

INVESTIGATION

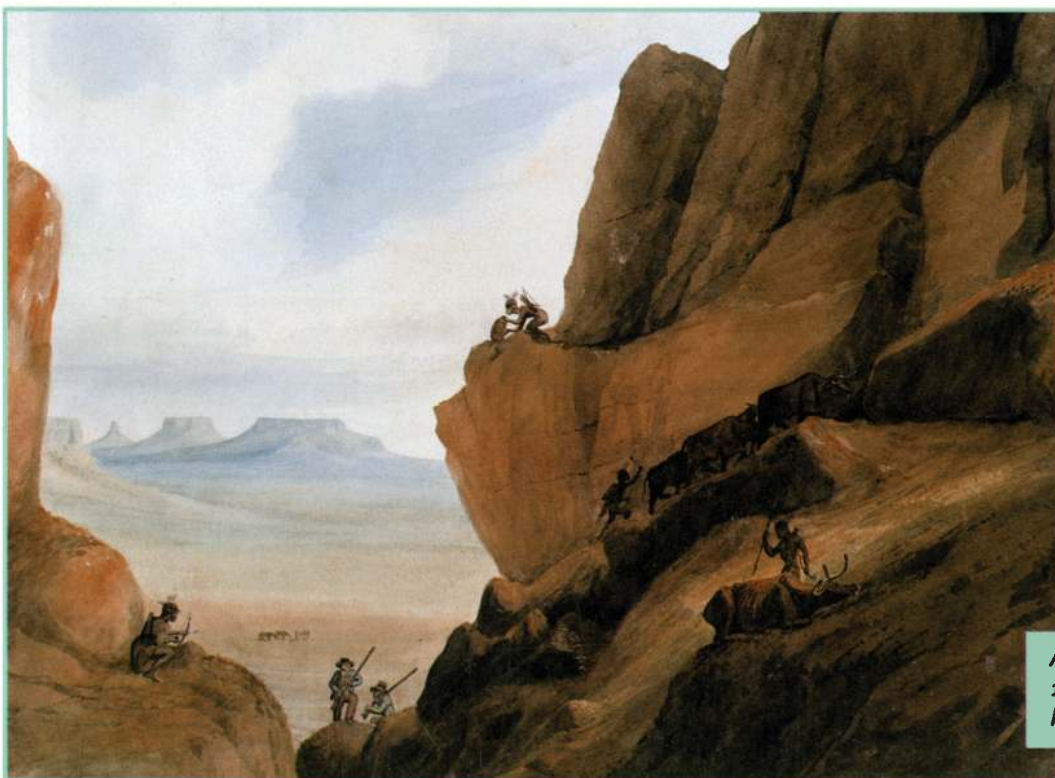
Apartheid – old wine in new bottles?

In 1948, the Purified National Party came to power in South Africa. Its aim was to turn South Africa into a republic and to separate the various racial groups within the country.

Why did many white South Africans support republican, racist ideas in 1948?

In 1948, Daniel Francois Malan, a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, became Prime Minister of South Africa. In the election campaign, he promised those who voted for him that he would make South Africa a republic and an apartheid state. Why did these promises bring him victory? Had white South Africans always been racist? Were racist policies exclusive to Afrikaners? Why was republicanism so appealing?

SOURCE A



A coloured lithograph of around 1836 showing Boers hunting down Khoisan accused of stealing cattle.

Racism

The origins of racism and its appeal lie deep in South Africa's history. The first European colonists, the Dutch, settled at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 with the intention of establishing a base from which they could supply their East Indies Fleet. Other Europeans, mainly German and some French, also made their home in the Cape. The settlers came in contact with the indigenous people of the area – the Khoisan, a people made up of two groups – the Khoikhoi whom the settlers called the 'Hottentots' and the San known as 'Bushmen'. In the beginning, there was much co-operation between the new settlers and the indigenous people. But, when some Dutch East India Company employees became farmers, they wanted more and more land. As a result, serious conflict with the Khoi pastoralists and hunter-gatherers began. Because slaves were brought in from the East Indies, menial work soon became associated with people of colour and this affected the attitudes of some settlers. Eventually many Khoikhoi became servants and the San were persecuted and often killed.

