



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SENIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS/ NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

HISTORY P2

MAY/JUNE 2026

Stanmorephysics.com

MARKS: 150

TIME: 3 hours

This question paper consists of 9 pages and an addendum of 14 pages.



INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION

1. This question paper consists of SECTION A and SECTION B based on the prescribed content framework in the CAPS document.

SECTION A: SOURCE-BASED QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1: CIVIL RESISTANCE, 1970s TO 1980s: SOUTH AFRICA

QUESTION 2: THE COMING OF DEMOCRACY TO SOUTH AFRICA AND COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PAST

QUESTION 3: THE END OF THE COLD WAR AND A NEW WORLD ORDER, 1989 TO THE PRESENT

SECTION B: ESSAY QUESTIONS

QUESTION 4: CIVIL RESISTANCE, 1970s TO 1980s: SOUTH AFRICA: THE CRISIS OF APARTHEID IN THE 1980s

QUESTION 5: THE COMING OF DEMOCRACY TO SOUTH AFRICA AND COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PAST

QUESTION 6: THE END OF THE COLD WAR AND A NEW WORLD ORDER: THE EVENTS OF 1989

2. SECTION A consists of THREE source-based questions. Source material that is required to answer these questions can be found in the ADDENDUM.
3. SECTION B consists of THREE essay questions.
4. Answer THREE questions as follows:
 - 4.1 At least ONE must be a source-based question and at least ONE must be an essay question.
 - 4.2 The THIRD question can be either a source-based question or an essay question.
5. You are advised to spend at least ONE hour per question.
6. When answering questions, you should apply your knowledge, skills and insight.
7. You will be disadvantaged by merely rewriting the sources as answers.
8. Number the answers correctly according to the numbering system used in this question paper.
9. Write neatly and legibly.



SECTION A: SOURCE-BASED QUESTIONS

Answer at least ONE question, but not more than TWO questions, in this section. Source material to be used to answer these questions is contained in the ADDENDUM.

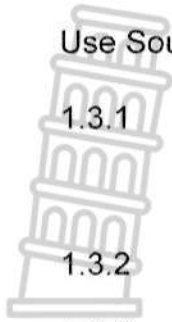
QUESTION 1: HOW DID PW BOTHA'S GOVERNMENT REACT TO THE ANTI-APARTHEID MEDIA REPORTING DURING THE 1980s?

Study Sources 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D and answer the questions that follow.

- 1.1 Study Source 1A.
- 1.1.1 Identify the community newspaper in the source that was established in 1980. Stanmorephysics.com (1 x 1) (1)
- 1.1.2 Name any THREE democratic organisations in the source that provided volunteers who worked for the *Grassroots* community newspaper. Stanmorephysics.com (3 x 1) (3)
- 1.1.3 Why do you think *Saamstaan* encountered constant police harassment while it was only a community newsletter? (1 x 2) (2)
- 1.1.4 Using the information in the source and your own knowledge, explain how the UDF contributed to the mobilisation of internal resistance to apartheid during the 1980s. Stanmorephysics.com (1 x 2) (2)
- 1.2 Consult Source 1B.
- 1.2.1 Comment on the symbolic representation of the following in the cartoon regarding Stoffel Botha's extreme measures in banning print media:
- (a) Onlookers, standing in the background (1 x 2) (2)
- (b) A grave, in the foreground (1 x 2) (2)
- 1.2.2 Explain why you would consider the caption of the cartoon 'MASS FUNERAL IN SOUTH AFRICA' appropriate in the context of the Home Affairs Minister, Stoffel Botha's media restrictions in the 1980s. (2 x 2) (4)



1.3 Use Source 1C.



- 1.3.1 List FOUR types of activities in the source that the media was restricted from reporting on when a national state of emergency was declared in June 1986. (4 x 1) (4)
- 1.3.2 Define the historical term *revolution* in your own words. (1 x 2) (2)
- 1.3.3 Why do you think Stoffel Botha imposed restrictions on reports about outlawed black nationalist groups? (1 x 2) (2)
- 1.3.4 Explain why Aggrey Klaaste regarded *The Sowetan* as the only kind of avenue where black people could vent some of their deeply held feelings against Botha's government reforms. (1 x 2) (2)

