



# HOW DID THE WORK OF THE TRC

HELP SOUTH AFRICANS CONFRONT THE PAST?

## SOURCES

During the negotiations that brought democracy to South Africa, a big question that needed to be answered, was what to do about the violent past? What form of justice would best help the country move forward while not forgetting about what happened in the past. Two forms of justice were possible: retributive justice which happened at the Nuremberg trials in Germany when the Nazi leaders were put on trial; and restorative justice, which is the path that South Africa took with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Retributive justice considers punishment to be the best response to a crime. There were many South Africans who thought that the perpetrators should have been tried and punished in a court of law.

Restorative justice looks for ways of restoring community relations after crimes such as those committed during apartheid. It brings together victims and perpetrators in a process that enables perpetrators to take responsibility for their crimes and for victims to find out the truth about what happened to their families and friends.

In the fragile political situation at the end of apartheid, if the former members of the security force and army had not been offered amnesty for politically motivated crimes, then there was the very real danger of a military takeover rather than a peaceful transition to democracy. It also ensured that no one could deny that crimes against humanity had been committed by the apartheid government and helped bring closure to many families of victims.

Many perpetrators who came before the TRC Amnesty Commission were not given amnesty. This meant that they could be prosecuted in a court of law. However, very few of them have been prosecuted since appearing before the TRC.

The sources that follow are all about the way in which various state systems support apartheid and through this support, enabled the apartheid state to continue with the violence against the people of South Africa. In 1973 the United Nations declared apartheid a crime against humanity.

Once you have worked with each of these sources, you will then read the extract from the United Nations Declaration, and compare that with the information in the sources. Read all the sources and use the table after the sources to organise the information.



## Source 1:

This is an extract from the questions to and answers of **Mrs Mogaetjie Francina Bopape** to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's submissions process on Human Rights Violations. Her son, Stanza, disappeared in 1988.

**MR MALAN:** Good afternoon Mrs Bopape and welcome. Is that a family member next to you? Your son? Welcome to you as well...

**DR ALLY:** Mrs Bopape, you have come to the Truth Commission to speak about the disappearance of your son Stanza in 1988. I'm going to ask you to give us an account of these events of the background in your own words and in your own time....

**MRS BOPAPE:**...He left Mamelodi and went to Johannesburg, that's where he was arrested by the police in Hillbrow. They took him to John Vorster Square Police Station where we were told that Stanza left and ran away from the police while they were taking him to Vergenoegen. They said he stole the keys from one of the policemen and then he left them, they shot, they don't know where he went. *(The interpretation service will resume as soon as the witness has regained her composure).*

They said we went to look for him, the father even went to Lusaka, they could not find him. Even now we don't know where Stanza is. I think that the police who were with him should come here and tell us where the bones are, even me so that I can be able to know where my son is.

*(We'll wait again until she regains her composure)*

**DR ALLY:** We'll wait until you can speak again because we know this is very difficult for you.

**MRS BOPAPE:** I am asking this Commission to assist me to find where Stanza is, and the police who killed him, if he's dead, to show us where they buried him, because it is a long time that we have been looking for him since 1988. Until today I don't know where my son is....I don't believe that Stanza released himself and disappeared. That is just a story, they killed my son. They say he disappeared. How could he be able to take the keys and release himself while he was handcuffed? I don't believe this. They said they went to look for him, the father even went to Lusaka. They could not find him. Even now we don't know where Stanza is. I think that the police that were with him should come here and tell us where the bones are, even me so that I can know where my son is.

*(We will wait again until she regains her composure).*

I'm asking these policemen to show me where they buried him, where they took him to. They must give me my son, I will bury him, even if only the bones.

**DR ALLY:** The investigators unit of the Truth Commission over the last few days has been working quite closely with lawyers who have been involved in the case of your son and we are hoping that through this investigation, something will turn up, that some new information will come to the fore, but I want to give you every assurance that this issue is receiving attention from the investigative unit of the Truth Commission....



