

AAS 254  
Background Notes for the  
*Mandela and De Klerk* Docudrama

Guys:

The information below goes together with the *Mandela and De Klerk* docudrama. Before I go on to define key terms, as well describe the main events, places, and dramatis personae of the struggle to end apartheid in South Africa that appear in the film, a reminder: As I have stated in class before (and as common sense would suggest), anything written by me—such as these notes—I assign you should be considered as an extension of my class lectures; in other words, it takes precedence over anything else you have been asked to read. Enjoy!

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**Afrikaans:** The language of Afrikaners, also sometimes called Cape Dutch, that grew out of a combination of the Netherlandic language (Dutch) and the languages of the indigenous Africans living in the Cape region (mainly the Khoisan peoples), and African and Asian slaves and indentured labor. It had diverged sufficiently from Dutch by about the middle of the 18th century to become a distinct language in itself. To the African people, Afrikaans in time came to be associated with apartheid oppression, therefore they preferred to learn English instead. (The common use of English among Africans, as opposed to Afrikaans, was also, however, facilitated historically by English-speaking missionaries—the Afrikaners did not believe that black people had a soul to convert.) When in 1976 the Apartheid government mandated that the medium of instruction in black high schools no longer be English, but Afrikaans, it provoked a massive rebellion on the part of the kids, who by this time had also come under the influence of the South African version of the U.S. Black Power movement, known as the *Black Consciousness Movement*, led by Stephen Biko (who himself would be arrested and tortured to death by the South African police in 1977) that came to be known as the Soweto rebellion in which hundreds, mostly school children, were killed by the police and many hundreds more imprisoned and tortured. South Africa was never the same again following the rebellion; it would be the beginning of the end of Apartheid and white minority rule. (Very often, in modern history, students have been at the forefront of bring major change to society.)

**Afrikaner:** An ethnic category comprising descendants of **Boers**—the original European colonial settlers (mainly Dutch, French and Germans), who arrived at the Cape beginning in 1652 under the initial leadership of one, Jan Van Riebeeck, at the behest of his employers, the Dutch East India Company, to set up a shipping station for their ships enroute to and from the East. They would later migrate out of the Cape region shortly after the British arrived to rule the Cape (in 1806) to form the autonomous states of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. (Incidentally, This term, as a self-conscious appellation, was already beginning to come into vogue by the beginning of the 1700s as the Afrikaners sought to distinguish themselves from the VOC officials and servants.) Along the way they would engage in frequent warfare with the African peoples they encountered. (Compare, the settlement of the West in the U.S. by European colonial settlers.) This migration (taking place roughly from mid-1830s to mid-1840s), prompted by dissatisfaction with British liberal policies, especially with their decision to free the slaves and abolish slavery in the Cape, came to be known as the *Great Trek*, has great symbolic significance in Afrikaner history. Afrikaners are also sometimes referred to as the *Boers* (Dutch word for peasant farmer). Note: The conflict with the British that led to the Great Trek would never completely abate; it would eventually develop into a full-scale war between them (1899-1902) known as the Anglo-Boer War or the South African War. During that war most of the U.S. public was on the side of the Boers, but the U.S. Administration and its allies took the side of the British. The Boers were defeated, but they would later emerge victorious through the ballot-box in 1948, by which time the British, through the 1909 South Africa Act, had facilitated the formation the following year of the now self-governing Union of South Africa (formed out of the original colonial settler states of Cape Colony, Natal, Transvaal, and Orange Free State). The constitution of this new country largely excluded the majority of the population, the Africans and other black peoples, from any form of political participation. It was as if they did not exist. Until 1994, when for the first time in its history South Africa would hold a nation-wide multi-racial national elections leading to the election of the majority black peoples to power (under the leadership of the ANC and Nelson Mandela), South Africa would remain a white minority ruled country.

**Americans:** In my classes this nationality refers to all the peoples who reside in the continents of North and South America. Reference to Americans who live in the United States is by the designation *U.S. Americans*.<sup>1</sup>

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1. In 1820, the Mexican rabble-rousing cleric Servando Teresa de Mier, during a visit to Washington, D. C. wryly indicated this problem of nomenclature: “Since the Europeans believe that there is no other America than the one their nation possesses, an erroneous nomenclature has formed in each nation.” He explained:

The English call their islands in the Caribbean Archipelago, our Indies or the West Indies; and for the English there is no other North America than the United States. All Spanish North America is to them South America, even though the largest part of the region is in the north. The people of the United States follow that usage and they are offended when we, in order to distinguish them, call them Anglo Americans. They wish to be the only Americans or North Americans even though neither name is totally appropriate. Americans of the United States is too long; in the end, they will have to be content with the name guasintones, from their capital Washington, . . . just as they call us Mexicans, from the name of our capital. (From Rodríguez O [2000: 131])

