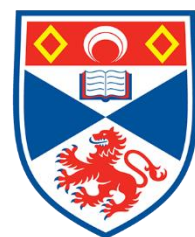


RECONCILING THE RAINBOW NATION: EVALUATING THE SUCCESS OF THE TRUTH & RECONCILIATION COMMISSION



Figure 1: A segregated walkway at a South African railway station during the Apartheid era, one of the more commonly recognised examples of Apartheid.

Cole, Ernest. "Apartheid". Den Store Danske: "Apartheid". Accessed 25th June 2023. Available at: <https://denstoredanske.lex.dk/apartheid>



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Contents

Introduction	1
Apartheid	1
The task of reconciliation	2
Successes	4
Weaknesses.....	5
Conclusion.....	6
Acknowledgements.....	7
Appendices.....	7
Appendix 1: Interview with Neeshan Balton	7
Appendix 2: Interview with Ismail Vadi.....	8
Appendix 3: Interview with Prema Naidoo	8
Appendix 4: Interview with Andries Botha	9
Appendix 5: Interview with Mangosuthu Buthelezi	10
References.....	10

Introduction

This essay is the outcome of a research project that involved three weeks of fieldwork in Johannesburg and Cape Town, where alongside conducting interviews with relevant individuals and experts, I visited four townships, and tried to understand the varied daily lives of people living in South Africa, and the ways in which Apartheid and reconciliation affect them. Museum visits were formative to the project, introducing me to many of the concepts that will be discussed, and helping me to empathise with the national trauma that almost all South Africans, regardless of their ethnic background, experienced and in many cases continue to experience.

A number of political and social events, from South Africa's tumultuous battle against HIV under President Mbeke to the controversial Black Economic Empowerment that shapes much contemporary government policy, are all deeply intertwined with the country's collective healing process. However, for the sake of specificity, this article will only outline one of the most central and divisive debates of South African reconciliation: The successes and failures of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). By seeking to understand what the original goals of reconciliation were, and then outlining the ways that interviewees feel these goals were/weren't met by the commission, I will evaluate the TRC.

Apartheid

Apartheid, literally 'separate-ness' in Afrikaans, was the policy of institutionalised racial segregation, imposed by the government of South Africa from 1948-1994. The policy was pursued through a variety of laws including the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act 1949, the Population Registration

Act 1950, and the Bantu Education Act 1953. The government assigned White/European; Indian/Asiatic; Coloured¹, and African (black) as the four main racial groups. Interviewees drew attention to the arbitrary nature of the punitive racial categorisation, keen to emphasise that Apartheid never made logical sense, even at the time of its implementation. When I asked him to clarify the meanings of words like 'Indian' or 'Asiatic', Neeshan Balton (Executive Director of the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation) half-jokingly told me to ask the Apartheid government. Language was weaponised to divide communities in Apartheid South Africa.

The task of reconciliation

The degree to which people understood the wrongness of the Apartheid system and the inaccuracy of its assumptions was very often low, with many individuals indoctrinated into believing that Apartheid was natural. Racist beliefs were not only a characteristic of the government, but of everyday individuals living under Apartheid, driven by segregation. The lack of interaction between people of different races, particularly in cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town which were divided under the Group Areas Act, meant that many people almost exclusively engaged with only their own racial group.

“Growing up in an environment like this, I was probably a deep racist. I didn't see African people as being equal in any particular way; I also saw white people as being incredibly superior. That took a huge effort to understand and break down mentally.” – Neeshan Balton (Executive Director, Ahmed Kathrada Foundation)

“Apartheid ideology, schooling and residential segregation shaped our consciousness... It's a false construction of an identity, this 'Indianness', and a denial of 'South Africanness' through official policy. Your material conditions shape your identity and your consciousness.” – Ismail Vadi (former Member of Parliament, ANC)