Source 2

What did **Mrs Bopape** learn about her son's death from the TRC Amnesty hearing? Ten Security Branch Policemen applied for amnesty for the death of Stanze Bopape and the disposal of his body and cover-up of his death. This is an extract from their amnesty application:

Stanza Bopape died on the 12th June 1988. At the time of his death the applicants were all members of the Security Branch of the South African Police Force...The version of events as given by the Applicants may be summarised as follows:

Bopape, together with Bheki Nkosi, was arrested on Thursday 9th June 1988 in a flat he shared with Nkosi in Hillbrow, Johannesburg [and transferred] to the cells at John Vorster Square. van Niekerk had been informed by Captain Jan Kleynhans of the West Rand Security Branch that Bopape was suspected of being involved with the Maponya Group, a group of African National Congress (ANC) activists suspected of causing a number of bomb blasts in the Pretoria and West Rand areas...[The] interrogation of Bopape [started] during the afternoon of 10th June 1988 by “processing” him, that is, by taking his finger and palm prints and obtaining his personal particulars...Bopape was also, that afternoon, taken...to the District Surgeon for routine examination. The District Surgeon prescribed medication for a nasal problem, which medicine was collected from a pharmacy... On Sunday 12th June 1988 Bopape was booked out of his cell ... and was taken up to the Security Branch offices on the 10th Floor of John Vorster Square. He was taken into a room where Mostert and Engelbrecht began interrogating him...Bopape did not answer questions put to him by Mostert and Engelbrecht to their satisfaction. They reported this to van Niekerk who also then participated in the questioning of Bopape. Then van Niekerk explained the gravity of the situation to Bopape and informed him that unless he co-operated he would continue to be detained in terms of section 29 of the Internal Security Act. Bopape nevertheless refused to co-operate.

No physical violence was used against Bopape during this period of interrogation which lasted approximately two hours. Van Niekerk, Beukes, Mostert and Zeelie then discussed the matter amongst themselves and agreed that more drastic measures should be resorted to in order to induce Bopape to co-operate. They decided that Bopape should be given the so-called “shock treatment”. An electric shock device was not available at the John Vorster Square offices. du Preez, who was then off duty, was telephoned at his home. No one can recall who telephoned du Preez. He informed the caller that there was an electric shock device at the Sandton offices and he undertook to immediately fetch the device and deliver it to them at John Vorster Square. He did so. The device consisted of an old telephone dynamometer to which was attached a crank handle and electrical cords. The ends of the electrical cords are either attached to the victim or moved across the body of the victim and when the crank handle is turned an electric current is produced which travels down the electric cords onto the body of the victim.

Du Preez prepared the device for use by ensuring that the electrical cords were properly attached and by placing dampened pieces of cloth at the ends of the cords. The dampened pieces of cloth were applied to ensure that no visible burn marks would result. A wooden chair was taken out of the office of van Niekerk and placed in the corridor. Bopape was placed in the chair and his shirt and shoes were removed. His hands were tied to the supports of the chair and his feet to the legs of the chair. The crank handle of the device was operated by du Preez and Engelbrecht pushed the cords against and moved them over the chest of Bopape. Van Niekerk, Beukes and Zeelie looked on.

Du Preez turned the handle two or three times and then stopped. Bopape was asked if he had anything to say but did not respond. This process was repeated three or four times over a period of three of four minutes. After the third or fourth time Bopape's head and upper body slumped forward. He appeared to be unconscious. He was untied from the chair and laid on his back on the floor. du Preez tried to resuscitate him but after a short while it was determined that he was dead.

The Applicants present realised that they were in a serious predicament and that the death of Bopape would have far-reaching political implications, particularly as the 16th June, the anniversary of the Soweto uprisings, was only few days away. They discussed the matter amongst themselves and van Niekerk decided that their commanding officer, Erasmus, should be informed. He telephoned Erasmus and briefly informed him of what had happened. He then immediately left and went to the home of Erasmus where the matter was fully discussed between them. Erasmus indicated that he would take the matter up with head office.

