UNIT 15 ANTI-*APARTHEID* MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

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15.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa has the distinction of being the only country in the world which adopted the policy of officially discriminating its citizens on the basis of race/colour of the skin. This system of official racial discrimination in South Africa was in existence for almost 90 years, whereas, the *apartheid* system continued for four and half decades (1948-1994). Such inhuman system continued due to the support extended to South Africa by major Western States which had huge investments. Those who opposed *apartheid* were either put in jails, without trials sometime or killed. Though the United Nations was seized of the question of racial discrimination and *apartheid* in South Africa since 1946, its pressure had only the weight of moral and international public opinion. The strong Anti-Apartheid Movement (hereafter, AAM) launched inside and outside South Africa played a significant role in dismantling the apartheid system in 1994.

Aims and Objectives

This unit will enable you to understand:

- The meaning, manifestations and legal structure of *apartheid* system as it prevailed in South Africa till 1994.
- Gandhi's contribution in laying the foundation of AAM in South Africa.
- The role / the involvement of the United Nations to solve *apartheid* system in South Africa.
- The role, impact and strategies of AAM.

- The role of ANC, its leaders, and mass of its supporters in resisting / opposing the *apartheid* regime.

15.2 WHAT IS APARTHEID SYSTEM?

Apartheid is Afrikaans word (literally "apart-hood") meaning racial segregation as practised by the National Party which came to power in South Africa in 1948. The UN adopted the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of *Apartheid* in 1973, in which *apartheid* has been declared as "a crime against humanity and that inhuman acts resulting from the policies of apartheid … are crimes violating the principles of international law, in particular the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations…." The Convention also provides a definition of *apartheid* in its Article II, as applying "to the following inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them": (a) denial of right to life; murder; infliction upon the racial group/s serious bodily or mental harm by subjecting them to torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; arbitrary arrest and illegal imprisonment; deliberate imposition of living conditions calculated to cause the members of the racial group their physical destruction in whole or in part; any legislative / other measures calculated to prevent a racial group from participation in the political, social, economic and cultural life of a country and the deliberate creation of conditions preventing the full development of such a group, in particular by denying to members of a racial group/s basic human rights and freedoms; any measures, including legislative ones, designed to divide the population along racial lines by the creation of separate reserves and ghettos for the members of a racial group/s, the prohibition of mixed marriages among members of various racial groups, the expropriation of landed property belonging to a racial group; exploitation of the labour of the members of a racial group/s, in particular by submitting them to forced labour; and, persecution of organizations and persons, by depriving them of their fundamental rights and freedoms, because they oppose *apartheid*. After reading the following sections in the Unit, you will able to fully understand the definition of *apartheid* as it appears in the Convention.

15.2.1 *Apartheid* Laws Before 1948

Though *apartheid* system was institutionalised in 1948, the previous governments in South Africa had passed many laws during the 19th and first half of the 20th century, which were precursors of *apartheid.* The British colonial rulers had enacted Pass Laws during the 19th century, which restricted the movements of blacks into the areas occupied by whites and coloured. Blacks were not allowed on to the streets of towns in the Cape Colony and Natal after dark and had to carry their passes at all times. Important legislations passed between 1905 and 1946 imposed many restrictions on blacks and Indians. In 1905 the General Pass Regulation Bill denied blacks the right to vote, limited them to fixed areas and inaugurated the infamous Pass System. Then followed the Asiatic Registration Act (1906) requiring all Indians to register and carry passes, the South Africa Act (1910) that enfranchised whites, giving them complete political control over all other race groups and removing the right of blacks to sit in Parliament, the Native Land Act (1913) which prevented blacks from buying land outside "reserves". Some Bills introduced residential segregation and some prevented blacks from practising skilled trades. The Asiatic Land Tenure Act (1946) banned any further sale of land to Asians.

