SOURCE C

Albert Luthuli was the president of the African National Congress during the 1950s.

For most of us Africans, bandied about on the field while the game was in progress and then kicked to one side when the game was won, the election seemed largely irrelevant. We had endured Botha, Hertzog and Smuts. It did not seem of much importance whether the whites gave us more Smuts or switched to Malan. Our lot had grown steadily harder.

A. Luthuli (1962) *Let My People Go,* London: Collins, p. 97.

End of section activities

1 Draw up a table to summarise the impact of early segregation laws on the lives of black South Africans. Be sure to include the following aspects: pass laws; townships; colour bar; reserves; voting rights.

2 Explain how the consequences of the Second World War contributed to the victory of the National Party in the 1948 election.

3 Do some research on the ideology of the National Party's policy of apartheid and explain whether it 'drew its ideals from the Nazis' as **Source A** suggests.

5.2 How was the population divided and segregated?

After winning the election, the new government put the policy of apartheid into practice. Its supporters believed that each race had its own distinct identity, which would be destroyed in an integrated society, and therefore, they believed, the population should be strictly divided along racial lines. Most of the legislative framework of apartheid was in place within five years. Apartheid was a much stricter system of discrimination than the segregation laws that already existed, and it was applied far more harshly. It affected every aspect of people's lives.

Supporters of apartheid believed that social contact and, more especially, sexual contact between the races should be prevented. Accordingly, two of the first apartheid laws were the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949) and the Immorality Act (1950), which made marriages and sexual relations between whites and people of other races illegal. The police went to extraordinary lengths to convict people under the Immorality Act, using binoculars, tape recorders and cameras to obtain evidence, and even bursting into bedrooms to do so. By the time the Act was repealed in 1985, more than 11,000 people had been convicted of offences under the Immorality Act.

But for the government to implement these laws comprehensively, the whole population had to be classified into specific race groups.

Figure 5.6 This cartoon by David Marais, published in the *Cape Times* on 24 November 1959, makes fun of the Population Registration Act and the Separate Amenities Act. ['Net vir blankes' means 'Whites only']. The caption reads: 'When I ask you to produce proof, I mean your identity card.'

The Population Registration Act (1950)

The Population Registration Act (1950) classified all South Africans into race groups – white, coloured, Indian and African. Some groups were further subdivided – into, for example, 'Zulu' or 'Xhosa', 'Malay' or 'Griqua'. Everyone had to have identity cards that stated their racial classification. A Race Classification Board was set up to review cases where the race classification was unclear or where it was challenged.

The racial classification on an identity card determined what opportunities people had in life. It determined where they could live and what sort of work they could do, as well as which schools or hospitals they could attend. This classification into racial categories affected many aspects of people's private lives and caused misery for families and relationships, especially in the Cape, where mixed marriages were more common than in other parts of the country. Some mixed families were torn apart when members of the same family were classified in different race groups.

The segregation of the population

The apartheid laws aimed to enforce the total separation of blacks and whites – politically, socially and culturally. The Group Areas Act (1950) demarcated separate residential areas for each race group. This meant that if an area was set aside for one race

Figure 5.7 Police lorries line up to move the possessions of residents who have been forced out of Sophiatown

group, all others living there would have to move out. Sometimes whole communities were destroyed when they were forced to move from places where they had lived for generations. Two of the best known examples of this are Sophiatown in Johannesburg and District Six in Cape Town, from where black and coloured families were forced to move when these suburbs became white 'group areas'. (You will read more about these later in this chapter.)

The Abolition of Passes Act (1952), despite its contradictory name, strengthened the pass system by consolidating all existing forms of passes and permits into a single pass or reference book. The underlying aim of the pass system was to control the movement of Africans from the reserves to other parts of the country. All African men had to have a 'pass' that recorded their name, address and the name of their employer. Any changes had to be recorded by officials of the Native Affairs Department. These passes had to be carried with them at all times, and they could be arrested and imprisoned if they were caught without a pass by the police. In the Transvaal, prison farms were established and men convicted under this act were forced to work on these farms. The system of passes was extended to African women in 1957.

Regular police raids resulted in the arrest and conviction of millions under the pass laws. The law courts and prisons were congested as a result, and the pass laws made criminals of large numbers of people, whose sole offence was to be unable to produce a pass book on request.

