

1994 Elections

Paul Weinberg

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A portfolio of twenty images

Black and white digital archival prints on Hahnemühle

photo rag 308 gsm paper

All prints signed and numbered

From an edition of 10 + 2 AP

Sheet size 42 x 59.4 cm

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Introduction

I was the official photographer for the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) that oversaw the historic elections in 1994 from February to May 1994. I covered all aspects of the election process from voter education to the activities of the IEC, to political campaigns, events around the elections, the historic voting process itself and finally, the inauguration that saw Nelson Mandela ushered in as President of the country.

Most memorable was witnessing people voting for the first time. There were many dramas during this process. The running out of ballot papers and the logistical anomalies when ballots didn't arrive at voting stations. South Africans endured all this to bring about a new democratic government. They waited patiently in long queues to cast their votes that would change the course of history. A profound sense of euphoria and peace enveloped the entire nation.

Being there when Nelson Mandela voted for the very first time, was a climactic moment. We had all dreamed that apartheid would end one day, and we would one day live in freedom. I was in a state of almost disbelief as I witnessed him dropping his ballot into a box. Here is a portfolio of selected memorable moments, 30 years later.

Paul Weinberg
March, 2024

Looking Back

Over four days in April 1994 about 20 million South Africans voted in the country's first democratic elections – with an 86,9% turn-out in an overwhelmingly peaceful climate. For compelling political reasons the Independent Electoral Commission had been hurriedly appointed to deliver the elections within less than four months.

Although, predictably, it proved a technically flawed exercise, requiring numerous running repairs – statutory, administrative and procedural amendments and inventive practical and logistical adaptations and variations – the elections were an unqualified success. Their universal acceptance as a genuine expression of the will of the electorate not only created a legitimate legislative and executive structure for the governance of the country during the awkward transition but, more importantly, set a standard of constructive co-operation across historical and ideological divides. I said at the time, “The irony is that if the elections had gone off like clockwork, they would have been less of an exemplary lesson in national unification. It was a national convulsion and it worked.” My prevailing sentiment was one of “gratitude to the political leadership for their steadfastness, to the people for their forbearance, and to everyone for making it work”.

This vivid portfolio provides a unique insider's insight into how the elections unfolded, and reminds us of the idealism and commitment of the heady days of 1994. For that reason alone the IEC should be commended for its foresight in engaging Paul to chronicle its activities over that chaotic period. His characteristic perception does

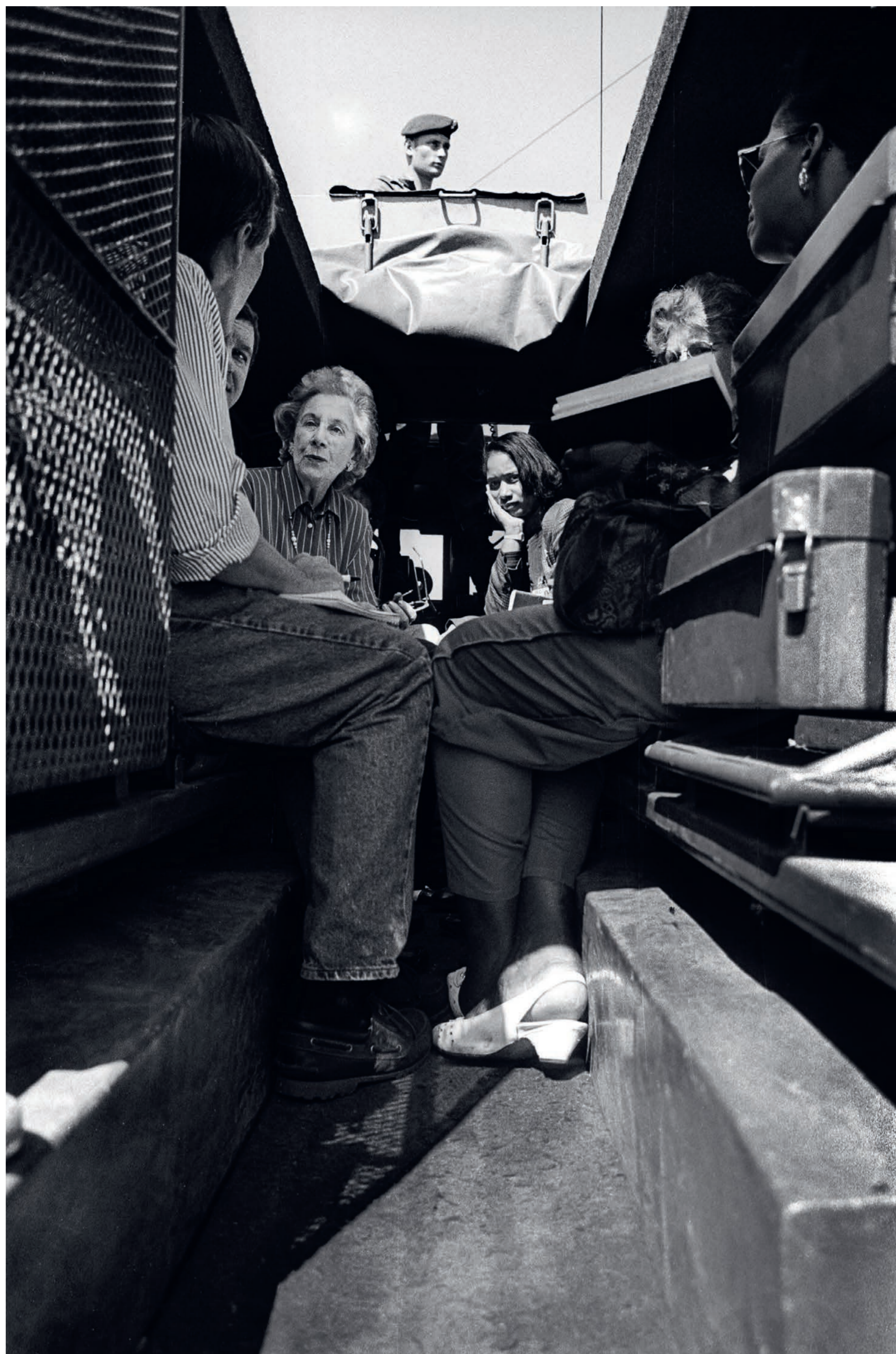
Johann Kriegler, Chairperson of the IEC, 1994