1.4 Read Source 1D.

- 1.4.1 Identify any TWO political events in the source which coincided with Mojalefa Moseki's arrival at *The Sowetan* newspaper in the early 1980s. (2 x 1) (2)
- 1.4.2 Quote TWO pieces of evidence from the source that suggest that the paper (*The Sowetan*) and reporters paid heavily for reporting against the apartheid state. (2 x 1) (2)
- 1.4.3 What is implied by the phrase, '(Sowetan editors) had long ago lost whatever "fear" they had of the government laws', in the context of reporting negatively about the police? (1 x 2) (2)
- 1.4.4 Explain the term *censorship laws* in the context of PW Botha's policy on media. (1 x 2) (2)
- 1.4.5 Comment on the usefulness of this source to a historian researching the censorship of the media in South Africa during the 1980s. (2 x 2) (4)

- 1.5 Refer to Sources 1C and 1D. Explain how the information in Source 1D supports the evidence in Source 1C regarding the introduction of media restrictions by Stoffel Botha in the 1980s. (2 x 2) (4)

- 1.6 Using the information in the relevant sources and your own knowledge, write a paragraph of about EIGHT lines (about 80 words) explaining how PW Botha's government reacted to the anti-apartheid media reporting during the 1980s. (8) [50]



QUESTION 2: WHY WAS THE GRANTING OF AMNESTY BY THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION (TRC) TO THE SECURITY BRANCH POLICEMEN FOR THE DEATH OF STANZA BOPAPE CONSIDERED CONTROVERSIAL*?

Study Sources 2A, 2B, 2C and 2D and answer the questions that follow.

2.1 Refer to Source 2A.

- 2.1.1 Quote TWO ways from the source showing how Stanza Bopape was described before he died in police custody. (2 x 1) (2)
- 2.1.2 According to the source, what did General Johan van der Merwe approve to avoid the negative political ramifications (results) of Stanza Bopape's death in police custody? (1 x 2) (2)
- 2.1.3 Define the term *amnesty* in your own words. (1 x 2) (2)
- 2.1.4 What conclusion can you draw from the fact that the Minister of Law and Order, Vlok, supported the Security Branch policemen's version of Stanza Bopape's 'escape'? (1 x 2) (2)
- 2.1.5 Using the information in the source and your own knowledge, explain why Stanza Bopape's mother pleaded with 'the police who were with him [to] come here and tell us where the bones are'. (2 x 2) (4)

2.2 Read Source 2B.

- 2.2.1 Explain the reference to 'them' in Francina Bopape's statement. (1 x 2) (2)
- 2.2.2 What is implied by the statement, 'All I am asking of them is to tell the truth ...', in the context of Stanza Bopape's whereabouts? (2 x 2) (4)

2.3 Use Source 2C.

- 2.3.1 Quote any THREE actions from the source showing how Stanza Bopape was interrogated by the Security Branch policemen. (3 x 1) (3)
- 2.3.2 Identify any TWO Security Branch policemen in the source who were present when Stanza Bopape was interrogated. (2 x 1) (2)
- 2.3.3 Using information in the source and your own knowledge, what does the statement, 'it was never our intention to kill him', suggest about the Security Branch policemen's interrogation methods? (2 x 2) (4)



2.4 Consult Source 2D.



2.4.1 Quote the controversial finding of the TRC from the source, regarding the death of Stanza Bopape. Stanmorephysics.com (1 x 2) (2)

2.4.2 Name the head of the security police in the source who applied for amnesty in the Stanza Bopape case. (1 x 1) (1)

2.4.3 Explain the term *full disclosure* as a condition required by the TRC. (1 x 2) (2)

2.4.4 What is implied by the statement, 'applicants presented a well-oiled account,' during the testimony before the TRC hearing? (1 x 2) (2)

2.4.5 Comment on why a historian would find the source reliable when researching the evidence submitted at the TRC hearings on the disappearance of Stanza Bopape. (2 x 2) (4)

2.5 Refer to Sources 2C and 2D. Explain how Source 2D differs from Source 2C regarding the TRC's decision to grant amnesty to the Security Branch policemen. (2 x 2) (4)

2.6 Using the information in the relevant sources and your own knowledge, write a paragraph of about EIGHT lines (about 80 words) explaining why the granting of amnesty by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to the Security Branch policemen for the death of Stanza Bopape was considered controversial. (8) [50]



QUESTION 3: DOES THE CHINESE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE (BRI) BENEFIT BRICS+ COUNTRIES?

Study Sources 3A, 3B, 3C and 3D and answer the questions that follow.

