

# **SAHA IN THE CLASSROOM**

## **THE 1983 CONSTITUTION**

A set of classroom materials  
produced by the South African History Archive  
for Grade 12 learners

## **SOURCE BOOKLET FOR LEARNERS**



## THE SAHA IN THE CLASSROOM SERIES

This series of booklets comprises an introductory booklet on how to use the SAHA in the Classroom series and 9 source booklets for learners, with corresponding guide booklets for educators, exploring the following aspects of South Africa's history from 1976 - 1994:

*The 1983 Constitution*

*The United Democratic Front (UDF) and the National Forum*

*Formal repression in the 1980s*

*Covert repression in the 1980s*

*Resistance in the 1980s - civil society*

*Resistance in the 1980s - militancy*

*Resistance in the 1980s - international pressure*

*The move to democracy - negotiations*

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The South African History Archive (SAHA) is an independent human rights archive committed to recapturing lost and neglected histories, documenting past struggles against apartheid, as well as ongoing struggles in the making of democracy in South Africa. SAHA's central mission is to bring South African history out of the archives and into schools, universities and communities in new and innovative ways. SAHA is also dedicated to using South Africa's Promotion of Access to Information Act in order to extend the boundaries of freedom of information in South Africa and to build up an archive of materials released under the Act for public use.

For more information about SAHA's archives, outreach projects and product development, please contact:



South African History Archive  
PO Box 31719  
Braamfontein, 2017  
Tel: 011 717 1941  
Email: [info@saha.org.za](mailto:info@saha.org.za)  
Web: [www.saha.org.za](http://www.saha.org.za)

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# INTRODUCTION

These historical sources and questions are produced by the South African History Archive (SAHA) for Grade 12 History learners. They form part of a broader historical study of South Africa in the 1980s.

This booklet examines the events surrounding the proposed Tricameral Constitution of 1983 that gave coloured and Indian South Africans the right to vote in national elections. Three separate chambers were created for the new parliament, but the implementation of the Constitution was opposed from various sides.

In the national examination, you will be asked questions on a wide variety of different sources. These will include written, oral, visual and other material useful to the historian.

There will be questions on both **primary sources** and **secondary sources**:

- **primary sources** are sources that come from the period that is being studied
- **secondary sources** are sources that are produced after the period of history that is being studied

Before getting to the sources, you will be given the historical context of the Tricameral Constitution of 1983. This text is much like a secondary source, as the information comes from the books written by historians who have researched this period. The sources themselves are drawn from the archives of SAHA, and will, more often than not, be primary sources.

These learning materials are intended to:

- provide you with an opportunity to use source material to **help your understanding** of South Africa in the 1980s
- provide you with **practice** in answering source-based questions
- guide you on **how to approach answers**

## Some tips:

- Always look at the mark allocation to guide you.
- In this material, two marks are given for each point that can be explained and backed up with evidence from the source.
- A two-mark question will usually award one mark for identifying evidence from the source, and one mark for your explanation.
- When you answer a question for six marks, you need to explain at least three points and provide evidence from the source to back up each point.

**After the sources and questions you will find a glossary of difficult terms and a list of books for further reading.**

# **HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

## **THE ORIGINS OF THE 1983 CONSTITUTION - THE PW BOTHA ERA BEGINS**

In 1978, Prime Minister B.J. Vorster was forced to resign because of his misuse of state funds, and P.W. Botha was elected to replace him. South Africa's economy was in trouble and international anti-apartheid sanctions threatened to plunge the country further into depression.

Botha's government faced growing international isolation from a world that opposed his racist system of apartheid. Economic, sports, cultural and arms boycotts were implemented against South Africa while the United Nations condemned South Africa's continued presence in Namibia and called apartheid a 'crime against humanity.' Afrikaner business leaders from Sanlam, Volkskas and the Rembrandt Group urged Botha to introduce reforms when he met with them at the Carlton Centre in 1979. They were afraid that South Africa could soon be plunged into a revolution and collapse economically.

The National Party government faced growing opposition inside South Africa. Black workers went on strike in Durban in 1973. Soon after this new black trade unions sprung up in all the major industrial centres. In 1976, during the Soweto Uprising, thousands of black schoolchildren protested in the streets against aspects of 'Bantu Education.'