15.2.3 Institutionalisation of *Apartheid: Apartheid* Laws after 1948

With the installation of Daniel Malan's government in 1948, the process of institutionalisation of *apartheid* system began. Malan of Nationalist Party became the first *apartheid* Prime Minister, as government passed many laws to institutionalise *apartheid*. The state passed laws which paved the way for "grand *apartheid*", which was centred on separating races on a large-scale, by compelling people to live in separate places defined by race. In addition, "petty apartheid" laws were passed. Following were the principal *apartheid* laws.

The first grand *apartheid* law was Population Registration Act of 1950. It classifies every person in South Africa by "race" into such groups as a white, coloured, African or Asian. Once classified and issued an identity card to that effect, it determines where one can live, which schools one can attend, job reservations on the basis of skin colour and also separate health services for blacks, whites and coloured. Official teams or Boards were established to come to an ultimate conclusion on those people whose race was unclear. This caused much difficulty, especially for coloured people, separating their families as members were allocated different races.

The second pillar of grand *apartheid* was the Group Areas Act of 1950. Until then, most settlements had people of different races living side by side. This Act put an end to diverse areas and determined where one lived according to race. Each race was allotted its own area, which was used in later years as a basis of forced removal. Further, the Act reserves 87 per cent of the land for the whites constituting 4.5 million people; it reserves only 13 per cent of the land for the 27 million blacks.

The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 prohibited marriage between persons of different races, and the Immorality Act of 1950 made sexual relations with a person of a different race a criminal offence. Under the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953, municipal grounds could be reserved for a particular race, creating, among other things, separate beaches, buses, hospitals, schools and universities. Signboards such as "whites only" applied to public areas, even including park benches. Black people were provided with services greatly inferior to those of whites, and, to a lesser extent, to those of Indians and coloured.

Further laws had the aim of suppressing resistance, especially armed resistance, to *apartheid.* The Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 banned the South African Communist Party and any other political party that the government chose to label as 'communist'. Disorderly gatherings were banned, as were certain organisations that were deemed threatening to the government.

Education was segregated by means of the 1953 Bantu Education Act, which crafted a separate system of education for African students and was designed to prepare blacks for lives as a labouring class. In 1959 separate universities were created for blacks, coloured and Indians. Existing universities were not permitted to enroll new black students. The Afrikaans Medium Decree of 1974 required the use of Afrikaans and English on an equal basis in high schools outside the homelands.

The Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 created separate government structures for blacks and was the first piece of legislation established to support the government's plan of separate development in the Bantustans. The Promotion of Black Self-Government Act of 1958 entrenched the National Party's policy of nominally independent "homelands" for black

people. The so-called "self-governing Bantu units" were proposed, which would have devolved administrative powers, with the promise later of autonomy and self-government. The Black Homeland Citizenship Act of 1970 marked a new phase in the Bantustan strategy. It changed the status of blacks so that they were no longer citizens of South Africa, but became citizens of one of the ten autonomous territories. The aim was to ensure whites became the demographic majority within South Africa by having all ten Bantustans choose "independence".

During the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s, the government implemented a policy of 'resettlement', to force people to move to their designated "group areas". Some argue that over three and a half million people were forced to resettle during this period. These removals included people re-located due to slum clearance programmes, labour tenants on white-owned farms, the inhabitants of the so-called 'black spots', areas of black-owned land surrounded by white farms, the families of workers living in townships close to the homelands, and 'surplus people' from urban areas, including thousands of people from the Western Cape (which was declared a 'Coloured Labour Preference Area') who were moved to the Transkei and Ciskei homelands. The best-publicised forced removals of the 1950s occurred in Johannesburg, when 60,000 people were moved to the new township of Soweto, an abbreviation for South Western Townships.

Interracial contact in sport was frowned upon, but there were no segregatory sports laws. The government was able to keep sport segregated using other legislation, such as the Group Areas Act (1950).

The government tightened existing pass laws, compelling black South Africans to carry identity documents to prevent the migration of blacks to 'white' South Africa. For blacks, living in cities required employment. Families were excluded, thus separating wives from husbands and parents from children. Up until 1956, women were- for the most part - excluded from these *pass* requirements as attempts to introduce *pass laws* for women were met with fierce resistance. Thus, many other similar discriminatory laws were passed.