**ANC:** Acronym for African National Congress, an African nationalist organization and political party, which originally began its life in 1912 as the South African Native National Congress with the initially limited objective of fighting for the retention of a modicum of voting rights that some sections of colored people (people of mixed racial descent) and Africans enjoyed in Cape Province. The organization changed its name to the African National Congress in 1923, by which time it had begun to expand its objectives to include resistance to racist segregation, so that by the 1940s and the early 1950s it was in the forefront of resisting Apartheid through moderate non-violent strategies. The more famous of these was the Campaign of Defiance against Unjust Laws of 1952 (organized jointly by the ANC with the South African Indian Congress and others) that included a public transportation boycott. (Compare, the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955 led by Martin Luther King, Jr.) In 1959, a small splinter group of ultra-nationalists broke away from the ANC to form the Pan African Congress (PAC) and it is as an indirect result of this event that Mandela, Sisulu, Kathrada and others would be given life imprisonment and be banished to a prison on the Robben Island. To explain: the PAC organized massive demonstrations against laws prohibiting freedom of movement for Africans (known as the “pass laws”) in 1960, and one of these demonstrations (involving peaceful unarmed demonstrators) in a black township called Sharpeville became a police massacre in which scores were shot to death as they fled from the police. The Sharpeville Massacre, in turn, provoked the ANC, now an underground illegal organization following its banning in 1960, to form a unit the following year called *Umkhonto We Sizwe* (“Spear of the Nation”) to commence armed resistance, mainly through sabotage activities, against apartheid given that as the Apartheid state increasingly tightened its grip on South African society, non-violent resistance was not only no longer possible, but it was a suicidal strategy, as demonstrated by the Sharpeville Massacre. In 1962, its leader Nelson Mandela (and other colleagues) were arrested and sentenced to five years in prison for their anti-apartheid activities. Those who had escaped arrest, such as Oliver Tambo, escaped from South Africa altogether to reconstitute the ANC in exile (with the assistance of countries such as the Soviet Union through the agency of ANC’s ally, the Communist Party of South Africa, itself also a banned organization (1950) and in exile, as well as the host countries, such as Zambia and Tanzania). Following the 1976 Soweto Rebellion, which provoked a massive emigration of the young to neighboring countries where the ANC had over the years developed bases, led to the reemergence of the ANC as the preeminent anti-apartheid organization, inside and outside South Africa.

**Apartheid:** I am sure most of you have come across this word before, and certainly we have used it in this class. However, it has a very specific meaning and history behind it even though it is usually used today generically to refer to racist segregation of a society. This is an Afrikaans word meaning “apartness” that came to signify the juridically-based, racially defined neofascist socio-political order (that had its roots in the colonial era at a time when the European settler struggle to dispossess aboriginal Africans of both their land and labor, in the context of the globally determined emerging capitalist order, overrode all else) in which the concept of “whiteness” was foundational, and fashioned by the Afrikaner segment of the white polity following its accession to power in 1948 when their party, the National Party, won the all-white national elections. It is important to point out that apartheid was both a racist ideology (white versus black), and an ethnically defined ideology in which the Afrikaners sought to gain ascendancy over the English segment of the white polity for both economic and cultural reasons. The specific guiding principles of the agenda of this new apartheid government are summarized best in a sentence or two by Kallaway (2002: 13): “They were keen to promote the interests of Afrikaner politics against English domination of economic, social and cultural life, against big business and its control by ‘alien forces of Anglo-Jewish capitalism,’ and against ‘black encroachment’ on ‘white interests.’ They were for the promotion of Afrikaner business and culture and the ‘salvation of ‘poor whites.’” In other words, and it is important to stress this, apartheid was at once an economic project and a political project—the two were intimately and dialectically related—that sought to promote Afrikaner supremacy in the first instance and white supremacy in the second. Apartheid was never meant to wish black people away, on the contrary it needed black people, but only as sources of cheap labor (and to this end it meant dominating and controlling them on the basis of that classic “separate-but-equal” ruse first perfected in the United States following the Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* 163 U.S. 537 [1896]). Ergo, to say that apartheid was a modernized form of serfdom is not to engage in cheap theatrical polemics, but to describe it as it really was designed (and came) to be. Building on existing racist legislation (such as the 1907 *Education Act No. 25*, and the 1913 *Natives Land Act*) and centuries old customary Jim Crow practices, various National Party-led governments systematically erected and perfected a highly oppressive, neofascist, racially segregated, super-exploitative, sociopolitical economic order that came to be called apartheid.<sup>2</sup> Initially, the system would rest on a base of three socially constructed races: Africans, Coloreds, and whites; but later, a fourth would be added: Indians (Afro-Asians). A little later, the system would be modified to fragment the African majority into its smaller ethnic components fictively rooted geographically in separate rural labor reservations (which would be first called Bantustans and later dignified with the label “homelands”) carved out of the measly 13% of land that had been allocated to Africans by the 1913 *Native Land Act* and its subsequent modification. (In other words, apartheid was also a form of colonialism—internal colonialism.) Of the numerous pieces of legislation that underpinned the system, among the more salient were: the 1949 *Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act*; the 1950 *Population Registration Act*; the 1950 *Group Areas Act*; the 1950 *Suppression of Communism Act*; the 1953 *Reservation of Separate Amenities Act*; the various internal security acts that not only proscribed any form of opposition to the apartheid system, but permitted imprisonment without trial; the various pass laws

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On this subject, see also the article by Hanchard (1990).

