

1991

# The End of Apartheid

South Africa's brutal system of racial segregation was abolished 20 years ago, making way for democratic rule

BY MICHAEL WINES



**W**hen hundreds of thousands of tourists poured into South Africa last summer to watch the World Cup, the entire nation basked in its moment of international glory.

Children and adults waved the country's flag and donned the South African soccer team's green and yellow jersey. And the collective hum from those piercing African horns called *vuuzelas* reverberated throughout the country, from luxury estates in Johannesburg to dirt-poor shantytowns in Capetown.

"The World Cup was this opportunity where all kinds of South Africans came together behind soccer," says Sue Cook, who works as a policy adviser to one of South

Africa's many black ethnic communities.

Hosting an event watched by 260 million people around the world marked an important milestone for a nation that just two decades ago was an international pariah: For years, South Africa was cut off from international trade, sanctioned by the United Nations, and excluded from global sporting events like the Olympics and the World Cup because of apartheid, a brutal system of racial segregation that was abolished 20 years ago this June.

The roots of apartheid—which means "separateness" in Afrikaans, a Dutch-based language—go back to the late 1600s and 1700s, when first Dutch, then British, settlers arrived and began dominating and segregating South Africa's native black population (*see timeline,*

*p. 18*). Beginning in the 18th century, a system of "pass laws" segregated and strictly limited the movement of nonwhites, who had to carry passes to enter white areas.

## Prisoners in Their Own Land

But apartheid began to take on an especially pernicious form in 1950, when the ruling Afrikaners, descendants of the original Dutch settlers, began enacting laws that forced blacks and "coloreds" (people of mixed race) to live and work in restricted areas, and barred them from owning land outside those areas.

Nonwhites soon found themselves prisoners in their own land. They were educated only enough to perform basic labor in white-run industries. They could not socialize with





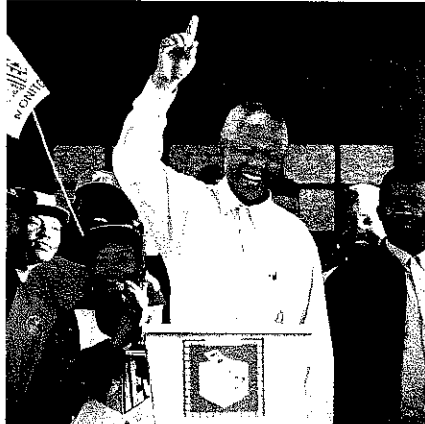
**June 1994:**  
Celebrating the inauguration of Nelson Mandela, the country's first democratically elected President, in Pretoria

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whites, have a voice in government, or even travel outside their designated areas without government permission. All blacks—who made up 70 percent of the population—had to carry pass books that recorded their movements, and they could be arrested for inviting whites to their homes without approval.

Secret police spied on black activists, and arrests, beatings, and even murders of dissidents were commonplace. Nelson Mandela, who led the military wing of the leading anti-apartheid group, the African National Congress (A.N.C.), was arrested and sent to jail with a life sentence in 1964. Stephen Biko, the 30-year-old leader of the South African Students' Organization, was beaten to death by government agents in 1977.



**Nelson Mandela** casts his vote for President on April 28, 1994, four years after his release from prison.

One of the most notorious cases of brutality took place on June 16, 1976. Black students were angry over a government order requiring that all major courses be taught not in English, but in Afrikaans, the primary language of South Africa's white rulers.

After months of classes they couldn't understand, more than 10,000 students staged a protest march on the streets of Soweto, a sprawling black ghetto near Johannesburg. Less than an hour after the march began, police opened fire on the unarmed crowd, killing at least 23, includ-

*Michael Wines is the former Johannesburg bureau chief and the current Beijing chief for The New York Times. With reporting by Veronica Majerol.*

# TIMELINE South Africa



## 1600s-1700s Colonization

In 1652, the Dutch begin to colonize the Cape Peninsula, conquering the native peoples and calling themselves "Afrikaners." In 1795, the British begin establishing colonies.

## 1899-1902 British-Dutch Wars

In the second Boer War, the British defeat the Dutch (Boers) for control of southern Africa. In 1910, the Union of South Africa is established under white-minority rule.

