Nkosi, Lawrence, Nogaya, A. B., Nokwe, Philemon (Duma) Pearce Dumasile, Nthite, Peter Papela, Ntsangani, P., Nyembe, Dorothy, Patel, Ahmed Ebrahim, Peake, George Edward, Pillay, V. (Mannie) S. M., Poo, Jacob, Press, Ronald Edwin, Ranta, Mary Goitsemang, Resha, Robert M., Secchoareng, Abraham Barnett Koatlhao, Seedat, Dawood A., Seitshiro, Bennett, Sejake, Nimrod, Selepe, Peter Kaya, September, Reginald, Shall, Sydney, Shanley, Dorothy, Shanley, Errol T., Shope, M. J. M. Williams, Sibande, Cleopus, Sibande, Gert, Sibeko, Archibald, Silinga, Annie, Simelane, Pitness (Stalwart) H., Singh, Debi, Sisulu, Walter M., Slovo, Joe, Tambo Oliver, Thompson, Douglas Chadwick, Tshabalala, Mshiywa Henry, Tshume, Tamsanqa Tasque, Tunsi, Robert, Turok, Ben, Tyiki, Simon, Vanqa, Mbuyiselo Stanley, Yengwa, Massabalala (Bonnie) B.

## Classroom activities

Learning Outcome: The learner is able to communicate knowledge and understanding about resistance, the Congress Alliance and the Freedom Charter.

1. Why was the Congress Alliance established and which organisations constituted the alliance?
2. Why was the Freedom Charter considered a subversive document?
3. Do you think that the Treason Trial had any significant impact on the ability of the Congress Alliance to mount effective opposition to the government during the duration of the Trial?
4. Would you consider the Treason Trial a failure or a success for the government?

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# Women's Anti-Pass March



Strike a woman you strike a rock



## The Women's Anti-Pass March, 9 August 1956

Women have become one of the most important political and social forces in the new democratic South Africa. There is a stereotype of women that sees them as unable to think and act as active participants and decision makers in political processes. This stereotype has been proved to be untrue by the courageous actions of South African women all through our history. A striking example of this is the 1956 Women's March. 20 000 women marched on the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest the pass laws.

Until the 1980s, the history of women's participation in the struggle was largely ignored by historians. The history books focused on the achievements of men – especially their military exploits and leadership abilities. Women, their political organisations, their struggles for freedom from oppression, and their fight for community rights and gender equality, were largely left out of writings on South African history. One reason for this emphasis was that South African communities were

conventionally patriarchal. In other words, most of the official positions of authority were held by men. Women were mainly seen as wives, home-makers and child-carers. The rise of the capitalist economy, the growth of towns, the development of the migrant labour system and the introduction of pass laws all contributed to major changes in the status of women across all language groups in the country.

### The 1940s and the Increase in Women's Political Involvement

The 1940s saw a big increase in women's involvement in trade union and anti-apartheid organisations. Women activists even ran some of the key trade unions.

The passing of the Pegging Act and other discriminatory legislation directed at the Indian and Coloured community acted as the catalyst for Indian and Coloured women to increase their participation in the political organisations and campaigns. Hundreds of women participated in the 1946 Passive Resistance Campaign and many were imprisoned with hard labour for up to six months – some

on more than one occasion. The war years also saw the mass migration of rural women into the urban areas and their increased economic role in industry, domestic service and in the informal beer brewing industry. The struggle to survive and exposure to the harsh realities of the apartheid urban laws gave rise to an increased role of women in the struggle for housing, education and basic rights.

### The Militant 1950s

Some would say that in South Africa the 1950s was the decade of the woman. During this time, the apartheid government's increasingly repressive policies began to pose a direct threat to all people of colour,



Lillian Ngoyi  
(1911 – 1980)

She joined the GWU under Solly Sachs and soon became one of its leading figures. A tireless worker against discrimination, with a great gift as a fiery speaker, Lillian joined the ANC and worked her way up until she was president of the ANCWL. When FEDSAW was formed in 1954, she became one of its national vice-presidents. Lillian was one of the leaders of the Women's Anti-Pass March on the Union Buildings in Pretoria in March 1956. In December 1956 she was arrested for high treason along with 156 other leading activists and stood trial until 1961 as one of the accused in the Treason Trial. Ngoyi was imprisoned for five months in 1960 and was first issued banning orders in October 1962, which confined her to Orlando Township in Johannesburg. In the mid-1960s she was jailed under the 90-day detention act and spent 71 days in solitary confinement. Her banning orders lapsed in 1972 but were renewed for five-year period in 1975.



Launch of the Federation of South African Women, 1954



and there was an increase in defiant mass political action by Blacks and progressive Whites. Women were prominent in virtually all these forms of protest, but none were more committed than those who took part in the Anti-Pass Campaign.

The 1952 Defiance Campaign concentrated on protesting against six unjust laws and was the first time that women of all races volunteered to break the laws and risk imprisonment.

Opposition to the extension of the Pass Laws to Black women provided the focus for the growth of progressive women's organisations amongst Black, Coloured, Indian and White groups. Union leaders like Ray Alexander and Annie Silinga were particularly active in focusing on the roles of female workers. These two women were the driving force in the establishment of the first non-racial national organisation – The Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) in 1954. FEDSAW had become an integrated member of the Congress Alliance. Regional branches were set up and membership was growing throughout the country. In addition, the ANC had a boost to its growth as a national organisation with the re-formation of the Women's League (ANCWL) in the 1950s.

### **The Anti-Pass Campaign of 1955 and the Events Leading up to the 1956 March**

In September 1955, the government announced that reference books would be issued to Black women from January 1956. This aroused a storm of protest and provoked a number of anti-pass campaigns by women.

Politicised and organised into a powerful resistance movement, women were no longer regarded only as wives and mothers, bound to the home. They saw themselves as independent and assertive and took their place in the forefront of the liberation struggle. The pass laws threatened African women's basic rights to freedom and family life and they were determined to resist. Their message to government was clear: *"We shall not rest until ALL pass laws and all forms of permits restricting our freedoms have been abolished. We shall not rest until we have won for our children their fundamental rights of freedom, justice and security"*.

A march to Pretoria to present women's grievances was suggested in August 1955. When the pass issue came to the fore, the scale and urgency of the planned demonstration increased dramatically. FEDSAW decided that they would march to the Union Buildings to demonstrate against the proposed pass law. The march was organised for the 27 October 1955. In spite of police intimidation and the banning of Josie Palmer, (the longstanding member of the banned Communist Party) and FEDSAW's main office-bearers, a week before the gathering, the march was a great success.

The government did what it could to obstruct the activities of the women. The pass laws fell under the jurisdiction



**Viola Hashe addressing protesters, Freedom Square**





**Fordsburg during the 1952 Defiance Campaign**



of HR Verwoerd, who was then Minister of Native Affairs. He refused to receive a multiracial delegation. The Pretoria City Council refused the women permission to hold the meeting and saw to it that public transport was stalled, making it difficult for the women to get to the Pretoria venue. Private transport had to be arranged and other evasive tactics had to be created for getting around the many other obstacles imposed by the authorities.

In the circumstances, it was surprising, and gratifying to the organisers, that a crowd of between 1 000 and 2 000 women gathered in the grounds of the Union Buildings in Pretoria. Although the majority were Black women, White, Coloured and Indian women also attended. Most of them came from towns on the Witwatersrand.

The crowd was orderly and dignified throughout the proceedings. They handed their bundles of signed petitions to Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa and Sophie Williams, the main organisers, who deposited them at the Minister's office doors. After the demonstration, the government tried to downplay its significance by claiming that the meeting had only been successful because the organisation had been in the hands of White women. That



**Women waiting outside the Union Buildings' grounds in Pretoria to sign the petition against passes, 1956**

later, Lilian Ngoyi became the first woman to be elected to the National Executive of the ANC.

The women were encouraged to make the most of the success of the October 1955 gathering. Anti-pass meetings were held throughout the country and were attended by huge crowds. They took place in Free State towns in late 1955, in Port Elizabeth in January 1956 and in Johannesburg in March 1956, as well as in Durban, East London, Cape Town and Germiston. The mood of the meetings was militant. Annie Silinga

declared: *'We women are prepared to fight these passes until victory is ours.'*

The government threatened to react with force, but when it finally began issuing reference books it did so quietly. It started in White agricultural areas and smaller towns such as Winburg in the Free State where the FEDSAW presence was minimal and the women were not well-informed. In Winburg on 22 March 1956 they issued 1 429 Black women with reference books and met with little reaction. Senior ANC officials were designated to go to Winburg immediately and Lilian Ngoyi and several men arrived in the town the following week and addressed the women. Inspired by the presence of Ngoyi, who was an excellent speaker, the local women marched defiantly into town and publicly burnt their new reference books outside the magistrate's office.

The authorities reacted swiftly. The offenders were arrested and charged. They were then informed that no pensions would be paid out to a woman unless she could produce her reference book. Again, there was a wave of protest from all parts of the country, and anti-pass demonstrations were held in 38 different venues.



**Women of all races arrive by bus to participate in the 9 August 1956 Anti-Pass march in Pretoria**





Women singing protest songs during the anti-Pass march on 9 August 1956.



Women protesters outside the Union Building, 9 August 1956

## Chronology

1913		Women in the Free State led by Charlotte Maxeke mount campaign against pass laws.
1913-1914		Women participate in Gandhi's Passive Resistance Campaign and many go to prison.
1918		The Bantu Women's League of the SA Native National Congress is formed.
1930		White women get the vote.
1933		Pixley Seme is reelected president of the ANC with the help of women's votes.
1936		Dr. Zainunnisa Cissie Gool founds the National Liberation League, and becomes the first President.
1943		The ANC Women's League is formed.
1946		Passive resistance campaign: hundreds of women participate and many go to jail.
1950		Florence Matomela leads an anti-pass demonstration resulting in the burning of passes in Port Elizabeth.
1952		Bibi Dawood recruits 800 volunteers for the Defiance Campaign in the Worcester region of the Cape. Florence Matomela, one of the first women volunteers, is arrested and spends six weeks in prison. Fatima Meer is banned. Lillian Ngoyi joins ANC and is arrested for her involvement in the Defiance Campaign.
1954		The Federation of South African women is formed – uniting women from the ANC, South African Indian Congress, Trade Unions and self-help groups.
1955		Francis Baard is involved in the drafting of the Freedom Charter. Sonia Bunting is the platform speaker at Congress of the People in Kliptown.  The Women's Defence of the Constitution League (commonly known as the Black Sash) is formed.
1956	9 August	20 000 women march to Union Buildings to protest against the carrying of passes.
1956	5 December	Leading women activists are part of the 156 accused in the Treason Trial.



## Sophia Theresa Williams – de Bruyn (1938 -)

Sophia Williams - de Bruyn was of the leading trade unionist in the 50's. At the Textile factory she rose to become an executive member of the Textile Workers Union in PE working alongside people like Raymond Mhlaba, the late Vuyisile Mini, Govan Mbeki and others. Williams-de Bruyn was the founding member of SACTU. She is a living legend of the South African liberation struggle, who has contributed immensely to the dismantling of Apartheid. Williams – de Bruyn is the only surviving member of the four leaders of the historic women's march to Pretoria. She is a member of the ANC's National Executive Committee (NEC) and Deputy Speaker for the Gauteng Legislature.



## The Event: The Women's March, Pretoria, 9 August 1956

By the middle of 1956 the preparations for the Pretoria march were in place and FEDSAW had written to request that Prime Minister J.G. Strijdom meet with their leaders so they could present their point of view. The request was refused.

The ANC then sent Helen Joseph and Bertha Mashaba on a tour of the main urban areas, accompanied by Robert Resha of the ANC and Norman Levy of the Congress of Democrats (COD). The plan was to consult with local leaders and to make final arrangements for delegates to be sent for the mass gathering planned for 9 August.

On the day of the March, women from all parts of the country began arriving in Pretoria, some from as far away as Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. 20 000 women led by Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Sophie Williams and Rahima Moosa marched on the Union Buildings in a determined yet orderly fashion. It was the biggest demonstration yet held by FEDSAW. They filled the entire amphitheatre in the bow of the graceful Herbert Baker building. The historian Cheryl Walker describes the impressive scene:

*“Many of the African women wore traditional dress, others wore the Congress colours, green, black and gold; Indian women were clothed in white saris. Many women had babies on their backs and some domestic workers brought their White employers’ children along with them. Throughout the demonstration, the huge crowd displayed a discipline and dignity that was deeply impressive.”* (Walker 1991, 195).



**Sophie Williams, Rahima Moosa, Helen Joseph and Lilian Ngoyi  
– Leading the march to the Union Building, 9 August 1956**





*Women's Anti-Pass March*



## Pass laws

Pass laws required that Africans had to carry identity documents with them at all times. These books had to contain stamps providing official proof that the person in question had permission to be in a town at that time. Initially only men were forced to carry these books, but soon law also compelled women to carry the dreaded documents.

According to Section 10 (1a-d) of the 1954 Native Urban Areas Act Africans could only stay in an urban area for more than 12 hours if they:

- a) Had been born there and had lived there ever since.
- b) Had worked there for ten years under one employer, or had lived there for 15 years without breaking any law (including pass laws)
- c) Were the child or wife of a man permitted to live in the urban area on the conditions of (a) or (b) mentioned above.
- d) Signed a contract to migrate from a rural reserve to a specific job for a limited period of time in an urban area after which they must return home. Contract workers' families were not allowed to join them in an urban area.