SOURCE D

This is an extract from Blame Me on History *by Bloke Modisane. He was a journalist, actor and writer who grew up in Sophiatown and went into exile in 1959. This autobiography was published in 1963. It is partly an account of the destruction of Sophiatown and also an examination of the effects of apartheid on the self-esteem of educated black people. The book was banned in South Africa.*

This is the essence of the Pass Law.

I cannot sell my labour to the highest bidder.

I cannot live in the residential area of my choice; I am committed by the colour of my skin to live in segregated ghettos or locations or slums.

Freedom of movement is restricted by the reference book [pass].

The right to live in peace in my house is subject to the pleasure of any superintendent or Native Commissioner who is empowered to endorse me out of the municipal area if, in his opinion, my presence is a danger to public peace and good order.

That is the law.

Quoted in *Understanding Apartheid*, 2006, published by the Apartheid Museum and Oxford University Press, p. 26.

Segregation of amenities

Apartheid was extended to every aspect of daily life by the Separate Amenities Act (1953). Facilities and services were allocated for 'whites' or 'non-whites'. There were separate buses, trains and taxis, separate entrances to government buildings, separate counters in post offices, separate parks, toilets, benches and beaches. Hotels, cinemas, theatres and restaurants could serve one 'race group' only. There were signs everywhere to remind people that virtually everything in South Africa was divided by race. Sporting activities were strictly segregated: no interracial competitions were allowed, no multiracial teams could represent South Africa, and no multiracial teams from other countries were welcome.

Segregation of education

The Bantu Education Act (1953) specified a separate curriculum for African children. It was designed to prepare them to be manual labourers. The curriculum was limited and strictly controlled by the government. Mission and church schools that refused to teach the Bantu Education curriculum were forced to close down. This meant that many independent institutions that until then had offered the opportunity of a wide-ranging and sound education to future leaders such as Nelson

Figure 5.8 A crowded classroom in a Bantu Education school

Mandela were forced to stop teaching. Historian Nigel Worden, in *The Making of Modern South Africa*, notes that these schools had 'previously led the field in African education and were viewed as breeding grounds for African independent thinking and protest' (2000, p. 106).

The system of Bantu Education led to a drastic decline in the quality of education available to African children. Far less money and fewer resources were set aside for their education than for the education of other 'race groups'. The result of this was that the schools were understaffed and overcrowded, and had few resources, such as libraries, science laboratories or sports fields. Black children were barred from attending any other schools – government or private – that were set aside for other 'race groups'.

The Separate Universities Act (1959) forced students to study at separate universities. The 'open' universities, such as Cape Town (UCT), Natal, and the Witwatersrand (Wits), were forced to accept white students only (with very few exceptions, where special permits were issued). Separate universities were established for other 'race groups' – for example, the University of the Western Cape (UWC) for coloured students, Durban–Westville for Indian students, the University of the North for Sotho students, the University of Zululand for Zulu students and the University of **Fort Hare** for Xhosa students.

Townships and forced removals

Under apartheid, a number of laws were introduced to prevent Africans who lived in the reserves from becoming permanent residents in urban areas. The most notorious of these was Section 10 of the Native Laws Amendment Act (1952). This prevented Africans from staying in an urban area for more than seventy-two hours unless they had been born there, or had worked continuously for one employer for ten years or more, or had proof of having lived there continuously for more than 15 years. People who did not fall into these categories had to register as jobseekers at a government labour bureau. If no jobs