After decades of alienation, the idea of being 'South African' was an alien concept for many non-Whites, further promoted by the township, Dompas² and Bantustan³ systems. Apartheid also caused fractures within ethnic groups. White opponents of the government, and non-White supporters of Apartheid (there were some), faced abuse from within their own communities. Prema Naidoo, an Indian revolutionary who was detained on numerous occasions, spoke of Indian 'collaborators', such as those who accepted positions within puppet parliaments that were designed to appease the Coloured and Indian communities. Andries Botha, a senior politician in the Democratic Alliance both

¹ While this word is generally considered offensive and pejorative outside of Southern Africa, it is the accepted term to refer to mixed race people of multi-ethnic origin, particularly people of European and African ancestry, or to descendants of the Khoisan (Bushmen) people. Under Apartheid it was usually applied to people who were not white, who did not speak indigenous African languages.

² The Dompas, translated from Afrikaans as 'stupid pass' (an insult to the black African carriers), was an official document which Africans had to hold in order to permit them entry into areas otherwise reserved for Whites, such as the city centres in which many worked.

³ Bantustans or Homelands were large, scarcely populated rural areas of land which were assigned as self-governing states to which Africans would be assigned citizenship. Most Bantustans were not actually self-governing, and very few were successful due to poverty and a lack of infrastructure. The system was designed to strip Africans of South African citizenship.

nationally and in the Free State, told stories of he and his wife (Sandra Botha, a former Leader of the Opposition & Ambassador) being harassed by other White Afrikaner townspeople who saw them as traitors for speaking up against the Apartheid regime.

Thus, conflict in South Africa during the Apartheid years was not limited to tensions between ethnic groups, but crucially, also tensions between those who supported the government and those who did not. Reconciliation in South Africa was not about addressing the grievances of all non-Whites against the crimes of all Whites, but had to specifically target the perpetrators to achieve justice for everyone else, an obviously more difficult task.

Indeed, many serious moral outrages were committed by the very groups seeking to liberate the people of South Africa, such as the African National Congress, and the Inkatha Freedom Party, who fought one another brutally in Natal, killing over 4,000 people⁴. While the causes of the conflict remain disputed, the reality of the violence was brutal and devastating for those involved.

“We have Winnie Mandela on record in a TV clip, saying that with the matches and necklacing they'd win the country⁵. When a person burns, and they scream, and their eyes pop out - oh God- even thinking back on it now, it makes me shiver.⁶” – Andries Botha (former Member of Parliament, DA)

“The ANC's strategy was to assassinate established community leaders and forcibly replace them with ANC leaders. More than 400 IFP leaders and office bearers were killed in a systematic plan of assassination.⁷” – Prince Mangosuthu Buthe (Zulu Prime Minister; Inkatha founder & former Chief Minister of the KwaZulu Government)

This aspect of the scourge of the Apartheid era, in which the ANC (and its military branch Umkhonto we Sizwe), Inkatha, and other African groups were involved in perpetrating crimes, left yet another challenge for the reconciliation journey: Would the leading party be held effectively to account?

⁴ Maré, Gerhard. “History and Dimension of the Violence in Natal: Inkatha’s Role in Negotiating Political Peace.” *Social Justice*, vol. 18, no. 1/2 (43-44), 1991, p. 186

⁵ South African Press Association: “Winnie’s Famous Speech: A Call for Killing Collaborators.” 1997. Accessed at: <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/media/1997/9711/s971128d.htm>

⁶ Botha is recounting a story in which a man in his town was forced to watch a ‘necklacing’, where suspected informers had a petrol-doused tire forced around their chest and arms, before it was set alight.

