

Historical Security Council (1949)

The apartheid policy in South Africa



Forum:	Historical Security Council (1949)
Issue:	The apartheid policy in South Africa
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Introduction

After the 19th century, European Powers had branched out to colonize countries in South America, Asia and Africa for a stronger external power in business, trade and raw materials during the Scramble for Africa at the Berlin Conference. South Africa was colonized by the Dutch in 1795, on their way from The Netherlands to the Dutch East Indies. Soon South African was heavily divided between the Dutch colonists that had travelled there from the Netherlands and the natives of South Africa. Great Britain had colonized the Cape of Good Hope later, and had passed an Act of Union bringing together the British and the Dutch (Afrikaners) to government.

Racial discrimination and white supremacy had begun long before both of the World Wars. The whites from Europe had dominated the country, leaving little independence for the native South Africans. The 'blacks' (natives) were forced to live in distinct areas and were no longer allowed to work as sharecroppers. Although the Afrikaners were in minority, they had complete dominance over those who had been living there long before the Europeans had even known South Africa existed. However due to the economic, political and governmental weakness the country possessed, they were very easily colonized by the modernized and strong western countries.

Government in South Africa had been completely dominated by whites as well. The two parties, the National Party run by J.B.M Hertzog and South African Labour Party, together forming a coalition government, who later merged with the South African Party of Jan Smuts. With Hertzog as Prime Minister, there was an ensured range of social and economic measures improving conditions for the white class. Later, Hertzog and Malan had created the Herinigde National Party.

The radical racist acts strengthened after World War II, when the two political leaders of South Africa wanted sole control of the government rather than the joint agreement of 1910. The anti-Semitism acts of Germany had spread to South Africa throughout the war,



igniting the anti-Semitism flame even more in South Africa, especially the South African Prime Minister Daniel Francois Malan. The 'pure race' trend that the Nazi's had glorified had rubbed of on Malan and many Afrikaners. The two leaders went head to head during the war as Jan Smuts (Afrikaner) supported Britain and the allies whereas Malan supported the Germans.

After the war there is an increase in urbanization, and soon the cities were populated with more blacks than whites. This caused unrest for the political parties who had wanted the whites to have the majority - especially in the cities where there was the most economic potential, calling for mass segregation plans for the 1948 election.

Definition of Key Terms

Apartheid

A policy or system of segregation or discrimination on grounds of race.

Segregation

The action or state of setting someone or something apart from other people or things being set apart.

Anti-Semitism

A prejudice against, hatred of, or discrimination against the Jewish ethnicity, religion or racial group. A person who holds such positions is called an anti-Semite. This inspired the racist hatred towards blacks after World War II.

Scramble for Africa

The invasion, occupation, colonization and annexation of African territory by European powers during the period of New Imperialism, between 1881 and 1914. It is also called the Partition of Africa and Conquest of Africa.

Minority

The smaller number or part, especially a number less than half of the whole number. For example, the whites in South Africa were in minority to the blacks as they made up less than half of the whole population.



Gerrymandering

A practice in the process of electoral districts that attempts to establish a political advantage for a particular party or group by manipulating district boundaries to create partisan advantaged districts.

General Overview

The 1948 governmental election

The governmental elections of 1948 were between the United Party (UP), a pro-commonwealth, liberal, conservatist party lead by incumbent Prime Minister Jan Smuts and the Herinigde National Party (HNP), a nationalistic, republican, white minority rule party lead by Daniel Francois Malan. Both parties were strongly against blacks having political influence, and therefore the elections were a white bias. Africans had been banned from political voting in the 1930's, and very little people of Asian descent were able to vote. The voting was reserved for the white's only.

The HNP realized that Many white South Africans felt threatened by any black political influence and therefore had drawn up a policy of radical racial segregation in all spheres of living, which would receive the name of 'apartheid'. The opposition however, did not agree with such radical forms of racism. The UP wanted to slowly incorporate different racial groups from within South Africa to form more diversity. However, the public admired the HNP for their ideology of white superiority. The whites were also not happy with the economic and domestic problems in South Africa, and the HNP superior organization and gerrymandering made the campaign very difficult for the UP.