Van Niekerk returned to John Vorster Square. The body of Bopape was then laid on the floor of the room where he had been interrogated and a blanket was placed over it. They then waited for instructions from Erasmus. Erasmus, shortly after the departure of van Niekerk from his home, went to see his commanding officer, van der Merwe, in Pretoria. They discussed the matter in depth and after considering the probable dire consequences the revealing of the death of Bopape would have for the government and the police, they decided to cover-up the death of Bopape by disposing of his body and creating a mock escape. They decided that the body should be disposed of in the Eastern Transvaal and that the services of Visser be used for this purpose.

Then Erasmus telephoned Visser and advised him that he had a “problem concerning a detainee” and he asked for assistance. Visser agreed to assist but said he did not want to know any details. It was agreed that van Niekerk would make the necessary arrangements with Visser.

Erasmus then contacted his deputy, du Toit and requested him to go to the offices at John Vorster Square. At the offices Erasmus informed du Toit of what had transpired. He also informed him and the others present of the decision to dispose of the body and to stage a mock escape. Van Niekerk communicated telephonically with Visser who was in Middelburg and it was arranged that they would meet him at a certain bridge near Bronkhorstspuit on the highway between Middelburg and the Witwatersrand.

The body of Bopape was placed in plastic bags and was put into the boot of a motor vehicle which was parked in the basement of the building. The vehicle in which the body was placed was driven by Zeelie to the rendezvous points. van Niekerk and Mostert were passengers in that vehicle. Engelbrecht and du Preez followed them in another vehicle.

# ater, Mampuru says he lied

They met Visser at the bridge as planned. Also present at the bridge, in his own vehicle, was van Loggerenberg. Van Niekerk had a brief discussion with Visser and they then all drove to a quiet country road. There the body of Bopape was transferred into the boot of van Loggerenberg's vehicle. Visser instructed van Loggerenberg to get rid of the body. He gave no instruction as to where or how the body should be disposed of - he left this to the discretion of van Loggerenberg. Visser then returned to Middelburg and van Niekerk, Engelbrecht, Mostert, Zeelie and du Preez returned to Johannesburg to plan the mock escape. van Loggerenberg drove approximately 350 kilometres to a secluded spot on the Komati River which was very close to the Mozambique border. The spot was familiar to him and he knew that the river there was infected with crocodiles. He arrived there sometime after midnight. He placed the body in the river and drove back to his home at Middelburg. The body was never recovered.

The five other applicants arrived back at John Vorster Square at approximately 22h00. They planned the fake escape which was then acted out by them at approximately midnight. The pretence was that they were taking Bopape (acted by Zeelie) to Sebokeng in the vicinity of De Deur where he was supposed to point out the house of a contact person. Zeelie put on Bopape's shoes which had been left at the offices (these would hopefully provide a realistic scent for sniffer dogs to follow at the scene of the mock escape). He also attached a set of leg irons to himself but only to one of his ankles. He also took along a set of opened handcuffs. The keys for the leg irons and handcuffs were put into a side pocket of Mostert's jacket which was draped over the front passenger seat of the vehicle they were to use. Zeelie sat in the rear seat behind the front passenger seat. The others in the vehicle were van Niekerk, Mostert and Engelbrecht.

They drove to a place near De Deur where there was a mielie field next to the road. du Preez followed them in a separate vehicle. They stopped and alighted from the vehicle. du Preez drove his vehicle to a spot a few hundred metres further on and waited there.

Zeelie then punctured the right rear tyre of their vehicle with a knife. He removed the keys for the leg irons and handcuffs from the jacket pocket and then ran into the mielie field while Mostert and Engelbrecht were changing the punctured tyre. Van Niekerk fired a few shots into the air. Zeelie made sure that the chain of the leg irons attached to his ankle made a distinct trail into the mielie field. He ran in the mielie field for a few hundred metres before he unlocked the leg irons. He left the leg irons and the opened handcuffs in the field and then ran to du Preez's vehicle. He and du Preez then drove to John Vorster Square.

