

SOUTH AFRICAN DILEMMAS

IN THE

TWENTIETH CENTURY

A Unit of Study for Grades 9-12

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

APPROACH AND RATIONALE

S*outh African Dilemmas in the Twentieth Century* is one of over 60 National Center for History in the Schools teaching units that are the fruit of collaborations between history professors and experienced teachers of both United States and World History. The units represent specific dramatic episodes in history from which you and your students can pause to delve into the deeper meanings of selected landmark events and explore their wider context in the great historical narrative.

By studying a crucial episode in history, the student becomes aware that choices had to be made by real human beings, that those decisions were the result of specific factors, and that they set in motion a series of historical consequences. We have selected dramatic moments that best bring alive that decision-making process. We hope that through this approach, your students will realize that history is an ongoing, open-ended process, and that the decisions they make today create the conditions of tomorrow's history.

Our teaching units are based on primary sources, taken from documents, artifacts, journals, diaries, newspapers and literature from the period under study. What we hope to achieve using primary source documents in these lessons is to remove the distance that students feel from historical events and to connect them more intimately with the past. In this way we hope to recreate for your students a sense of "being there," a sense of seeing history through the eyes of the very people who were making decisions. This will help your students develop historical empathy, to realize that history is not an impersonal process divorced from real people like themselves. At the same time, by analyzing primary sources, students will actually practice the historian's craft, discovering for themselves how to analyze evidence, establish a valid interpretation and construct a coherent narrative in which all the relevant factors play a part.

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

Within this unit, you will find: Teaching Background Materials, including Unit Overview, Unit Context, Correlation to the National Standards for History Unit Objectives, Introduction to *South African Dilemmas in the Twentieth Century*; A Dramatic Moment; and Lesson Plans with Student Resources. This unit, as we have said above, focuses on certain key moments in time and should be used as a supplement to your customary course materials. Although these lessons are recommended for use by high school students, they can be adapted for other grade levels.

The Teacher Background section should provide you with a good overview of the entire unit and with the historical information and context necessary to link the specific Dramatic Moment to the larger historical narrative. You may consult it for your

Introduction

own use, and you may choose to share it with students if they are of a sufficient grade level to understand the materials.

The Lesson Plans include a variety of ideas and approaches for the teacher which can be elaborated upon or cut as you see the need. These lesson plans contain student resources which accompany each lesson. The resources consist of primary source documents, any handouts or student background materials, and a bibliography.

In our series of teaching units, each collection can be taught in several ways. You can teach all of the lessons offered on any given topic, or you can select and adapt the ones that best support your particular course needs. We have not attempted to be comprehensive or prescriptive in our offerings, but rather to give you an array of enticing possibilities for in-depth study, at varying grade levels. We hope that you will find the lesson plans exciting and stimulating for your classes. We also hope that your students will never again see history as a boring sweep of inevitable facts and meaningless dates but rather as an endless treasure of real life stories and an exercise in analysis and reconstruction.

TEACHER BACKGROUND MATERIALS

I. UNIT OVERVIEW

South Africans of all colors have faced many dilemmas in the twentieth century. Whites have faced predicaments over how to reconcile the European ethnic groups—Afrikaner-speaking and English-speaking—in the wake of the South African War of 1899–1902; how to maintain cheap labor supplies for mines and industries; how, as a racial minority, to preserve white supremacy; and how to share power with the black majority without sacrificing white privilege. The solution of the white government to these various quandaries—segregation and apartheid (apartness)—imposed its own cruel dilemmas for blacks, whose struggle to resist racial oppression paved the way for the establishment of nonracial democracy in 1994.

An understanding of apartheid's creation, growth, and eventual demise will deepen students' grasp of this oppressive system and serve as a reminder to protect the freedoms we have gained. Important to this understanding is an ability both to examine the origins of racist ideas and to analyze the importance of individuals who led the struggle for democratic, economic and social reform in South Africa. The role of individuals acting on their beliefs and consciences was critical to the successful abolition of apartheid. Finally, students will examine how the end of apartheid and the creation of a society moving towards a nonracial democracy brought with it many problems that are still a source of contention in South Africa today.

Our goal in writing this teaching unit is to portray the complexity of the South African past. We want middle and high school students to understand that that country's history is not simply the story of white racial oppression or of black heroic resistance. Rather, it reveals many layers of conflict, ambiguity, tragedy, and hope.

II. UNIT CONTEXT

This unit may be taught with a unit on African decolonization. It can also serve as a supplement to commonly taught topics in twentieth-century world history including units focusing on the struggle for human rights and the rising tide of democracy. It may also be used for comparative study in an American history unit dealing with the civil rights movement.

