

# South africa 1945- 1994 the end of apartheid



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

1) Select and explain the most important turning points in Nelson Mandela's life.

Nelson Mandela had experienced many turning points in his life, some more important and visible than others.

Nelson Mandela was born on 18 July 1918 at Qunu near Umtata, the capital village of the Transkei 'reserve'. As one of the royal family of the Thembu, his upbringing was traditional and a sense of responsibility was bred in him. He attended mission school where he had to wear his father's cast-off clothes, with shortened sleeves and trousers. Nelson Mandela did not care that he was a laughing stock, as he was so keen to learn.

He moved to Johannesburg in 1937 and experienced what many black people at the time were experiencing - hardship. This was definitely a major turning point for Mandela. Being from quite a wealthy family Mandela was originally protected from poverty however at the age of 19, wanting to study law and escape from an arranged marriage, he escaped to Johannesburg.

This was an important turning point for him because the moment he arrived in Johannesburg, he realised what the black people of South Africa were really experiencing in their own country. If he had not had gone to Johannesburg he may not have been exposed to these harsh realities but just have heard about them. The fact that he saw them most likely encouraged him to take further action.

Mandela's course at University was difficult and he lacked proper study facilities. One of the people he worked with urged him to concentrate on

becoming a good lawyer and to avoid politics but Mandela could not agree to this and was attracted to the African National Congress (ANC). In 1942, after a period of decline, the ANC had lost members who broke away to form the African Democratic Party. Mandela thought this was wrong, and thought their duty was to stay in the ANC and to prove a historic team as they worked with other young people to activate Congress.

Mandela's joining of the ANC was another major turning point in his life and was also one of the first steps in his political career he took. Joining the ANC helped Mandela as he became well-known, as well as gaining power and respect, which is just what he needed if he wanted to make something to happen. The formation of the Youth League was to galvanize the ANC and their main aim was true democracy. This is what 'boosted' Mandela as it also enabled him to become actively involved in the fight against apartheid.

When Mandela's treason trial collapsed, Nelson grew more militant, and helped to launch a new branch off the ANC named Unkhonto we Sizwe, he planned to continue the struggle for the ANC's Campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws by force. Nelson was the chief and had to travel around secretly keeping ahead of those he knew were trying to arrest him. He underwent military training in different countries and made many personal friendships that influenced him to be tough. However, whilst in prison for leaving the country illegally, plans were found which outlined a strategy for guerrilla warfare in South Africa. This was a great turning point in Mandela's life; instead of fighting peacefully, he was building an army. If he hadn't turned to violence, he would not have been put in jail for life.

The next major turning point was when Mandela was actually in prison.

Whilst in prison, the whole of Africa knew his name. Not only did this give the ANC world recognition but the reputation on Mandela grew and he continued to be a beacon of hope for his people who carried on the struggle against Apartheid in his absence. Mandela was very self disciplined and was able to effectively make himself the master of his own prison, managing to bend even the most brutal wardens to his will, with his intelligence and charm. In prison, Nelson did not lose his determination. If the guards told them to run, he insisted on walking. Nelsons character changed during his imprisonment, he became less militant, but was consistent, and when he was released in February 1990 he was still fighting for the black Africans freedom.

The last important turning point of his life was his release from prison in 1990 and onwards. Once and after released, he continued his efforts for freedom, winning the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize leading on to become President of South Africa in 1994. Becoming president showed the abolition of the minority rule demonstrating that blacks and whites were now equal.

I think these are the most important turning points for Mandela, and in each one an outcome was achieved. Mandela knew what he wanted for his outcome; true democracy. This would be hard to achieve as it is changing the way of life for a whole country but knowing that Mandela achieved his long hoped for outcome shows he is a determined and strong-minded man.

2) Choose two from the following list of factors which contributed to the ending of white minority rule in South Africa.

