

Racism

According to Albert Memmi, racism is a social structure. It is not going to be understood through its content, which changes at will, it does not care about the difference it insists on, but only that the difference exists and can be used to denigrate the other who is seen as different. (Memmi, Albert, *Racism*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, London. 2014, p.viii) In the context of the Soweto Riots, racism underpinned the causes, the action, and the violence of everyone involved. What is evident is that prejudice, segregation and exclusion are just some of the factors that cause violent conflict in cities where people live. The speed at which violent clashes occur, suggest people are acutely aware of racial divides that exist and in the case of Apartheid South Africa of its continuous presence.

From its inception the Nationalist party passed racist laws based on white supremacy.

1949-Prohibition of mixed marriages Act. Marriage between people of different races banned and nullified marriages of South Africans living abroad that were in a mixed marriage.

1950-Immorality amendment Act. Sexual relations between whites and other races illegal.

1950-population registration Act. Entire population was registered as White, Native or Coloured, Indian, Griqua, Cape Malay and Chinese

1950-Suppression of Communism Act. Any person hostile to government policy, could be defined as communist and be banned without right of appeal.

1950- Group areas Act. Segregation enforced by law people lived in areas designated by race.

1952-Native Act. All blacks over the age of 16 required to carry a pass book and present it to police on demand.

1953- Separate Amenities Act- separate amenities for whites and non-whites. This included park benches, toilets, and buses, train classes etc.

1953- Bantu Education Act. Set down rules and curriculum for a limited black education. Schools not adhering to this could be closed.

1959-Extension of University Act. Excluded all races other than white from universities and established five other ethnic universities.

1959-Promotion of Bantu self-Government Act. Promoted black reserves into self-governing homelands.

1970-Bantu homelands citizen Act. All black South Africans could become citizens of a tribal homeland.

These laws are called structural violence. This is exactly what entrenched white minority control over the majority. In 1976, Andries Treurnicht decided to make it compulsory for Black students to switch to the medium of Afrikaans for all high school subjects as opposed to English. June 16 is the day black students marched against this ruling from schools in Soweto. It is regarded as the beginning of the end of Apartheid.