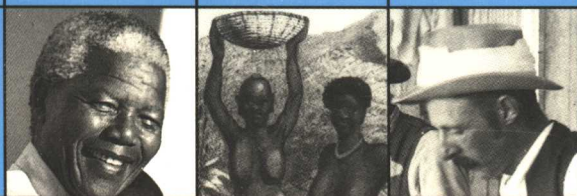


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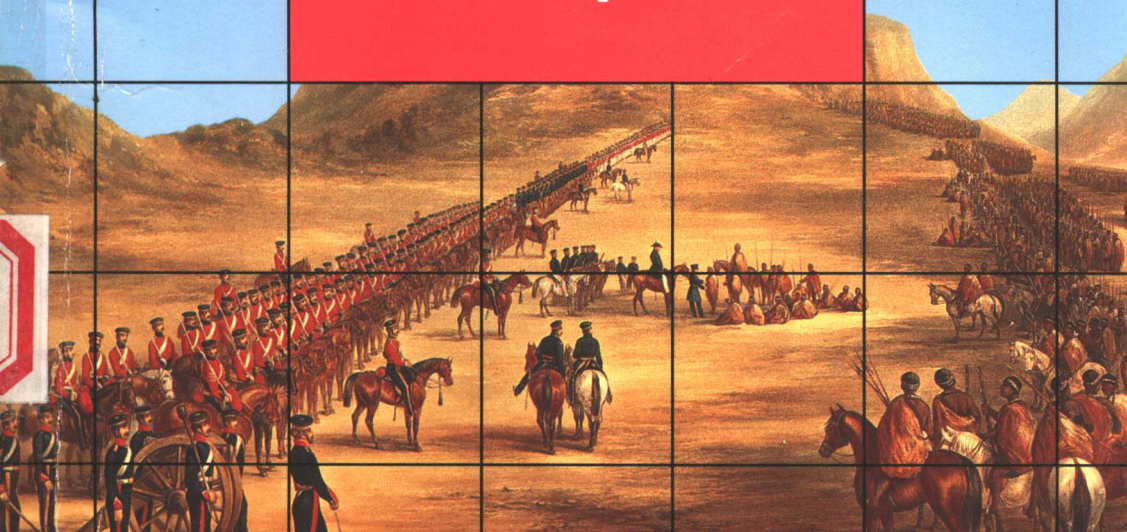
Archbishop Desmond Tutu



A History of South Africa

REVISED EDITION

Leonard
Thompson



LEONARD THOMPSON

A History of
**South
Africa**

Revised Edition



YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS

NEW HAVEN AND LONDON

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Frontispiece Nelson Mandela casts his vote in South Africa's first all-race election, April 27, 1994. Photo: AP/World Wide Photos.

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P R E F A C E

In this edition I have added a chapter on the dramatic events that have transformed South Africa since 1989. The first three sections of the new chapter describe the process that began with contacts by white businesspeople, intellectuals, and politicians with African National Congress leaders in prison and in exile—events that led to the repeal of racist legislation, the creation of a democratic constitution, the conduct of a nonracial general election, and the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as president of South Africa on May 10, 1994. The next two sections analyze events in South Africa during the ensuing year, when the new government, confronted by the legacy of apartheid, sought to democratize the bureaucracy, the army, and the police; to energize the economy; and to improve the quality of life of the impoverished victims of apartheid. The chapter concludes with a discussion of seven social and political currents that are mingling in late twentieth-century South Africa—a discussion that should help the reader to make sense of events as they unfold.

I have also made a few amendments to chapters 1 through 7 in this edition, notably in the discussion of the rise of the Zulu kingdom and the widespread disturbances among Africans in the early nineteenth century—a subject that has generated a lively debate in South Africa. I have updated the chronology, revised the statistical appendix, and added references to numerous recent publications in the notes.

Readers should be aware that, in South Africa as elsewhere, historians are shaped by the context in which they live and work, and that their publications in turn—especially their textbooks—influence the history of their times. During the British colonial regimes of the nineteenth century, many authors wrote in an imperialist mode. In reaction against that metropolitan bias, British colonists composed works that embodied their perspective as a dominant minority in an African milieu, often at odds with the British metropole; and by the end of the century, when British imperialism was reaching its apogee, Afrikaners were laying the foundations of an exclusive, nationalist historiography. In the segregation and apartheid years, the white regime authorized textbooks and favored other publications in the settler and Afrikaner nationalist traditions of the previous century. Today, those traditions are becoming obsolete. They have been overshadowed by counter-historiographies that, since World War II, have become increasingly rich, varied, and nuanced.

Historians writing from a critical liberal perspective began to expose the racial bias in the established historiography in the late 1920s. From the 1940s onward, their successors placed unprecedented emphasis on the historical experiences of Africans, Indians, and Coloured People. By the 1970s, some scholars were creating a “radical” historiography, which was influenced by Marxism and highlighted the role of capitalism and the growth of class divisions in South Africa. Initially, a rather clear line demarcated the “liberal” and the “radical” perspectives, though each group also contained great differences—there were variations within the liberal tradition, and radicals drew on rival schools of Marxism. Recently, following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the collapse of the communist regimes in eastern Europe and elsewhere, and the global movement toward an open economy, the perspectives have converged considerably. With some exceptions, liberals have been radicalized, radicals have been liberalized. In this book, I have drawn on the rich achievements of both streams of contemporary South African historiography.