⁷ (Prince) Buthe, Mango. “Excerpt from a speech delivered at a meeting of the Helderberg branch of the Current Affairs and Media Forum of the University of the Third Age on *An Incomplete Healing: Reconciliation After Black-on-Black violence.*”

Successes

“We are looking to maintain not retribution but reparation; we are seeking room for humanity rather than revenge⁸” – Archbishop Desmond Tutu

The Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established to investigate crimes committed during the Apartheid era⁹. Chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, it was originally given just 18 months (extended by one year) to hold hearings and produce its report. The TRC did not act as a courtroom where criminals would be prosecuted, but instead as a tribunal where confessors could attain amnesty from criminal proceedings in return for disclosing the whole truth of their crimes. Even the most serious abusers of human rights, were entitled to apply for amnesty from the TRC if they agreed to confess the full truth of their crimes¹⁰.

“It was never an easy thing to conduct such a commission, but at the end there was a light, even if some people were not satisfied. It shaped a way for democracy to be born.” – Mduzi Tshabalala (Senior Guide, Apartheid Museum)

The Commission found that more than 19,000 people were victims of gross violations of their human rights¹¹, with some of those having been first identified at the hearings: as a fact-finding inquiry, the TRC was undoubtedly successful. Bodies of victims were found and identified based on the testimonies of ex- security force employees, and survivors had the truth of their ordeals established for the public record. If a perpetrator withheld information, they could be refused amnesty and prosecuted.

Because it never set out to perform the role of a criminal court, in the way that the Nuremberg trials for example did, the Commission can be seen to have met its goals. Prema Naidoo testified alongside many members of his family to the TRC. When I interviewed Naidoo, he explained, “The TRC in my view was necessary, it wasn't perfect, it had a lot of flaws in it, but I think it gave us an opportunity for closure. That's my view. It's not a very widely supported view, but it is my view¹²”. According to Naidoo, the weaknesses of the TRC were mitigated by the commission's ability to bring the country back together, and systematically establish the truth of Apartheid. Without a recognition of the genuine pain and suffering that so many, including Prema and the entire Naidoo family, experienced

⁸ Desmond Tutu at the first hearing of the TRC in April 1996.

⁹ Georgetown Legal Guides. “South African Legal Research: Truth and Reconciliation Commission”. Georgetown Law Library. Accessed 22nd August 2023. Accessible at: <https://guides.ll.georgetown.edu/c.php?g=365528&p=2469564>

¹⁰ South African Legal Information Institute "South Africa Numbered Acts: Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, 1995 [No. 34 of 1995].”

¹¹ Boraine, Alex. “South Africa's TRC in a Global Perspective,” Paper prepared for the CCR seminar, Peace vs Justice: Truth and Reconciliation Commissions and War Crimes Tribunals in Africa, Cape Town, 17 & 18 May 2007

¹² Naidoo testified to the TRC alongside four other members of his family in July 1997. Prema was himself detained and tortured at the hands of the Apartheid government. Many other members of his family across multiple generations experienced similar inhumane treatment.

during the Apartheid period, South Africa could not have healed, and for Naidoo the TRC was a crucial component in this healing process.

Victims were able to come face-to-face with their perpetrators, and these perpetrators had the opportunity of a fresh start through public confession and atonement, so that grudges and resentment did not shape the future development of the country. The TRC was an intentionally political body: its job was not to achieve complete justice for every victim of Apartheid, but rather to somewhat conciliate victims and sufficiently exonerate perpetrators so that the country could begin to move past the violence in as short a timeframe as possible. Insofar as achieving these specific goals, the TRC was successful. South Africa avoided the all-out conflict that was seen across Southern Africa in places like Zimbabwe following similar power transfers.

Weaknesses

Three common criticisms of the TRC were raised by interviewees: The commission lacked enough time; lacked sufficient legal power, and was biased in favour of the ANC.

All interviewees who discussed the issue agreed that the TRC's 18-month timeframe was too short. It is understandable that the timeframe was intended to move past Apartheid as quickly as possible, so that the country did not resign itself to years of further conflict. In order to create the 'rainbow nation' that Mandela dreamed of¹³, he intended to keep the bitterness of the commission limited to as short a period of time as possible, so it could publish its report, and the country could start to rebuild itself. Thus, it is not possible to conclude that the shortness of the TRC's investigatory period was detrimentally negative, because it was intentional.

