

South African History Time-Line

Pre-history:

By 100,000BC the **San** people had settle in southern Africa. From about ~50,000BC groups of San people migrate out Southern Africa eventually giving rise (apparently) to modern man in the rest of the world. From about 500AD Bantu speaking people from Central and Eastern Africa had migrated into South Africa.

1500–1650

Arid western half of southern Africa was dominated by **Khoi herdsman** and by **San hunters/gatherers** who in lean times became clients of the Khoi. San lived in small nomadic bands while Khoi lived in larger, semi-nomadic, and differentiated groups. At the Cape, **Khoi traded cattle to occasional European ships**. At the east-west divide, marked by grazing land that was marginal for agriculture, there were economic relationships between Khoi herders and **Bantu cattle-keeping farmers**. The latter (**Nguni** along the coast and **Sotho/Tswana** in the interior) lived in late-iron-age mixed farming communities based on grain and livestock. These communities were formed into **chiefdoms** but were not highly centralized; the **basic unit was the homestead**, linked to the chiefdom through a patrilineage and a clan.

1652

Dutch East India Company established a settlement at **Cape Town** as refreshment station for ships in trade between Europe and Asia, under command of **Jan van Riebeeck**. Meat was procured from the Khoi and vegetables grown in the company garden. Since Khoi labor was not forthcoming, the company **imported slaves from Asia and other parts of Africa** (especially Madagascar). The settlement slowly expanded as **Europeans engaged in extensive pastoralism and hunting** with Khoi and slave laborers. **Burghers** freed from company service at Cape Town came into **conflict with Khoi on Cape Peninsula**, leading to series of wars between the company and Khoi.

Bantu speakers in present-day South Africa also began to adopt **MAIZE**, which has higher yields but is less drought-resistant than sorghum. The century was generally dry in South Africa and concluded with a **serious drought and famine**. Preceding the drought, however, there was considerable **population growth** based on the early adoption of maize in the northern **Nguni** areas and a **proliferation of chiefdoms**. **Sotho-Tswana** peoples began to form **large chiefdoms** in southern and western **Transvaal** and in **Botswana**, living in large central settlements and ruled by a chief with religious and political authority advised by a council.

Cape Town became an entrepôt for an extensive pastoralist economy. Its population increased from **slave importations and immigration**; by 1800 there were 20,000 free burghers and 25,000 slaves. The colony's expansion pushed the Khoisan from the western interior.

1667

Indians and Malaysians began to arrive at the Cape, being brought as slaves or indentured servants.

1688

Two hundred **Huguenot refugees from France** arrived at the Cape and strengthened Dutch settlement.

1707

At least one Dutch settler began to call himself an **Afrikaner**.

1713

Smallpox epidemic in Cape killed large numbers of Khoi and was followed by cattle disease that led to loss of herds. Impoverished Khoi became clients of cattle-keeping Africans and Afrikaners.

c. 1730

Dutch began **trekking** into the interior of the Cape.

1730–80

Independent mixed-race communities of Kora, Griqua, and Nama cattle-raiding and trading pastoralists thrived north of Cape Town along the Orange River beyond the white frontier. The **trading frontier** east of Cape Town for ivory and cattle became the frontier of white settlement, leading to **conflict with Xhosa** semipastoralists over grazing land and to series of **frontier wars** at end of century.

c. 1776

First direct contacts between **Dutch and Xhosa on the Zeekse River**.

1779–81

First **frontier war** of a series of wars spanning 100 years occurs between colonists of Cape and Xhosa on eastern frontier at **Fish River**.

1789

Xhosa cross the Fish River.

1795

Whites rebelled against company rule on eastern frontier of South Africa. **British captured Cape Town** and put down rebellion.

1799

Khoi revolt on eastern frontier, supported by Khoi soldiers in British service. At this time there were 14,000 Khoi in the colony, cast in the role of intermediary between the settlement and Bantu farmers, but the rebellion ended this role in the east.

c. 1795

Slaves outnumbered Europeans at the Cape.