As the Dutch began to expand eastward, they came in contact with the Xhosa people. These were mainly settled farmers and better able to defend their territory than the Khoikhoi. Sometimes they co-operated with the Dutch or made an uneasy truce with them but often their relationship became hostile. War broke out for the first time between the settlers and the Xhosa in 1779.

The British, who wanted to protect their sea route to India, took the Cape from the Dutch in 1806. In 1828, they abolished the Hottentot Codes, strict regulations – including the carrying of passes – that had been introduced by the British Governor, Lord Caledon, in 1809. In 1833, the British abolished slavery.

The origins of republicanism

The seeds of republicanism were sown in 1836 when a large number of Afrikaner farmers, known as the 'Voortrekkers', moved northwards into the interior in search of land. They wished to get away from a war-torn eastern Cape, the rule of the British, and to be free to speak their own language and control their own affairs. The journey later became known as the Great Trek. This event, and the subsequent battles they had with some of the black kingdoms in the interior, were used many years later by some Afrikaner leaders to build a sense of Afrikaner identity.

The British passed laws that attempted to gain control over the Voortrekkers beyond the bounds of the Cape Colony. In 1842, the British took over Port Natal (Durban). This was resented by the Voortrekkers, many of whom again moved into the interior. By 1850, the colonial office had decided that any attempt to control the lands beyond the Cape Colony and Natal was a profitless and expensive task. They signed treaties granting the Boers the lands beyond the Orange and Vaal Rivers in 1852 and 1854, so the Orange Free State and the South African Republic (Transvaal) came into being.

AFRIKANERS

Afrikaners are people of European descent, usually Dutch, German or French, who made their home in Africa. At first they spoke Dutch but the language gradually changed. Local African words were adopted and it became a new language called Afrikaans. The Afrikaners are also called Boers, which means farmers. The first Afrikaans newspaper, *Die Afrikaanse Patriot*, was published in January 1876. It stood for 'our language, our nation and our country'. The founding of the newspaper highlights the growing tradition of nationalism among the Boers that Malan, the leader of the Purified National Party, was able to draw on in 1948.

SOURCE B



An illustration of 1849 showing Utimi, the nephew of the Zulu warrior hero and chief Shaka Zulu. As the Boers moved into KwaZulu (Natal), the Zulu defended their territory.

WHY DID MANY WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS SUPPORT REPUBLICAN IDEAS?

Federation

The two Boer Republics were mostly left alone by the British until, in the late 1860s, diamonds and gold were discovered inside their borders.

The British government was anxious to control the huge potential profits from the new-found diamonds and gold. They were also concerned that the Boers might be encouraged by these huge profits to demand formal independence and to assert Boer sovereignty. Lord Carnarvon, the British Secretary of State for Colonies from 1874 to 1878, hoped that, if the four republics could be joined together in a federation (or political union), these problems could be solved. The British also felt that a federation of four states would be able to stand up to outside interference from other European powers, like Germany, who wanted to extend their influence in Africa.

The British, therefore, took steps to bring about federation in a number of ways. Firstly, the Afrikaner diamond-fields were incorporated into the Cape Colony in 1871. Secondly, the South African Republic (Transvaal) was annexed in 1877. Finally, from 1877 to 1879, the British fought a series of wars against the independent black kingdoms of South Africa, like Zululand and Lesotho, in order to gain control over them.

SOURCE C



A typical Boer commando unit made up of farmers and townspeople. Raiding parties such as these successfully harassed the British lines of communications during the war of 1899–1902. They were excellent marksmen.