On a lack of legal instruments, another dilemma is apparent. As has been explained, the purpose of the TRC was not to act as a criminal court, but to investigate, uncover, and grant amnesty where it deemed it appropriate. Numerous interviewees highlighted the fact that the TRC could have remained predominantly forgiving in its approach, while still prosecuting the most serious perpetrators. The fact that mass murderers, rapists, and torturers were allowed to live freely following the conclusion of the TRC remains unpalatable to many South Africans today. The commission did have the power to refuse amnesty, and did use this power, but perhaps not enough.

Andries Botha, for one, argued that far too few perpetrators of some of the worst crimes were prosecuted, and that the TRC may have used its pardoning power too generously. His view was; "Don't go for the foot soldiers, go for the real thugs, the guys who gave the orders". Botha further rejects the hypothesis that such prosecutions would have alienated the white minority in the country, arguing that the realisation of the scale and detail of the crimes of Apartheid had turned many very-right-wing Afrikaners against the Apartheid state. Prema Naidoo suggested that many perpetrators breached the central condition of their amnesty, by not disclosing the full truth: "Particularly on the side of the Apartheid state, not everybody came out and gave a full disclosure. Some of them could've been charged and put into prison." Botha and Naidoo's suggestion is not that the TRC lacked the legal instruments they needed, but instead that they didn't utilise their powers as effectively as they could have. The Commission was clear from the outset that the disclosure of the full and absolute truth was a prerequisite to perpetrators being absolved of their crimes, and so the commissioners could have still prosecuted those amnesty applicants who were believed to be concealing evidence.

¹³ Habib, Adam. "South Africa - The Rainbow Nation and Prospects for Consolidating Democracy." *African Journal of Political Science*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1997, pp. 15–37. Accessed 22 Aug. 2023.

Finally, the allegation of political bias. While interviewees largely shared the same opinions on other elements of the TRC, such as the timescale, or the issue of prosecutions, here there was a disparity in the responses given by ANC-aligned interviewees, and those aligned with other political parties (Inkatha and the DA). Most ANC-aligned interviewees did accept, for the most part, that the 'freedom fighters' of Umkhonto we Sizwe did commit some heinous acts that could not be justified. However, interviewees were often quick to assert that such crimes were identified and dealt with by the TRC. On the other hand, the issue of pro-ANC bias in the commission was identified as its most fundamental flaw by interviewees aligned with opposition parties. Issues such as the aforementioned conflict in Natal; murders that took place outside the country in Umkhonto training camps, and assassinations, were considered as unsettled by some interviewees.

Andries Botha summarised concisely that "The ANC were not held to account" by the Commission. There is truth in the allegation that the TRC's very makeup prevented the ANC from being held to account. Historian and journalist R. W. Johnson argues that, "The TRC, in the ANC's eyes, had been set up with the task of exposing apartheid atrocities to help make the ANC invincible in the 1999 election. To make sure the TRC was politically onside, all candidates for its membership were screened by an eight-member panel, of whom six were ANC members¹⁴." Despite this, president Thabo Mbeki (ANC), still refused to accept the TRC's final report¹⁵. However, Mandela himself did not necessarily adopt the stance of other party cadres, instead writing in the Citizen Newspaper (2nd Feb 2007) "I want to caution the ANC not to be arrogant, not to fall into the temptation of a majority party, to brush aside the concerns of the minorities¹⁶". The relationship between the ANC and the commission is certainly dubious, at best.

