

SAHA IN THE CLASSROOM

● FORMAL REPRESSION IN THE 1980s

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 formal repression of political resistance by the apartheid state during the 1980s. Despite a number of reform measures, such as the Constitution of 1983, the main form of government response was repression. State repression took many forms but generally these measures were brutal and denied people basic and fundamental human rights.

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 formal repression by the apartheid state during the 1980s in an attempt to quell resistance. 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

FORMAL REPRESSION IN THE 1980S

After the Soweto Uprising of 1976, the South African government was not able to stem the growing tide of resistance. By the 1980s, the anger and militancy of the youth had been channelled into mass political organisation. The government responded with its two-pronged approach of reform and repression. Despite a number of reform measures, such as the Constitution of 1983, the main form of government response was repression. State repression took many forms but generally these measures were brutal and denied people basic and fundamental human rights. It is possible to divide state repression into formal repression, which is discussed here, and which was visible and relied on laws and policing; and informal repression, which was usually covert (secret and hidden), and in this sense was far more sinister. Informal repression is the theme of this series.

Formal repression relied on the laws passed by the apartheid state, which gave the security police wide powers. It also depended on extensive law enforcement machinery. These repressive powers of the state affected people, organisations, public gatherings, publications and all forms of political activity. The apartheid state was able to invade all aspects of public and private life.

REPRESSION AGAINST PEOPLE

New security legislation, such as the Internal Security Act of 1982, gave the state the power to detain a person without trial indefinitely. This meant that detainees had no access to the law courts or to the normal procedures of law. People were brutalised in detention, experiencing both mental and physical abuse. Detainees were interrogated, during which they were tortured and abused. Many were kept in solitary confinement for extensive periods. Over 80 000 people were detained without trial, some for as long as two and a half years. In this way, people who were regarded as a threat to the national security were simply removed from society. Over 70 people died in detention. The police always claimed that they were not responsible for these deaths. The Detention Action Committee took up this issue (Source A).

Another method of silencing people who were regarded as a security threat was through banning. Banned persons were restricted to the magisterial district in which they lived, were not allowed to be in the company of more than one person at a time and could not take part in political activities. Banned people could not even be quoted. Banning orders were usually imposed for a five year period, but thereafter many people had banning orders re-imposed for a further five years. For the individual, the effect of banning was devastating. Other people were banished to remote areas of the country or restricted and placed under house arrest. All of these methods removed people from public life.

REPRESSION AGAINST ORGANISATIONS

The government also banned over 100 political organisations, which meant that they were not allowed to operate. Other organisations experienced harassment. Their foreign funding was cut off, or they were severely threatened with this.

GATHERINGS

Many public gatherings were banned. In particular, the security police targeted funerals of political activists. They were either restricted or subjected to a large police presence. This often led to confrontation, arrests and deaths.

PUBLICATIONS

Newspapers and publications were strictly censored. Six newspapers were closed down completely, while others were suspended for a period of time. The information that newspapers were allowed to print was strictly controlled. Thousands of books, publications and pamphlets were banned.

MILITARY BUILD UP

P.W. Botha, a military man himself, expanded both the powers and the role of the military. He increased government spending on the military. In 1974 there were 328 000 people in the armed forces and the military budget was R707 million; by 1982, these figures had increased to 592 000 people with a budget of R3 000 million. After being elected as Minister of Defence in 1966, he introduced conscription in 1967, which meant that all white men had to do two years compulsory military service. Jail sentences for objection to conscription were harsh, and as time went by, became increasingly severe – with up to six years sentence. The End Conscription Campaign (ECC) took this issue up.

STATE OF EMERGENCY

In 1985 the government launched a serious attempt to crush the forces of resistance by imposing a State of Emergency in many parts of the country. This gave the security forces even wider powers. Thousands of people were detained, meetings were prohibited, the news was censored, and the army moved into the townships. This caused a great deal of anger. In 1986, the State of Emergency was re-imposed, this time over the whole country. It was extended until 1990. As a result, the rule of law in South Africa was suspended. Repression was the dominant instrument of control.

