CASE STUDIES: SOUTH AFRICA

PART I:
Creating Apartheid:
from Union to Republic
1948 - 1961
She weaves mats from the river grasses,
Cutting them down as history passes.
She weaves them slowly with fingers worn;
History is the thread of a nation born.
I look at the mats, their beauty, their grace,
History is now and this is its face.
She cannot read and she cannot write,
But her grass mats capture a people’s plight.
Her cloths are worn, her eyes are wise;
Biko, Goniwe, Hani arise!
Her life is a history, a hardship a song,
Mandela brings freedom, the struggle was long.

[Saturday in Africa, 1996 p.49]
Settler Colonialism

South Africa: in many ways ‘typical’ settler societies like Rhodesia, Algeria, Belgian Congo, Mozambique:

- some form ‘local government’: following Boer War, ‘Union of South Africa’ 1910

- government in hands ‘local’ white settlers: British settlers predominated after 1910

[see ‘South Africa Union: South Africa Act 1909’, Resources. Note definitions of who could be Members of Parliament, the Senate; note the ‘oath’ of loyalty to British King/Queen embedded in Act]
Settler Colonialism

Most Important ‘Settler’ Legislation:

- 1913 Natives Land Act

- restricted Africans’ right to purchase land to 13% total arable land

- taxes levied on Africans: ‘hut tax’ – intended to push Africans into labour market (like Kenya, Rhodesia)
‘South African Native National Congress’: small educated elite who believed that the British would not sanction Natives Land Act – but they did.


[Shepherd & Paver, *African Contrasts*, 217]
Native Reserve in South Africa, 1940s

[RHW Shepherd & BG Paver, African Contrasts, 1947: 19]
South Africa: ‘typical settler society’ in terms of discriminatory laws

- segregated living: imposed in all urban settings

- mines used compounds to segregate African workers
DeBeers Diamond Mines

‘Hostel’ (below)
Domestic Labour

- rural labourers, urban domestics probably most ‘integrated’ of all African workers: usually lived on property of employers
“Millions of man hours are spent annually at pass offices, registration centres and post-office counters throughout South Africa.”

This scene could be anywhere in East and Southern Africa.

[RHW Shepherd & PG Paver, *African Contrasts*, 57]
Pass Laws

- pass laws controlled movement African labourers to gold and diamond mines from 1880s ...
‘Second Colonization’

South Africa: engaged in ‘Re-Colonizing (like Belgian Congo, Mozambique)

- strongly shaped by ‘cold war’ international environment: manipulated by South Africa to underpin re-colonization (similar to aims of colonial neighbours but more successful)

- paying long-term ‘price’ of building society based on racial difference
WW II: South Africa fought with Allies (although many objected)

- injected investment in industry to supplant industry elsewhere oriented to war

- Africans took on jobs previously denied to ‘blacks’ because ‘whites’ joined war effort

- like other colonies, ‘war effort’ not rewarded
Settler Colonialism

Post War Era: ‘youth movement’ (as elsewhere) dissatisfied with moderation of previous generation

- involved Nelson Mandela, Albert Luthuli, Govan Mbeki (and many others)

- no longer satisfied with idea that Africans could negotiate with government
Young Members: Mandela, Luthuli, Mbeke

Founded 1944: Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo

First President: Anton Lemembe
South Africa as ‘Special’ Case

South Africa: in other ways distinct

- ‘colonized’ by two settler groups: Afrikaners and British

- Boer War (1899-1902): war between settlers to control colony

- black Africans caught between them (as in Mozambique): “when two elephants fight, the grass is trampled...”!
South Africa as ‘Special Case’

- complicates focus of ‘resistance’: Britain abdicated

- Africans worked with… whichever white group was in power
South Africa as ‘Special Case’

1910-1948: power gradually shifted from British control to Nationalist Party (Afrikaner)

- process complicated by:

  * British-Afrikaner differences
  
  * demands of ‘Coloureds’
  
  * divided African interests
South Africa as ‘Special Case’

* economic impact Depression:
  - exacerbation of large population ‘Poor (Afrikaner) Whites’
Report of Carnegie Commission on The Poor White Problem in South Africa (Stellenbosch University, 1932):

- estimated by 1929, out of total 1,000,000 Afrikaners:
  * more than 300,000 lived as ‘paupers’
  * equal number were poor but lived above pauper level.