Women at the Union Building singing the Congress Alliance (*Nkosi sikelel' i Afrika ...*) anthem, 9 August 1956



Women at the Union Building grounds, 9 August 1956





Lillian Ngoyi and other leaders of the march delivering petitions, inside the Union Building, 9 August 1956

***Wathint' abafazi, Strijdom!***

***Wathint' imbokodo uzo kufa!***

**Now you have touched the  
women, Strijdom!**

**You have struck a rock**

**(You have dislodged a boulder!)**

**You will be crushed!**

Without exception, those who participated in the event described it as a moving and emotional experience. FEDSAW declared that it was a “*monumental achievement*”.

Since then, the slogan “*Wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo*” has come to represent women’s courage and strength. As a group that had been marginalised, South African women organised and rose to political challenge of fighting for their freedom and the freedom of their families.

## Helen Joseph

(1905 – 1992)

After the Second World War broke out Joseph took a job with the Garment Workers’ Union (GWU) and came under the influence of Solly Sachs. Joseph was a founder member of the ANC’s White ally, the COD, and national secretary of FEDSAW in the 1950s.



In 1955 she was one of the leaders who read out the clauses of the Freedom Charter at the Congress of the People. She was one of the main organisers of the women’s march to Union Buildings in protest against passes. She was arrested on a charge of high treason in December 1956 and banned for the first time in 1957. Thereafter her life became a long saga of police persecution.

She was the first person to be placed under house arrest. Her last banning order was only lifted in



## After the March

Women had once again shown that the stereotype of women as unable to participate in politics was outdated and inaccurate. As they had done the previous year, the Afrikaans press tried to give the impression that it was Whites who had 'run the show'. This was obviously untrue, and FEDSAW and the Congress Alliance gained great prestige from the obvious success of the march. FEDSAW had come of age politically and could no longer be ignored as the voice of new assertive women. This was a remarkable achievement for a body that was barely two years old. The Congress Alliance decided that 9 August would henceforth be celebrated as Women's Day, and it is now, in the new South Africa, commemorated each year as a national holiday.

## FEDSAW after Sharpeville

The banning of the ANC and the PAC in 1960 saw FEDSAW trying to fill a vacuum and keeping the ideals of the Congress of the People alive. But the banning of many of the key women activists, as well as the detention of, Ngoyi and Joseph, and Ruth Mompati's

flight into exile, weakened the organisation.

Those who remained in South Africa felt restricted because their FEDSAW structures were no longer in place. Women like Dorothy Nyembe, who became President of the Natal Rural Areas Committee, continued to play a role at local level. In 1962 she organised anti-government demonstrations together with rural women in what became known as the Natal Women's Revolt.

By September 1961 FEDSAW had managed to hold enough ground to organise a reasonably well-attended national conference in Port Elizabeth. Lilian Ngoyi and Helen Joseph were re-elected. Ngoyi was very positive in her report and reminded members that freedom was not easily won. But bad times were near at hand. In October, Ngoyi was banned and confined to Orlando for five years. Florence Matomela of the Eastern Cape section suffered a similar fate.

In early 1962, the situation became worse. Helen Joseph's banning order expired, but she was served another order within a few months, becoming

## International Women's Day:

International Women's Day (8 March) is a special occasion marked by women's groups around the world. This date is also commemorated at the United Nations and in many countries it is regarded as a national holiday. When women from all continents, from different nationalities, different cultural, ethnic and linguistic groups, with different economic and political status, come together to celebrate their Day on 8 March, they can look back to a tradition that represents at least nine decades of struggle for equality, justice, peace and development.

International Women's Day is the story of ordinary women as makers of history; it is rooted in the centuries-old struggle of women working and fighting to participate in society on an equal footing with men. In ancient Greece, Lysistrata initiated a sexual strike against men in order to end a war. During the French Revolution, Parisian women calling for "liberty, equality, fraternity" marched on Versailles to demand women's suffrage. In South Africa women took on the government and marched to the Union Buildings changing the political identity of South African women forever.



Mrs Albertina Sisulu briefs members of women's organisations before a picket to mark Women's Day – Johannesburg 1984





**Burning of Passes**

the first person to be subjected to house arrest. With the loss of its three main leaders, there was no chance of revival.

In 1963, the Congress of Democrats (COD) was banned - another blow for many politically active women. In the next few years, more women leaders were removed from office by government orders and arrests. Hundreds of women spent years banned, banished or otherwise restricted. The list includes, among others; Albertina Sisulu, Mary Moodley, Amina Cachalia, Liz Abrahams, Lilian Ngoyi, Winnie Mandela, Phyllis Naidoo, Helen Joseph, Mamphela Rampela and Bertha Mashaba.

Dorothy Nyembe spent 15 years in prison for her underground activities as a member of the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK). She and Amina Desai were for a long time the only Black female prisoners.

In 1965, Ray Alexander went into exile in Zambia. By the mid-1960s FEDSAW had no presence in South African politics. In the years that followed, leading female activists like Winnie Mandela, Sheila Weinberg, Dorothy Nyembe, Florence Mkhize, Phyllis Naidoo, Amina Desai, and a whole new generation of women student activists continued to play a key role in keeping the ANC and the Communist Party and the PAC alive underground.

## Rahima Moosa

(1922 –1993)



Moosa became politically active after she became aware of the unjust segregationist laws that ruled South Africa. In 1943 Rahima became the shop steward for the Cape Town Food and Canning Workers'

Union. She later became the branch secretary for the union and more active in labour politics. In 1951 she married Mohamed Moosa, a fellow comrade and Treason Trialist. In Johannesburg, Rahima became involved with the TIC and thereafter the ANC as the Congress and the ANC had signed a pact for a common struggle. In 1955 she played a significant role in the organisation of the Congress of the People, where the Freedom Charter was adopted. Together with Helen Joseph, Lillian Ngoyi and Sophia Williams, Rahima spearheaded the historic march to the Union Buildings where women handed over petitions against pass laws. In the early 1960s, Rahima became a *listed* person, a status that she remained in until 1990 with the unbanning of the African National Congress. In 1970 she suffered a heart attack, as a result of diabetes and after this her health deteriorated drastically until her death in 1993, a year before independence.



**COSATU Congress 1985**



## Reviving Progressive Women's organisation in the 1970s and 1980s

The 1970s witnessed the emergence of new political formations like Black Consciousness student movements and the independent trade union movement, within which there were a equal number of female and male activists. But it was the formation of the Non-Racial Women's Federation in Natal, in 1972, by the leading activist, Professor Fatima Meer, that prepared the way for the revival of a women's organisation committed to freedom and women's rights. In 1975 the Federation underwent a radical shift at a national conference in Durban. Here a decision was taken to constitute itself as the Black Women's Federation. Within six months of its founding, the President, Professor Meer, was banned and was later held in detention for six months with five other executive members of the Federation. The Federation never recovered from the detentions and bannings.

It was in 1980s that a new more feminist orientated women's movement emerged and changed the face of the women's struggle in South Africa. Women established women's rights journals, such as *Agenda*, established regional organisations such as the Federation of Transvaal Women (FEDTRAW), the Natal Organisation of Women (NOW) and the United Women's Congress (UWCO) in the Western Cape. These organisations establish branches and established links with grassroots women's bodies. These organisations were some of the most active components of the United Democratic Front, the National Forums

and played a major role in the militant campaigns of the 1980s. The leaders of bodies like NOW played a key role in providing support to women and communities who had become victims of state sponsored violence in Natal.

In the late 1980s women activists from South Africa and their counterparts in exile met at the Malibongwe Conference held in Holland. Here they built the links that were to play such an important role after the ban on the liberation movements was lifted and real political negotiations began.



**ANC leader Dorothy Nyembe celebrating after her release from a 15 years prison sentence for MK activities, Durban 1984**

## Women in the new democracy (1990s)

Soon after the democratic election of 1994, the new Minister of Justice, Dullah Omar, proposed the idea of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The Commission was set up in 1995 to witness the testimonies of people who had experienced violence under apartheid. Statements were heard by more than 20 000 people, many of whom were women. Amnesty was offered to people who had committed violent crimes against other human beings. It is significant that no women applied for amnesty.

In 1996 the new Constitution made provision for women's rights. A Commission for Gender Equality was set up and there was a renewed public awareness of gender issues. The first 10 years of democracy have been remarkable in many ways, but there are still a number of crucial challenges to be met.

South African society remains a society of many social and economic inequalities. It faces high levels of poverty and huge gap between the rich (the majority are still White) and the poor (the majority are still Black).

Women in the new democracy are faced with a wide range of issues such as the high crime rate, domestic violence, rape, child abuse, alcohol abuse, HIV/AIDS, poverty, obstacles to entrepreneurial activities, poor local government service delivery and unemployment. Motherhood is still central to most women's lives and a women's role in family life is still seen as the core of a morally sound society. This narrow view is strongly opposed by women who argue that the creation of

*"No government in South Africa could ever claim to represent the will of the people if it failed to address the central task of emancipation of women in all its elements, and that includes the government we are privileged to lead"*

*– President Thabo Mbeki*



## Phumzile Mlambo – Ngcuka

(1955 -)

In 2005 Phumzile Mlambo – Ngcuka made by being appointed the first woman Deputy President of South Africa. She was born and educated in Durban and worked as a teacher. In the 1980s she became politically active and served one term as the President of the Natal Organisation of Women (NOW). From 1984 to 1992 she worked abroad at the YWCA world office in Geneva and director of World University Services. In 1994 she was elected to parliament and was appointed as Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry and later Minister of Minerals and Energy Affairs.





**Victoria Mxenge, assassinated UDF leader, at June 16 meeting, Durban 1984**

an equal, strong and just society is dependent on both men and women working together as equals.

workplace. While there are some notable exceptions, women are still poorly represented in top managerial and executive posts.

Although great changes have taken place, gender discrimination still takes place in

These are all real challenges. The women of South Africa have shaken off the shackles of the past and have won the right to play an equal role in the political structures of the country. Under the ANC led government, women have benefited from its policy of ensuring that women make up 50% of all delegates to its conferences and that they are represented in all state structures. South Africa now has a woman as Deputy State President and many of its municipal, provincial and national public representatives are women. In commemorating the Women's March of 1956, we as a country not only have to celebrate the role that women have played in the making of modern South Africa, we also have to embrace the challenge to ensure that the rights they fought for are protected and that they continue to play their powerful role in making South Africa a truly progressive, just, non-racial and non-sexist society.

## Glossary

<b>Migrant Worker</b>	– A worker who is forced by economic circumstances to find work in another city or country. The migrant worker was one of the defining features of South Africa's capitalist development. African workers were discouraged and forced by the pass laws not to settle permanently in the cities. The migratory labour system allowed the state and capital to keep the cost of African workers wages low.
<b>Oppression</b>	– an unjust or excessive exercise of power which denies peoples basic human rights.
<b>Campaign</b>	– A sustained programme of action around an issue; or a set of issues.
<b>Subordinate</b>	– Belonging to a lower class or rank.
<b>Federation</b>	– A union of several states or provinces or political parties.
<b>State of Emergency</b>	– A condition in a country in which martial law is applied and certain civil liberties are taken away temporarily. Martial law is when the military replaces the civilian government to keep order. The military is allowed to rule temporarily without having to stick to democratic principles or having to protect civil rights. A state of emergency is usually declared by the government when there is much unrest and there is danger of a revolution or civil war breaking out.
<b>Trade Union</b>	– an organisation of employees formed to protect and advance their wages and working conditions.
<b>Mooted</b>	– To bring up as a subject for discussion or debate or to plead or argue (a case) in a moot court.
<b>Petition</b>	– A solemn supplication or request to a superior authority; an entreaty. A formal written document requesting a right or benefit from a person or group
<b>Militant mood</b>	– An aggressive mood.
<b>Stereotype</b>	– A conventional and oversimplified conception, opinion, or image.
<b>Amnesty</b>	– A general pardon granted by a government, especially for political offences.



## Naledi Pandor (1953 - )



Naledi Pandor was born on 7 December 1953 in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. She received most of her education in exile and matriculated at Gabarone Secondary School in Botswana in 1972. She obtained a Bachelor's Degree in History and English at the University of Botswana and Swaziland in 1977. After completing this course she left for London, completing her Masters' Degree at the University of London in 1978. In 1997 she obtained her Masters of General Linguistics from the University of Stellenbosch .

Before becoming the Minister of Education in 2004 Pandor was involved in educational issues in various ways. She has been senior lecturer at the University of Cape Town, and during the time she spent abroad she taught English in Botswana and London. Following South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, Pandor was elected to Parliament, and in 1995 she the Deputy Chief Whip of the ANC. She also convened the Sub-Committee on Higher Education in the Education Portfolio Committee. In August 1998 she became the Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) and in 1999 she was elected Chairperson of the NCOP.



## Classroom activities

Learning Outcome: Learn how to research and use outside resources. Strengthen their ability to define and make use of new terms/words. Essay writing ability. Increase the ability of comparison.

1. Why would we say that women were subordinate to men at the beginning of the 20th century?
2. a) What is your understanding of the word stereotype? How would you say that women are stereotyped today? Examine adverts, magazines and newspapers to support your answer.  
b) Other than gender-based stereotyping, can you name what other forms of stereotyping you have encountered?
3. Write an essay of about a page on the formation and functions of the FEDSAW. Remember to say when and why it was formed and who the leading members were.
4. The Black Sash did not join FEDSAW. Use the internet and library resources to research the reasons for this and look at the role that Black Sash has played over the decades.
5. Compare the 1955 and 1956 women's marches to the Union Buildings. Why do you think we remember the 1956 March as opposed to the 1955 March?
6. Who were the leaders of the Women's March of 1956 and what preparations did they make to ensure that the event was a success? Do some research on one of the leaders. Add your findings to the information given in this booklet and then write a brief biography of one of these women.





