

ARMED STRUGGLE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

The struggle for independence in South Africa started since the Dutch and the British had interested in South Africa for many years since 1652 and 1795 respectively, The two European powers struggled for the occupation of south Africa since 18th century AD.

In 1910 they made a union of South Africa where the Boers gained independence (minority independence) in their republics of Transvaal, Natal and Orange Free State. The rest of South Africa like the Cape Province remained under the British, under the British and the Boers in south Africa racial segregation was common.

In 1922 South African Native National Congress (SANNC) was formed by Kaisake Seme to struggle against racial segregation and attain civil and political rights of all people living in South Africa. In 1935 SANNC was transformed into *the African national congress (ANC)* political party. ANC recruited many young professionals from several towns in South Africa for example; Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu who then formed *the ANC youth league* in 1940

During all these time Africans were fighting for their freedom through constitutional means but they failed

THE WAY TO ARMED STRUGGLE

In 1948 the British withdrew from administration of South Africa; the Boers took control of the whole South Africa since 1948 under *the nationalist party* with Dr. Malan as the prime minister of the Boer government who in 1948 officially declared apartheid as the policy that his government would pursue.

The state passed laws that paved the way for “**grant apartheid** “ which was centered on separating races on large scale, under apartheid policy south Africa was made up of four distinct racial groups, whites, blacks, colored and Indians who were treated differently by the government according the new apartheid laws

.As the reaction to apartheid policy, ANC began defiance campaigns against this policy in 1952 deliberately defying apartheid segregationist laws and opposing the **Bantustans** which were the land reserve areas where many Africans were overcrowded after being evicted from their fertile land,

In 1955 the ANC prepared a freedom charter which proclaimed that South Africa belonged to all who lived in it (black and whites), the aim of the charter was to form a free South Africa based on political equality, respect of power sharing between various races. But the Boer government arrested 156 ANC leaders who were imprisoned for four years as a response to the freedom charter.

In 1959 there was misunderstanding between ANC members over the kind of South Africa which had to be formed in consideration of being a multiracial society, the situation

led to the separation of Oliver Tambo and Robert Sobukwe from ANC and formed *the Pan African Congress (PAC)* while Nelson Mandela and other ANC leaders continued with ANC.

In 1960 all the two parties carried out the strike against the pass law which required Africans to carry a pass indicating that they were offering labor to the mines and settlers' farms, the strike took place at Sharpeville in Transvaal and at Langa in Cape Town in March 1960, the police killed 69 unarmed black demonstrators and 180 were injured, most of them shot behind when they were running, this was known as *Sharpeville massacre*. This event marked the new phase of struggle for independence in South Africa because it revealed that the Boers were not prepared to stop apartheid in South Africa.

After the Sharpeville massacre in 1960s the Boer government banned ANC and PAC POLITICAL PARTIES in April 1961. The leader of PAC Robert Sobukwe was arrested and detained on Robben Island, Chief Albert Lithuli a leader of ANC was the most wanted individual by the Boer government. Nobody was allowed to participate in the activities of ANC and PAC.

As the result the ANC under the leadership of Nelson Mandela formed a liberation army known as **UMKONTHO WE SIZWE** meaning **the spear of the Nation** and adopted armed struggle through guerilla movement, and PAC adopted POQO which based on strikes and demonstrations.

In 1963 Nelson Mandela was arrested and charged of instigating violence in Revonia (Revonia trial), he was sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island where he met his fellow Robert Sobukwe.

Following the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela, the ANC opened offices outside South Africa for example Dar es Salaam and other cities in Europe.

In 1976 demonstrations were organized by the Africans against the Boer government, (the SOWETO uprising) which was organized by children (school children) led by Steve Biko were opposing the use of Afrikaans language as a medium of instructions in schools. The Boer government killed many people including their leader STEVE BIKO.

The struggle for independence continued in 1980s under the influence of internal and external factors. UNO, OAU, Commonwealth and frontline states started to support Africa in the struggle against apartheid regime; economic sanctions were introduced to force the Boers to grant political independence to the Africans.