March, 2024















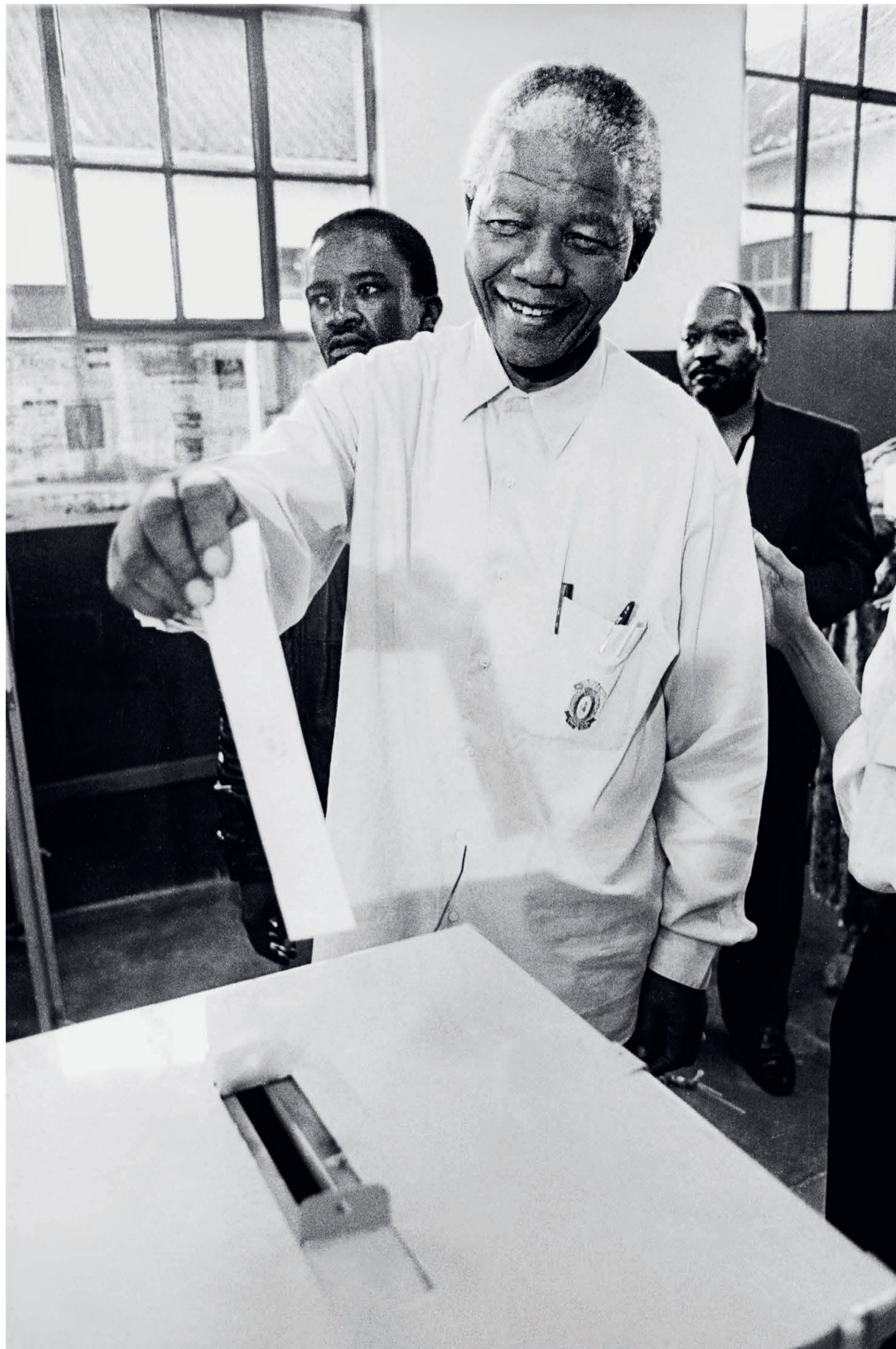










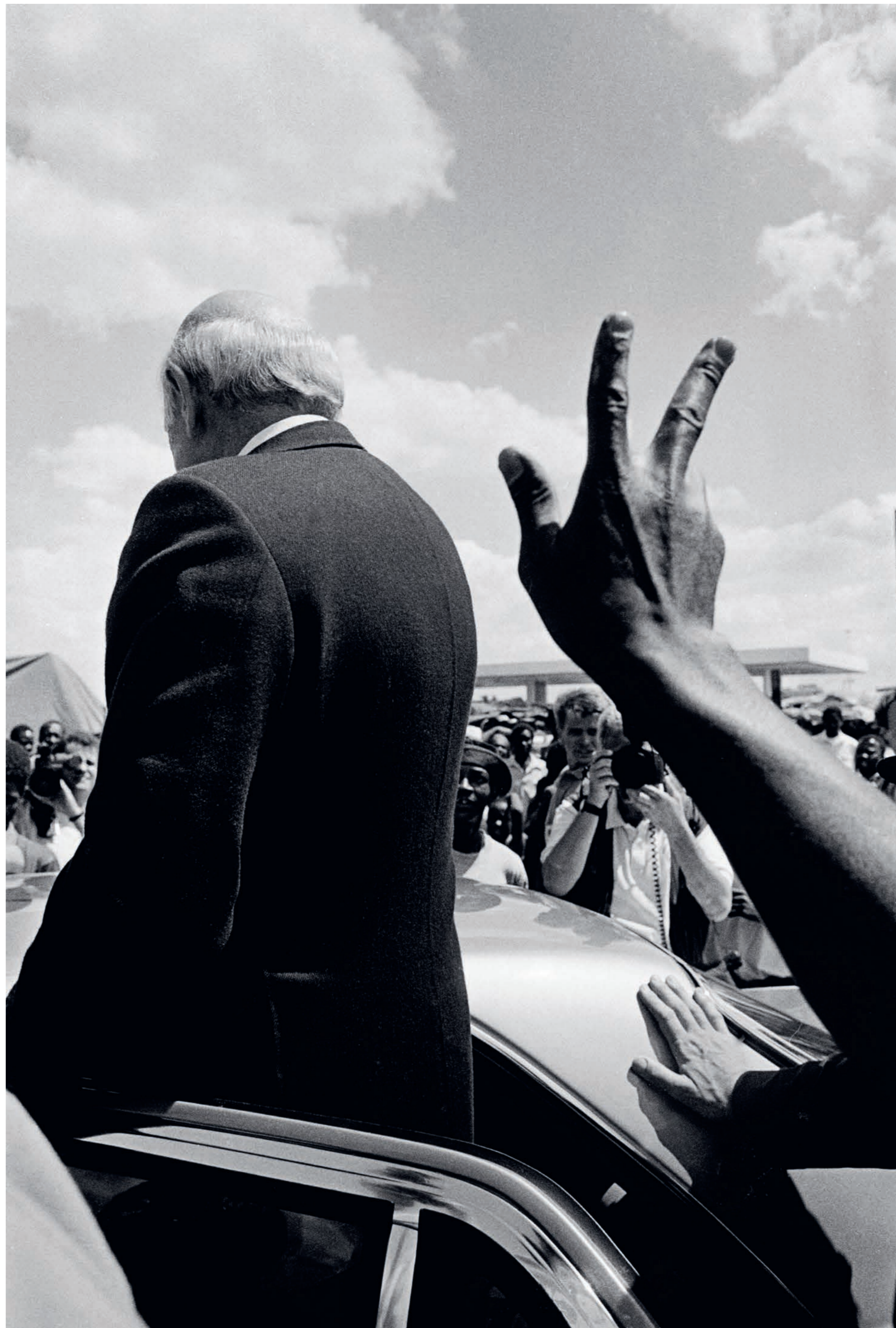


















Voter education in the Richtersveld during the IEC's Operation Access campaign in the 1994 elections, Northern Cape



Independent Electoral Commission run voter education campaigns in the run up to the historic elections that brought democracy to South Africa, factory, Central Johannesburg



Judge Johann Kriegler, head of the Independent Electoral Commission, visits President Mangope, then premier of Bophutatswana, to inform him the homeland will be terminated at the end of the elections, Mafekieng



Helen Suzman, human rights veteran and commissioner for the IEC visits the violence-ridden Kathlegong in the run up to the historic elections



