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# MARTIN AND MANDELA: TWO LEADERS, TWO CONTINENTS AND A SINGULAR GOAL

Leland Ware  
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## ABSTRACT

The civil rights and anti-apartheid movements produced two iconic leaders, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King. Both leaders confronted white supremacist regimes with no resources beyond the volunteers who participated in organised protests. They ultimately prevailed against tremendous odds. Segregation and apartheid shared a common purpose. They rigidly controlled each country's black population. Laws and practices determined where blacks could reside, where they could work and where they could attend schools. Under apartheid, every South African was classified into one of three racial groups: white, coloured and black. Blacks could not own property in 80 percent of South Africa's land area. Racial segregation was enforced in all public areas including buildings, services and transportation.

In America's southern states, schools, restaurants, hotels, theatres, public transportation and waiting rooms were segregated, as were elevators, parks, public restrooms, hospitals, drinking fountains, prisons and places

of worship. In the northern states, many restaurants, theatres and hotels would not serve black patrons. Segregated neighbourhoods were perpetuated by the real estate industry. Blacks were confined to occupations such as maids, cooks, chauffeurs, porters and labourers.

This article examines the ways in which segregation and apartheid were fought with marches, boycotts and demonstrations and, in the case of South Africa, armed resistance. King and Mandela took courageous stands against unjust laws. Mandela was banned by the South African government and subsequently imprisoned for 27 years. King gave his life to the struggle when he was assassinated in 1968. Despite the many obstacles, both leaders were able to lead the decades-long struggle to end segregation and apartheid. The Civil Rights Movement in America culminated with the federal legislation of the 1960s. South African apartheid lasted for a generation longer, ending in 1994 with the election of Nelson Mandela as president. In both countries, justice eventually prevailed. "[T]he arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice".

## INTRODUCTION

The civil rights and anti-apartheid movements produced two iconic leaders, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King. Both leaders confronted white supremacist regimes with virtually no resources beyond the volunteers who participated in organised protests. They ultimately prevailed against tremendous odds. From 1910, when the Union of South Africa was established, until 1994, black South Africans endured a system of racial exclusion and oppression. The constraints were tightened in the 1940s and '50s when the South African government implemented apartheid. In America, from 1896 until 1968, blacks experienced similar forms of discrimination under laws and practices that enforced racial segregation.

Segregation and apartheid shared a common purpose. They rigidly controlled each country's black population. Laws and practices determined where blacks could reside, where they could work and where they could attend schools. Parks, restaurants, hotels, public buildings and transportation were divided by race. In South Africa, the intent was to have a large supply of cheap labour residing near the gold and diamond mines. South African blacks could also serve as maids, cooks, drivers and in other low-level occupations. Apartheid envisioned a servile black population that would be dependent on whites for all of its needs.

In America's southern states, schools, restaurants, hotels, theatres, public transportation and waiting rooms were segregated, as were

elevators, parks, public restrooms, hospitals, drinking fountains, prisons and places of worship. In the northern states, many restaurants, theatres and hotels would not serve black patrons. Segregated neighbourhoods were perpetuated by the real estate industry. Blacks were confined to occupations such as maids, cooks, chauffeurs, porters and labourers. As was the case in South Africa, blacks were expected to be deferential and subservient. An obsequious "yes sir" or "no ma'am" were the ways blacks were required to address whites in the American South; "yes baas" was the South African equivalent.

Under apartheid, every South African was classified into one of three racial groups: white, coloured and black. Blacks could not own property in 80 percent of South Africa's land area. Apartheid was enforced in all public areas including buildings, services and transportation. Urban communities were divided into "group areas" in which residence was restricted to designated racial groups. South African blacks were prohibited from working in any occupation except those designated for blacks. Laws enforced racially separated schools. A law created ten black "homelands" as independent states. The citizenship of millions of black South Africans was revoked and they were required to carry passbooks to enter white areas. The system was all-encompassing.