In 1977 the National government tried to re-assert its authority by arresting hundreds of black activists including Steve Biko who was then killed by security police. Dozens of black organisations were banned and *The World* and *The Sunday World* newspapers were closed down. Despite this, protestors would not be silenced, and all over South Africa black civic organisations, as well as youth and women's groups, were formed, openly declaring that they would organise to bring down apartheid.

As Minister of Defence under President Vorster, Botha knew that force alone would not be enough to contain these growing threats from abroad and from within. Botha told his supporters that they faced the threat of 'Total Onslaught' and that they must 'adapt...or die'. He said that whites would only remain in power if they adopted his policy of a combination of repression and reform that he called 'Total Strategy'.

Botha's reforms included the Tricameral Parliament, the homelands system and town councils in black townships. He wanted to win allies among the coloured and Indian sections of the population as well as the African middle class in the townships. Botha realised that his National Party government needed allies to survive. To achieve these goals, the constitution needed to be changed.

## **THE TRICAMERAL PARLIAMENT**

At the centre of PW Botha's reforms was the new 1983 Constitution that gave coloured and Indian South Africans the right to vote in national elections. Three separate chambers were created for the new parliament. White Members of Parliament or MPs would sit in the House of Assembly with 178 seats. Coloured legislators would attend their own chamber called the House

of Representatives with 85 seats and Indian representatives would be confined to the House of Delegates with 45 seats.

Each chamber would deal with their 'own affairs' in matters like education and health. When it came to 'general affairs' like defence, police, justice and foreign affairs, the majority parties in all three houses would have to agree for a new law to be passed. If a disagreement occurred, then the matter would be referred to the President's Council for a decision. The National Party dominated this body.

PW Botha took over the powerful new position of the State President. The new constitution was accepted by the white Parliament and approved by white voters in a referendum held in 1983.

The United Democratic Front (UDF) and National Forum were formed in 1983 as groupings of anti-apartheid organisations that would oppose the Tricameral Parliament and boycott 'sham' elections. The UDF was a non-racial alliance of literally hundreds of community and political organisations, including one of the oldest political organisations in South Africa, the Natal Indian Congress (NIC).

The Indian and coloured candidates who agreed to take part in the Tricameral Parliament tried to convince people to vote for them by claiming that they would 'dismantle' apartheid 'from within.' Most voters supported the UDF and National Front, and boycotted the elections.

In the 1984 election, only two-thirds of coloureds registered to vote, and only 30% actually voted. The Reverend Alan Hendrickse's Labour Party was 'elected' as the largest party in the coloured House of Representatives. Hendrickse claimed to represent coloured people even though only a small minority voted for him. Similarly, about two in three Indians registered to vote but only one-fifth actually voted. Amichand Rajbansi of the National People's Party became the leader of the Indian House of Delegates despite very low levels of support. Another party, called Solidarity, formed the 'Official Opposition' in the House of Delegates as the second largest party (See Source A). Support for the Tricameral arrangements was even less in 1987.

The success of the UDF election boycotts, together with the country's economic problems and international developments, eventually forced the National Party under PW Botha's successor, FW de Klerk (who took over as State President in 1989), to unbanned the ANC and other political parties and free Nelson Mandela in 1990. The Nationalists and the ANC began a process of negotiations that led to the first democratic elections on April 27, 1994, when all South Africans had a democratic right to vote.

## **HOMELANDS**

The Tricameral Parliament completely excluded Africans. PW Botha said that Africans should rather vote for their representatives in ethnic 'homelands'. These homelands were based on the ethnic reserves set up by the 1913 and 1936 Land Acts and were supposed to correspond to the 'national states' of original 'tribes' like the 'Tswana' and the 'Xhosa' before they were incorporated under white rule. Anti-apartheid activists condemned this policy of creating crowded, poverty-stricken 'Bantustans.'