3.1 Refer to Source 3A.

- 3.1.1 Name any TWO regions where China's BRI has the potential to transform the geo-economic landscape. (2 x 1) (2)
- 3.1.2 According to the source, which TWO banks supported the BRI projects? (2 x 1) (2)
- 3.1.3 Explain what is implied by the phrase 'a win-win situation' in the context of Chinese BRI investment in developing countries. (2 x 2) (4)
- 3.1.4 Define the term *developing countries* in your own words. (1 x 2) (2)
- 3.1.5 Why do you think BRICS partners, Russia and India, have reservations about China's Belt and Road Initiative? (1 x 2) (2)

3.2 Read Source 3B.

- 3.2.1 List any THREE of the 'five connectivities' that Chinese scholars believe is a common way forward for both the BRI and BRICS. (3 x 1) (3)
- 3.2.2 Explain in what way strengthening the interconnection between BRI and BRICS would be of benefit to China. (1 x 2) (2)
- 3.2.3 Why do you think China's view of itself as the 'leading power centre' or 'dominant power' within BRICS could negatively affect relations among BRICS member states? (2 x 2) (4)

3.3 Consult Source 3C.

- 3.3.1 Explain how the United States is depicted in the cartoon. (1 x 2) (2)
- 3.3.2 What impression does the cartoonist give of the BRI? Use visual clues to substantiate your response. (1 x 2) (2)
- 3.3.3 Comment on the limitations of this source to a historian studying the benefits of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). (2 x 2) (4)



- 3.4 Study Source 3D.
- 3.4.1 According to the source, state THREE opportunities that entry into BRICS has offered to Ethiopia. (3 x 1) (3)
- 3.4.2 Identify the TWO traditionally dominant Western lenders in the source that BRICS wishes to be independent from. (2 x 1) (2)
- 3.4.3 Explain the term *South-South cooperation* in the context of globalisation. (1 x 2) (2)
- 3.4.4 Why do you think supporters of the BRI would consider the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway a success? (1 x 2) (2)
- 3.5 Refer to Sources 3B and 3D. Explain how Source 3D supports Source 3B regarding China's use of the BRI to strengthen economic development of BRICS+ nations. (2 x 2) (4)
- 3.6 Using the information in the relevant sources and your own knowledge, write a paragraph of about EIGHT lines (about 80 words) explaining whether the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) benefits BRICS+ countries. (8) [50]



SECTION B: ESSAY QUESTIONS

Answer at least ONE question, but not more than TWO questions, in this section.

Your essay should be about THREE pages long.

QUESTION 4: CIVIL RESISTANCE, 1970s TO 1980s: SOUTH AFRICA: THE CRISIS OF APARTHEID IN THE 1980s

Explain to what extent Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement played a significant role in mobilising black South Africans to challenge the apartheid regime during the late 1960s and the 1970s.

Support your line of argument with relevant historical evidence.

[50]

QUESTION 5: THE COMING OF DEMOCRACY TO SOUTH AFRICA AND COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PAST

The process towards achieving a democratic South Africa between 1989 and 1994 was smooth because of the role of skilled negotiators.

Critically discuss this statement. Support your line of argument with relevant historical information.

[50]

QUESTION 6: THE END OF THE COLD WAR AND A NEW WORLD ORDER: THE EVENTS OF 1989

Gorbachev's attempts to save the Soviet Union through policy changes (Glasnost and Perestroika) resulted in its ultimate collapse from the mid-1980s to 1991.

Do you agree with this statement? Substantiate your line of argument with relevant historical evidence.

[50]

TOTAL: 150





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ADDENDUM

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This addendum consists of 14 pages.



QUESTION 1: HOW DID PW BOTHA'S GOVERNMENT REACT TO THE ANTI-APARTHEID MEDIA REPORTING DURING THE 1980s?

SOURCE 1A

The extract below, titled 'HISTORY OF RESISTANCE AND THE BLACK PRESS', by Xaba, is from *The Journalist* newspaper, dated 26 September 2017. It explains how various community newspapers became a voice against oppression in South Africa in the 1980s.

Grassroots, a community newspaper, was eventually birthed (established) in 1980 after a protracted (expanded) process of brainstorming that commenced in the 1970s amongst progressive journalists in the Writers' Association of South Africa. The newspaper would operate till 1990 and was a labour of commitment to the struggle of the African National Congress (ANC) and its allies. It grew to reach approximately 20 000 readers. Eight months after *Grassroots* was established, its first organiser, Johnny Issel, was banned, but the paper continued to exist.

The paper was made up of volunteers from 60 democratic organisations such as the Western Cape Civic Association (WCCA), Cape Areas Housing Action Committee (CAHAC), women's and youth organisations, the youth under the Cape Youth Congress (CAYCO) with over 400 contributing members and survived on funds from a group of Protestant churches in the Netherlands. By 1984, the community support of *Grassroots* encouraged the formation of *Saamstaan (United We Stand)*, a community newsletter established in the small rural town of Swellendam in the Cape Province. It soon moved base to Oudtshoorn, a larger, mainly rural town, also in the Cape. From the start, it encountered constant police harassment in an area where police vigilance (awareness) was high, compared with Cape Town.

