

SOUTH AFRICAN DILEMMAS
IN THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY

A Unit of Study for Grades 9-12

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

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TEACHER BACKGROUND MATERIALS

I. UNIT OVERVIEW

South Africans of all colors have faced many dilemmas in the twentieth century. Whites have faced predicaments over how to reconcile the European ethnic groups—Afrikaner-speaking and English-speaking—in the wake of the South African War of 1899–1902; how to maintain cheap labor supplies for mines and industries; how, as a racial minority, to preserve white supremacy; and how to share power with the black majority without sacrificing white privilege. The solution of the white government to these various quandaries—segregation and apartheid (apartness)—imposed its own cruel dilemmas for blacks, whose struggle to resist racial oppression paved the way for the establishment of nonracial democracy in 1994.

An understanding of apartheid's creation, growth, and eventual demise will deepen students' grasp of this oppressive system and serve as a reminder to protect the freedoms we have gained. Important to this understanding is an ability both to examine the origins of racist ideas and to analyze the importance of individuals who led the struggle for democratic, economic and social reform in South Africa. The role of individuals acting on their beliefs and consciences was critical to the successful abolition of apartheid. Finally, students will examine how the end of apartheid and the creation of a society moving towards a nonracial democracy brought with it many problems that are still a source of contention in South Africa today.

Our goal in writing this teaching unit is to portray the complexity of the South African past. We want middle and high school students to understand that that country's history is not simply the story of white racial oppression or of black heroic resistance. Rather, it reveals many layers of conflict, ambiguity, tragedy, and hope.

II. UNIT CONTEXT

This unit may be taught with a unit on African decolonization. It can also serve as a supplement to commonly taught topics in twentieth-century world history including units focusing on the struggle for human rights and the rising tide of democracy. It may also be used for comparative study in an American history unit dealing with the civil rights movement.

III. CORRELATION TO THE NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

South African Dilemmas in the Twentieth Century provides teaching materials that address the National Standards for History, Basic Edition (National Center for History in the Schools, UCLA, 1996), **World History, Era 9**, "The 20th Century Since 1945: Promises and Paradoxes." Lessons specifically address **Standard 2C** on how liberal democracy, market economies, and human rights movements have reshaped political and social life and **Standard 3A** on major global trends since World War II. This unit may also be useful in addressing **Era 7**, "An Age of Revolutions," **Standard 5B** on the causes and consequences of European settler colonization in the 19th century.

IV. UNIT OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze the growth and development of South Africa through the 20th century.
2. To examine how ideas about race, culture, and nation shaped apartheid and subsequent South African history.
3. To analyze the political and legal means used by the advocates of apartheid to maintain this rigid system of racial segregation.
4. To evaluate the methods used by different resistance groups in South Africa to abolish apartheid and to create a nonracial democracy in its place.
5. To study and compare various kinds of historical evidence, analyzing it for reliability and significance.

V. LESSON PLANS

1. Events Leading to Apartheid in South Africa.
2. The Development of Afrikaner Consciousness: Moral and Ethical Justifications for Apartheid.
3. The Rise of African Militancy Against Apartheid.
4. Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement.
5. States of Emergency
6. Nelson Mandela and the New South Africa.

VI. INTRODUCTORY AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Ask students what they know about apartheid in South Africa. If students are unfamiliar with the term, you may wish to use the term 'segregation' and talk about this American legal phenomenon as the starting point for discussion. Ask students to brainstorm and list ideas on the blackboard: What is apartheid (segregation)? How does it work? What means might a government use to get people to follow the rules in such a system? How might these rules be changed? (Some possibilities to look for: laws strictly enforced by police and military, change brought about through civil disobedience or armed revolt).
2. Share with the class the **Dramatic Moment**, an excerpt from Mark Mathabane's experiences growing up in apartheid South Africa narrated in the book *Kaffir Boy*. Guide a discussion of the reading. What means did the police use to control people? Focus on the themes of police violence, the climate of fear and insecurity, and living conditions. Tie the discussion back to the brainstorm done earlier.
3. A summative assessment exercise for the whole unit might include staging a mock trial of apartheid. Participants are assigned the following roles: prosecutor, defense attorney, judge, members of jury, and witnesses. After completing the unit and doing adequate research, participants put "Apartheid on Trial."