Under Verwoerd, and later South African Prime Ministers, these 'homelands' were designed to

become a 'constellation of states' where Africans would gain citizenship while being denied any rights in 'white' South Africa. For example, Kaiser Matanzima became 'president' of the 'Transkei Republic' in 1976, while Lucas Mangope became 'president' of Bophuthatswana in 1977. These so-called 'independent' states were poverty-stricken and completely dependent upon South Africa economically. Internationally these 'states' were not recognised.

Unscrupulous businessmen like Sol Kerzner used this 'sham' independence to set up luxurious hotels with casino licences to entertain white 'tourists' from South Africa who could not legally gamble in their own country. The 'Sun City' hotel, which was built in Bophuthatswana in the 1970s, became a symbol of 'fake' independence, white wealth and black poverty.

Under PW Botha, the Ciskei and Venda also became 'independent' states in 1981 and 1983 respectively, but by then it was clear that this strategy was a failure. No other homeland leader was prepared to agree to 'independence', including Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the leader of the 'KwaZulu' homeland with its population of five million.

An important reason for the failure of the homelands policy was that millions of Africans lived permanently in the urban areas and refused to see themselves as citizens of the homelands. These urbanised Africans wanted full rights as South African citizens and many joined anti-apartheid organisations to protest against the homelands policy. All these factors played a part in forcing the National Party under de Klerk to negotiate with the ANC. Negotiations led to the re-incorporation of the homelands into a united, democratic and free South Africa.

## **TOWN COUNCILS AND THE AFRICAN MIDDLE CLASS**

Botha carried out several reforms aimed at winning over the African middle class as allies. He followed the advice of the De Lange Commission and increased education spending for African schoolchildren. In addition, one of Botha's ministers, Piet Koornhof, granted more powers to the community councils in the townships and other reforms that were called the 'Koornhof Bills'. The Black Local Authorities Act of 1982 appealed to some members of the African middle class who aspired to become town councillors and mayors.

The 'Koornhof Bills' also recognised Africans who had lived in urban areas for more than ten years as permanent residents. This gave Africans in the townships greater stability and some protection against the pass laws at the expense of those Africans who were recent arrivals in urban areas and who lived in informal settlements like 'Crossroads' near Cape Town. The Africans in such 'squatter camps' periodically had their homes destroyed by government bulldozers, and the people forcibly taken by lorry to be dumped in the homelands.

PW Botha's plan to win support among the African middle class failed. Africans living in the townships boycotted the town council elections as 'sham' democracy. Only about 12% of black voters took part in the elections in 1987. Eventually the government scrapped the pass laws and began a process of negotiations that led to democratic elections in 1994. All South Africans became full citizens who were protected by the Bill of Rights.



**SOURCE A: Local election pamphlet for Solidarity (1987)**

**FOR PEACEFUL CHANGE**  
**VOTE**



**PERRY (P.M.) CHETTY**  
**CENTRAL RAND**



**SOLIDARITY**

An election pamphlet from the local elections of 1987.  
(Archived at SAHA as Collection AL2457: A9.20 House of Delegates)

## **QUESTIONS FOR SOURCE A**

### **A1.**

Study the above pamphlet and identify four reasons why some voters would support Perry Chetty as the Solidarity candidate. (8)

### **A2.**

Use your own knowledge and Source A to explain why many voters might boycott Perry Chetty and Solidarity. (6)

### **A3.**

At whom is the pamphlet aimed? Substantiate your answer. (4)

### **A4.**

\*Imagine that you are a UDF member. Adapt the election pamphlet to satirise or make fun of the candidate and the party and add a sentence to win support for an election boycott. (6)

**(TOTAL MARKS: 24)**

## **SOURCE B: Extract from pamphlet – Why Participation – by Ismail Omar, National Chairman of Solidarity (1989)**

# **WHY PARTICIPATION**

**By ISMAIL OMAR - National Chairman**

In 1984 when we in Solidarity took the historical decision to participate in the new tricameral constitution, we readily admitted that it was flawed in that it had three racially segregated and unequal chambers, because it made no provision for Black representation. But we should participate to change the system peacefully from within. In so doing, history was made when we said goodbye to the last all-White Parliament in the world.

Despite the hostile criticism from our opponents and often from people who failed to understand, history proved us correct in that decision.