There was also another Western Cape newspaper, *South*, which was successful in providing a voice for the United Democratic Front and other progressive forces in the area, whilst making its coverage relevant to the local community. *New Nation*, in the then Transvaal, also featured prominently in the 1980s. The resistant black press was instrumental in forging (keeping) African people's voice alive during the many decades of oppression.

[Source: *The Journalist* newspaper, 26 September 2017]



SOURCE 1B

The cartoon below, titled 'MASS FUNERAL IN SOUTH AFRICA', drawn by E Hulme, appeared in an American newspaper, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, in Texas on 8 September 1986. It depicts the Minister of Home Affairs, Stoffel Botha's extreme measures in banning and censoring the print media to protect PW Botha's government from criticism.



[Source: *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, 8 September 1986]

Onlookers

A grave



SOURCE 1C

The article below, titled 'Threats of Censorship and Closures Bode Ill for South African Anti-apartheid Press', by A Croft, an American journalist, appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* newspaper on 10 January 1988. It explains how the South African government dealt with the anti-apartheid media for reporting on political violence and apartheid repression.

South Africa provoked (triggered) a worldwide uproar by imposing (enforcing) tight restrictions on the media when a national state of emergency was declared in June 1986, after months of black protest violence. The curbs (controls) barred (banned) first-hand reporting of political unrest and severely restricted news about strikes, anti-apartheid boycotts and such unofficial township structures as people's courts and street committees. They were reinforced (strengthened) in August 1987, with sweeping new powers that enabled Home Affairs Minister Stoffel Botha to censor or close for up to three months any newspaper that he believed was fanning (fuelling) revolution.

Newspaper editors say that Botha's restrictions are subjective (one-sided) and that it is impossible to know when they have been broken. They say the present battery (series) of regulations already makes it difficult for newspapers to operate, with many stories cut or dropped on legal advice. Botha can act against a newspaper that he believes consistently enhances (increases) the image of outlawed black nationalist groups, promotes the breakdown of public order or foments (encourages) hatred of the security forces. Stanmorephysics.com

Newspapers, like *The Sowetan*, say they would fight government action in court. Black newspapers fear that government action against them could close one of the few remaining pressure valves for the vote-less black majority and lead to more frustration and violence in the townships. 'For black people, papers like ours are the only kind of avenue where they can vent (open) some of their deeply held feelings, and now it's going to be stopped,' [Aggrey] Klaaste said.

[Source: *Los Angeles Times*, 10 January 1988]



SOURCE 1D

The extract below, titled 'Black Journalists Under Apartheid', appeared in an online Taylor and Francis article in *Index on Censorship*, Issue 7: Volume 17, 1988 on 24 October 2007. In this source Mojalefa Moseki reflects on his personal experience as a journalist during the apartheid government's media censorship period in the 1980s.

'... My arrival at *The Sowetan* coincided with the rent protests in the Vaal Townships and the uprising and the tricameral parliament elections in September 1984. The creativity and resilience (resistance) of reporters at the paper came to the fore (front) and the popular daily became a must for opinion leaders in the black townships countrywide. But the paper and reporters paid heavily; some were seriously injured, in some cases 'accidentally'; company cars and photographic equipment were confiscated.

Impromptu (Unplanned) meetings were called by the editor at *The Sowetan* as warnings against 'portraying the police in a bad light' or 'instigating (starting) unrest' piled in from the then Minister of Law and Order, Mr Louis le Grange. Nevertheless, reporting remained lively at *The Sowetan* under deputy editor A Klaaste, features editor J Thloloe and news editor T Mazwai, who had long ago lost whatever 'fear' they had of the government laws. As staffers they had seen the demise (end) of *The World* and *The Post* and had all been detained at one stage or another for alleged violations of the security laws. There is no way a black person can avoid arrest in South Africa, never mind how law abiding.

Klaaste, Thloloe and Mazwai could not conceal (hide) their anger at government warnings against the paper and the security forces' activities in black townships. But the anger was usually short-lived as it always found its way into the pages of *The Sowetan* only to be often cut out by subeditors complying with the censorship laws. But the news editor, and the subeditors too, lost their duties when lawyers started determining which stories went into the paper. This was the trend for all papers during the mid-80s, except the pro-government Afrikaans press.'

[Source: *Index on Censorship*, Issue 7: Volume 17, 1988]



QUESTION 2: WHY WAS THE GRANTING OF AMNESTY BY THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION (TRC) TO THE SECURITY BRANCH POLICEMEN FOR THE DEATH OF STANZA BOPAPE CONSIDERED CONTROVERSIAL*?