Results of the 1948 elections

The HNP won 79 seats in the House of Assembly along with their allied Afrikaner Party against the 74 seats of the combined UP and Labour Party. The nationalist coalition formed the government and were to directly begin with the policy of the century, apartheid. Before the elections, Malan had given a speech criticizing the United Party for neglecting the racial problem and wanting to add diversity to South Africa. Furthermore, he had highlighted the problems of influx of Natives and Indians in the 'European' areas and with that the lack of interest for South Africa's economy. Malan had promised to fix these and he did not fail to execute these promises. The main issues that Malan wanted to resolve as quickly as



possible was to find a solution to the racial problem and to lead South Africa to independence and to a Republican status.

Together with his two adjunct Prime Ministers, Strijdom and Verwoerd, they started working hard on the Republican status and independence. They still had close ties with Great Britain and felt that if these were cut that they would be more independent and Republican. To do this, the HNP would need to issue a referendum, and many of the white South Africans did not want to break the dependence they had on Britain, and thus the HNP would have to deal with the still colonized ruling and not antagonize the British.

The Apartheid Policy

The HNP's solution to the racial problem was the apartheid policy. Malan plans to implement this with as an introduction, a registration system for the whites and blacks, and then they will be divided between different geographical locations, the whites in the economically richer, urbanized cities and the blacks in the rural areas. The only exception of blacks living in the cities was if they are guaranteed work, and only then will they still have to stay in live with the principle of segregation. The country will be divided between whites and blacks, marked clearly with signs saying which specific area it was. This meant for park benches, public restrooms, restaurants, supermarkets, etc. In the white areas, the coloured (mixed race) have no political rights however could be represented in the Senate by whites only. With the apartheid policy, blacks will not be allowed to attend white universities.

Malan also plans on banning marriages between whites and people of mixed race or black, prohibiting any sexual relations between the blacks and whites, to keep his country of 'white purity'. The registration act that is planned would be the basic framework of apartheid with the classification of Bantu's (blacks), coloured (mixed) and white. Also the HNP plans on implementing a land act, setting aside over 80% of South Africa's land for the white minority, making it a law for all non-whites to hold official documents authorizing their presence into white areas.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Herinigd National Party (HNP)

A political party in South Africa founded in 1915, and the current governing party with the beginning of their governing on June 4th 1948. The policies of the party include apartheid, establishment of a republic and the promotion of the Afrikaner culture.



United Party (UP)

A political party between 1934 and 1948, after losing the general election against the HNP. It was a merger of the National Party and its rival the South Africa Party and the Union Party, receiving the full name of The United National South African Party. The party was a mix of mostly whites but also a few blacks and mixed races. The UP refused to commit South Africa against Nazi Germany during World War II. Many of the members were still shaken because of the Second Boer War against Britain, and felt that siding with the former enemy would be wrong.

India

Many Indians who had immigrated to South Africa were discriminated against as well. This made the Indian government dissatisfied, to the extent that they had questioned to the United Nations to make the well-being of Indians in Africa to be added to the agenda in 1946. India is very strongly against the apartheid policy because it restricts the people of Indian nationality of living freely as they wish, and not categorized for standard treatment depending on their colour.

Israel

Relations between Israel and South Africa had blossomed after World War II as a result of South Africa's vote for a Jewish State in Palestine. Jan Smuts, leader of the UP was a long-time supporter of Zionism and thus resulted for good relations amongst the two nations. South Africa was one of the first nations to recognize the new Jewish state.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1909	Establishment of the South African Union, consolidated the power of all white in parliament
1911-1926	Colour ban imposed on certain occupations and that white people should have higher salaries than blacks in all occupations.
1913-1926	Native Land Act enforced, limiting blacks to the land to a fraction of 13%