By the fourth year all three chambers began to sit in one great Hall of Parliament debating issues jointly. We were there in Parliament when the pass laws were abolished. We were there to stop the Group Areas Act from being reinforced. We were also there when the same Act began to get eroded. We were there when dozens of other discriminatory laws were scrapped. We were also there to ensure that the hundreds of laws that have passed since then bear our input and changes.

We achieved a major objective when the government announced that the tricameral constitution was going to go and would be replaced by a new constitution allowing Black participation. But all these changes had to go through Parliament. And we were part of the process.

We understand why people asked you to boycott these structures. In desperation they even frightened you by telling you that your children would be sent to the army if you voted. Now you know the truth.

Bitterness and frustration, boycotts and sanctions all help to strengthen the hardliners of the right-wing Whites. It retards change. A fact which even the NIC now seems to recognise. Why else would they now support participation in the White Chamber of Parliament? In 1984 and 1987 they asked everyone, even the whites, to boycott totally the tricameral structures. By 1989 they asked you to boycott not the full tricameral constitution but only its bicameral half. It won't be long before they too will participate--As soon as they find ways of explaining their change of heart. You see, in politics especially, it's not easy to say we made a mistake.

In the meantime, you have to ensure that those participating are not allowed to make a mockery of participation, as many of our public representatives did in pursuit of their own personal gain. Remember the James Commission. That can only happen when you don't vote. Such people who would normally not stand a chance of winning get in by low percentage polls. Don't allow such people to get in by default again. In the mean time, many things have still to be changed. Houses have to be built, schools have to be run so that our children continue to get a good education. The poor have to be helped.

All this can be done by people who represent people and not just themselves. And by a party which sets the lead. A party that is larger than any individual. A party that is democratic. A party that thinks five years ahead of other parties.

A party that believes in honouring timeless values. In upholding truth, honesty and integrity. Solidarity is such a party. For all its faults, it still tries to identify itself with you. To voice your grievances. To express your aspirations. To help you to achieve. In Solidarity you feel good because you feel you are part of a movement. A movement that is doing its bit for a better and just South Africa.

The next time you think politics, think positive. Be positive. Vote Solidarity. We are not just a party saymore. We are a movement.

This is an extract from a pamphlet issued by Solidarity justifying their participation in the House of Delegates of the Tricameral Parliament. The NIC referred to above is the Natal Indian Congress, see 'HISTORICAL CONTEXT'.

(Archived at SAHA as Collection AL 2457: A9.20, House of Delegates)

## **QUESTIONS FOR SOURCE B**

**B1.**

What reasons were given by the Solidarity National Chairman Ismail Omar to explain why his party took part in the Tricameral Parliament? (10)

**B2.**

Using your own knowledge and Source B, explain why most Indians opposed participation in the Tricameral Parliament. (4)

**B3.**


Was this pamphlet aimed at Solidarity supporters or its enemies? Substantiate your answer. (4)

**B4.**

Is this source biased? Substantiate your answer. (4)

**(TOTAL MARKS: 22)**

**TO VOTE OR  
NOT TO VOTE??**



**WOULD YOU YIELD TO INTIMIDATION??  
OR WOULD YOU EXERCISE YOUR  
DEMOCRATIC RIGHT??**

***BE INDEPENDENT ON  
TUESDAY 4 AUGUST 1987  
DON'T BE FOOLED***

1		
2		
3	NAIDOO MATHAVEN (MADI)	X
4		

**CAST YOUR VOTE WISELY**

---

**BEFORE YOU JUST DUMP THIS DO YOURSELF A  
FAVOUR AND READ IT. IF NOT TO BE INFLUENCED  
RESERVE IT FOR FUTURE RECRIMINATION.**

MADI NAIDOO ELECTION COMMITTEE  
197 HYDRANGEA AVENUE  
EXT 3, LENASIA TEL. 852-1245

**BE SURE TO  
VOTE**

This pamphlet urges people to vote in the elections.