## 1912 A.N.C. Formed

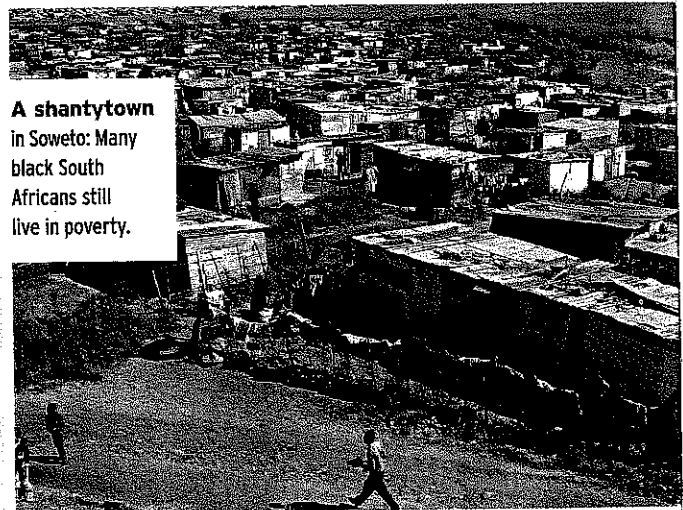
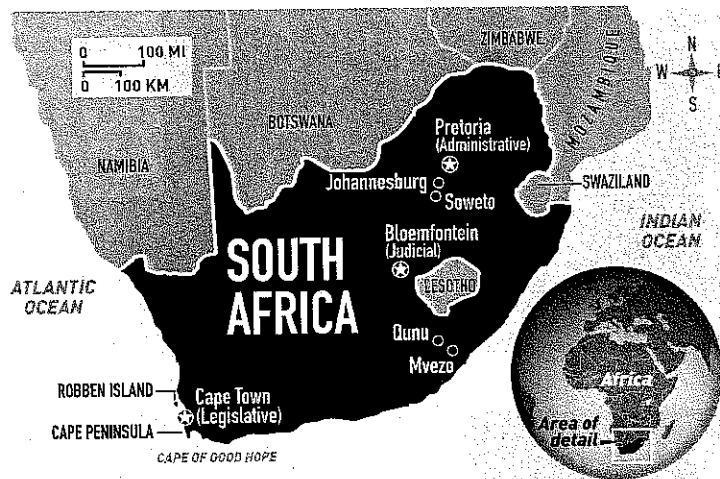
The African National Congress (A.N.C.) is created to promote racial equality.

## 1940s-1950s Apartheid Established

South Africa's white government formally establishes apartheid, a system of rigid racial segregation in education, housing, transportation, and employment.

## 1961-62 U.N. Sanctions

Nelson Mandela is named commander of Spear of the Nation, the A.N.C.'s new rebel army, in 1961. The following year, the United Nations condemns apartheid and calls for sanctions against South Africa.



**A shantytown in Soweto:** Many black South Africans still live in poverty.

## South Africa at a Glance

- GDP per capita: \$5,680 (U.S.: \$46,350)**
- Literacy rate: 89% (U.S.: 99%)**
- Life expectancy: 52 years (U.S.: 78)**
- Internet users: 9% (U.S.: 79%)**
- Racial makeup: 80% black, 9% white, 11% other**

SOURCES: THE ECONOMIST, PEW RESEARCH CENTER, WORLD FACTBOOK (C.I.A.), STATISTICS SOUTH AFRICA

ing 12-year-old Hector Pieterse. A photo of a boy carrying Hector's lifeless body as his sister runs beside them gained international attention and became a symbol of black resistance against apartheid. More riots followed, and by the end of the year, police had killed more than 500 protesters and injured thousands. Against this backdrop, black rage in South Africa didn't surprise outsiders. "Suppose white American families were told that their children would be taught all their school

PAINTING BY CHARLES BELL; THE GALLERY COLLECTION/CORBIS; BAILLIES ARCHIVE/AFRICAN PICTURES/THE IMAGE WORKS; APARTHEID ESTABLISHED; JON HIRSHMAN/EPA/CORBIS (SHANTYTOWN)



## 1964 Mandela Imprisoned

Mandela and seven others are convicted of conspiracy to overthrow the state and sentenced to life in prison.

