

## Notes on the life of Nelson Mandela

### Terminology

Apartheid...Apartheid an Afrikaans[1] word meaning "the state of being apart", literally "apart - hood" was a system of racial segregation in South Africa enforced through legislation by the National Party (NP) governments, the ruling party from 1948 to 1994, under which the rights, associations, and movements of the majority black inhabitants were curtailed and Afrikaner minority rule was maintained. The government segregated education, medical care, beaches, and other public services, and provided black people with services that were often inferior to those of white people.

Townships...In South Africa, under Apartheid, the term township came to mean a residential development that confined non-whites (Blacks, Coloureds, and Indians) living near or working in white-only communities. Soweto is a well-known example.

Regent...A regent is the informal or sometimes formal title given to a temporary, acting head of state in a monarchy.

Kraal...Kraal is an Afrikaans and Dutch word for an enclosure for cattle or other livestock, located within an African settlement or village surrounded by a fence of thorn-bush branches, a palisade, mud wall, or other fencing, roughly circular in form.

ANC...The African National Congress is the Republic of South Africa's governing political party since the establishment of multi-racial democracy in April 1994.

National Party...The National Party was a political party in South Africa and was the governing party of the country from 4 June 1948 until 9 May 1994. The policies of the party included apartheid, the establishment of a republic, and the promotion of Afrikaner culture.

Pass Laws...In South Africa, Pass laws were a form of internal passport system designed to segregate the population, severely limit the movements of the black African populace, manage urbanisation, and allocate migrant labour.

martial law...is used by governments to control the public by use of the army

Robben Island...a small island in Table Bay west of Cape Town home to the notorious prison. Robben Island is now a world heritage site

Kaross Traditional Dress...cloak without sleeves made of animal hide traditionally worn by a chief

Xhosa...one of the official languages of South Africa

## Notes on the life of Nelson Mandela

### Supporting Information:

#### Clip 1

Mandela was born on 18 July 1918 in the village of Mvezo in South Africa's Eastern Cape. His father was a local chief.

He was given the forename Rolihlahla by his father. It a Xhosa name which means 'pulling the branch of a tree' and also a colloquial term for "troublemaker"; in later years he became known by his clan name, Madiba.

Mandela grew up with two sisters in his mother's kraal in the village of Qunu, (pronounced [kʰuːnu]) where he tended herds as a cattle-boy, spending much time outside with other boys.

Neither of his parents could read or write and it was unusual for black children to go to receive a western education but his mother sent him to a local Methodist school when he was about seven. Mandela was given the English forename of "Nelson" by his teacher which was a common practice in those days because the British colonials did not find African names easy to pronounce.

*"No one in my family had ever attended school. On the first day of school my teacher, Miss Mdingane, gave each of us an English name. This was the custom among Africans in those days and was undoubtedly due to the British bias of our education. That day, Miss Mdingane told me that my new name was Nelson. Why this particular name I have no idea."*

— Mandela, 1994

### Facts about South African schools under the apartheid regime:

*The schools reserved for the country's white children were of Western standards and the education was both mandatory and free. 30% of the black schools did not have electricity, 25% no running water and less than half had plumbing. The education for Blacks, Indians and Coloureds was not free. In the 1970s governmental spending on black education was one-tenth of the spending on white.*

#### Clip 2

When Mandela was about nine, his father died of a lung disease.

His mother took Mandela to the "Great Place" palace at Mqhekezweni, where he was taken under the guardianship of the tribe regent, Chief Jongintaba Dalindyebo. Although he did not see his mother again for many years, Mandela felt that the regent and his wife treated him as their own child, raising him alongside their son Justice.

In December 1940, aged 22, Mandela found that the regent had arranged marriages for him and Justice; dismayed, they ran away together to Johannesburg

Staying with a cousin in one of Johannesburg's townships, Mandela was introduced to the ANC activist Walter Sisulu, who helped to get him a job as a clerk at a law firm

Mandela became increasingly interested in politics and more aware of the unfairness of South African society of the time. In August 1943 Mandela marched in support of a successful bus boycott to reverse bus fare rises.

Continuing his higher education, Mandela signed up to a University of South Africa course, working on his law degree at night.

## **Notes on the life of Nelson Mandela**

### **Clip 3**

Black people were forced to live out of town in townships and travel to work by bus. Some of the townships were a considerable distance from the city. Conditions in the townships were very different to where the white people lived. Long hours, low pay mostly in jobs like housemaids, cleaners, gardeners, etc.

The pass book laws meant black people in South Africa had to carry a pass in order to visit white areas.

Mandela was an active part of the anti-pass campaign in which Africans burned the passes that they were legally obliged to carry.

From the 1960s, the pass laws were the main tool used by the state to arrest and harass people opposed to its policies.

Nelson Mandela was one of those arrested and charged with treason

### **Clip 4**

March 1960

One of the demonstrations was fired upon by police, resulting in the deaths of 69 protesters in the Sharpeville massacre.

In solidarity, Mandela publicly burned his pass as rioting broke out across South Africa, leading the government to proclaim martial law.

In present-day South Africa, 21 March is celebrated as a public holiday in honour of human rights and to commemorate the Sharpeville massacre.

### **Clip 5**

Mandela and other activists were arrested and imprisoned without charge several times. On one occasion he went on the run for 17 months before being arrested by the police. He was eventually charged with high treason.

Mandela defended himself wearing the Kaross traditional dress. On 29 March 1961, after a six-year trial, the judges produced a verdict of not guilty. This verdict was very embarrassing the government and made them more determined to lock him, and others like him, up in prison.

Although he was successful in winning the Treason trial, the following year he was arrested again and this time was convicted of conspiracy to overthrow the state, and sentenced to life imprisonment and sent to Robben Island jail

### **Clip 6**

Mandela served 27 years in prison, initially on Robben Island, and later in two other prisons.

An international campaign called for his release and put pressure on the South African government. He was finally released in 1990 and Nelson Mandela then negotiated with President F. W. de Klerk to abolish apartheid and establish multiracial elections in South Africa.

Mandela led the ANC to victory and became South Africa's first black president in 1994