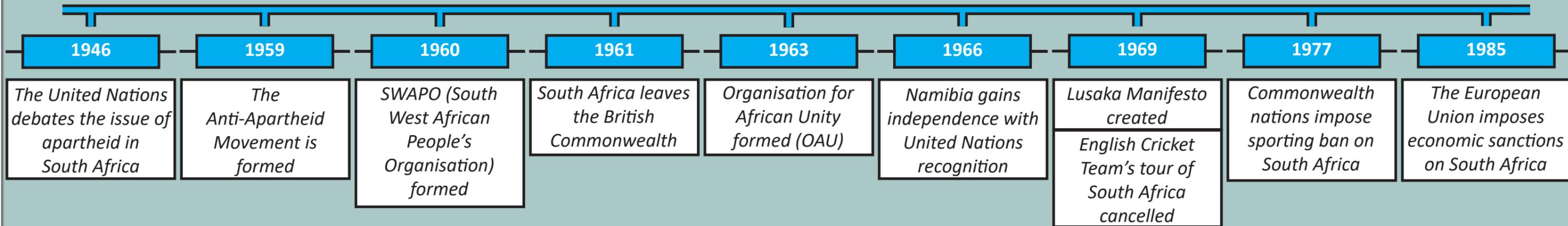


Knowledge Organiser: Changes in South Africa (Unit 2)

Key Question 5: *How effective was international opposition to apartheid?*

Timeline of events



Important concept

International opposition to apartheid in South Africa became increasingly important over time. Political pressure, economic sanction and sporting boycotts all contributed to some extent to the eventual collapse of the apartheid system in South Africa.

Key words

- Economic Sanctions** - When trade and financial relations are suspended with the hope of influencing a government to change its policies.
- Boycotts** - A protest by means of a decision to stop using or supporting something.
- Anti-apartheid Movement** - A campaigning group founded to gain support against apartheid in South Africa.
- Commonwealth nations** - Independent countries that were formerly part of the British Empire that retained strong ties together.

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International pressure

The Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM)

The **Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM)** was formed in Britain in 1959 to persuade people to protest against apartheid in South Africa by means of boycott. Support for the AAM increased rapidly following the events at Sharpeville in 1960. Branches of the AAM were founded in most European countries and they brought increased pressure on governments and the United Nations to take a stand against apartheid. Supporters of the AAM came from a broad range of people; students, politicians, clergy and South Africans living in exile. The organisation was prominent in its role of promoting **boycotts** and arguing for the use of economic and sporting sanctions.

Economic sanctions

Placing **economic sanctions** on South Africa was seen as an important action to put pressure on the government to abandon its apartheid system. Due to the work of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, and international condemnation of events such as Soweto in 1976, many nations and international companies began to support the use of sanctions on South Africa. Economic sanctions were placed on South Africa by the European Union in 1985. Commonwealth countries, apart from Britain, adopted a three-step approach to increasing economic sanctions in 1989. Large companies such as Coca-Cola, General Motors and IBM closed their business operations in South Africa. The sanctions imposed by Western nations to stop banks from giving financial loans to South Africa in 1985 had a big impact on the country. The issue of sanctioning arms sales to South Africa was problematic because Western nations led by the USA were fearful that South Africa would come under the influence of the Soviet Union if the white government lost complete control of the country.

Sporting protests and boycotts

Sports, in particular rugby union and cricket, were very important to white South African culture. As anti-apartheid feelings grew during the late 1960s and 1970s many nations began to boycott sports participation with South Africa. In 1969 the English cricket team's tour of South Africa was cancelled because the South Africans would not allow the 'coloured' cricketer Basil d'Oliviera to play against them. The Springboks tour of Britain in 1969 was constantly disrupted by anti-apartheid protests. South Africa was excluded from participation in the Olympic Games from 1970 and any countries that maintained sporting links with them would also be excluded from 1976. Growing support for sporting boycotts led to **Commonwealth** nations breaking all sporting ties with South Africa in 1977. While sporting boycotts were largely very successful some unofficial tours did take place during the 1980s, with both rugby and cricket matches being played.

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International opposition

The United Nations (UN): From its first meeting, the United Nations made efforts to influence the South African government regarding apartheid. It issued more than 150 resolutions against the country between 1946 and 1980. Condemnation of apartheid was made on numerous occasions and UN members were asked to support the use of economic sanctions against South Africa. The United Nations had limited success in its influence on South Africa mainly because powerful nations, such as the USA and Britain on the Security Council, used their veto to stop forcing harsh sanctions on the nation. The United Nations was successful in ensuring that the world's nations were aware of the unjust situation in South Africa and played a significant role in gathering international support to condemn the apartheid regime.

Leaving the British Commonwealth

In 1961, following a referendum to decide if South Africa should become a republic, the white only voters decided by a small majority to leave the British Commonwealth. Since the National Party had gained control of South Africa and implemented apartheid policies, Britain and other Commonwealth nations had been critical of the white government in South Africa. This was emphasised when the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson made his "wind of change" speech in Cape Town shortly before the vote.

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU)

The OAU was created in 1963 to unify the nations of the African Continent in their aim of improving the lives of all Africans. The OAU was determined to ensure that white minority rule would disappear. It supported efforts to implement sanctions on South Africa as ports and airspace was closed across much of Africa to South African trade and travel. The organisation supported the ANC and PAC and would provide weapons, training and shelter to fighters. The OAU was effective in persuading the United Nations to take action against South Africa.

The Lusaka Manifesto in 1969 showed that the OAU was determined to try and influence the South African government to end apartheid. However, without the support of all nations led by the UN it did not achieve the desired effect on changing white South African's attitudes.

SWAPO (South West African People's Organisation)

South West Africa (Namibia) had been under South African influence since 1919. Rather than supporting moves towards independence, the South African government gradually exerted more control over the state and by 1945 had introduced apartheid to the region. The United Nations condemned South Africa's attempt to seize control of South West Africa. SWAPO was formed in 1960 as a political party to gain independence. In 1966 the United Nations declared the territory to be independent and named it Namibia. SWAPO engaged in guerilla warfare against the South African army. Armed conflict came to an end between the two nations in 1988.

Lusaka Manifesto (Manifesto on Southern Africa)

A document created by Central and East African countries calling on Southern African nations to give up their apartheid policies and support human rights and freedoms. The aims were initially to try and influence change in South Africa through diplomatic means and compromise, but were prepared to resort to supporting wars if necessary. The manifesto would be supported by both the OAU and United Nations.