Workers at a Union meeting, University of Cape Town, 1989

## Classroom activities

7. Do you think that it is appropriate that each year on Women's Day South Africans should remember the women who participated in the Women's March of 9 August 1956 – or should we remember the role of women throughout our history? Why was it such an important milestone in the history of women's resistance in South Africa? Discuss fully. You should perhaps hold a class discussion on this important topic before you begin your essays.
8. Did you perhaps accompany your parents in the queues outside the polling stations on 27 April 1994? What do you remember about the mood of the crowds on that historic day? Do a survey among adults in your community to find out about their impressions of that election. Then write an essay of about a page on the 1994 election.

### TO CONCLUDE:

Hold a class debate, to be followed by a class discussion when you have finished studying the material in the booklet. Divide the class into two groups and elect a lead speaker and second-speaker for each side, one to speak on the importance of women's history and the other to oppose it. Prepare your arguments well, using the material in the booklet.



**REMEMBER  
JUNE 16**

VIVA PEOPLES EDUCATION  
AWAY WITH GUTTER EDUCATION

**FREEDOM OR DEATH  
VICTORY IS CERTAIN**

ISSUE BY PRINTERS OF F 4312 TO 4314

**KAGISO  
REMEMBERS.**

**JUNE 16**

**NO PEACE UNDER  
APARTHEID**

**JUNE 16**

**PRAYER SERVICE 10 a.m**  
BONTEHEUWEL ANGLICAN CHURCH  
Prof. CHARLES VILLA-VICENCIO

**2PM  
SATURDAY**

**VICTORY**

**STAY-AWAY**

**JUNE 16**

**S.A. YOUTH DAY**

UDF NECC

**REMEMBER  
JUNE 16**

**MEETING  
METHODIST**

**2PM  
SATURDAY**

**VICTORY  
CERTAIN**

**KHUMBULA  
UNGANIKEZELI  
ONTHOU**

**REMEMBER  
JUNE 16**

**JUNE - 1**

**10 FIGHTING YEARS  
1976-1986**

**JUNE 16  
SOUTH  
AFRICAN  
YOUTH  
DAY**

**PEOPLES' EDUCATION FOR  
PEOPLES' POWER!**

**JUNE 16**

**SOLIDARITY  
APPEAL  
TO  
WHITES**

**OBSERVE AS A PUBLIC HOLIDAY**

UDF



## The Soweto Uprising, 16 June 1976

### Introduction

In June 1976, students from Soweto schools took to the streets and set off a chain of events that dramatically influenced the course of the liberation struggle in South Africa. The events between June 16 1976 and February 1977 established the youth as one of the most important forces of change in South African history. They also challenged the idea that it was primarily the working class that was the essential force in challenging the apartheid regime. Together with the 1973 Durban Strike, the 1976 Soweto Uprising brought together the most significant forces to challenge the apartheid regime since the banning of the liberation movements.

The uprising that was sparked off on June 16 was a protest by students against the forced introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in Black schools. Opposition to this measure was organised entirely by the students themselves, at a time when liberation movements were banned throughout the country.

The protest started off peacefully in Soweto, but it turned chaotic when the police opened fire on unarmed student marchers. The unrest gained momentum and by the third day it had spread to the townships around Soweto and to other parts of the country.



**Police set up road blocks to break up the student march, Soweto 1976**

It took some time before adults in and around Soweto bought into the idea of demonstrations by students, but they eventually gave them whole-hearted support.

### Some of the Student leaders involved on 16 June 1976

**Adriaanse, Noel John** – Shot through the left side of head, 2 September 1976 in Cape Town.

**Mashinini, Tsietsi** – Died in exile

**Barnes, Isaac** – Shot in the chest from front and died, 25 August 1976  
Where

**Montsitsi, Dan Sechaba** – Fourth president of SSRC



**Police firing at the student protesters, Soweto 1976**

**Pieterse, Hector** – One of the earliest casualty of 16 June

**Makhubu, Mbuyisa** – The youth carrying the body of Hector Pieterse, whereabouts not known, (some believe he died in Nigeria)

**Ndlovu, Hastings** – Alleged first victim of June 16

**Sithole, Antoinette** – The young woman in the famous June 16 photograph, lives in Soweto.

**Mazibuko, Seth** – Technical Advisor: Education Management and Development, Eastern Cape

**Seatholo, Khotso** – Deceased

**Morobe, Murphy** – Head of Communications in the Office of President Thabo Mbeki

**Mtintso, Thenjiwe** – South African Ambassador to Cuba

**Masetlha, Billy** – Former national Intelligence Agency (NIA) head

**Semela, Selby** – Went to exile with Tsietsi Mashinini

**Nengwekhulu, Harry** – Director of Education in the Eastern Cape

**Rachidi, Kenneth** – Semi-retired

**Macozoma, Saki** – Business man

**Sexwale, Tokyo** – Former political prisoner, Premier of Gauteng and member of the ANC NEC and successful businessmen.





**Students protesting against the use of Afrikaans**

### Events leading to the Soweto Uprising

The events leading to Soweto Uprising were brought about by radical changes of policy in African education and, to a lesser degree, in Coloured and Indian education. The riots were sparked off by an educational issue – the introduction

of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools.

Opposition to the government’s Bantu Education Policy had been growing in the Soweto schools over the past few months. A meeting of representatives from the schools had called for action to be taken. They elected an Action Committee and

gave it the task of organising a peaceful demonstration. The Action Committee decided on June 16 as the date for the demonstration. Placards were prepared and stored and members of the Action Committee toured the schools, holding secret meetings to organise support.

Details were worked out to ensure the participation by the maximum number of students while minimising the risk of confrontation with the authorities. Over a dozen assembly points were chosen at various schools around Soweto. Each school had a set time of departure to march to Orlando West. In this way, the student leaders hoped that, each time the police received a report that one group of students was marching, another group would start out before the police could react. The police would be too stretched to respond adequately and would probably be confused by all the dispersed activity. This would give the students time to gather *en masse* at Orlando West and march to Orlando Stadium for a mass *rally*.

### June 16 Chronology

1976	24 February	The first indications of protest over Afrikaans appear in Soweto schools
1976	4 March	The BPC, SASO and SASM become active in Soweto schools over the issue of schooling in Afrikaans.
1976	11 March	Thomas Mofolo High School principal calls in the police to cool the students and force them to accept Afrikaans, and immediately there is a student protest. Some students from, Naledi High School, went there to investigate.
1976	13 June	The Naledi branch of the SASM holds a meeting attended by representatives of all Soweto schools and decide that protests will be held on June 16 against the use of Afrikaans in education.
1976	13 June	SASM holds a meeting, attended by representatives of all Soweto schools, and decide that protests will be held on June 16 against the use of Afrikaans in education.
1976	16 June	The Soweto Uprisings begin.
1976	16 June	Pupils at Phefeni Secondary School start boycotting classes in protest against the use of Afrikaans in education. The unrest spreads to Belle Higher Primary School, Thulasizwe Higher Primary School, and Emthonjeni Khulo Ngolawazi Higher Primary School.
1976	16 June	Police fired at a demonstration in Soweto, of students protesting against “Bantu education” and the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction.
1976	16 June	Hector Zolile Pieterse is killed.
1976	17 July	The second day of the Soweto Uprising is marked by uncontrollable fury.



The leaders of the original march came mainly from two high schools, Naledi High and Morris Isaacson in Mofolo. Historian Sfiso Ndlovo argues, however, that the main centre of organisational activity was Phefeni Junior Secondary, close to Vilakazi Street in Orlando. Phefeni was certainly close to the railway station, where many students got off trains to join the march.

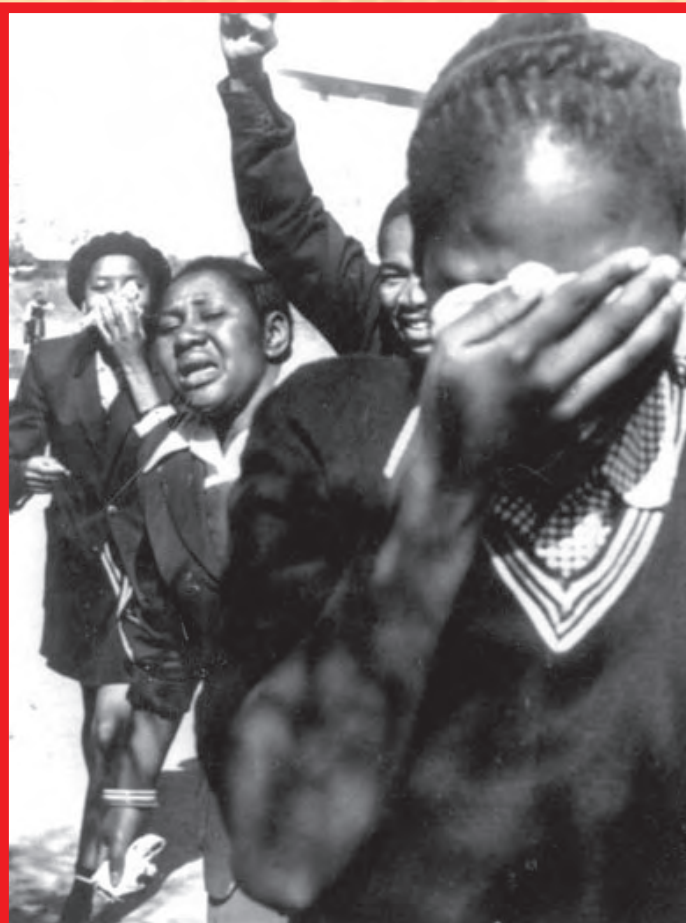
The plan was that students from Naledi High were to march from their area, picking up students from other schools on their way. The Morris Isaacson students were to do the same until the two groups met in Orlando West. They would then all proceed to the Orlando Stadium. Other schools were also part of the original plan, but it is not clear whether or not students at all the schools were fully aware of the planned march.

### The main events

#### 16 June – Day One

For many it started as an ordinary school day, since not everyone knew about the plans of the Action Committee. It was time for senior students to sit for their annual exam and many were afraid they would fail if they had to write their exams in Afrikaans.

Shortly before 7 :00 , students began gathering at the various assembly points. Placards were distributed and student leaders gave the last-minute instructions, emphasising the need for a peaceful, disciplined demonstration.



Students overcome by teargas, Soweto 1976

### June 16 Chronology

1976	1 August	Minister allows the first public gathering since 16 June and UBC the end to the burnings and return to school.
1976	4 August	The students are out in the streets in their school uniforms and, in the first instance, try to persuade the adults not to go to work.
1976	11 August	African pupils from Langa, Gugulethu and Nyanga hold marches in solidarity with the Soweto students.
1976	16 August	Pupils at the Alexander Sinton High School and the Belgravia High School boycott classes.
1976	23 August	Tsietsi Mashinini, SSRC president goes into exile.
1976	23 August	Students at the three Cape high schools organise a demonstration in sympathy with Soweto Uprising.
1977	January	Khotso Seathlolo, president of SSRC is shot and wounded in a car chase, and escapes to Botswana.
1977	16 June	First anniversary of Soweto Revolt is commemorated.
1977	31 August	Mpho Mashinini (Tsietsi's brother) is acquitted on charges under Terrorism Act.
1977	12 September	Steve Biko dies in police detention.



At 7:00 the first contingent moved off. Ten minutes later, another group set out and soon over a dozen columns were marching through Soweto, singing freedom songs, chanting slogans and carrying placards made from torn cardboard boxes and exercise book covers.

The first stop was at Naledi High. The students were in high spirits. At assembly, the principal gave support to the children and wished them good luck. The first chairperson of the Action Committee, Tepello Motopanyane, addressed them and informed them that the march would be disciplined and a peaceful.

Students also gathered at Morris Isaacson. Before setting out, they were addressed by Tsietsi Mashinini, one of the leaders of the Action Committee.

On the way they passed schools where some children were waiting to join them and others were recruited on the spot. In all, there were 11 columns of students marching towards Orlando West.

Along the way there were some minor brushes with the police, who stopped some of the school groups and dispersed them. Most of the students from these groups caught up with the marchers later, and several thousand students converged near Orlando West Junior Secondary School. It is hard to determine how many students there were at this point, as estimates range from 1 000 to 10 000. The atmosphere was tense and expectant, but the students continued to sing.

Shortly before 9:00, Tsietsi Mashinini, a senior student and one of the leaders, was helped onto a tractor to address the marchers:

*'Brothers and sisters, I appeal to you – keep calm and cool. We have just received a report that the police are coming. Don't taunt them - don't do anything to them. Be cool and calm. We are not fighting.'*

It was a tense moment for both the police and the students. Police reports stated that the situation was explosive and they retreated to await further reinforcements. The students carried on marching. At 9:30 they reached what is now Hector Peterson Square, close to Orlando High School. Here the march came to a stop again.

While hundreds of demonstrators were still marching into Orlando, several police vans and cars drove up to face the main crowd. About 50 policemen emerged from the vehicles and spread out in an arc, facing the pupils. Despite the tense atmosphere, the huge crowd of young people remained calm and orderly. The pupils were singing the national anthem in Sotho, *Morena Boloka Sechaba sa heso* ('God Save our Nation').

Suddenly, a White policeman lobbed a tear-gas canister into the front of the crowd. Students ran to escape the smoke, dazed and coughing. The crowd retreated slightly, moving out of range of the smoke but still facing the police, waving placards and singing.