15.3 ORIGIN OF AAM: GANDHI'S CONTRIBUTION

The seeds of AAM in South Africa were sown by Gandhi. He established the first anti-colonial and anti-racial discrimination movement there and founded the Natal Indian Congress on 22 August 1894. When Gandhi learnt that the South African Government is likely to pass a law to disfranchise Indians, he urged the Indians to protest. On his suggestion a petition was sent to the South African legislature on 28 June 1894. Wide publicity of the petition was made. Despite the Indian opposition the Bill was passed. Gandhi sent another petition to Lord Rippon, Secretary of Colonies in London. Ten thousand Indians signed this petition. Lord Rippon disallowed the Disfranchising Bill. Thus the petitioner Gandhi succeeded.

Gandhi's *Satyagraha* experiment began in 1906. He opposed the 1906 legislation requiring the registration of Asians. Opposing this law, thousands of Asians boycotted registration. Gandhi and his satyagrahis were arrested and the jails were full. Following an agreement between General Smuts, the Prime Minister, and Gandhi, an agreement was evolved whereby the Indians would voluntarily register and the Registration Act would be repealed thereafter. Gen. Smuts, however, went back on his words and did not repeal the Act. Then Gandhi began his *Satyagraha* and asked Indians to burn the passes, which led to the arrest of thousands of Indians. Gandhi's *Satyagraha* reached its climax in 1913

with the epic march of 5000 workers indentured on the coal mines of Natal. This event evoked a massive response from the Indian women who, in turn, provoked the Indian workers to come out on strike. That was the beginning of the marches to freedom and mass stay-away-from work which became a characteristic feature of AAM in later years.

When Gandhi left South Africa in 1915, he had left behind his legacy- Phoenix Settlement (in which he placed his third son Manilal in charge of his work there), the Natal Indian Congress and Transvaal Indian Congress and the weapon of Satyagraha to struggle against the racial discrimination policies. In 1946, Manilal played a leading role in a major campaign of protest against new laws that discriminated against the persons of Indian origin. The Satyagraha continued for two years, with mass rallies and the picketing of and squatting on land reserved for 'whites-only occupation'. Indians of all classes were involved and around 2000 were jailed. Although confined to the Indian community, many blacks were deeply impressed by the power of the protest. As Nelson Mandela later wrote:

It instilled a spirit of defiance and radicalism among the people, broke the fear of prison, and boosted the popularity and influence of the NIC [Natal Indian Congress] and TIC [Transvaal Indian Congress]. They reminded us that the freedom struggle was not merely a question of making speeches, holding meetings, passing resolutions and sending deputations, but of meticulous organization, militant mass action and, above all, the willingness to suffer and sacrifice. The Indians' campaign harkened back to the 1913 passive resistance in which Mahatma Gandhi led a tumultuous procession of Indians crossing illegally from Natal to the Transvaal. That was history; this campaign was taking place before my own eyes. (Mandela, p.98)

Blacks felt a novel sense of solidarity with a community hitherto regarded by them as being little better than lackeys of the whites (Mandela, pp.97-98 and 119).

15.4 AAM: ROLE, IMPACT AND STRATEGIES

The AAM was the first successful transnational social movement in the 20th century.What is unique about the AAM is the extent of support it received from individuals, governments and organisations on all continents. Few social movements in history have garnered anywhere near the international support that was mobilised against the racist *apartheid* regime in South Africa. Although national liberation and Marxism might both be considered as successful trans-national social movements, neither of these had the global support that the anti-apartheid movement garnered.

There were two main aspects of the AAM: the internal campaign to destabilise the racist apartheid regime in South Africa, and the external campaign for political, economic, and cultural sanctions. At the heart of the movement was the struggle of black Africans to end white supremacy in South Africa. This internal movement was both a catalyst for actions at the international level and the critical link that gave coherence to the movement as a whole. The external effort can be divided into two fronts: (1) regional efforts to provide military bases, material, and diplomatic support for liberation movements; and (2) the diaspora movement, which focused on seeking international sanctions against the regime and providing direct aid to the liberation movements.