One interviewee, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, was in a unique position to speak as both President Emeritus of the Inkatha Freedom Party, and also from numerous other perspectives, including as traditional Prime Minister to the Zulu King. Prince Buthelezi noted that "The TRC had only limited success in promoting reconciliation for it was politically-biased... some simply said what they thought the commissioners wanted to hear, to secure amnesty. Moreover, more than half the ANC-led cabinet applied for blanket amnesty, which was granted, meaning they never had to admit to what gross violation of human rights they had committed." This testimony, by one of the most prominent, senior, and relevant figures in the field, is reflective of an ongoing and widespread criticism of the ANC from its opposition: that the party has always found itself subject to far less scrutiny than appropriate. The special treatment of the ANC, due to their role in ending Apartheid, could be seen to have originated at the TRC.

Conclusion

The fairness of the Commission was South Africa's first post-Apartheid test: Would the country be able to proceed with a fair and thorough reconciliation process, without bias being shown toward any group, whether ethnic or political. While the commission was very successful in starting the healing process of a fractured nation, and uncovering the truth of crimes committed by the Apartheid state, it was still largely a failure. The commission had insufficient time to fully investigate events, but more pressingly lacked the willingness to deny amnesty to the most heinous

¹⁴ Johnson, R. W. "South Africa's Brave New World: The Beloved Country Since the End of Apartheid" Penguin Books, 2009, p. 81

¹⁵ The Guardian, "Mbeki attacks 'truth' report". Feb 1999. Accessible at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/1999/feb/26/davidberesford>

¹⁶ Johnson, R. W. "South Africa's Brave New World: The Beloved Country Since the End of Apartheid" Penguin Books, 2009, p. 139

perpetrators. Detrimentially, the TRC also failed to treat the African National Congress with the same level of scrutiny that it treated other groups, and in doing so established a precedent of deference to the ANC. In the context of South Africa today, a country riddled with endemic corruption, ongoing racial tensions, and huge inequalities, the governing party's ability to squander due process remains ever relevant. While South Africa is certainly well on its way towards reconciliation, with South Africans still positive that reconciliation can be a success¹⁷, my interviews point to a conclusion that the TRC failed to capitalise on the momentum of the transition to democracy and was one of the first failures of post-Apartheid South Africa.

Acknowledgements

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Special thanks go to individuals who agreed to partake in interviews, imparting their personal experience and knowledge, and who agreed to have their names published in this report: Ismail Vadi and Neeshan Balton from the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation; Mduduzi Tshabalala at The Apartheid Museum; Prema Naidoo; Andries Botha, and His Royal Highness Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

Appendices

The limited word count has meant that much interview material was excluded, and so some additional excerpts from interviews have been attached because of their value to any interested reader.

Appendix 1: Interview with Neeshan Balton

"The impact of what used to be called Christian National Education [had an] almost brainwashing effect. Growing up in an environment like this, I was probably a deep racist. I didn't see African people as being equal in any particular way, but I also saw white people as being incredibly superior, and Christianity as really being the standard bearer for all kinds of things. A lot of that was inculcated through the education system, and culturally. That took a huge effort to understand and break down mentally."

"We lived amongst Indian people, we went to school with Indian people, friends, families. In a sense, that entrenched one of the key parts of what Apartheid was about: was to reinforce a racial identity. Unlearning that is something we're still having to deal with now."

"When you have political power and you squander that political power, and that political power has resulted in wealth accumulation by the political elite, and the process of that virtually destroying your country in terms of infrastructure and so forth, it makes reconciliation even more difficult. There's a sense among all South Africans that everybody feels they are victims of democracy: white people, Africans, Indians, everybody thinks they are the victims. The good thing about the reconciliation barometer is that people have not lost faith in terms of a common South African identity. They are holding onto the elements of unity, but within that they do think that there

¹⁷ Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. "SA Reconciliation Barometer 2021". 2021. Accessible at: <https://www.ijr.org.za/portfolio-items/south-african-reconciliation-barometers-survey-2021-report/>

is a need for redressing these imbalances, and a lot of those responsibilities will be placed on the state and on businesses, and those are the difficulties that you would have today."

