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Nelson Mandela strongly opposed South Africa's system of *apartheid*. He was willing to go to prison in exchange for his efforts to oppose the system. This image depicts letters, written by Mandela, which are included in his prison correspondence journal. The documents are part of the Google Mandela Archive. (Google donated a significant sum of money to have Mandela-related pictures and documents digitized.)

As Mandela continued his education in the real world of South African life, he became more political. Indignities against blacks (don't miss this BBC video archive) existed everywhere.

Why couldn't they vote? Why did they need passbooks (providing personal details) to travel inside their own country? Why weren't black students given the same educational opportunities as white students? Why did black South Africans need separate bantustans (tribal "homelands"), located in rural (not gold-and-diamond-producing) areas?"

Some of the more egregious apartheid laws were these:

- **Population Registration Act** (1950). This law divided South Africa's people into racial groups. In descending order of privilege, they were: Whites, "Coloreds," Indians and Blacks.
- **Group Areas Act** (1950). Whites and blacks were prohibited from living in the same parts of town. This compulsory aspect of apartheid insured separateness, with white people living in towns and black people living in townships.
- **Natives Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents** (1952). Black Africans had been required to carry passbooks for domestic travel as early as 1923. In 1952, however, those laws were changed in favor of reference books containing a host of information about each book bearer. In addition to a photo, the new books included employment records - only white employers counted - fingerprints, one's place of origin and other identification items.
- **Separate Amenities Act** (1953). As early as 1948, "Whites Only" (Blankes Alleen) signs kept black people away from taxis, ambulances, hearses, buses, trains, elevators, benches, beaches, restrooms, parks, church halls, town halls, cinemas, theaters, cafes, restaurants and hotels used by whites. Since a court had ruled segregated amenities were acceptable only if they were equal, South Africa's Parliament passed another law - in 1953 - to eliminate that equality requirement. Thereafter, apartheid allowed unequal - as well as segregated - facilities and amenities.

Laws like these lead to crimes (and increasing subjugation). In 1957 - while America was dealing with its own version of apartheid in the South (via "Jim Crow" laws) - the U.S. government commissioned a documentary entitled *South Africa under Apartheid*. Archival footage, including interviews with South Africans, reveals growing levels of fear and mistrust between the races.

On the 21st of March, 1960, a massacre occurred in Sharpeville Township (in the Transvaal) when people protested the hated passbooks. Although accounts of the incident differ, sixty-nine people were killed.

Today, as a direct result of the Sharpeville Massacre, the 21st of March is remembered as "Human Rights Day" in South Africa. It was also those events which convinced Mandela that his non-violent resistance, against Apartheid, was no longer the right approach to end separation of the races.

While Mandela and his law partner - Oliver Tambo - were successful in their business, they could not achieve equality for themselves or their clients. Apartheid's laws - like those above - would never permit such a thing.

A proponent of physical fitness, Mandela was a skilled boxer - of the heavyweight variety. Tall, well-dressed and athletic, he was an imposing man. Then ... he became an imposing leader.

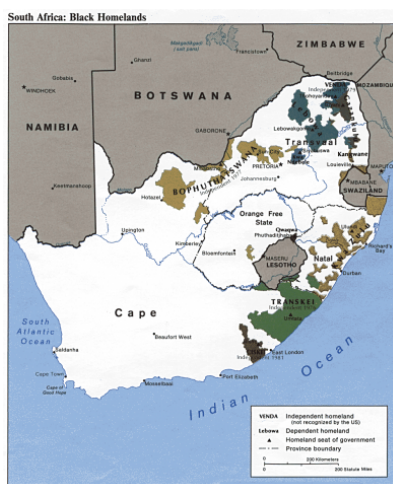
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/MANDELA-and-APARTHEID-Invictus>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/MANDELA-and-APARTHEID-Invictus>

Media Stream



Bantustans - Tribal Homelands

Map of South African tribal homelands during the apartheid era. Online, courtesy Perry-Castañeda Map Collection, University of Texas at Austin.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Bantustans-Tribal-Homelands>

Rural Area in Ciskei

Image by Drake, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Durban Beach - Apartheid-Era

Photo by Guinnog, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Durban-Beach-Apartheid-Era>



Apartheid-Era Sign - Whites Only

Photo online, courtesy El C via Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Apartheid-Era-Sign-Whites-Only>



Oliver Tambo at Mandela and Tambo

Image of Oliver Tambo, online courtesy [ANC](#) (African National Congress).

Quoted passage of John Carlin's interview with Adelaide Tambo, online courtesy [FRONTLINE](#).

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Oliver-Tambo-at-Mandela-and-Tambo>



Mandela - The Heavy-weight Boxer

Nelson Mandela, as a heavyweight boxer.

Image online, courtesy [Bailey's African History Archive](#).

Quoted passage from *Long Walk to Freedom*, Mandela's autobiography, page 193.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Mandela-The-Heavy-weight-Boxer>



MANDELA and APARTHEID

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/>



Invictus - Nelson Mandela Interview

Clip from May 21, 1961 interview between Nelson Mandela and Brian Widlake. Video online, courtesy ITN and Newsfilm Online.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Invictus-Nelson-Mandela-Interview>



Nelson Mandela - The Early Years

Clip from "Nelson Mandela: Higher Than Hope," produced by NTV Kenya. Online, courtesy NTV Kenya.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Nelson-Mandela-The-Early-Years>



South Africa under Apartheid

Clip from "South Africa under Apartheid," from the CIA Film Library, online courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/South-Africa-under-Apartheid>

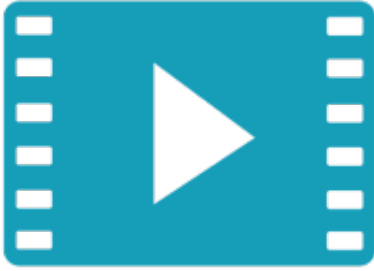


South Africa under Apartheid - Part 2

Clip from "South Africa under Apartheid," from the CIA Film Library, online courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/South-Africa-under-Apartheid-Part-2>



South Africa under Apartheid - Part 3

Clip from "South Africa under Apartheid," from the CIA Film Library, online courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/South-Africa-under-Apartheid-Part-3>