

Questions

- (1) How does Nyerere characterize traditional African society? In what manner does he deem it to be socialistic?
- (2) What sort of "re-education" does Nyerere see as being essential for Africans in the wake of independence?
- (3) How does Nyerere interpret the role of the traditional family, village, and community?

22-4

Nelson Mandela: the ultimate conquest.

The long arm of European colonialism on the African continent, stretching from the voyages dispatched by Henry the Navigator to the last gasps of South African apartheid, cannot be said to have reached its end until May 10, 1994, the day that Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as South Africa's first Black President. For Mandela and those who supported him, the price was high. He was long forced to write his articles and to carry on the anti-apartheid war in secret or while on the run. He was finally imprisoned for a quarter century until the white South African government of F.W. De Klerk, bowing to internal upheaval and international condemnation, released Mandela and initiated the process of dismantling apartheid and preparing for the fateful elections. In this excerpt Mandela, then a young activist in the African National Congress writes a stinging attack on the system in an article for Liberation.

Source: Nelson Mandela, *The Struggle is My Life* (N.Y.: Pathfinder Press, 1986), pp. 59-61.

'PEOPLE ARE DESTROYED' (OCTOBER 1955)

On the effects of apartheid, and in particular the pass laws, on people's lives.

Rachel Musi is fifty-three years of age. She and her husband had lived in Krugersdorp for thirty-two years. Throughout this period, he had worked for the Krugersdorp municipality for £7 10s. a month. They had seven children ranging from nineteen to two years of age. One was doing the final year of the Junior Certificate at the Krugersdorp Bantu High School and three were in primary schools, also in Krugersdorp. She had several convictions for brewing kaffir beer.* Because of these convictions she was arrested as an undesirable person in terms of the provisions of the Native Urban Areas Act and brought before the Additional Native Commissioner of Krugersdorp. After the arrest but before the trial her husband collapsed suddenly and died. Thereafter the Commissioner judged her an undesirable person and ordered her deportation to Lichtenburg. Bereaved and broken-hearted, and with the responsibility of maintaining seven children weighing heavily on her shoulders, an aged woman was exiled from her home and forcibly separated from her children to fend for herself among strangers in a strange environment...

In June 1952 I and about fifty other friends were

*Home-brewed alcoholic beverage, illicit brewing of which was one of the few ways African women could earn money. The word 'kaffir' is used as an insulting term for Africans but the term 'kafir beer' was widely used in English as a name for this drink.

arrested in Johannesburg while taking part in a defiance campaign and removed to Marshall Square. As we were being jostled into the drill yard one of our prisoners was pushed from behind by a young European constable so violently that he fell down some steps and broke his ankle. I protested, whereupon the young warrior kicked me on the leg in cowboy style. We were indignant and started a demonstration. Senior police officers entered the yard to investigate. We drew their attention to the injured man and demanded medical attention. We were curtly told that we could repeat our request the next day. And so it was that Samuel Makae spent a frightful night in the cells reeling and groaning with pain, maliciously denied medical assistance by those who had deliberately crippled him and whose duty it is to preserve and uphold the law.

In 1941 an African lad appeared before the Native Commissioner in Johannesburg charged with failing to give a good and satisfactory account of himself in terms of the above Act. The previous year he had passed the Junior Certificate with a few distinctions. He had planned to study Matric in the Cape but, because of illness, on the advice of the family doctor he decided to spend the year at home in Alexandra Township. Called upon by the police to produce proof that he had sufficient honest means of earning his livelihood, he explained that he was still a student and was maintained by his parents. He was then arrested and ordered to work at Leeuwkop Farm Colony for six months as an idle and disorderly person. This order was subsequently set aside on review by the Supreme Court but only after the young man had languished in jail for seven weeks, with serious repercussions to his poor health...

The breaking up of African homes and families and the forcible separation of children from mothers, the harsh treatment meted out to African prisoners, and the forcible detention of Africans in farm colonies for spurious statutory offences are a few examples of the actual workings of the hideous and pernicious doctrines of racial inequality. To these can be added scores of thousands of foul misdeeds committed against the people by the Government; the denial to the non-European people of the elementary rights of free citizenship; the expropriation of the people from their lands and homes to assuage the insatiable appetites of European land barons and industrialists; the flogging and calculated murder of African labourers by European farmers in the countryside for being 'cheeky to the baas';* the vicious manner in which African workers are beaten up by the police and flung into jails when they down tools to win their demands; the fostering of contempt and hatred for non-Europeans; the fanning of racial prejudice between whites and non-whites, between the various non-white groups; the splitting of Africans into small hostile tribal units; the instigation of one group or tribe against another; the banning of active workers from the people's organisations, and their confinement into certain areas.

All these misdemeanours are weapons resorted to by the mining and farming cliques of this country to protect their interests and to prevent the rise of an all-powerful organised mass struggle. To them, the end justifies the means, and that end is the creation of a vast market of cheap labour for mine magnates and farmers. That is why homes are broken up and people are removed from cities to the countryside to ensure enough labour for the farms. That is why non-European political opponents of the Government are treated with such brutality. In such a set-up, African youth with distinguished scholastic careers are not a credit to the country, but a serious threat to the governing circles, for they may not like to descend to the bowels of the earth and cough their lungs out to enrich the mining magnates, nor will they elect to dig potatoes on farms for wretched rations.

Nevertheless, these methods are failing to achieve their objective. True enough they have scared and

deterred certain groups and individuals, and at times even upset and temporarily dislocated our plans and schemes. But they have not halted the growing struggle of the people for liberation. Capable fighters and organisers are arising from amongst the people. The people are increasingly becoming alive to the necessity of the solidarity of all democratic forces regardless of race, party affiliation, religious belief, and ideological conviction.

Taking advantage of this situation, the people's organisations have embarked on a broad programme of mutual co-operation and closer relations. The Freedom Charter recently adopted by people of all races and from all walks of life now forms the ground-plan for future action.

However, the fascist regime that governs this country is not meeting this situation with arms folded. Cabinet ministers are arming themselves with inquisitorial and arbitrary powers to destroy their opponents and hostile organisations. They are building a monopoly state, the essence of which is the identification of the Nationalist Party with State power. All opposition to the Nationalists has been deemed opposition to the State. Every facet of the national life is becoming subordinated to the overriding necessity of the party's retention of power. All constitutional safeguards are being thrown overboard and individual liberties are being ruthlessly suppressed. Lynchings and pogroms are the logical weapons to be resorted to, should the onward march of the liberation movement continue to manifest itself.

The spectre of Belsen and Buchenwald is haunting South Africa. It can only be repelled by the united strength of the people of South Africa. Every situation must be used to raise the people's level of understanding. If attacks on the people's organisations, if all discriminatory measures, be they the Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act, Bantu Education, or the classification of the Coloured people, are used as a rallying point around which a united front will be built, the spectre of Belsen and Buckenwald will never descend upon us.

*'Baas' is Afrikaans for 'master'.

Questions

- (1) In general terms, what does Mandela describe as the by-products of apartheid?
- (2) With what major atrocities does Mandela compare apartheid? To what effect?
- (3) What does Mandela say about the rationale and underlying motives of apartheid supporters?

22-5

Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement.

One of the most effective voices for the black majority in South Africa, and its most tragic hero, was Steve Biko (1946-1977), whose reasoned and devastating attacks on apartheid both as a campus