After the wheel of the vehicle had been changed, van Niekerk, Mostert and Engelbrecht drove to the Residentia Police Station where they reported the escape. All necessary branches, including the dog unit were informed of the escape. They returned to the scene with members of the Vereeniging Security Branch, all of whom were unaware that the escape was nothing more than a pretence. The next day the applicants compiled a detailed false report relating to the “escape”, setting out step by step what had happened and who was involved...

Van Niekerk, Mostert, Engelbrecht, Zeelie and du Preez stated that they had knowledge, in varying degrees, of the electric shock machine. They stated that in using the machine on Bopape their intention was to frighten Bopape and to coerce him into co-operating with them. It was not, they said, their intention to kill him and they were surprised and shocked when Bopape died. They all acknowledge that they unlawfully caused the death of Bopape. They further aver that while the use of the electric shock machines was not in accordance with police policy, it was common knowledge amongst members of the police force that such machines were often used in interrogations and that their superior officers condoned such use by turning a blind eye.

All of the applicants stated that they were supporters of the National Party and the government: they stated that at all times they acted in their capacities as policemen and supporters of the government. They regarded themselves as combatants in a war situation. They had sworn an oath of allegiance to the state and they did everything in their power to support the government and to resist the onslaught of the liberation movements against it...

These are the requirements for amnesty as set out by the National Unity and Reconciliation Act:

Section 20(1) of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act No 34 of 1995 (the Act) provides for amnesty if:

- the crime was politically motivated; and
- the applicant or perpetrator told the full truth about what happened.

This is the judgment of the Amnesty Committee of the TRC in terms of those who applied for amnesty for the murder of Stanza Bopape:

With regard to the provisions of section 20(1)(a) of the Act, we are satisfied that all of the applications under consideration in this matter comply with the formal requirements of the Act...

The Amnesty Commission further found that it was politically motivated:

‘The applicants were all members of the security forces of the State. The evidence establishes that at all relevant times the applicants acted in the course and scope of their duties as members of the Security Branch of the police force.’

And that the truth about Stanza Bopape's death had been revealed.



Not all of those who came before the TRC were satisfied with the process. The family of Ahmed Timol who died in detention were not happy and this was expressed by Timol's nephew, Imtiaz Cajee, who wrote a book about his uncle. The Timol family did not believe that the truth had been revealed.

Source 3:

**Imtiaz Cajee** is the nephew of Ahmed Timol. In this source he talks about the suffering experienced by the family of Ahmed Timol and the hope that the perpetrators will be prosecuted.

...My appeal through projects like yours [John Vorster Square DVD] is to try and establish that because I truly do not believe that my uncle's death in this particular building could have been covered up to such an extent that there are not individuals out there who today have some form of a conscience who understand the tragic history of our country. If these individuals are out there my appeal to them is if they can come forward, and the intention again from a Timol family perspective is not prosecution, prosecution in this particular context is not what the family wants. My grandmother died without knowing what had happened to her son, her husband had died not knowing what happened to his son. Ahmed's brother was forced to go into exile to continue the struggle. During the time of his brother's death he was also taken in police detention and the Prime Minister at the time, John Vorster, refused to give him permission to attend his brother's funeral.

Now these are our tragic history. These are events that unfolded in our communities and the intention for us is not to deliberately bring them back, just for the sake of bringing them back, the intention is to bring them back as a constant reminder to us of our tragic past and at the same time for us to reach closure. The key aspect is closure and the closure can only come when the likes of Gloy and Van Niekerk, Rodrigues and all the other policemen that were stationed here in this institution that were responsible for interrogating my beloved uncle are prepared to come forward and simply explain the nature of events. The intention is not for us to prosecute is not to pursue as to why he was severely tortured. One truly understands, South Africa was at war; there were different ideologies at stake. My uncle was a devoted communist. He was proud of fighting for the liberation of South Africa. The security police had a clear mandate. They were there to protect South Africa against the communists and against the ANC. So that is not the challenge that I am putting forward to former apartheid policemen, that is clear, it was in a particular context. The message is for us to move forward as a nation, we need closure and the appeal once again, is for former policemen to come forward and to make the necessary information available so that at least the family can have closure....