There were three phases of AAM. ***First***, the resistance movement responded with nonviolent direct-action tactics under the leadership of organisations such as the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist Party (SACP), the Indian

National Congress (INC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). On May 1, 1950, this coalition organised a national strike to oppose the Suppression of Communism Act. When thousands of workers boycotted their jobs, the government responded by sending troops to the townships, and eighteen workers were killed. Nevertheless, the coalition called another strike for June 26, and workers again responded in good numbers. These strikes were a prelude to the mass civil-disobedience campaigns of 1952-1953 known collectively as the "Campaign of Defiance of Unjust Laws." Between June and December 1952, thousands of activists were arrested for defying petty *apartheid* laws, such as "whites only" drinking fountains, train compartments, and waiting rooms. The ANC's volunteer-in-chief Nelson Mandela made hundreds of speeches across the country urging black people to defy apartheid laws, and the government responded by shooting demonstrators and arresting movement leaders, including Mandela; Yusuf Dadoo, president of the INC; and J. B. Marks of the Mineworkers Union.

In the 1960s, the apartheid regime responded to the internal struggle by declaring emergency, banning anti-apartheid organisations such as the SACP, ANC, and PAC. In response, the liberation movement went underground and into exile where they launched the second phase of the movement: the armed struggle. This was the ***second phase***, which was characterised by the internationalisation of the struggle, with support from the African Union (previously OAU – Organization of African Unity). The exiles acquired bases of operation, military training, and political education through both the AU and a coalition of South Africa's neighbours known as the "Frontline States". The apartheid regime responded by attacking its neighbours – Angola, Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

In the 1980s, the movement entered a **third stage**: massive resistance. The movement reached its climax in this stage, which was characterised by the determination of anti-apartheid activists within South Africa to make the country ungovernable through strikes, boycotts, demonstrations, and acts of sabotage. In 1983 a coalition of the internal organisations and church groups formed the United Democratic Front to lead the new phase of the movement. In an attempt to split the opposition, the regime offered Indians and Coloured (people of mixed race background) limited franchise in the elections of 1984. The strategy failed, however, and instead galvanised further acts of civil disobedience and sabotage. Moreover, the international anti-apartheid movement had matured, and most countries in the world had imposed military and economic sanctions against South Africa.

Thus, it was the combined pressures of international sanctions and internal strife that led to the demise of the apartheid state. The retreat began with the repealing of the pillars of apartheid legislation, beginning with the repeal of the pass laws in 1986. By 1990 the government had lifted the ban on the SACP, ANC, and PAC and repealed the 1913 and 1936 Land Acts, the Population Registration Act, and the Separate Amenities Act. Nelson Mandela was released in 1991, having spent twenty-seven years in prison. Four years later, on May 10, 1994, Mandela became the President of South Africa.

In England the AAM was established in 1959 in which leaders and people from Britain, African nations and from Commonwealth participated. It was a very active movement and achieved much. Three of its achievements were to lobby successfully in 1961 with Commonwealth to expel South Africa from the Organization (when the Canadian Prime Minister moved a resolution in 1961 Commonwealth conference that every Commonwealth country should agree to adopt a Bill of Rights, the next day South Africa resigned from the Organization), securing the exclusion of South Africa from Olympic sport and the

imposition of sanctions by the UN against South Africa. The idea on which the Movement was based was very simple. The boycott call was essentially an appeal from the people of South Africa not to collaborate with apartheid. As Julius Nyerere said in 1959 "We are not asking you, the British people, for anything special. We are just asking you to withdraw your support from apartheid by not buying South African goods". Father Huddleston, of course, was far more passionate at that founding meeting in demanding an end to collaboration with an evil ideology that amounted to a blasphemy against God. And there were others who used different bases for trying to mobilise people to support the boycott. The members of AAM adopted a novel method of boycotting South African produces; they would go into British shops to buy oranges and would say "where are these from"? Knowing that they were from South Africa, "Oh! South African, no thank you" walking out as though the shop stank.