Marching students protesters, Soweto 16 June 1976

## Thandi Modise (1958-)



Thandi Modise became a political activist in her teens. In 1976 she was forced to flee the country and joined Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK), the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC). In MK she held the ranks of Political Commissar and later Commander. In 1978 Modise re-entered South Africa on a MK mission but was captured and detained from 1979 to 1980. While in detention she was severely tortured despite her advanced pregnancy; and even contemplated taking her own life. In 1980 she was sentenced to ten years for her membership of the ANC and involvement in MK. She was released in 1989.

In 1991 Modise was elected a member of the African National Congress Women's National Executive Committee. After being elected to Parliament in 1994, she also held the post of Deputy President of the ANC Women's League until 1997. In Parliament she was the Chair of the Portfolio Committee on Defense. She is currently a member of the North-West Legislative Assembly.



A policeman drew his revolver. Black journalists standing by the police heard a shout: 'look at him! He's going to shoot at the kids!' A single shot rang out.

There was a split second's silence. Then pandemonium broke loose. Children screamed and ran in all directions. More shots were fired. At least four students fell. A journalist described the events:

*'I remember looking at the children in their school uniforms and wondering how long they could stand up to the police. Suddenly a small boy dropped to the ground next to me ...They were shooting into the crowd. More children fell. There seemed to be no plan.'*

The police were shooting at the fleeing children, who retaliated by throwing stones. While some carried the wounded away, others darted out and threw bricks, stones and bottles. More shots rang out. More children fell. The shooting continued and more stones were thrown.

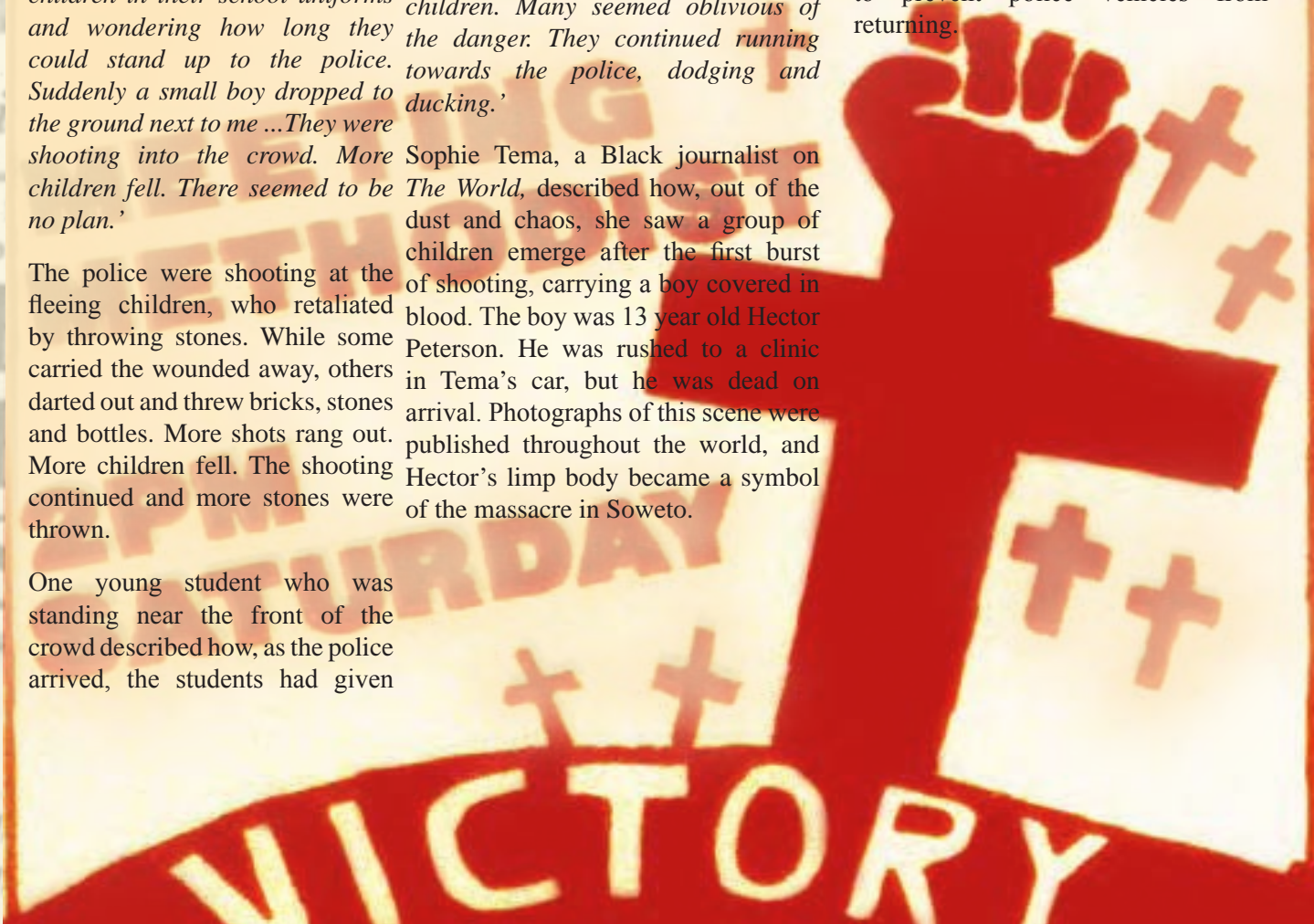
One young student who was standing near the front of the crowd described how, as the police arrived, the students had given

peace signs and shouted 'Peace!' After the first shots were fired, the front ranks, mostly young girls, picked up bricks, stones and bottles and pelted the police.

Within minutes, a well-ordered demonstration had turned into a riot. The firing continued but the crowd still advanced, pelting the police with anything that came to hand. More children fell. A journalist commented: *'What frightened me more than anything was the attitude of the children. Many seemed oblivious of the danger. They continued running towards the police, dodging and ducking.'*

Sophie Tema, a Black journalist on *The World*, described how, out of the dust and chaos, she saw a group of children emerge after the first burst of shooting, carrying a boy covered in blood. The boy was 13 year old Hector Peterson. He was rushed to a clinic in Tema's car, but he was dead on arrival. Photographs of this scene were published throughout the world, and Hector's limp body became a symbol of the massacre in Soweto.

Even with their weapons, the police were on the point of being overwhelmed. They retreated towards Orlando East, pursued by a furious crowd. As the police retreated, the students began to count the casualties: at least two dead and over a dozen wounded. Teachers from nearby schools, taxi drivers and journalists who were on the scene were called on to transport the injured to hospital. Armed with makeshift implements, others began to block the roads to prevent police vehicles from returning.



### **Thenjiwe Mtintso** (1949 - )



As an activist in the BCM and close associate of Steve Biko, Mtintso was expelled from university for political activities. She then was subjected to several detentions and banning orders during the 70s while working as a political organiser and as a journalist for the *Daily Dispatch*. After being severely tortured by the South African police, she went into political exile in 1978. In 1992, Mtintso returned to South Africa to participate in the negotiation process under CODESA, and sat on the TEC. In 1994 she was elected to Parliament, and in 1997 was appointed Chairperson on the Commission on Gender Equality. In April 1998, she accepted the position of ANC's Deputy Secretary General, where she focused on reforming South Africa's defense forces. A SACP Central Committee member and one of the country's foremost gender activists, Mtintso is at present South Africa's Ambassador to Cuba.



Large numbers of students were still arriving at Orlando West. News of the shooting spread quickly. Barricades were thrown across roads and students armed with sticks and bits of metal and wood stood behind them, awaiting an attack by the police.

The police unit involved in the first shootings had come from the nearby Orlando Police Station, which usually has a complement of about 100 uniformed and CID officers. They retreated across the Klipspruit River, blocked off the road with their vehicles and called for reinforcements. A second contingent, hurriedly rushed to the conflict area, was unprepared to face thousands of angry demonstrators. Its members joined the others at the Klipspruit River roadblock and awaited further assistance.

An operational headquarters was set up at Orlando Police Station. Ammunition and rifles were flown in by helicopter. Throughout the rest of the morning, the police maintained their positions. Reinforcements were moved in quickly and, by midday, a force of several hundred had assembled at the Orlando Police Station.

After the first shooting, the students fled in different directions. Anger at the senseless killings inspired retaliatory action. Offices of the West Rand Administration Board (WRAB) were burnt to the ground and their vehicles were overturned and set alight. A White WRAB official was dragged out of his car and beaten to death. Liquor stores were burned and looted.

Other encounters with the police took place and more students were killed, especially in the vicinity of Regina Mundi Church in Orlando and the Esso Garage in Chiawelo. When the students were stopped by the police in one area, they moved their protest action to other areas.

By the end of the day, most of Soweto, including Diepkloof, which was relatively quiet during the morning, had felt the impact of the protest. Schools were closed at about 12:00 and many students walked out of school to a township on fire.

As students were let out of school, they joined the protests that were closest to them. Some accounts describe the events of the afternoon as chaotic, a free-for-all, especially since bottle-stores and beer-halls were raided and looted. The apartheid press certainly tried to portray it this way. It was clear that the events of the afternoon were not organised and that an atmosphere of panic and defiance had taken over. Others have argued, however, that the students attacked targets for political reasons and were disciplined in who and what they attacked.

A White university student who was sympathetic to the students' cause was actually taken to safety by the schoolchildren themselves. It was, overwhelmingly, WRAB structures and cars that were set alight.

There probably was an element of free-for-all and chaos in the looting of bottle-stores. Many students came home with liquor and a lot of people enjoyed the results of the plunder. There were probably mixed motives for the raids on bottle-stores, but the children had long seen alcohol as a means of social control, used by the apartheid government to control Black people. The municipality had built most of the beer-halls, which was enough reason for the students to regard them as legitimate targets. Their slogan was *'Less liquor, better education!'*

At 1:30 pm, two army helicopters began swooping over the students' stronghold in Orlando West, dropping tear-gas. Police reinforcements arrived. Although they numbered no more than 150 to 200 men, the two riot squad units (one from Pretoria and the other from Johannesburg) appeared to be well briefed and equipped. Dressed in camouflage uniforms, they were armed with automatic rifles, hand machine carbines and machine-guns. By mid-afternoon, the police had succeeded in moving back into Orlando West. In Jabavu, the riot squad had swept through the area near Morris Isaacson School.



Students and military confront each other, Soweto June 1976



The demonstrators had already spread into other areas. To the west of Phefeni station, a number of buildings were burnt, including the Urban Bantu Council offices in Dube. Burnt-out vehicles were strewn across the roads, reducing police mobility. A police spokesman said that 36 vehicles were gutted.



**Protesting students Soweto**

The police now started to shoot indiscriminately, mowing down a number of teenagers and bystanders. Hundreds of youths were killed. Peter Magubane, the photographer stated that: *“I was personally nearly shot down when I started taking photographs of police and the smouldering buildings. At the Dube office and Bank, my camera was taken by the police and the film destroyed”*.

Towards evening, workers arrived home to find a desperate situation. They heard of the horrors of the day’s events and many of them joined the students. The attacks on buildings escalated. Between 17:00 and 20:00, the police received reports of 20 buildings set blaze. As darkness fell, the army helicopters that had guided

police operations throughout the day were grounded. The police were unable to get an overall picture of events and were particularly ineffective where there was no street lighting. Large convoys of police moved through Soweto, firing into crowds in the dark, and were pelted with stones and bottles in return.

Fires continued blazing late into the night and there was fierce fighting. According to official figures, 23 people were killed, but other sources estimated that that there were at least 200 deaths. It is hard to know how many people died as the authorities covered up the numbers.

At 21:00, armoured police personnel carriers, later known as ‘hippos’, started moving into Soweto. These vehicles, initially designed to withstand land-mine blasts and used in war zones in Namibia and Zimbabwe, were to become important features of urban ‘riot control’.

## Hector Zolile Peterson

(1963 – 1976)



One of the youngest killed in the Soweto uprising of 1976. A newspaper photograph (taken by Sam Nzima) of Peterson’s body being carried away from the killing grounds came to symbolise the wider tragedy, indeed the liberation struggle itself. A postmortem revealed that was killed by a shot fired directly at him and by a bullet ‘ricocheting off the ground’ as police claimed. For years, June 16 stood as a symbol of resistance to the brutality of the apartheid government. Today, it is known as National Youth Day - a day on which South Africans honour young people and bring attention to their needs.

Police reinforcements continued to pour into Soweto. At 21:30, 14 ‘hippos’ arrived. The army was placed on the alert and an army detachment moved into Soweto to guard the Orlando Power Station. Heavily armed police guarded the railway stations. Reinforcements were sent to police stations elsewhere in Soweto, some of which had been completely overwhelmed for several hours.





## 17 June – Day Two

*“The second day... was marked by uncontrollable fury and burning hostility... Police also assumed another attitude. They shot at random, and at anyone who would raise a fist and shout ‘Power’, into their face.”*

Solomon Marikele, Rhulane Senior Primary

Many others joined the original protesters. Not everyone had heard about Hector Peterson and the others who were killed, but the word was spreading. Schools, trains, buses, delivery vehicles, West Rand Administrative Buildings (WRAB) buildings, cars of business people, all were targeted. The fury and frustration that had been simmering amongst township youth had free reign. There was an enormous police presence in Soweto on the morning of 17 June. 1500 police, armed with sten guns, automatic rifles and hand machine carbines had taken up strategic positions in the township. Helicopters flew overhead. The army was on standby.

The police force had never developed any methods of crowd-control other than the use of live bullets. Policemen fired indiscriminately and casualties were even higher than the day before. The violent reaction of the police enraged the students still more.