- figures obtained prior to calamitous 1930 depression which brought widespread destitution among all sections of community.
“Poor White” Problem

Report of the Social and Economic Planning Council 1945:

- gives figures of cash incomes for European farming families (mostly Afrikaners) for 1941, when Poor White problem becoming less acute.

- over 45% of total farming population had cash earnings of less than £100 a year; of these about half earned under £50.

[see ‘Poor White Problem’ (from Sachs, *Garment Workers…1956*), in Resources]
Role Communist party: critical from post WWI

- support for workers: had to overcome racism

- gradual co-operation with ANC (successor to SANNC) because ‘workers’ were by definition (in South Africa) black Africans

[see ‘Guns and Gallows’ (from Sachs, *Garment Workers…* 1956), in Resources]
Apartheid

Election 1948: victory of Nationalist Party, implementation ‘Apartheid’

How was Apartheid ‘different’ from ‘racist settler colonialism’?

- key ‘1948 Colour Policy’ [Readings]

- society to be organized by race

- legal, social, educational, public, private life to be defined, controlled in ‘racial’ terms
Apartheid

‘Legally Defined’ Races:

- Whites (Afrikaner, British)
- Blacks (numerous African tribes)
- Coloureds (mixed race)
- Asians (Indian origin)
Apartheid

Racially defined Space: “Group Areas Act” 1950 (continued to be ‘redefined’ over several years)

Racially defined Personal Relations: “Mixed Marriages Act” 1949 (followed by “Population Registration and Immorality Act” 1950)

Racially defined Culture: “Bantu Education Act” 1953
Apartheid

Racial Classification
Apartheid

Space, amenities: racially designated
South Africa as ‘Special Case’

Real Resistance: 1950s

- not ‘black vs white’

- many whites, mostly British (or of British origin) supported blacks

- both against Apartheid
Sophiatown

- declared ‘black spot’ under Group Areas Act

- mixed-race community where Africans owned homes
Sophiatown

Vibrant, vital community

Well-known street-music culture
Removals began to ‘Meadowlands’ in 1955

- Resistance strong
- Supported by Anglican Church
Apartheid

- But to no avail. . .
Sophiatown razed to the ground. . .
Apartheid

- New white suburb, called ‘Triomph’ built in its place
Sophiatown Devastation:

- rallying point for ANC, Anglican Church involvement

- gave impetus to ‘defiance campaign’: passive resistance, following Gandhi’s example

- ultimately proved unsuccessful: Sophiatown set pattern for Government policy of forced removals
Forced Removals

1950s, 1960s: ‘discarded people’

- millions of Africans forcibly removed from homes in what were called ‘black spots’, located in newly-decreed ‘white’ (or Coloured, Asian) areas

[Cosmos Desmond brought situation to international attention in book… banned in South Africa]
Forced Removals

Umbulwana, Natal in 1982. Called "a black spot" because it is in a "white" area. Eventually demolished and the inhabitants forced to move to identically numbered houses in "resettlement" villages in their designated "homelands."

Millions of black South Africans were forcibly "resettled" in this way.

Note Date on this: policies/processes did not stop!
“there is no place for the Bantu above a certain level of labour” (minister for native affairs c.1950)

- former mission-based education had to be ‘adjusted’ accordingly

- Bantu Education Act intended to produce generations of quiescent workers

- many (Church, some Africans) referred to this as ‘education for servitude’
Apartheid

Took Place in Context ‘Cold War’: South Africa: protecting southern part African continent from Communism

- 1950 “Suppression of Communism Act”
  [see Readings]

- Communism threatened government: therefore --- treason

- anything ‘anti-government’ was communism: therefore --- treason
Apartheid

1950s – 1960s:

- introduced banning, house arrest

- used combination Suppression Communism Act, various Race-Based Acts to intensify social control
Apartheid: the Townships

Enforcement:
- major townships built 1950s (eg SOWETO, Alexandra): movement in, out controlled
Apartheid: the Townships

- required monitoring
Apartheid: the Pass Book

Enforcement:
- pass books: indicated where man employed, where he had right to be, live, visit
Enforcement:
- police raids ensured residents had up-to-date pass books
Apartheid: Women’s Passes

1955: government succeeded in extending passes to women

- huge women’s protest 20,000: led by ANC
Apartheid: Women’s Passes

Apartheid was a policy of institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination practiced in South Africa from 1948 to 1994. The passes were a system of identity control designed to separate the races and enforce apartheid. Women were required to carry passes, which were issued by the government and controlled their movement between different racial groups. The passes were often a source of great stress and hardship for women, as they limited their freedom and restricted their ability to work and travel. The image shows women protesting against the passes, with signs reading "Women do not want passes" and "With passes we are slaves."
Protest Failed: Minister refused to address women or receive petitions

[see ‘Demand of Women…’, Readings. Note racial composition]
The Freedom Charter

- reflected politics of Defiance Campaign
- ‘national’ convention called: important that it involved people from all over
- symbolic: over two-day weekend number of resolutions passed
- meant to reflect ANC view of ‘new, free society’
The Freedom Charter

- reflected politics of Defiance Campaign

- national convention: important that it involved people from all over, different ‘racial’ organizations
Brought together South African Congress of Trade Unions, South African Indian Congress, South African Council of Democrats, South African Coloured People’s Organization and ANC
The Freedom Charter

Freedom Charter began...

We, the People of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:

- that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people. . .
The Freedom Charter

The People Shall Govern!

- Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and to stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws;

- All people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country;

- The rights of the people shall be the same, regardless of race, colour or sex;
The Freedom Charter

The People Shall Share in the Country's Wealth!

- The national wealth of our country, the heritage of South Africans, shall be restored to the people;

- The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the Banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people…;

- All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist … the people;
The Freedom Charter

The Land Shall be Shared Among Those Who Work It!

- Restrictions of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land re-divided amongst those who work it…;

- Freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all who work on the land;

- All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose;

[For the full text, see ‘The Freedom Charter’, Readings]
Weekend Ended with Police Raid of Congress:
- all literature, pamphlets ‘confiscated’
- organizers imprisoned
- 156 people detained, charged with Treason
- materials, Charter itself deemed ‘Communist’ and under Suppression of Communism Act – made ‘Congress’ and ‘Charter’ evidence of Treason!
Treason-Trial 1956-61:

- received international coverage

- Mandela’s speech from the Dock widely reported [see ‘Treason Trial Speech’, Readings]

- became ANC mandate

- ultimately NO ONE found guilty
Freedom or Treason?

Four-Year Trial allowed for much discussion, planning, ‘bonding’ between defendants
- saw emergence of Mandela as recognized ANC leader
‘Winds of Change’?

1960: ‘Golden Anniversary’ Union of SA

- British Prime Minister Harold McMillan delivered speech in South Africa in which he announced ‘the wind of change’ is sweeping the African continent [Readings]

-[Full Audio in ‘Resources’: no apparent way to just listen to excerpts]
“Winds of Change?”

Speech being delivered to SA Parliament, Cape Town, 3 February, 1960
“WindsofChange?”

“In the twentieth century, and especially since the end of the war, the processes which gave birth to the nation states of Europe have been repeated all over the world. We have seen the awakening of national consciousness in peoples who have for centuries lived in dependence upon some other power. Fifteen years ago this movement spread through Asia. Many countries there, of different races and civilisations, pressed their claim to an independent national life...
“Winds of Change?”

“Today the same thing is happening in Africa, and the most striking of all the impressions I have formed since I left London a month ago is of the strength of this African national consciousness. In different places it takes different forms, but it is happening everywhere.

The wind of change is blowing through this continent, and whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact, and our national policies must take account of it.
‘Winds of Change’?