III. CORRELATION TO THE NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

South African Dilemmas in the Twentieth Century provides teaching materials that address the National Standards for History, Basic Edition (National Center for History in the Schools, UCLA, 1996), **World History, Era 9**, "The 20th Century Since 1945: Promises and Paradoxes." Lessons specifically address **Standard 2C** on how liberal democracy, market economies, and human rights movements have reshaped political and social life and **Standard 3A** on major global trends since World War II. This unit may also be useful in addressing **Era 7**, "An Age of Revolutions," **Standard 5B** on the causes and consequences of European settler colonization in the 19th century.

IV. UNIT OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze the growth and development of South Africa through the 20th century.
2. To examine how ideas about race, culture, and nation shaped apartheid and subsequent South African history.
3. To analyze the political and legal means used by the advocates of apartheid to maintain this rigid system of racial segregation.
4. To evaluate the methods used by different resistance groups in South Africa to abolish apartheid and to create a nonracial democracy in its place.
5. To study and compare various kinds of historical evidence, analyzing it for reliability and significance.

V. LESSON PLANS

1. Events Leading to Apartheid in South Africa.
2. The Development of Afrikaner Consciousness: Moral and Ethical Justifications for Apartheid.
3. The Rise of African Militancy Against Apartheid.
4. Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement.
5. States of Emergency
6. Nelson Mandela and the New South Africa.

VI. INTRODUCTORY AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Ask students what they know about apartheid in South Africa. If students are unfamiliar with the term, you may wish to use the term 'segregation' and talk about this American legal phenomenon as the starting point for discussion. Ask students to brainstorm and list ideas on the blackboard: What is apartheid (segregation)? How does it work? What means might a government use to get people to follow the rules in such a system? How might these rules be changed? (Some possibilities to look for: laws strictly enforced by police and military, change brought about through civil disobedience or armed revolt).
2. Share with the class the **Dramatic Moment**, an excerpt from Mark Mathabane's experiences growing up in apartheid South Africa narrated in the book *Kaffir Boy*. Guide a discussion of the reading. What means did the police use to control people? Focus on the themes of police violence, the climate of fear and insecurity, and living conditions. Tie the discussion back to the brainstorm done earlier.
3. A summative assessment exercise for the whole unit might include staging a mock trial of apartheid. Participants are assigned the following roles: prosecutor, defense attorney, judge, members of jury, and witnesses. After completing the unit and doing adequate research, participants put "Apartheid on Trial."

VII. HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO *SOUTH AFRICAN DILEMMAS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY*

When the Dutch East India Company established a refreshment station at Cape Town in 1652, the first European settlement in South Africa, whites encountered Khoisan (Khoikhoi—herders; San—hunter-gatherers) who had inhabited the region for thousands of years. By 1657, some of these Europeans settled at the Cape, occupying the traditional lands of the Khoikhoi and confiscating their cattle. The ensuing warfare weakened indigenous resistance, transforming many Khoikhoi into menial laborers for white farmers and pushing the San into the dry interior. Meanwhile, the growing European settler population (a mixture of Dutch, German, and French, coalescing as "Afrikaners" or "Boers") imported slaves from Asia and East Africa. Whites came to depend on blacks for all forms of unskilled and coercive labor. Thus, a distinct racial hierarchy of white over black was established early in modern South African history.

Nonetheless, white racial assumptions received a jolt in the late 1700s when Europeans encountered the more populous and organized Bantu-speaking farmers (Xhosa) who inhabited the eastern Cape frontier. North of the Xhosa, an even more powerful Bantu-speaking people, the Zulu, organized a centralized kingdom in the second decade of the 1800s under the leadership of Shaka. By the early 1800s, competition be-

Teacher Background Materials

tween white farmers and Xhosa over the eastern Cape's fertile *zuurveld* region resulted in a military stalemate. At precisely this time (1806), the British, locked in competition with Napoleon's French Empire for global military supremacy, occupied the Cape Colony. The British presence shifted the military balance of power in favor of the white communities in the eastern Cape frontier, leading to the dissolution of the Xhosa chiefdoms. Britain also instituted new legislation to govern the various peoples in South Africa, acts that included the abolition of the slave trade (1807) and slavery itself (1834). Laws such as these that interfered with European labor supplies and implied racial "leveling" provoked many Afrikaners to leave the Cape Colony. Beginning in the mid-1830s, this Afrikaner exodus to the highveld, known as the Great Trek, expanded the zone of intergroup conflict from the eastern Cape into the South African interior.