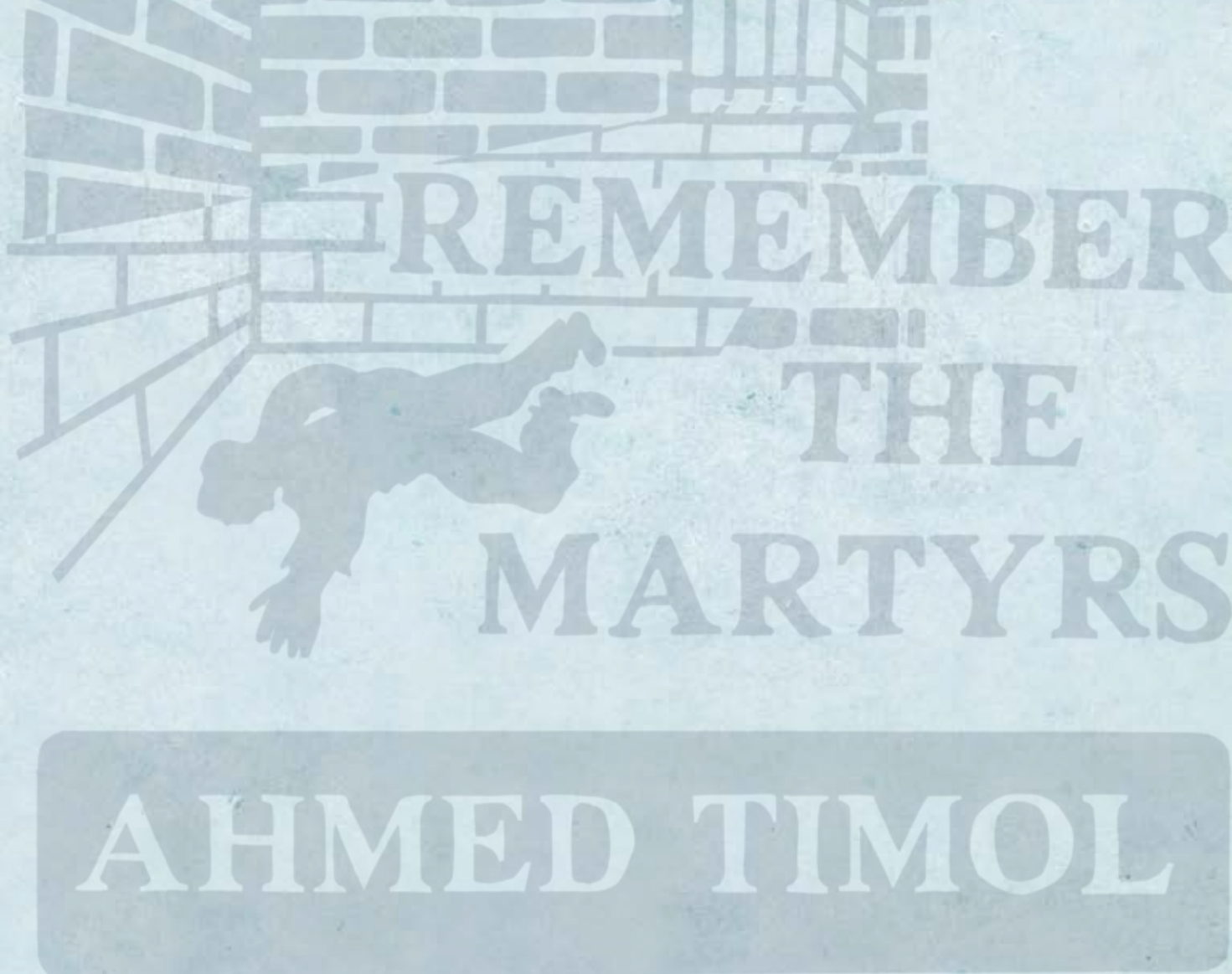
We live in hope and faith. We had to embark on the TRC process. It was necessary; it was required for us to move forward as a nation. The TRC process has come and it has gone with its successes and its failures. The mandate remains with the National Prosecution Authority to take this matter forward and the appeal once again is the likes of Gloy, Van Niekerk, Rodrigues are stepping closer to their graves. And if action is not taken quickly that information is going to be lost. And we will always remain in this slumber, in this darkness of not truly knowing what happened to Ahmed Timol. So the appeal again is to the National Prosecution Authority, not just in the Timol case, but for thousands of families to understand the tremendous pain and suffering that people are going through. And one understands that as a country and as a nation we have new challenges that in order for us to move forward the issues of the past have to be resolved.