VII. HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO *SOUTH AFRICAN DILEMMAS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY*

When the Dutch East India Company established a refreshment station at Cape Town in 1652, the first European settlement in South Africa, whites encountered Khoisan (Khoikhoi—herders; San—hunter-gatherers) who had inhabited the region for thousands of years. By 1657, some of these Europeans settled at the Cape, occupying the traditional lands of the Khoikhoi and confiscating their cattle. The ensuing warfare weakened indigenous resistance, transforming many Khoikhoi into menial laborers for white farmers and pushing the San into the dry interior. Meanwhile, the growing European settler population (a mixture of Dutch, German, and French, coalescing as "Afrikaners" or "Boers") imported slaves from Asia and East Africa. Whites came to depend on blacks for all forms of unskilled and coercive labor. Thus, a distinct racial hierarchy of white over black was established early in modern South African history.

Nonetheless, white racial assumptions received a jolt in the late 1700s when Europeans encountered the more populous and organized Bantu-speaking farmers (Xhosa) who inhabited the eastern Cape frontier. North of the Xhosa, an even more powerful Bantu-speaking people, the Zulu, organized a centralized kingdom in the second decade of the 1800s under the leadership of Shaka. By the early 1800s, competition be-

Teacher Background Materials

tween white farmers and Xhosa over the eastern Cape's fertile *zuurveld* region resulted in a military stalemate. At precisely this time (1806), the British, locked in competition with Napoleon's French Empire for global military supremacy, occupied the Cape Colony. The British presence shifted the military balance of power in favor of the white communities in the eastern Cape frontier, leading to the dissolution of the Xhosa chiefdoms. Britain also instituted new legislation to govern the various peoples in South Africa, acts that included the abolition of the slave trade (1807) and slavery itself (1834). Laws such as these that interfered with European labor supplies and implied racial "leveling" provoked many Afrikaners to leave the Cape Colony. Beginning in the mid-1830s, this Afrikaner exodus to the highveld, known as the Great Trek, expanded the zone of intergroup conflict from the eastern Cape into the South African interior.

The immediate result of the Great Trek was the foundation of new Afrikaner republics (Transvaal and Orange Free State) in 1852 and 1854, a state-making process facilitated by the demographic chaos of the *mfecane*. The *mfecane* (or *difaqane*) on the *highveld* interior delineates an African time of troubles ignited by the emergence of Shaka's Zulu kingdom. Shaka's conquests contributed to the famine, migration, and human suffering that affected a large portion of southeastern Africa in the 1820s and 1830s. Another immediate legacy of the *mfecane/difaqane* was the formation of Lesotho ("Basutoland") under the leadership of Moshoeshe. In 1843, Britain annexed the Natal Colony and continued to crush African resistance, most strikingly in the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. Britain's interests in South Africa peaked in the latter third of the nineteenth century with the discovery of diamonds (1867) and gold (1887). This mineral revolution provides the context for the outbreak of the South African ("Boer") War (1899-1902), in which troops from throughout the British Empire defeated the defenders of the Afrikaner republics. Despite Britain's victory, the constitutional settlement, resulting in the independent Union of South Africa in 1910, excluded the black majority from the national political process.

Blacks, who had fought on both sides during the South African War, expressed outrage. In protest they formed in 1912 the South African Native National Congress (later known as the African National Congress, or ANC). Excluded from national politics, the ANC could not block the passage of the Natives' Land Act of 1913, which designated African reserves, placed severe restrictions on African land ownership elsewhere, and outlawed sharecropping in the Orange Free State. Policies soon followed that sanctioned urban segregation and job reservation. Such laws, which served to maintain a cheap and manageable black labor force, were also constructed to resolve lingering ethnic and class tensions among whites. Ethnic hostility between Afrikaners and British became particularly acute during World War I, as many Boers supported Germany. After the war, class conflict erupted in the Rand Rebellion of 1922. This European miner's strike, suppressed brutally by the Smuts' government, gave rise to a labor-nationalist coalition in 1924 that imposed additional legal restrictions on Africans.