1800–67

This period was characterized by **CONCOMITANT AND CONTRADICTIONARY STATE FORMATION ENTERPRISES** of the **Nguni Bantu of the southeastern coast, the expansion of British colonial hegemony, and the creation of Boer Republics.**

1800

Emergence in southeast coast among northern **Nguni**–speakers of **larger chiefdoms that would become the Zulu state** early in the century, perhaps sparked by conflict over the ivory trade at Delagoa Bay or conflict over drought-stricken grazing land. The **ivory trade at Delagoa Bay**, from the late 18th century, contributed to political centralization in southeastern South Africa. By this time there were several **large federations of chiefdoms** under paramount chiefs in Phogola-Thukela region—**Zwide's Ndwandwe, Sobhuza's Ngwane** (later the Swazi), and **Dingiswayo's Mthwethwa**. These chiefdoms, in an atmosphere of competition for the ivory trade and grazing, converted male initiation schools into military and state-labor **age regiments** that formed standing armies under royal princes at various capitals.

1803–6

The British left the Cape in the hands of the Dutch **Batavian Republic** by the **Treaty of Amiens**. Batavians continued the British policy on the frontier.

Oct. 10

British returned to the Cape with the capitulation of **Papendorp**.

1807

The abolition of the slave trade throughout the British Empire caused a serious labor shortage in the Cape.

1809

The Khoikhoi were placed under colonial law.

1811–12

The **British drove 20,000 Xhosa out of Zuurveld** to a line east of the Fish River on the Eastern Cape frontier, opening the area for white settlement.

1814, May 13

By the **Treaty of Paris**, the British secured definitive possession of the Cape.

1817

Dingiswayo was killed by Zwide's Ndwandwe. His protégé, **Shaka**, was quickly installed as chief of the small Zulu chiefdom and took over Dingiswayo's Mthwethwa confederacy under new Zulu paramountcy.

1817–28

Shaka became king of the newly emerged Zulu kingdom. Shaka **militarized and centralized** the state. Men under age 40 remained in active service, serving periodically in central military barracks. They were forbidden to marry and thus establish new homesteads until given permission by the king. The trade and competition that led to state formation in the region, as well as the need to support and employ the army, fueled constant cattle raiding and warfare to exact tribute and incorporate new chiefdoms. The wars and migrations of this period through the 1840s were known as **MFECANE**.

1818–19

The Xhosa war of resistance failed, leading to cession of the area between the Fish and Keiskamma Rivers.

1819–20

Zulus defeated Zwide's Ndwandwe. Remnants scattered northward and established new states from Mozambique to Tanganyika.

1820

Arrival of 10,000 sponsored **British settlers** on small farms in Zuurveld on the Eastern Cape Frontier. They were intended to Anglicize the area and make it defensible, as well as to offset the Dutch population politically. Most of these settlers soon migrated instead to the towns.

1820–30

Basotho kingdom arose under the leadership of Moshoeshoe in a defensive reaction to raiding by offshoots of Mfecane.

1822

A proclamation provided for the **gradual establishment of English** in place of Dutch as the official language.

Mzilikazi, chief of the Khumalo and one of Shaka's generals, defied Shaka by refusing to turn over captured cattle and fled with 200 followers into high veld, leading to the formation of **Ndebele state**.

1824

British traders established a post at **Port Natal** (present-day Durban) under Shaka's goodwill. The Zulu kingdom traded there and through the Portuguese at Delagoa Bay. **Moshoeshoe established a mountain fortress at Thaba Bosiu**, which was virtually impregnable, allowing consolidation of a kingdom from various Sotho-Tswana groups straddling the Caledon River.

1825

Ndebele established themselves through raiding and conquest as the dominant kingdom on the high veld.

1828

Shaka was assassinated in a conspiracy by his brothers, including **Dingane**, who became king.

Following the efforts of John Philip, the Cape passed the **Fiftieth Ordinance**, permitting Khoikhoi to hold and to purchase land. The legal system was overhauled, and the court system was replaced by a British judiciary.

1834

Abolition of slavery was gradually introduced and led to the freedom of 35,000 slaves. Dutch slaveholders in particular complained bitterly about the lack of adequate compensation.

Twelve thousand Xhosa attacked Cape Colony outposts.

1836–38

Antislavery legislation and labor regulation under the colorblind British legal system, as well as shortage of land in the Cape for the Boer system of extensive pastoralism, sparked **migration of Dutch-speaking pastoralists** into the South African interior beginning in 1836. This movement was later designated the **Great Trek**, and its participants, the **Voortrekkers**. About 10,000 moved northward. Under **Andries H. Potgeiter**, a group passed beyond the Vaal River and settled in what became known as the Transvaal. Another group under **Piet Retief** crossed the Drakensberg and began to occupy parts of Zululand and Natal in regions depopulated by the **Mfecane**.