15.4.1 Struggle against Apartheid: Role of ANC and African Leaders

For nearly 80 years, the ANC was the primary source of AAM. Prior to the 1940s, its activity had remained strictly political. Its leaders and the nationalists were continuously resisting the policies of *apartheid* regime through Gandhian tactics of non-violence and constitutional forms of protest. In 1949, it made a change from the strictly constitutional protest of the past to peaceful yet unlawful demonstrations. To facilitate this, it launched the Defiance Campaign of 1950. This Campaign was the beginning of mass movement of resistance to *apartheid*. The Campaign adopted in 1955 "Freedom Charter" and submitted it to the government. The government claimed it was a Communist document and arrested leaders of ANC and other political organisations who had collaborated with ANC to draft the Charter. In 1960, the ANC was declared an unlawful organisation. They decided to defy this decree and went underground. Though it still believed in non-violent methods to deal with *apartheid,* the government was intimidating the people by establishing harsher laws and penalties and dispatching military forces into African townships. It may be noted that in March 1960, several thousand Africans had assembled at Sharpeville to demonstrate against "the pass law" (the passes issued to South African blacks which restricted their movements to limited areas) and to get them arrested. **It is horrifying to note that the South African authorities not only sought to terrify them with low-flying jets but ordered police to open fire. As a result, 69 Africans were killed in firing, and 180 wounded**.

The ANC was in a difficult position and after much deliberation decided that violent forms of political protest were inevitable, as the outlets for peaceful protest had been banned. In 1961, feeling they had been left with no other choice, the ANC took up arms against the South African government. The Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) organisation was formed to carry out acts of sabotage by attacking strategic buildings of significance to the white government. In a span of 18 months, MK carried out 200 acts of sabotage. The government threatened to take strong action, but the morale of the black population was only strengthened.

Despite the efforts of the ANC, the *apartheid* system continued to grow stronger and exert more control over the people's lives. In the 1970's, increasing prices made it more difficult to survive on small incomes. Strikes broke out and workers walked away from jobs demanding higher wages. Fed up with the situation, student anger exploded in June of 1976. More than 10,000 students engaged in peaceful protest against coercive use of

Afrikaans at schools. Feeling threatened, police unjustifiably opened fire on the students. This led to an uprising that spread to other parts of the country. In the end, over 1000 blacks were dead, killed by police. The most serious incident happened in Soweto, where school children were demonstrating against the *apartheid* system and demanding education in English. More than 2000 policemen were trying to control the crowd. The policemen, instead of using humane and simpler methods to control the crowd, resorted to firing, in which (as their own report stated) around 100 people had been killed and more than 800 injured.

Despite stiff and organised resistance to *apartheid* system, the Pretoria regime was engaged in indiscriminate killings and arrests of thousands of blacks who opposed the policy of *apartheid*. Citing some of the facts from the 1980s is a sufficient attestation to establish the horrendous scenario of White oppression of blacks, which in a way was the order of the day, in South Africa. For instance, in 1982 over 4,400 people were convicted under the Suppression of Communism Act and other provisions. Between 1981 and 1986, mass protests and demonstrations against *apartheid* led to the conviction of 44,300 people of whom 8,200 were less than 18 years old. According to a study conducted at the University of Cape Town, eight million men and women were arrested or prosecuted under the pass laws. Under the Terrorist Act of 1967, and the 90-day detention provision of 1963, thousands of persons were arrested for indefinite period and detained without trial. In February 1981, South African Prison Population stood at 104,622, about 38.4 per cent more than the jails could accommodate (Banerjee, p.6). During 1985-86 (i.e. just in 20 months) the death toll of anti-*apartheid* demonstrations had reached the figure of 1,700. Joseph N. Garba (Nigeria), the Chairman of the Special Committee against *Apartheid*, in a statement said that on 12 February 1987, South African authorities had acknowledged in Parliament that they were detaining children aged 11 years or younger and that a total of more than 13,000 persons had been in detention. The UN Secretary General, expressing his deep concern, had said on 17 December 1986 that the South African authorities have reported that 256 children between the ages of 11 and 15 were being held under emergency regulations. The previous day, Desmond Tutu, while meeting the Secretary General at the UN Headquarters had informed that many of the detained children have been made to share accommodation with "hardened criminals" (Vijapur, pp. 112-13).