- 1914 National Party founded
- 1918 Secret Broederbond (brotherhood)
- Native in Urban Areas Bill enforced, forcing blacks into their 'designated geographical locations'
- 1919 South West Africa comes under South African administration
- Jan Smuts signs the Paris Peace Treaty
- 1923 Urban Areas Act brought to law, introducing the residential segregation providing cheap labour for industry lead by whites
- 1926 Colour Bar Act brought to effect preventing black miners from being involved in skills trading
- 1934 Status of the Union Act is enabled by the South African Union, declaring the country as a 'sovereign independent state', removing British legal authority over South Africa.
- 1936 The Representation of Natives Act undermines the black South African's political rights allowing them to only vote for white representatives.
- 1946 Indian government approaches the United Nations demanding the review of racism against Indians in South Africa
- Jan Smuts sets up Fagan commission
- 1948 Early 1948: HNP gets elected into government, the start of apartheid is in sight with their plans for the apartheid policy.
- Fagan commission submits support for the relaxation of segregation laws
- Sauer commission expresses direct support for the implementation of Apartheid
- December 10th: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is voted on and signed at the United Nations.
- December 10th: The delegation of South Africa abstained from voting



and does not sign the Declaration.

1949

Prohibition of Mix Marriages Act enabled

Sexual relations between whites and blacks becomes illegal

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

To this day, there has not been much attention given to the current racial situation in South Africa. In this post-war era, many countries do not see the racial human rights as an overall priority, especially when they are in another country. In the United States, segregation is present as well, thus it is not specifically limited to South Africa. The new-born United Nations has a heaping amount on its agenda concerning post-war issues.

The only exception for this however, is the government of India. There are several Indian-immigrated civilians living Durban, South Africa. They had made their descent from India to South Africa as labourers to work in the sugarcane fields in South Africa, as a trade route of the Dutch Kingdom. Over the centuries, the Indian South Africans had formed a small population in South Africa. During the times of discrimination, they were seen as blacks, mixed and Asians. In each category, they would be discriminated and not treated equally compared to the whites. In 1946, the Government of India felt that this was no longer acceptable, and went to the United Nations, requesting that the question of the treatment of Indians in South Africa would be included for the next part of the first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

On October 24th 1946 the General Committee of the General Assembly did not accept the request from the Indian government to add the treatment of Indians to the agenda, as the issue was not with India but was part of the domestic jurisdiction of South Africa and their inhabitants, as the Indians in South Africa did no longer officially belong to India.

However, two days later on the 26th, the General Assembly decided to include to the agenda: The Treatment of Indians in the Union of South Africa, neglecting that the matter was within the domestic jurisdiction of South Africa. Soon thereafter the General Committee decided that the issue should be considered in the first and sixth committees of the General Assembly, which would be held from the 21st to the 30th of November.

The General Assembly adopted a resolution (44) expressing the opinion that the treatments of Indians living in South Africa should be in accepted by the dual government



and follow the provisions of the United Nations. However, this resolution failed because of the lack of the two-thirds majority rule.

In 1948, India requested recognition for the consideration of Indians in South Africa. The fact that the National Party had won the election meant that the apartheid policy was almost inevitable, and further discrimination against Indians was as well. The government of India had warned the rest of the United Nations by saying: "If the belief that there is to be one standard of treatment for the White races and other for the non-White continues to gain strength among the latter, the future for solidarity among the Members of the United Nations, and consequently, for world peace, will indeed be dark."

Possible Solutions

The main concern for the apartheid policy coming into power in South Africa is that South Africa is in political and geographical isolation from all of the United Nations superpowers. This is one of the main reasons why there has been so little resistance against the policy. The policy attends to complete racism and superiority. South Africa was one of the few countries not to sign the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), written in 1948, mainly to protect the system of apartheid.

Nonetheless, the current human rights situation in South Africa and those to follow if the apartheid policy is strengthened would not abide by the conventions of the Declaration, such as the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* or the *International Covenant on Economics, Social and Cultural Rights*. If South Africa was to sign the Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations would be able to force the South African government to follow the conventions and covenants, and thus ruling out apartheid.

Another possible solution to resolve this issue could be the transparency of the discrimination in South Africa. One of the reasons that apartheid went into effect so smoothly was because there was no external recognition for the situation, and thus no external parties are directly trying to stop the matter. If there was more transparency for what is happening and how the government has such a white superiority over the blacks, more countries may want to get involved to stop this.

Another possible solution could be to write and pass a resolution for overall universal racial equality, enforcing all countries worldwide to abide by it. If the resolution passes, then officially and legally speaking the United Nations would be able to interfere in any country



where racial discrimination is present. This is more effective than the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as countries who do not agree will still need to abide.

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The sources written in bold will be helpful for further understanding for the delegates.