## 1980s Anti-Apartheid Pressure

International pressure to end apartheid increases (above, protesters at the White House). In 1986, Congress bans imports from South Africa and prohibits American businesses from investing there.

## 1990 Mandela Freed

President F.W. de Klerk announces the release of all political prisoners. Mandela is free after nearly three decades in prison.

## 1993-94 Black Rule

A new constitution based on black-majority rule is adopted in 1993. A year later, the first elections are held and the National Assembly elects Mandela as South Africa's first black President.

## 2010 World Cup

South Africa becomes the first African nation to host the soccer World Cup, marking its emergence on the world stage.

subjects in French and Dutch from now on. Imagine that virtually all white children, regardless of ability, were given a different and inferior kind of education," *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis wrote after the riots.

But with the Soweto uprising, apartheid's foundation began to crack. Unable to contain the rioting, the government slowly began to look for ways to diminish black anger. It drew up a new constitution that gave some nonwhites a voice (but still excluded blacks); it tried to give all blacks citizenship in separate semi-independent "homelands" within white-controlled South Africa.

### Mounting Pressures

None of it worked. And South Africa's relations with the rest of the world became increasingly strained. In 1977, the United Nations imposed an arms embargo on South Africa. International sports groups banned South African teams from competitions, and many companies boycotted South African goods and services. The demand for Nelson Mandela's release grew into a global campaign, and a leading critic of apartheid, the Anglican Bishop of South Africa, Desmond Tutu, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984.

Along with the rest of the world, the U.S. condemned apartheid, but was criticized for

not doing enough to end it. Instead of trying to isolate South Africa's rulers with economic and political sanctions, as many nations had done, President Ronald Reagan (1981-89) followed a policy his administration called "constructive engagement": negotiating with white and black leaders to seek a peaceful end to apartheid.

Some thought Reagan's approach was too soft. Testifying before Congress in 1984, Tutu called the administration's policy "immoral."

But the State Department official responsible for that policy, Chester A. Crocker, says that critics didn't know about the enormous pressure the U.S. was placing on South Africa's white leaders. Crocker says the U.S. softened its public criticism of the government while privately demanding that it grant blacks long-denied freedoms.

Crocker adds that the most important push for change in South Africa came not from outsiders but from within. "You need leaders to make peace," he says. "It takes guts."

Those leaders were South Africa's last President under apartheid, F. W. de Klerk, and Mandela. (They shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993.) Seeing that apartheid was not only isolating his nation but robbing it of the talents of its black workers, de Klerk released all political prisoners, including Mandela, from jail in 1990,

ended restrictions on black political groups, and began negotiations toward democracy.

### Healing Old Wounds

On June 17, 1991, South Africa's Parliament voted to repeal the legal framework for apartheid. Three years later, Mandela was elected President.

Though South Africa has made the transition to majority rule, it hasn't always been a smooth ride. The government, now led by President Jacob Zuma, has been battered by charges that it tolerates corruption and has been slow to address the needs of millions of its poorest black citizens. And with Mandela now 93 and increasingly frail, many South Africans fear that the country may never live up to the ideals of the modern nation's father figure.

"The country's very nervous about whether they can continue to be 'the good South Africa'" without Mandela, says Cook, the policy adviser. "They're going through a lot of separation anxiety."

Yet despite those uncertainties and the work that lies ahead for South Africa, hosting the World Cup gave the country a renewed sense of hope and a self-confidence it had never known. "And South Africa needs a lot of that," Cook says, "just to heal its own wounds." ●



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1982

# The AIDS Epidemic

Thirty years after scientists gave a frightening new disease its name, AIDS still afflicts millions of men and women around the world

BY LAWRENCE K. ALTMAN, M.D.

**T**he patients had baffling problems. Many came in with painful white patches in their mouths. Others had swollen lymph nodes, purplish skin blotches, or uncommon infections of the lung or brain.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, doctors like myself began seeing a scattering of such cases in otherwise healthy young men in California and New York. (In addition to being a reporter for *The New York Times*, I'm a doctor.)