SOURCE 2A

This source is an extract from the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Final Report* submitted in 1998. It exposes a high-level cover-up of Stanza Bopape's death by the Security Branch and why his mother appealed for assistance from the TRC.

Mr [Johannes Stanley Maisha] 'Stanza' Bopape, a well-known activist and general secretary of the Mamelodi Civic Association, died in police custody at John Vorster Square on 12 June 1988, three days after he had been detained with his flatmate Mr Bheki Nkosi. A high-level cover-up, including a fake escape and secret disposal of Mr Bopape's body was approved by the Commissioner of Police, General Johan van der Merwe, in order to avoid the negative political ramifications (results) of his death in police custody.

Until the recent amnesty applications of a number of policemen involved in Bopape's death, a public fiction (lie) had been maintained that Bopape 'escaped' from police custody while being transported from Johannesburg to the Vaal. According to the then Minister of Law and Order, Mr Adriaan Vlok, Bopape escaped when three policemen with whom he was travelling got out of the car to change a punctured tyre. Bopape allegedly found the keys to unlock his handcuffs and fled. Police reported that they shot at him but failed to apprehend (arrest) him, and claimed that he must have left the country to join the African National Congress (ANC).

Mr Bopape's mother, Ms Mokgaetji Francina Bopape, breaking down several times, made an impassioned (emotional) plea at the Commission's (TRC) Pietersburg hearings for information about her son's whereabouts. After a fruitless (unsuccessful) search by her husband for [Stanza] Bopape in the ANC exile community, Ms Bopape became convinced that her son had died in police custody. However, she was never able to confirm this. She told the Commission that she wanted 'the police who were with him [to] come here and tell us where the bones are'.

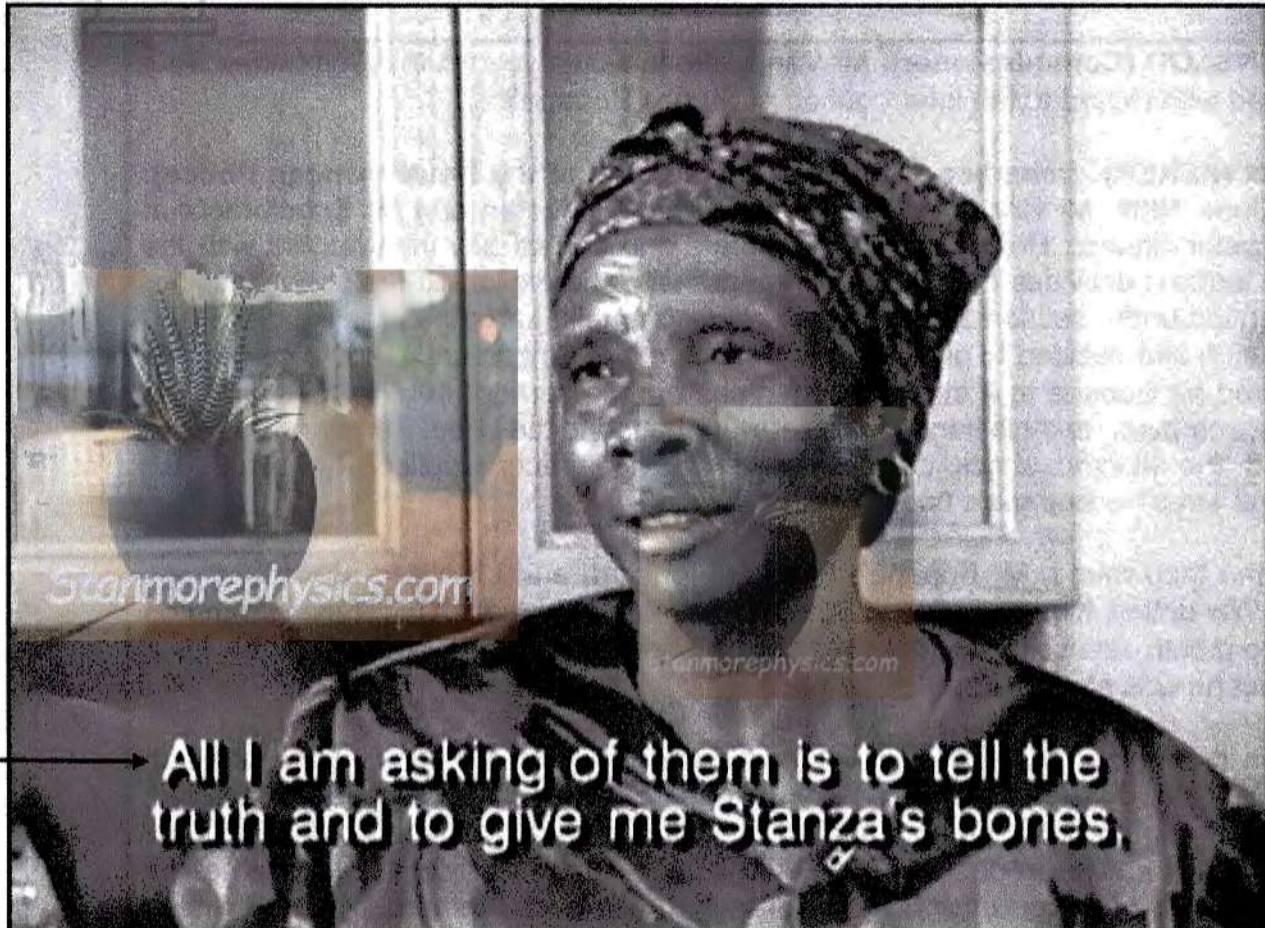
[Source: *TRC Final Report*, Volume 3, Chapter 2, 1998]