- early part of speech emphasized very clearly how important economic relations with Britain were (investment, trade)

- acknowledged ‘material progress’ of nation: most industrialized country in continent

- articulated appreciation of role in WWII and contributions to ‘recovery’ of post-war economy
‘Winds of Change’?

- but then went on to speak of his tour of the country: emphasizing that everywhere, people were aware of and talking about ‘change’ elsewhere in the continent

- ‘welcoming’ SA to play leadership role in continent as ‘most industrialized’ of all countries
‘Winds of Change’?

- President Hendrik Verwoerd: speech was insult – refused to even extend ‘thanks’

[Verwoerd Response to ‘Winds of Change’, Readings]
“Winds of Change?”

“We call ourselves European, but actually we represent the white men of Africa. They are the people not only in the Union but through major portions of Africa who brought civilisation here, who made the present developments of black nationalists possible. By bringing them education, by showing them this way of life, by bringing in industrial development, by bringing in the ideals which western civilisation has developed itself. . . .
“Winds of Change?”

“. . .we in this southern most portion of Africa, have such a stake here that this is our only motherland, we have no where else to go. We set up a country bare, and the Bantu came in this country and settled certain portions for themselves, . . .
“Winds of Change?”

“[we] believe [in] providing …rights for those people in the fullest degree in that part of southern Africa which their forefathers found for themselves and settled in. But similarly, we believe in balance, we believe in allowing exactly those same full opportunities to remain within the grasp of the white man who has made all this possible.”
Sharpeville

1960 : watershed ‘Sharpeville’

- Treason Trial confirmed failure of ‘Defiance’ (moderate, ‘passive’ resistance)

- Rival group Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) grew in importance

- focused on liberation of ‘blacks’ – *by blacks*

- influenced by Nkrumah’s Pan Africanism, America’s Civil Rights Movement
Sharpeville

1960 : watershed ‘Sharpeville’

- PAC organized nation-wide demonstrations against carrying passes

- ANC supported

- In some instances: led to burning of passes
Sharpeville (south of Johannesburg):

- police opened fire on demonstrators: at least 69 killed, 185 wounded

- most shot in the back as fled from scene

- generated work stoppages, demonstrations, protests throughout country rest of year

- attracted international attention: first real view ‘Apartheid in Action’
Images of Sharpville – seen around the world

[see also ‘Eyewitness Accounts’, Readings]
Sharpeville

- culminated in march of 30,000 on Parliament

- government reacted by declaring ANC and PAC illegal

- arrested more than 18,000: among them of most leadership of two political parties

- successfully shut down open resistance in 1960s: led to underground movements, exile
“Winds of Change?” Referendum

Culmination of resentment
‘external’ interference:

Referendum 5 October 1960

“Are you in favour of a Republic for the Union?” (English)

“Is u ten gunste van 'n Republiek vir die Unie?” (Afrikaans)
Referendum 5 October 1960: results

- voting: ‘Whites Only’

- Afrikaner provinces strongly in favour, ‘British’ in Cape split vote, Natal against

- passed by only 52.29% vote

“Republic of South Africa”
constituted 31 May, 1961
March 1961: South Africa withdrew from Commonwealth

- Intended to request permission to remain part of Commonwealth as Republic

- Instead faced expulsion: Canada (Diefenbaker) particularly outspoken against continued South African membership; joined by other African States and India [Video clip: CBC digital Archives 1.35min., Resources]

- South Africa ‘withdrew’ before this could happen
‘Winds of Change’? Not in South Africa

The Star

BIG CROWDS ACCLAIM THE REPUBLIC

Rain fails to damp their enthusiasm

SUN SHINES AS STATE PRESIDENT SPEAKS

The largest crowds ever to assemble in Pretoria acclaimed the Republic of South Africa today. They stood in the rain to watch the first State President drive down Church Street to the church for his installation. And as the rain continued to fall, they watched him ride to the Palace of Justice on Church Square to make his first speech to the nation.

She listened in hospital

Many slept Pretoria-bound trains