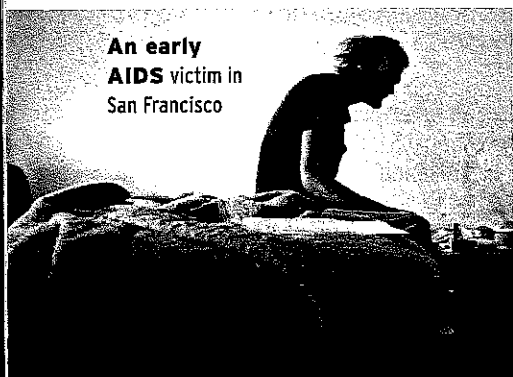
We could usually diagnose the individual conditions—for example, the skin blotches were Kaposi's sarcoma, a rare cancer—but we couldn't explain why these patients had developed these ailments or even agree on what to call the overall disease.

In August 1982—after more than 450 cases involving men and women in 23 states were reported—the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (C.D.C.) decided on acquired immune deficiency syndrome, or AIDS.

Thirty years later, AIDS has infected more than 60 million people worldwide

and has killed at least half that number in one of the worst epidemics in history. Teenagers today have grown up with little if any knowledge of the dark early days of AIDS. But they're worth recalling—as a reminder of both what can happen when confusion and fear surround a previously unknown disease, and of the changes and breakthroughs that the epidemic has brought about.

Looking back 30 years and with the wisdom of hindsight, it seems as if doctors, the public, journalists, and governments were shockingly slow to