***CONTROVERSIAL:** questionable



SOURCE 2B

The image below is from an interview conducted with Francina Bopape, Stanza Bopape's mother, in the SABC *Special Report on Truth and Reconciliation*, Episode 83, Part 1 on 1 March 1998. It highlights her response to the testimony given by the Security Branch policemen at the TRC hearing held on 23 February 1998.



[Source: The SABC *Special Report on Truth and Reconciliation*, Episode 83, Part 1, 1 March 1998]

'All I am asking of them is to tell the truth and give me Stanza's bones.'



SOURCE 2C

This source below is from the testimony by Major Adriaan van Niekerk (member of the Security Branch of the South African Police) at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearing into the death of Stanza Bopape held on 23 February 1998. It sheds light on the interrogation and subsequent death of Stanza Bopape in police custody at the hands of the Security Branch policemen and why the TRC granted amnesty to the perpetrators.

MR PRINSLOO (Commissioner): Mr Van Niekerk, would you tell the Committee what happened with regard to the interrogation of Stanza Bopape?

MR VAN NIEKERK (member of the Security Branch of the South African Police): On 12 June 1988, Mr Bopape was questioned by Mr Mostert and Mr Engelbrecht at John Vorster Square. He refused to co-operate and denied any involvement with the ANC or terrorist activities. I spoke to him personally and explained the seriousness of his detention under section 29, but he still refused to talk. Later that day we discussed the situation and decided to give him a fright (scare him) to persuade him to co-operate ... We tied Mr Bopape to a strong wooden chair in the corridor outside my office. His shirt was removed, and his hands and feet were bound to the chair. Sergeant Du Preez operated the electric shock device while Mr Engelbrecht applied the electrodes (electrical wires) to Bopape's body.

During the third round, Mr Bopape's head fell forward, and I realised something was wrong. We untied him and placed him on the floor. Sergeant Du Preez attempted mouth-to-mouth resuscitation (revival), but he showed no signs of life. We felt for a pulse, but he was already dead.

All of us present – myself, Major Charles Zeelie, Warrant Officer Hendrik Mostert, Sergeant Johan du Preez and Constable Jakobus Engelbrecht – believed he had died. I immediately phoned General Erasmus and informed him of what had happened. Chairperson, it was never our intention to kill him; the aim was only to obtain information. It was common practice in the Security Branch to use such methods when detainees refused to co-operate.

... The TRC concluded ... We are, in the circumstances and in the light of what is said above, satisfied that they have made a full disclosure of all the relevant facts.

As a result, their application for amnesty succeeds.

[Source: *Looking Back, Reaching Forward: Reflections on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa* by C Villa-Vicencio and W Verwoerd]



SOURCE 2D

The source below is an extract from an article titled 'Lid Not Lifted on Bopape Cover-up' by P Pigou, a former TRC investigator, which appeared in the *Mail and Guardian* newspaper on 28 April 2000. It suggests that the granting of amnesty to 10 former security policemen for the death of Stanza Bopape was controversial and a threat to the credibility of the amnesty process.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) came to yet another controversial finding ... when it granted amnesty to 10 former security policemen for their role in the murder of Mamelodi activist Stanza Bopape in June 1988.

The disappearance of Bopape will go down in history as one of apartheid South Africa's most elaborate cover-ups. Despite having vanished in 1988, Bopape's death was only confirmed after the matter came before the TRC. It is the only case before the Commission in which a full array (display) of police ranks – from constable to the then head of the security police (and South Africa's first post-apartheid police commissioner), General Johannes Velde van der Merwe – applied for amnesty.

