

What is the anc  
achievement of  
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The oppression and discrimination caused by segregation and Apartheid, led to the formation of organizations dedicated to the freeing of South Africa from imperialist and racist systems. The ANC was the leading force in the liberation struggle for South Africa[1]The organization was formed in 1912 as the South African Native National Congress (SANC) and was later renamed to the ANC in 1923.[2]The ANC's early aims were focused on denouncing the segregation policies and demanding full citizenship for blacks.

## **The ANC is formed – 1912**

The ANC was formed at a time when South Africa was changing very fast. Diamonds had been discovered in 1867 and gold in 1886. Mine bosses wanted large numbers of people to work for them in the mines. Laws and taxes were designed to force people to leave their land. The most severe law was the 1913 Land Act, which prevented Africans from buying, renting or using land, except in the reserves. Many communities or families immediately lost their land because of the Land Act. For millions of other black people it became very difficult to live off the land. The Land Act caused overcrowding, land hunger, poverty and starvation.

In 1910 the Union of South Africa had been constituted, signaling the emergence of the first time of a unitary white supremacist state. Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) which led to British authority in the colonies of the Cape and Natal finally being extended to the previously independent Boer republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. The war bore many of the hallmarks of a civil conflict and, although it represented a crushing defeat for Afrikaners in the short term, the long-term losers were Africans whose interests were sacrificed in the pursuit of white unity and

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reconciliation.[3]The ANC began to use strikes and campaigns of civil disobedience to try to liberate the oppressed black majority from the Apartheid state.

The 1940s was not only a formative period in the history of the ANC and African nationalism; it also provided a powerful impetus to extreme Afrikaner nationalism. A decade that began with the country's entry into the Second World War under the leadership of General Smuts concluded with the victory of D. F. Malan's National Party in 1948 and the official inauguration of apartheid.

With the enactment of apartheid laws in 1948, racial discrimination was institutionalized. Race laws touched every aspect of social life, including a prohibition of marriage between non-whites and whites and the sanctioning of white-only jobs. In 1950, the Population Registration Act required that all South Africans be racially classified into one of three categories: white, black (African), or coloured (of mixed decent). The colored category included major subgroups of Indians and Asians. Classification into these categories was based on appearance, social acceptance, and descent. From 1948 to 1994 nearly 31. 5 million blacks in South Africa were treated cruelly and without respect. They were given no representation in the National party even though they made up most of the country.

Increased attacks on the rights of black people and the rise of extreme Afrikaner nationalism created the need for a more militant response for the ANC. Harsher racism also brought greater co-operation between the organizations of Africans, Coloureds and Indians. In 1947 the ANC and the

Indian Congresses signed a pact stating full support for one another's campaigns.[4]

The Defiance Campaign was the beginning of a mass movement of resistance to apartheid. Apartheid aimed to separate the different race groups completely through laws like the Population Registration Act, Group areas Act and Bantu Education Act, and through stricter pass laws and forced removals. The success of the Defiance Campaign encouraged further campaigns against apartheid laws, like the Group Areas Act and the Bantu Education Act. The government tried to stop the Defiance Campaign by banning its leaders and passing new laws to prevent public disobedience, but the campaign had already made huge gains. It brought closer co-operation between the ANC and the SA Indian Congress, swelled their membership and also led to the formation of new organizations: the SA Coloured People's Organization (SACPO) and the Congress of Democrats (COD), an organization of white democrats. The Congress Alliance came together to organize the Congress of the people – a conference of all the people of South Africa – which presented people's demands for the kind of South Africa they wanted. [5]

## **The Turning Point**

The first area of society affected by the Apartheid regime was the freedom of movement through implementing Pass Laws under the Group Areas Act in 1950. The act as a whole sought to segregate living areas based on race. Although Pass Laws existed before the Second World War for every black male over 16 the new pass laws extended to the majority of non-white South Africans. In 1960 in Sharpeville just outside Johannesburg, the PAC led a <https://assignbuster.com/what-is-the-anc-achievement-of-power-history-essay/>

peaceful protest against the Pass Laws. 69 people were shot dead by the police and many more were injured. Most were shot in the back and the victims included women and children.[6]

As news of the Sharpeville massacre spread within South Africa, several riots broke out in towns throughout the country. Sharpeville showed the obvious determination of the white to maintain their position by any means at their disposal, including open violence and the suppression of all expressions of dissent; after the incident African demoralization was nationwide. Even the areas that were accessible to non-white "visitors," were subject to the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act passed in 1953. This form of segregation resonates with the treatment of African-Americans in the United States. In mid 1960 the ANC and PAC were banned under the Suppression of Communism Act: a new reign of repression was unleashed.[7]

Many people continued to sustain substantial levels of resistance. For example during 1959-60 women in Natal embarked on protests against a whole range of apartheid-induced conditions, with state-run beer halls (which threatened their home-brewing industry) as their main targets. Their anger spilled over into acts of violence[8] which the ANC condemned while attempting to find compromise solutions with the authorities

#### ANC Strategy and Armed Resistance

On December 16, 1961, the first organized acts of sabotage against South African government installations took place, marking the emergence of Umkhonto we Sizwe (The Spear of the Nation), which was later to become the armed wing of the ANC. There were 200 small-scale attacks through the <https://assignbuster.com/what-is-the-anc-achievement-of-power-history-essay/>

country over the next eighteen months. Its largely symbolic sabotage campaign was restricted to blowing up strategic installations like pylons, railway lines and government offices. The date chosen for these initial sabotage acts was of historical significance. It is a public holiday in South Africa, commemorating the military victory of the Afrikaner Voortrekkers over the African warriors on the banks of the Ncome River in Natal in 1838 and is thus symbolic of the ascendancy of white power over the blacks.[9]

For at least a decade after 1964 the NCA virtually ceased to exist in South Africa and the prospects for liberation appeared more remote than ever. [10]During this time Mandela, Sisulu and Mbeki, were languishing in the bleak surroundings of Robben Island, serving out life sentences for sabotage and conspiracy against the South African government. The government had kept Mandela in prison since 1962. While in prison, Mandela had become a symbol of the black struggle for racial justice..

