

The origins of the apartheid in south africa

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The Origins of The Apartheid in South Africa Apartheid represents a mordant period in the history of South Africa. At this time the policy of segregation and political and economic discriminating against non-European groups in The Republic of South Africa was the norm. The Afrikaners are a South African people of Dutch or French Huguenot descent. In 1998, 2. 7 million Afrikaners inhabited South Africa, consisting of about 56% of the white population. Their language is Afrikaans, a derivative of Dutch. The Nationalist party of South Africa was founded in 1914 by James Barry Munnik Hertzog to protect and promote the interests of Afrikaners against what were considered the pro-British policies of the South African party, led by Louis Botha and Jan Smuts. On May 26, 1948, the Nationalists reigned victorious. They won the parliamentary elections and gained control of the South African government, despite the fact that they constituted no more than 12% of the population. The party, under new Premier Dr. Daniel F. Malan, began taking steps toward implementing apartheid, the political policy of racial separation. Over the next several decades, they consolidated their power. The National Party used its control of the government to fulfill Afrikaners ethnic goals as well as white racial goals. In 1961, South Africa became a republic and completed its separation from Great Britain. Apartheid turned into a drastic, systematic program of social injuring based on four ideas. First, the population of South Africa comprised four racial groups; white, colored, Indian, and African. Second, whites, as the civilized race, were entitled to have absolute control over the state. Third, white interests should prevail over black interests; the state was not obliged to provide equal facilities for the subordinate races. Finally, the white racial group formed a

single nation, with Afrikaans, while Africans belonged to several distinct nations or potential nations, a formula that made the white nation the largest in the country. Over the years, the government introduced a series of repressive laws. The implementation of the apartheid policy, later referred to as "separate development", was made possible by the Population Registration Act of 1950. It is widely considered the cornerstone of the entire system. It provided for the racial classification of every person. The law put all South Africans into three racial categories: Bantu, White, or "Colored". The state has variously sought to demarcate the category "Colored" on the basis of descent, parentage, physical appearance, language preference, cultural criteria, and general acceptance by the community. The Population Registration Act defined a "Colored" as someone "who in appearance is obviously not white or Indian, and who is not a member of an aboriginal race or African tribe." The Group Areas Act of 1950 assigned races to different residential and business sections in urban areas, and the Land Acts of 1954 and 1955 restricted nonwhite residence in specific areas. These laws further controlled the already limited right of black Africans to own land, entrenching the white minority's control of over 80 % of South African land. The laws are based on a fear of black insurgence and the desire to present the world with a picture of South Africa showing whites less heavily outnumbered by non-whites than they really are. During this time even the media was under very strict restrictions in opposing the Apartheid. For example, reporter Sharon I. Sopher was conducting an interview of two Africans in reference to the horrors of the Apartheid. While filming soldiers arrived and surrounded the house, demanding for everyone inside to exit. Once she and the crew came

out they were immediately separated from the family they interviewing and then taken into custody at gunpoint. While being taken to the police compound she states, " The voices of torture that I interviewed flashed through my mind. As we entered the police compound I felt like screaming for help but I realized we were in the middle of nowhere. " They began to interrogate them asking, why were they in the township and why were they filming a black family? The police eventually released them because they were Americans and they didn't want an international incident. Before releasing them, their names and addresses were taken and they were warned to stay out of the township. One of the most repressive apartheid restrictions was the law requiring that blacks and all other nonwhites carry a " pass book" stating their legal residence and workplace. Those without the proper papers could be stopped by police and summarily expelled to the countryside. Interracial Marriage and Immorality Acts prohibited marriage and sexual relations across color lines. The Group Areas Act defined residential areas by race. Under it, Colored and Indians were removed to special segregated townships. Anti-Apartheid supporter, Jim Hilgendorf interviews a gentleman with a personal recount detailing the effects of The Group Areas Act. The gentleman tells a story of a friend of his, where he and his wife were separated because his friend was classified as colored while his wife was classified as black. He was sent to one township and his wife was sent to another along with the children who were also considered black. In order to see his family he had to apply for a permit at the police station. He could only receive a permit once every three months which would only allow him to see his family for two hours. This was all too common in South Africa,

families being torn apart, parents being deprived the opportunity to watch their children grow up. The government tried to move all Africans, except those needed by white employers, into the "Homelands", but these areas simply could not support the masses of people confined to them. Each Homeland consisted of fragments of land separated by white farms. Kwa Zulu consisted of 29 major and 41 minor fragments. It is estimated that 3.55 million Blacks were removed between 1960 and 1983. The social implications were severe. Two examples: In Soweto, a township near Johannesburg with a population of over one million by 1978, seventeen to twenty people were living in a typical four room house. In Crossroads, outside Cape Town, there were more than six people to a bed. Despite the conditions, the government continued to implement new apartheid regulations decade after decade. The Bantu Laws Amendment Act of 1964 gave the government complete authority to banish blacks from any urban area and from white agricultural areas. During the 1970's, the government stripped thousands of blacks of their South African citizenship when it granted nominal independence to their homelands. Most of the homelands had few natural resources, were not economically viable, and being both small and fragmented, lacked the autonomy of independent states. Apartheid extracted a huge human cost. In its efforts to create completely segregated residential areas, the South African government destroyed thousands of houses in racially mixed areas. With their homes destroyed, tens of thousands of people were forced into small, substandard houses, located in bleak townships and neighborhoods with poor services. Limits on black residence in urban areas also broke apart families in cases where one

parent obtained a residence permit but the other did not. Restrictions on the size and location of black businesses squelched the economic aspirations of many blacks, preventing them from competing effectively with white-owned businesses. In another interview with Jim Hilgendorf, a man tells the story of his family losing their home. He lived in Cape Town, a town that was considered very cosmopolitan which held many different races that lived together peacefully and was then turned into District Six after the government came through and destroyed all homes declaring the community an all white area. The gentleman confronted one of the men who were destroying the homes and asked why would he do such a thing? He apologized stating that it was his job and that he did not have a choice. Everyone in the community watched helplessly while the government destroyed their homes. The Pan-African Congress organized a campaign against the pass laws. People gathered at police stations without passes. The campaign led to the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960 when police opened fire on an unarmed group killing 67 Africans and wounding 186. This led to widespread disturbances and the subsequent banning of both resistance coalitions. The government declared a state of emergency, and arrested 98 Whites, 90 Indians, 36 Colored, and 11, 279 Africans. Nelson Mandela and other leaders were jailed in 1963 and tried in 1964. The government crack-down succeeded and suppressed the resistance for several years. The spirit of resistance grew and on June 16, 1976, thousands of Black schoolchildren in Soweto protested against being taught in Afrikaans. After the police killed a boy, the protests spread throughout the country. The government once again reacted brutally killing over the next few months 575 people. In an

interview with the Al Jazeera Network, a woman by the name of Joyce shares a personal story of the death of her son. Joyce states that on the day of his death, her son led a peaceful protest of the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela. The demonstration was simply to raise awareness throughout the country of horrid actions of their government. The police eventually approached the protestors and began to open fire on the crowd. Her son was immediately shot in the stomach and soon died. She claims that her brother in-law was later arrested by the police and tortured for information pertaining to any future riots or protest. After days of being tortured he was finally released when the police deemed him not to be a threat. The date of the " Soweto Uprising" is now recognized in South Africa as National Youth Day. Soweto was another dramatic turning point. But it took 14 more years of repression, resistance, and violence, but no widespread civil war before the transition to majority rule and democracy began. The transition began with President de Klerk's election in 1990.