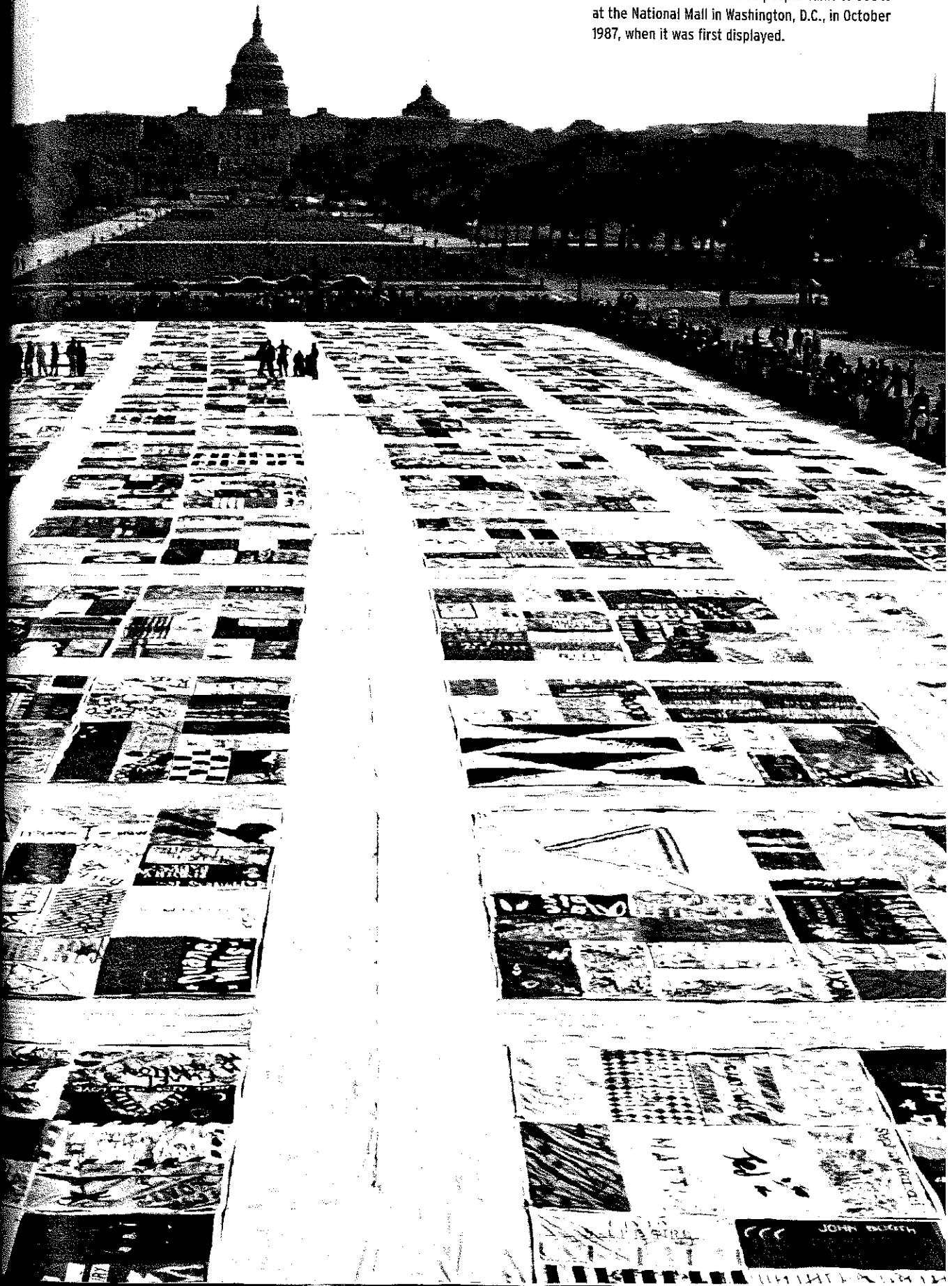


An early AIDS victim in San Francisco



PAUL FUSCO/MAGNUM PHOTOS (MAN WITH AIDS); SUSAN STEINKAMP/ICORBIS (AIDS QUILT)

**The AIDS Memorial Quilt**, honoring victims of the disease. Half a million people came to see it at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in October 1987, when it was first displayed.



# 1980s

## 'Stigmatization'

- A.** A doctor checks the health of an AIDS patient in 1986.
- B.** New York parents and children protest the city's decision to allow a second-grader with AIDS to attend school.
- C.** Ryan White, 15, attends high school in Indiana despite protests aimed at keeping him out.



# THREE DECADES OF AIDS

1980s-2000s

# 1990s

## H.I.V. 'Cocktails'

- D.** L.A. Lakers star Magic Johnson retires in 1991 after announcing that he's H.I.V.-positive.
- E.** First-generation drug "cocktails" included up to 20 pills a day that had to be taken at precise times; they helped Magic Johnson and millions of others infected with H.I.V. live relatively normal lives.



# 2000s

## Africa & AIDS Education

- F.** A girl stands by her mother's bed at an AIDS hospital in Ethiopia; Africa has been hit harder by the epidemic than other parts of the world (see chart, facing page).
- G.** Ricky Martin and Nicki Minaj have teamed up with Mac Cosmetics to educate young people about H.I.V./AIDS.



recognize an epidemic in the making and to take steps to try to contain it.

Because infectious diseases were no longer the major killers they had been even a few decades earlier, doctors had become overconfident. Smallpox had just become the first-ever disease to be eradicated, and most doctors overlooked a basic fact of biology: that a new infectious disease could appear at any time.

Researchers set out to investigate AIDS, but they were puzzled. Why were many of the earliest patients gay men? Could an infectious agent—something transmitted person to person—cause

AIDS? If so, what was it?

In 1983, the first report that a virus, now known as H.I.V. (human immunodeficiency virus), causes AIDS came from researchers in Paris.

### Immune System Attacked

With new blood tests, scientists soon found that H.I.V. infects women and heterosexual men too, and that the virus usually lies dormant in the body for about 10 years before developing into AIDS. It thus became clear that AIDS had been silently spreading around the world in the 1970s.

Scientists learned that the disease could be transmitted in a number of ways: through sex, blood transfusions, needles and syringes used to inject drugs, and from mother to child in the womb.

In the early years, AIDS was an almost certain death sentence. A healthy immune system fights off disease, but what is so terrible about AIDS is that it attacks the immune system itself, making a person vulnerable to all kinds of fatal infections that a healthy immune system could fight off.

My worst fears about the magnitude of what was clearly a global epidemic

came in 1985, when I reported on AIDS in Africa. There the disease had begun to take a devastating toll on both men and women. Only a few African countries would let me in. Wherever I went, officials were in denial about the disease. A health official in Rwanda scoffed at the threat of AIDS in an interview. But later, in private, he questioned me closely about the disease because a member of his family had it.

