# SAHA IN THE CLASSROOM

# RESISTANCE IN THE 1980s: MILITANCY

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 The move to democracy - the role of violence

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.

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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 role of militancy in the South African political resistance movement of the 1980s, which specifically opposed Botha's 'Total Strategy'. The anti-conscription movement gained ground during the 1980s through the End Conscription Campaign, and aimed at opposing the state-sanctioned repressive military tactics of the South African Defence Force. Forms of militancy were employed by the resistance movement in exile and through the armed struggle, and had a major role to play in political resistance.

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 use of various forms of militancy in the resistance during the 1980s, as well as the resistance to state-sanctioned militarism. 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

#### RESISTANCE TO 'TOTAL STRATEGY'

Central to PW Botha's policy of 'Total Strategy' was the increase of the power, influence and size of the army. During Botha's era conscription was extended; this meant that all white men had to do two years of compulsory military service. If they refused, they faced a jail sentence. A few individuals went to jail, and others, to avoid conscription into an army fighting for apartheid, went into exile as political refugees. The End Conscription Campaign (ECC) was formed in 1983 to oppose the conscription of white males into the Defence Force. Support for the ECC increased once the government began to send the army into the townships to control unrest. Although the support base for the ECC was never very large, the government still saw it as a threat, and the ECC was banned in 1988.

#### THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS IN EXILE AND THE ARMED STRUGGLE

The ANC in exile received a massive boost in membership and morale after the 1976 uprising, when thousands of young people went into exile to join the movement. Many of these exiles joined the military wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), and received training in ANC camps. The headquarters of the movement was in Lusaka, Zambia. Under the leadership of people such as Oliver Tambo, Joe Slovo and Thabo Mbeki, the ANC gained increasing international support for sanctions against South Africa. Both the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity recognised the ANC as the official representative of the people of South Africa, and the ANC eventually had more envoys stationed in foreign capitals than the South African government did. Support for the ANC within South Africa also increased significantly. The ANC had support among the civics, in the UDF and in COSATU.

In the early 1980s, MK launched attacks on high-profile targets, such as the SA Air Force in Pretoria, the dockyards in Durban, and the Koeberg nuclear power station near Cape Town. By the mid-1980s MK stepped up the number of attacks on police stations and other targets.

#### THE MASS DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

The ANC called for 1989 to be a 'Year of Mass Action'. In August a broad alliance of anti-apartheid organisations formed the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), with COSATU and the UDF as its core members. It launched a Defiance Campaign against the government. The Defiance Campaign was a national programme that called for an end to segregation in hospitals, on public transport, and on the beaches, and widespread worker stay-aways in opposition to the Tricameral elections in September 1989.

As the pressure on the government grew, the authorities reacted with intensified repressions, and thousands of activists were arrested. However, the mood of defiance grew. Three million workers stayed away from work on the election day. People became bolder and ignored government banning orders, evictions, and restrictions.

The Defiance Campaign was successful and there was an end to segregation. However, some historians argue that this occurred because the government had already planned to end segregation and therefore did not feel threatened by the MDM's actions.

Later that year a number of peaceful marches against the State of Emergency were organised by the MDM in the major cities. Whereas previously the government had reacted against such challenges, now the government took little action against the marches. This was evidence that apartheid and the government's will was weakening.

A number of factors came together, and by the end of 1989, the stage was set for major changes in South Africa.

#### INSURRECTION IN THE TOWNSHIPS

The spark of revolt came in September 1984 when rent increases were announced in the industrial regions of the then Transvaal. The increases were imposed by the new tier of, frequently corrupt, black councillors who were seen as apartheid stooges. Such 'collaborators' were an obvious target for the hatred of ordinary township residents. The rent increases came at a time of distress when unemployment was at about 30 per cent.