1837, Dec

Contingent of **Boer Voortrekkers** under Retief sought **concession of land from Dingane, king of the Zulu**. At a meeting with Dingane, **Retief and 60 followers were murdered**. Zulu forces also attacked trekker encampments. Other Boer Voortrekkers, allied with Tswana and Griqua armies, **defeated Ndebele**, who relocated at Bulawayo in southwestern Zimbabwe.

1838, Dec. 16

Boers under Andreas Pretorius defeated the Zulu army at the Battle of Blood River at the Ncome River. The Boers thereupon settled in Natal, calling it the Republic of Natal, and founded Pietmaritzburg (1839).

1839

Dingane's half-brother **Mpande allied himself with the Boers and defeated Dingane**, becoming king. As a result, Mpande became a vassal of the Boer republic of Natalia.

1842–43

War between the British and the Boers in Natal. Pretorius defeated a British column under Capt. T. Smith in June 1842. By July, the Republic began to collapse, and by May 1843, the British had annexed Natal.

1843, Dec

A treaty with **Moshoeshoe**, powerful leader of the Basuto, led to the recognition of Basutoland under British protection. A similar treaty was made with **Adam Kok**, a leader of the **Griqua**.

1845

British annexation of Natal led to **renewed emigration** of most of the Voortrekkers.

1848

Sir Harry Smith, British high commissioner, annexed the area between the Fish and Kei Rivers as British Kaffraria; he also annexed the Orange River Sovereignty—the area between the Orange and Vaal Rivers, populated by Sotho and Boer groups. Boers **resisted Smith's annexations**, but they were defeated at the Battle of **Boomplaats**.

1849–52

Sponsored immigration brought more British settlers to Natal.

1853, July

A **new constitution** was introduced in the Cape Colony. It provided for an elected Legislative Council and an elected House of Assembly.

1854, Feb

Britain paved the way for formation of the **Orange Free State** by abandoning sovereignty in the **Bloemfontein Convention**. Boer settlers organized a republic with a president and a *volksraad*.

1856, July 12

Natal was established as a British colony, separate from the Cape, with a legislative council for the settlers. **Civil war in Zulu kingdom** established the supremacy of the Usuthu faction and the right to succession of Cetshwayo, while Mpande remained king.

1857

In a self-defeating effort to resist European incursions, **the Xhosa killed cattle in response to a millennial prophecy**. Perhaps as many as two-thirds of the population died as a result of the killing of cattle and the livelihood they represented.

1859

The first indentured Indian servant arrived in Natal to work especially on **sugar plantations, because of shortages of willing African labor**. By the end of the 19th century, numbers of indentured and voluntary Indian immigrants equaled the white population in the colony.

1865–66

War between the Orange Free State and Moshoeshoe's Sotho resulted in cession of most of Sotho state's arable land.
Severe economic depression in South Africa.

1866

The Indian government stopped supply of indentured Indian labor to Natal.

1867, April

DISCOVERY OF DIAMONDS near Hopetown on the Orange River. By 1870 a considerable mining industry had emerged. The discovery of diamonds led to a **profound restructuring** of the relationships among the various communities in South Africa and ushered in an era of **INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM**.

1868, March 12

Britain annexed Basotholand as a protectorate, following a request by Moshoeshoe, and began the process of establishing white governance over African areas without a substantial white presence.

1870

Digger's Republic was proclaimed at Klipdrift.
Diamonds were discovered in the Orange Free State.

1870–80

“Dry diggings” took place in diamond fields of what became **Kimberley** in the northern Cape. By 1875, this region became the largest diamond-producing area. **THE MINING ECONOMY TRANSFORMED THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ALL PEOPLES IN THE REGION, commercializing agriculture and leading to migrant labor systems, increase in Christian missionary activity, and conquest of independent kingdoms.** Productive mines were increasingly concentrated into a few big conglomerates.

1870–1904

Mineral revolution led to white immigration, increasing the white population in South Africa from 225,000 to 1 million.

1871

Kimberley soon became the center of the diamond industry. **Cecil Rhodes** moved from Natal to Kimberley.

April

The **British government annexed** the diamond region (Griqualand West).

1876

Pedi kingdom defeated the Boer South African Republic (Transvaal) army.

1877, April 12

Britain annexed the South African Republic under the authority of Theophilus Shepstone. The British intended this annexation to be part of a larger federation of South Africa, but the Afrikaners considered it to be a violation of the Sand River Convention.