2. Recall that some of the architects of this order were open admirers of Nazi Germany!

that severely curtailed the freedom of movement of Africans by requiring them to carry a pass at all times; and the 1959 *Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act*, which created the pseudo-sovereign internal African states just mentioned. (Note: the *Suppression of Communism Act* defined communism so broadly as to include any nationalist or anti-apartheid activities by any one, communist or not.) It is also important to point out that the rise and longevity of apartheid as an ideology were also due, to a significant extent, to the fact that the ideology while seemingly at odds with the needs of capital, in reality suited the capitalist order quite well—that is until the accumulated weight of contradictions it spawned would grow to become a serious liability by the 1980s—in that it served to “purchase” the loyalty of white labor (with its electoral power to legitimate capitalist enterprise) in the inherent class struggle between labor and capital by facilitating the subjectification of objective class interests of labor at both levels: at the racial level of the white polity as a whole (through the concept of whiteness), and at the specific ethnic level of Afrikanerdom (through the concept of “Afrikanerism,” for want of a better word). At the same time, needless to say, it facilitated the super exploitation of land and labor that belonged to others, namely the aboriginal African majority. To those familiar with U.S. history, it would not be farfetched to draw parallels (leaving aside the obvious reversal of the black/white population ratios) with the Jim Crow era of the U.S. South in which Jim Crow was aimed at securing political/economic domination over both, in the first instance, blacks, and in the second instance, white northerners.<sup>3</sup>

**Banning:** The proscription of organizations—and, check this out, persons. Now you may ask, how can a person be “banned”? What this meant in practice was that banned persons were virtually under house arrest during specified hours, restricted to a particular locale, they had to report to the local police regularly at specified times, were isolated from family, friends and the media, and so on. (It was illegal, for example, for the media to talk to or quote a banned person. Another severe restriction was not being allowed to be in the company of more than one person at a time.) Remember, apartheid South Africa was a neo-fascist state. (Fascism refers to an ideology first practiced in Nazi Germany and Benito Mussolini’s Italy that combined jingoism, militarism, authoritarianism, racism and capitalism.) It was a *neo*-fascist state because it still allowed some democracy for a portion of the population: the white population. For the rest, the black population, however, it was racist domination and exploitation, involving at the margins of the system an endemic pattern of murders of political opponents inside and outside prison, assassinations of opponents in foreign countries, military incursions into neighboring countries, the imprisonment without trial and torture of thousands upon thousands of anti-apartheid activists (including children as young as seven!), unprovoked shooting of demonstrators, and so on. All this has been documented in a multivolume report issued by a commission of inquiry set up in 1995 by the then newly elected President Mandela under the leadership of Bishop Desmond Tutu called the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*.

**Boer:** Descendants of the first European settlers to arrive in South Africa (roughly during the period 1652 to 1707) who were predominantly Belgian, Dutch, German and **Huguenot**, and whose first language is **Afrikaans**. The word Boer in Dutch means farmer or husbandman. Note, that today the word has acquired a generally derogatory connotation and Afrikaners prefer not to be called by this term.

**Boipatong Massacre:** Boipatong is a township south of Johannesburg in the Vaal Triangle. Inkatha supporters attacked (on June 17, 1992) a squatter camp inhabited by, presumably, ANC supporters, killing more than 40 people, including many women and children. An independent investigation at that time revealed that the attackers had had the support of the police. The ANC accused the government of F. W. De Klerk of using the police and the army to engage in terrorist activities against ANC supporters, with the connivance of groups such as Inkatha. More recently, however (November 2000 ruling of the Amnesty Committee of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission), it has been suggested that Inkatha supporters had acted on their own and that the police were not involved.

**Botha, P. W. (Pieter Willem):** A law student who did not finish his degree, Botha’s passionate love of politics ensured that this particular personal failure would be a minor handicap, if at all. Botha was born on January 12, 1916 in what was then the Orange Free State. Politically active even as a teenager, he would be elected to Parliament in 1948 as a candidate for the National Party when this right-wing (even in terms of white South African politics) Afrikaner party would sweep the whites-only elections, banishing the white liberal parties into political wilderness forever. After almost 20 years of active participation, beginning in 1961, as a government minister in various posts (public works, defense, etc.) he would assume the prime ministership in 1978 upon the resignation of B. J. Vorster. The timing could hardly have been auspicious, for the storm clouds that would herald the twilight of apartheid South Africa were already gathering fast (recall the Soweto rebellion two years prior, and the collapse of white-minority rule in the neighboring countries of Mozambique and Angola three years prior, and in Rhodesia two years later). It is unlikely that he or any one else would have foreseen that he too, despite his stubborn efforts to maintain an iron-grip on the apartheid ship of state—as the fury of the African people, led by the young, at enduring more than 300 years of unmitigated white racist oppression exploded beyond all control—would be made to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor: he would end his office in ignominy by being forced to resign, on grounds of incompetence, by his own cabinet in 1989.

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3. See also Derrida and Kamuf (1985, 1986) for an insightful take on the word apartheid. It is also worth pointing out here that as in the case of Jim Crow U.S. South, apartheid came to have a highly corrupting influence throughout society, sparing no one. As Lyman (2002: 9) has so well put it:

Racial discrimination, when institutionalized, indeed made part of the national ethic, brings out the worst in all people. It attracts the most brutal into positions of authority and gives them an outlet for their brutality; it demeans the victims and forces them into servility to survive; it breeds anger, fear, and timidity on all sides, making efforts at reform tepid and violent by turns. In sum, it corrupts the entire society, oppressor and victim, liberal and conservative. So it was with apartheid.