**Question:** *Is there a role for the former apartheid political leadership and the security leadership to be trying to encourage underlings to be able to come forward and to explain what happened?*

**Answer:** Absolutely! The likes of Gloy and Van Niekerk and Rodrigues were not acting on their own. They had superiors and masters who sanctioned this method of atrocity, which they were conducting on apartheid detainees. It's practically impossible for 2 or 3 Security Branch policemen to have covered up the death of an individual....

So the onus and responsibility again, apart for the National Prosecution Authority who got this mandate, is for former apartheid generals, former apartheid government officials, security policemen, is to take responsibility because that would be their ultimate contribution to the new democratic South Africa. And I think apart from them, the religious community, the churches, I think they've also got an important role to play. The likes of Gloy and van Niekerk do go to church. They do pray to God and I think the responsibility is on the churches to remind them and to encourage them, not just their particular church but all churches to encourage these individuals to come forward and say, "Your ultimate contribution to a new South Africa is asking for forgiveness for the past," and that would help people like the Timol family and thousands of other families in the country to come to terms with the deaths of their loved ones in order for them to reach closure. I can only imagine that there is no way that the likes of Gloy and Rodrigues and Van Niekerk sleep nicely and sleep comfortably in the evenings, it cannot be possible, when they know that they have committed atrocities.

And there are thousands of other security branch policemen across the country who have done that... Again the Timol family is fortunate that at least some publicity is given around his death, fortunate that I have written a book to explore and to explain what he had gone through, but there are thousands of former detainees and ordinary South Africans throughout the entire country who even failed to come to the TRC, who failed to even receive any form of financial compensation from the TRC and these families are out there. So the onus and responsibility is on the National Prosecution Authority to pursue this matter, the religious committees should ensure that former perpetrators carry out this particular process of then coming forward and making full disclosure. The onus and responsibility is on the education department to make sure that projects like the SAHA and the Sunday Times Heritage Project get recognition and that these are promoted within the education sector in South Africa to ensure that our tragic past is never forgotten.



Source 4

**Police Commissioner Simon Pembe** talks about the political transition in South Africa and of the necessary police attitudes in the new democracy in South Africa. This is part of the interview:

**Question:** *I was wondering, whether maybe you have any thoughts on what still needs to be done in terms of dealing with the past and also marrying that with the process of not being trapped in the past?*

**Pembe:** We as a nation were successful in achieving reconciliation in this country without bloodshed. And for that we need to compliment ourselves as a nation.

The lesson, especially for police officials is that in terms of the TRC, we have learnt lessons. Police officials are not above the law and under no circumstances should we go back to that period where we violate the rights of human beings in this country. As police the execution of our duties needs to be carried out within the parameters of the law.