Fort Hare: was established by missionaries in 1916 and developed into what was regarded as the best institution of higher education for black students in southern and eastern Africa. Until 1959, when the apartheid government forced it to become a college for Xhosa-speaking students only, it had welcomed students of different race and language groups. Many prominent South Africans studied at Fort Hare, including Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, and Robert Sobukwe, as well as future leaders of other African countries, such as Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Kenneth Kaunda (Zambia) and Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe).
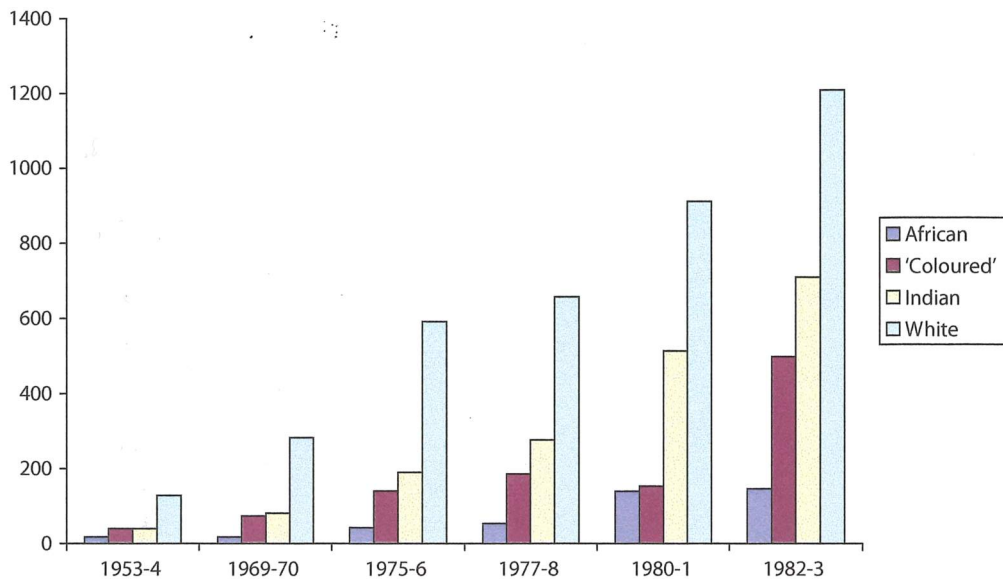
Figure 5.9 This graph shows how much money (in Rands) the government spent on the education of each child according to their racial classification under the system of apartheid)

were available, they would be 'endorsed out' and sent to the reserves. This practice was referred to by the government as 'influx control'.

The influx control laws were only partially successful in preventing the movement of people to the towns. They required a massive bureaucratic system and police effort to enforce them. Although regular police raids resulted in the arrest and conviction of millions of people, many more risked arrest and came to the towns illegally, rather than starve in the homelands.

The authorities built more townships on the outskirts of towns and cities to house the limited numbers of Africans who were legally entitled to live there. Many of these townships were situated a considerable distance from places of work, forcing township residents to spend long hours and inadequate incomes on transport costs. Most houses were small, uniform and lacked basic facilities, such as electricity or running water. Many workers were housed in hostels for single men. The townships lacked infrastructure and adequate public transport, or services and amenities such as tarred roads, sanitation and refuse removal, or shops and banks.

Under apartheid laws such as the Group Areas Act, as well as the Natives Resettlement Act (1954), people were forced to leave mixed areas, where they had owned land and houses, and move to the townships. The most well-publicised forced removals of the 1950s occurred in Sophiatown, a multiracial suburb near central Johannesburg, which was one of the few urban areas where Africans had been allowed to own land. In 1955, despite a vigorous protest campaign and worldwide publicity, the government sent in heavily armed police to force residents out of their homes and load their belongings onto government trucks. The 60,000 residents were taken to Meadowlands, now part of Soweto (an acronym for South Western Township). Sophiatown was destroyed by bulldozers, and a new white suburb named Triomf (Triumph) was built in its place.

5

Figure 5.10 The new township of Meadowlands where the residents of Sophiatown were forced to move after the destruction of their homes close to central Johannesburg

The government also destroyed other black suburbs that it felt were too close to city centres. Cato Manor (Mkhumbane), near Durban, was an informal settlement of about 50,000 households. Living conditions there were poor, but it was conveniently close to job opportunities in Durban. In 1957, the government began moving the people of Cato Manor to a new township called KwaMashu, 25km from the centre of Durban.

The 'coloured' community of Cape Town was forced to leave the centrally situated suburb of District Six to move to new townships on the Cape Flats outside Cape Town, where violence and crime had devastating effects. District Six was destroyed by bulldozers. Many other parts of Cape Town were similarly affected by the Group Areas Act. Families that had lived for generations in places like Mowbray, Newlands, Claremont and Simon's Town were also forced to move, and all that remained of once vibrant communities were their mosques and churches. In Port Elizabeth, the mixed-race suburb of South End was demolished to make way for white housing and other developments, and thousands of people were forced to move to new townships.