At a press conference, Manie Mulder, the chairman of the West Rand Administrative Board (WRAB), announced that nearly all the WRAB buildings in Soweto had been destroyed. 21 offices and 3 schools were burnt down. 10 were plundered, as were an unknown numbers of municipal halls, beer-halls and bottle-stores.

To add to all this, 300 predominantly White Wits students marched through the city centre to protest the killing of schoolchildren. As they marched through the streets they were joined by crowds of Black workers.

The South African currency lost value overnight. Thousands of workers refused to go to work. It was indeed a crisis for the apartheid government, and a serious loss of face in the light of the impending visit to South Africa of US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger.

The Action Committee, SASM and other organisations were desperately trying to take control of the protest, to channel the anger of the youth and to give the movement political direction.

The ANC in exile called for immediate international action and the intensification of economic sanctions.



**Student protesters, Cape Town**



**Students on the March, Soweto 1976**



The protest action also spread to other townships around Soweto. In Thembisa, students organised a solidarity march, which, although heavily guarded, did not result in violence. In Kagiso, police tried to stop a gathering of students and adults. The result was a forced retreat and the destruction of WRAB buildings, vehicles and schools. When the police returned with reinforcements, they shot indiscriminately into the crowd, killing at least five people.

### 18 June – Day Three

On the third day, the situation in Soweto was still volatile. There were some fatalities outside a butchery in Moroka. Fires were blazing in the Soweto townships of Zola, Ikwezi, Moletsane, Naledi and Tladi. Administration buildings, bottle-stores and beer-halls continued to be set on fire by the young people. Buses and cars were burnt. Clashes continued between students and heavily-armed police. The students used stones to strike back at armoured cars, helicopters and guns. There were some reports of students seizing weapons from police and using them to shoot back.

At about 10 am the chairman of WRAB, Manie Mulder, went to Soweto to assess the situation. He was escorted by a large police contingent. All the WRAB-owned cars that had not been burnt were removed from Soweto.

### The aftermath of the Uprising

The Action Committee regrouped at the end of July. In August, at the Church of Regina Mundi, they came up with the idea that they should

establish a more representative body of students - the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC). The SSRC called for solidarity and worker stay-aways between Aug and Nov 1976. These were the height of mass participation in the uprising. The student based rebellion was able to broaden support for the protests by appealing to the working class. On 4 August 1976 Soweto residents marched together with students to John Vorster Square demanding for the total abolition of Bantu Education and protesting police violence. Placards read: *“Bantu Education is the education of slavery!”* *“Vorster release our leaders”* *“Thou shalt not kill students”*.

A second stay-away was organised for 23 – 25 August. An invitation urged *“parent-workers”* to stay-away *“as proof that you are crying with us for those cruelly killed by the police and detained all over the country in various prisons without trial.”* Workers were reached through their residences and not their factories. The lack of trade union involvement would later be seen as short-sighted and lost the



Students in exile – Tanzania





sympathy of many workers. There are a lot of questions around the use of coercion to get people to support the stay-aways. Gangs took advantage of the confusion and chaos and added to the senseless violence. Conflict between township residents and hostel dwellers arose on 24 August when hundreds of ill-informed Mzimhlope Hostel residents respond to attempts to force them to stay-away from work by going on a murderous rampage through Medowlands and Orlando killing 70 people. By September, when a third stay-away was called, the hostel dwellers were solidly behind the students and violence dropped to a minimum.

Because of continued police action against students, intimidation on the part of the students themselves and the almost complete loss of parental control over children, African education ground to a halt in two main trouble spots: Soweto and the Cape Town townships.

The revolt spread throughout the country. In Limpopo, those who had left the Soweto and other townships in order to evade arrest began to influence events there. A new era of enlightenment engulfed the region, as they carried on with what they started in Soweto and convinced the locals to rally around them in support of the Soweto Uprising. In areas such as Eastern Province and KwaZulu-Natal, things started slowly and then gained momentum. The explosion that started in Soweto was heard in every part of South Africa and throughout the world. Afterwards, the days passed in a fevered rush of demonstrations and shootings, arson and sabotage, strikes, boycotts and funerals of riot squad victims.

Towards the end of September, heavy raids and numerous arrests signalled the start of a counter-offensive by the police, which ran on into early October. In the Western Cape, Coloured students resumed their boycott of classes. African students launched a campaign against liquor and the shebeens on 11 October.

A few days later, the SSRC made an appeal for a period of mourning until the end of the year. It was to be marked by the closure of shebeens and cancellation of parties, sporting events and Christmas festivities in solidarity with those who had been killed or detained for taking part in the strikes. It was accompanied and reinforced by some of the largest funerals yet held. These funerals served as political rallies, organised to find a way around the ban on public meetings.

By late October thousands of young Blacks had left the country and taken refuge in neighbouring states. Most were motivated by the desire to acquire arms and training so they could return and continue the fight more effectively. The return of some of them, and of others, who had left before June 1976, became evident in a wave of sabotage incidents. Preparations intensified for guerrilla warfare within the country.

Events in the first week of November showed that a boycott of examinations was within the capacity of the student movement, but a planned five-day worker stay-away was not. By the middle of the month, the level of mass activity had fallen lower than at any time since mid-July.

Student action against Black collaborators flared up again in Guguletu at the end of the month, triggering off intermittent clashes in which the police sought to turn migrant



**Wits students & workers in demonstration against killing of Soweto students (1976)**

workers against the young people and residents of the Cape Town townships. This reached a fierce and bloody climax over the Christmas weekend.

Meanwhile, in Soweto, a boycott of White-owned shops was widely supported and the SSRC's call for mourning instead of celebrations proved generally effective.

The predominant attitude amongst scholars is that the students were not interested in continuing their education under the present system of Bantu Education, and that the attainment of their political goals was now far more important than furthering their education. Schools remained empty, numerous schools and classrooms were burnt down and very few candidates wrote their final examination.

## **Murphy Morobe (1956 -)**

In 1972 Morobe joined the SASM because he saw unity and community development as important. The following year members of the SASM were detained, and it became quite weak. In 1974 he helped with the reorganisation of SASM, and was elected treasurer. In 1976 SASM was to play an important role in the Soweto Uprising, and it was the first time that Morobe took part in a demonstration. In August 1976 the SSRC and Morobe was appointed deputy Chairman.



The group played a role in organising campaigns and protests, and almost all Soweto schools were involved in the SSRC. In December 1976 Morobe was arrested and sent to Robben Island. He was released in May 1982 and he then joined COSAS. He was also one of the founding members of the UDF.

Between 1994 and 2004 he headed various organisations, until appointed as the Head of Communication in the Office of the President in 2005.



# Glossary

- Liberation** – The violent or non-violent act of transforming an unjust social system. It was used to describe anti-colonial and socialist movements for change in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In South Africa it is used to describe those organisations that took up arms to overthrow the apartheid regime.
- Uprising** – A limited popular revolt against an unpopular constituted government.
- Struggle** – To strive in opposition: battle, combat, contend, duel, fight, and war
- Abantu/Bantu** – An Nguni word for people. It is the plural of the word 'umuntu', meaning 'person'.
- Segregation** – A policy of discrimination against people based on their race, caste, and creed. In South Africa, it was the official state policy of subsequent White dominated government between 1910 and 1994.
- Apartheid** – Afrikaans word meaning apartness, which became the policy of the National Party government in 1948 and, which called for the total segregation of Black people and extension of racially and ethnically based self-governing territories or Bantustans and councils for Coloured and Indian people.
- State of Emergency** – The suspension of all civil liberties by the government in order to deal with political unrests or natural disasters.



## Tsietsi Mashinini (1957 – 1990)

In 1971 Mashinini became a student at Morris Isaacson High. His English and History teacher was Abram Onkgopotse Ramothibi Tiro, who was expelled from the University of the North (Turfloop) for his political activities. Tiro had great influence in shaping Mashinini's political thinking and subsequent adherence to the ideology and philosophy of Black Consciousness. Mashinini was elected Chairperson of the Action Committee. The Action Committee was later renamed SSRC, with Mashinini as its first President until he was succeeded by Khotso Seatlholo from Naledi High. Mashinini became the leader of the 16 June 1976 Soweto Uprising and in the process he became enemy number one of the state. He eluded police arrest until he left the country for Botswana in August 1976.

## Classroom activities

Learning Outcomes: Synthesise information about the past and develop, sustain and defend an independent line of historical argument. Communicate and present information reliably and accurately verbally.

1. Why did the youth of 1976 object to the government's new education system?
2. Name five heroes of the struggle and why do you think were crucial to the struggle?
3. What were the defining moments of the Soweto Uprisings?
4. Do you think the country is doing enough to honour the youth that took part in the struggle?
5. What was the role of the liberation organisation in the Soweto Uprisings?
6. Do you believe the government has done enough to conscientise the youth of today about the Soweto Uprisings or the day has been turned into a political event with no meaning?





# **Samora Machel**

## **Mysterious Death of a Revolutionary - 1986**

The revolutionary leader of the Mozambique liberation movement FRELIMO and first Mozambican President, Samora Moises Machel, was killed in plane crash on 19 October 1986. The death of the President sent shockwaves throughout the world. Also killed in the crash were thirty three members of his party and the crew of the Russian built Tupolev TU 134A.

The plane was returning from a Summit of African leaders held in Zambia. It went down in the Lebombo mountains near Mbuzini in Nelspruit eastern Transvaal (now Mpumalanga). The crash site was an area where the South African border connected with Swaziland and Mozambique. The fact that it crashed over South African territory raised some questions about the possibilities of the involvement of the apartheid government. Of thirty-four people on board only nine survived the crash.

After the crash a Commission, made up of representatives from South Africa, Mozambique and Soviet Union, was instituted to establish the cause of the crash. Many possible reasons ranging from the mechanical fault to bad weather conditions were put forward as the cause of the crash. However the investigations failed to pinpoint the precise cause of the crash. The new democratic South African government and the Mozambique government have called for a new inquiry to determine the real cause of the crash and the death of President Machel and his party.

### **Events leading to the Plane crash**

The crash happened at the time when the Mozambique government was in the midst of an armed attack by the National Resistance Movement in Mozambique (RENAMO). RENAMO was a rebel group backed by the South African and Rhodesian government. There was also mounting tension between South Africa, Mozambique and Malawi. The Mozambican Chief of Staff accused the President of Malawi, Hastings Kamuzu Banda, of setting up a base for RENAMO in its territory and issuing the rebels with travel documents. One month prior to the crash, an angry Mozambican President Machel issued his Malawian counterpart with an ultimatum to stop his support for RENAMO. He threatened to seal off Mozambique's borders with Malawi.

On 7 October 1986 after six South African soldiers died in a landmine explosion on the Mozambican border, the SA Minister of Defence, Magnus Malan, threatened the Mozambican leader personally when he said, "*He (Machel) will clash head-on with South Africa*". The two countries got embroiled in a bitter verbal exchange. Two weeks before the crash the South African government accused Machel of having revived his support to the banned African National Congress (ANC) and its guerrilla forces.



On 18 October, Carlos Cardoso, Director of the Mozambican News Agency Agência de Informação de Moçambique (AIM) received an anonymous message informing him that the President (Machel) had died. The message was very bizarre as Machel was preparing to leave for Zambia. On the same day before leaving for Zambia, Machel had convened a meeting with journalists, FRELIMO leaders and military officers. Machel announced that he had received information that the South Africans wanted to eliminate him. He gave instructions to his Cabinet and party what had to be done if he failed to return.

### The Event - The plane crash

On Sunday night, 19 October 1986, the Mozambique Presidential aircraft Tupolev Tu-134 turned towards the South African border in response to signals from a VOR (a very high frequency omnidirectional radio), which was emanating not from Maputo, but from the crash site on the Lebombo mountain near Mbuluzi, Nelspruit.

The South African police arrived on the crash site four and half hours after the crash. It was alleged that they initially ignored the dead and wounded people and started collecting the documents papers scattered around the scene as well as the victims' valuable personal items and cash. Foreign Minister, Pik Botha, and Niel Barnard, head of the National Intelligence Service, who arrived later, admitted that the documents had been removed from the scene for copying. Mozambican authorities were only informed about the incident nine hours after it had happened.

### Survivor Accounts

Vladimir Novosselov, a surviving member of the Soviet crew, felt that the crash was not an accident. He maintained that the Soviet Crew of the presidential plane was highly

experienced: *"The pilot, Yuri Novodran, had been flying for 25 years. The other crew members, co-pilot Igor Kartamichev, navigator Andrei Kudriachov and radio operator Anatoli Choulipov, were also very experienced."* *"At about six o'clock in the evening, the President came to Lusaka. The plane gained the necessary height and headed towards Maputo. When we were flying over Zambia the altimeter showed 11,400 meters. When we crossed the Mozambican frontier the Tupolev descended to 10,600 meters. Novodron ordered contact to be made with Maputo airport requesting authorisation to land. The airport services granted the request. Weather conditions were favourable for the flight.*

*Maputo was ahead and to the left of the pilots. To the right and very close was the Mozambique-South African border. We were gradually descending. The altitude was 5,200 meters. Then we dropped to 3,000 meters. We were 113 kilometers away from Maputo. Novodran switched off the autopilot and took over the manual controls. He was an excellent pilot. Even navigator Kudriachov and radio operator Choulipov, who have spent around 14,000 hours in the air, did not know a more experienced captain than Novodran. We descended to less than a thousand meters. The last thing I remember was that the altimeter was reading 970 meters, after that nothing."*

Another survivor of the crash was Machel's bodyguard, Fernando Maniel João. He was lucky to survive and had the least serious injuries. At midnight he managed to contact the Komatipoort police from the phone of a mission post. He requested the Komatipoort police to contact Mozambique and inform them of the crash, but the Mozambican government was only officially informed of the disaster by the SA authorities at 6.50 the following day.