The Independent Electoral Commission visits the Zion Christian Church in the run up to the historic elections, Moria, Limpopo Province



A group of rightwing protesters burn the effigy of F.W. de Klerk and the ANC flag, in the run up to the 1994 election, Pretoria, Gauteng



IFP supporters march through Johannesburg in the run up to the historic elections that brought democracy



ANC rally in the run up to the elections, Gauteng



Voters line up to vote in the historic elections that brought democracy to South Africa, Soweto



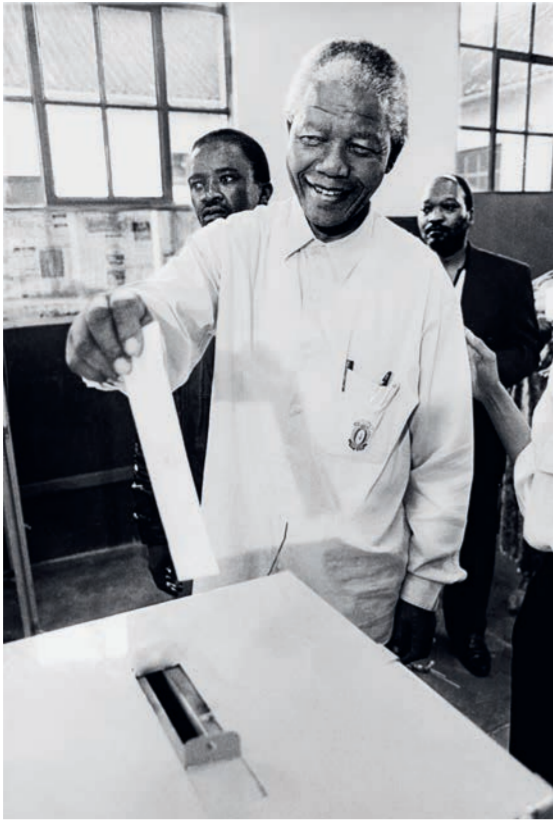
Voting for the first time in the historic elections, Gauteng Province, South Africa



Voting in Diepkloof prison during the historic elections that brought democracy to South Africa



Soldiers and police secure the voting station where Mandela voted, Ohlange High School, Inanda, Kwa-Zulu Natal



Nelson Mandela votes for the first time in his life, Ohlange High School, Kwa-Zulu Natal



Counting the vote took place under tight security for the historic elections that brought democracy to South Africa, Nasrec, Johannesburg



The count, amid much tension and apprehension, lasted 5 days, Nasrec, Johannesburg



Celebration in the streets as the ANC emerges victorious



Madiba does his shuffle as the ANC celebrates the 1994 election victory, Johannesburg



Former President F.W. de Klerk campaigns in Soweto



The inauguration of Nelson Mandela as President, 5 May 1994, Union Buildings, Pretoria



South Africans usher in a new era, Inauguration, Union Buildings, Pretoria