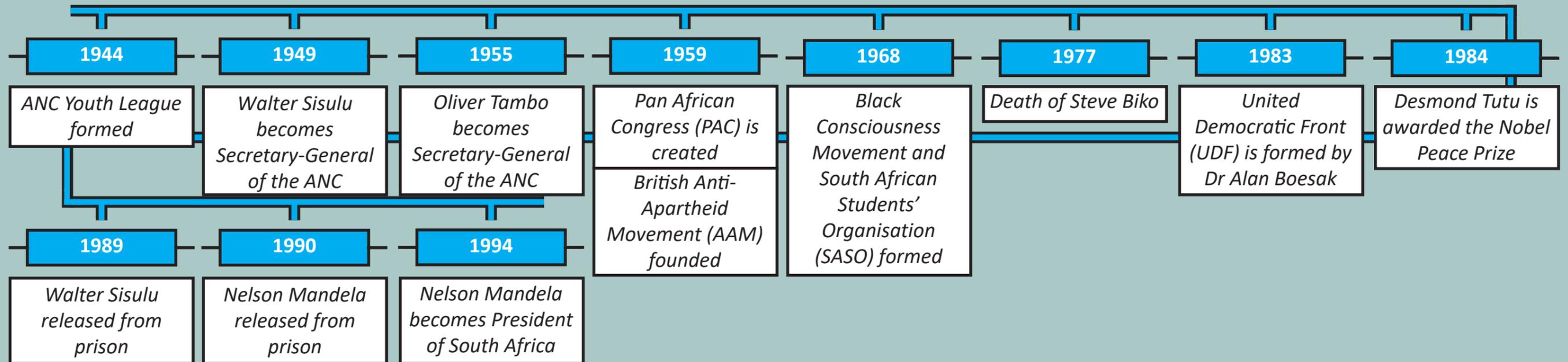


# Knowledge Organiser: Changes in South Africa (Unit 2)

Key Question 4: *What was the role of key individuals in the campaign against apartheid?*

## Timeline of events



### Important concept

The fight against apartheid depended on the leadership and actions of many individuals in different ways. Political activists, women and church leaders all played an important role in maintaining and promoting the campaign against apartheid in South Africa.

### Key words

**MK** - uMkhonto we Sizwe meaning 'Spear of the Nation', was part of the ANC that was prepared to use violence to achieve its aims.

**Black Consciousness Movement** - The movement that emphasised that black people should work together in their efforts to improve their lives and campaign against apartheid.

**United Nations Security Council** - The council is responsible for maintaining international peace and security.

**South African Students' Organisation (SASO)** - Formed to gather black South African students to support the Black Consciousness Movement.

**KwaZulu homeland** - The Bantustan or homeland created for the Zulu tribe in Natal.

**Dutch Reformed Church** - A popular church in South Africa with roots dating back to the Dutch settlers in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

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### Political activists

**Nelson Mandela:** A key member of the ANC Youth League who went on to be elected to the ANC Executive. He led the Defiance Campaign in 1952 and initially supported non-violent methods of protest.

The ANC's lack of success and the Sharpeville Massacre convinced Mandela that he would support an armed struggle. He set up **MK** and conducted acts of sabotage against the government. He went into hiding and travelled all over South Africa, and other African nations, trying to gain support for the struggle against apartheid. His arrest and imprisonment as a member of MK following the Rivonia Trial resulted in his imprisonment at Robben Island.

Nelson Mandela's imprisonment for 26 years at Robben Island was important in gaining international support against apartheid. The **United Nations Security Council** in 1980 pressed for the release of Mandela and other political prisoners. He became a symbol of the injustices of apartheid in South Africa and 'Free Mandela' was adopted as an anti-apartheid slogan.

His release from prison was agreed only if all political parties such as the ANC were unbanned, and in February 1990 this happened. Mandela immediately re-entered the political arena and continued his struggle against apartheid. He became president of the ANC in 1991 in place of Oliver Tambo. He became President of South Africa in 1994 following the ANC's success in the General Election.