**Cape:** A geographic term that in the South African context has had various geographic designations depending upon historical context: hence it can refer to the settlement that was established at Table Bay by Jan van Riebeeck on behalf of the VOC that eventually grew to become today's modern Cape Town; or it can refer to the Cape of Good Hope (a promontory at the southern end of Cape Peninsula); or it can refer to Cape Colony (and later Cape Province), one of the administrative territories (of which Cape Town was its capital) that was the first European colony of the four colonies that eventually coalesced to become modern South Africa.

**Cape Town:** The legislative capital of South Africa, and administrative capital of Western Cape Province, that was founded by the first Dutch settlers (led by Jan van Riebeeck) in 1652. A geographic landmark that the city is famous for is, of course, Table Mountain. The city is located in the Cape peninsula north of Cape of Good Hope. By the way, the administrative capital of South Africa is Pretoria. All the three prisons Mandela was in are in or near Cape Town.

**Colored:** An ethnic category in Southern Africa (a very rough equivalent to “mulatto” in the Americas) comprising persons *either* of mixed descent who emerged after the arrival of Europeans in that region—e.g., a person with a European father and a Xhosa mother, or an Asian slave father and a Khoisan mother, or a European father and an Asian slave mother, or a Colored father and a European mother, and so on—*or* persons of Khoisan or slave ancestry who took on the working-class version of the dominant white culture (including language) of their day, namely Afrikaner culture. Their predominant language is **Afrikaans**. An important subgroup among them were the Khoikhoi/Afrikaner descendants who were initially called the “Baastards,” or “Basters” but who later renamed themselves the *Griqua*. (Fleeing racist discrimination at the Cape to go on to impose their own brand of racism on the aboriginal Africans, they, for a time, had even managed to carve out their own territories: Griqualand East [in 1861, under the leadership of Adam Kok III], and Griqualand West [settled beginning in the late eighteenth century]. Both territories were eventually annexed by the British, the former in 1879, and the latter in 1871 when it was under the leadership of Nicholas Waterboer.) Note that in the U.S. context this term was once reserved for **U.S. African Americans**.

**Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986:** This Act is referenced in the film, but not by name but by its principal provision: the imposition of economic sanctions by the United States on South Africa. It was signed into law by none other than Ronald Reagan (who had long resisted doing exactly this). Recall that earlier in the film Botha mentions Reagan (and Margaret Thatcher) as friends of South Africa. The Act was the work of Congress, prodded by the anti-apartheid activities of African Americans and others throughout the U.S. in the 1980s. The economic sanctions that were imposed on South Africa were limited and were more of a symbolic significance than anything else, except for an extension the following year (via the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987) of an important provision of the Act that rescinded the exemption from double-taxation enjoyed by U.S. transnationals operating in South Africa. It increased the cost of doing business in South Africa—thereby accelerating the loss of foreign investment for that country. From the perspective of the Apartheid government, the Act was a serious psychological blow (and we can sense it in the film).

**De Klerk, F. W. (Frederick Willem):** Another law student, but who, like Mandela, did finish his law degree and go on to establish his own successful law firm, would enter national politics in 1972 when as a National Party candidate he won a seat in parliament. Born on March 18, 1936, in Johannesburg, De Klerk's family background was saturated with politics (his father Jan, for instance, had been the head of the Transvaal National Party, and a minister in the 1954-58 government of J. G. Strydom). Given this pedigree and his own legal and political talents, he would be selected by Botha for a place in his cabinet—he would serve in various posts for the next ten years, beginning in 1979. In the same year that he connived with his fellow cabinet colleagues to force the resignation of Botha from the presidency, De Klerk had won the election for the leader of the National Party. He would formally become president upon the mandate of Parliament on September 14 (in which year, guys?). By the time he became president, secret talks with Mandela had already been underway, and his release a foregone conclusion, except for the actual date. It would come the following year, accompanied by the release of other important political prisoners, and a few days later (February 20, 1990), the unbanning of all political parties—including the Communist Party of South Africa on the left, and the neo-Nazi parties (like Terreblanche's AWB) on the right. Between 1991 and 1994 when the first multi-racial national elections were held in which the ANC won with a landslide, De Klerk's government undertook a series of negotiations with the ANC for a new political order based on universal suffrage against a backdrop of considerable internecine violence among black people involving, among others, ANC and Inkatha supporters. Sadly, and to the horror of many inside and outside South Africa, it proved to be the required catalyst to speed up the negotiations and break the various impasses that arose. Following ANC's electoral victory in 1994, De Klerk for a short time served as the second deputy president in the government of national unity that Mandela established. In 1997, De Klerk retired from active politics. From the film we can sense that De Klerk was essentially a backroom wheeler and dealer, and a pragmatist rather than an ideologue (unlike his wife Marike). What we are not shown in the film, however, is the real power behind the throne in De Klerk's rapid move toward dismantling apartheid, the Afrikaner-Broederbond—a South African secret society of male members of the Afrikaner establishment (whose membership is by invitation only and secret) founded in 1918 in the wake of the defeat of the Afrikaners in the Boer War, for the purpose of countering the power of the English-speaking white establishment.

Guys: a question to ponder: why did De Klerk deserve to share with Mandela the 1993 Nobel Prize for Peace? Or did he?