President Samora Machel on a Parade



President Samora Machel and P W Botha – Nkomati Accord, 1985





Police and Investigators at the site of the plane crash

## Chronology

1933	29 September	Samora Moises Machel is born in the village of Chilembene, Mozambique.
1962		Machel joins Mozambique liberation movement Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO).
1963		Machel receives military training somewhere else in Africa.
1964		Machel returns to Mozambique to lead FRELIMO first guerilla attacks against Portuguese in northern Mozambique.
1969		Machel replaces Eduardo Mondlane as the president of FRELIMO.
1975	25 June	Machel becomes first President of the independent Mozambique.
1975	7 September	Machel marries his second wife Graça.
1984	16 March	Machel signs Nkomati Accord with his South African counterpart P.W. Botha.
1986	18 October	Machel convenes a meeting with journalists, FRELIMO leadership and military officers before leaving for Zambia.
1986	19 October	Machel dies in a presidential aircraft Tupolev TU 134A plane crash in South Africa.
1986	6 November	Joaquim Chissano replaces Machel as the President of Mozambique.
1998	4 June	South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) commences with its investigations of Machel's death.
2006	9 February	South Africa's Minister of Safety and Security Charles Nqakula reports to Parliament that investigations into Machel's death would be resumed.



Another survivor Almeida Pedro said that the SA police appeared on the scene of the crash at about 2:00 in the morning of Monday 20 October (four and a half hours after the crash). *“The police didn’t go to the aid of the people who were crying out. There were people who died for lack of assistance”* and Pedro said he saw *“all of them collecting papers, diplomatic bags, dollars. They took lots of things.”*

This was confirmed by João: *“The South Africans were not at all concerned with the lives of the wounded. They were just messing around with the other things there”*. He said he became angry with the South Africans for refusing to take the wounded to hospital. He spoke with a police inspector who finally ordered helicopters and medical staff to come and take the injured to the hospital in Nelspruit. The first of the injured arrived at Nelspruit at 8:00, almost 11 hours after the crash.

## Aftermath

### Inquiries into the crash

South Africa’s reaction to the crash was very slow and suspicious. The South African officials relayed false information to the Mozambican authorities. It took them nine hours to report the incident in spite of Mozambique Minister of Security reporting the plane missing. When news of the crash was communicated to Mozambique, it was reported that the crash had taken place in Natal, some 200 kilometers away from the actual site of the accident.

A few days after the crash Mozambique and South Africa agreed to the establishment of the International Commission of Inquiry (ICI) with the participation of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and in line with to ICAO procedures. According to the ICAO (also known as the Chicago Convention), the procedures dictated that South Africa should lead the investigations process as it was the country where the crash occurred. The procedures also dictated the inclusion of Mozambique as the owner of the aircraft and Soviet Union as the manufacturer. In compliance with these procedures the South African government thus instituted the Margo Commission under the chairmanship of Justice Cecil Margo to conduct investigations. The Margo Commission sat and heard evidence at the Rand Supreme Court in Johannesburg from 20 – 28 January 1987. Mozambique and the Soviet Union withdrew their investigators from the Commission, accusing the South Africa government of refusing to treat them as equal partners in the investigations. with to ICAO procedures.

The investigations were stalled for several weeks as a result of General Lothar Neethling’s refusal to make the cockpit voice recorder (the black box) available to the Commission. He had seized it at the scene of the crash. Colonel Des Lynch, who headed the police investigation, told the Commission that it took a letter from a lawyer to persuade Neethling to release the box to the investigators. Based on the evidence gathered from the black box, the Margo Commission concluded that the aircraft was airworthy and fully serviced and that there was no evidence of sabotage or external forces involved. It held the Soviet Crew responsible, claiming that the plane had locked onto a VOR (very high frequency omnidirectional radio), which they had mistaken for Maputo.

*“It unanimously determined that the cause of the accident was that the flight crew failed to follow procedural requirements for an instrument let-down approach, but continued to descend under visual flight rules in darkness and some cloud without having contact with the minimum*



## Samora Machel

(1933-1986)

Samora Machel was born in 1933 and was raised in the village of Chilembene.

He began his first political activities in a hospital where he protested the fact that black nurses were paid less than whites doing the same job. In 1962 Machel joined the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), as it was called, and dedicated to creating an independent Mozambique. In 1963 Samora Machel left Mozambique and traveled to several other African nations where he received military training. In 1964 he returned to Mozambique and led FRELIMO’s first guerilla attack against the Portuguese.

By 1970 Samora Machel became commander and chief of the Frelimo army. He believed in guerilla war and Frelimo’s army established itself among Mozambique’s peasantry. The new revolutionary government, led by Machel, took over on 25 June , 1975. Machel became independent Mozambique’s first President and was affectionately referred to as “President Samora.”

He supported and allowed revolutionaries fighting white minority regimes in Rhodesia and South Africa to operate within Mozambique. Unhappily for Mozambique, Samora Machel was killed in a plane crash on 20 October in 1986.

*safe altitude and minimum assigned altitude, and in addition ignored the Ground Warning Proximity alarm”.*

### The Soviet Union Report

The Soviet Union report disagreed with the Margo Commission and issued its own report. It accused the South African government of undermining its expertise and experience. The Soviet report focused on the 37 degrees’ right turn that led the plane into the hills of Mbuzini. It rejected the finding of the Margo Commission. It strengthened suspicions of the involvement of the South



African security forces. It suggested that the plane was deliberately diverted by a false navigational beacon signal, using a technology provided by Israel intelligence agents.

### **Mozambique Medical Commission**

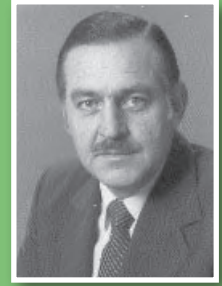
Mozambique conducted its own medical investigations on victims of the crash. The investigations revealed that there were unknown people who interfered with six bodies of people who died during the crash. The bodies were found to have been cut and stitched up on the side of the neck. The incisions, about seven centimeters long, were made with a sharp instrument on one or other side of the neck along the line of the cleido mastoideo muscle. The affected bodies included those of a Soviet crew member, President Samora's two Cuban doctors, two Mozambican stewardesses and of a functionary of the Mozambican Foreign Ministry. The investigations failed to determine the precise time of the crash. It further indicated that the cuts were not the cause of death. A South African, Prof. Nel, strengthened the theory that the cuts had been made to collect blood samples, but declared also that it was not normal procedure.

### **TRC special investigation.**

Following the demise of the apartheid regime in 1994, the newly elected democratic government opened new probes into the death of President Samora Machel. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which was instituted in 1996 under the chairmanship of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, was tasked to contribute to the investigation. It called everyone suspected of being involved in the plane crash and those who had close ties with Machel in Mozambique. Some of the suspects called by the TRC were senior government officials and officials attached to the government security institutions.

The TRC's investigation did not find any conclusive evidence to support either of the earlier reports. Circumstantial evidence collected did, however, question the conclusions reached by the Margo Commission. For example: A police video in the TRC's possession shows South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Roelof Pik Botha, telling journalists at the crash site that President Samora Machel and others killed in the crash were his and President P. W. Botha's very good friends and that their deaths were therefore a tragedy for South Africa. The TRC report concluded that the questions of a false beacon and the absence of a warning from the South African authorities require further investigation by an appropriate structure.

## **Roelof "Pik" Botha** (1932 – )



In 1970 Botha entered politics and on 22 April he won the Wonderboom seat for the NP. In April 1977 he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs and in the same year became MP for Westdene.

In July 1985 Botha had to deal with the Klaas de Jonge affair, who was suspected of assisting the ANC against the Nationalist government. In 1986 Botha told reporters that SA could be ruled by a Black President in the future, provided agreement was reached on protecting minority rights. He was one of the first government ministers to arrive at the plane crash scene, where Samora Machel died. In 1987 he was the Deputy Leader of the NP in the Transvaal. Botha was appointed Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs in the first post-apartheid government in 1994. He resigned from this post in May 1996. In 2000 he joined the African National Congress (ANC).

In his State of the Nation address on 3 February 2006, South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki announced that there would be a commemoration of the 20th anniversary of Samora Machel's death. In his report to parliament the Minister of Safety and Security, Charles Nqakula, said that South Africa together with its Mozambican counterpart would resume investigations. *"We owe it to the people of Mozambique to ensure the matter is thoroughly investigated"*. He added: *"Discussions are underway for dealing with the matter"*.

## **Acronyms**

<b>FRELIMO</b>	– Liberation Front of Mozambique
<b>RENAMO</b>	– Mozambican National Resistance
<b>ANC</b>	– African National Congress
<b>SADF</b>	– South African Defence Force
<b>ICI</b>	– International Commission of Inquiry
<b>ICAO</b>	– International Civil Aviation Organisation
<b>TRC</b>	– Truth and Reconciliation Commission



## Andreas Jacobus “Kat” Liebenberg (1938 - 1998 )

Andries Jacobus “Kat” Liebenberg was born in Upington in 1938. In 1955 he obtained his matric certificate and continued to study law degree at the University of Stellenbosch. In 1977 he took over as Officer Commanding 2 Military Area in South West Africa, which at the time was the nerve centre of the main war against Swapo.

He went on to serve in the apartheid military’s main battleground, Namibia, as commanding officer of Ovamboland. In 1980 Liebenberg rose up the military ranks when he became Director of Operations at Army Headquarters. In 1990 his loyalty was awarded when was appointed Chief of the SADF to replace Jannie Geldenhuys.

In 1993 Liebenberg relinquished his position at the SADF. He was subpoenaed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to account for his involvement in the military operation that claimed 16 civilians life in Kwazulu-Natal.

## Glossary

<b>Concede</b>	– Admitting to something
<b>Divert</b>	– Change direction/ distract
<b>Eliminate</b>	– Get rid of
<b>Incision</b>	– Cut made as part of surgical operation
<b>Stall</b>	– Putting something on hold till later date/ Delay something
<b>Subpoena</b>	– Summon a person to appear before court or to give evidence in investigations



Ruth First and Samora Machel

## Classroom activities

Learning Outcome: Learners must be able to investigate and unearth the correct and concealed historical facts.

1. What caused the death of Samora Machel?
2. Where did the crash occur?
3. In which of the following countries was Samora Machel President?
  - Zambia
  - Zimbabwe
  - Mozambique
  - Malawi
4. Where was the Mozambique President coming from when his plane crashed? Briefly explain the nature of his visit.
5. Who was SA cabinet minister to appear first on the scene?
6. Who were SA President and Foreign Minister at the time?
7. Did the death of Machel have a detrimental effect on SA-Mozambique relations?
8. Why did Samora Machel censure the Malawian President?
9. How was the Commission of Inquiry into the death of Samora Machel constituted?
10. What was the outcome of the investigations?
11. Did investigations make anticipated revelations?
12. Why was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission entrusted with responsibilities to investigate further?
13. Have investigations into Machel’s death been closed? If not, what is the state of affairs?
14. Do you think the building of the monument built by the SA and Mozambiquan government, where Machel died, is the correct way to honour him? Explain your answer.



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# The Birth of the New Constitution -1996





# The Birth of the New Constitution

## – 1996

### Introduction

The adoption of the South African Constitution on 8 May 1996 was one of the peak moments in the history of the struggle for democracy in this country. The Constitution is considered by many as one of the most advanced in the world, with a Bill of Rights second to none. The South African Constitution was drafted by an all-inclusive Constitutional Assembly, which had representatives from all the major political parties and liberation organisations. The new Constitution, produced by the Constitutional Assembly May 1994 and October 1996, is the embodiment of the vision of generations of anti-apartheid freedom fighters and democrats who had fought for non-racialism, human rights and a South Africa that belongs to all of its people.

The guiding principles of the new Constitution were first articulated in the ANC's African Claims document of 1943, the Non-European Unity Movements 10 point programme of 1943, and the 1955 Freedom Charter of the Congress Alliance.

The Constitution is the supreme law of the land, against which all other laws are judged. The Constitution called for the creation of a Constitutional Court. The Constitutional Court is the place where the Constitution is interpreted. The Constitution also clearly states how the country is to be governed, as well as processes for the establishment of parliament, the election of the president, and the creation and government of provinces and local authorities.

### How the Constitutions was drafted.

On 2 February 1990, the National Party government unbanned political parties and individuals. It also released many political prisoners and detainees, including Nelson Mandela.

On 20 and 21 December 1991 the first session of CODESA (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) was held. There were 19 political groups at this event. All parties agreed to support the Declaration of Intent, which said that they would begin writing a new Constitution for South Africa.

On 15 May 1992 CODESA 2 met at the World Trade Centre, Johannesburg. After three days it was clear that there were many tensions. The ANC and COSATU decided to have a campaign of 'rolling mass action'. The first stay-away was on 16 June. On 17 June people marching in Boipatong were shot and many people were killed. After this the ANC stopped talks.

### The Multi-Party Negotiating Process

In March 1993 full negotiations began at the World Trade Centre. The parties present decided to use the title Multi-Party Negotiating Process (MPNP) instead of CODESA. There were twenty-six parties taking part in the MPNP.

The MPNP had to write and adopt an interim Constitution which would say how the government would govern after the first democratic elections on 27 April 1994. The Interim Constitution was to last for two years.