(Archived at SAHA as Collection AL 2457: A9.21, House of Delegates)

## QUESTIONS FOR SOURCE C

**C1.**

Identify those sections of the pamphlet that urge voters to vote. (10)

**C2.**

Use Source C and your knowledge to explain how and why this pamphlet tries to convince voters to take part in the elections by voting. (4)

**C3.**

What does this pamphlet imply about the people who were campaigning for a boycott of the elections? (4)

**C4.**

How does this pamphlet use emotive language to persuade potential voters that voting is a positive act while failing to vote is a negative act? (8)

**C5.**

The pamphlet is headed 'To vote or not to vote?' Why does it have this heading?  
Does the content of the pamphlet match the heading? Explain why. (8)

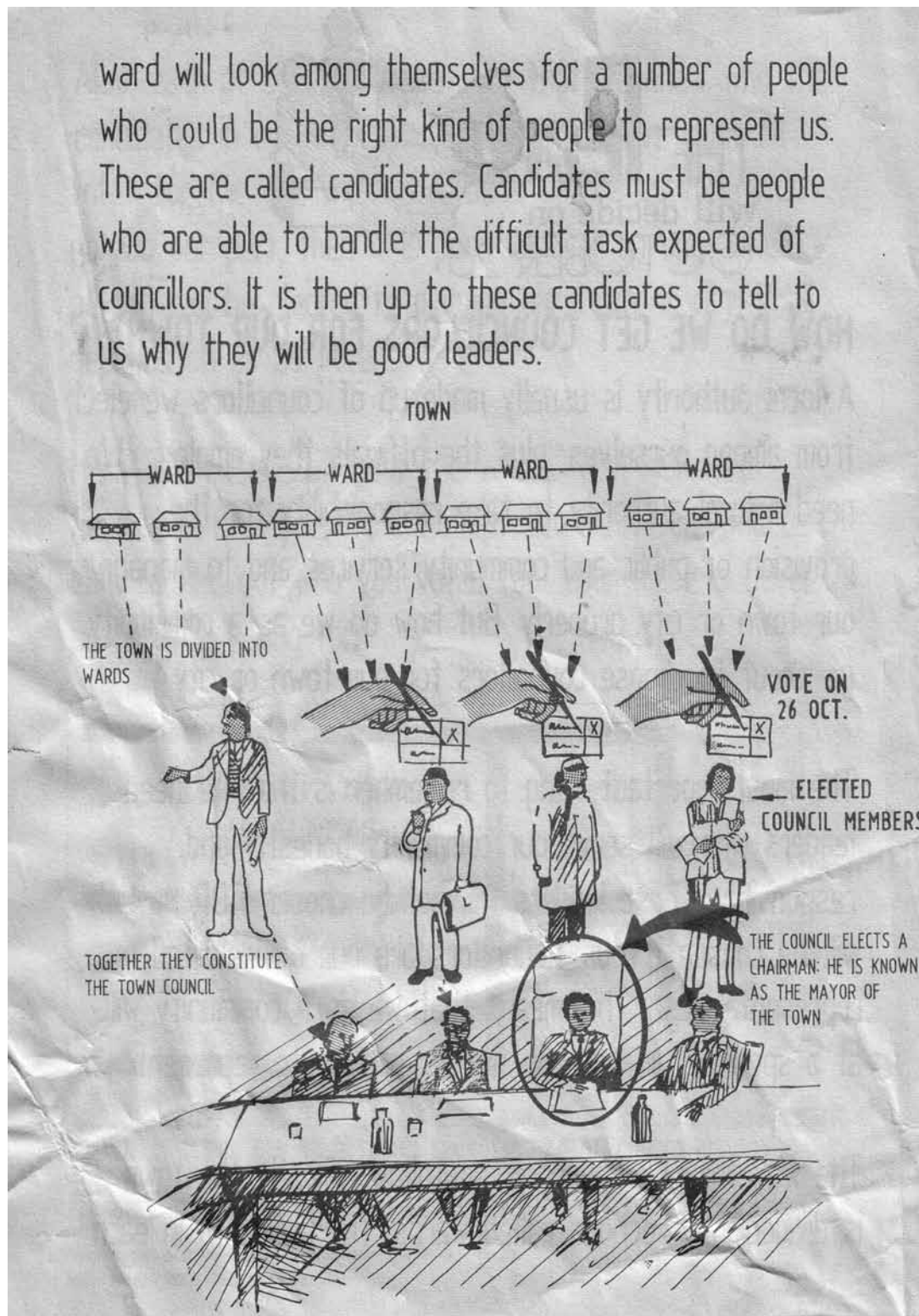
**C6.**

Who is the target audience of this pamphlet? Substantiate your answer. (6)

**(TOTAL MARKS: 40)**



**SOURCE D: Diagram – How town councils were elected in black townships (1987)**



This is a diagram explaining how town councils are elected in black townships, published by the Provincial Administration of the Transvaal.

