

TIMELINE

For centuries, black and white South Africa have viewed the past from different perspectives. Even the “facts” of history became controversial. For example, despite evidence to the contrary, many South African history books written during apartheid claimed that when whites first came to the region in the 1600s, they encountered few blacks other than nomadic tribes of “Arabic origin.”

Millennia B.C.	The ancestors of the Khoikhoi and San are living in Southern Africa.
A.D. 300	Ancestors of Bantu-speaking South Africans begin to settle in South Africa.
1652	The Dutch start a colony in Southern Africa at the Cape of Good Hope.
1658	The Dutch import slaves to the Cape from Angola and West Africa.
1806	The British defeat the Dutch and the Xhosa and other African peoples.
1834	Britain ends slavery in all British colonies, including the Cape.
1836	The Great Trek begins, as Afrikaners leave the coast to establish new settlements.
1838	Afrikaners defeat Zulu warriors led by Dingaan at the Battle of Blood River.
1852-1854	Afrikaners form two republics, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.
1880	The first of two Anglo-Boer wars begins.
1902	The second Anglo-Boer War ends with a British victory.
1910	The Union of South Africa is formed.
1912	The South African Native National Congress is formed to fight discrimination. It is later renamed the African National Congress (ANC).
1913	Afrikaners form the National Party to preserve their identity under British rule.
1914-19	World War I
1939-45	World War II
1948	The National Party comes to power and adopts a policy of apartheid.
1960	The Sharpeville massacre; the ANC and other activist groups are banned.
1961	The ANC turns to armed resistance.
1976	Soweto uprising; riots break out in black townships across the country.
1977	P.W. Botha becomes prime minister, later president of South Africa.
1978	South African Council of Churches supports civil disobedience.
1980	New surge of protests, strikes, and boycotts.
1983	United Democratic Front is formed to oppose apartheid.
1983	A new constitution grants limited power to Coloreds and Indians but not blacks.
1984	Uprisings in black townships; the government declares a state of emergency.
1986-87	Talks begin between Afrikaners and the ANC.
1986-95	Violent conflicts take place between Zulu supporters of Inkatha and the ANC.
1990	President F. W. de Klerk legalizes anti-apartheid groups and releases Mandela.
1991	Formal multi-party talks begin.
1993	Agreement is reached on an interim constitution; a transitional government meets.
1994	South Africa hold its first democratic elections.
1995	The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is established.
1996	South Africa adopts a new constitution to take effect in 1997.
1998	The Truth and Reconciliation Commission issues its report.



P.W. Botha



F.W. de Klerk



Attending a session of the the Truth and Reconciliation Commission