

Desmond Tutu and the TRC

understanding not vengeance



Johnnic Library

Testimony and Tears

In this lesson plan, learners will be offered the opportunity to think about the impact of personal testimony about apartheid-related events. They will also be asked to interpret a cartoon, and to think about the long-term effects of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

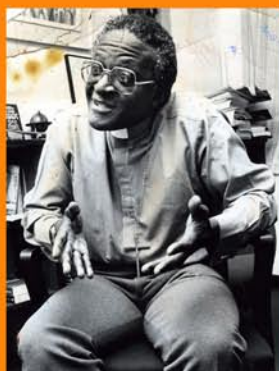


Desmond Tutu and the TRC (1931 -)

Desmond Tutu was born in Makoeteng Location near Klerksdorp in what is now the North West province. His father, Zachariah Zelilo Tutu, was a schoolteacher who had been educated at Fort Hare, and his mother was Aletta Dorothea Mavoertsek Mathlare. Tutu suffered from polio for which a vaccine had not yet been developed, but apparently spent a sociable childhood in the township. In 1984, he was the second South African to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his leadership of peaceful struggle against apartheid. The Nobel Committee hoped that through making the award to Tutu, it could direct the world's attention to the evils of apartheid South Africa.

The TRC was set up at the end of 1995. There were 17 commissioners appointed with Tutu as chairperson. Human Rights violation hearings began in April of 1996. The dramatic testimonies of Calata and Malgas were heard on the second day of the TRC's existence. In 1997, Eugene 'Prime Evil' de Kock, the Vlakplaas commander who had been responsible for murdering apartheid opponents, implicated his superiors. Special hearings were also held on the Mandela Football Club's involvement in the murder of Stompie Seipei. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela denied being involved in the murder, but, in response to a request from Tutu, offered an apology. The TRC also heard an apology from FW de Klerk, and representations from senior ANC officials.

The TRC officially came to an end in 2002 but had already presented a 2 700 page report four years earlier.




Bishop Tutu
Johnnic Library,
30 November 1979



SA's Noble Prize winner, Bishop Desmond Tutu, is greeted by well-wishers at Jan Smuts Airport when he arrived in S.A from New York Johnnic Library, 19 October 1984

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION



S. TRUTH/1996/1 & 1/2 P. 008

- IN ORDER TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE PAST, THE TRUTH CONCERNING GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN OUR COUNTRY CANNOT BE SUPPRESSED OR FORGOTTEN. VIOLATIONS SHOULD BE INVESTIGATED, RECORDED AND MADE KNOWN.
- THE COMMISSION SHALL GIVE VICTIMS THE CHANCE TO TELL OF THE VIOLATIONS THEY HAVE SUFFERED.
- THE COMMISSION SHALL MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PRESIDENT ABOUT REPARATION.
- FOR PERSONS WHO MAKE A FULL DISCLOSURE OF ALL RELEVANT FACTS RELATING TO ACTS ASSOCIATED WITH A POLITICAL OBJECTIVE COMMITTED DURING THE CONFLICTS THAT TOOK PLACE BETWEEN 1/3/1960 AND 5/12/1993 - THE COMMISSION SHALL FACILITATE AMNESTY.
- THE COMMISSION HAS AN INVESTIGATION UNIT WHICH HAS THE POWER TO SUBPOENA WITNESSES, SEARCH FOR EVIDENCE AND SEIZE ARTICLES WHICH MAY ASSIST IN THEIR INVESTIGATION.

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION IS COMMITTED TO:

- The need for understanding but not for vengeance;
- The need for ubuntu but not victimisation;
- The need for reparation but not for retaliation.

IF YOU HAVE KNOWLEDGE OR EXPERIENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BETWEEN 1 MARCH 1960 AND 5 DECEMBER 1993 KINDLY CONTACT THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONER'S CONVENOR AT THE OFFICE

Document issued by the TRC to explain to the public. Distributed on 14 April 1996 in the Sunday Times



Zapiro Sowetan 23 May 1995

Source B: TESTIMONY OF MRS CALATA

MRS CALATA: At 11 I was anxious and unable to sleep because my husband was not yet back as he promised. I knew that he was always being followed and harassed, even when he went to OK (store), wherever he went he was harassed by the police force... (her husband did not come home). I looked at the headlines and one of the children said that he could see his father's car was shown in the paper as being burned. At that moment I was trembling because I was afraid of what might have happened to my husband, because I wondered if his car was burned like this, what might have happened to him? I started distributing the papers as usual, but I was very unhappy. After a few hours some friends came in and took me and said I must go to Nyami (Goniwe), who was always supportive. I was still 20 at the time and couldn't handle this. When I got to Nyami's place Nyami was crying terribly and this affected me also (sobbing)....

MR SMITH: Mr Chairman, may I request the Commission to adjourn maybe for a minute, I don't think the witness is in a condition to continue at the present moment.

CHAIRPERSON: Can we adjourn for 10 minutes please?

OBSERVERS SINGING: What have we done? What have we really done? What have we done?

Nomonde Calata's testimony before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Human Rights Violations Hearings, East London, 16 April 1996. Mrs Calata's husband was one of the Cradock Four murdered by security police. <http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans/hrvell/calata.htm>



First Hearing, East London City Hall
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