This article compares segregation in America to apartheid in South Africa. It examines the ways in which segregation and apartheid were fought with marches, boycotts and demonstrations and, in the case of South

Africa, armed resistance. Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela took courageous stands against unjust laws. Mandela was "banned" by the South African government and was subsequently imprisoned for 27 years. King gave his life to the struggle when he was assassinated in 1968. Despite formidable obstacles, both leaders were able to lead the struggle to end segregation and apartheid. The Civil Rights Movement in America culminated with the anti-discrimination legislation of the 1960s. South African apartheid lasted for a generation longer, ending in 1994 with the election of Nelson Mandela as president. "[T]he arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."<sup>1</sup>

## SEGREGATION IN AMERICA

Martin Luther King, Jr was born on 15 January 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1944, King graduated from Booker T. Washington High School and was admitted to Morehouse College at the age of 15. After graduating from college, he entered Crozer Theological Seminary in Upland, Pennsylvania. King was ordained as a Baptist minister on 25 February 1948, when he was 19 years old. In 1951, King entered Boston University. He received a PhD in Theology from that institution on 5 June 1955. King married Coretta Scott and settled in Montgomery, Alabama, where he became the pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church.

In the 1950s, segregation was a deeply entrenched American institution. The system was officially sanctioned by the 1896 decision, *Plessy v. Ferguson*<sup>2</sup>, which held that

segregation did not violate the Constitution if the separate facilities provided for blacks were equal to those reserved for whites. After *Plessy*, a regime of white supremacy was imposed. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments<sup>3</sup> of the United States Constitution were essentially nullified in the South. African Americans were disenfranchised, confined to substandard housing in segregated neighbourhoods and excluded from all but the lowest paying, least desirable occupations. They were always separate, but never equal.<sup>4</sup>

Whites and blacks were born in separate hospitals, educated in separate schools and buried in segregated graveyards. Segregation was codified in state and local laws and enforced by intimidation and violence. There were, in effect, two criminal justice systems: one for whites and another for blacks. When the colour line was breached, violence was unleashed against offenders by the Ku Klux Klan and local whites, often in concert with local law enforcement officials. Lynching and other forms of racial violence and intimidation were routine.<sup>5</sup>

In the North many theatres, restaurants, places of entertainment and public accommodations barred black patrons. Segregated neighbourhoods were enforced by racially restrictive covenants. The covenants were clauses in deeds that prevented property owners and subsequent purchasers from selling their homes to racial and religious minorities. When northern cities began to industrialise at the beginning of the twentieth century, thousands of African-American



families migrated from the rural South to cities in the Northeast and Midwest. Local ordinances were enacted that prohibited African Americans from occupying properties except in black neighbourhoods.

The ordinances were challenged and declared unconstitutional in a 1917 decision, *Buchanan v. Warley*.<sup>6</sup> After *Buchanan*, the real estate industry resorted to racially restrictive covenants. The Supreme Court implicitly endorsed the covenants in a 1926 decision, *Corrigan v. Buckley*.<sup>7</sup> The Fourteenth Amendment applies only to "state action", which consists of actions taken by the state and local governments. The covenants, however, were private agreements.

During the post-World War II era of the 1940s and '50s, suburban communities were developed in areas adjacent to cities. For most Americans, home ownership was made possible for the first time by the introduction of fixed-rate, 30-year mortgages insured by the Veterans Administration and Federal Housing Authority. The Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), a federal agency established during the 1930s depression, fostered discriminatory practices through "redlining".<sup>8</sup>

The HOLC rated every neighbourhood in America "A", "B", "C" or "D", using colour coded maps. The lowest quality rating, "D", was coloured red. Neighbourhoods rated "A" had to be homogenous and occupied by whites. Neighbourhoods in which blacks resided were rated "D". The neighbourhood's boundaries were marked by a red line. The

federal government required racially restrictive covenants on loans it insured. This barred African Americans from suburban communities in which most of the homes were purchased with federally-insured mortgages.<sup>9</sup>

## **THE AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT**

Martin Luther King's career as a civil rights leader began in 1955 and ended thirteen years later with his assassination in 1968. During this relatively short period of time, America underwent a profound change. Beginning in the mid-1930s, the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) challenged segregation with court cases that culminated with *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954.<sup>10</sup> That case effectively reversed *Plessy* and held that racial segregation in public schools violated the Fourteenth Amendment of the US Constitution.