**Walter Sisulu:** Joined the ANC Youth League with Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo. He was elected Secretary General of the ANC in 1949. Arrested on several occasions for his role in planning and supporting anti-apartheid campaigns. Finally arrested at Rivonia and sentenced to life in prison. He was released in 1989 and would be elected deputy president of the ANC in 1991.

**Oliver Tambo:** Together with Mandela and Sisulu was an original member of the ANC Youth League. Appointed National Secretary of the ANC in 1948. He became Secretary General of the ANC in 1955 following Walter Sisulu's banning. He ascended to the role of President of the ANC in 1967. Tambo spent 30 years in exile organising and supporting the ANC in its attempt to influence the South African government. He eventually returned to South Africa in 1990 to aid the negotiations to end apartheid.

**Robert Sobukwe:** Founder of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) that broke away from the ANC in 1959. He was convinced that Black South Africans could only gain their freedom by campaigning alone, as opposed to working with white, coloured and Indian groups.

**Steve Biko:** Founder of the **Black Consciousness Movement** in South Africa, Biko was very influential in gaining support for the campaign against apartheid among young South Africans during the late 1960s and 1970s. In 1968 Biko cofounded the **South African Students' Organisation (SASO)**. His ideas of promoting black dignity and identity were popular among the younger black generation and this was seen as a threat by the white government. He was arrested in 1977 and murdered while in police custody. His death rocked South Africa and shocked the world.

**Chief Buthelezi:** Leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party who represented the Zulus in South Africa. Chief Buthelezi sought to use his influence as Chief Minister of the **KwaZulu homeland** to end apartheid and gain power for the Zulu people. His opposition to the ANC and other black opposition groups led to outbreaks of violence between them. During the democratic elections held in 1994 Chief Buthelezi was elected to the National Assembly and appointed Minister of Home Affairs.

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### Women

Women were active in their opposition to apartheid. They were prominent in their support of protest marches and engaged in civil disobedience actions. Women adopted an important role in anti-pass law demonstrations, the Black Sash movement, beer-hall protests and bus boycotts.

**Lilian Ngoyi:** President of the ANC Women's League, Ngoyi was responsible for leading the women's protest march against passbooks in 1956. She was also an important figure in gaining international support and was an inspiration for other women to support apartheid protests.

**Helen Suzman:** A white politician who consistently opposed and criticised the South African governments' apartheid policies. She spent over 30 years in parliament as a member of various progressive political parties that eventually played a role in using political pressure to bring an end to apartheid.

**Winnie Mandela:** She was important because she was viewed as the representative of her husband of 38 years during his imprisonment. She was a figurehead to many South Africans and foreign supporters of the anti-apartheid movement as a spokesperson for the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL). Her reputation suffered during the 1980s and 1990s as she became implicated in organising violent crimes.

### Church leaders

The role of church leaders was prominent in gaining support against apartheid. They were influential in South Africa and internationally in highlighting the injustice facing black South Africans under the apartheid regime.

**Trevor Huddleston:** As an Anglican Church minister he moved to South Africa from Britain in 1943 to work in the black township of Sophiatown. He spent the next 13 years criticizing the white government's apartheid laws and supporting protests. He returned to England in 1955 and continued to protest against apartheid. He founded the British Anti-Apartheid Movement in 1959 and served as its president from 1981 to 1994.

**Desmond Tutu:** The first Black Anglican Bishop in South Africa, Tutu used his position effectively to gather support against apartheid. He played a prominent role in persuading other nations, which he visited across the globe, to place sanctions on South Africa. Desmond Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in 1984.

**Allan Boesak:** A **Dutch Reformed Church** minister, Allan Boesak supported anti-apartheid demonstrations. He became an active member of the ANC and later formed the UDF. In 1982, as president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, he successfully persuaded its members to declare that apartheid was heresy. White South African churches had their membership suspended. He was arrested on several occasions.