education

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HISTORY

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ADDENDUM

This addendum consists of 04 pages.

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QUESTION 1: WAS THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION (TRC) SUCCESSFUL IN HEALING THE WOUNDS OF A DIVIDED SOUTH AFRICA?

SOURCE 1A

The following is an extract dealing with the exposure and expression of victims during the TRC.

There are two crucial things that have come out of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The first is that it has achieved a remarkable and far-ranging public exposure of the human rights violations and crimes committed under the apartheid regime ... It has forced a previously reluctant population (though, of course, there is still denial at one level) to see that apartheid was morally indefensible; that it is a crime against humanity. It has produced an archive which allows people to examine their past and hopefully learn from it.

Secondly, it has allowed ordinary people to find expression for the suffering under the regime. It has had a completely cathartic [therapeutic or healing] function for many of the victims … It is in this sense that some form of reconciliation has already taken place.

[From *The South African Truth Commission* by K. Christie.]

SOURCE 1B

This source deals with the positive aspects of the TRC.

The TRC also had to deal with grievances stemming from actions of both black and white during apartheid. To encourage people to come forward, limited amnesty was offered. Amnesty does not imply forgiveness or acquittal, but simply means that for any confessed crimes the perpetrator cannot be tried later in court. Those wishing for amnesty had to testify at an open hearing.

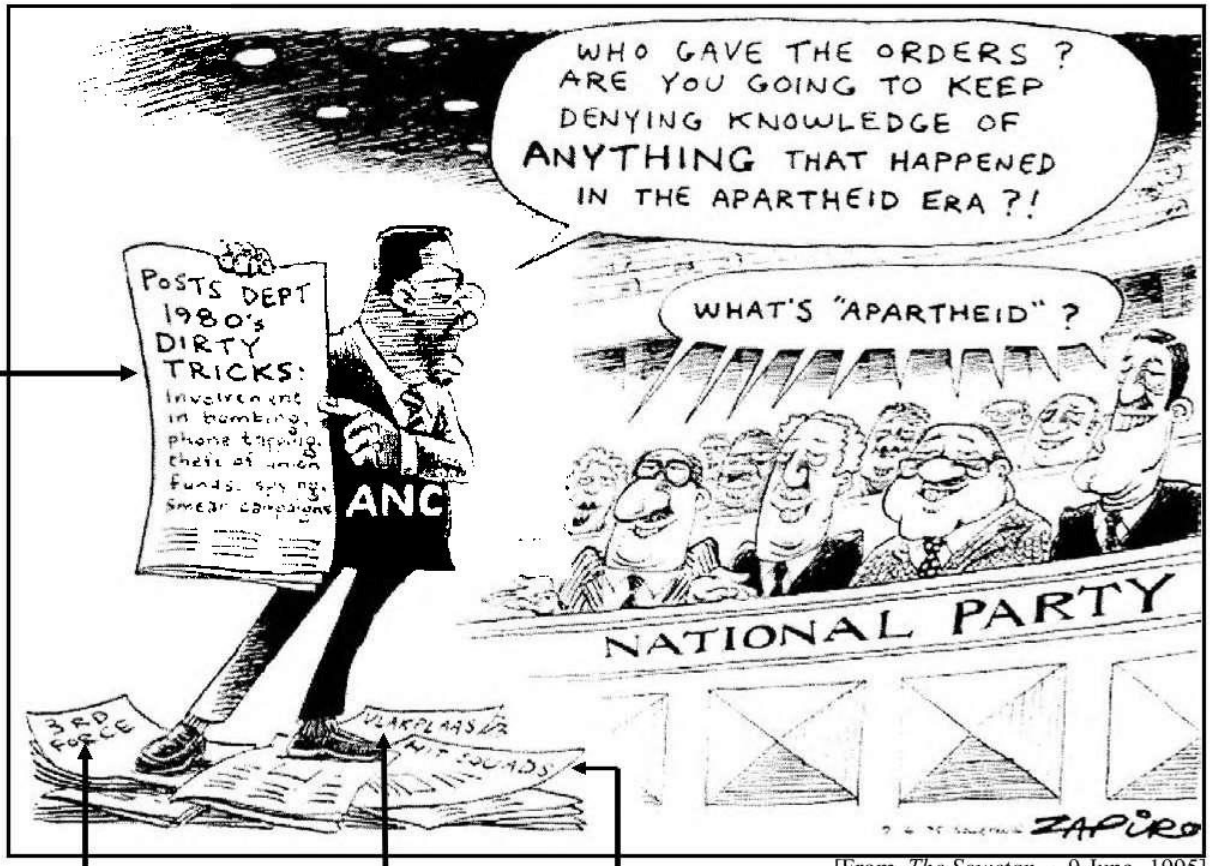
The hearings were designed to give surviving victims the opportunity to confront those who have harmed them and to ask why; and to give perpetrators the chance to express remorse if they wished. At these hearings, many victims learned what had happened to loved ones who had disappeared or who had been found dead. Others confronted for the first time the individuals responsible.

Some people were told the location of the bodies of their loved ones and were thus able to find the remains for proper burial. Though the commission had its critics, among them relatives who were denied the chance to seek justice in the courts, it has generally been viewed as a success in encouraging the nation to move on after the horrors of the apartheid era.

[From *South Africa in the 20th Century* by P. Joyce]

SOURCE 1C

This cartoon by Zapiro depicts how the National Party (NP) denied knowledge about its involvement in the 'Dirty Tricks' campaign against ANC activists.



[From *The Sowetan* , 9 June 1995]

3RD FORCE

VLAKPLAAS

HIT SQUADS

POSTS DEPT 1980 's DIRTY TRICKS: Involvement in bombing, phone tapping, theft of union funds, spying, smear campaigns

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SOURCE 1D

The following extract is an evaluation on the work of the TRC.

One of the greatest limitations to restoring victims' dignity – and which was largely beyond the control of the Commission – was the political tension that prevailed (existed) during its operations. This stemmed (coming from) from the reluctance of the National Party and some extreme right-wing groups to see the TRC investigating aspects of the past that might damage their political credibility. These parties accused the TRC of being a 'witchhunt' rather than a genuine tool for national reconciliation, and frustrated the Commission's work by (bringing about) frequent legal actions against the TRC. The Commission's biggest political blunder was the tendency to (give in) to these political groupings in an attempt to keep them committed to the process…. (the) politically delicate task of the TRC worsened its relations with victims who were justifiably frustrated by the lack of proper justice that the position implied. For restorative justice to succeed, victims need to see offenders' express remorse (regret). That this was not forthcoming from the political party that governed the country under apartheid, dealt a severe blow to the process.

[From *The Truth and reconciliation Commission as a Model of Restorative Justice* by T. Maepa Pretoria]