(Archived at SAHA as Collection AL2457: A6.4.4, Town Council)

## QUESTIONS FOR SOURCE D

**D1.**

Use this diagram to write a paragraph that describes the process of electing a town council and a mayor in a black township. (6)

**D2.**

Use Source D and your own knowledge to identify what class of person was likely to vote and / or stand in black town council elections. Substantiate your answer. (4)

**D3.**

Why do you think the Transvaal Provincial Council thought it was necessary to produce and disseminate this diagram to residents in the townships? (6)

**D4.**

How are the people in this diagram depicted? Are various groups of people, on grounds of race, gender, age, physical disability and class, represented? (10)

**(TOTAL MARKS: 26)**



**SOURCE E: Extract from promotional booklet –  
This is Transkei (1978)**

*Education has always been one of the largest  
budget votes of the Transkei government.  
Since 1972/73 the amount allocated to  
education has more than doubled*



62

TEXT: *'Education has always been one of the largest budget votes of the Transkei government. Since 1972/73 the amount allocated to education has more than doubled.'*

This is an extract from a government promotional booklet published in 1978.  
(Archived at SAHA as Collection AL2457: B9.6, Transkei)

## QUESTIONS FOR SOURCE E

### E1.

What does the text in this source say about Transkei's commitment to education?  
What evidence to support these claims is missing? (8)

### E2.

Using Source E and your own knowledge, explain why the booklet focused on education  
(consider the date) in promoting Transkei. (4)

### E3.

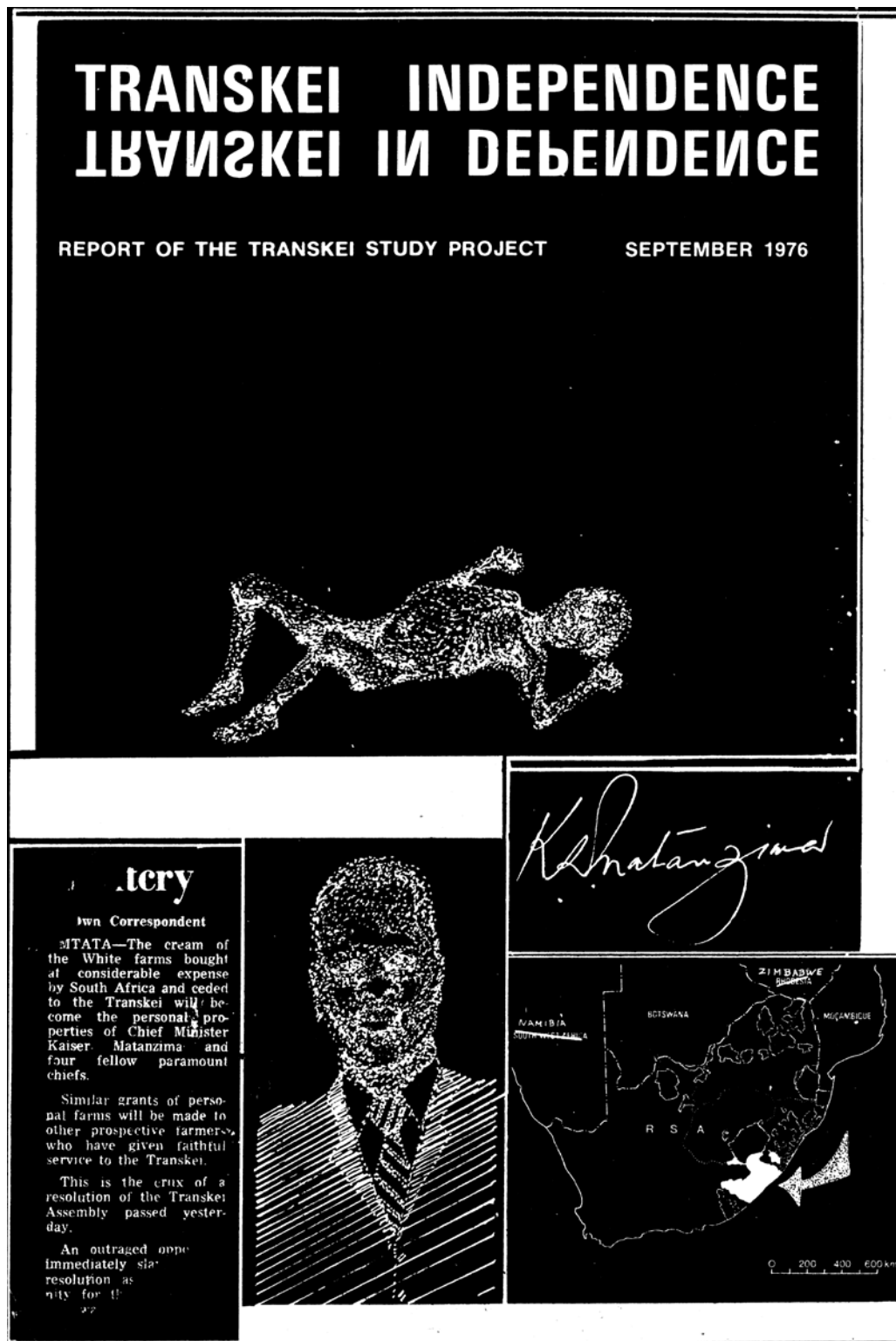
\*Form groups and discuss all the possible target audiences that this promotional booklet  
could be aimed at, giving reasons for your selection. (10)