Despite these external constraints, coupled with crippling internal divisions, blacks

adapted and resisted during the interwar years. The Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU), which formed between 1919 and 1928, represented one of the most impressive efforts of African mobilization at this time. By the 1930s the ICU collapsed under the weight of corruption, mismanagement, and government repression. Despite this, the African urban working class experienced unprecedented growth during the next two decades, buoyed especially by economic expansion during World War II. The interwar period also witnessed the resurgence of Afrikaner nationalism. In 1943 Daniel Malan founded the Purified National Party, a forerunner of the National Party. Supported by the Broederbond (Brotherhood), a secret society of the Afrikaner intellectual elite, the Purified National Party stressed Afrikaner solidarity. It coordinated the centennial celebrations of the Great Trek in 1938, which culminated in the laying of the foundation stone of the Voortrekker Monument near Pretoria. These expressions of Afrikaner nationalism culminated in the National Party's stunning election victory in 1948. The Nationalists played on the fears of many whites over the state of race relations in South Africa, especially the issue of preserving white supremacy in the changing urban landscape. The National Party seemed to offer a plausible solution—the doctrine of apartheid (apartness), which promised a more systematic approach to segregation and a more modern version of racial domination.

The era of apartheid proceeded through three phases: 1) classical white supremacy (1948-1960); 2) separate development (1961-1976); and 3) multiracial co-option (1977-1989). The first phase of apartheid witnessed the passage of the Population Registration Act (1950), which classified people according to race, and the Group Areas Act (1950), which required specific "racial" groups to reside in racially zoned areas. In addition, the Nationalists enacted security legislation that vastly empowered the state to arrest and detain individuals and organizations. In one of the government's most injurious actions, the so-called Bantu Education Act of 1953, the delivery of separate and purposefully inferior education for blacks became the state's mission and prerogative. Hendrik Verwoerd, who became Prime Minister of South Africa between 1958 and 1966, conceived many of the laws of the first phase of apartheid.

The second phase of apartheid, separate development, matured under Prime Minister B. J. Vorster, who served from 1966 to 1978. During this era, the South African government sought to transform the African reserves ("Bantustans" or "Homelands") into self-governing states. This farcical design, the so-called "Homeland" policy, theoretically set aside 13% of fragmented bits of South African land as reserves for three-fourths of the country's total population. The policy bore a tragic face because approximately four million blacks were forcibly relocated to poverty-stricken "Homelands" between 1960 and 1990. In effect, these areas constituted reservoirs of cheap labor as well as dumping grounds for "superfluous" people.

The Soweto riots of 1976, a reaction to "Bantu" education, prompted a transition to the third and final phase of apartheid, multiracial co-option. The principal leader during this phase, Prime Minister and later State President P. W. Botha, engineered a series of political and economic reforms, including the adoption of a "power-sharing" constitu-

Teacher Background Materials

tion in 1984. The most immediate effect of these reforms was to alienate the black majority and provoke a widespread struggle to end apartheid. Resistance to the system has a long history. During the 1950s, the ANC revived under a new generation of leaders, including Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and Oliver Tambo. In 1955 the new ANC leadership organized civil disobedience campaigns and championed the Freedom Charter. In 1959, the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) split from the ANC, adopting a black consciousness strategy. In 1960 the PAC organized an anti-pass law campaign that was shattered by South African police at Sharpeville. Following the Sharpeville massacre, the government banned the ANC, PAC, and South African Communist Party (SACP). In response, these organizations went underground, launching guerrilla warfare against the state. In 1963-1964, Mandela and other prominent ANC and PAC leaders were arrested, tried for treason, and sentenced to life imprisonment. Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) filled the political vacuum at home. Tensions stemming from the Soweto riots, combined with the popularity of BCM, marked Biko as a threat to internal security. Hence, Biko was arrested for his activities and murdered in prison in 1977.