SOURCE A: Extract – Deaths in Detention (1982)

AUGUST 1982

NEWSLETTER

AD
HOC **DETENTION ACTION COMMITTEE**

ADAC NEWSLETTER 2 P.O. BOX 368 SALT RIVER 7925

FIFTY - THREE

The death in detention of Moapi Ernest Dipale brings to 53 the number of recorded deaths of detainees held under South Africa's so-called "security laws".

There is no doubt about about what causes death in detention. The causes are the methods of interrogation adopted by the "security" police and the pressures put on detainees as a result.

In some cases detainees have been killed by the police, in others courts have found that they committed suicide or died "by accident". The way detainees have died does not matter. The system of detention is responsible in each case.

For the government, collecting detainees is the issue. Disposing of them is not. The Rabie Commission on security spent dozens of pages talking about "the threat to South Africa". It streamlined the government's system of finding detainees; but **NOWHERE DID IT ASK WHY SO MANY DETAINEES HAVE DIED.**

There is a very good reason for this. It did not ask the question because it knew the answer. The answer lies in the interrogation methods used by the police.

These have included: beatings, blindfolding, electric shocks, partial suffocation, injuries to the genitals, deprivation of sleep, food and toilet facilities, standing on bricks for long periods and solitary confinement.

Despite a public outcry and several recent deaths in detention, the Government has refused to introduce a Code of Conduct for interrogators or even to disclose the standing orders governing interrogation (if there are any). The Rabie Commission stated that detainees are often the only reliable source of information - the Government, then, has no interest in stopping brutal police methods.

But these brutal police methods are just one part of a brutal system. It is this system that needs to be changed.

In this August issue of ADAC Newsletter we remember all the detainees who have died in the months of July and August.

NAME	DATE	ATTRIBUTED CAUSE
Michael Shivute	16 July 1969	Suicide (no details)
William Tshwane	26 July 1976	No details
Mapetla Mohapi	5 August 1976	Death by hanging
Phakamile Mabija	7 July 1977	Fell - 6th floor
Elijah Loza	1 August 1977	Natural causes (stroke)
Bayempin Mzizi	14 August 1977	Death by hanging
Lungile Tabalaza	10 July 1978	Fell - 5th floor
Saul Ndzumo	10 August 1980	Natural causes
Moapi Dipale	7 August 1982	Death by hanging

This is from a newsletter of the Ad Hoc Detention Action Committee, August 1982.
(Archived at UWL: AD2951, H, South African Institute of Race Relations, Detentions, Bannings)

QUESTIONS FOR SOURCE A

A1.

Give three reasons the police gave for detainee deaths in detention. (3 x 2 = 6)

A2.

Why do you think the newsletter refers to these causes of death as 'attributed causes'? (4)

A3.

Why do you think that so many people died in detention? (6)

A4.

Why do you think this pamphlet refers to South Africa's security laws in inverted commas, and refers to them as so-called? (4)

A5.

The newsletter refers to the Rabie Commission. What does the source say about the Rabie Commission? Why did it not ask why so many detainees died? (6)

A6.

What was the attitude of the Detention Action Committee towards the police and its policy of detentions? Provide evidence from the source to justify your answer. (6)

(TOTAL MARKS: 32)