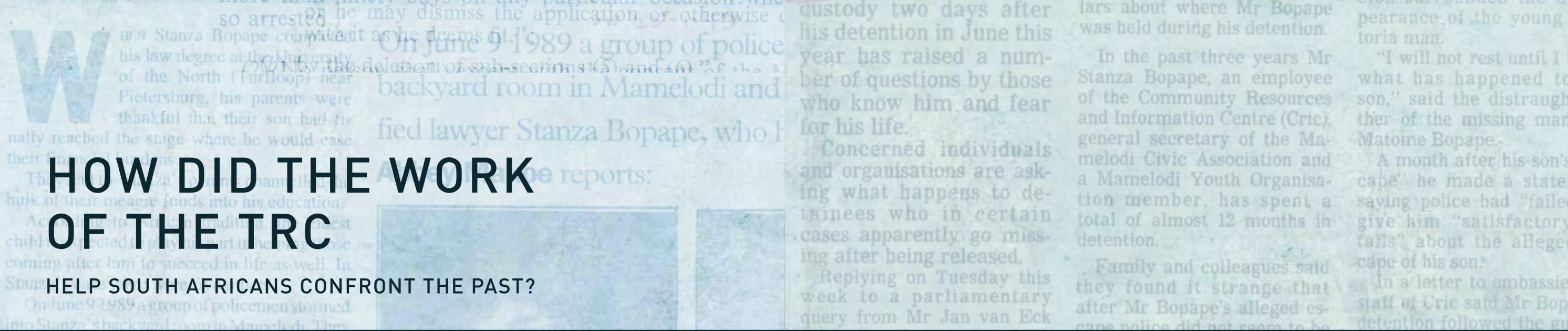
**Question:** *Commissioner, is it important when in terms of understanding the past to make a distinction between political policing, the Security Branch of the SAPS, and many other members of the South African Police of other branches, such as the uniform branch and so forth?*

**Pembe:** Well I think the distinction is already made because you can't operate that way anymore. In the past there was no distinction because in the past you had a sovereign parliament and everybody, the security police, the parliamentarians, all had to collaborate to deal with the opposition parties who were the enemy. That was the situation then but presently the police officials are there to uphold the law that is what is crucial. Every policeman knows that if you are violating the rights of people and you are not operating within the law or using excessive force, you can go to jail. That is how we were trained in terms of the culture of human rights.

**Question:** *As Station Commissioner here what do find to be the biggest challenge or challenges facing your jurisdiction?*

**Pembe:** ....And, then also the attitudes of some of our police members, in terms of improving service delivery and understanding that we are now functioning in a democracy, because we obviously cannot say we have completely transformed the police service. However, we are very optimistic in terms of Johannesburg Central as a police station, because, for example, our local business and the general communities are happy with the service and the improvements that they've seen within the station.





ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1

ANTICIPATION GUIDES

Why this activity?

Anticipation guides ask learners to express an opinion about ideas before they encounter them in a text or unit of study. Completing anticipation guides prepares learners to recognise and connect to these themes as they surface in their learning. Reviewing anticipation guides at the end of a lesson or unit is one way to help learners reflect on how learning new material may have influenced their opinions, perhaps by reinforcing previously held beliefs or by causing ideas to shift. The TRC is often a difficult section to teach because there are such conflicting views on its impact and because the stories are hard to deal with. An exercise like this at the start of the teaching enables the class to have aired some views around these issues and, importantly, set the tone for discussion and debate around the history.

How to do it:

■ STEP 1: SELECT STATEMENTS FOR THE ANTICIPATION GUIDE.

The most effective statements relate to universal themes and dilemmas and are phrased in ways that make sense when applied to events in the unit of study and to situations in learners’ lives.

For this section, an anticipation guide can prepare learners to address the themes of justice and forgiveness:

- Punishing perpetrators for wrongdoing is necessary to achieve justice. Offenders should suffer for the crimes they have committed.
- Justice is best achieved when the perpetrators repair the harm they have caused.
- After a community has been through a time of conflict or violence, it is better for everyone to move on and forget the crimes or hardships of the past.
- The truth heals. Perpetrators should be encouraged to confess their crimes in exchange for lighter sentencing.
- An eye for an eye leaves everybody blind.

■ STEP 2: LEARNER RESPONSE

Prepare a worksheet or graphic organiser that structure learners’ responses by asking them to decide if they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the statement, and then explain why. Alternatively, ask learners to provide a response in the form of a numerical ranking. For example, 1 can represent the strongest agreement and 10 can represent the strongest disagreement. You might also give learners one or more statements to respond to in their journals.

■ STEP 3: REFLECT ON STATEMENTS AGAIN AFTER COMPLETING THE TEXT

Often teachers have learners review their anticipation guides after completing a text, noting how their experience with new material might have changed their thinking. Reflections can be in writing and/or through discussion. Often the statements used in anticipation guides make effective jumping-off points for essay writing.