As a result of growing opposition to *apartheid* regime the government declared a state of emergency in some parts of South Africa in July 1985, which lasted for six months. Eventually the national state of emergency was declared in June 1986, which lasted till 1990. In February 1990, the *apartheid* regime was forced to officially recognise the ANC and other affiliated organisations. This recognition indicated the government's possible willingness to solve South Africa's problems peacefully. In 1991 Mandela was elected as President of ANC, who later became first President of the multi-racial South Africa.

Let us now discuss about the Key Figures in AMM from South Africa. Albert Luthuli, Oliver Tambo, Stephen Biko, Desmond Tutu, Joe Slovo, and Nelson Mandela were some of the prominent leaders. Luthuli was President of ANC from 1952 to 1960. He received Nobel Peace Prize for his opposition to racial violence in 1960. Tambo was acting President of ANC in 1967 and President in 1977. Biko was founder and leader of the Black Consciousness Movement. He was also the founder and first President of all black South African Students Organisation in 1969. He died while in police custody as a result of severe beatings. Biko was the subject of the film "Cry Freedom" directed by Sir

Richard Attenborough in 1987 (Attenborough had earlier made the film "Gandhi"). Desmond Tutu chose to seek peaceful negotiations between blacks and whites as a means of bringing an end to apartheid. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984. Slovo was one of the most influential **white South Africans** who fought apartheid. He was a member of the Communist Party. Nelson Mandela, who had joined ANC in 1942, was the most prominent leader in organising the mass civil disobedience campaign against apartheid. In 1964 he was sentenced to life imprisonment for sabotage. He remained in jail for 27 years and later shared, in 1993, the Nobel Peace Prize with de Klerk.

15.5 THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND ITS IMPACT

No other issue has engaged the United Nations, almost from its inception, for as long a time as that of South Africa and its policy of *apartheid*. Both the General Assembly and the Security Council adopted more than 500 resolutions / recommendations concerning the racial policy of South Africa constituting probably the largest number addressed to a single country on a single issue. It may be noted that India brought, as a complaint, the question of human rights in South Africa to the General Assembly as early as in 1946. The Indian complaint was concerned with the treatment of the people of Indian origin (later, it was re-titled as Indo-Pakistan origin) in South Africa who were discriminated by the Racist Government of South Africa. Initially, the Government of South Africa and some Western Powers considered that the question of human rights fell exclusively within the domestic jurisdiction of member States, in which the United Nations cannot interfere. Six years later, another question entitled "Race conflict in the Union of South Africa Resulting from the Policy of *Apartheid"* was brought to the Assembly by 13 Arab and Asian States, including India. In their complaint, these States argued that the gross violation of human rights in South Africa not only constituted a breach of the UN Charter obligations but also constituted a threat to international peace and security under Chapter VII of the Charter (which enabled the UN to take enforcement measures, including sanctions). This charge made against South Africa in 1952 remained valid till 1994. With the coming into power of a multi-racial democratic government in South Africa replacing *apartheid* regime in 1994, the UN discontinued its discussion of this question.

On the broad aspects of *apartheid*, the General Assembly annually adopted resolutions requesting: (1) South Africa to modify its policies; (2) member States to take retaliatory action against South Africa; (3) special committees to study the situation and recommend action; (4) the Security Council to use economic sanctions or to consider the expulsion of South Africa from the United Nations; and (5) the specialized agencies to take by all appropriate means to apply pressure on South Africa to modify its policies. In 1962, the General Assembly requested member States to: (1) break off diplomatic relations with South Africa; close their ports to South African vessels; (3) forbid their ships to enter South African ports; (4) prohibit all imports from or exports to South Africa, specially sales of arms or ammunition to that country; and (5) refuse landing rights to all South African aircraft. An additional resolution had called for dissemination of information concerning the apartheid policies. **In a 1971 resolution apartheid was declared as a "crime against humanity".** Another resolution reaffirmed the recognition of the legitimacy of the struggle of the people of South Africa to eliminate apartheid by all means at their disposal and to attain majority rule in the country by universal suffrage. These resolutions/ recommendations (as they represent only moral weight) have made little apparent impact on the leaders of South Africa; new legislative measures were enacted from time to time