In 1990 the Boer's president P. W. Botha was replaced Frederick de Klerk, the new president was ready to discuss with African political organizations such as ANC, PAC SAC for African majority rule.

The new president also released nationalist leaders like Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrado and Andrew Mlageni from jail. And on 11th February, 1990 he released Mandela from Robben Island.

After the release from the prison Nelson Mandela appealed to the world organizations like UNO and commonwealth, OAU and frontline states not to uplift the sanctions until the Boer government implement ANC's demands.

Finally the Boer government implemented the ANC demands as they were given by Nelson Mandela, in 1994 Election for majority rule was held and ANC won, Mandela became the first African president, African majority rule was achieved and apartheid ended in South Africa.

THE CAUSES OF ARMED STRUGGLE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

- i. Presence of apartheid policy, the Africans were discriminated in all spheres of life when apartheid system was introduced in South Africa, Africans were segregated in terms of education, health services and housing, Africans were not allowed to mix with the white race in the buses, hostels, restaurants and residential areas, apartheid system was intolerable in South Africa.
- ii. Banning of political parties in 1961 by the Boer government, the ANC and PAC political parties were outlawed by the state. The solution in liberation of South Africa was the application of armed struggle through the UMKONTHO WE SIZWE.
- iii. The material and moral support by the front line states in Africa, it was possible for the ANC to train its soldiers in Tanzania, it also received weapons from Angola, Mozambique, and Zambia to fight against the colonial rule in South Africa.
- iv. The exploitation of South African labor through forced labor, pass laws, and low wages made the Africans revolt for armed struggle; they were discontented mostly by the pass laws which had to be carried by the Africans to prove to the police that they were offering labor in the mines or settler farms.
- v. Killing of Africans at Sharpeville town in 1960, the event catalyzed the use of armed struggle about 69 Africans were killed and 180 were wounded by the Boers' police, immediately the Africans declared the use of armed struggle against the Boers.
- vi. Imprisonment of African political party leaders like Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrado.
- vii. Failure of peaceful means, the Boers failed to grant African majority rule through non-violent means, like demonstrations, strikes, petitions and etc. because of this Africans had no other alternative except that they had to fight by arms to eliminate minority rule and apartheid system.

THE METHODS EMPLOYED BY BLACK MAJORITY IN SOUTH AFRICAN TO LIBERATE THEMSELVES FROM APARTHEID REGIME

1. **Formation of political parties** such as the S.A.N.N.C (1912) later the A.N.C in 1935, despite that some political parties were banned yet, they played a fundamental role in awakening blacks in South Africa about the evils of Apartheid. Furthermore, some of the political parties organized peaceful demonstrations against the Apartheid policy.
2. **The use of mass peaceful demonstrations**, which pled the Boers' government to grant the majority rule in South Africa. Political activists, adult and children came together demanding for the liquidation of the Apartheid policy in South Africa. For example, the 21st March 1961 famously termed as Sharpeville demonstrations against pass laws in South Africa and the 16th June 1976, which is historically, recorded as Soweto (South West Township) demonstrations. These demonstrations made the black people aware of the evils of **apartheid policy**.
3. **The use of arts such as poems**, novels and songs, which raised the blacks' awareness and feelings as far as the Apartheid policy was concerned. For example, Lucky Dube launched his music album "Together as One" which mobilized the black and whites in South Africa to come together as brothers and sisters, other musicians like Bob Marley (Jamaican) and Miriam Makeba played their distinguished roles in persuading the international community to intervene what was going on in South Africa. Furthermore, novelists such as Peter Abrahams published the novel titled **Mine Boy**, which illustrates the evils that the blacks were experiencing in mines.
4. **Underground organizations**. The black radicals and political leaders mobilized their supporters to secretly join political parties and underground guerilla movements in order to end the racist white regime in South Africa. For example, after the formation of Ukhonto we Sizwe (the spear of the nation) Many ANC young men joined the movement.
5. **The use of mass media such as radios**. For example, some A.N.C leaders who were in exile in Tanzania in collaboration with the government of the United Republic of Tanzania established **RADIO FREEDOM** which was heard in South Africa from Mazimbu – Morogoro, the radio programs which were aired mobilized the black society in South Africa to join their hands firmly against the racist regime in South Africa.
6. **The use of religious forums**, for example the formation of the United Democratic Front (U.D.F) which was a coalition of about 600 organizations led by Rev. Allan Boesak and Bishop Desmond Tutu, played a significant role in ending Apartheid in South Africa.

