

## Chapter 33 The Freedom Charter

On June 25–26, 1955, representatives of many progressive groups in South Africa—representing those of European descent, “coloureds,” Asians, and blacks—met to draw up what was called *The Freedom Charter*. This document outlined goals for a fair, multi-racial society. The Freedom Charter remains the basis for the demands of those who want the South African government to abandon its apartheid policy. Read the extract from the charter and answer the questions.

### The Freedom Charter

#### Preamble

We, the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:

That South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people;

That our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty, and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality;

That our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities;

That only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief;

And therefore, we, the people of South Africa, black and white, together—equals, countrymen and brothers—adopt this FREEDOM CHARTER. And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing nothing of our strength and courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won. . . .

Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws. . . .

All people shall have equal rights to use their own languages and to develop their own folk culture and customs. . . .

The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole;

All other industries and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people;

All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions. . . .

Restriction of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land redivided amongst those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger. . . .

No one shall be imprisoned, deported or restricted without a fair trial. . . .

The privacy of the house from police raids shall be protected by law;

All shall be free to travel without restriction from countryside to town, from province to province, and from South Africa abroad. . . .

Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children. . . .

All people shall have the right to live where they choose, to be decently housed, and to bring up their families in comfort and security.

Adapted from *The Freedom Charter*, 1955.

**Vocabulary** Use a dictionary to find the meanings of the following words:

birthright \_\_\_\_\_

distinction \_\_\_\_\_

monopoly \_\_\_\_\_

deported \_\_\_\_\_

compulsory \_\_\_\_\_