### E4.

In what ways does the picture in this source depict Transkei's schooling in a positive light? (8)

**(TOTAL MARKS: 30)**

**SOURCE F: Cover page of the booklet – Transkei Independence: Report of the Transkei Study Project (1976)**



This report is very critical of the homeland system. It was written by the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), an affiliate of the UDF.

(Archived at SAHA as Collection AL2457: B9.7, Transkei)

## **QUESTIONS FOR SOURCE F**

### **F1.**

Use the text and images that appear on the cover of this report to write a paragraph written as if you were someone who had never heard of the Transkei before and had only this page as a source of information. (8)

### **F2.**

Using Source F and your knowledge explain why NUSAS depicted the Transkei and its leader Mantanzima in this way on the cover of the report. (6)

### **F3.**

What audience was this booklet supposed to reach and for what purpose? (6)

### **F4.**

Compare the image of the child in Source F to the images of children in Source E and assess whether both these images are accurate depictions of reality in the Transkei. Using your own knowledge and the sources determine which is likely to be more accurate.  
Are both images biased? (6)

**(TOTAL MARKS: 26)**

## SOURCE G: Sun City Promotional Brochure (1977)

**entertainment**


- Theatre, Cinema, Casino, Disco, Aquarius Entertainment Bar.

**Recreation**

- Health Spa, Gym, Jacuzzi, Sauna, Massage, Beauty Salon, Games Room, Game Reserve Excursions.


**ilities and services**

- Boutiques, Curio Shop, Jewellery Shop, Bank, Post Office, Valet Service, Unisex Hairdresser, Same Day Laundry and Dry Cleaning, Car Rental, Theatre Bookings, Doctor on Call, Dentist on Call, Resident Nurse.



**A SOUTHERN SUN HOTEL**

Sun City Telephone (014220) 21000  
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82.2


**Tennis**




**Ten Pin Bowling**




**Waterworld**



**Jacuzzi**



**Sauna**



This is part of a promotional brochure publicising Sun City in Bophuthatswana.

