

# South Africa Timeline

courtesy of La Jolla Playhouse

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**1902-09** Colonies establish laws permitting local authorities to define “locations” for African residents.

**1905** School Board Act limits attendance at government schools to children of “European parentage and extraction.”

**1950** Enforcement of the Immorality Act, banning mixed marriages and the Group Areas Act, strictly segregating living areas along racial boundaries.

**1953** Bantu Education Act enforces inferior education for blacks.

**1960** The Sharpeville Massacre. Police open fire on blacks demonstrating peacefully. Sixty-nine are killed. A five-month state of emergency is declared. The African National Congress (ANC), a black opposition group, is banned.

**1961** From underground, Nelson Mandela organizes a non-violent strike, which is crushed by the State. The *Umkonto we Sizwe* sabotage movement is formed under his leadership.

**1962** Mandela is captured and sentenced to five years in prison.

**1964** Mandela and other leaders of the Umkonto and the ANC are sentenced to life imprisonment.

**1970** Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act attaches “citizenship” to a “homeland” to every black African in the Republic—thereby denying them South African citizenship.

**1976** Soweto uprising. Hundreds of black schoolchildren are shot by police while protesting legislation changing education from English to Afrikaans. Riots spread.

**1977** Steven Biko, black protester, is killed in police custody.

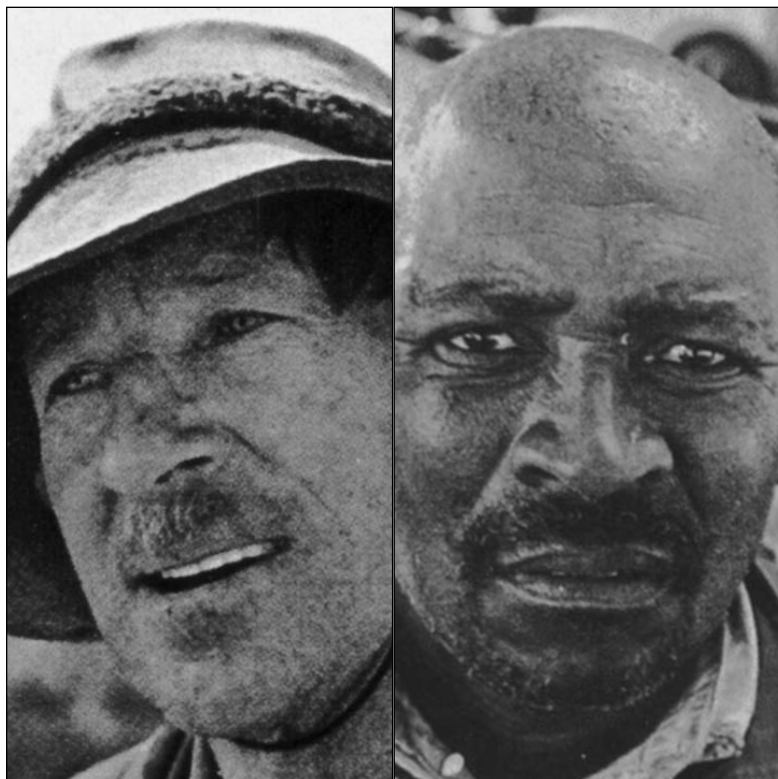
**1980** 55,000 black high school pupils boycott classes, especially on the Cape Peninsula where boycotts last almost a year. Forty-five shot by police in the Cape Town unrest.

**1985** Police fire on unarmed marchers commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre. Eighteen are killed and 36 injured.

**1986** South Africa launches air and land raid against the ANC. Twenty thousand are held in detention centers. The European community adopts sanctions against South Africa.

**1988** One million black South African workers hold a three-day strike to protest new labor laws.

**1990** President F. W. de Klerk announces the lifting of restrictions for the ANC and grants amnesty for political prisoners. Nelson Mandela is freed. ■



## A Story

Sometime in the 1880s, two baby boys were born on a farm in a lush green valley near the spot where white men first settled in the Cape. They grew up there, at the foot of a dramatic pass that crosses the craggy mountains to the east. When they were old enough, they went to primary school together in the little town nearby.

After a few years, they were separated. The one boy, who was white, went to a white school in a larger town, while the other, who was of mixed race, or “Coloured,” went to the Coloured school in a town set aside for his population group. The Coloured child completed eight years of schooling, and then returned to the farm. The white boy finished secondary school and returned as well. At age 35, the white man made the Coloured his foreman and they farmed together for the next 40 years.

At age 75, they both retired. The farmer bought retirement

homes both for himself and for his foreman, one in the white town and one in the smaller town set aside for Coloureds. The foreman visited the farmer weekly. Then, the Coloured town was declared “white” and the foreman had to move. He built a house in another town, and then that too was declared white, and the two men were both over 80 by this time. The Coloured man came to say goodbye to the farmer, and he asked, “Why are you allowing this to happen? I can no longer be friends with you.”

The farmer was in a state about it. He had been a Nationalist all his life, and now this was what the Nationalists were doing. For the first time, it really got to him. Before, apartheid was something that was happening to other people. His life had gone on normally. He was once-removed from it. But that really shook him—the immorality of it! How could he accept it, in conscience? ■

—From *Anatomy of a Miracle*  
by Patti Waldmeir,  
London: Norton, 1997