When the National Party came to power in 1948, it continued the policy of previous governments by trying to encourage South African Indians to move to India. The policy was not successful, however, and the government abandoned it in 1961. Instead, the government established a Department of Indian Affairs and, later, the South African Indian Council, to accommodate Indians within the framework of separate development. Although partially elected, this council was a purely advisory body that had no effective

Fact: It has been estimated that nearly 600,000 coloured, Indian and Chinese people, and a further 40,000 white people, were moved in terms of the Group Areas Act. The historians Giliomee and Mbenga (2007, p. 318) note that one out of every four coloured people, and one out of every six Indian people, were forced to move (as opposed to only one out of every 666 whites).
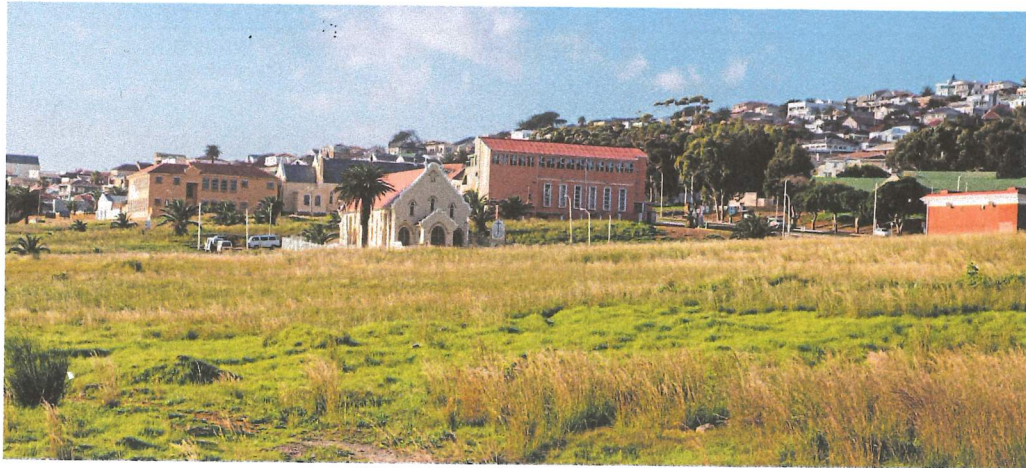
Figure 5.11 District Six after 66 000 people were forced to move to make way for a white group area. Virtually all that remained were the churches and mosques

powers, and it failed to satisfy the demands of the Indian population for proper political representation.

Most of the South African Indian population lived in Durban, and as a result of the Group Areas Act, thousands of Indians were forced to move out of the central areas to the new township of Chatsworth. In many other towns and cities, thousands of Indian-owned shops and businesses were forced to close and move out of the central business districts. This caused economic ruin for many Indians, who were often forced to sell their property and businesses cheaply.

Homelands and forced removals

A further extension of the policy of apartheid was the concept of 'separate development'. This was based on the idea that every black South African belonged to a separate 'national' group, each with its own language and traditions. Each group should have its own 'homeland' (or Bantustan), which would be politically separate from the rest of South Africa. The driving force behind the policy was **Hendrik Verwoerd**, the Minister of Native Affairs. The groundwork for the homelands policy was the Bantu Authorities Act (1951), which abolished the Natives' Representative Council and gave more power to traditional chiefs in the reserves. No provision was made for any form of political representation for Africans in urban areas.

The government appointed the Tomlinson Commission (1950–6) to investigate how the homelands could become economically self-sufficient. The commission recommended that they should be substantially enlarged and consolidated geographically, and that significant economic investment would be needed for them to become economically viable. The government ignored these recommendations and it went ahead with its homelands policy.

Verwoerd's master plan for the policy was outlined in the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act (1959). The reserves were to become 'self-governing' states (or 'Bantustans'), in which black people could exercise their political rights, rather than in 'white' South Africa. They would be stripped of their South African citizenship and

Fact: The apartheid laws that enforced the strict segregation of all aspects of daily life, and which were introduced in the early 1950s, were sometimes referred to as 'petty apartheid', while the policy of separate development (the Bantustan system) was referred to as 'grand apartheid'.