Anti-apartheid resistance persisted and broadened during the 1980s, most notably with the formation of the United Democratic Front in 1983. Under Botha, the government responded with massive repression within the country and a campaign of destabilization throughout the region. A National Security Management System utilized surveillance and coercion to smother the opposition. By the end of the 1980s however, South Africa had reached a state of violent equilibrium—a government that could not be overthrown and a spirit of mass resistance that could not be crushed. In addition, the costs of administering apartheid, including the burden of international sanctions, had become prohibitive. In this context Botha resigned in 1989 and was replaced by F. W. de Klerk. In early 1990, de Klerk called for the unbanning of the ANC and the release of Mandela. Multi-party negotiations ensued to establish a nonracial democracy based on the principle of one person, one vote. Despite these promising measures, violence escalated between supporters of the ANC and the followers of Inkatha, a Zulu nationalist organization. Nonetheless, in late 1993 the negotiating parties endorsed an interim constitution. Nationwide elections followed in April 1994, resulting in an ANC victory. Nelson Mandela was sworn in as president and formed a Government of National Unity. Mandela's regime witnessed the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1996–1998), designed to promote national harmony and to engage all South Africans in an honest reappraisal of their past. Whether or not the work of the Commission bears fruit in the twenty-first century, remains to be seen.

LESSON ONE

EVENTS LEADING TO APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA

A. OBJECTIVES

1. Students analyze change over time in South Africa.
2. Students analyze how geography influences history.
3. Students evaluate the role of legislation in creating the setting for apartheid.

B. LESSON ACTIVITIES

1. As the teacher presents an overview of South African history using the **Table of Dates (Student Handout 1)**, students analyze maps showing the country's history. **Maps 1, 2, and 3 (Student Handouts 2, 3, and 4)** may be used as overhead transparencies.
2. Have students read Sol Plaatje's account of the effect of the Native Land Act of 1913 (**Document A**) on the indigenous people.
3. Have students write a letter to the editor protesting the Native Land Act and the conditions it brought on. Use Plaatje's account as a source.

C. TEACHER BACKGROUND MATERIAL

By 1910, when the Union of South Africa was formed, the country had been conquered by whites. Many Bantu-speaking Africans practiced farming in reserves or on land they bought from whites. Over time, however, laws limiting land ownership became more restrictive. The most important of these laws was the Natives Land Act of 1913, prohibiting the purchase or leasing of land outside of the reserves. In addition, the law reduced all Africans in white owned rural areas to tenant or wage laborers. This caused great hardships to black Africans, particularly in the Orange Free State. In his book *Native Life in South Africa*, Sol Plaatje, the first secretary of the African National Congress, described the plight of African sharecroppers who had been forced from their farms as a result of the Natives Land Act.

EFFECTS OF THE NATIVES LAND ACT OF 1913

Primary Source

The natives were at first inclined to laugh at the idea of working for a master with their families and goods and chattels [slaves], and then to have the additional pleasure of paying for their own small wages, besides bringing money to pay the "Baas" (boss) for employing them . . . But the Dutchman's serious demeanour told them that his suggestion was "no joke." . . . He could only "employ" them; but, as he had no money to pay wages, their cattle would have to go out and earn it for him. 'Had they not heard of the law before?' he inquired.

Needless to say the natives did not see their way to agree with such a one-sided bargain. They moved up-country, but only to find the next farmer offering the same terms, however with a good many more disturbing details – and the next farmer and the next – so that after this native farmer had wandered from farm to farm, occasionally getting into trouble for traveling with unknown stock, "across my ground without permission," and at times escaping arrest for he knew not what, and further, being abused for the crimes of having a black skin and no master, he sold some of his stock along the way, besides losing many which died of cold and starvation; and after having lost much of his substance, he eventually worked his way back to Bloemhof with the remainder, sold them for anything they could fetch, and went to work for a digger [miner].

Source: Sol T. Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa* (London, 1916; Reprint, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1982), 79–80.

Sol T. Plaatje flyer
African National Congress, n.d.