After *Brown*, the Civil Rights Movement went from the courts to the streets. On 1 December 1955, Rosa Parks was arrested after refusing to yield her seat to a white passenger.<sup>11</sup> A few days later, the Montgomery Improvement Association was organised by local black leaders. Martin Luther King, who was just 26 years old at the time, was elected president. After a tense year, in which car-pools were organised and weekly prayer meetings held, in November of 1956 the US Supreme Court ruled that segregation on public transportation was unconstitutional, ensuring victory for the bus boycott.<sup>12</sup>



In 1960, lunch counter sit-ins began in Greensboro, North Carolina, and rapidly spread across the South. In Atlanta, King was arrested during a sit-in, as he waited to be served at a segregated restaurant. He was sentenced to four months in jail, but after intervention by John Kennedy and Robert Kennedy, he was released.

In 1963, King launched the Birmingham campaign.<sup>13</sup> The effort started with a boycott and switched to nonviolent marches and sit-ins. Eugene "Bull" Connor, Birmingham's Commissioner of Public Safety, ordered police officers to use high-pressure water hoses, police dogs and tear gas to control protesters, many of whom were children. The extreme brutality inflicted on protestors was featured on nightly newscasts that shocked the nation. King was arrested. During his incarceration he wrote the *Letter from Birmingham Jail* in which he argued that individuals have "a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws."<sup>14</sup> After weeks of tense negotiations, an agreement was reached that provided for the desegregation of Birmingham's stores, restaurants and schools.

The historic March on Washington was held on 28 August 1963.<sup>15</sup> It was the result of the collective efforts of several civil rights groups. The march was the largest civil rights demonstration in American history. It received international attention. Approximately 250 000 people gathered peacefully on the Mall in Washington, DC. King was an inspirational speaker. He used the black preachers' "call-and-response style" driven by rhythmic cadences. King captivated the

audience and the nation with his "I have a dream" speech in which he articulated his vision of a just and egalitarian society.<sup>16</sup> The speech catapulted him to international acclaim. On 3 January 1964, King's image appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine as its "Man of the Year". On 10 December, King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, which made him, at the age of 35, the youngest person to be awarded the honour.

In the summer of that year, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted.<sup>17</sup> The major provisions of this landmark legislation are: Title II, which outlawed discrimination in hotels, motels, restaurants, theatres, and other public accommodations; Title VI, which authorised the withdrawal of federal funds from programmes, including public schools, which practised discrimination; and Title VII, which prohibits discrimination in employment and created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to review and investigate complaints.<sup>18</sup>

This was a major accomplishment that met several of the legislative goals of the Civil Rights Movement. The denial of access to places of public accommodation stigmatised and demeaned African Americans. The threat of the loss of federal funding made discrimination in schools, colleges and universities too costly to continue. This dramatically expanded the educational opportunities available to blacks. Discrimination in employment relegated African Americans to the lowest paying, least desirable occupations. The law forbade employment discrimination.

The 1964 Civil Rights Act did not address voting rights. The Fifteenth Amendment of the Constitution guaranteed African Americans the right to vote. However, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, almost all of the southern states had enacted laws that disenfranchised African Americans. The Selma, Alabama, voting rights demonstrations were publicised in January of 1965, when Martin Luther King addressed a mass meeting in that city. Members of a civil rights group, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, had been attempting to register voters in Selma for several weeks.<sup>19</sup>

During their first march, the protestors were stopped by police officers who savagely attacked them with billy clubs and tear gas. After a second march was aborted, King led a group of demonstrators on a journey from Selma to Montgomery. They set out on 21 March with approximately 3 000 demonstrators. Four days later they reached Montgomery with 25 000 marchers. This effort spurred Congress to enact the Voting Rights Act, which President Lyndon Johnson signed into law on 6 August 1965.<sup>20</sup> The Act prohibits states from imposing any requirement that would deny the right of any citizen to vote on account of race. This was another significant accomplishment of the Civil Rights Movement.

In 1967, African Americans' frustrations and impatience erupted in 159 race riots in cities across the United States.<sup>21</sup> The first occurred in Cleveland, Ohio. The most destructive violence took place in Newark, New Jersey, and Detroit, Michigan. In Newark, 26 people

were killed and 1 500 injured. The riots reflected the anger and frustration that had been building for decades. Northern ghettos had long been tinderboxes waiting to explode.

