

# CHAPTER 4

## Protest

*'Nothing is black or white.'*

In 1952, Mandela was a lawyer at last. He and his friend Oliver Tambo opened the country's first ever law business with black lawyers. At home, he and Evelyn had a second son. Then they had a daughter, but she died. They had a second daughter in 1954.



Lawyers Mandela and Oliver Tambo

Around this time, Mandela became interested in Gandhi's\* fight against the British government in India. The ANC made a new plan. They wanted black South Africans to fight apartheid. Mandela travelled all around the country to ask for people's support. This was not easy.

\* Mohandas Gandhi was a political leader in India. He protested peacefully against the British who governed his country.

Often he had to walk from town to town. In every place, he gave the same message: Africans had to work together for change.

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**POLICE ARREST THOUSANDS  
ACROSS THE COUNTRY**

The plan was simple. The ANC wanted all non-white South Africans to go into 'white only' areas. The police could not arrest *everybody*. Lots of people agreed to help with the ANC's plan. They went into 'white only' restaurants and trains and they used 'white only' toilets and waiting rooms. During six months in 1952, the police arrested 8,000 non-white South Africans in 'white only' areas. One of the 8,000 was Nelson Mandela.



The 1952 protest

He went to court, but they did not send him to prison. In the eyes of the court, Mandela's protest was peaceful. But now the government knew about him. Mandela could not travel around the country any more. He couldn't even leave the city. He couldn't work for the ANC or continue with his political activities.

But of course, Mandela did not stop. With his help, the ANC wrote to thousands of black Africans. They wanted all the different political groups against the government to join together as a new group, the Congress Alliance. The Congress Alliance wanted the same rights for all people. They wanted everybody to vote for the country's government. They wanted everybody to live and work freely and fairly.

Protests continued. But the long fight against the government was hurting Mandela's home life. By 1955 he and Evelyn were not together any more. In 1956, the police arrested Mandela and many other political leaders for 'crimes against the government'. 155 people went to court. This was much worse than Mandela's last time in court. The government could kill people for this crime. With so many people, the court took a long time to decide. Mandela had to live with this uncertain future for five years, but at the end of this time, the courts decided not to do anything.

Around the same time Mandela met another woman, Nomzamo Winifred (Winnie) Madikizela, and the two married in 1958. They had their first daughter, Zenani, the following year and their second daughter, Zindzi, the year after that.



Nelson and Winnie marry

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## 69 DEAD IN SHARPEVILLE PROTEST

All the time there were more and more protests against apartheid. But the government did not listen. In 1960 there was a protest on the streets of Sharpeville, a town near Johannesburg. The police had guns. They killed sixty-nine of the protesters and badly hurt almost two hundred more. Many died as they were running away.

The rest of the world was angry at the terrible news from Sharpeville, but the South African government did not care. When the British queen, Elizabeth II, spoke against apartheid, South Africa just left the British Commonwealth. It was now a crime to be in the ANC. The police arrested Mandela again. This time he spent five months in prison.



The Sharpeville protest

When he was free again, Mandela was a different man. Peaceful protest was not working. It was time to hit the South African government harder. He and his friend Walter Sisulu joined a new group inside the ANC, Umkhonto. This group planned to destroy things that were important to the government. They did not want to hurt people, just things. In December 1961, they put bombs in government offices for the first time.

Soon Mandela was the leader of Umkhonto. He couldn't live his usual life with Winnie and his daughters. He moved from place to place and hid from the government. Sometimes he travelled to other countries in Africa and Europe. He wanted to tell people about the terrible problems in South Africa and win their support. In Ethiopia he learned about guns and bombs.

When he returned to the country in 1962, the police arrested Mandela again. 'It was a crime when you left the country,' they told him. Mandela went to court. On November the 7th, 1962 they sent him to prison for five years.