Nelson Mandela and the Anti-Apartheid Movement in South Africa

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Nelson Mandela was a renowned leader worldwide. He fought for peace and freedom. He was different from the other leaders like Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi. He always had the vision to do things. Nelson Mandela was a great supporter of non-violent paths and he is also considered as Gandhi, an inspiration source and he seems to have learned the lesson of non-violence from him. Nelson Mandela is popularly known as African Gandhi because he had adopted the peaceful Resistance model of freedom struggle. His influence on the Freedom fighters was such that the vigor of the struggle did not stop despite his imprisonment. Nelson Mandela struggled for equality among the human race in South Africa and even despite being imprisoned for his movement and spending years in jail, he came out to be a continuous threat to apartheid policy and was successful in the long run.

Apartheid was nearly inevitable in some form or another due to the fact that most of its infamous measures, including residential segregation and passbooks, already existed under the British colonial system. It escalated the existing British colonial policies of racial separation to an international level by creating separate national states for various Bantu tribes. Apartheid codified these measures into nationwide laws that were better defined. The mass removals and forced relocations were unbelievably brutal and carried out in a heavy-handed manner, but many modern countries also carry out mass urban evictions of the poor under the pretense of aggressive gentrification (Norval, 1996). There were about 15,000 deaths due to political violence under apartheid - including state-sanctioned killings and massacres. While this is an enormous human toll for South Africa, thousands of more people have perished as a result of orchestrated pogroms elsewhere on the African continent in places like Zimbabwe, Equatorial Guinea, and Burundi. Black, Colored (this is a widely accepted term for people of mixed race in South Africa, so get off that soapbox), and Indian people had to have a permit to be in a "white" area after a certain time. Police brutality was rife, and people were often forced to receive schooling in Afrikaans instead of saying any of the many other languages that would be their home and spoken language. Any race other than the whites’ received very limited education and career opportunities.

The people who lived during the time of apartheid report that realize many whites enjoyed the privileges, while others were too afraid to voice out there condemning in fear of Apartheid police, so they settled and became neutral in a moving train. A number of whites who lived under the Apartheid regime and severely persecuted for their stance on system, included the likes of George Bizos, Alec Erwin, Bram Fischer, etc. The likes of the late Ruth First were literally killed by the Apartheid regime for standing against this inhuman and degrading government. It was never comfortable to know that the majority of the population was oppressed. People reported continuous harassment by the police; they lived with the fear that they could be arrested on suspicion of subversion and jailed for 18 months without a trial. Teargas at peaceful gatherings, roadblocks, strip searches, destruction of your property by police were some of the common events of apartheid (Clark & Worger, 2013).

Nelson Mandela was famous for his imprisonment for 27 years by the South African apartheid government. The only crime of him was standing against the apartheid government committing egregious human rights exploitations against black South Africans. He was seen as a threat to the current regime (apartheid), but he also sanctioned acts of terrorism, the 1983 Church Street bombing is probably the most publicized of these excursions. His wife also advocated for the use of necklaces (the act of setting alight a rubber tire around an individual) and he himself suggested that the noses of collaborators should be cut off. So he used violence to try and change a violent regime. He was also offered a reduced sentence in 1985 if he agreed not to use violence as a political weapon. In the end, he did an excellent job de-escalating a volatile situation that could have led to a civil war. In 1990 he was released from jail and moved ahead to lead the way for the eradication of apartheid in 1994 (“Nelson Mandela: Father of the Nation | South African History Online,” n.d.). Basically, his imprisonment was for his involvement in a plan to overthrow the government, however, not in a peaceful way but through various bombs and attacks. Conspiring to overthrow them was illegal and after the Rivonia Trial between 9 October 1963 and 12 June 1964.

His wife, Winnie Mandela, was the leader of the freedom movement in South Africa. Although it was originally Nelson, his wife took over the leadership role and Nelson was in prison. Nelson was not arrested as a politician; he was arrested as a leader of the largest liberation movement in South Africa. It is not so surprising he "regained" power.  Nelson Mandela’s wife was the leader of a movement that was very large nationwide.  The British government warned the National Party not to kill Mandela because they are going to need Nelson Mandela when their government fails and they were very right. The British had learned in the past that when they killed a leader, usually you end up getting a far worse and more radically militant one. Thus Mandela was practically appointed by the white people. He spent 27 years of his life for the freedom of South Africa (“Nelson Mandela—History of South Africa,” n.d.).

Originally he proposed violence to overthrow the white regime. Then during his many years in jail (famously on Robben Island off the coast of Cape Town with a spectacular view), he became a pacifist of the greatest order. Eventually, he won the Nobel Prize for his efforts - and the country underwent one of the biggest quickest social changes ever, with a relatively small amount of bloodshed (especially for Africa). His life and efforts could have ended at the Robben Island, but the death of one of the founders of the movement in custody, student activist Steve Biko, and the rise of the militant Black Consciousness Movement during the 1970s renewed interest in the ANC and Mandela’s efforts. During the time of 27 years of Mandela was in jail, he became the symbol of the anti-Apartheid movement and freedom globally. He gained international support at that time, and his efforts for freedom, equality and a fight against segregation were recognized on a global level. The local and international efforts combined and urged the apartheid regime to come to an end.

White South Africans were not permitted to mix with the blacks but as the oppressions on blacks amplified, a global anti-apartheid movement began. This movement was aimed at the freedom of Mandela, along with his companion prisoners. A few things that were kept in the public eye included demonstrations, sanctions, and musical concerts, one particularly held on the 70th birthday of Mr. Mandela. By the time, banks and international businesses refused to do business with South Africa and the roar for freedom increased. Some aspects of apartheid legislation already began to water down, and the South African government finally granted open negotiations resulting in the release of Nelson Mandela. It was easy for him to win the elections of 1994 and he became the first black president of South Africa. The 27 April 1994 is marked as the most important day in the history when first democratic elections of South Africa were held. The ANC won the elections and he became the president, owing to his efforts, South Africa became a fully democratic nation. As he formed the government, the apartheid already came to an end and dismantled. In his authority, South Africa's people were considered equal by the law and they had all the rights of the vote. They were finally able to live a life they always longed for during the time of apartheid

To sum up, Mandela worked hard to prevent a civil war and assured freedom and equality of all. His efforts were grounded on his belief that no one ought to be segregated based on the color of their skin. Now the South African constitution protects the rights of all the citizens and it is grounded on the protection of human rights. Though apartheid came to an end, its legacy is still remembered today in South Africa, particularly in the organizational issues such as the distribution of labor, and education. After apartheid, South Africa took steps towards growth (Iheduru, 2004). In 1999, Nelson Mandela stepped down as president but he continued to spread harmony and equality around the globe. Numerous charities for children and education also had his support throughout his life. While he was in exile, people of South Africa knew he is sacrificing his today for a prosperous tomorrow. Today's Africa is the result of the sacrifices he has made before. His devotion and struggle for freedom made remarkable changes in people's life.

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