7. **The blacks convinced the International communities put international sanctions against the South Africa's racist regime.** The O.A.U pled the western capitalist countries not to sell weapons to South Africa. South Africa was also denied air-landing rights.
8. **Seeking international support from friendly countries within Africa and outside Africa,** e.g. Cuba. Black Nationalist parties such as the A.N.C and P.A.C set up their bases in foreign countries. For example, the A.N.C set up its base in Dar-es- Salaam and Morogoro in Tanzania.
9. **Strikes,** these persuasive means and hunger strikes attracted the international community, which helped to pressurize the racist government in South Africa to grant the majority rule in South Africa.

WHY MAJORITY INDEPENDENCE DELAYED IN SOUTH AFRICA.

South Africa delayed to regain majority independence until 1994 due to the following factors.

1. **Boers got support from Britain and USA,** Some western countries such as the US, France and Britain which had an economic stake in South Africa supported South African racist regime. These countries had heavily invested in mining companies and plantations for example the B.P (British Petroleum). Thus they supported the Boers in order to protect their interest.
2. **The banning of all anti-apartheid movements and organizations in South Africa** for example the A.N.C and P.A.C were banned following the 1960/March/21st (Sharpeville Massacres). All these hindered the pace towards majority rule in South Africa.
3. **Imprisonment and assassination of radical political leaders.** For example, Steve Biko was brutally tortured before the very naked eyes of the police and secretly murdered, while other radical leaders such as the late Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu were sentenced to life imprisonment while a few others like Oliver Thambo were exiled. All these hindered and complicated the way to majority rule
4. **South Africa was the country that was recognized by UN to be independent country from 1910.** But the fact was that because both political and economic power were in the hands of whites ,worse still there was apartheid that did not able the African to have economic power the blacks were denied democracy.
5. **Lack of unity among the nationalist organizations .**There were many movements working independently, they included the Indian National Congress [IAC], African people organization [APO], Pan African Congress [PAC] UMSA, ANO, and

Inkatha Freedom Movement. These except ANC were less radical they could not bring any impact but rather weakened the strength of the struggle.

6. **Poverty:** It made it difficult for Africans to confront whites who were both militarily and economically strong. Most of the black Africans were pushed in the reserves of Bantustan where economic activities were very hard the land was barren no infrastructures to facilitate the activities of the movement thus it took long to achieve their independence.
7. **Methods of struggle were weak initially,** until 1960s ANC and PAC were using non-violent based on Mahatma Gandhi philosophy e.g. demonstrations, petition, strikes, and boycotts .It was until 1960 after the Sharpeville massacre that ANC formed UMKONTO WE SIZWE meaning the spear of the nation and adopted violent means.
8. **The international organizations and western countries delayed to support South Africa.** ,The big powers of western Europe feared that an independent south Africa may fall in the hands of Russia a communist nation this was because Mozambique and Angola who are geographically near South Africa had the elements of communism. international organization like UNO started to support south Africa from 1980, 14 years before independence
9. **Betrayal and puppetism,** The puppets betrayed their fellow freedom fighters; these were great obstacles because whatever the nationalistic leaders secretly and confidentially planned was reported to the Boers before they were implemented by the Africans. .
10. **The possession of Namibia by South Africa racist regime,** which was used by her as naval base and harbored the American French and British military men, hindered the military wing of the nationalistic movement.
11. **Boers used sophisticated weapons compared to that of Africans,** they used strong bombs against the African military organization such as *Umkonkho we Sizwe*, they brought such weapons from capitalist countries such as France and western Germany, Boers used the weapons to destabilize the neighboring countries such as Angola, Mozambique, Lesotho, and Zambia, they were threatening these countries so as to make them abandon their aid to the freedom fighters in south Africa



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