What of the future? Because historians now live in a post–Cold War and postapartheid context, we may expect new departures in South African

historiography. Historians with strong commitments to the African nationalist movement may be expected to write from that perspective, which may lead to partisan works resembling a mirror-image of Afrikaner nationalist writings. Meanwhile, scholars and bureaucrats are working to create and authorize school textbooks that reflect the democratic ideology of the new government, in place of the old textbooks, which emphasized the achievements of Whites and denigrated Blacks.

As a result of the racial structure of South African society, almost none of the scholars who currently hold appointments in history departments in South African universities are Africans and nearly all the historiography of South Africa has been written by white people. In the future, Africans will bring new perspectives, new experiences, and new linguistic skills to the study of South African history. They may be expected to explore fresh topics and produce works with distinctive features. This process will be gradual. It will take time for Africans to acquire professional training and research experience and to receive appointments that provide opportunities for historical research.

We may also expect that historical themes that received scant attention in the past will now come to the fore. Ethnicity is a typical example. Ethnic divisions among Africans were so central to the apartheid ideology that they were taboo for most scholars not tainted by the apartheid regime. Now, the history of the politicization of ethnicity in South Africa, among Blacks as well as Whites, has become highly relevant. Women's history has already received considerable attention in South Africa, but deeper examination of the role of gender in South African history has become a high priority, owing to unresolved tensions between the ideal of gender equality and the patriarchal traditions and practices of African societies. Among many other themes that warrant closer examination in the new South Africa than previously are historical studies of African health, of African families, of African spirituality and ideology, of South African urbanization, and of the South African environment. We may look forward to works on such themes cast in long-term perspective—exploring the continuities and changes through the centuries before and since the conquest and the impact of industrial capitalism.

The scene of a variety of complex relations among diverse cultures, South Africa will always offer challenges to creative scholars. One hopes that South African historiography will remain a rich field of intellectual inquiry into the distant future. Meanwhile, this volume is a succinct survey of the present state of knowledge.

PREFACE

I am grateful to Lynn Berat, Leonard Doob, William Foltz, Christopher Saunders, Robert Shell, and Johann van der Vyver for valuable criticisms of a draft of chapter 8; and to Leslie Bessant, Catherine Higgs, and Sean Redding for comments on the first edition, which they have been using in their university and college classes. This edition, like the first, has benefited greatly from the professional skills of Charles Grench and Laura Dooley of Yale University Press.

CHRONOLOGY

- Millennia B.C. Hunter-gatherers, ancestors of the Khoisan (Khoikhoi and San: "Hottentots" and "Bushmen"), living in Southern Africa
- By A.D. 300 Mixed farmers, ancestors of the Bantu-speaking majority of the modern population, begin to settle south of the Limpopo River
- 1487 Portuguese expedition led by Bartholomeu Dias reaches Mossel Bay
- 1652 The Dutch East India Company founds a refreshment station at the Cape of Good Hope
- 1652-1795 Genesis and expansion of the Afrikaners ("Boers"); the Khoisan conquered; slaves imported from Indonesia, India, Ceylon, Madagascar (Malagasy), and Mozambique
- 1795 Britain takes the Cape Colony from the Dutch
- 1803 The Dutch (Batavian Republic) regain the Cape Colony by treaty

CHRONOLOGY

1806	Britain reconquers the Cape Colony
1811-12	British and colonial forces expel Africans from the territory west of the Fish River
1815	Rising of frontier Boers (later known as the Slagtersnek rebellion)
1816-28	Shaka creates the Zulu kingdom; warfare among Africans throughout much of southeastern Africa (the <i>Mfecane</i>)
1820	British settlers arrive in the Cape Colony
1828	The Cape colonial government repeals the pass laws
1834-38	Cape colonial slaves emancipated
1834-35	Xhosa defeated by British and colonial forces
1835-40	Five thousand Afrikaners (later known as voortrekkers) leave the Cape Colony with their "Coloured" clients; a movement later known as the Great Trek
1838	An Afrikaner commando defeats the Zulu army at the battle of Blood River
1843	Britain annexes Natal
1846-47	Xhosa defeated by British and colonial forces
1850-53	
1852, 1854	Britain recognizes the Transvaal and Orange Free State as independent Afrikaner republics
1856-57	The Xhosa cattle-killing
1858	Lesotho wins war versus the Orange Free State
1865-67	The Orange Free State defeats Lesotho
1867	Diamond mining begins in Griqualand West
1868	Britain annexes Lesotho ("Basutoland")
1877	Britain annexes the Transvaal
1879	British and colonial forces conquer the Zulu after losing a regiment at Isandhlwana
1880-81	Transvaal Afrikaners regain their independence
1886	Gold mining begins on the Witwatersrand
1895-96	Leander Starr Jameson leads an unsuccessful raid into the Transvaal
1897-98	Rinderpest destroys vast numbers of cattle
1898	Transvaal commandos conquer the Venda, completing