ACTIVITY 2

BAROMETER - TAKING A STAND ON CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

After having completed the anticipation guides, learners do the barometer exercise around the question of amnesty. The intention is for the learners to take a stand on whether or not the murderers of Stanza Bopape should have been given amnesty.

Before doing the barometer activity, learners should read through the sources using the two-column note-taking activity that they were introduced to in the section ‘What was the nature of the apartheid state?’

Why this activity?

The barometer teaching strategy helps learners share their opinions by lining up along a continuum to represent their point of view. It is especially useful when trying to discuss an issue about which students have a wide range of opinions. Engaging in a barometer activity can be an effective pre-writing exercise before an essay assignment because it gets many arguments out on the table.

How to do it:

■ STEP 1: PREPARATION

Identify a space in the classroom where students can create a line or a U-shape. Place “Strongly Agree” and “Strongly Disagree” signs at opposite ends of a continuum in your room. Or, you can post any statement and at the other end of the line post its opposite.

■ STEP 2: CONTRACTING

Set a contract for this activity. Since it deals with learners literally putting themselves and their opinions on the line, it has potential for outbursts which result from some not understanding how classmates can hold whatever opinion they hold. Reiterate your class rules about respect for the opinions and voices of others, and call for them to be honest, but not insulting. Re-address ways to constructively disagree with one another, and require that when offering their opinion or defence of their stance, that they speak from the “I,” rather than from an accusatory “You.”



### ■ STEP 3: FORMULATING AN OPINION

Give learners a few minutes to reflect on a prompt or prompts that call for agreement or disagreement with a particular statement. Often teachers have learners respond to the prompt in their journals.

If this is the first time learners have engaged in this kind of note-taking, you should discuss what is meant by “key ideas” and “response” and then model this technique with them.

### ■ STEP 4: “TAKE A STAND”

Ask learners to stand on the spot of the line that represents their opinion - telling them that if they stand on either extreme they are absolute in their agreement or disagreement. They may also stand anywhere in between the two extremes, depending on how much they do or do not agree with the statement.

### ■ STEP 5: EXPLAIN POSITIONS

Once learners have lined themselves up, ask the learners to explain why they have chosen to stand where they are standing. Encourage learners to refer to evidence and examples when defending their stance. It is probably best to alternate from one end to the middle to the other end, rather than allowing too many voices from one stance to dominate. After about three or four viewpoints are heard, ask if anyone wishes to move. Encourage learners to keep an open mind; they are allowed to move if someone presents an argument that alters where they want to stand on the line. Run the activity until you feel most or all voices have been heard, making sure that no one person dominates.

### ■ STEP 6: DEBRIEFING

There are many ways you can debrief this exercise. You can have learners to reflect in their journals about how the activity changed or reinforced their original opinion. Or, you can chart the main for and against arguments on the board as a whole-class activity.

### ■ VARIATIONS

- **Forced Decision: Yes, No, or Undecided** - Read a statement aloud. Rather than have a continuum for agreement, require students to make a decision that they either “agree” with a statement, “do not agree” or “are unsure”. If learners agree with the statement then instruct them to move to one side of the room. If learners disagree with the statement then instruct them to move to the other side of the room. Also, distinguish a place for students to stand in the middle if they are undecided or unsure. Have learners explain why they are standing where they are standing. If after hearing a student's position, a learner would like to move across the room, allow for this movement.
- **Post-it notes barometer:** Draw a continuum on the board. Ask learners to place a post-it note on the spot along the continuum that represents their opinion. Then have learners discuss what they notice. This variation is less about individuals explaining their point of view than about illustrating the range of agreement or disagreement in the class.
- **Presenting different perspectives:** A barometer can be used to present different perspectives of historical figures, schools of thought, and literary characters. Assign learners a perspective to represent. Then give them time to research or study the ideas of this person or group as it relates to the question being studied. When you frame a statement, ask learners to stand on the line that represents how their assigned individual or group would respond. For example, you could use this activity to show how different philosophers or groups have responded to the statement: Individual freedom is more important than protecting the needs of the larger community.