The TRC found that the applicants were compliant with the amnesty criteria, having made full disclosure of all the relevant facts. But a closer examination of the amnesty transcripts and judgements reveals a selective use of available evidence and no attempt to make further inquiries regarding a wide range of relevant issues.

The applicants presented a well-oiled account of events that carefully interlocked and reinforced each other's versions. Some sections of the written applications used identical script and turns of phrase, leaving the impression that they could have been contrived (false) and selective in detail.

[Source: *Mail and Guardian* newspaper, 28 April 2000]



QUESTION 3: DOES THE CHINESE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE (BRI) BENEFIT BRICS+ COUNTRIES?**SOURCE 3A**

The extract below, from a research article titled 'BRI: Bridging or Breaking BRICS' by D Thussu, appeared in the journal *Global Media and China*, 2018, Vol. 3(2). It highlights the nature of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its connection to BRICS.

China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has the potential to transform the geo-economic landscape of Asia, the Middle East, Africa and even Europe. Conceived (Created) in 2013 and outlined in 2015 by China's National Development and Reform Committee, it was formally launched in May 2017. Due for completion in the next decade, the BRI comprises more than 900 infrastructure projects – ranging from ports and roads to digital infrastructure, valued at about US\$1,3 trillion.

The BRI projects are to be backed by a US\$40 billion Silk Road Infrastructure Fund, and will also be supported by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank together with the Shanghai-based BRICS bank, or to give its formal name, the New Development Bank (NDB), established in 2014 by the five BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) nations.

In most Chinese official and journalistic accounts, the BRI has been projected as 'a win-win situation' for all concerned. However, some see this significant geo-political endeavour (effort) as designed to promote Chinese political and economic interests in strategically important areas in Asia and beyond, presenting an alternative to the US-dominated security and economic infrastructure that has shaped the world since the Second World War.

For many developing countries that are involved in the BRI projects, it opens up huge potential for rapid access to modern amenities and infrastructure and to benefit from Chinese largess (wealth). Among the BRICS nations the attitude is more complex. Two of China's main BRICS partners – Russia and India – harbour reservations (worries) about the BRI, while for the other two members (Brazil and South Africa), it is not of such geo-political significance.

[Source: *Global Media and China*, 2018, Vol. 3(2)]



SOURCE 3B

The extract below is from an article titled 'BRICS and BRI: China Aims for Strategic Alignment' by an Indian researcher, A Singh, and published in the *Observer Research Foundation: Issue Brief 591* in 2022. It highlights how China wanted to strengthen economic connection between the BRI and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).

Chinese scholars (researchers) are of the opinion that the 'five connectivities' (policy, infrastructure, trade, finance and people-to-people) is the common way forward for both the BRI and BRICS. They highlight how China has been working towards strengthening the interconnection of economic development strategies of different states along the BRI, particularly the BRICS nations – aligning and integrating BRI and BRICS infrastructure (transportation) projects, ensuring free trade, enabling deep integration of financing mechanisms and pursuing different forms of cooperation.

BRICS countries play a dominant role in organisations in their respective regions. China wants to use the BRICS platform to establish links and influence policies of these key regional organisations, including the African Union in Africa. It wants BRICS, especially the BRICS New Development Bank, to strengthen cooperation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). This will enable China, through BRICS, to strengthen its international leadership and play a bigger role in the formulation (creation) of international rules.