**De Klerk, Marike:** Unlike her husband, De Klerk's spouse did not share her husband's view, by the time he took over the presidency of South Africa, that the “writing on the wall” was clear: the days of white minority rule would soon be over. The De Klerk's divorced in 1998 after a 39-year marriage, allowing De Klerk to marry Elita Georgiadis (a love-interest of some four years standing). Marike died in early December 2001; she was brutally murdered in her apartment in Cape Town (motive of the murderer not surmisable). South Africa remains a violent country to this day; in the year that she died some 21,000 people were murdered.

**Euro-South Africans.** People of European ancestry, but excluding the Colored peoples—generally used interchangeably with “Europeans” in my classes in terms of the South African context. (See also **Coloreds**.)

**Fascism:** A political ideology that first arose in Nazi Germany, and Benito Mussolini’s Italy that combined jingoism, militarism, authoritarianism, virulent ethnicism/racism, and capitalism into one ideological package.

**Frontline States:** Name acquired by a loose grouping of independent countries in Southern Africa who shared the legitimate view that they were in the “frontline” of the struggle against apartheid South Africa. They met regularly to exchange notes and coordinate policy; their membership included Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

**Goldberg, Dennis:** An engineer by profession, he was born in Cape Town in 1933. He was a leading member of the Congress of Democrats (a white organization allied to the ANC). Goldberg was not taken to Robben Island with his codefendants since he was considered white; instead, he was taken to Pretoria Central Prison where white political prisoners were incarcerated. He served 22 years of his sentence before he was released.

**Hani, Chris:** At the time of his assassination (which had been preceded by several other assassination attempts on him by South African security agents while he was in exile) Hani was the general secretary of the South African Communist Party (took up the office in 1991 from the ailing Joe Slovo; he had joined the party in 1961) and a member of the national executive committee of the ANC. His popularity (especially among young blacks) rested not only on his charisma, but his intimate involvement with ANC’s guerrilla campaign as one of its top leaders. Hani (full name Martin Thembisile Hani) was born on June 28, 1942 in Cofimvaba in the rural Transkei. His original ambition had been to become a priest, but his father, a migrant worker in the mines, wished otherwise. In the same year that he graduated with a BA in Latin and English (Fort Hare, 1961), he also joined Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK—the military wing of the ANC), having been a member of the ANC since 1957. The following year he was forced to go into exile with a number of other members of MK fearing imminent arrest. His years abroad until his official return with other ANC and SACP leaders in 1990 were spent on building ANC’s capacity to wage a guerilla campaign, in the course of which, it appears, he did see some action in the Zimbabwean liberation struggle in the late 1960s.

**Homelands:** “Self-governing” areas of territory, during the apartheid era, for Afro-South Africans (dubbed initially as “bantustans,” but later called “Black Homelands,” and later still “Black States” and arguably similar in principle and provenance to U.S. First American reservations in the United States) legislatively carved out of the countryside, on the basis of SAAG-designated ethnicity, by means of the 1959 *Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act*. In order to deflect international criticism on one hand, and on the other to diffuse black opposition to apartheid (against the backdrop of an ever increasing reliance on black labor), SAAG, under the leadership of Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd, came up with what it thought was the ingenious concept of ethnically-based “self-government” for Afro-South Africans—geographically rooted in the rural Afro-South African reserves (known as “native reserves”) that had been established through the 1913 *Natives Land Act* and which could trace their origins to the time of the British colonial period—where through the subsequent 1970 *Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act* all Afro-South Africans were stripped of their South African citizenship and instead made “citizens” of the reserves. A total of ten ethnic groups were identified and allocated their own homelands which for the most part were not only economically non-viable but politically too they were nothing more than a charade in self-government given the absence of meaningful political power (even in those homelands that had been granted “independence,” namely, Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei).<sup>4</sup> In reality, all that the homelands project achieved was that by means of this divide-and-rule strategy they helped to further institutionalize the use of the reserves as black labor reservoirs; they were neither recognized by most Afro-South Africans, other than the traditional non-democratically appointed authorities that “governed” them, nor by the international community. It may be noted that the homelands project also abolished the meager indirect representation in parliament Afro-South Africans had had (before the *Self-Government Act* was enacted they had been allowed to elect to the Senate four *white* representatives on the basis of a system of electoral colleges). As one would expect, with the abolition of apartheid the homelands system was also scrapped.

### **Inkatha Freedom Party**

An ethnic based cultural organization founded by Mangosuthu Gatscha Buthelezi, hereditary tribal chief of the Zulu people, in 1975 in KwaZulu, a “homeland” for the Zulus during the apartheid era, that would be transformed by him into a political party in 1994 in order to take part in the multi-racial elections. Although Buthelezi claimed to be an arch opponent of apartheid, the fact that the apartheid government tolerated him throughout the period when other anti-apartheid leaders and organizations had been banned, speaks volumes. Certainly these organizations came to see him as nothing more than a creature of apartheid, even though at one time in his younger days he had been a member of the ANC. In the waning days of apartheid, conflict between supporters of Inkatha and other anti-apartheid organizations (especially the ANC) were frequent, fierce and chillingly bloody—aided and abetted by the apartheid government—as Buthelezi tried to jostle for a political stake in a new South Africa beyond that of leadership of a discredited ethnic homeland.