Hendrik Verwoerd (1901–66)

He was born in the Netherlands and came to South Africa with his family as a child. As Minister of Native Affairs during the 1950s, he was responsible for the framing and implementation of many apartheid laws. He served as prime minister from 1958 to 1966, during which time South Africa became a republic and withdrew from the Commonwealth. A few weeks after the Sharpeville shootings in 1960 (see Chapter 6, section 6.2.8), he survived an assassination attempt by a white farmer. However, he was assassinated in 1966, when he was stabbed to death by a parliamentary messenger, who seems to have had no clear political motive.
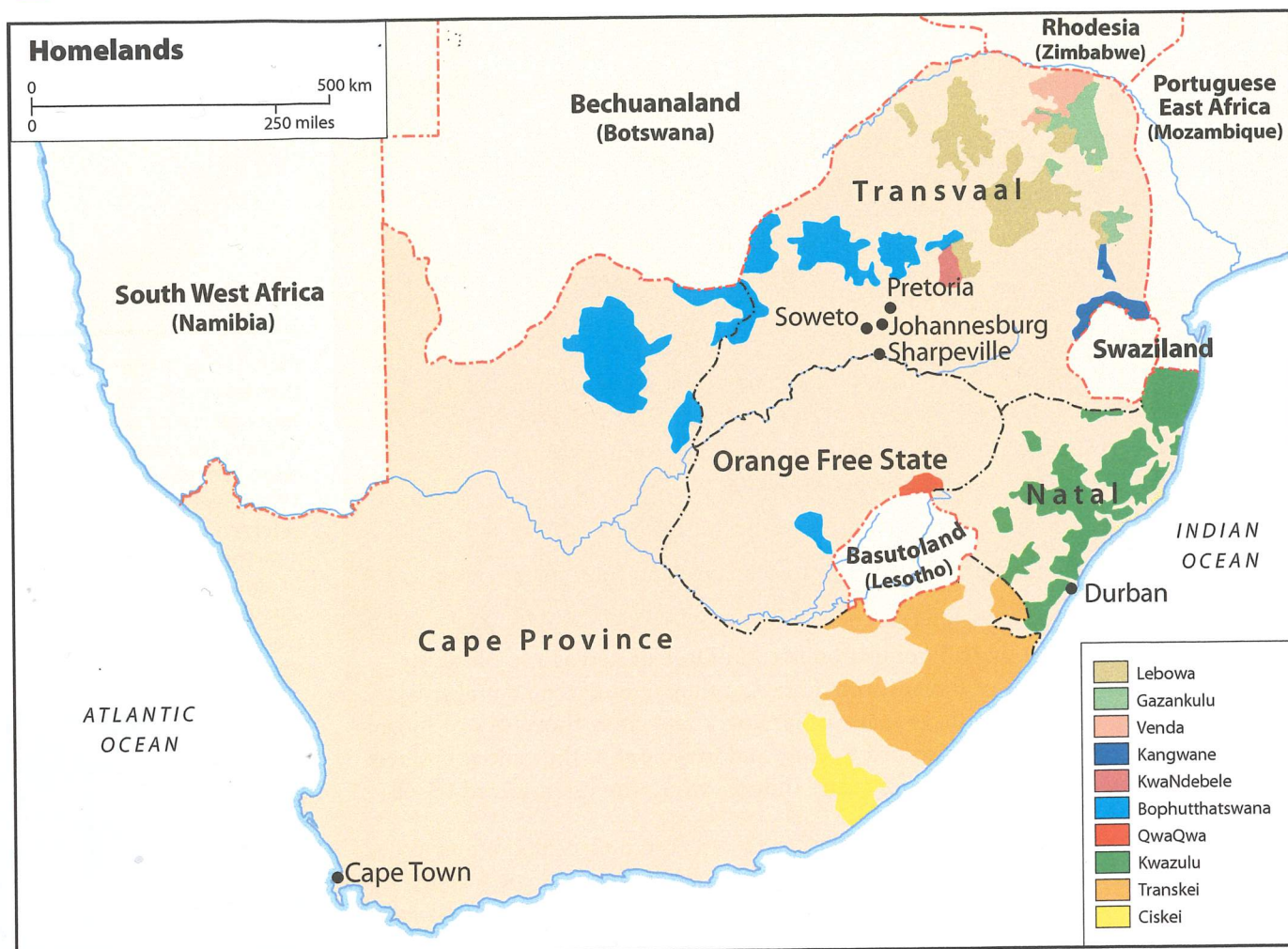
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Homelands

Figure 5.12 There were ten homelands, which were based on the reserves set aside in the 1913 Land Act. Four of them – Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei – subsequently opted for 'independence', which was never officially recognised by the rest of the world

forced to become citizens of one of the homelands, even if they had never lived there. The homeland authorities would control education, agriculture and roads, but crucially the South African government would control key elements such as foreign affairs, defence and internal security.