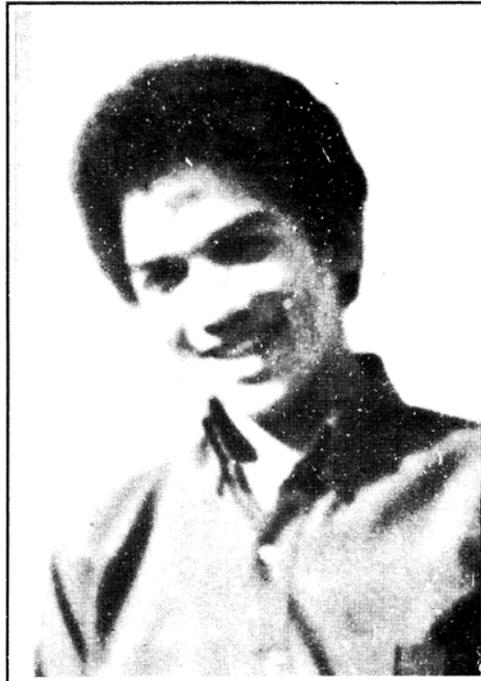
A LION HAS FALLEN

During the early hours of Friday 17th Nov 1989 a fierce battle took place in Athlone. Anton Fransch, a soldier of Umkhonto We Sizwe, the People's Army, held the might of the South African police at bay for seven hours. In the true spirit of the Spear and Shield he fought to the bitter end.

Anton first became involved in the political struggle whilst attending Modderdam High School. He played a crucial role in formulating the political direction of the S.R.C. and student activities. It was through his leadership abilities that BISCO spearheaded numerous campaigns in Bonteheuwel. His dedication to the struggle was broader than just his involvement in student politics.

In CAYCO he also made enormous contributions which led to him being detained in 1985. His detention served only to strengthen his resolve to fight harder to end the violent and evil system of apartheid.

During 1986 Anton led the young lions of Bonteheuwel to the streets in protest against the detentions, killings, beatings and harrassment



of our people. His efforts led to the formation of the Bonteheuwel Military Wing (BMW) who tirelessly fought stone in hand against the guns and bullets of the racist police and army.

Like so many other young people of the 'Class of 85' he too decided that to effectively protect the people from the brutality of the police and army you must arm yourself. At the end of 1986 Anton left the country to undergo military training. His last brave and courageous fight will serve to strengthen the oppressed masses. We will pick up his fallen spear!

"Long live the fighting Spirit of Anton Fransch."

"Long live Umkhonto We Sizwe"

"Long live the ANC/SACP alliance"

Freedom or Death

Victory is certain!

CHURCH SERVICE
THURSDAY: 23 NOVEMBER 1989
AT: ST. MATTHEWS CATHOLIC
CHURCH
BONTEHEUWEL
8p.m.

Issued by the ANTON FRANSCH FUNERAL COMMITTEE. P. O. Box 20 Bonteheuwel Printed by Allie's Press Phone 931-2142/3/4 Fax 932-1224

(Archived at SAHA as Collection AL2457: F6.9)

QUESTIONS FOR SOURCE B

B1.

How did Anton Fransch believe people could effectively protect themselves from the brutality of the police? (2)

B2.

Did the government detention imposed on Anton Fransch have the desired effect? Explain. (6)

B3.

What is meant by: 'We will pick up his fallen spear'? Did this indeed happen? (4)

B4.

Why was Anton Fransch referred to as a 'Lion' in the title? Use words from the source to support your answer. (4)

B5.

Give two reasons as to why Umkhonto we Sizwe was known as the people's Army. (4)

B6.

How effective do you think the chants / refrains 'Long live... (etc.); Victory is certain!' would be on the young people in the struggle? Explain your answer. (6)

(TOTAL MARKS: 26)

SOURCE C: Pamphlet issued by Interim Committee against Political Imprisonment

Organisations of the Mass Democratic Movement, including COSATU, feel it is time to answer these questions together.

We need to consult our organisations to find out exactly what the situation is with prisoners in every corner of the country.

We must decide how to improve support for them and their families.

We must decide how to struggle against political imprisonment, as this is part and parcel of our struggle against apartheid.



**Raise these questions in *your* organisation!
Forward to the CAPI workshop!**

Issued by the interim Committee against Political Imprisonment (CAPI)

(Archived at SAHA as Collection AL2457: F4.15.9)

QUESTIONS FOR SOURCE C

C1.

