

Why did opposition to Apartheid Grow during the 1950s And 1960s in South Africa?

Opposition to Apartheid started to grow in the 1950s and 1960s because of a number of people standing up and making their voices heard. This included people such as Albert Lutuli, Walter Sisulu and Nelson Mandela. All done their part in making people go against Apartheid.

Albert Lutuli was a teacher from Zimbabwe. In 1945 he joined the ANC in 1945 and 7 years later in 1952 he was elected the president of the ANC. In December 1952 Lutuli supported the proposal to hold a Congress of the people. At this Congress delegates would decide the sort of country they wanted the new South Africa to be. The ANC worked closely with the likes of Indians, Coloured and a small group of white supporters to plan the meeting. The Congress was held in Kliptown on 26th June 1955. Despite the police blocking the roads, nearly 3000 people were there to attend the Congress and to listen to the Freedom charter. The Freedom charter was then read in English, Sesotho and Xhosa. The Freedom Charter became the most important document in South African history. In the Charter it demanded a non-racial South Africa with political rights for everyone no matter what race or colour skin they were. In 1956 Lutuli was arrested and charged with High Treason. In 1957 he was released. After a couple of years in 1961 Lutuli was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. 6 years on in 1967 he was killed in a railway accident.

Walter Sisulu became the Secretary-General on the ANC in 1949. a few weeks later Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela joined him aswell in the Executive Committee. The ANC then adopted the League's programme of Action. This meant strikes, demonstrations and boycotts. However before the ANC could organise the campaign the Transvaal ANC joined the Indians and the Communist party to plan a general strike in 1950. Mandela and the other leaders did not want this to take place. They did not want to co-operate with anyone who was not part of the ANC.

However the strike did go ahead and was a great success except the police killed 18 Demonstrators. Mandela told everyone that whoever suffered under the Apartheid Laws should stand up and fight together. In 1961 the ANC and Indian congress decided to organise members to break the rules of apartheid and make the police arrest them. On 26th June 1952 the anniversary of the day of protest and mourning, renamed the Freedom Day. On that day Mandela led a group of 52 men to break the law by braking into a whites only part of Johannesburg. On that day the police arrested 8000 volunteers and the prisons started to crowd up. The Government refused to change its policies and by the end of the year the ANC called off the campaign.

Before Apartheid missionaries ran most schools for Africans. The Government thought they might be dangerous so they were closed down. Hendrik Verwoerd became Minister of Native affairs and he introduced a new Law called the Bantu Education Act (1953). Government inspectors checked the schoolbooks to see if the teachers were teaching the 'correct' facts.

During the 1960s the standard of living for blacks improved. Though it was still below the standards of whites it was still going in the right direction. Black people started owning cars. This was a sign of Wealth and Status. In Cape Town and in Durban there was a small number of Black Middle Class. These included business man, clerks, civil servants and Teachers who all had the skill to organise opposition to Apartheid. In the late 1960s the population of Blacks started to increase rapidly. Black families chose to have more babies. The Black school children would have a massive part to play in the new rebellion against Apartheid.

In 1960 the ANC sent Deputy President Oliver Tambo abroad to set up an External Mission. He got out of South Africa just in time. By 1964 these leaders of the resistance who were not in exile like Tambo, were in prison on Robben Island. The PAC also survived in exile but remained rivals with the ANC.

Resistance to Apartheid from exile took two forms: guerrilla and diplomacy.

The Creation of separate Universities for Africans after 1965 led to an increase in black students. Most joined the NUSAS despite the fact that most of its members were English speakers. The Union was multi-racial and its members would often be in trouble for opposing Apartheid.

In Conclusion I think that during the 1950s the Black Africans went through a lot to make their voices heard. Some even went so far they were shot. But after all the suffering they went through and the hard work they put in during the 1950s, it all started to pay off in the 1960s. Black people started owning cars and in some of the Towns Middle Class black families started to form. The increase in black population also had a dramatic affect on the rebellion against Apartheid. This is because this new Generation got the opportunity to go to Universities and get a education which would allow them to have the skills to go against Apartheid.