Guys: a question to ponder: politically, why is the continued presence of the Inkatha Freedom Party important for South Africa?

**Johannesburg:** South Africa’s industrial and financial capital and which owes its birth to the discovery of gold. It is home to the “capital” of South Africa’s black people, Soweto. Soweto was the segregated township that did not even merit a name under apartheid (the name is an acronym).

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4. The ten homelands, with their ethnic affiliation, were Bophuthatswana (Tswana), Ciskei (Xhosa), Gazankulu (Machangana-Tsonga), KwaNdebele (Southern Ndebele), KwaNgwane (Swazi), KwaZulu (Zulu), Lebowa (North Soto), Transkei (like the Ciskei also Xhosa), QwaQwa (South Sotho), and Venda (Vhacenda). For more on the homelands see Omond (1985)

**Kathrada, Ahmed Mohammed:** His character in the film asks incredulously, “Soft targets? Do you mean women and children?” The ANC had made a decision very early on, when *Umkonto We Sizwe* was formed, not to target civilians in their guerrilla campaigns on moral grounds. Kathrada, the son of Indian Muslim immigrants, was born on August 21, 1919 in Schweizer Reineke, a small town 240 miles from Johannesburg. He became involved in the political activities of the Transvaal Indian Congress from the age of 12 and was first sentenced to prison as a result of these activities at the age of 17 (he lied about his age to the police). As he grew older, his political activities expanded to a wider national level so that on more than one occasion he would be placed under banning orders. More significantly, however, three times, in 1955, in the Treason Trials of 1956-61, and the Rivonia Trial of 1963-64 he would be tried together with Mandela, Sisulu and others, and with them he was eventually given life imprisonment and banished to Robben Island. He was freed with Sisulu and others from Polsmoor in 1989. In 1991 he was elected to the national executive committee of the ANC and became head of its Public Relations department. Kathrada, it ought to be noted, is among the many anti-apartheid activists to emerge from the South African East Indian community—quite out of proportion, in terms of their numbers, to the community’s small percentage of the total population (about 3%). One possible explanation for this was the presence within the community’s intelligentsia of a political tradition that combined in a unique amalgam the influences of Gandhism, Marxism, and African and East Indian nationalism (and for some, Islam).

**Mandela, Nelson:** Mandela was born on July 18, 1918 (in Umtata, in the then Cape of Good Hope). His father, Henry Mandela, was the chief of the Tembu, a Xhosa-speaking people. In a country where higher education opportunities for black people were few, this privileged background allowed him to eventually graduate from the English-speaking University of Witwatersrand to become a practicing lawyer by establishing South Africa’s first African law firm, in partnership with Oliver Tambo, in 1952. Some years earlier, in 1944, he had joined the ANC, becoming one of its leaders in 1949. As a flamboyant man who loved fancy clothes, women and fast cars, and given his privileged background and high educated status (there were relatively few African professionals in his day), it is perhaps surprising that he became a very active and militant ANC member, since he had so much to lose. Anyhow, as a rising star within the ranks of the ANC leadership he had the opportunity to travel abroad in 1961 (following his acquittal in the infamous Treason Trials of 1956-61) to be wined and dined by a number of African leaders (such as Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, and Leopold Senghor of Senegal), as well as leaders of the Labor and Liberal parties in England. On his way home, he stopped over in Ethiopia for a few months to undergo rudimentary training in guerilla warfare. However, only a few days after his return he was already sitting in jail, he was arrested on August 5, 1962, charged with illegal political activity and leaving the country without a passport. While he was still on Robben Island serving a five-year prison sentence, he was brought back for trial in 1963 on another more serious charge, of plotting to overthrow the apartheid State by armed rebellion (treason). At that trial, which came to be known as the Rivonia Trial, Mandela (together with others) was sentenced to life imprisonment on June 12, 1964. From 1964 to 1984 Mandela and his colleagues spent their years at the notorious maximum security prison on Robben Island. In April 1984 they were transferred to Pollsmoor Maximum Security Prison in Cape Town for fear that their presence on Robben Island was helping to further politicize other younger political prisoners pouring into the prison in the aftermath of the Soweto Rebellion. Following a medical operation, Mandela was separated from his colleagues, and moved to more comfortable surroundings at Victor Verster prison near Paarl. He would not gain freedom until February 11, 1990. In 1991 he was elected to the presidency of the now unbanned ANC, and three years later, with the overwhelming election victory of the ANC, he would become the first black president of South Africa. He stepped down from the presidency of the ANC in 1997 (to be replaced by Thabo Mbeki), and of South Africa, in 1999. He is no longer involved with active politics. For their efforts in bringing about a relatively peaceful transition to a new democratic South Africa, Mandela and De Klerk shared the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize.

Guys: a question to ponder: how did the long imprisonment of Mandela help the country of South Africa in the long run? Or did it?