In 1967, Dr King announced his intent to organise a Poor People's Campaign that would focus on unemployment and poverty. As plans were being finalised, King travelled to Memphis, Tennessee, to support striking sanitation workers. In March of 1968, King led a demonstration in Memphis that went out of control and turned violent. Disappointed but undeterred, King returned to Memphis. On 3 April, he delivered a powerful, and what would be his final, speech. Appearing to anticipate his death, King said:

I got into Memphis. And some began to say the threats, or talk about the threats that were out... But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, *that we, as a people*, will get to the Promised Land!<sup>22</sup>

On 4 April, King was fatally shot by an assassin while standing on a balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis. Riots erupted in 130 American cities; 20 000 people were arrested. Washington, Baltimore and

Chicago were the heaviest hit among the cities that experienced unrest following King's assassination.<sup>23</sup> While many of the nation's cities were still smouldering from the riots, the Fair Housing Act of 1968 was enacted.<sup>24</sup> This law forbade discrimination in the sale and rental of housing and allowed blacks to move away from the ghettos to which they had been confined. With the passage of the Fair Housing Act, the Civil Rights Movement's legislative agenda was achieved. By the time of his death, King had become an international Civil Rights icon. In 1983, a law was enacted that made his birthday a federal holiday. "The Stone of Hope" memorial, featuring a statue of King, was opened to the public in Washington DC, on 22 August 2011.

## **SOUTH AFRICAN APARTHEID**

The careers of Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela bear a striking resemblance. Both men were internationally renowned leaders in the struggle against black oppression. Mandela organised rallies and protests in the 1950s. He was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964. He was imprisoned until 1990. After his release, he was elected the first black president of South Africa in 1994. Over the course of these years, South Africa transitioned from a white ruled oligarchy to an egalitarian democracy.

On 18 July 1918, Rolihlahla Mandela was born in Mvezo, a small village in the Transkei, a former British protectorate in the South. His father, Gadla Henry Mphakanyiswa, was a chief of the Thembu people, a subdivision

of the Xhosa nation, and counsellor to the monarch. When Nelson Mandela's father died in 1930, the paramount chief, Jongintaba Dalindyebo, became his guardian. Mandela grew up with his two sisters in the village of Qunu. He attended Clarkebury Missionary school and graduated from Healdtown Methodist school. The name Nelson was given to him by a school teacher when he was seven years old.<sup>25</sup>

In 1938, Mandela enrolled at the University of Fort Hare, South Africa's first university for black Africans. At Fort Hare Mandela met Oliver Tambo, who would become his close friend and law partner. Mandela and Tambo were expelled from Fort Hare in 1940 for leading a student protest. Mandela subsequently moved to Johannesburg to avoid being forced into an arranged marriage. He found work as a night-watchman at a gold mine.<sup>26</sup>

In Johannesburg, Mandela met Walter Sisulu, who became his close friend. He began to work as a clerk in a law firm. In 1941, Mandela completed the work for his bachelor's degree and began to study law at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. In 1944, Mandela married Evelyn Ntoko Mase, Walter Sisulu's cousin. The marriage produced four children. Over time, however, Mandela's frequent absences and heavy involvement in protest activities strained their relationship to breaking point. The couple divorced in 1958.<sup>27</sup>

Nelson Mandela was born into a society in which black Africans were severely

oppressed.<sup>28</sup> Apartheid in South Africa was, in some ways, even harsher than segregation in America.<sup>29</sup> In 1910, the Union of South Africa was established by former British colonies of the Cape and Natal and the Boer republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State. The 1911 *Mines and Works Act*, and its 1926 successor reserved skilled jobs in the mining and railway industries for white workers. In 1913, the *Land Act* was adopted to prevent blacks, except those living in the Cape Province, from buying land outside of designated areas. The law effectively limited black land ownership to 8 percent of South Africa's land area.

The *Natives Act* of 1923 regulated blacks residing in urban areas. It gave local authorities the power to establish separate black areas on the outskirts of urban and industrial areas. Local authorities were expected to provide housing for Africans or to require employers to provide housing for their workers. In 1934, South Africa's parliament enacted the *Status of the Union Act*, which ended its colonial ties with England and established South Africa as a sovereign nation.<sup>30</sup>

In 1948, the formal policy of apartheid was adopted after the National Party prevailed in the elections. The National Party was founded in 1915 and was South Africa's governing party from 1948 until 1994. The Party's supporters included most of the Dutch-descended Afrikaners and many English-speaking whites. This ultra-right wing party rose to power on a platform of "apartheid" which is Afrikaans for "separateness".