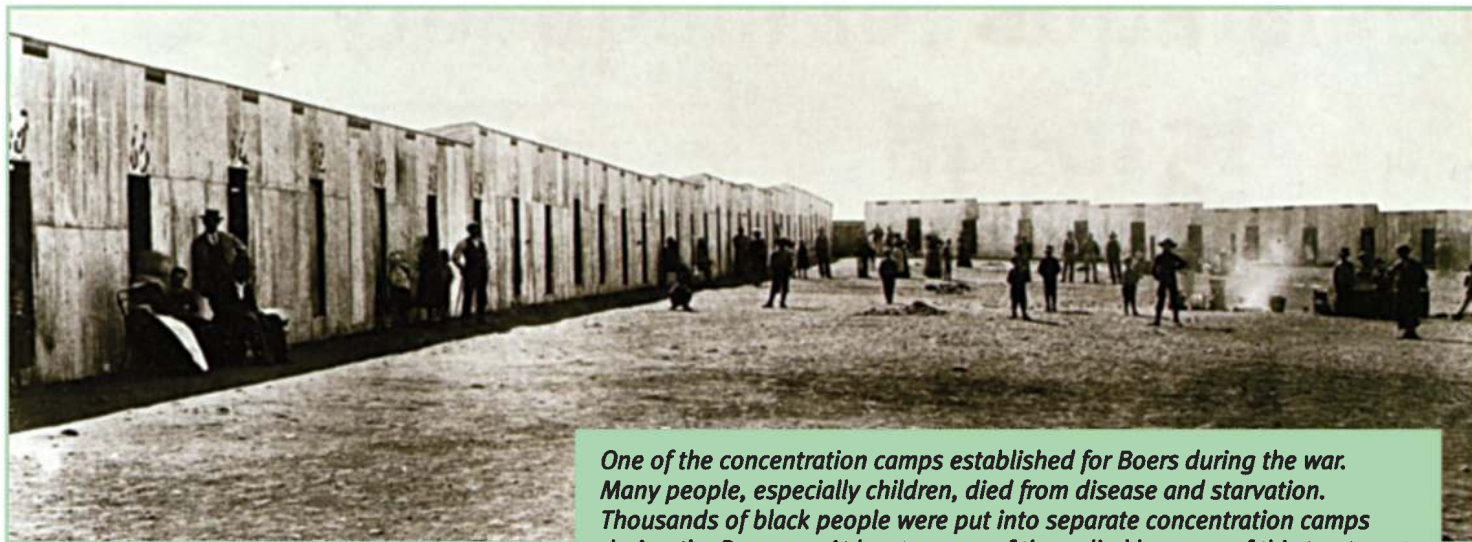
The Anglo-Boer Wars

The Boer Republics fought twice for their survival against Britain, once in 1880–81 and again from 1899 to 1902. By the end of the second war, most Afrikaners had come to despise the British administration and the way in which the wars had been conducted. The scorched-earth policy ordered by the leader of the British forces, General Kitchener, that had destroyed their farms, and the deaths of 25,000 women and children in concentration camps had left them bitter and resentful.

SOUTH AFRICA AT THE TIME OF THE 1899–1902 WAR



SOURCE D



One of the concentration camps established for Boers during the war. Many people, especially children, died from disease and starvation. Thousands of black people were put into separate concentration camps during the Boer war. At least 14,000 of them died because of this treatment.

SOURCE E

When families returned from the camps they often found their farms had been totally destroyed. One farmer remembers the scene that met him on returning to his farm:

We had nothing – no furniture, no cooking facilities. We didn't have a stove and if we had had a stove we had nothing to put on the stove not in the way of either utensils or food. And they killed everything, every chicken and every pig and every sheep – every animal on the farm. There was nothing on the farm. Nothing on any farm.

Quoted in David Harrison, *The White Tribe of Africa*, 1981

After the war, Lord Alfred Milner, the British High Commissioner in South Africa, adopted a policy of 'Anglicisation'. He was anxious to break down the sharp divisions between the Boers and the mainly town-dwelling British. He wanted to encourage large numbers of new British settlers to come to South Africa, hoping that they would swamp the Boers. But this simply did not happen. Milner also insisted that English should be the only means of instruction in all schools. This policy, which was not supported by all his colleagues, was bitterly resented by the Boers as they felt that the Boer language and culture was being threatened. These feelings of resentment helped to keep republicanism alive among the Boers.

