



newspaper dated 05/03/1990

Apartheid was a system of racial segregation that existed in South Africa from 1948 to the early 1990s, through discriminatory laws, policies and practices. Furthermore, the crime of apartheid implies the commission of inhumane acts with the intention of maintaining this domination.

In 1950, the government passed the first of the segregation laws. This text, known as the Population Registration Act, defined the four main racial groups to which each individual was systematically attached:

- Whites, mainly descendants of European immigrants. They represented just over 21% of the South African population at the time apartheid was introduced.
- Blacks or colored, who represented almost 67% of the South African population in 1950.
- mixed-race, (9%).
- Asians, mainly Indians (just under 3%).



This text was to serve as the basis for some fifty others with a single objective: to separate communities. In 1950, a law obliged each group to live in predefined urban housing areas.

In 1953, services and public places were segregated (Reservation of Separation Act, in 1953). "Europeans Only", "Native Only" and "Coloured Only" signs became compulsory.

In 1959, the country was divided into several geographically distinct zones, to which each racial group was assigned. The regions reserved for blacks, called Bantustans, were supposed to acquire economic and administrative autonomy. But they covered only 13% of the territory and were therefore overpopulated. Worse still, they were generally the poorest lands, with no natural resources and no industry.

Gradually, the policy of segregation was extended to all areas: geographical, economic, social... But the resistance of the blacks and the opposition of the international community put an end to it in 1991. Take Nelson Mandela, for example. Until his death, Mandela fought to overthrow the law, through strategies of resistance, long years of imprisonment and dynamic leadership. A lifetime spent freeing South Africa from the yoke of apartheid and ushering in an era of reconciliation and democracy. He joined the African National Congress, which campaigned for civil rights for blacks in South Africa. In 1952, Mandela organised the launch of a large-scale civil disobedience campaign in which he encouraged black demonstrators to break the law. More than 8,000 people - including Mandela - were imprisoned for breaching curfews, refusing to produce identification



and other offences.

On trial for sabotage, Mandela and the other defendants knew they would be executed. So they turned their trial into a statement to

highlight the anti-apartheid struggle and denounce the judicial system that oppressed black people in South Africa. In 1964, Mandela was sentenced not to death but to life imprisonment. He was only allowed one 30-minute visit a year and could only write and receive two letters a year.



He was held in austere conditions and worked in a quarry extracting limestone. After 27 years in prison, Mandela became the world's best-known political prisoner. His speeches were banned in South Africa, but nothing was done: he was already the most famous man in the country. His supporters campaigned for his release and the news of his imprisonment mobilised anti-apartheid activists around the world. In the 1960s, some members of the United Nations called for sanctions against South Africa, demands that gained momentum over the following decades. South Africa ended up becoming a pariah on the international stage. In 1990, faced with international pressure and the threat of civil war, the new president, F. W. de Klerk, pledged to end apartheid and free Mandela. He then shared a Nobel Peace

Prize with de Klerk and became president of a new country.