The immediate result of the Great Trek was the foundation of new Afrikaner republics (Transvaal and Orange Free State) in 1852 and 1854, a state-making process facilitated by the demographic chaos of the *mfecane*. The *mfecane* (or *difaqane*) on the *highveld* interior delineates an African time of troubles ignited by the emergence of Shaka's Zulu kingdom. Shaka's conquests contributed to the famine, migration, and human suffering that affected a large portion of southeastern Africa in the 1820s and 1830s. Another immediate legacy of the *mfecane/difaqane* was the formation of Lesotho ("Basutoland") under the leadership of Moshoeshe. In 1843, Britain annexed the Natal Colony and continued to crush African resistance, most strikingly in the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. Britain's interests in South Africa peaked in the latter third of the nineteenth century with the discovery of diamonds (1867) and gold (1887). This mineral revolution provides the context for the outbreak of the South African ("Boer") War (1899-1902), in which troops from throughout the British Empire defeated the defenders of the Afrikaner republics. Despite Britain's victory, the constitutional settlement, resulting in the independent Union of South Africa in 1910, excluded the black majority from the national political process.

Blacks, who had fought on both sides during the South African War, expressed outrage. In protest they formed in 1912 the South African Native National Congress (later known as the African National Congress, or ANC). Excluded from national politics, the ANC could not block the passage of the Natives' Land Act of 1913, which designated African reserves, placed severe restrictions on African land ownership elsewhere, and outlawed sharecropping in the Orange Free State. Policies soon followed that sanctioned urban segregation and job reservation. Such laws, which served to maintain a cheap and manageable black labor force, were also constructed to resolve lingering ethnic and class tensions among whites. Ethnic hostility between Afrikaners and British became particularly acute during World War I, as many Boers supported Germany. After the war, class conflict erupted in the Rand Rebellion of 1922. This European miner's strike, suppressed brutally by the Smuts' government, gave rise to a labor-nationalist coalition in 1924 that imposed additional legal restrictions on Africans.

Despite these external constraints, coupled with crippling internal divisions, blacks

adapted and resisted during the interwar years. The Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU), which formed between 1919 and 1928, represented one of the most impressive efforts of African mobilization at this time. By the 1930s the ICU collapsed under the weight of corruption, mismanagement, and government repression. Despite this, the African urban working class experienced unprecedented growth during the next two decades, buoyed especially by economic expansion during World War II. The interwar period also witnessed the resurgence of Afrikaner nationalism. In 1943 Daniel Malan founded the Purified National Party, a forerunner of the National Party. Supported by the Broederbond (Brotherhood), a secret society of the Afrikaner intellectual elite, the Purified National Party stressed Afrikaner solidarity. It coordinated the centennial celebrations of the Great Trek in 1938, which culminated in the laying of the foundation stone of the Voortrekker Monument near Pretoria. These expressions of Afrikaner nationalism culminated in the National Party's stunning election victory in 1948. The Nationalists played on the fears of many whites over the state of race relations in South Africa, especially the issue of preserving white supremacy in the changing urban landscape. The National Party seemed to offer a plausible solution—the doctrine of apartheid (apartness), which promised a more systematic approach to segregation and a more modern version of racial domination.

The era of apartheid proceeded through three phases: 1) classical white supremacy (1948-1960); 2) separate development (1961-1976); and 3) multiracial co-option (1977-1989). The first phase of apartheid witnessed the passage of the Population Registration Act (1950), which classified people according to race, and the Group Areas Act (1950), which required specific "racial" groups to reside in racially zoned areas. In addition, the Nationalists enacted security legislation that vastly empowered the state to arrest and detain individuals and organizations. In one of the government's most injurious actions, the so-called Bantu Education Act of 1953, the delivery of separate and purposefully inferior education for blacks became the state's mission and prerogative. Hendrik Verwoerd, who became Prime Minister of South Africa between 1958 and 1966, conceived many of the laws of the first phase of apartheid.

The second phase of apartheid, separate development, matured under Prime Minister B. J. Vorster, who served from 1966 to 1978. During this era, the South African government sought to transform the African reserves ("Bantustans" or "Homelands") into self-governing states. This farcical design, the so-called "Homeland" policy, theoretically set aside 13% of fragmented bits of South African land as reserves for three-fourths of the country's total population. The policy bore a tragic face because approximately four million blacks were forcibly relocated to poverty-stricken "Homelands" between 1960 and 1990. In effect, these areas constituted reservoirs of cheap labor as well as dumping grounds for "superfluous" people.

The Soweto riots of 1976, a reaction to "Bantu" education, prompted a transition to the third and final phase of apartheid, multiracial co-option. The principal leader during this phase, Prime Minister and later State President P. W. Botha, engineered a series of political and economic reforms, including the adoption of a "power-sharing" constitu-

Teacher Background Materials

tion in 1984. The most immediate effect of these reforms was to alienate the black majority and provoke a widespread struggle to end apartheid. Resistance to the system has a long history. During the 1950s, the ANC revived under a new generation of leaders, including Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and Oliver Tambo. In 1955 the new ANC leadership organized civil disobedience campaigns and championed the Freedom Charter. In 1959, the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) split from the ANC, adopting a black consciousness strategy. In 1960 the PAC organized an anti-pass law campaign that was shattered by South African police at Sharpeville. Following the Sharpeville massacre, the government banned the ANC, PAC, and South African Communist Party (SACP). In response, these organizations went underground, launching guerrilla warfare against the state. In 1963-1964, Mandela and other prominent ANC and PAC leaders were arrested, tried for treason, and sentenced to life imprisonment. Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) filled the political vacuum at home. Tensions stemming from the Soweto riots, combined with the popularity of BCM, marked Biko as a threat to internal security. Hence, Biko was arrested for his activities and murdered in prison in 1977.