What does the acronym CAPI stand for? (2)

C2.

The images on both sides of the pamphlet give a powerful message regarding the struggle. Describe and explain the message and why the images are so effective. (8)

C3.

What questions does the pamphlet urge the people to ask of their organisations? Write them in your own words. (4)

C4.

What are the different forms of political imprisonment mentioned in the source? (4)

(TOTAL MARKS: 18)

SOURCE D: Extract – Use of the Courts: Bannings (1989)

Use of the Courts:

There has been a substantial escalation in the number of political trials in recent years. In the year ending June 1988, for example, 51 political trials involving 165 people were completed, with 80 convictions and 85 acquittals. A further 58 trials were in progress, involving 232 accused. Charges ranged from treason, terrorism, membership and furthering the aims of banned organization, sabotage, under going military training, harbouring guerillas, attending illegal gatherings, to murder and public violence, which at first glance are not political, yet closer investigation reveals them to be so.

Some of these trials involve prosecution of notable community leaders on tenuous charges of conspiracy with the African National Congress, and plots to overthrow the state by making townships ungovernable. The tenuousness of these charges has not saved some accused from conviction at the hands of enthusiastic judges, who have not been reluctant to pass punitive sentences.

The best known of these involves the "Delmas trial" which tied up three senior UDF leaders and various religious and civic leaders in a trial which took three years to come to complete, and where the judgment alone filled 1500 pages. Only four of the original 22 accused were actually jailed, receiving lengthy sentences. Pre-trial detention, the refusal of bail, and these sentences removed both the general secretary and publicity secretary of the UDF from the political arena.

An extract from *Suppressing Apartheid Opponents: the State of Emergency June 1987 to March 1989* by David Webster and Maggie Friedman, SA Research Service and Ravan Press.
(Archived at SAHA as Collection AL2457:K1, Ad hoc and Unsourced)

QUESTIONS FOR SOURCE D

D1.

What was the UDF and why was it formed in 1983? (4)

D2.

From the source, identify four of the charges laid against anti-apartheid groups. (4)

D3.

Why does the source regard the above charges as political? (4)

D4.

Why could the charges be regarded as 'tenuous'? (2)

D5.

Why do you think only 4 of the 22 accused in the Delmas Trial were actually jailed? (2)

D6.

What impact would the removal of the general secretary and the publicity secretary of the UDF have on the struggle? (4)

D7.

The government used the procedure of long treason trials to disempower the struggle. Name and describe the Trial of 1956 showing how it was similar to the Delmas Trial. (10)

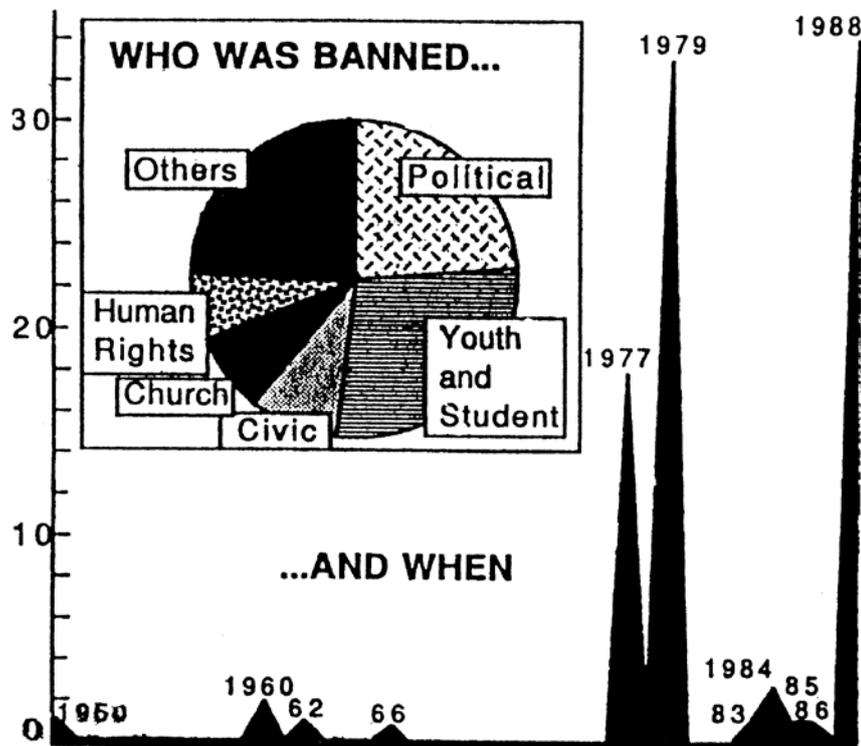
(TOTAL MARKS: 30)