### The Constitutional Principles

The MPNP also drew up and adopted the 34 Constitutional Principles. These principles would guide the Constitutional Assembly (CA), which had to draw up the final Constitution. If the final Constitution didn't include all 34 Constitutional Principles then the Constitutional Court would not be able to certify the Constitution. One of the Constitutional Principles was that the final Constitution had to include a Bill of Rights. If it did not have a Bill of Rights, then the Constitutional Court would not be able to certify it.

### The Constitutional Assembly (CA)

After the elections in 1994, the new Parliament, working as the Constitutional Assembly (CA), began writing the final Constitution. After two years, on 8 May 1996, the CA



Nelson Mandela taking the oath of office as President – 1994

adopted the final Constitution. But this Constitution still had to be certified by the Constitutional Court.

### The Constitutional Court's first hearing

The Constitutional Court had its first session in July 1996. In September the Judges of the Court declared the Constitution did not follow all of the 34 Constitutional Principles and refused to certify it. On October 1996 the Constitutional Court asked the Constitutional Assembly to make some changes to the Constitution. On 18 October 1996 the final Constitution was passed by Parliament and became the highest law of the land.

### Preamble to the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*

*We, the people of South Africa, Recognise the injustices of our past; Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land; Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity. We therefore, through our*



*freely elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic so as to Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights; Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law; Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations. May God protect our people. Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika. Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso. God seën Suid-frika. God bless South Africa. Mudzimu fhatutshedza Afurika. Hosi katekisa Afrika*

### **South Africa's Constitutional changes over the years:**

In 1910 with the granting of responsible government and constitution of the new Union of South Africa, the English colonial regime formally handed the country over to the British and Afrikaner white settlers. The first Constitution of the Union of South Africa formally excluded Blacks and Coloureds other than a small number of Black and Coloured voters in the Cape from direct say in parliament.

In 1960 after a hotly contested referendum, white South Africans voted to become a Republic. On 31 May 1961 South Africa was declared a Republic and adopted a new Constitution. The apartheid government had now embarked on its grand plan to create ethnic based homelands for Blacks each with its own constitution and government. Over the next decades as these homelands were created Black people lost their South African citizenship and become citizens of the so-called independent states.

In 1983 the government passed a new Constitution, which created the Tri-cameral parliament, which created a separate parliaments for the White, Coloured and Indians. This Constitution excluded Black people who, the apartheid regime argued, were citizens of their respective ethnic homelands. They had no rights outside these homelands. The establishment of the Tricameral parliament and the loss of citizenship by Black people



**Nelson Mandela casting his vote in 1994 elections at Inanda, Durban**

were some of the triggers that led to the creation of the UDF and the mass country wide revolt against white rule and the end of apartheid.

In 1990 with the unbanning of the liberation organisations, the release of political prisoners laid the basis for the start of multi party negotiation to create a new democratic constitution. In 1994, twenty-six parties negotiated and adopted an interim Constitution that gave the vote to everyone. This Constitution lasted for two years. During that time the elected government worked as the Constitutional Assembly to draw up the present South African Constitution, based on the principles of human rights, equality, non-racialism and non-sexism.

The Constitution also embraces the vision that the Republic of South Africa would be one, sovereign, democratic state founded on the following principles:





- Human dignity, equality, advancement of human rights and freedoms non-racialism and non-sexism
- The Constitution will be supreme rule of law
- All adults will be able to vote
- There will be a common voters' roll
- There will be regular elections
- There will be a multi-party system of democratic government to make sure there is accountability and openness.

### **What is Democracy?**

The word '*democracy*' comes from the Greek language. It means "the people rule". There are different ideas about what democracy means. A short definition is that it is a form of government in which political power belongs to all the people and is practised by them directly or given to elected representatives. This means that everybody should have a say in how they are governed. In most democracies today, people do not have direct political power. Direct power would mean that every single person sat in the government. Instead, there are elections in which everybody can vote for individuals or a political party to represent them in the government.



In South Africa, elections are held every five years.

Human rights are also important in a democracy. Every person is equal, and nobody may discriminate against others. The three golden rules for a democracy are:

- There is a voting system and regular elections;
- Citizens have freedom of speech; and
- Those who break the law will get a fair trial.

### Structure of Government in South Africa

The South African government is divided into three parts: the Executive (the Cabinet), the Legislature (Parliament), and the Judiciary (the courts).

#### The Executive – Cabinet

The Executive is responsible for ruling the country through different ministries. Each ministry is responsible for a different issue – for example, there is one for health matters, one for education, and one for sport. The Executive is a committee of all the heads of these ministries. This is called the Cabinet.

#### The legislature - Parliament

To legislate means to ‘make laws’. The legislature, or Parliament, is where our elected representatives, the members of Parliament (MPs) meet to discuss matters, to debate and to decide on new laws. The word *Parliament* comes from the French word for “to speak”. Parliament is made up of two groups, the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP).

The National Assembly is made up of all the Members of Parliament (MPs) who got seats in the general elections. There are 350 – 400 MPs in our National Assembly. The head of the National Assembly is called the Speaker. It is the Assembly’s job to represent the public and to make sure the democratic laws of the Constitution are made. They also have to check that the Cabinet does its job and does not go against the Constitution.

The National Council of Provinces (NCOP) is a body that represents the nine provinces in the national government. Every province has ten representatives in the Council. When a province has a suggestion, it asks the Council to put it before Parliament. Then Parliament can decide and vote on the suggestion.

#### Judiciary – The Courts

The Judiciary is the court system. This is the part of government that has to make sure that those who do not keep the law are punished. There are different levels of courts. If a case in a low court is appealed, it goes to a higher court. The decision of the higher court can be different, and can overrule the decision of the lower court. The two highest courts in South Africa are the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court of Appeal. The Constitutional Court has the highest say on matters that have to do with the Constitution. If Parliament wants to make a new law, the Constitutional Court first has to make sure that it does not go against the Constitution. The Supreme Court of Appeal has the highest say in all other court matters. The court system is independent from the rest of government. After an election Parliament and the Cabinet can change, but the courts might still look the same. In other words, the elections do not influence the Judiciary.

### State institutions that support constitutional democracy

The Constitution calls for the establishment of nine institutions to protect and advance the rights enshrined in the constitution. They are referred to as the protection mechanisms. It is their job to make sure that the government does its work properly. These institutions are independent and report directly to Parliament. They are:

- The Public Protector
- South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC)
- Commission on Gender Equality (CGE)
- The Auditor General
- Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)
- Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (Cultural Commission)
- Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA)
- The Land Claims Commission (LCC) has been set up to protect people’s land rights under Section 25 of the Bill of Rights
- Financial and Fiscal Commission (FFC) to advise the government on revenue sharing



Democracy in action at school. Children at Emadwaleni school near Soweto greet their out-going SRC-Leader, 11 June 1999



## Roelof Petrus Meyer (1947-)

In 1990 Meyer became a Member of Parliament for the NP. His positions included Deputy Minister of Law and Order and of Constitutional Development (1986 to 1991) and Minister of Defence, of Communication and of Constitutional Affairs (1991-1996).

In May 1992 he formed part of the government delegation at talks with the ANC at Groote Schuur, Cape Town. He was the government's chief negotiator in constitutional negotiations and established an effective working relationship with the ANC's chief negotiator, Cyril Ramaphosa. In 1996 Meyer retired as a Member of Parliament and as the Gauteng leader of the National Party.

The next year, he co-founded the United Democratic Movement (UDM) with former Transkeian leader, Bantu Holomisa. Meyer has since retired from active politics and has ventured into business and he is involved in conflict resolution in international troubled spots.



## Chronology

1955	26 June	Freedom Charter A statement of principles to guide the pro-democracy anti-apartheid movement is drafted, through an ANC convened Congress of the People.
1989	8 December	Conference for a Democratic Future A gathering of the Mass Democratic Movement is held to develop a common approach based on the ANC's Harare Declaration for negotiations leading to a new constitution drafted by an elected constituent assembly.
1991	June-September	National Peace Accord negotiation Negotiations involving representatives from political parties, business and church associations lead to an agreement signed by 27 political, trade union and government leaders that creates national, regional and local peace structures.
1991-92	December-May	Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) Negotiations are held to decide the rules guiding the transition and a new constitution, involving 19 parties and more than 400 negotiators organized in working groups. It starts with an opening plenary (CODESA I) and finishes with a final plenary (CODESA II) that marks the breakdown of the process.
1992	26 September	Record of Understanding The ANC and the NP sign an agreement on the process to negotiate an interim government and interim constitution.
1992-1993	April-November	Multi-party Negotiating Process Negotiations involving 26 parties to draft an interim constitution, with administration provided by the Consultative Business Movement.
1994	27 – 29 April	General elections The first non-racial, democratic elections are held for parties to form the transitional government and choose delegates to new parliament and Constitutional Assembly.
1994-1996	May-October	Constitutional Assembly and public participation programme 490 members from 7 parties draft a new Constitution with inputs from a massive public participation programme. The final text of the Constitution is adopted 8 May 1996 and an amended text, is approved on 11 October 1996.
1996	10 December	Constitution signed into law President Nelson Mandela signs the Constitution into law in Sharpeville. It comes into effect on 4 February 1997.
1996	October	The Constitutional Assembly makes some changes to the Constitution.
1996	18 December	The final Constitution is passed by Parliament and becomes a law.





**Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa (1952-)**

In 1972 Ramaphosa registered at the University of Limpopo (Turffloop) for a BProc degree. Ramaphosa became involved in students politics and joined the SASO in 1972.

After the pro-Frelimo rally at the University Turffloop in 1974, Ramaphosa was detained for 11 months under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act. In June 1976, following the unrest in Soweto, Ramaphosa was again detained under the Terrorism Act for six months and held at John Vorster Square. In March 1986 he was part of COSATU's delegation, which met the ANC in Lusaka, Zambia. In January 1990, Ramaphosa accompanied released ANC political prisoners to Lusaka, Zambia. Ramaphosa served as chairman of the National Reception Committee, which co-ordinated arrangements for the release of Nelson Mandela. He was elected General-Secretary of the ANC in a conference held in Durban in July 1991. In May 1994 he was elected Chairperson of the New Constitutional Assembly. In May 1996 he resigned from the post of General Secretary of the ANC and went into business.

**Some of the key Constitution drafters**

- |                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Camerer, Sheila</b>    | <b>Nkoane, Kevin</b>        |
| <b>Cheadle, Halton</b>    | <b>Omar, Dullar</b>         |
| <b>Coleman, Neil</b>      | <b>Pandor, Naledi</b>       |
| <b>De Lille, Patricia</b> | <b>Patel, Ebrahim</b>       |
| <b>Ebrahim, Gora</b>      | <b>Phosa, Mathews</b>       |
| <b>Ebrahim, Hassen</b>    | <b>Ramaphosa, Cyril</b>     |
| <b>Englin, Colin</b>      | <b>Wessels, Leon</b>        |
| <b>Gibson, Douglas</b>    | <b>Rautenbach, Ignatius</b> |
| <b>Gomomo, John</b>       | <b>Shilowa, Sam</b>         |
| <b>Gordhan, Pravin</b>    | <b>Skweyiya, Zola</b>       |
| <b>Hofmeyr, William</b>   | <b>Slovo, Joe</b>           |
| <b>Liebenberg, Sandy</b>  | <b>Smuts, Dene</b>          |
| <b>Mabandla, Brigitte</b> | <b>Taft, Noël</b>           |
| <b>Maharaj, Mac</b>       | <b>Van der Merwe, Fanie</b> |
| <b>Mbeki, Thabo</b>       | <b>Verwoerd, Melanie</b>    |
| <b>Meyer, Roelof</b>      | <b>Viljoen, Constand</b>    |
| <b>Moosa, Valli</b>       | <b>Zondo, Louisa</b>        |
| <b>Mti, Linda</b>         |                             |

**Glossary**

- Cabinet** – The executive arm of government responsible for the security of the state, budget and the implementations of the policies of the ruling party through the many state departments. It is made up of ministers who head one or more ministries.
- Constituent Assembly** – Constitutional body that is convened to draw the Constitution of a country.
- Constitution** – The fundamental law, that defines the character of a country's system of government, it enshrines the basic principles that governs the rights of its citizens and government. The Constitution clearly states the structure and responsibility of the government and its relations to its citizens and the judiciary. It describing the organisation of the government and the role of parliament and functions of different levels of government departments; and by prescribing the extent and manner of the exercise of its sovereign powers.
- Democracy** – A system of government which allows all citizens to elect or be elected through a open and transparent and fair elections to serve in all the different levels of government.
- Governance** – The act of governing a county.
- Judiciary** – The word used to describe the legal system ie the courts of law, the prosecuting authorities and the management of the legal system.
- Legislature, Parliament** – The body made up of elected representatives, ie members of Parliament (MPs) where laws are tabled and passed and which also acts as an oversight body that monitors the functions of the executive or cabinet and government departments. or



**Political Parties and number of people that participated in drafting of the Constitution.**

Party	No. of Members	Leader
African National Congress (ANC)	312	Nelson Mandela
National Party (NP)	99	F.W. de Klerk
Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)	48	Mangosuthu Buthelezi
Freedom Front (FF)	14	Constand Viljoen
Democratic Party (DP)	10	Tony Leon
Pan Africanist Congress (PAC)	5	Clarence Makwetu
African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)	2	Kenneth Meshoe



**ANC supporter, Cape Town**



**Nelson Mandela congratulates the new President Thabo Mbeki, 1999**

**Patricia de Lille (1951-)**



In 1974 she became involved in trade union politics and was a member of the SACWU. She started off as a shop steward and soon was SACWU's regional secretary. She then went on to the NEC of SACWU and was also the regional chairperson of the NACTU in the Western Cape.