TABLE OF DATES	
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Early millennia	Ancestors of the Khoisan (Khoikhoi and San) living in Southern Africa.
By A.D. 300	Ancestors of the Bantu-speaking majority of the South African population settle within the boundaries of modern South Africa.
1652	The Dutch East India Company founds a refreshment station at the Cape of Good Hope.
1652-1795	Expansion of Afrikaners; conquest of Khoisan; importation of slaves from Indonesia, India, Ceylon, Madagascar, and Mozambique.
1795, 1806	Britain conquers and reconquers the Cape Colony from the Dutch.
1816-28	Formation of the Zulu kingdom under Shaka; the <i>mfecane</i> (<i>difaqane</i>) ensues.
1834-38	Cape colonial slaves emancipated.
1834-53	Xhosa defeated in a series of frontier wars against British and colonial troops.
1835-40	Five thousand Afrikaners (later known as voortrekkers) leave the Cape Colony with their "Coloured" clients; a movement later known as the Great Trek.
1838	Afrikaner commando under the leadership of Andries Pretorius defeats Dingane's Zulu army at Blood River.
1856-57	The Xhosa cattle-killing; over 40,000 Xhosa die of starvation.
1867	Diamonds discovered in Griqualand West.
1879	British and colonial forces conquer the Zulu after losing a regiment at Isandhlwana.
1886	Gold-bearing reef discovered on the Witwatersrand.
1895-96	Leander Starr Jameson leads an unsuccessful raid into the Transvaal.

1898	Transvaal commandos conquer the Venda, completing the white conquest of the African population of Southern Africa.
1899-1902	The South African (Boer) War: Britain conquers the Afrikaner republics.
1906-7	Britain gives parliamentary government to the former republics; only whites enfranchised.
1910	The Cape Colony, Natal, the Transvaal, and the Orange Free State join to form the Union of South Africa.
1912	South African Native National Congress founded; later becomes the African National Congress (ANC).
1913	Native Lands Act limits African land ownership to the reserves; the beginning of a series of segregation laws.
1914-19	As a member of the British Empire, South Africa participates in World War I.
1922	White strikers subdued by government troops in the Rand Rebellion.
1934	Founding of the Purified National Party, forerunner of the National Party.
1938	Afrikaner centennial trek culminates in the laying of foundation stone of the Voortrekker Monument on a hill outside Pretoria.
1939-45	South Africa participates in World War II on the Allied side.
1948	The Afrikaner National party wins a general election and begins to apply its policy of apartheid.
1950	The Population Registration Act classifies people by race; the Group Areas Act makes people reside in racially zoned areas. Security legislation gives the government vast powers over people and organizations.
1952	The ANC and its allies launch a passive resistance campaign.
1958-66	Hendrik Verwoerd is prime minister.
1959	Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) founded.