In September, matters came to a head when violent confrontations took place in the African townships of Vereeniging (including Sharpeville) and other parts of the Vaal Triangle. The protestors attacked targets that symbolised Botha's system of local government. They burnt down police stations and other government buildings, including municipal beer halls, along with the homes of black policemen and town councillors. By April 1985, twelve councillors had been killed. The ANC added its voice to the community activists, calling in April 1985 for people to 'Make apartheid unworkable! Make the townships ungovernable!'

The police and army occupied the townships. But instead of restoring order, as had happened after Sharpeville in 1960 and Soweto in 1976, the struggle was intensified and the 'Vaal uprising' soon spread to the Eastern Cape, Orange Free State and Natal. These protests were remarkable in their extent, far exceeding the anti-apartheid campaigns of the 1950s and the Soweto uprising. There was widespread community involvement of young and old, female and male.

The apartheid system of local and township governance had largely collapsed by mid-1985. It was replaced by an alternative structure of community-organised bodies such as street committees, residents' associations and peoples' courts. These community organisations enforced, often through the young people who became known as 'comrades', UDF-supported boycotts and punished those who transgressed. After 1985 the revolt extended to the 'independent' and self-governing black homelands where corruption had reached intolerable proportions.

In spite of their efforts, the police and army never regained full control of the townships. In 1985 – 1986 there were well over 2 000 deaths as a result of political violence. Tens of thousands of activists were detained or went into hiding. Of the countless incidents that might be mentioned, one stands out in particular: the unprovoked killing by police of 21 mourners in a funeral procession – on the 25th anniversary of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre.

With the country, in the words of the Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, 'at the edge of anarchy and bloody revolution', Botha proclaimed a State of Emergency on 21 July 1985 – the first imposed since Sharpeville twenty five years earlier. Under the terms of the State of Emergency, the police were given the power to arrest people without warrants and to detain them indefinitely without charging them. It also gave the government even greater authority to censor radio, television and newspaper coverage of the unrest.

SOURCE A: Pamphlet – Working for a Just peace: Construction not Conscription



Undated pamphlet of the End Conscription Campaign (ECC), a white, anti-apartheid organisation affiliated to the UDF and the MDM.

(Archived at Historical Papers as Collection AG1977:N1)

# **QUESTIONS FOR SOURCE A**

### A1.

According to the pamphlet, how did the End Conscription Campaign suggest that white conscripts could help to build up communities that crossed racial barriers? (6)

#### A2.

By analysing both the text and the visual images used in this article, determine whether the End Conscription Campaign supports or opposes the SADF. (10)

(TOTAL MARKS: 16)

# SOURCE B: Pamphlet – How much are we spending on Defence? (1988)

HOW MUCH ARE WE SPENDING ON DEFENCE?

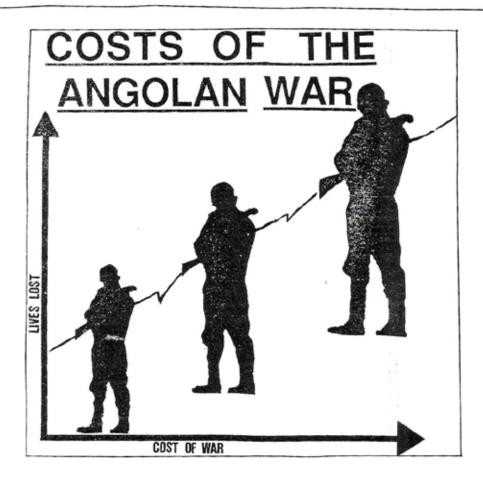
1972/3 - SA spent R3 330m on defence

1985/6 -SA spent R5 123m on defence\_

1986/7 -SA spent R6 683m on defence

These figures are **exclusive** of other security costs such as Secret Services and Detention: including such costs, the total Security Force budget is between **R11 and R12 billion per annum** - about 10% of South Africa's Gross National Product (GNP).