Politically NACTU was to the PAC what the COSATU is to the ANC. In 1989, she was elected into the NEC of the PAM, a wing of the PAC. In 1990 she was appointed as Foreign Secretary and Relief and Aid Secretary of the party. During the CODESA negotiations, Patricia led the PAC delegation, and was one of the constitution drafters. Between 1994 and 1999, she was the Chairperson of the Transport Committee and the Chief Whip for the PAC in Parliament. She resigned from the PAC and formed a new opposition party, Independent Democrats (ID) and is the ID's leader in Parliament.

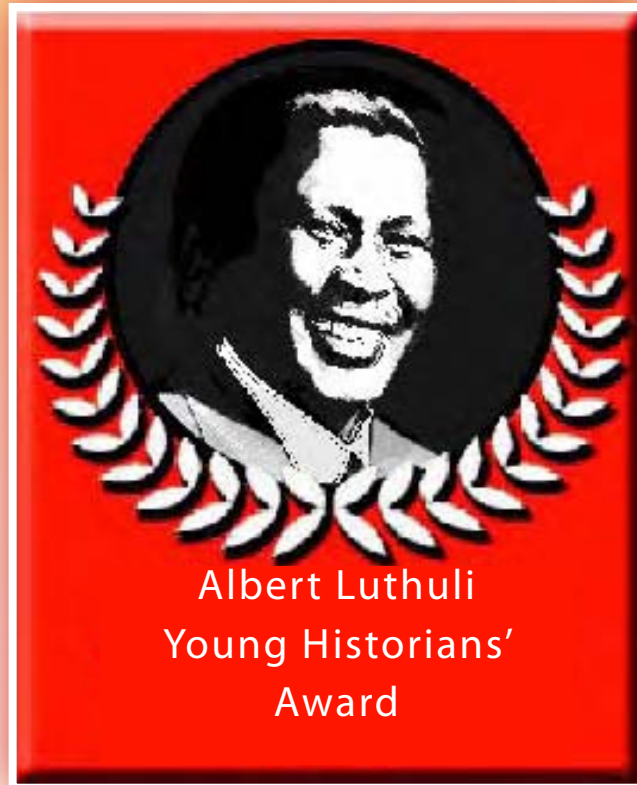


**Classroom activities**

Learning Outcome: The learner will be expected to have an informed understanding of key concepts as ways of analysing the past. They will be expected to understand and explain the dynamics of change in the context of power relations operating in societies. They will also be expected to compare and contrast points of view/perspectives of the past and draw their own conclusions based on evidence.

1. What is a Constitution?
2. Why do we need a Constitution?
3. Why was it necessary to have the South African Constitution drafted after the 1994 election?
4. What it is a tricameral parliament?
5. What is a policy of separate development and how does it constitute to human rights infringements.
6. What is it that the new Constitution has brought about in the new South Africa?
7. How do you as learner understand the basics fundamental human rights and do you believe that the Constitution is being upheld by the government and Parliament?
8. What's your position on the death penalty? Do you think it was right that the Constitutional Court declared it unconstitutional?





## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# Nkosi Albert Luthuli Young Historians' Award

The Department of Education, in partnership with South African History Online, is inviting all secondary schools to participate in the National Schools' Oral History Competition, the Nkosi Albert Luthuli Young Historians' Award that was inaugurated in 2005. This competition will form part of the Department's contribution to the commemoration of the anniversaries of significant historical events in 2006.

It is also part of the Department's ongoing initiative to encourage all learners to develop an understanding, not only of the broad history of South Africa, but also of the richness of the histories of their local communities. It is also an opportunity for young learners to gain experience in developing important research skills.

The competition is open to all learners from Grade 8 to Grade 12 and all history educators in secondary schools.

### Competition for Learners

Learners will be required to research and prepare a presentation or a documentary film or video on one of the following topics:

*A woman (either a parent, teacher or other member of the local community) who has played an important role in the women's movement for equality*

### Chief Albert John Luthuli (1898 – 1967)



President-General of the ANC from December 1952 until his death in 1967, Christian and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1960, Luthuli was the most widely known and respected African leader of his era. Over the course of his political career his attitudes grew progressively more militant. His public support for the 1952 Defiance Campaign cost him his chieftainship. In response, Luthuli issued *The Road to Freedom is via the Cross*, his famous statement of his principles a belief in non-violence, a conviction that apartheid degrades.

He was tried for treason and because of his banning he was unable to attend the 1955 Congress of the People. A speech of his was however read out to an appreciative multitude. After the 1960 Sharpeville emergency Luthuli publicly burnt his pass in Pretoria as part of a defiance campaign.

Chief Luthuli was banned and restricted to Grootvlei on the Kwazulu-Natal North Coast in 1960. He died after sustaining serious injuries when he was knocked down by a train while crossing a railway bridge.



or

*An individual/individuals in the local community who participated in the Youth Uprisings of 1976*

or

*An individual in the local community who contributed to the transformation of their community*

**Please note the following:**

1. **The project must be based on oral history research.**
2. **Learners should be assisted in their choice of person/persons to be interviewed. Learners should be strongly guided to choose a person/persons from their local community.**
3. **Adjudication will be weighted in terms of the quality of research, rather than the mode of presentation.**
4. **The presentation may be in any of the official languages.**

**CRITERIA**

1. The learner will be expected to do TWO things:
  - Give an oral presentation or video documentary of his/her oral research to a panel of adjudicators. **This may be in any of the official languages.** It is not intended to be a dramatic presentation nor poetry.
  - Prepare a portfolio in written form. The portfolio must include the following: Portfolios must show evidence of research. They should interview a member or members of the community and should be able to show evidence of the interviews, for example letters to interviewees, transcripts of interviews or tape recordings including the lists of questions posed to the person that they interviewed and their responses – either in written form or on a tape recording. **Interviews may be conducted and recorded in any of the official languages.**

Portfolios must also show evidence of reflection and should give attention to the following:

- Learners should make it clear why they chose the person, show a clear understanding of the historical context in which the individual worked and how the information from the interview relates to the historical context or how it helps us to understand events from a personal perspective.
- Learners should include a personal reflection on what they have learnt about the possibilities for individuals to bring about change in society, and what they have learnt personally from carrying out the oral history research and the value of oral history research in helping us to understand our history/past.
- Learners must acknowledge all sources used in their portfolios. Bibliographies should be included. Plagiarism will be penalised.

**Assessment criteria for oral history research projects (adapted from NCS FET HISTORY Subject Assessment Guidelines)**

**Scope of the oral history project**

Oral history projects in the FET have a number of components:

- key question to focus the research;
- background research to set the interviews in context;
- the interviews and transcription of the interviews;
- a written discussion about how the information in the interviews relates to the period and
- an evaluation of the interviews as sources about the past.
- Self-reflection at the end: what has doing this project meant to me [the learner] in terms of personal growth and knowledge and understanding of the period.



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**N.B. Core assessment Criteria for research section: use the criteria for each grade as outlined for the research assignment. (Criteria might be added to make the core criteria more appropriate for specific tasks.)**

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CRITERION 1 – FORMULATE QUESTIONS FOR THE PROJECT

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CRITERION 2 – IDENTIFY AND ACCESS A VARIETY OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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CRITERION 3 – KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE PERIOD

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CRITERION 4 – HISTORICAL ENQUIRY AND COMMUNICATION

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CRITERION 5 – PRESENTATION

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### Criteria for assessing an oral history project

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#### Criterion 1 – Interview questions

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- The questions were open-ended
  - The questions were appropriate and elicited information relevant to the overall question
  - There were sufficient questions
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#### Criterion 2 – Interviewee

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- Person/s interviewed was/were appropriate
  - The biographical details of the interviewee/s was/were given
- 

#### Criterion 3 – Preparation and planning

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- There is evidence of careful preparation for the interviews
  - There is evidence of project planning
  - All preparation and planning notes are included in the project
- 

#### Criterion 4 – Presentation of the information from the interviews

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- The interviewee/s was/were placed into historical context.
  - The context for understanding the interview/s was given
  - The information from the interviews was placed in historical context
  - The information from the interviews was accurately transcribed (if a tape recorder was used)
  - The information from the interviews was analysed and organised coherently, showing different points of view if appropriate.
- 

#### Criterion 5 – Self reflection

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Comments show depth of thought about the process and the product.

The presentation of the project to the class was clear and effective.

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## Competition for Educators

Educators from secondary schools entering the competition will be required to develop a work plan on how they planned and set up the oral history project in the classroom.

Each educator will be required to give a presentation of his/her portfolio to a panel of adjudicators and be prepared for a panel discussion on his/her portfolio.

Educators should include the following in a portfolio for the competition:

- How the oral history project was introduced in the classroom;
- What explanation was given to learners about choosing and approaching possible interviewees, preparing for and conducting interviews and using the interview as evidence to reach conclusions about the contribution of that individual;
- What interventions the educator made in assisting learners to complete the project.
- What the teacher felt the learners gained from doing an oral history investigation

## Adjudication

Adjudication will take place at a provincial level in August /September 2006 and at a national level in September/October 2006 at a national event.

Panels of adjudicators comprising historians and heritage workers will be appointed for the provincial and national adjudications.

## The National Event

**Ten learners** from secondary schools in all provinces will be selected as the *Nkosi Albert Luthuli Young Historians* to represent the province at a national event at the University of Fort Hare in September/October 2006. Learners will be expected to give an oral presentation of their research and have a hard copy of their research essay available for adjudicators.

**Two educators** from each province will be selected to the national event at the University of Fort Hare in September 2006. Educators will be expected to present their work plans to a panel of adjudicators.



**2005 Chief Albert Luthuli National Competition Students finalist from each Province together with workshop co-ordinators Omar Badsha and Bridget Thompson, Robben Island Cape Town**



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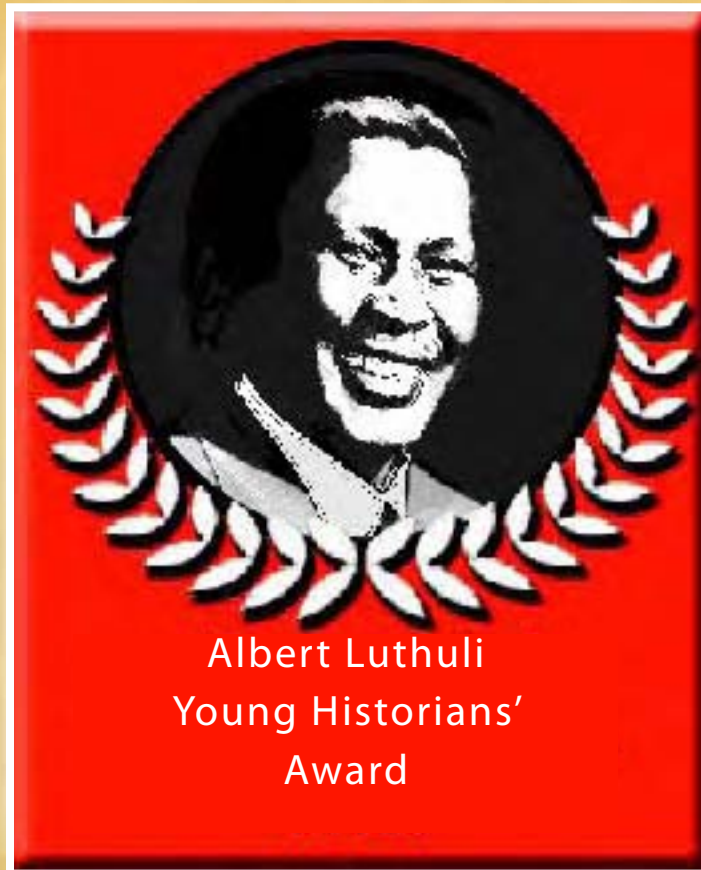
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# Annual National Oral History Competition



## Honouring the Memory of All

“The task is not finished. South Africa is not yet a home for all her sons and daughters. Such a home we wish to ensure. From the beginning our history has been one of ascending unities, the breaking of tribal, racial and creedal barriers. The past cannot hope to have a life sustained by itself, wrenched from the whole. There remains before us the building of a new land, a home for men who are black, white, and brown, from the ruins of the old narrow groups, a synthesis of the rich cultural strains which we have inherited. There remains to be achieved our integration with the rest of our continent. Somewhere ahead there beckons a civilisation, a culture, which will take its place in the parade of God’s history beside other great human syntheses, Chinese, Egyptian, Jewish, European. It will not necessarily be all black, but it will be African ”

Chief *Albert Luthuli. Let My People Go 1962*

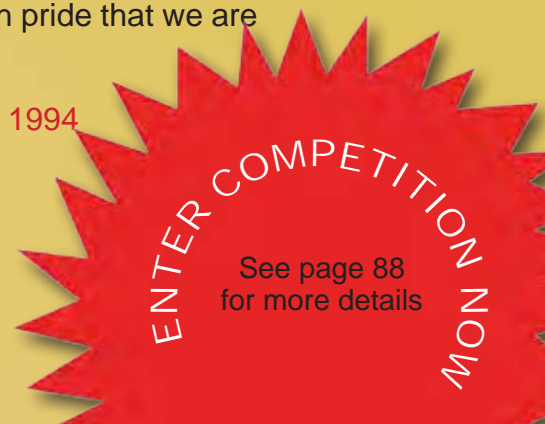
“The time will come when our nation will honour the memory of all the sons, the daughters, the mothers, the fathers, and the children who, by their thoughts and deeds, gave us the right to assert with pride that we are South Africans.”

President Nelson Mandela, First address to Parliament, 1994



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for more details