**Mandela, Winnie (premarital name: Winifred Nomzamo):** Born in Pondoland in the Transkei in the mid-1930s, her fame would come to rest on her marriage to Mandela (in 1958, as his second wife)—they had met two years earlier when she became involved with his political activities. (During the prolonged Treason Trials of 1956-61, Mandela divorced his first wife to marry Winnie, despite the large age gap between the two.) In the years that Mandela was in prison, Winnie, as a political activist in her own right, and as the spouse of one of the most important political prisoners in South Africa (if not the world), came to face constant harassment from the police, including being placed under banning orders, and even spending time in prison (1969-1970). For a long time she was the heroine of the anti-apartheid movement, until it began to become clear around the mid-1980s to many, especially those in the ANC, that her politically reckless behavior, motivated by fame and ambition, was becoming a liability. The kidnapping and murder of a fourteen year old boy by the chief of her bodyguard (who came to be known as the “Mandela Football Club”) proved to be the first major step toward political anonymity. Even though she did come to hold a post in Mandela’s government as the deputy minister of arts, culture, science and technology, following her election as president of the ANC’s Women’s League, she was eventually expelled by Mandela because of her continued courting of controversy with her attacks on the new government, among other things. The Mandelas separated in 1992 after her infidelity came to light; they divorced in 1996.

**Necklacing:** The horrifying lynching of fellow Africans suspected (but never of course proven guilty) of being police informers and spies by mobs in African townships like Soweto. It involved placing a car tire (the “necklace”) over the victim and then setting it ablaze until the victim was burned to death while onlookers stood by. This awful barbaric response, never condoned by the ANC, was a desperate response to the equally barbaric, brutal and illegal underground war (involving murders, imprisonment, torture, etc.) that the South African security police waged against anti-apartheid activists in the segregated African townships.

**Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika:** The national anthem of South Africa (sung at several points in the film). Composed originally in Xhosa in 1897 by Enoch Sontonga, a music loving teacher at a Methodist mission school in Johannesburg, with stanzas added later at various times by others, it, in time, became a popular hymn in African churches and at political meetings. On April 20, 1994 the hymn together with the existing national anthem, the *Call of South Africa*, were declared national anthems of the postapartheid South Africa. Two years later, a combined but shortened version of both anthems became the new national anthem. A few of verses of the original English translation version of *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* (God Bless Africa) go like this:

Lord, bless Africa;  
May her horn rise high up;  
Hear Thou our prayers And bless us.

**Chorus**

Descend, O Spirit,  
Descend, O Holy Spirit.

Bless our chiefs

May they remember their Creator.  
Fear Him and revere Him,  
That He may bless them.

Bless the public men,

Bless also the youth  
That they may carry the land with patience  
and that Thou mayst bless them.

**Pass:** A form of internal “passport” that Afro-South Africans had to carry at all times on their person when living and working outside their ‘homelands,’ that is in ‘white’ South Africa, under the totalitarian pass law system established by SAAG. Its purpose was to control their movement for both economic and political reasons. Failure to produce the pass when asked by the police usually meant arrest, a fine, and sometimes imprisonment. A deportation order (to one’s supposed “homeland”) would also follow if the pass lacked an appropriate permit. In any given year the number of persons arrested under the pass laws numbered in the tens of hundreds if not thousands. It should be noted that the pass was not an original SAAG invention, as with so many other features of apartheid, it borrowed the concept from a practice established in earlier times by both the Dutch colonists and the British.

**Rivonia Trial:** The Rivonia Trial that led to life-imprisonment for Mandela, Sisulu and others, arose as a result of a police raid (involving a tip from a CIA infiltrator, Gerard Ludi) on the secret headquarters of *Umkonto We Sizwe*, the Lilliesleaf Farm, located on the outskirts of an affluent suburb of Johannesburg called Rivonia.<sup>5</sup> The raid had unearthed a small cache of arms and other ordnance, together with incriminating documents. The 28-acre farm was owned by the Communist Party of South Africa which had purchased it a year after the ANC had been banned in 1960. Among those arrested were a number of South African Jews and East Indians including, Lionel Bernstein, Dennis Goldberg, Arthur Goldreich (who had pretended to be the owner of the farm), Bob Hepple, James Kantor, Ahmed Kathrada, Moosa Moolla, A. Jassat, and Harold Wolpe. Interestingly, except for Bernstein, Goldberg and Kathrada, the others were able to escape by various means prior to or during the trial, and fled the country. (Another arrestee who escaped during the trial was Walter Mkwayi, but he was re-arrested a year later, and served his life-sentence on Robben Island with the others.) The conclusion of the trial saw life-imprisonment being pronounced by Judge Quartus de Wet on eight of the nine remaining defendants (one, Bernstein, was acquitted, but rearrested and placed on bail, but he fled from South Africa too). Besides Goldberg, Kathrada, Mandela, and Sisulu, they were Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Elias Motsoaledi, and Andrew Mlangeni. The government prosecutor was Dr. Percy Yutar (ironically, from the perspective of the Jewish defendants, a South African Jew). Under South African law, treason was punishable by death, so why were those found guilty given life instead? Due to world-wide protests, which forced the prosecution to seek life-imprisonment rather than the death sentence they had originally wished for. During the trial, among the more memorable of Mandela’s long four-hour speech (delivered on April 20), were these oft-quoted lines:

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.

Guys, question to ponder: were the South African Jews (considered “white” in apartheid South Africa) and other whites who actively opposed apartheid, “traitors” to the white race?