to reinforce apartheid policies. In protest over the General Assembly's invasion of what South Africa claims to be a matter of domestic jurisdiction, that government for three years, beginning in 1955, refused to participate in General Assembly sessions and has subsequently refused to attend any committee meetings dealing with the *apartheid* issue. In a reverse move, the Assembly in 1970, for the first time, questioned the legitimacy of the credentials of the South African delegation to the Assembly, but on technical grounds the delegates were allowed to participate in spite of this manifestation of disapproval.

There have been in the 1970's suggestions from some members that South Africa should be expelled or suspended from the United Nations. The Assembly Resolution 2505 (xxiv) welcomed the Manifesto on South Africa (S/7754) which *inter alia,* urged the exclusion of South Africa from the UN. Later, in 1974, when the Credentials Committee of the Assembly rejected South Africa's credentials on the ground that the white minority regime, because of its policy of *apartheid,* could not represent the 80 per cent of the country's black population, the Security Council extensively discussed the question of South Africa's membership in the United Nations. **Thus from 1974 to 1994 South Africa was not allowed to participate in General Assembly sessions**. However, the resolution which sought to expel South Africa was finally defeated by three vetoes cast by the United States, United Kingdom and France. **This was the first time in the history of the United Nations that three vetoes were cast.** This shows how some of the great powers were directly supporting *apartheid* regime.

The Security Council first got involved in the apartheid question in 1960 after the Sharpeville incident (discussed above). It adopted a resolution stating that a continuation of South Africa's racial policies might endanger international peace and security. Some members of the Security Council have not been willing to impose sweeping sanctions, as reflected in 1962 Resolution of the General Assembly, but in 1963 the Council called on all States to embargo the sale of arms, ammunition, and military vehicles to South Africa, including equipment or materials for arms manufacture in South Africa.

By 1977, the Western Powers had dramatically altered their position and supported the passage of Security Council Resolution 418. This resolution condemned the South African use of violence against black dissidents and the "defiant continuance" of the *apartheid* system and called for strengthening of the 1963 arms embargo. The most significant feature of this resolution is that it established that the South African policies and acts constituted a threat to international peace and security under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. However, a careful reading of this resolution reveals that though it termed export of arms to South Africa a threat to the peace and invoked mandatory arms embargo, it did not declare explicitly that the internal situation of South Africa constituted a threat to peace.

It must be noted that the 1977 arms embargo remained only on paper as far as the major Western powers were concerned. The clandestine arms trade of Western States with South Africa continued to flourish. Therefore, the General Assembly urged the Security Council to impose comprehensive mandatory sanctions. Attempts to pass such a resolution in 1981 and 1988 were vetoed by France (in 1981 only), U.K. and USA.

There had been a great cumulative effect of UN resolutions and condemnations of South Africa's policy of *apartheid*. At the outset, it seems there was no impact whatsoever of the United Nations on the *apartheid* regime, but one can cite examples to highlight the UN influence. The first reaction to the ever increasing concern of the international

community with *apartheid* came from South Africa itself. In response to the UNESCO's Programme adopted in 1956 which, *inter alia,* would launch studies of race and race relations, South Africa withdrew from the Organization. Since on 5 December 1963, FAO adopted a resolution stating that South Africa would no longer be invited to participate in its activities, South Africa withdrew from its membership. Due to ILO's programme of action for the elimination of apartheid in labour matters, South Africa withdrew from the Organization in 1966. Also the WHO suspended its voting rights in 1964. In 1964, the Universal Postal Union (UPU) became the first inter-governmental organisation to expel South Africa from membership for maintaining its policy of *apartheid*. From 1964 the UPU adopted an annual resolution excluding South African participation in the deliberations of the Union. Similarly in 1960, as a result of a prolonged and bitter discussion of South Africa's racial policies at the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference, South Africa withdrew from the Commonwealth of Nations.