But these figures are in turn exclusive of the war in Angola which currently costs South Africa R5 million per day, which amounts to R4 billion per year! " If we could put an end to this Angolan expenditure, we could cut income taxes by as much as 1/4 and create much economic growth . . . the biggest cost is in human lives, which can't be measured in Rands and cents. " -Weekend Argus 2/7/88.



A pamphlet produced by the Economic Research Committee (ERC) a sub-committee of the Student Representative Council (SRC) of the University of the Witwatersrand and the NUSAS, a largely white anti-apartheid student organisation.

(Archived at SAHA as Collection AL2457: N8.1.5, NUSAS Publications)

# **OUESTIONS FOR SOURCE B**

#### B1.

Analyse the graph. Identify two different ways in which it suggests that the number of lives lost was increasing as a result of South Africa's involvement in the Angolan war? What is missing from the graph? (8)

#### B2.

How much was spent on defence by South Africa in 1986/7? What happens to the Defence Budget when it is calculated to include Secret Services and Detentions? Now add the money spent on the Angolan war, what is the total? (6)

#### B3.

What is this pamphlet's view on the impact of South Africa's war in Angola and other military costs? Provide evidence to substantiate your answer. (10)

(TOTAL MARKS: 24)

# SOURCE C: Extract – The African National Congress (ANC) in exile and the armed struggle (1986)



# International action: THE PACE STEPS UP -<section-header><section-header><section-header><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text><text> **BUT IS IT ENOUGH ?**





Anti-Apartheid News October 1986 Page 5

THE Non-Aligned Movement, meeting almost on Pretoria's door-step, concentrated most of its attention on apartheid and the need for practical support for the liberation movements. KEITH SOMERVILLE reports on its summit meeting, which ended with a decision to send an eight-person group to the US, Britain, West Germany and Japan to press for comprehensive mandatory UN sanctions

The final declaration of the eighth Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit, which ended in Harare on 7 September, demanded the immediate imposition of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against South Africa.



Waging economic war - Zimbabwea prime minister Robert Mugabe

neighbouring states and called for ever greater pressure on Britain, West Germany, Japan and the USA to adopt comprehensive, mandatory sanctions.

anctions. He proposed, and the NAM supported, the sending of a team of foreign ministers to the capitals of industrialised countries to argue the prime minister also called for greater ald to the liberation movements. Afficien National Congress presi-dent Oliver Tambe toid the summit that the South African people, who were ready to mount an assued on





IN ANGOLA CUBAN president Fidel Castro told the Kon-Aligned sammi in Harare that Cuba was prepared to keep its parahed exists in South Acce. The presence of Cuban troops in this front line state was "based on principal" he stad. "It is in no way metivated by Cuba's national interest and the state of the state of the metivated by Cuba's national interest and the state of predice." The Apolan povernment, at wome request the 20,000 Cuban combatants are defending existing in the south of the country, could ank for their sindherwal at any cuba. when the Botha regime finally

collapses, the Cuban president said, then no country will feel threatened and not a single Cuban soldier will b needed.

... African National Congress president Oliver Tambo told the summit that the South African people, who were ready to mount an assault on apartheid 'regardless of the price they have to pay', needed modern weapons 'to enable them to march against Pretoria.'

An extract from a speech by Oliver Tambo at the Eighth Non-Aligned Summit in Harare, printed in Anti-Apartheid News.

(Archived at SAHA as Collection AL2457: W2.1, AAN, 1986 oct 5)

# **QUESTIONS FOR SOURCE C**

#### C1.

List two positive ideas that are linked to the logo of the eighth Non-Aligned Summit in Harare in 1986 and explain why this logo is depicted side-by-side with a photograph of Oliver Tambo. (6)

#### C2.

Using your own knowledge and Source D, explain why it was fitting that the summit meeting was held in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, in 1986. (6)

#### C3.

Study the images and the text in Source D. Identify the different ways that the image and text differ from one another. (6)

(TOTAL MARKS: 18)

## SOURCE D: Statement – Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) Position on the Formation of the Democratic Party

PD-H23.6

THE MASS DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT'S (UDE AFFILLIATES AND COSATU)

POSITION ON THE FORMATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

The Mass Democratic Movement notes the formation and launching, of the Democratic Party which has within it a number of individuals who who have been sympathetic to the struggle of the oppressed masses for an end to the apartheid systems

To the white community, the event is probably seen as an attempt to provide an alternative to the present Apartheid Goverment.