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<sup>5</sup> Ludi claims in a BBC documentary, *Nelson Mandela: Accused #1* (2004), that the CIA was forced to provide the information it had on Mandela’s movements to the South African security service because it had arrested one of their spies (inadvertently) in Durban but would not let him go. They used their info on Mandela as a bargaining chip to obtain the release of their operative.

**Robben Island:** This is a roughly five-square mile island some six miles off the coast of Cape Town in Table Bay that has been used at various times, ever since the arrival of the Dutch colonial settlers at the Cape, primarily as a place for imprisonment or exile of prisoners, mentally disabled, leprosy sufferers, and so on. The name of the island is an anglicization of the Afrikaans name for it, *Robbeneiland* (meaning seal island). From around 1965 to 1991 the island served as a maximum security prison housing mainly black prisoners, and it became infamous among black people as a place where the task of the jailors was to break the spirit of political prisoners by means of a regimen of harsh treatment. (There is a mind-numbing scene in the film that speaks to this.) In the years following the Soweto Rebellion, however, the prison island also became a status symbol for potential young political prisoners. They began to designate the island as “Mandela University.” The mere presence of Mandela, Sisulu and others on Robben Island was enhancing the politicization of the young. In 1997, Robben Island ceased to be a prison and it was converted into a museum. The United Nations, in 1999, placed it on the list of *World Heritage sites*. (Guys, what is a “World Heritage site?”)

**Sisulu, Walter:** Sisulu was born on May 18, 1912 in Qutubeni in the Transkei. In terms of South African racial terminology he was a *colored*, that is, a person of mixed parentage (his mother was a black domestic servant [Alice Sisulu] and his father a white civil servant [Albert Victor Dickinson]). He was raised by his mother. His interest in politics was initially awakened by Garveyism—imported into South Africa by, among others, Clement Kadalie, a trade union leader—and consummated by joining the ANC in 1940 and subsequently founding, together with Mandela and others, the ANC Youth League in 1944. As a member of the league, he was afforded the opportunity to travel fairly widely abroad in the 1940s and 50s. He was one of the ANC defendants in the Rivonia Trial, and together with them sentenced to life imprisonment. He was also among the 156 who were tried in the marathon 1956-61 Treason Trials. Two years following his release on October 15, 1989 (together with Kathrada and others), he was elected the deputy president of the ANC. He died on May 6, 2003.

**Tambo, Oliver:** President of the ANC from 1969 to 1990, and the partner of Mandela in their law firm they had established in 1952. He was born in Mbizana in eastern Mpondoland to subsistence farmers on October 27, 1917. He became fully active in the ANC by cofounding with Mandela, Sissulu, and others, the youth wing of the organization, the ANC Youth League, in 1944. Thereafter, he would steadily rise in the ranks of the ANC concurrently with Mandela and Sissulu, among others. Following the banning of the ANC on March 23, 1960, he was sent abroad to help set up the headquarters of the ANC in exile in a number of countries, including Zambia, where he would spend most of his life, until the unbanning of the ANC. He returned to South Africa on December 13, 1990 with other exiled ANC leaders. Due to ill-health, however, he gave up his position as ANC president to Mandela in 1991; he died of a stroke two years later on April 24, 1993. (In the film *Mandela* visits his grave.)

**Terreblanche, Eugene:** Leader of a neo-Nazi white supremacist group, the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (Afrikaner Resistance Movement – AWB), that achieved some media prominence for their oppositional activities against the dismantling of apartheid. Known more for his flamboyant gestures (e.g. riding to court on horseback) and buffoonery than for coherence in aims and strategy, Terreblanche has always been, in reality, a sideshow in South African politics. The AWB is now no longer operational; however, other right-wing neo-Nazi racist groups continue to exist in South Africa—often with links to other similar organizations in Europe, the U.S., Australia, and so on, and sporadically active in criminality and violence. (Interestingly, it has been reported in the South African media that among those involved with the AWB was Steven Hatfield—the U.S. scientist from Maryland erroneously fingered by the FBI for the post-9/11 anthrax attacks.)

**Tutu, Desmond Bishop:** In the film we see him in spliced news clips addressing a large crowd in London and later casting his vote in the first-ever multi-racial national elections. Tutu was born on October 7, 1931 in Klerksdorp. His ambition was to become a doctor, but unable to afford medical education he became a teacher, and later a cleric when he was ordained a parish priest of the Anglican Church in 1961. Using his moral authority, and advocating non-violent strategies of resistance to apartheid, Tutu, an articulate man, would become in time a prominent South African cleric. In 1978 he assumed the post of the general secretary of the South African Council of Churches, and several years later, in 1985, he acquired the distinction of becoming the first black bishop of Johannesburg. (In apartheid South Africa this was a major achievement.) A year later, he achieved a similar distinction when he was elected as the first black archbishop of Cape Town. Among his other achievements include receiving the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1984, and his appointment by Mandela as the head of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*—a commission of inquiry set up to investigate human rights abuses during the apartheid era, and whose mandate included the controversial device of amnesty from prosecution for those who confessed and repented for their crimes.

**Viva:** A Portuguese word, etymologically of Italian roots, meaning “long live” (hence the slogans, “Viva ANC,” “Viva Mandela,” etc.) borrowed by black South Africans from the *relatively* successful African liberation struggles of the 1960s and early 1970s against Portuguese colonialism in the neighboring countries of Mozambique and Angola.