There were many factors which contributed to the ending of apartheid, however some were more effective than others hence they helped to end apartheid sooner. Some of the factors that could have facilitated the ending of the white minority rule are: external pressures, Nelson Mandela, pressure from black protest within South Africa, the actions of De Klerk and the collapse of Communist rule in the Soviet Union.

In my opinion the two main factors which contributed to the ending of apartheid in South Africa were external pressures and the actions of De Klerk.

External pressures played a very important part in bringing about the end of apartheid. It was the mid 80's when sanctions began to take effect. They were put in place by the rest of the world in hope to see the ending of apartheid. Sanctions had a fairly big impact until the whites of South Africa started losing the power they had gained. To regain power they took even more from the blacks. The blacks had the biggest population but the smallest portion of land. The food was stolen from the crops that they grew, their houses were ransacked every other week or so.

Financial sanctions had a much greater impact on the South African economy than the political sanctions imposed. Financial sanctions involved the withdrawal of loans, a major prop for the South African economy. The most damages were caused when the Chase Manhattan Bank withdrew from South Africa. This caused the South African stock market to plummet and the rand to drop significantly in value.

However, it is ironic that the withdrawal helped to bring about the end of apartheid as the withdrawal was not due to disapproval of apartheid. It was in fact because South Africa was seen as a risky nation to invest in. The withdrawal of funds had an immediate effect. The South African government was forced to declare bankruptcy. The countries debts were also rescheduled causing South Africa to be ignored economically, financially and diplomatically.

As a result of the sanctions, the government no longer had the money to support PW Botha's plans for 'Total Reform'. The sanctions were also having an effect on the morale of white South Africans. They felt disliked throughout the world; they wanted their national pride restored. The sanctions meant that Pretoria had less money to spend on keeping the whites in their luxurious lifestyles. Economic sanctions seemed to show a possible end to the future of apartheid.

Sporting sanctions were put in place. South Africans loved their sports so the world hoped that they would stop apartheid by banning them from the Commonwealth Games, Olympics and Cricket World Cup. However it didn't work as the blacks were treated the same.

These restrictions caused white South Africans to realise just how isolated they had become due to apartheid. South Africa and the rest of the world had very different opinions on how blacks should be treated. South Africa believed that the whites were far superior to the blacks. The rest of the world disagreed, they believed in equal opportunities for everyone but in the end

only a few extremists stayed true to the idea of minority rule and white supremacy.

External pressure was a big problem for South Africa. Although South Africa believed they could keep fighting the rest of the world, they eventually found out otherwise. The sport and trade sanctions hit South Africa hard. The trade sanctions hit the cash flow throughout the country, and the sport sanctions just hurt, as South Africans loved their sports. Over all I feel that the sanctions and other political action taken by the rest of the world was a good move as it was degrading the population of the whites in South Africa and the country as a whole which is something they did not want. Even though it hit the blacks hard to start with it helped them in the long run, with giving them their rights and freedom.

F. W. De Klerk also took actions to help with the ending of petty apartheid. He was born in 1930 as the son of a leading National Party politician he was a lifelong National Party member and a strong believer in racial separation. He did not seem like someone who could change much too many however this was soon to be proved wrong.

In August 1989, Botha resigned from President and F.W. De Klerk took over. De Klerk was different from Botha; he was an Afrikaner, did not believe in the Minority rule and realised that new policies were needed so started to take action. At the General Election in September 1989, he promised that apartheid would be reformed. Just days later, Cape Town had its biggest anti-apartheid march in 30 years.

De Klerk could have banned it but he let it go ahead. In October 1989, De Klerk released Walter Sisulu and some other black prisoners. He began to demolish petty apartheid. He announced that the Separate Amenities Act would be repealed; this law had segregated public places such as parks. The beaches were now also open to people of all races. In December, De Klerk met Mandela, who asked him to lift the ban on the ANC. The cabinet agreed to do this probably because they may have thought that the ANC didn't offer a major threat at the time.

On February 2nd, De Klerk told parliament that:

\*All bans on ANC and PAC were ended including bans on over 30 other organisations.

