

How important was the opposition of other countries in bringing apartheid in South Africa to an end?

There were many ways in which the opposition of other countries helped bring apartheid to an end. I think that the most important way in which the opposition of other countries helped bring apartheid to an end was by imposing economic sanctions on South Africa. In the 1960's most Western companies had avoided criticising the Nationalists as they were making good profit under apartheid and they also knew that South Africa could easily ignore any opposition due to its economic strength. The reason why there was a change of attitude during the 1970's is because business leaders began realising that apartheid laws were getting out of hand and were also getting in the way of economic progress. Many famous foreign companies in South Africa (for example Tate sugar) were also internationally criticised because they were not paying their black workers the decent wages which kept them out of real poverty. Business leaders all round the world therefore tried to improve the working conditions for the blacks working in their South African factories. For example, many American companies (e.g. General Motors) agreed to the 'Sullivan Principles' which guaranteed equal pay for equal work, no segregation and better training for blacks.

However, for many critics of apartheid, things like the 'Sullivan Principles' were not enough. They persuaded many Western businesses to actually pull out of South Africa completely and Western governments to impose economic sanctions on South Africa. They probably thought that the Nationalists would only give political rights to the black if they suffered from such economic punishments. As the Western governments intended, the economic sanctions had a disastrous effect on South Africa. South Africa was not getting any of the vital supplies which they needed and the excess products which they made were going to waste as their primary consumers (outside countries) refused to buy these products. Therefore, South African companies had no money with which to pay their workers and consequently protests began in South Africa demanding wages and the vital products produced by other countries. Although at present this did make life for the blacks even worse, as the outside countries anticipated, in the long run the blacks did benefit a lot. In result of the economic sanctions, South Africa became less secure and stable. It also made the South African government more vulnerable because they had depended for so long, on international supplies and the only way they could get these vital supplies back was by bringing apartheid to an end.

A short-term factor which helped strengthen the economic sanction was the township unrest in Britain as well as in other international countries during 1984 and 1985. Many people campaigned against the remaining international businesses in South Africa and at shareholders' meetings, anti-apartheid shareholders pressurised their directors to pull out of South Africa. In the short term, this therefore encouraged

more business leaders to pull out of South Africa and therefore made South Africa even more unstable.

Another short-term factor which encouraged businesses to pull out of South Africa was the financial crisis of 1985. In the summer of 1985, the township violence and international criticism led to more discussions inside and out of South Africa about the urgent need for greater reforms to apartheid. The world's press were convinced that Botha (the president of South Africa at the time) would announce such reforms at a speech in Durban on August 15th. When he merely came up with more 'tough talk', business leaders were very disappointed and felt that they were getting no where. This therefore motivated more major businesses, such as the Chase Manhattan Bank of New York, to cut their links with South Africa. As result of this, a major financial crisis in South Africa followed which made it even more unstable and vulnerable. The value of the rand dropped by 35% forcing the South African government to take emergency financial measures. This resulted in an increase of black unemployment and poverty and a decrease in white incomes. No one was happy in South Africa and there were even more protests against the South African government, but this time by both the whites and the blacks. At this stage, the South African government was more vulnerable than ever because the people in the rest of the world as well as the people inside South Africa were unhappy with the government.

The fact that countries surrounding South Africa were becoming independent was a long-term factor which helped make the South African government more vulnerable. By 1980, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, Malawi and Zambia had all become independent and were now unfriendly with South Africa. This posed a great threat on South Africa because these countries were no longer in an economic 'strangle hold' to South Africa and therefore if they disagreed with any of South Africa's policies, they did not have to think twice before opposing it. Also, the goods which South Africa supplied to the rest of the world could instead produced by the neighbouring countries of South Africa which were now independent. This is because they also had access to the 'riches of South Africa' such as gold, diamond, valuable minerals etc. This meant that during the economic sanctions, the international countries still got most of the products which they usually would have received from South Africa and therefore had no reason to end the economic sanctions. Also, neighbouring countries of South Africa would make a lot of money from the trading they did with international countries, therefore making them able to spend money on armed forces, consequently making them stronger and more secure. The independence of neighbouring countries to South Africa was always going to happen and I don't think that it had a very significant part in bringing apartheid to an end. It just made South Africa more paranoid which consequently convinced Prime Minister De Klark to it end apartheid in a fear of a war or something similar!