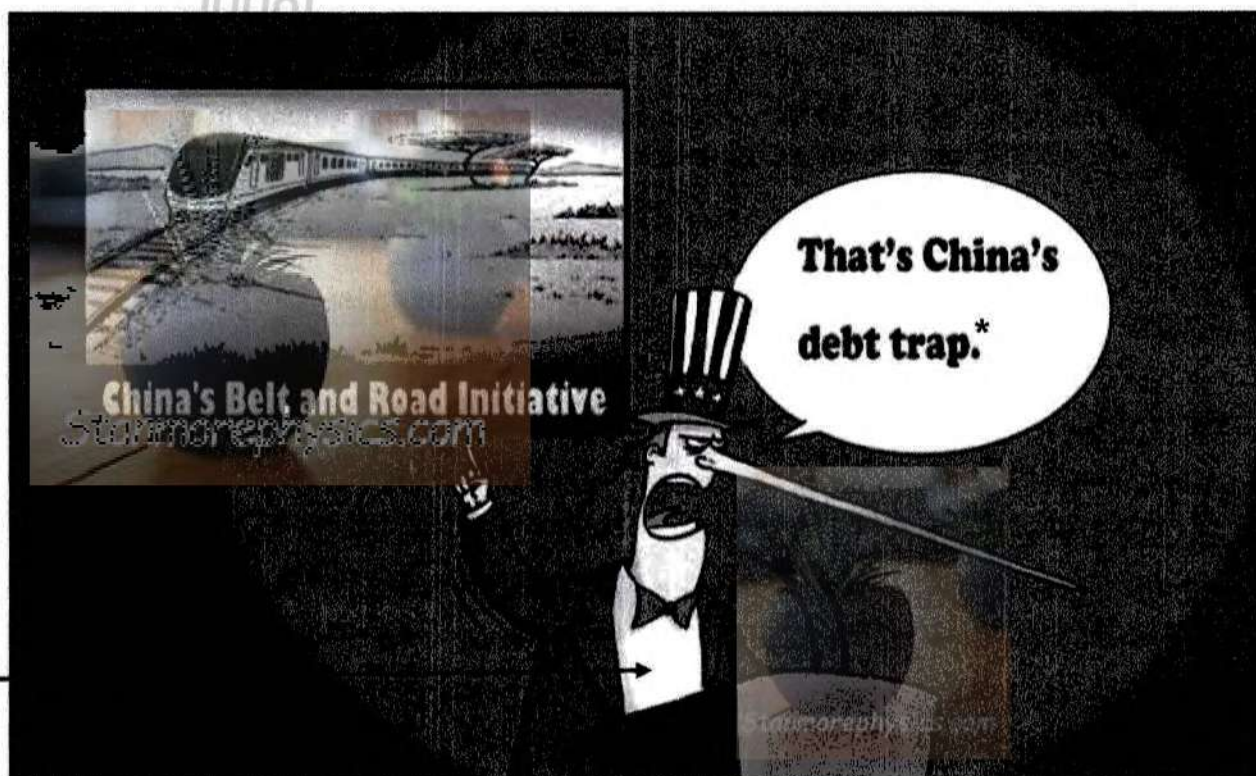
In Chinese strategic thinking, the BRI and BRICS are deeply interconnected. BRICS comprise the world's best-performing emerging economies. How does China view each member state within BRICS? It sees itself as the 'leading power centre' of the mechanism, 'the dominant power' or the 'hub or core', with the greatest strength and ability to determine the grouping's future course.

[Source: *Observer Research Foundation: Issue Brief 591*, November 2022]



SOURCE 3C

The cartoon below, drawn by the Chinese cartoonist M Hongliang, appeared in *People's Daily Online* on 22 August 2023. It depicts the USA's claims that China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a debt trap for countries involved in infrastructure projects.



[Source: *People's Daily Online*, 22 August 2023]

USA

***debt trap:** financial crisis where a country cannot pay off their debt, forcing it to borrow more money to cover their existing obligations, leading to severe financial instability, growing interest and difficulty in escaping from the lender



SOURCE 3D

The source below, from an article titled 'BRICS+: China's Belt and Road Initiative is Advancing Ethiopia's Infrastructure', by I Surve and S Mdlovana, appeared in the *Sunday Independent* newspaper, on 26 June 2025. It examines the experiences of Ethiopia (BRICS+ member) with regard to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Ethiopia's 2024 entry into BRICS+ offers new opportunities for funding, technology exchange and strategic partnerships. The BRICS bloc has always championed alternative models of development. The BRICS framework calls for infrastructure-led development, financial independence from traditionally dominant Western lenders, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and equitable partnerships.

Ethiopia's collaboration (cooperation) with China, particularly within the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), exemplifies (demonstrates) the BRICS vision of fostering physical and digital infrastructure, strengthening South-South cooperation, and promoting industrial growth across the Global South. Despite 'debt trap' criticisms of Chinese infrastructure investments, Ethiopia's experience with the Belt and Road Initiative offers a counter-narrative (different story). The operational Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway serves as a crucial element in Ethiopia's economic development. Completed in 2016 with Chinese engineering and financing, the 750-kilometre electrified railway that connects landlocked Ethiopia to Djibouti's Port – is the lifeline for over 95% of Ethiopia's exports and imports. This railway has significantly reduced the transport time from three days to less than 12 hours, improving trade efficiency, cutting costs and reshaping the architecture of logistics within the region. Platforms like BRICS and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are facilitating this shift, marking a new era of agency (control) for Africa. A future built on collaboration. The Ethiopia-China-BRICS alliance offers a compelling alternative to traditional development models.

[Source: *Sunday Independent*, 26 June 2025]



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