1877–78

The last Cape-Xhosa (Fontier) war resulted in famine and defeat for the Xhosa.

1879, Jan. 12–Sept. 1

The British invaded and defeated the Zulu kingdom, after suffering a major defeat in the first battle at Isandlwana. The British rushed in reinforcements and won a decisive victory at Ulundi. Military defeat led to series of civil wars in the former kingdom and finally to annexation by Britain in 1887.

The **Afrikaner Bond** was founded by **Jan Hofmeyer** to promote the Dutch language. It soon rallied most of the Dutch elements in South Africa. The Bond soon developed a political position favoring the elimination of all interference from the British government.

1880–81

Boers in the Transvaal revolted against the British. In Dec. 1881 Boer leaders, including Kruger, Joubert, and Pretorius, declared the **South African Republic**. Boers defeated British forces at Laing's Nek in Jan. and at Majuba Hill in Feb. The British recognized the republic on April 5 in the Treaty of Pretoria.

1880

The **Barnato Diamond Mining Company** was founded by Barney Barnato, and the **De Beers Mining Corporation** was founded by Cecil Rhodes and Alfred Beit.

1883–84

Civil war in Zululand. In May 1884, **Dinizulu**, son of Cetewayo, was made king.

1886

THE GOLD DISCOVERED on Witwatersrand accelerated the mining revolution; by the end of the century, South Africa was the world's largest producer of gold. Gold increasingly was found only in deep reefs, which required **substantial capital and cheap labor**.

Johannesburg was laid out in Sept. 1886 and before long had a population of over 100,000. **Cecil Rhodes's Consolidated Gold Mines** soon controlled a large share of the business.

1890

Cecil Rhodes became prime minister of the Cape Colony.

1890–1906

Series of **ecological crises**, including drought, locusts, and cattle disease (rinderpest) undermined the independence of African peasant production, which had been stimulated by the mining revolution.

1892

The first **train** line to link Capetown and Johannesburg was established.

1894, Aug

Glen Grey Act provided for African self-government along the model of indirect rule. It also raised property qualifications and introduced an educational test for black voters of the Cape.

1895, Dec. 29–1896, Jan. 2

Leander Starr Jameson led an unsuccessful raid on Johannesburg, intended to spark an uprising of Uitlander miners as a pretext for British intervention in South African Republic.

1896, Jan. 6

Cecil Rhodes, implicated in the Jameson Raid, was forced to resign as prime

minister.

1897

Zululand was incorporated into Natal Colony. In Natal, it became a **criminal offense for a white man to marry an Indian**.

1898

Kruger was reelected president of the South African Republic and brought a hardening of Afrikaner attitudes toward immigrants. **Uitlander** agitation against the Kruger regime increased. Milner was favorably disposed toward Uitlander grievances. In 1899, 20,000 Uitlanders sent a petition to Queen Victoria, recounting their grievances.

1899–1902

South African War (also known as Anglo-Boer War). At the outset, Boers had the military advantage of numbers and knowledge of terrain. Britain had only 25,000 men available. By Feb. 1900, the tide of battle favored British forces. By November, the Boers turned to **guerrilla tactics**, frustrating British army strategy. In Jan. 1901, Gen. Herbert Kitchener used a **scorched earth policy** to counter Boer guerrillas. Some 120,000 **women and children were confined in concentration camps**, where poor sanitation and malnutrition contributed to high mortality (around 20,000 died). British journalist **J. A. Hobson**, covering the war, developed a new **theory of imperialism**. At the end of the war, the British had 300,000 troops in South Africa against 60,000–70,000 Boers. By the **Treaty of Vereeniging** (May 31, 1901) the Boers accepted British sovereignty but were promised representative government. The British promised £3 million to enable the Boers to rebuild their farms.

1902–10

Lord Milner, as high commissioner, **consolidated South Africa** and brought about accommodation among Afrikaner (Boer) leaders and mining and imperial interests.

1903–5

South African Native Affairs Commission endorsed principles of territorial and political segregation for the prospective unified South African state.

1903–7

Sixty thousand Chinese laborers were imported to counter the labor shortage on the Rand mines, undermining the bargaining power of African workers. The Chinese resisted labor conditions and discipline of mine work.

1907

The Transvaal government passed the **Asiatic Registration Bill** and provided for restrictions on Asian immigration. **Mohandas Gandhi** began his long campaign of **passive resistance**.

