



Liliesleaf

A PLACE *of* LIBERATION

Grade 6

Democracy and Citizenship

Healthy Democracy, Healthy Citizens

The Freedom Charter

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 all 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 neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won.

The raid on Liliesleaf led to the arrest and prosecution of many senior leaders of the liberation struggle. While many were members of the African National Congress (ANC), some belonged to the South African Communist Party (SACP), the Congress Alliance and Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK). There were other organisations that fought against the oppression of non-white South Africans: among them the Pan African Congress (PAC), the Congress of Democrats (COD), the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the African Resistance Movement (ARM) and the South African Coloured People's Congress. Even though these organisations had their differences, they were all focused on one goal: the creation of a democratic South Africa where all people were equal.

One of the main documents of the struggle period was the Freedom Charter. It was adopted in 1955. The Preamble to the Charter sets out this goal as follows:

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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 neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won.”

Today we live in a democratic South Africa. But what does that mean?

When we say that a country is democratic, it means that the way in which that country is governed is democratic.

In South Africa democracy works like this:

- Our Constitution sets out the principles by which the country must be governed, including a Bill of Rights. This is for the protection of all people.
- All people 18 years or older have the right to vote for a party of their choice to govern the country.
- In an election, the party with the most votes wins and becomes the ruling party.
- We have three branches of government: Parliament, the Executive and the Judiciary
 - Parliament is where all the political parties who got votes in the election meet to make laws. The more votes a party gets in the election, the more Members of Parliament it has.
 - The President of South Africa heads up the Executive. The Executive implements the laws and decisions made by Parliament.
 - The Judiciary decides how to interpret the laws. The highest court in the country is the Constitutional Court.

But democracy is about more than just how a country works. It is about how people relate to one another and treat one another. We want to live in a country where democracy is about more than how a country is governed. We want democracy to become a way of life.

Some of the values that build democracy are:

- Believing that all people are equal
- Treating all people with respect no matter who they are, what they look like and what they believe