\*Political prisoners who had not committed violent crimes would be released.

\*Newspapers could report events freely.

The death sentence would be stopped.

\*Nelson Mandela and his fellow prisoners would be released without conditions.

De Klerk's actions resulted in some great outcomes for most in South Africa. In October 1990, Separate Amenities Act was repealed and in June 1991 the Group Areas Act was repealed. The National Party also now allowed people of all races to become members. There were also many international reactions which occurred after De Klerk took actions towards the abolition of apartheid. In April 1990, the EC stopped sanctions and in July 1991 the USA



stopped sanctions. Cricket boycott ended and South Africa was allowed back into the Olympics.

I think the actions of De Klerk contributed to the ending of apartheid in South Africa. If it had not been for him, Mandela may have been kept in prison for longer, international pressures may still have been great and apartheid would have continued to drag along. De Klerk changed this. Being able to release Mandela and many political prisoners, he did. This was great as Mandela was now able to actually take actions towards the complete abolition of apartheid. Although as mentioned above, external pressures helped to breakdown the economic and social system of South Africa, they now had it back, but this time with soon to be more opportunities for the blacks too.

So in conclusion, both of these factors helped in the eradication of apartheid. They both also linked to one another. External pressures were quite great, and De Klerk realised this. He took actions to improve the well being of many people and obviously other countries had noticed this hence sanctions stopped as they believed apartheid would soon come to an end.

3) Apartheid implied eradication at different times for different people. For some it could have been when sanctions were stopped, or when Mandela and his fellow prisoners were let out of prison or when segregation laws were repealed or when fully democratic elections were held in South Africa. I personally believe that apartheid implied abolition in November 1993 when an agreement on new constitution for South Africa was decided, however it

was proven that apartheid had ended when the first-ever fully democratic elections were held in South Africa in 1994.

Apartheid could have been ended sooner however there were many factors which slowed down the ending of apartheid and managed to drag it on.

Firstly, Nelson Mandela. Although he was standing up for what he believed in, Mandela was imprisoned in 1963. Some believed Mandela was the only hope for the ending of apartheid and stayed loyal in supporting him even whilst he was in prison but Mandela's time in prison was not useful to help apartheid end sooner. His decision in 1968 to turn to violence could be argued to be a half-hearted one. I think that if Mandela had not gone to prison he could have worked efficiently and built a reputation in a way showing him to actually be doing something against the fight for apartheid instead of doing it whilst being in prison. This would have not only have got him recognised but he would be able to take action and help the ANC rather than sit behind bars and advise them every once in a while.

Black protest could also have affected the timing of the ending of apartheid. Leaders of the ANC planned a campaign of defiance of apartheid and Mandela was put in charge. He called for 10, 000 volunteers; 8, 577 responded. On 6 April 1952, whilst whites celebrated 300 years since the arrival of the Dutch, ANC supporters all over South Africa defied the apartheid regulation. They got into 'white only' compartments of trains, they queued at 'white only' counters at post offices, they sat on 'white only' benches. They were arrested in thousands and by October 2, 354 people had been arrested. Their numbers congested the courts and as they had hoped,

the newspapers, not only in South Africa but also abroad were full of their exploits. ANC membership rose from 7000 to 100, 000.

The Defiance Campaign could have lead to apartheid not ending sooner as the ANC now had more people supporting them; instead of trying to crush the National Party, the blacks decided to build upon the ANC. Although this showed how much support the blacks had, it also meant the National Party would now have to work even harder to keep up ahead of them, which they were willing to do, hence it is unfortunate for the blacks. The Soweto Riots were also a group who added on time to the ending of apartheid. The riots burnt down the library and the administration block of the University of Zululand on 18 June 1976.

The riots spread trouble all around the country and the police met violence with violence. More than 700 people died; the police killed many of them. Others died at the hands of blacks who believed them to be police informers or to have helped the white government in other ways. I think that the violence which was running through South Africa certainly did not prove to be helpful in the ending of apartheid as there was so much of it. When violence met violence it usually resulted in horrific outcomes which did not help either the blacks or whites.