1908, Oct.–1909, Feb

The Constitutional Convention was held first in Durban and then at Capetown. The convention agreed on a scheme for a union of South Africa. There was to be a two-chamber Parliament: in the Senate, composed of eight members from each state, some would be elected proportionally and some appointed; in the House of Assembly, most were to be elected proportionally.

1910, May 13

The Union of South Africa came into being with white male franchise and property-qualified nonracial franchise in Cape Province. The general election brought **Gen. Botha to power as head of a coalition of Afrikaner parties**, but English speakers were included in the cabinet. Botha's and **Gen. Jan Smuts's** parties merged to form the South African National Party. The opposition was divided among the Unionists, representing business interests, and the small Labour Party.

Native Labour Regulation Act unified laws making breach of contract a criminal offense and outlawed African strikes; it also regulated conditions of employment but had the effect of **depressing wages for Africans**.

1912

The South African Native National Congress (later the African National Congress (ANC)) was founded, composed of educated elites and chiefs but drawn from all ethnic groups and regions. **Rev. John Langalibalele Dube** of Natal was its first president.

1913, June

THE NATIVE LAND ACT ENTRENCHED THE PRINCIPLE OF TERRITORIAL SEGREGATION, restricting African land tenure to 7.3 percent of South Africa (with a promise of more to be added later), mostly in communal tenure reserves and scattered freehold areas. In the long term, this act **crippled the already declining African peasantry**; its antisharecropping and antirenting provisions took effect slowly (except in Orange Free State) but increased the bargaining power of white farmers seeking African labor.

The **Immigration Act** restricted the entry and free movement of Asians. Extensive rioting by Indians followed, during which **Gandhi** was arrested.

1914

Hertzog founded the Nationalist Party in opposition to Botha's South African Party. The Nationalist Party drew its support largely from rural Afrikaners and became an organ for Afrikaner separatism. (See [Southern Africa](#))

Aug.–Dec

South Africa entered World War I as part of the British Empire and invaded German South West Africa (SWA), prompting an Afrikaner rebellion in the Orange Free State, led by Gen. De Wet; the rebellion was put down by December.

1914–18

South African troops, white and “colored” (mixed race), fought in Europe and, under **Gen. Smuts**, in East Africa; Africans served as noncombatants.

1915, July

South Africa defeated German forces in SWA.

1918

Up to **200,000 Africans died in South Africa from a worldwide influenza epidemic.**

1919

South Africa given a League of Nations mandate to rule SWA. The **African National Union** organized burning of passes as protest.

1919–21

Severe drought coincided with postwar boom and collapse of agricultural prices in South Africa, driving many **Afrikaners off the land** to become urban workers.

1920

Nationalists won the largest number of seats in the general election, but Smuts stayed in power by an alliance with the Unionists; election showed the growing **appeal of Afrikaner nationalism**. The **Native Affairs Act** provided for local councils in reserve areas and a permanent (white) Native Affairs Commission, furthering the **doctrine of segregation** in the political sphere. **Witwatersrand University** chartered. Students at **Fort Hare** burned buildings in protest against school policies.

1921–36

Doubling of the urban black population and a significant increase in the **numbers of black women in towns**.

1922, Jan

White mineworkers' strike to maintain monopoly of skilled jobs for whites, leading to white workers' insurrection. Communist Council of Action briefly gained control of the Rand.

1923

Natives (Urban Areas) Act provided for urban segregation and regulation of conditions in black areas.

Africans held conferences at Bloemfontein and Pretoria to protest changes in their rights.

1925

The Native Tax and Development Act replaced hut taxes with a uniform poll tax of £1 per African adult male, plus 10 shillings per annum for reserve dwellers, earmarked for development projects.

Afrikaans recognized as an official language of South Africa, on a par with English and Dutch. **Areas Reservation Act** segregated Indians.

1925–29

A wave of **rural radicalism** in eastern South Africa was marked by the rise of the ICU and other radical or millenarian movements.

1926–27

The African National Congress adopted a more radical line under the leadership of **J. T. Gumede**, influenced by the example of the USSR and by the Comintern's call for a black republic in South Africa.

1927

Native Administration Act furthered implementation of administrative and legal segregation and indirect rule.

1929

The Riotous Assemblies Act gave the government power to deport those promoting “racial hostility”; the act was a tool for clamping down on radical movements.

Word *apartheid* was used.