Anti-apartheid resistance persisted and broadened during the 1980s, most notably with the formation of the United Democratic Front in 1983. Under Botha, the government responded with massive repression within the country and a campaign of destabilization throughout the region. A National Security Management System utilized surveillance and coercion to smother the opposition. By the end of the 1980s however, South Africa had reached a state of violent equilibrium—a government that could not be overthrown and a spirit of mass resistance that could not be crushed. In addition, the costs of administering apartheid, including the burden of international sanctions, had become prohibitive. In this context Botha resigned in 1989 and was replaced by F. W. de Klerk. In early 1990, de Klerk called for the unbanning of the ANC and the release of Mandela. Multi-party negotiations ensued to establish a nonracial democracy based on the principle of one person, one vote. Despite these promising measures, violence escalated between supporters of the ANC and the followers of Inkatha, a Zulu nationalist organization. Nonetheless, in late 1993 the negotiating parties endorsed an interim constitution. Nationwide elections followed in April 1994, resulting in an ANC victory. Nelson Mandela was sworn in as president and formed a Government of National Unity. Mandela's regime witnessed the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1996–1998), designed to promote national harmony and to engage all South Africans in an honest reappraisal of their past. Whether or not the work of the Commission bears fruit in the twenty-first century, remains to be seen.

DRAMATIC MOMENT

POLICE RAID

That night we went to sleep with the rumors of an imminent police raid hanging over the neighbourhood like a dark cloud.

"We will have to leave before daybreak," I heard my mother say to my father as we prepared to go to sleep. "That way when the raid comes we won't be here." Upon hearing that Florah and I tensed and grew frightened. My mother calmed us.

"Don't believe the rumors, woman," my father said with an air of authority. "There won't be any raid. Weren't the police here just today? People are just scared. They are always scared. They always will be scared."

"But everybody says they're coming," my mother insisted; "It's the start of Operation Clean-up Month, remember?"

"Woman," my father said sternly, "I tell you there won't be any raid. It's just another false rumor."

But a raid was coming. A little after midnight, while everybody was sound asleep and snoring and dreaming, the police invaded the neighbourhood.

"OPEN UP!" Fists banged at the kitchen door. "IT'S PERI-URBAN!"

For a minute I thought I was dreaming because from outside there suddenly erupted the same volcano of noise of a day ago. Dogs barked. People shrieked and shouted and ran. Sirens screamed. Children screamed. Doors and windows smashed. Feet clumped. I tossed and turned as if in a nightmare, but the persistent pounding and kicking at the door, and the muffled voices coming from the bedroom convinced me otherwise.

"OPEN UP OR WE'LL BREAK IT DOWN!" demanded the police more loudly.

Source: Reprinted from *Kaffir Boy*, Mark Mathabane. (New York: New American Library, 1986), pp. 15-18.

LESSON ONE

EVENTS LEADING TO APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA

A. OBJECTIVES

1. Students analyze change over time in South Africa.
2. Students analyze how geography influences history.
3. Students evaluate the role of legislation in creating the setting for apartheid.

B. LESSON ACTIVITIES

1. As the teacher presents an overview of South African history using the **Table of Dates (Student Handout 1)**, students analyze maps showing the country's history. **Maps 1, 2, and 3 (Student Handouts 2, 3, and 4)** may be used as overhead transparencies.
2. Have students read Sol Plaatje's account of the effect of the Native Land Act of 1913 (**Document A**) on the indigenous people.
3. Have students write a letter to the editor protesting the Native Land Act and the conditions it brought on. Use Plaatje's account as a source.

C. TEACHER BACKGROUND MATERIAL

By 1910, when the Union of South Africa was formed, the country had been conquered by whites. Many Bantu-speaking Africans practiced farming in reserves or on land they bought from whites. Over time, however, laws limiting land ownership became more restrictive. The most important of these laws was the Natives Land Act of 1913, prohibiting the purchase or leasing of land outside of the reserves. In addition, the law reduced all Africans in white owned rural areas to tenant or wage laborers. This caused great hardships to black Africans, particularly in the Orange Free State. In his book *Native Life in South Africa*, Sol Plaatje, the first secretary of the African National Congress, described the plight of African sharecroppers who had been forced from their farms as a result of the Natives Land Act.