Segregation

After the 1905 General Election in Britain, the new Liberal government decided that it would be in Britain's best interests to co-operate with the Afrikaner communities in South Africa. The Liberals had been opposed to the use of force in the Anglo-Boer War and were ashamed of the use of concentration camps and the wholesale destruction of the Boer farms. They also knew that, as the Afrikaners were in a majority, they would dominate any future government. The British, therefore, tried to placate the Afrikaners to a certain extent during negotiations leading to the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. As a result, the practices by which the races had been segregated in the two Boer republics now became part of the new Constitution. A commission, the South African Native Affairs Commission, that had been set up by the British politician, Lord Milner, reported in 1905. It proposed segregation as the right policy for the country. This policy was to be carried out and further extended by governments after 1910.

>> Activity

Explain in your own words how:

- a** European people came into conflict with black people;
- b** Afrikaners became hostile to the British government.

BRIEFING

Legislation for inequality

1910–48

Between the years 1910 and 1948 the policy of separating the various racial groups in South Africa was enacted in law. Segregation eventually began to break down only when it became a handicap to economic growth.

The Union of South Africa

In 1910, the British colonies (the Cape Colony and Natal) and the former Boer republics – the Orange Free State and the South African Republic (Transvaal) – were joined in a political union. The negotiations had, on the whole, pleased the Afrikaners. In future elections, for example, the voting arrangements laid down in the Constitution would give greater weight to votes cast in the rural areas. This meant that the Afrikaners (who were mainly farmers) could be sure of having political control. Each member state, moreover, was allowed to keep the voting system that had existed before the union. This meant that blacks and coloureds had only a qualified right (based on the ownership of property) to vote in the Cape and no vote at all in the Orange Free State, Transvaal or Natal.

RACIAL GROUPS IN SOUTH AFRICA

African

These were the original black inhabitants of South Africa. Various words were used to describe them such as Natives, Non-Europeans, Bantu, or Africans.

White

These were made up of the Afrikaans speakers, mainly of Dutch, German and French descent, and the English-speaking colonists, mainly of British descent, who were in the minority.

Coloured

The Coloured community is a mixture of the various population groups of South Africa. Many are descended from the skilled Batavian slaves (from present-day Java) brought to South Africa by the Dutch. The ancestors of others were whites, free blacks, Khoisan, and slaves from Madagascar and east and west Africa.

Asian

The Asian community was largely descended from Indian immigrants. Many of these had been brought over in the nineteenth century to work on the sugar plantations of Natal. Some higher-caste Indians had also come over at their own expense to work in Natal, mainly as traders.

In 1914, a delegation of the South African Native National Congress came to London to try (unsuccessfully) to gain the support of the British government against the colour bar in South Africa.



Black protest

The black, Coloured and Indian communities were dismayed to see the colour bar enshrined in the new legislation. The first national association for black people, the South African Native National Congress (SANNC), was founded in 1912. In 1923, it was to change its name to the African National Congress (ANC). Most of its members were lawyers, teachers or priests from the newly emerging black middle classes. Their protests were vigorous but peaceful. But the two South African prime ministers who were largely to dominate political life before 1948, J. C. Smuts and B. M. Hertzog, were convinced segregationists and all protest fell on deaf ears.