Over the following decades a series of apartheid laws were enacted. Black citizenship was revoked. Education, residential areas, medical care and common areas, public transportation, beaches and other amenities were segregated.<sup>31</sup>

The *Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act* of 1949 forbade interracial marriages. The *Immorality Amendment Act* of 1950 forbade extramarital sex among people of different races. The *Population Registration Act* enacted in 1950 required every South African to be classified into one of three racial groups: white, coloured (mixed race or Asian) and Bantu or native (African/black). In 1950, the *Group Areas Act* segregated blacks and whites. Urban areas were divided into "group areas" in which residence was restricted to designated racial groups.

The 1951 *Bantu Building Workers Act* prevented black South Africans from performing skilled work in any occupation except those designated for blacks. In 1952, the *Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents Act* required black South Africans to carry identification that included a photograph, place of origin, employment record, tax payments and any arrest records. The 1953 *Bantu Education Act* established a black Education Department. This law enforced racially separated educational facilities. A curriculum was developed that was designed to prevent blacks from receiving higher levels of instruction. A 1959 law prohibited black students from attending white universities. The 1953 *Reservation*

of *Separate Amenities Act* imposed racial segregation in all public areas including buildings, services and transportation.

The 1951 *Bantu Authorities Act* created ten black "homelands" as independent states. It provided the legal basis for the deportation of blacks into designated homeland reserve areas and established tribal, regional and territorial authorities. The 1970 *Bantu Homelands Citizens Act* revoked black South Africans' citizenship and required them to become citizens of a homeland designated for each individual's ethnic group, even if they didn't actually live in their designated homeland. The purpose of the law was to ensure that white South Africans constituted the majority of the South African electorate.

## **THE ANC YOUTH LEAGUE AND THE DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN**

Nelson Mandela was an engaging speaker and a charismatic leader. He was tall and imposing, but he was always humble and modest. He gave credit to others and readily acknowledged their contributions. In 1944, Mandela, Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu founded the Youth League of the African National Congress (ANC). The ANC had been established in 1912 to bring Africans together to defend their rights and freedoms. Leaders of the youth league felt the ANC's cautious approach moved too slowly. They decided to take a more active approach. In 1948, Mandela became national secretary of the ANC's Youth League. In 1950, he was elected president of the Youth League.

In December 1952, Mandela and Oliver Tambo opened South Africa's first black law firm in Johannesburg. That same year, the ANC commenced its "Defiance Campaign". The nonviolent tactics employed were similar to those Martin Luther King would use in the United States. The Defiance Campaign was the largest nonviolent protest in South Africa's history. It was the first demonstration that included all racial groups under the leadership of the ANC and the South African Indian Congress. On 26 June 1952, a group of volunteers led by Mandela and Sisulu openly defied South Africa's apartheid laws in Johannesburg and other cities. A national action committee was formed by Sisulu and Ismail "Maulvi" Cachalia. Mandela was the leader of the effort.

During the many protest demonstrations, participants sang freedom songs and gave the ANC's thumbs-up sign as a symbol of unity. They shouted *Mayibuye i Afrika* (come back, Africa) and were greeted with cheers from onlookers. A total of 52 Africans and Indians, including Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela and Ismail Cachalia, marched into Boksburg, a location near Johannesburg, without permits. All of the demonstrators were arrested, except Mandela and Cachalia who attended as observers, having planned to avoid arrest.

In Port Elizabeth, 30 people entered a railway station through the "Europeans Only" entrance and were arrested. Others were arrested for entering the European sections of post offices, sitting on benches reserved for whites or violating other apartheid



regulations. The campaign spread from Port Elizabeth to smaller towns in the Eastern Cape Province and from Johannesburg to Cape Town, to Bloemfontein and Durban.

The government reacted by arresting the leaders of the protests. A number of them were charged with violating the *Suppression of Communism Act* for promoting communism. The trial began in November and, on 2 December 1952, all of the 20 persons charged were found guilty of "statutory communism" and sentenced to nine months imprisonment. The sentences were suspended for two years.

Mandela was banned under the *Suppression of Communism Act*. Banning in South Africa was an administrative action in which individuals could be subjected to severe restrictions on their travel, associations and speech. A person deemed to be a communist, a terrorist or a threat to the security and public order of the state could be confined to the individual's home or immediate surroundings.

