



The Passbook

THE PASSBOOK

(Dompas)

The Pass Laws Act of 1952 required black South Africans over the age of 16 to carry a passbook, a *dompas*, everywhere and at all times. Each year, over 250,000 blacks were arrested for technical offenses under the Pass Laws. As a result, the *dompas* became the most despised symbol of apartheid.

Pass laws were intended to force Black people to settle in specific places in order to provide White farmers with a steady source of labour.

Without it a person would be arrested and detained indefinitely. The police would raid townships in the middle of the night to find people who did not have passes. Many families were broken up in this way, and many children were left to fend for themselves as the children were without their parents once their parents were arrested.

Adapted from: <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/pass-laws-south-africa-1800-1994>
<https://www.cortland.edu/cgis/suzman/apartheid.html#:~:text=Pas>