### Public Hysteria

Back in the U.S., because AIDS was often sexually transmitted, many people, including doctors, patients, and government officials, hesitated to speak frankly about it.

Public hysteria took hold of the country in the mid-1980s. Many people feared, without reason, that they could catch AIDS from drinking fountains and toilet seats or in restaurants.

"The '80s was an era of stigmatization," says Dr. Frank J. Bia of AmeriCares, a disaster-relief and humanitarian aid organization that delivers treatment to H.I.V. patients around the world.

At a number of schools around the country, parents protested the presence of students with AIDS. Ryan White, a hemophiliac in Kokomo, Indiana, contracted H.I.V. at age 13 from a blood transfusion. In 1985, parents at his school went to court to keep him out of the classroom, although health authorities said he posed no threat to other students. "All our children have to give up their right to a safe education for him," Faye Miller, a parent at Ryan's school, told *The Times*. After a lengthy legal battle, he won the right to stay in school.

Ryan became a spokesman on AIDS issues, trying to educate the public on how incorrect information about AIDS added to the plight of children with the disease. He died in 1990 at age 18, after Congress had passed a law named for him that paid for health care

and support services for H.I.V. and AIDS patients.

Some critics accused public officials, including President Ronald Reagan, of ignoring the epidemic. Reagan, who took office in 1981, gave his first major speech about AIDS six years later, when he called for wider testing. "Just as most individuals don't know they carry the virus, no one knows to what extent the virus has infected our entire society," Reagan said.

In 1987, a drug known as AZT was introduced. It was the first treatment that seemed to slow the progression of AIDS in those infected with the H.I.V. virus.

The most significant breakthrough in

drug treatments today are available in a single pill. Perhaps most significant, the cost of the drugs has dropped dramatically, from about \$12,000 a year to about \$200 for some programs in poor countries. But no one knows whether these drugs will work indefinitely.

### The Future of AIDS

Despite tremendous strides in the past 30 years in containing and treating AIDS, the outlook for the disease remains uncertain. Today an estimated 34 million people, mostly in the poor countries of sub-Saharan Africa and in Asia, are infected with H.I.V. and 2.7 million more become infected each year, according to the United Nations.

In the U.S., the number of new infections per year has dropped from 130,000 at the peak of the epidemic to 50,000, but has stubbornly remained at that level for the past five years. Though nearly 7 million people worldwide are receiving drug treatments paid for with billions of dollars from government and private sources (more than half of which come from the U.S.), many are not getting the treatment they need. Health officials say an effective vaccine is badly needed but that it's still years off.

Beyond that, there's concern that stories about Magic Johnson and others infected with

H.I.V. living more normal lives might make people—especially teenagers, who weren't around when the epidemic began—complacent about how serious a disease AIDS remains. Anyone—white, black, male, female, rich, poor, young and old—can still get it.

"Young people have a different perspective because H.I.V. has become a treatable chronic disease," says Dr. Bia of AmeriCares. "But there's a lot of work to be done, and the epidemic continues." •

*Dr. Lawrence K. Altman writes about health issues for The New York Times. Additional reporting by Veronica Majerol.*

## H.I.V./AIDS TODAY

Region	Number Infected
Sub-Saharan Africa	22.9 million
South/Southeast Asia	4 million
Eastern Europe/Central Asia	1.5 million
Central & South America	1.4 million
North America	1.3 million
Western & Central Europe	840,000
East Asia	790,000
North Africa/Middle East	470,000
Caribbean	200,000
Oceania	54,000
<b>Global Total</b>	<b>34 million</b>

SOURCE: UNITED NATIONS 2011 REPORT (2010 ESTIMATES, NUMBERS ROUNDED).

treatment came in the mid-1990s, with the advent of drug combinations, popularly known as cocktails, which have done more than just help keep H.I.V.-infected people alive. Magic Johnson, the Los Angeles Lakers basketball star who announced in 1991 that he was retiring because he was H.I.V.-positive, has been taking the medications for more than 20 years. He's been leading a robust and successful life as a businessman: Last month, he bought the Los Angeles Dodgers with a group of investors.

Unlike the early days of the epidemic, when patients had to take up to 20 tablets a day at very specific hours, some