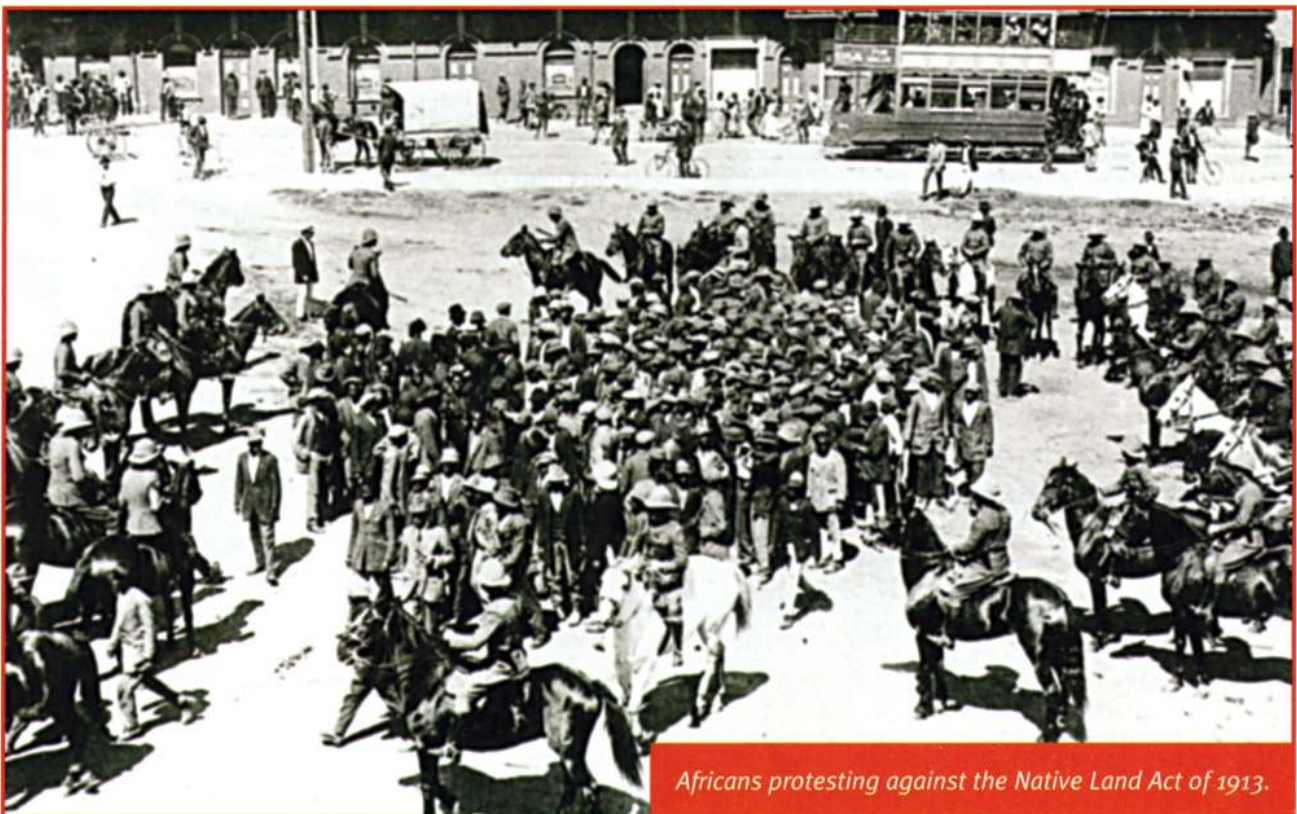
Discrimination

In the years that followed, successive governments passed Acts extending discrimination on the grounds of race in many areas where it had not existed before, until it covered nearly all aspects of daily life.

The attitudes behind these Acts of Parliament were summed up by the Stallard Commission of 1922 when it stated that 'blacks were in towns to minister to the needs of the white man and should depart when they cease to minister'.

ACTS DISCRIMINATING ON GROUNDS OF RACE

- 1911:** Blacks were barred from many categories of work.
- 1913:** The Native Land Act forbade blacks to own land (except in a few native reserves making up 7.3 per cent of the total land) and forbade them to practise share-cropping. This was a practice whereby tenants farmed the land and gave back a proportion of the crops to the landlord as a form of rent.
- 1923:** The Urban Areas Act created special areas, well away from city centres, where black people could be forced to live.
- 1924:** Certain unskilled jobs were reserved only for whites.
- 1924:** The Industrial Conciliation Act forbade any 'pass bearer' (that is, blacks) from taking part in trade-union activity.
- 1926:** The Colour Bar Act prevented blacks and Asians from doing skilled and semi-skilled jobs in mines.
- 1927:** An Immorality Act forbade extra-marital sex between whites and blacks.
- 1936:** Another Land Act severely limited the rights of black people to lease property, operate businesses or own agricultural land.



Africans protesting against the Native Land Act of 1913.