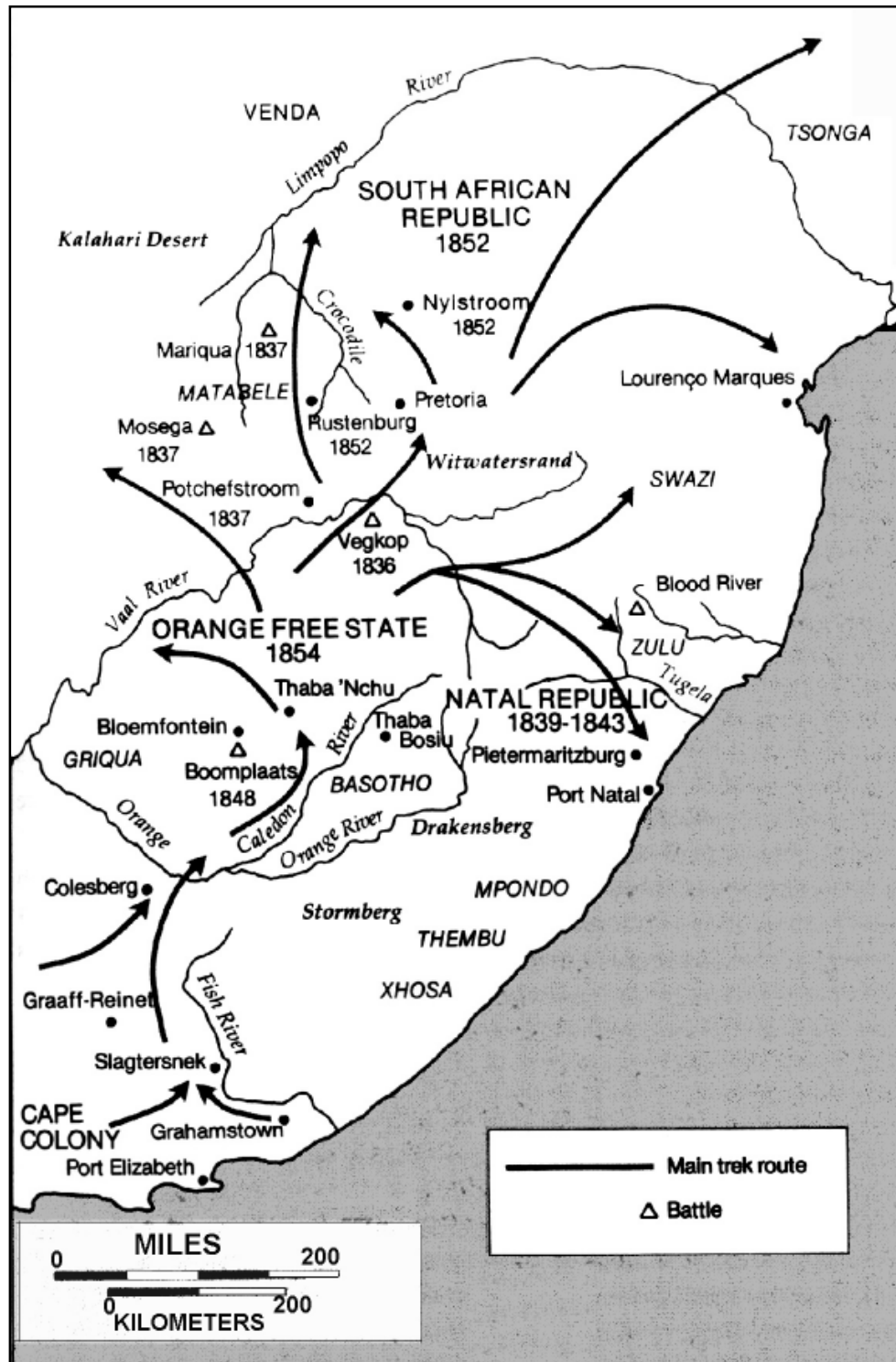
1960	Police kill 67 African anti-pass-law demonstrators at Sharpeville; the government bans African political organizations.
1961	South Africa becomes a republic and leaves the British Commonwealth.
1964	Nelson Mandela and other ANC and PAC leaders sentenced to life imprisonment.
1966-68	Lesotho, Botswana, and Swaziland become independent states.
1966-78	B. J. Vorster is prime minister.
1976-77	At least 575 people die in confrontations between Africans and police in Soweto and other African townships.
1976-1981	The government grants "independence" to the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and the Ciskei Homelands, but they are not recognized abroad.
1977	The U.N. Security Council imposes a mandatory embargo on the supply of arms to South Africa.
1978-84	P. W. Botha is prime minister.
1979	African trade unions can register and gain access to the industrial court and the right to strike.
1981-88	South African forces invade Angola and make hit-and-run raids into Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Zambia; ANC guerillas sabotage South African cities.
1983	United Democratic Front (UDF) formed.
1984-86	Prolonged and widespread resistance to the regime in black South African townships; violent government reactions.
1984	A new constitution gives Asians and Coloureds but not Africans limited participation in the central government; Botha becomes state president.
1984-86	Prolonged and widespread resistance to the regime in black South African townships and violent government reactions.
1986	Pass laws repealed.

- 1986 The government proclaims a nationwide state of emergency, detains thousands of people, and prohibits the press, radio, and television from reporting unrest.
- 1986 The U.S. Congress passes the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act over President Reagan's veto.
- 1989 F. W. de Klerk succeeds Botha, first as leader of the National party, then as president.
- 1990 De Klerk unbans the ANC, PAC, and SACP; releases Mandela and other political prisoners.
- 1990-91 1913 and 1936 Land Acts, Group Areas Act, Population Registration Act, and Separate Amenities Act repealed; political organizations unbanned; state of emergency revoked; amid widespread violence, delegates from 18 parties start formal negotiations.
- 1992 White voters support the negotiation process in a referendum. The ANC breaks off negotiations with the government after an Inkatha mob massacres 46.
- 1993 Negotiations resume; de Klerk, Mandela, and leaders of 18 other parties endorse an interim constitution.
- 1994 The ANC wins first nonracial election (April 27-30). Nelson Mandela is sworn in as president and forms Government of National Unity.
- 1996-1998 Truth and Reconciliation Committee hears former police, army, and government officials confess to torture, murder, and other civil rights abuses as a means of achieving an honest reappraisal of the past and setting the foundation for a new democratic South Africa.