I think without all the violence apartheid may have ended sooner as it would have not made the white South Africans need to take further action. Without violence people would not have been arrested, but because they were, the whites probably feared them hence felt it was best they be locked up, in which case they are helpless. If apartheid had ended any sooner then whites

would fear that blacks may have more power and if they were still violent, the results would be terrible so they could take advantage of the power and violently terrorise the whites.

The ANC was also eventually banned due to the violence. The ANC were fighting for political rights and equal opportunities however once a ban had been put on this group they were not able to show their efforts as much. Without the black protests the ANC may still have been around, helping the struggle against apartheid and whites may not have feared the blacks as much-so they may have not minded the blacks being equal to them.

As already mentioned earlier, sanctions played a great role in the breakdown of apartheid. Sanctions such as economic sanctions meant that there was less money circulating the country which affected not only blacks, who then had even less money but also the whites who were not living as luxurious lifestyles. There are also however arguments as to why the sanctions did not help the apartheid system, for example:

The South African economy was strong enough to survive sanctions: Despite sanctions exports went up 26% from 1985-89, which brought extra money into South Africa. South Africa supplied over half the world's gold and had over 75% of the world's platinum, chromate and manganese supplies. These were vital for industries all over the world. Furthermore, the other main supplier of gold and other precious metals was the Communist Soviet Union. Countries would rather trade with South Africa than trade with Communists. Therefore, sanctions were not as strong as they could have been. It was their strong government and help of their determination which kept them going.

However other countries experiences show that sanctions do not work for example, The United Nations has had sanctions against Iraq since 1990. This still had not led to a change of government there. One reason apartheid managed to survive was because it was profitable for the whites.

The Africans may have believed that keeping apartheid could continue bringing in money as they were using blacks as cheap labour, which is beneficial especially to businesses. For sanctions to actually be made effective can take a long time for example sanctions in Rhodesia in 1960's and 1970's only made the white government collapse after 15 years and a civil war costing 30, 000 lives. This questions us as to whether sanctions really were effective or not and were they as strong or as helpful as they may have been portrayed to be?

Sporting sanctions too failed to prove a difference. South Africans enjoyed sports however when they were no longer allowed to compete in the Olympics, they did not start to treat the blacks any better. This shows that although they may have been angry about the sporting decision, they wanted to keep control of apartheid which was more important to them than the isolation from sports.

Communism is where all the companies and businesses are state owned, no one has any more than their neighbour. Everyone is equal in communism. The whites feared communists. The whites were rich people living luxurious lifestyles and knowing what the blacks in their country were living like, one can be assured they would not have wanted communists taking over and taking what was theirs.

If apartheid had collapsed and elections were held then the ANC had a chance of winning. Many people in the ANC were communist. If the ANC did take over then there would be a chance that South Africa would have a communist government which the whites did not want. Apartheid and communism were completely different as apartheid was helping South Africa bring in money but communism would take it all away. This made them believe that having apartheid was much better than the results of not having apartheid. So communism in conclusion is definitely an important factor when considering why apartheid did not end sooner as a fear of communism allowed apartheid to be dragged on.

De Klerk was a man who I believe could have ended apartheid sooner. De Klerk was the president of South Africa which helped him to end apartheid. To end apartheid he released Nelson Mandela, lifted the ban of the ANC and talked about the reformation of apartheid. De Klerk, unlike Botha who was the previous president could see that change was needed and he was a man willing to make it. De Klerk's actions were definitely if not the reason for the ending then definitely the foundation of the ending of apartheid. If De Klerk had been in power earlier then apartheid would have ended sooner but apartheid ended only when Botha was made rid off. The views of these two presidents were also different; Botha was a religious man who believed in equal opportunities whereas Botha, like many whites believed the whites were better than the blacks.

In conclusion I believe that all the factors which helped end apartheid also restricted apartheid not to end any sooner. The factors worked but not quick enough.

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