Appendix 2: Interview with Ismail Vadi

"Apartheid ideology and schooling and residential segregation shaped our consciousness. If we had grown up in a different society we might have had a very different consciousness. It's a false construction of an identity, this 'Indianness', and a denial of 'South Africanness' through official policy, and that would apply to Coloured people, people of mixed descent. Your material conditions shape your identity and your consciousness."

"The policy of affirmative action or Black Economic Empowerment is correct, but 'black' meaning those who were historically discriminated against, which is Indian, African, and Coloured. I think in the early years of the transition that held, that broader concern, but I think in recent times we are getting a more narrow definition of that in the form of quotas. They [quotas] have a massive negative impact."

"In the early years of the transition I think that white youth thought this was about Africanisation or blacks only, and a lot of them left the country and worked elsewhere etc. but they've come back also, because this is their home. But I think we are starting to go back to that process of Africanisation now which is worrying, because that's not the vision of the liberation movement. The vision is a non-racial society, and it will take us generations to build that, but as you build that vision there should be progressively less emphasis on race as a factor. And that's really where we seem to be falling short now."

Appendix 3: Interview with Prema Naidoo

"I was arrested and was taken to John Vorster Square, taken to the 10th floor, where I was kept awake, stripped naked, beaten, tortured, for 7 days and 7 nights. They gave me a pink liquid that they said would calm my nerves, I don't know to this day what it was. I fell asleep on my feet and started talking about the escape and my involvement. I was sentenced to one year in prison and three years suspended. I was released in April 1983."

"The ANC was a victim and made a bulk submission to the TRC. The ANC never believed in killing civilians, but you have undisciplined people in any struggle, who did certain things they were not supposed to do, like planting bombs in restaurants etc. The ANC did come clean on those issues though. On the other side, there were a number of people killed in detention, while in custody, assassinated, and nobody has come forward to say they're sorry."

"Out of the people who tortured me, the lawyers for the security police were there and when it came to their turn to cross-examine me, they didn't. They said they accepted what I said, and they apologised. For me, that was good enough. Revenge is not going to get us anywhere. What we need to do is build this country. The people like Desmond Tutu and all of them coined a phrase: Rainbow Nation. We need to be a Rainbow Nation. At the moment it isn't."

"A lot of Indians felt discriminated against by the Quota system: Indians found it very difficult to get a place at university. To a certain extent you can understand that, but it went too far. It became discriminatory and also ridiculous, in the sense that they appointed somebody to run Eskom who didn't have a clue what he was doing. You can speak to the average Indian and they'll tell you that they're heavily discriminated against, but unemployment among the Indian community has been around 8%, but over 35% among the black Africans. White South Africans also feel discriminated against. The skills, particularly in the engineering field, are held by the White people. The core has

collapsed and now the criminal element is taking advantage. They refer to us sometimes as a mafia state, and it's true."

Appendix 4: Interview with Andries Botha

"One night I went to visit friends of ours and I suddenly got very angry and left, and I said "I despise you people because of the way that you behave and the way you speak and what you sanction. We will pay heavily for what you're doing here. You will be sanctioned for it in the future, but unfortunately so will my family and I, without us being as guilty as you are."

"A guy I knew, he told me "You know, I am very far-right", he supported the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging, and he said, "I'm even on the right wing of those people, but this time I'm going to vote for you and your wife." He told me that he'd been watching the TRC. He said to me "I just did not know about these things, and I'm so ashamed of what my own people have done, that I'm going to vote for you guys, and no longer for these lot."

"They'd made up nonsense like people jumping out of windows, falling down stairs. People don't jump out of windows, they're thrown out of windows. People don't fall down stairs, they're pushed down stairs. Some of the more brutal things we heard there revolted me - but the goings on I was aware of. Everyone who didn't fool themselves knew about that. I think most of them [Afrikaners] must have had a good idea some pretty brutal things were going on. The National Party were trapped by their propaganda, like a rabbit in the strong lights of the power, in a fear of what would happen when they gave up power. That was the driving force of apartheid, a fear that we would be swamped, but I'm not swamped. We lived fine for 300 years, like the rest of the world behaved, but the monstrous stupidities of these guys [the National Party]. As people were shocked by the genocide of the second world war, people revolted against racism, and here we actually embraced racism in laws and made it legal- and that was the monstrous stupidity of Apartheid- and of the ANC, who are doing exactly the same thing."