1929–32

Severe **depression** caused the collapse of agricultural prices, leading to government institution of price supports and other aid to white farmers.

1930

The ANC returned to a moderate stance under the leadership of **Pixley Seme**.

1931

Revision of South Africa's **Urban Areas Act** further restricted Africans' rights to residence in cities and towns.

1932–40

Abandonment of the gold standard led to a steep rise in the price of gold and to a boom in secondary industry, **vastly increasing urbanization and labor migration**.

1935

In emulation of Nazi Brown Shirts, **Grey Shirts** emerged in South Africa.

Dec

All-African Convention of black organizations met in Bloemfontein to **oppose Native Bills**, especially the **withdrawal of the Cape franchise**.

1936, April 7

Passage of **Natives Representation Act** removed the Cape African franchise and set up the advisory Natives Representative Council (NRC); simultaneous passage of Natives Trust and Land Act added land to native reserves and required six months' service of African tenants on white-owned land.

1938

Electoral gains by the Purified Nationalist Party. **Centennial of the Great Trek** used to galvanize Afrikaner nationalism. **Census of urban areas** used to enforce segregation.

1939, Sept

South Africa joined World War II on the side of Britain, leading to the resignation of Hertzog; Smuts became prime minister; Purified Nationalists emerged as the main Afrikaner party.

1948

The Afrikaner National Party, under the leadership of D. F. Malan, won the white general election under an ill-defined **slogan of apartheid** (separateness), an intensification of existing structures of segregation.

1950

The Population Registration Act in South Africa required classification of all South Africans on racial lines, especially for the purpose of dividing white and mixed-race (coloured) populations, but more generally as the basis of **strategy of Grand Apartheid**, involving rigid political, territorial, and economic segregation by race in order to entrench white domination and Afrikaner nationalist power. **The Groups Areas Act** furthered this concept by rigidifying urban segregation and excluding black traders from central business districts. **The Suppression of Communism Act** gave the government broad powers to ban and detain opposition leaders; it drove the Communist Party of South Africa to underground reformation as the South African Communist Party (SACP) in 1952.

1953

The Bantu Education Act placed the Department of Native Affairs in charge of African education (in place of mission churches and provincial administrations) and adopted a syllabus that **emphasized training for servitude and downplayed academics**.

1955

The Congress of the People, led by the African National Congress, the Indian Congresses, and white liberal and leftist groups, adopted the **Freedom Charter** as a consensus statement of **opposition to denial of political freedom and wealth to the majority**.

1959

Pan African Congress (PAC) formed.

1960

Sharpsville massacre of blacks; ANC and PAC are banned by the government.

1961

South Africa leaves the British Commonwealth and becomes a separate republic

1963

Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and other activists in the ANC are **jailed for life**.

1966 and 1968

Britain grants **independence to Basotholand**, which becomes the **Kingdom of Lesotho** and then grants **independence to Swaziland**, which becomes the **Kingdom of Swaziland**.

1975

South Africa invades Angola. The **Zulu cultural movement** of Inkatha is revived by **Mangosuthu Buthelezi**, leading to the establishment of **the Inkatha Freedom Party**.

1976-76

Soweto uprisings begin. **Steve Biko** is **murdered**.

1985

State of emergency is declared in South Africa. During this period “official murder and torture” become common. Black resistance activities increase.

1990

ANC ban is lifted and **Nelson Mandela** is **freed**.

1991

Government talks on a **new constitution begin**, while **political violence escalates**.

1992

A whites-only referendum leads to beginnings of governmental reforms

1993

Chris Hani is **assassinated**. A **new constitution** is enacted signaling the **end of apartheid** and the birth of a **new South Africa**.

1994

Democratic elections open to all south Africans are held and **Nelson Mandela** is **elected President**.

1996

The **new constitution** is **signed** into law. **The Truth and Reconciliations Commission hearings** are started.

1998

Former South African leaders P. W. Botha and F. W. de Klerk appeared before the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission created by Pres. Nelson Mandela to review the apartheid system.

1999

Nelson R. Mandela retired from the presidency of South Africa, having established himself as one of the world's most recognized and revered statesmen. In parliamentary and presidential elections in South Africa, the ANC won a huge victory, gaining 266 of 400 available seats in the Assembly and a two-thirds majority through alliance with another party. The ANC leader **Thabo Mbeki became South Africa's second popularly elected president.**

[Edited from The Encyclopedia of World History 2001, on line:
<http://www.bartleby.com/67/890.html>]