



Historical Security Council: Topic 1

The issue of apartheid in the Union of South Africa (April 2, 1963)

Background:

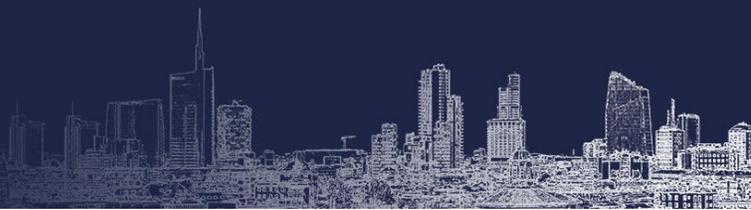
After the National Party gained power within South Africa in 1948, the all-white government immediately enforced existing policies of racial segregation. Apartheid (“apartness” in the Afrikaans language) was a system of laws that upheld separation between white and non-white citizens of South Africa. The goal of the party was not only to separate South Africa’s white minority from its non-white majority, but also to separate non-whites from each other, and to divide black South Africans along tribal lines to decrease their political power. Daily life for a person of color or non-white South African was filled with danger and the constant, unrelenting inequality that regulated their life’s worth as less than that of a white person.

By 1950, the government had banned marriages between whites and people of other races. The Population Registration Act of 1950 provided the basic framework for apartheid by classifying all South Africans by race, including Bantu (black Africans), Coloured (mixed race) and White. In some cases, the legislation split families: parents could be classified as white, while their children were classified as colored. In one of the most devastating aspects of apartheid, the government forcibly removed black South Africans from rural areas designated as “white regions”, forcing them back to the “homelands”. In doing so, the government sold their land at low prices to white farmers. From 1961 to 1994, more than 3.5 million people were forcibly removed from their homes and deposited in the “Bantustans”, where they were plunged into poverty and hopelessness. Despite strong opposition to the legislation within and outside the country, the laws remained in effect for approximately 50 years. Only in 1991 did President de Klerk and activist Nelson Mandela work to create a new constitution for South Africa.

Situation in April, 1963:

The period of the 1960s in South Africa marked an important part of the opposition movement and the population’s struggle against Apartheid. The aftermath of the Sharpeville Massacre and the declaration of the subsequent State of Emergency in March 1960 signaled the beginning of a brutal and intensive phase of state repression to enforce Apartheid.

The intensification of repressive laws and the erosion of political rights by the Apartheid regime made the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) the first casualties in an era of banishment. Forced underground, the ANC, PAC and other liberation organizations had to consider



new tactics, and their leaders seriously considered a move to armed struggle, concluding that peaceful methods had proved fruitless.

The ANC created an underground military wing, called *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK), which was launched on 16 December 1961. The MK was formed “to be a fighting arm of the people against the government and its policies of race oppression”¹. MK units undertook just over 200 operations. Using mainly home-made incendiary devices, their bomb attacks were intended to damage public facilities. In 1962, Nelson Mandela undertook trips to Algeria, Nigeria, Tunisia and Ethiopia in an attempt to drum up support for the MK and to arrange military training for potential recruits.

Thereafter the organization dispatched more than 300 recruits abroad for military training. In the early 1960s the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the MK High Command purchased an isolated farm, called Liliesleaf, in Rivonia. It was agreed that it would be used as a meeting place for many of the luminaries of the struggle. It also proved perfect as a hide-out for banned activists from the ever-present and highly efficient police and security services. This was one of the most important steps in creating resistance against the government.

Important bloc positions:

Most of the international community isolated South Africa during this time, in order to punish the Apartheid regime. One of the primary means for the international community to show its aversion to Apartheid was to boycott South Africa in a variety of spheres of multinational life.

- **United Kingdom:** When South Africa pulled out of the Commonwealth in 1961, the United Kingdom led resistance against punitive monetary and trade sanctions. It largely supported the Apartheid regime and had many key trade links with it, as well as a particular need for South Africa's gold.
- **United States:** At the beginning of Apartheid, the United States avoided serious criticism of South Africa's racial policies in part because several U.S. states, especially in the Deep South, had similar policies under the Jim Crow laws.
- Countries such as **Zambia, Tanzania and the Soviet Union** provided military support for the ANC.

¹ "Rivonia Trial 1963 - 1964 | South African History Online". 2019. Sahistory.Org.Za. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/rivonia-trial-1963-1964>.



Possible solutions:

- Press effective international sanctions against the South African regime.
- Arrange assistance to the victims of Apartheid and release of political prisoners in South Africa.
- Ensure constant publicity and fund awareness of the inhumanity of Apartheid to secure widest support for action
- Initiate or assist organization of public campaigns, possibly including:
 - arms and oil embargoes against South Africa,
 - sports, cultural and consumer boycotts of South Africa,
 - sanctions against loans to or investments in South Africa.
- Condemn all violence, either from the Apartheid government or the ANC.
- Demand free diplomatic elections to decide government in South Africa.
- Work to ensure physical security for all South Africans.

More sources:

- [Born a Crime](#) by Trevor Noah ← Highly recommended book
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vq2qc-zt9ec> - South Africa Under Apartheid | The Economist
- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/apartheid> - Apartheid | Britannica
- <http://www-cs-students.stanford.edu/~cale/cs201/apartheid.hist.html> - The History of Apartheid | Stanford
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rk-Lxgp9NWg> - Mandela, from prison to President.

Bibliography:

- "African Activist Archive". 2020. Africanactivist.Msu.Edu. Accessed November 10. <https://africanactivist.msu.edu>.
- "Apartheid". 2020. History.Com. Accessed November 10. <https://www.history.com/topics/africa/apartheid>.
- "Rivonia Trial 1963 - 1964 | South African History Online". 2019. Sahistory.Org.Za. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/rivonia-trial-1963-1964>.