In so far as there is a genuine desire on the part of more and more whites to move away from apartheid, the shift is welcome.

It is our duty to point out that participation in the tricameral parliament is totally unacceptable to the overwhelming majority of S.Africa's oppressed people.

The tricameral system divides our people and its whole purpose is to preserve a system based on ethnicity, group rights and privileges. It entrenches the Apartheid System.

What is more, real power no longer rests in parliament which is nothing more than a smokescreen to cover the presidential-military dictatorship which exercises power in S.A.

It is our desire that whites who share our vision of a single non-racial democratic South Africa in which all persons are citizen and enjoy full equality with each other should take their place in the Democratic Organisations of our people so that they may fight side by side with us for a new South Africa free form apartheid, division, oppression and exploitation.

Any person or group that wants to contribute to a solution in our Country will have to address itself to and call for

- (1) An end to the State of Emergency.
- (2) An end to arbitrary detentions.

(3) The removal of troops from townships and schools.

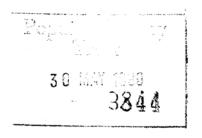
- (4) The unconditional release of all political prisoners
- (5) The unbanning of the A.N.C. and all other banned organisations.
- (6) The unconditional return of all exiles with guarantees for their safety.
- (7) The immediate end to all forms of apartheid.

\_\_\_\_\_

(8) Free political activity with the right of freedom of speech, assembly, movement and association for all South Africans.

The new party will be judged on its track record in these matters.

SIGNED:



Statement issued by the Mass Democratic Movement on the formation of (the white opposition political party) the Democratic Party.

(Archived at SAHA as Collection AL2457: H23.1)

J

# **QUESTIONS FOR SOURCE D**

### D1.

What evidence is there that the MDM cautiously welcomed the formation of the Democratic Party? (6)

### D2.

What concerns were expressed by the MDM about the Democratic Party's participation in parliament? (6)

## D3.

What would the MDM prefer democratic whites to do instead of joining the Democratic Party? (4)

(TOTAL MARKS: 16)

# **SOURCE E: Cartoon – Insurrection in the townships**

Page 12 Anti-Apartheid News July-August 1986



A cartoon encouraging people to join the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM), published in Anti-Apartheid News (1986).

(Archived at SAHA as Collection AL2457: W2.1, AAN, 1986)

# **OUESTIONS FOR SOURCE E**

### E1.

How do we know that apartheid causes poverty and misery among black people from this cartoon? (6)

#### E2.

How is the apartheid government (represented by the figure of PW Botha) portrayed in the cartoon? Why is he presented in this way? (8)

#### E3.

Who do you think created this pamphlet and what was its target audience. Substantiate your answer. (6)

(TOTAL MARKS: 20)

# GLOSSARY

**liberal** – supporters of the political philosophy of liberalism who favoured protection of individual rights such as the freedom of speech and the press

**academic freedom** – the right to research, study and teach on any topic by any writer, including those critical of the current government

tier – layer or level

**stooges** – dupes, people who are easily fooled

# FURTHER READING

Callinicos, L. Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains, David Philip, Cape Town, 2004

Gevisser, M. Thabo Mbeki: the Dream Deferred, Jonathan Ball, Cape Town, 2007

Kasrils, R. Armed and Dangerous: from undercover struggle to freedom, J. Ball, 2005

Mandela, N. Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela, Macdonald Purnell, Randburg, 1994

Sampson, A. Mandela: the Authorised Biography, Harper Collins Library, Johannesburg, 1999