Adapted from Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), xv-xx.

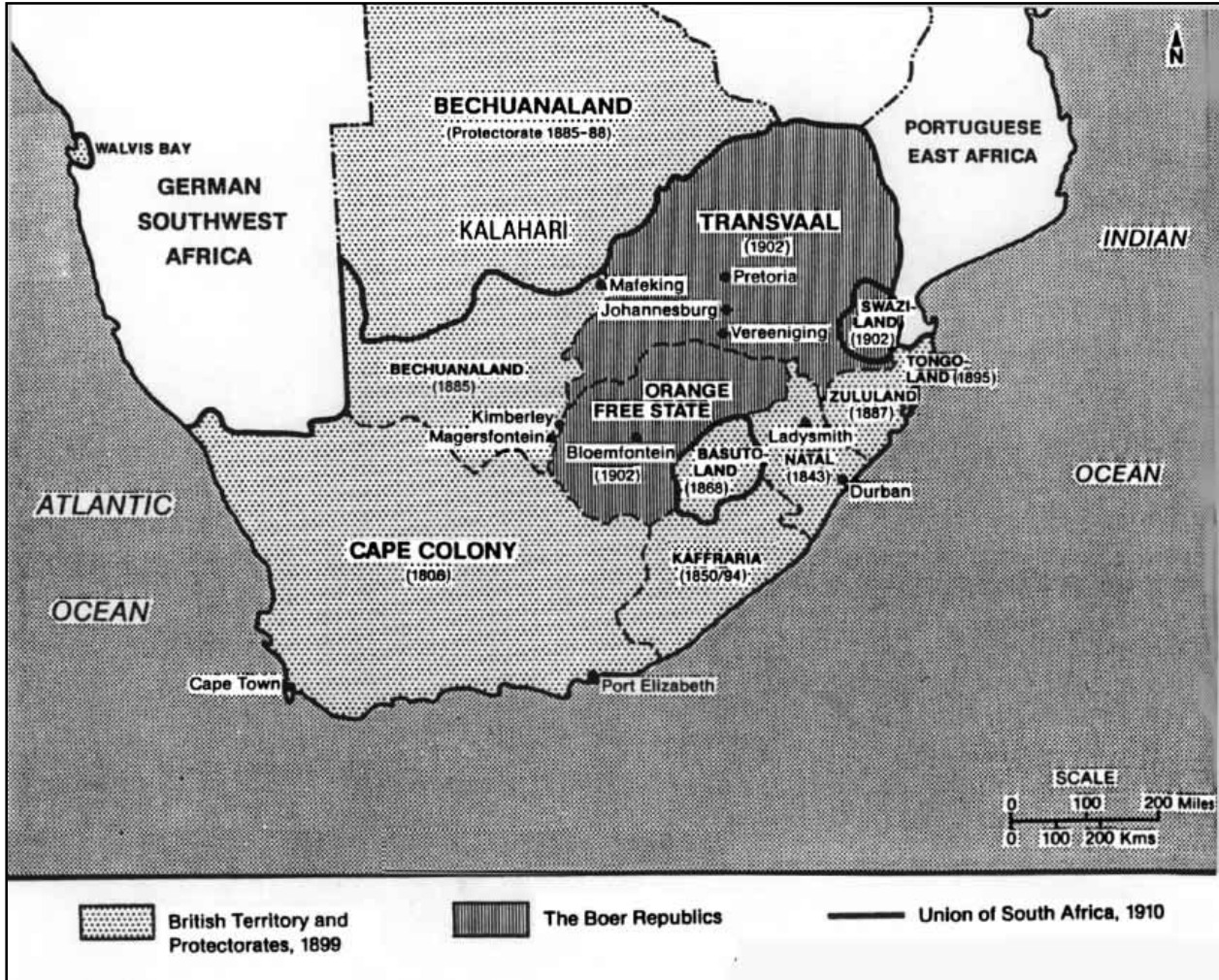
THE AFRIKANER GREAT TREK, 1836-1854

Map One



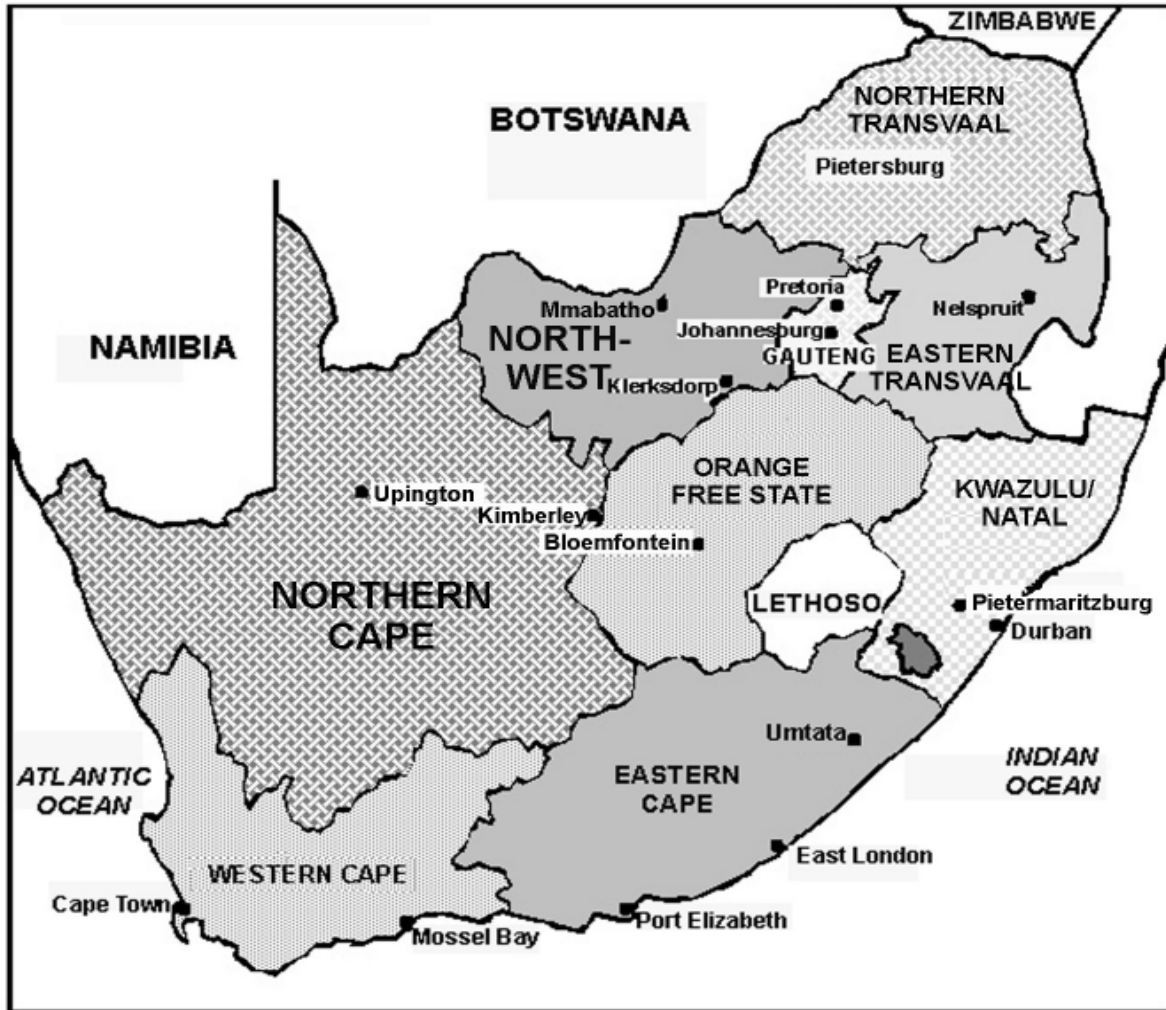
Adapted from Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 89.

SOUTH AFRICA, 1806-1910 Map Two



Source: *Historical Maps on File*

TODAY'S SOUTH AFRICA Map Three



Source: African National Congress.