"The ANC weren't held to account. They murdered a lot of people up there, outside the country. It was quite clear that the authorities here were sending spies into those camps, in Zambia and so, so they did have that danger it's true. But the brutality too - even Zuma himself - I think he was a brutal thug. We have Winnie Mandela on record in a TV clip with a box of matches, saying that with the matches and necklacing they'd win the country. When a person burns, and they scream, and their eyes pop out - oh God- even thinking back on it now it makes me shiver. To be forced to watch it! And a lot of these people were completely innocent, and the mob spirit made the crowd grab the person, and put a tire over them."

"They've done everything in their power in order to enrich themselves and retain power, exactly the same as the National Party. Anything they think will allow them to keep power and enrich themselves beyond the dreams of avarice, they'll do. Like this latest legislation about so called "Employment Equity Act". The ANC is now exactly on par with what the National Party was, they're as racist, as discriminatory, and much more disastrous economically than the Nat's [National Party] ever were. Total incompetence. Take Eskom for example, complete irresponsible self-servicing. They sit around at meetings of foreign investors calling themselves Comrade. What bullshit. They spent so much time in corrupt communist communities (and communist countries are the most corrupt which is why they all failed)."

Appendix 5: Interview with Mangosuthu Buthelezi

“The homelands system was not optional. It was simply foisted upon us. The only part that was optional was the taking of independence. Because KwaZulu rejected independence. it never became one of the Bantustans.”

“When the homelands system was foisted on the black majority, I was a loyal cadre of the African National Congress (ANC) and was working closely with ANC leaders like Inkosi Albert Luthuli and Mr Oliver Tambo. They sent a message to me, through my sister, Princess Moringah Dotwana, urging me not to refuse the leadership of the newly created Zulu Territorial Authority if Amakhosi (traditional leaders) elected me. They knew that, as a loyal ANC cadre, I rejected the homelands system and would not participate in it except on their explicit instruction. They believed that we could undermine the system from within, as part of a multi-strategy approach to our liberation struggle. On instruction of my ANC leaders therefore, when Amakhosi asked me to lead, I accepted. I never saw this as “propping up the Apartheid government”. We had to option but to live within the homelands system. The strategy of undermining it from within was successful, because my position as Chief Minister enabled me to reject independence, thereby securing the citizenship of millions of Black South Africans.”

“The TRC had only limited success in promoting reconciliation for it was politically-biased... some simply said what they thought the commissioners wanted to hear, to secure amnesty. Moreover, more than half the ANC-led cabinet applied for blanket amnesty, which was granted, meaning they never had to admit to what gross violation of human rights they had committed. I as the leader of the IFP asked to be held to a higher standard. I asked that if there was any evidence of my ever having committed, authorised, sanctioned or condoned a single human rights’ violation, I should be tried in a court of law, so that I would face the full legal consequences. But nothing was ever taken to court, for my hands and my conscience were clear.”

“The idea of a rainbow nation never materialised. While we live in one democratic country, with constitutionally enshrined equality, there are still wounds that have never healed between our various people groups. The high incidence of farm attacks and the murder of white farmers is an example of continuing racial hatred. This is fuelled, of course, by deepening inequality.”

“I believe that reconciliation is an ongoing process. We will never be able to say that we are a nation fully reconciled, because the pain of our past is too deep and too severe to be definitively dealt with. Instead, it is something we need to work on continuously, at all levels, remaining forever conscious of the fact that there are wounds in our people’s psyche that influence the way they think and perceive and act.”

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