It is also gratifying to note that the United Nations has adopted three important human rights Conventions to deal with the problem of racial discrimination. They are: the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1973), and the International Convention against Apartheid in Sports (1985).

As rhetoric (and also as lip-sympathy) many States had called upon the Security Council to impose effective sanctions against South Africa, but most of them were not really serious/ sincere in their assertions. For instance, most States, which had often spoken strongly in support of South African people, had not adhered to the Council and Assembly resolutions on arms embargo and severance of diplomatic/trade relations with South Africa. It is interesting to note that, in 1979, according to an estimation of *New York Times* (9 April 1979, p.1) as many as 25 African nations, including some of the outspoken critics of *apartheid* regime, were engaged in $1 billion a year trade with South Africa. The bulk of this clandestine trade has involved food and other items. Among the Great Powers, the UK's trade involvement and investment in South Africa was so profound that the effective sanctions would have threatened the viability of the British economy. This was the main reason for Britain's opposition for UN action/sanctions against South Africa. It may be noted that by 1980s, the Western investments had reached unprecedented heights. According to the report of *The Times of India* (9 August 1986), the investments of these States were as follows: Britain: $ 12,000 million; USA: $ 10,000 million; West Germany: $ 2,000 million; France: $ 1,500 million and Switzerland: $ 1,000 million.

Concluding the discussion, it can be said that due to the double standards in the policies of member States (which are governed by their national interests), lack of strong political will and sincerity in their approach, and the lack of unanimity among Great Powers, the *apartheid* system remained intact so long. But we should not be pessimistic to conclude that the UN impact was nil or minimal. On the UN influence, one can agree with the analysis of Moses Moskowitz, who asserted that "but for the concerted drive against the policy of *apartheid,* the question of human rights would likely to have long ago disappeared from the active agenda of the United Nations." He believes that hostility toward South Africa's racial policies has provided a political motive force which a more general effort on behalf of human rights "could not even remotely command" (Cited in Vijapur, p.112). Moreover, on the impact of UN--imposed sanctions, one study concludes that they did influence the racist government. It sifts abundant data to suggest that the

sanctions had adverse impact on South African economy, and hence on white living standards. This was seen as a threat both by the business community and by the government; that is why the *apartheid* regime negotiated with African National Congress and other parties for the creation of a "new South Africa," which became a reality in 1994.

15.6 SUMMARY

In South Africa, racial discrimination was an official policy of the white minority government for over 80 years. Gandhi laid the foundation of AAM in the first decade of the 20th century, which got matured, enlarged with mass following with the involvement of ANC and its affiliated bodies and other political organisations. Since the 1950s ANC has been at the forefront to run this AAM. Initially, African leaders and organisations used the Gandhian method of non-violence to resolve *apartheid*. Subsequently, they were compelled by South African authorities to use violent measures to achieve their goal of dismantling *apartheid.* During their long struggle against apartheid thousands of people and many of their leaders lost their lives. The AAM got international support from the AU, the UN, and the Commonwealth. The UN even debated and voted to expel South Africa from the UN in the 1970s. The UN not only adopted three important human rights instruments to deal with the problem of racial discrimination, but also imposed arms embargo and sanctions against South Africa. The AAM was the first successful transnational social movement in the modern world. Although national liberation and Marxism might both be considered as successful transnational social movements, neither of these had the global support that the AAM garnered.

15.7 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Define the *apartheid* system.
2. Briefly discuss the features of the *apartheid* laws passed by South African Government before and after 1948.
3. What was the contribution of Mahatma Gandhi to AAM?
4. Examine the role of the United Nations to bring an end of the *apartheid* regime. Why was the UN not very successful in dismantling *apartheid*?
5. Discuss the role, impact and strategies of AAM adopted by people inside and outside South Africa.

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