At a 1955 meeting of the Congress of the People, the Freedom Charter was adopted. The government's ban on Mandela prevented him from attending. The initiative for the Freedom Charter was developed by a multi-racial coalition of organisations, including the ANC, the Congress of Democrats, the Indian National Congress and the South African Coloured People's Congress. The Freedom Charter was intended to facilitate a united, anti-apartheid movement with a common vision. It was adopted by

approximately 3 000 delegates at the Congress of the People in Kliptown, near Johannesburg, on 26 June 1955.

The Charter was the product of more than a year of meetings and discussions that were convened with groups across South Africa. It envisioned an egalitarian society that would replace the apartheid regime. In a reformed South Africa, the wealth of the country would be shared and adequate housing, education and healthcare would be provided for all South Africans. The Freedom Charter states that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it" and that "all shall be equal before the law". It promised to continue the struggle against apartheid until it was replaced by a democratic order.<sup>32</sup>

On 6 December 1956, Mandela was arrested and charged with treason, along with 156 other political leaders. The arrests included most of the executives of the ANC, as well as representatives of the Congress of Democrats, South African Indian Congress, Coloured People's Congress and South African Congress of Trade Unions. The persons arrested were charged with "high treason and a countrywide conspiracy to use violence to overthrow the present government and replace it with a communist state". While the charges were pending, Mandela met and married a social worker, Winnie Nomzamo Madikizela, in 1958. Their marriage produced two daughters.

On 29 March 1961, Mandela and his co-defendants were acquitted after a four-year trial. However, in 1960, the Sharpeville

demonstrations were organised to protest laws that required black South Africans to carry passbooks with them whenever they travelled out of their home areas. The ANC planned an anti-pass campaign that would have commenced on 31 March 1960. The Pan Africanist Congress, a younger and more militant group that broke away from the ANC, organised a campaign that was scheduled to start 10 days before the ANC's demonstration.

On 21 March, a demonstration involving 5 000 to 7 000 people convened in Sharpeville. The protesters went to the local police station where they demanded to be arrested for not carrying passes. Police reinforcements arrived during the incident. In the afternoon, scuffles broke out and some of the demonstrators began throwing rocks at the police. As the crowd moved forward, the police began to fire live rounds into the crowd. A total of 69 people were killed, 180 were injured. The "Sharpeville Massacre", as the incident became known, sparked protests and riots among black South Africans throughout the country. On 30 March, the South African government declared a state of emergency. Thousands of blacks were arrested. The African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress were banned.<sup>33</sup>

## **FREEDOM FIGHTER**

After the ANC was outlawed, Mandela decided to go underground to carry on the organisation's activities clandestinely. For 17 months, he was a fugitive. During this period, the South African press referred to Mandela

as "The Black Pimpernel" based on his ability to avoid the police, using several disguises, including a favourite that involved posing as a chauffeur.<sup>34</sup>

Mandela travelled to Addis Abba, Ethiopia, to attend a conference of African nationalist leaders. From there, he went to Algeria to receive guerrilla training. Afterwards, he went to London to meet with Oliver Tambo, who was heading the ANC in exile. During this period, Mandela established the ANC's military wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (abbreviated as "MK" and translated as "Spear of the Nation") and became its first leader. Mandela viewed nonviolent protest as a tactic to be used only as long as it was effective. The circumstances had changed. Violence had to be met with violence. Mandela became a freedom fighter.

MK engaged in acts of sabotage including bombing military installations, power plants, telephone lines and transportation links at night, when civilians were not present. Mandela said they chose sabotage, because it was the least harmful action and it did not involve loss of life. MK set off 57 bombings on 16 December, 1961. Additional attacks were launched on 31 December. MK did not suspend its armed struggle until Mandela was unconditionally released from prison and the ANC was unbanned.

On 5 August 1962, Mandela was arrested after returning to South Africa. After a trial, Mandela was convicted of leaving the country illegally and incitement to strike. He was sentenced to five years in prison. On 11 July



1963, while Mandela was in prison, the police raided the ANC's secret headquarters at a farmhouse in Rivonia, a suburb of Johannesburg. They found documents that outlined "Operation Mayibuye", which was a plan for a possible commencement of guerilla operations stating how they might provoke a mass armed uprising against the South African government. Operation Mayibuye was drafted by members of the National High Command. Mandela was imprisoned at the time and did not participate in drafting the document. He later described Operation Mayibuye as a "draft document" that he considered "entirely unrealistic in its goals and plans".