CHRONOLOGY

the white conquest of the African population of Southern Africa

- 1899-1902 The War between the Whites: Britain conquers the Afrikaner republics
- 1904-7 Chamber of Mines imports 63,397 Chinese workers
- 1906-7 Britain gives parliamentary government to the former republics; only Whites enfranchised
- 1910 The Cape Colony, Natal, the Transvaal, and the Orange Free State join to form the Union of South Africa
- 1912 South African Native National Congress (NNC) founded; later becomes the African National Congress (ANC)
- 1913 Natives Land Act limits African landownership to the reserves; the beginning of a series of segregation laws
- 1914-19 As a member of the British Empire, South Africa participates in World War I
- 1917 Anglo American Corporation of South Africa founded
- 1921 Communist party of South Africa founded
- 1922 White strikers seize control of Johannesburg but are crushed by government troops
- 1936 African parliamentary voters placed on a separate roll
- 1939-45 South Africa participates in World War II on the Allied side
- 1946 70,000 to 100,000 African gold-mine workers strike for higher wages; troops drive them back to the mines
- 1948 The Afrikaner National party wins a general election and begins to apply its policy of apartheid
- 1950 The Population Registration Act classifies people by race; the Group Areas Act makes people reside in racially zoned areas
- 1950 ff. Security legislation gives the government vast powers over people and organizations
- 1952 The ANC and its allies launch a passive resistance campaign
- 1953 The government assumes control of African education
- 1955 The Congress of the People adopts a Freedom Charter

CHRONOLOGY

- 1956 156 members of Congress Alliance charged with high treason
Coloured parliamentary voters placed on a separate roll
- 1958-66 Verwoerd is prime minister
- 1959 Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) founded
- 1960 African and Coloured representation in Parliament (by Whites) terminated
Police kill 67 African anti-pass-law demonstrators at Sharpeville; the government bans African political organizations
- 1961 South Africa becomes a republic and leaves the British Commonwealth
- 1964 Nelson Mandela and other ANC and PAC leaders sentenced to life imprisonment
- 1966-68 Lesotho, Botswana, and Swaziland become independent states
- 1975-76 Mozambique and Angola become independent states
- 1976-77 At least 575 people die in confrontations between Africans and police in Soweto and other African townships
- 1976-81 South Africa grants "independence" to the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and the Ciskei Homelands, but they are not recognized abroad
- 1977 The U.N. Security Council imposes a mandatory embargo on the supply of arms to South Africa
- 1978-84 Botha is prime minister
- 1979 African trade unions can register and gain access to the industrial court and the right to strike
- 1980 Zimbabwe (previously Rhodesia) becomes independent
- 1981-88 South African forces invade Angola and make hit-and-run raids into Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Zambia; ANC guerrillas sabotage South African cities
- 1983 United Democratic Front (UDF) formed
- 1984 A new constitution gives Asians and Coloureds but not Africans limited participation in the central government; Botha becomes state president
- 1984-86 Prolonged and widespread resistance to the regime in

CHRONOLOGY

- black South African townships; violent government reactions
- 1985 First contacts between the government and imprisoned and exiled ANC leaders
- 1986 Pass laws repealed
The government proclaims a nationwide state of emergency, detains thousands of people, and prohibits the press, radio, and television from reporting unrest
The U.S. Congress passes the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act over President Reagan's veto
- 1986-95 Violent conflict between Zulu supporters of Inkatha and the ANC in KwaZulu and on the Witwatersrand
- 1987 Three-week strike by 250,000 African mine-workers
- 1988 South Africa undertakes to withdraw from Angola and cooperate in U.N.-monitored independence process in Namibia
- 1989 De Klerk succeeds Botha, first as leader of the National party, then as president
- 1990 De Klerk unbans the ANC, PAC, and SACP; releases Mandela and other political prisoners
Namibia gains independence
- 1990-91 1913 and 1936 Land Acts, Group Areas Act, Population Registration Act, and Separate Amenities Act repealed; political organizations unbanned; state of emergency revoked; amid widespread violence, delegates from 18 parties start formal negotiations
- 1992 White voters support the negotiation process in a referendum
The ANC breaks off negotiations with the government after an Inkatha mob massacres 46
- 1993 Negotiations resume; de Klerk, Mandela, and leaders of 18 other parties endorse an interim constitution
- 1994 Governments of the Bophuthatswana and Ciskei "Homelands" collapse
The ANC wins first nonracial election (April 27-30)
Nelson Mandela is sworn in as president (May 10) and forms Government of National Unity

CHRONOLOGY

- Foreign governments lift sanctions; South Africa rejoins the British Commonwealth
- Crime escalates
- 1995 Racial conflict in the police force (January)
- Inauguration of the Constitutional Court (February); it abolishes the death penalty (May)
- Disturbances in universities (March)
- Inkatha withdraws from the Constituent Assembly (April)
- Inauguration of the Commission for the Restitution of Land Rights (May)