The threat of an economic sanction was a long-term factor because South Africa first realised that there was a threat ever since world opinion turned against

apartheid – which was during the 1960's. The actual economic sanctions were also a long-term factor which helped bring apartheid to an end as it made South Africa slowly deteriorate but I don't think it was such a long-term factor at the actual threat of the sanctions.

Despite the fact that the opposition of other countries had a major role in bringing apartheid in South Africa to an end, there were also many factors within South Africa which greatly influenced the fall of apartheid. A very significant long-term factor which helped bring apartheid to an end was the force which the black people began to use after black consciousness arose in the 1970's. The blacks wanted to fight for their rights and they became more forceful because they realised that peaceful protests didn't effect the South African government. For example, the blacks wanted the Sharpville demonstrations to be peaceful but they actually resulted in 69 black deaths. This forcefulness led to riots and violent protests, such as the tragic Soweto riots, which were very threatening to the South African government. This therefore also put pressure on the South African government to bring an end to apartheid because the black were in a way black mailing the South African government by saying that in order to stop the violence, the government also had to stop apartheid.

Nelson Mandela greatly promoted the idea of force by persuading the ANC leaders to use violence against the South African government. Mandela's forming of the 'Spear of People' (MK) also encouraged the use of violence because the MK planned acts of sabotage on the South African government. When Mandela was caught by the police and sentenced for life imprisonment in 1964, although it crippled the MK, it must have made the MK more determined to bring equality into South Africa and end apartheid as this is what their close friend Mandela wanted them to do. After hearing about the Rivonia trial, the black people probably looked upon Mandela as their idol and he probably also inspired them to bring an end to apartheid - this determination also led to more forcefulness.

The Rivonia trial also put apartheid in the spotlight and made the rest of the world aware of the unhappiness within South Africa. This therefore must have made people in outside countries more curious to know how the blacks were treated during apartheid – therefore making them alerted when news of riots and deaths within South Africa passed round the world. I therefore think that by highlighting the black unhappiness, people were more likely to oppose apartheid and also they probably felt disgusted and shocked after hearing about the terrible incidents which happened in South Africa.

Another way in which the forcefulness of the blacks helped to convince the rest of the world to oppose apartheid was the fact that it led to more forceful riots. The result of many of these riots was death due to the fact that the police panicked after seeing the force the blacks brought. Because of the riots, there were therefore many devastating photos of deaths, destruction etc taken by black photographers. When broadcast round the world, these shocking photos convinced even more people

outside South Africa that apartheid should end because in the photos, they saw the misery and pain apartheid caused the blacks. I therefore think that the forcefulness and riots caused by the black people themselves was a very significant cause of the fall of apartheid. This is because without these photos and without any shocking incidents, the rest of the world would never have even known about the black suffering!

In 1989, De Klerk replaced P.W. Botha as Prime Minister. He greatly influenced the fall of apartheid because he brought new reforms into South Africa which legalised the ANC, the OAC, and the SACP. Hundreds of political prisoners including Mandela were released and announced that he wanted to create a new constitution which would give all equal rights to every South African. An obvious reason for these new reforms was economic pressure which De Klerk probably realised would get worse if apartheid was not ended. Without the release of political prisoners, Mandela would also never have been able persuade De Klerk to release the ANC leaders. Without the ANC leaders, Mandela would never have been able to become president and free South Africa of apartheid.

In my opinion, I think that the pressure the people within South Africa imposed on the government was just as effective as the pressure imposed by other countries. Both pressures were long term because.....