The government saw the homeland system as a means of maintaining white control by creating divisions among the black majority – the principle of 'divide and rule'. Another aim of the homeland system was to provide a cheap source of labour for the mines, industries and farms of 'white' South Africa. The homelands were geographically fragmented and lacked adequate infrastructures as well as health and education facilities. They were not economically viable and were maintained by substantial, yet inadequate, financial grants from the South African government.

Over the next three decades, about three and a half million people were forced to move to the homelands, which were overcrowded, undeveloped and desperately poor, and could not support the number of people who were forced to live there. As a result, many men were forced to become migrant workers, leaving the homelands populated mainly

KEY CONCEPTS ACTIVITY

Change and Continuity: Explain whether the policy of apartheid represented change or continuity from previous segregation policies.

by women, children and the elderly or sick. Separated families, severe malnutrition and high infant mortality rates were features of life for the millions of people living there. Critics of the system referred to the homelands as 'dumping grounds'. The millions of people living there grew poorer and poorer.

Figure 5.13 The homelands lacked basic services and infrastructure and were populated mainly by women and children, while the men worked as migrant labourers in 'white' South Africa

The disenfranchisement of voters

Before the Union of South Africa was formed in 1910, the Cape was the only colony in which black people had any political rights. The Cape had refused to join the Union unless its non-racial franchise was guaranteed. This was done in what was called an 'entrenched' clause in the constitution (which could only be changed by a two-thirds majority in a joint sitting of both houses of parliament). As a result, African and coloured

males in the Cape could qualify to vote. In 1936, this clause was amended and Africans lost the right to vote in general elections. But coloured voters retained their right to vote, and it was assumed that most of them voted for the United Party and against the National Party in the 1948 election.

In the early 1950s, the government was determined to remove coloured voters from the common voters' roll, partly because it wanted to strengthen its own position in the next election: coloured voters held the balance of power in several marginal constituencies. Another reason was that the concept of a common voters' roll went against the National Party's ideology of apartheid. The methods it used to disenfranchise coloured voters caused the most heated parliamentary struggle over the new apartheid policy.

The government first introduced a Separate Representation of Voters Bill in parliament in 1951. When the act was passed by a simple majority, its validity was challenged in the courts by a group of voters, supported by the United Party. The Appeal Court declared the act to be invalid (on the grounds that it had not fulfilled the requirements for the changing of an entrenched clause – namely a two-thirds majority in a joint sitting of both houses of parliament). Determined to succeed despite this setback, the government then introduced the High Court of Parliament Bill, which gave parliament the power to overrule decisions of the court. This too was declared invalid by the courts.

However, the government was still determined to continue with its quest to disenfranchise coloured voters. In 1955 it prepared the way for the reintroduction of the first bill. It increased the number of judges in the Appeal Court from five to eleven, and ensured that pro-government judges were appointed to fill the new places. In addition, the Senate Act (1955) increased the size of the Senate (the upper house of parliament) from forty-eight seats to eighty-nine, and the method by which senators were chosen was altered in such a way that the National Party controlled seventy-seven of the seats in the enlarged senate. Finally, in a joint sitting of the two houses of parliament, the Separate Representation of Voters Act (1956) was passed. An appeal against the validity of the Senate Act was rejected by the Appeal Court.

The 1956 Act removed coloured voters from the common voters' roll in the Cape and established a separate voters' roll for them. Coloured voters could now elect four white MPs to represent them in parliament. The government established a Department of Coloured Affairs and later a Coloured Persons' Representative Council. This was an advisory body that had limited legislative authority, depended on the white-controlled parliament for funding and needed the approval of the (white) minister of coloured affairs before any of its decisions could be implemented. It therefore had little support or credibility amongst the coloured community.

By these controversial means, the National Party government succeeded in its aim of separating white and coloured voters in the Cape, and ensuring that, in effect, only white voters had a say in determining the political future of South Africa.

Theory of knowledge

History, ethics and bias:
Many people at the time felt that the National Party government had used immoral tactics by tampering with the constitution to ensure that it got what it wanted. What is the role of the historian when writing about issues such as this? Should historians make moral judgements about the past, or should they adopt a neutral stance and record what happened impartially? Is it possible to describe historical events in an unbiased way?

End of section activities

1 Explain these terms in the context of the policy of apartheid: townships; influx control; forced removals; homelands; separate development.