SOURCE E: Extract – Table and Pie Graph (1989)

TABLE 4. Affiliations of restricted organisations

Black Consciousness	3
UDF	24
Trade Union (COSATU)	1
Right Wing (BBB)	1
Independent (CDD, DTU, NECC, ECC)	4
TOTAL	33
Bantustans	2

FIGURE 3 History of bannings of organisations since 1948⁷



13

In 1988 the Minister of Law and Order imposed a series of restrictions which crippled 33 organisations, ranging from AZAPO, through many UDF structures, to one extreme right wing group.

An extract from *Suppressing Apartheid Opponents: the State of Emergency June 1987 to March 1989* by David Webster and Maggie Friedman, SA Research Service and Ravan Press (Archived at SAHA as Collection AL2457:K1, Ad hoc and Unsourced)

QUESTIONS FOR SOURCE E

E1.

Give two reasons as to why bannings were most prevalent in the political youth and student movements. (4)

E2.

The graph in the source shows a trend of fewer bannings between 1950 and 1976. Account for this. (4)

E3.

What event occurred in 1960 that caused bannings to increase? (2)

E4.

In 1976 yet another event caused a spike in bannings. Using your own knowledge describe why this event significantly increased the bannings. (10)

E5.

Why did bannings increase once again in 1988? (2)

(TOTAL MARKS: 22)

SOURCE F: Cartoon – 'The Dark Ages Revisited' (1997)



A political cartoon by Zapiro, published in the *Sowetan*, 19 September 1997. (Archived at SAHA as Collection AL 3129: C23, Zapiro TRC Cartoon Collection)

QUESTIONS FOR SOURCE F

F1.

Which political leader does the Emperor represent? (2)

F2.

With reference to the cartoon what kind of support was Stoffel Botha giving to the Emperor? (4)

F3.

How has the cartoonist shown the differences between the alternative press and the regular press?
(6)

F4.

What message is the cartoonist trying to convey to the reader by using the title
'The Dark Ages revisited....' (6)

F5.

Read the speech bubble on the right hand side of the cartoon where the alternative press is sitting on a bench. What do you think the alternative press is predicting for the future? (4)

F6.

Do you think this source is biased? Substantiate your answer. (4)

(TOTAL MARKS: 26)

GLOSSARY

acquittal – judgment, as by a jury or judge, that a defendant is not guilty of a crime as charged

banning – under the former system of apartheid, to deprive a person suspected of illegal activity of the right of free movement and association with others

banished – as a form of punishment, a person is expelled or forced to leave his/her community and live elsewhere

brutalise – to treat brutally, without feeling or humanity

censored – suppress material which is considered to be politically sensitive or objectionable

conviction – judgement of a jury or judge that a person is guilty of a crime as charged

disempower – to deprive of power and influence

guerrilla – a member of an irregular, politically motivated, armed force that fights regular forces

harbour – to give shelter or protection

interrogation – a form of questioning often accompanied by torture to extract information or a confession

state of emergency – a governmental declaration that suspends certain normal functions of government and may be used to suspend civil liberties

FURTHER READING

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