Mandela and other ANC leaders were charged with recruiting persons for training in the use of explosives and in guerrilla warfare for the purpose of violent revolution and committing acts of sabotage; conspiring to commit those acts and to aid foreign military units when they invaded the Republic; acting in these ways to further the objects of communism and soliciting and receiving money from sympathisers outside South Africa.

At the conclusion of the trial, Mandela said:

During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities.

It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

On 12 June 1964, Mandela, Sisulu and six other ANC leaders were convicted, sentenced to life imprisonment and taken to Robben Island prison.<sup>35</sup>

### **The Soweto Uprising and the "Free Mandela" Campaign**

On 16 June 1976, thousands of school students marched through the streets of Soweto, an area in the city of Johannesburg, to oppose a law requiring the use of Afrikaans as the language of instruction in black schools. The South African government decided to enforce a law requiring secondary education to be conducted in Afrikaans, rather than in English. This was bitterly resented by teachers and students. A protest march was organised in the Soweto township on 16 June 1976. Over 20 000 students turned out for the march. There was a heavy police presence.

The bloodshed began when police set off tear gas and fired guns into the crowds. Students of all ages were attacked without warning. Many young, defenceless children were killed including 13-year-old Hector Pieter-son. The students used sticks, rocks, bricks and schoolbags to attack the police. Heavily outnumbered, and unable to protect themselves from the students, the police fled to regroup. When the police retreated, students began destroying government property. The students set up barricades to make sure that

the police could not return. The riots spread to other South African townships.

The government reacted with force. Anti-riot units and armed vehicles were sent to Soweto and other townships. Government officials restricted the activities of anti-apartheid groups. Meetings were stopped and activists were harassed. After Soweto, however, an uprising or march would take place almost every day, often completely spontaneously. Young blacks expressed their anger by marching, rioting and setting fire to government property. In the end, over 360 blacks were killed in the Soweto riots of 1976. The government's heavy-handed tactics ignited a fire that would burn until the end of the apartheid regime.<sup>36</sup>

In the late 1960s, the ANC launched an international anti-apartheid campaign. Nelson Mandela became the personification of this effort. His photograph, with the caption "Free Mandela", appeared on flyers and literature that were widely distributed.<sup>37</sup> In the United Kingdom, the Anti-Apartheid Movement was established in 1959. The organisation led one of Britain's most successful social campaigns. The organisation started as the "Boycott Movement". In 1960, it was re-named the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM). The organisation sought an end to apartheid in South Africa. It demanded sanctions and the economic isolation of South Africa. For more than three decades, hundreds of thousands of people in Britain joined AAM campaigns. During that time, the Movement campaigned for the release of people detained without trial. It encouraged

banks and other British companies to sell their South African subsidiaries and led a national boycott of South African imports.<sup>38</sup>

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Anti-Apartheid Movement spread to America.<sup>39</sup> Supporters urged institutional investors to withdraw their investments from South African-based companies. Institutional investors, such as public pension funds, were the most susceptible to these types of lobbying efforts. The anti-apartheid disinvestment campaign moved to Michigan State University and Stanford University in 1977. The movement spread to campuses across the nation. Students organised and demanded that their universities stop investing in companies that traded with or had operations in South Africa.

On 21 November 1984, Randall Robinson, the founder of TransAfrica,<sup>40</sup> District of Columbia Congressman, Walter Fauntroy, and Professor and Civil Rights activist, Mary Frances Berry, were arrested at a sit-in at the South African embassy. This high profile event elevated the Anti-apartheid Movement to the national stage and ignited the Anti-apartheid Movement in the United States. Within a few days, sit-ins and other demonstrations against the South Africa government were held in cities across America.<sup>41</sup> By 1985, more than 3 000 people were arrested during anti-apartheid demonstrations.