The early 1970s saw the emergence of the Black Consciousness (BC) movement, which defined liberation as a state of mind rather than in narrow political terms. Black Consciousness was inspired by a range of included, including the Black Power movement in the United States. Black Consciousness had a palpable influence on the student-led Soweto uprisings of 1976-7, which were sparked off by spontaneous protests against the introduction of Afrikaans as a compulsory medium of instruction in black schools.[11]

The Soweto uprising far exceeded the scale and intensity of the 1960 insurrection. It heralded the demise of white supremacy and made real the

possibility of liberation, perhaps for the first time. It seems White authority was no longer feared as it had been in and “ the system” rather than the government was not the target of popular fury.

The ANC’s ability to absorb a substantial proportion of the Black Consciousness movement was a vital aspect of its revival as a political force within South Africa during the 1980s. The ANC was determined to rebuild its constituency within the country were the concerted moves, from 1988 to reinstate the Freedom Charter as a living political document. The launch of the “ Free Mandela” signature campaign when Mandela was an ageing and almost forgotten prisoner - was an essential part of this process.

## **Negotiations**

The government’s grip was being steadily eroded by a fast-deteriorating economic situation which aggravated by the imposition of international sanctions and a loss of business confidence. Calculated destabilization by the military of the Marxist-supporting government of Mozambique and Angola engulfed these countries in civil war, and South Africa’s “ securocrats,” now virtually unrestrained by civil powers,[12]attacked ANC targets beyond South Africa’s borders at will.

Internationally South Africa was becoming a major focus of attention and concern. From the mid-1980s audiences with the ANC were increasingly sought by Western governments in recognition of the evident fact that the ANC would have to be a participant in any credible political settlement. The hostility expressed toward the ANC by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan

was thus increasingly countermanded by their governments' own intelligence service and diplomatic officials.[13]

In the early 1990s, the ANC took a number of steps to broaden its political base. It reactivated the ANC Youth League in order to bridge the generational gap between its older leaders and young members. In addition, propelled by the many politically active women in the organization, the ANC reactivated its Women's League in order to promote women's rights nationwide.

The ANC's major political partner throughout most of the apartheid era was the SACP. SACP leaders helped the ANC to secure the support of communist and socialist governments during its period of exile, played important roles in ANC policy formulation, and helped to consolidate support for the ANC in the labor movement.

In July 1984, National Party leaders began to have secret meetings with the imprisoned ANC leaders. These meetings went on until May 1988 when the government formalized the meetings. Finally, on July 5, 1989, President P. W. Botha met with Nelson Mandela for their first face-to-face talks. Nelson Mandela's proposal outlined a power sharing plan for the National Party and its political rivals and embraced the spirit of compromise that would be needed to weather the political turbulence that lay ahead.[14]

One month later Botha resigned due to his health, which brought in F. W. de Klerk. Nelson Mandela and President F. W. de Klerk continued to negotiate and their talks led to a transformation in South African politics. On February 2, 1990, President de Klerk gave a historical speech in which he legalized  
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over thirty anti-apartheid organizations, ordered the release of the ANC leaders, which included Nelson Mandela and announced that he was negotiating a democratic constitution with Nelson Mandela. At the 1991 National Conference of the ANC Nelson Mandela was elected President. The negotiations initiated by the ANC resulted in the holding of historic first elections based on one person one vote in April 1992. The ANC won these first historic elections with a vast majority. 62. 6% of the more than 22 million votes cast were in favor of the ANC. On the 10th of May 1994 Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as President of South Africa.

Recent politics. In a struggle which lasted for most of the twentieth century the continent's first major African nationalist movement had survived to lead the last African country to political freedom.

Nelson Mandela was the most significant figure in opposing apartheid to 1991. He helped prompt peaceful protests against the government and later on incorporated illegal armed resistance against apartheid. Even though Mandela was imprisoned as a result, he never gave up the struggle that was his life. He was offered six chances of freedom on condition that he unconditionally rejected violence as a political weapon.[15]Mandela rejected all these offers as he was providing hope for the strugglers against apartheid. If he was to renounce violence, he would be agreeing to abide by the apartheid laws and Mandela was unprepared to go so. Mandela maintained his stance on what he believes and this was significant for the fall of apartheid to occur. Through sheer determination and resilience of Mandela over nearly four decades, he was able to destroy the apartheid

system, achieve his ideal of a democratic society, win liberty for South Africa and create full national rights and equality for all the people of South Africa.

## **The ANC Achievement of Power**

In 1994, after many years of violence, the African National Congress won elections and established a democratic government where whites and blacks now were going to be treated equally. The ANC organization had played a key role in protesting, and eventually the downfall of the apartheid policies. The end of apartheid was a major, if not the most important event in South Africa history. This event symbolizes South Africa's freedom from oppression and the beginning of new life for ethnic citizens. South Africa's history is incased with events that shaped the way the nation is today