(Archived at SAHA as Collection AL2457: B2.2, Bophuthatswana)

## QUESTIONS FOR SOURCE G

### G1.

Write a short blurb that promotes Sun City's features based on Source G. (6)

### G2.

Using your own knowledge and Source G, explain why Sol Kerzner built Sun City hotel and casino in Bophuthatswana in the 1970s close to Johannesburg and Pretoria. (6)

### G3.

Who do you think created this promotional brochure and what was its target audience? Substantiate your answer. (8)

### G4.

Which aspects of Bophuthatswana does this brochure ignore? Why? (4)

**(TOTAL MARKS: 24)**



**SOURCE H: Pamphlet – Boycott Bop. Elections and Celebrations Now (1987)**

# BOYCOTT

## BOP. ELECTIONS AND CELEBRATIONS NOW

### TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF HARDSHIP IN BOPHUTHATSWANA

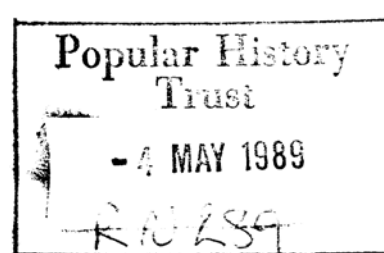
**Why should our people in so-called Bophuthatswana participate in Bophuthatswana's Elections and celebrate their so-called 10 (TENTH) Anniversary of independence this year:**

- while our people were massacred in Winterveldt, and are being brutally assaulted, harassed, and detained by the notorious and reckless Bop. Police, Bop. Defence Force, and Bop. Security Branch.
- after Bus fares, Electricity bills and rents are highly increased.
- while water supply in villages such as Eersterus, Stinkwater, Winterveldt etc. is so poor, while in townships such as Temba, Ga-Rankua, and Mabopane, water bills are increased against the wishes of the residents.
- while civil workers (e.g. teachers) that are non-Tswanas (as classified by Mangope) are employed on a 12 month contract.
- after a demand for free books by students has been rejected by the so-called Ministry of Education at the barrel of a gun.
- after our parents, brothers and sisters are highly unemployed.
- while are parents, brothers and sisters are earning very low salaries and wages in Bop. industries such as Babelegi in Hammanskraal, Ga-rankua, and Mogwase near Rustenburg.
- while our pensioners are expected to pay full amount in busses, while being given low pensions.
- while business men are forcibly demanded to pay R200 to support the so-called 10 (tenth) anniversary of independence.

**We therefore call upon all the communities in the so-called Bop. to boycott elections and their reactionary celebrations.**



issued by Anti-Bop. Campaign Committee (ABCC)



This is from a UDF pamphlet calling for a boycott of Bophuthatswana's '10th year of independence celebrations' in 1987.

(Archived at SAHA as Collection AL2457: B2.1, Bophuthatswana)

## QUESTIONS FOR SOURCE H

### H1.

Why, according to the pamphlet, should the residents of Ga-rankua (GaRankua) and Winterveld specifically boycott the Bophuthatswana 'independence' celebrations? (6)

### H2.

Use your own knowledge and Source H to explain why this boycott pamphlet was produced in 1987. (6)

### H3.

Who were the intended readers of this pamphlet? Substantiate your answer. (4)

### H4.

Compare Source H with Source G. Which gives a more accurate picture of Bophuthatswana in 1987? Substantiate your answer. (4)

**(TOTAL MARKS: 20)**



## GLOSSARY

**Bantustans** – the term used by the apartheid government for the ten black ‘homelands’ where blacks were eventually supposed to live

**ethnic group** – a group of people who share the same race, language and traditions

**sham** – fake

**Total Onslaught** – the belief of P.W. Botha that South Africa was facing a ruthless onslaught (attack) from Communist forces operating both inside and outside the country

**Total Strategy** – P W Botha’s response to Total Onslaught in which South Africa would fight this threat by means of twin policies of repression and reform

**Tricameral Parliament** – the parliament that was introduced into South Africa by the Constitution of 1983 which consisted of three chambers – whites, coloureds and Indians

## **FURTHER READING**

Culpin C. *South Africa since 1948*, John Murray, 2000

Seekings J. *The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa 1983-1991*, David Philip, 2000

Worden N. *The Making of Modern South Africa*, 4th edition, Blackwells, 2007

South African History Archive (SAHA), *Images of Defiance: South African Resistance Posters of the 1980s*, 2nd Ed, STE Publishers, 2004