The Congressional Black Caucus developed a legislative strategy that led to the enactment of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986.<sup>42</sup> This law imposed sanctions

against South Africa and stated a number of preconditions for lifting the sanctions. The legislation banned all US trade and investment in South Africa. Direct flights to South Africa were banned. The act also required various federal departments and agencies to withhold funds and other assistance to the South African government. The Bill was passed in August of 1986. President Ronald Reagan vetoed the legislation on 26 September. Congress overrode Reagan's veto on 2 October.<sup>43</sup>

The international sanctions imposed significant pressure on South Africa's economy. The government finally recognised that some actions were needed to address the situation. On 31 January 1985, South Africa's President P.W. Botha offered to pardon Mandela if the ANC renounced violence. Mandela declined saying South Africa's government needed to dismantle apartheid and grant full political rights to blacks. In July of 1989, President Botha invited Mandela to his official Cape Town residence for a 45-minute talk. Mandela's comments on his conversation with Botha were broadcast on government radio and television stations.<sup>44</sup>

On 15 October 1989, Walter Sisulu and four other ANC prisoners were freed by F.W. de Klerk, who had replaced Botha as president in August. On 2 February 1990, De Klerk lifted the bans on the ANC and 60 other organisations that were outlawed. He promised to free all political prisoners, end restrictions on 374 individuals and to impose a moratorium on executions. On 11 February 1990, Nelson Mandela was released. He was 71 years old.

On 20 December 1991, negotiations commenced to prepare an interim constitution based on political equality for all South Africans.<sup>45</sup> There were tense intervals during the negotiations. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, ANC supporters and the Inkatha Freedom Party were involved in several bloody clashes. The Inkatha Party was founded in 1975 by Mangosuthu Gatscha Buthelezi, a Zulu chief and minister of the KwaZulu homeland. Under Buthelezi's leadership, Inkatha indicated that it was willing to accept power-sharing arrangements that would fall short of majority rule in a post-apartheid South Africa. In 1991, the South African government admitted that it had secretly subsidised Inkatha's conflicts with the ANC.<sup>46</sup>

On 15 October 1993, Mandela and De Klerk were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for working to end apartheid and putting South Africa on a path to democracy. On 27 April 1994, the apartheid regime formally ended when the ANC won a majority of the vote and elected Mandela as president.

A Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established after the elimination of apartheid. Witnesses who were victims of human rights violations presented testimony about their experiences.<sup>47</sup> Police officers and other perpetrators of violence testified about their crimes and could request amnesty from civil and criminal prosecution. The Commission was viewed by many as an important aspect of the transition to democracy in South Africa. In 1996, Nelson divorced Winnie Mandela. In 1998, on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, he married Graça Machel. In May of 1999, Mandela stepped

down as President after choosing not to run for re-election. On 5 December 2013, Nelson Mandela died in his home at the age of 95, surrounded by his family.

## CONCLUSION

In the decades that followed the enactment of the American Civil Rights laws of the 1960s, the black middle-class has grown exponentially. Levels of educational attainment are higher. Employment opportunities are greater. Family incomes are higher. The election of Barack Obama as President, in 2008, represented an unprecedented advance in race relations in America. "However, an examination of the current status of African "American" families reveals a mixed picture". For those in a position to take advantage of the opportunities created by the Civil Rights revolution, the gains since the 1960s have been remarkable. For the 28.1 percent of the African-American population residing in the nation's impoverished communities, the obstacles to advancement can be as formidable today as they were a generation ago.<sup>48</sup> We have not, as a people, made it to the Promised Land, but some of us are close.

The number of families in South Africa's growing, black middle class has surpassed that of their white counterparts over the past

eight years. They are now seen as the driving force behind the country's economic growth. While the African government still has major challenges to overcome in its efforts to improve the lives of the nation's impoverished families, millions of black South Africans have advanced into the middle class since apartheid ended in 1994. Recently released studies by the University of Cape Town's Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing found that the black middle-class population had grown to 4.2 million.<sup>49</sup> This increased from 1.7 million in 2004.

There are still many challenges. The poorest 10 percent of South Africans receive less than 1 percent of the national income. The richest 10 percent get 57 percent. In South Africa, 67 percent of black children live below the poverty line compared to 2 percent of white children. The overall poverty rate is 23 percent.<sup>50</sup> However, the African National Congress has made significant strides since the end of apartheid. The economy has expanded for nearly two decades. Literacy and access to electricity have advanced considerably. An affordable housing programme and welfare payments to low income groups have elevated nearly all South Africans out of abject poverty. The nation is rapidly moving forward. Americans and South Africans owe a debt of gratitude to Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King.

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