

**Ending Apartheid by David Welsh and J. E. Spence**, Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited, 2011. xi + 231 pp. £19.99 (paperback). ISBN 978-0-582-50598-8.

*Ending Apartheid* charts the rise of South Africa's primary political parties, the Nationalist Party (NP) and the African National Congress (ANC), paying particular attention to the ideological and philosophical factions within these movements that preceded universal suffrage. David Welsh and J. E. Spence describe the process of transformation as a lengthy and complicated process during which competing political movements negotiated a peaceful governmental transition.

The book begins with a history of the NP and the implementation of apartheid policies and continues on to chronicle the parallel activities of the ANC as it struggled to maintain a common voice. These two stories unite in the next chapter outlining the negotiation process. The final chapter describes South Africa's relationship with the world. Although the material is somewhat disorganized, the authors provide readers with a detailed account of political parties' ambitions and rivalries.

The picture chosen for the cover of the book – that famous photo from 10 May 1994 of Nelson Mandela and F. W. de Klerk in Pretoria raising their clasped hands in solidarity – depicts the ambiguous nature of the negotiations. During the early 1990s, South Africa was riddled with political uncertainty and violence. To avert a seemingly inevitable civil war, Mandela and de Klerk discussed the terms by which the apartheid government would peacefully transfer power through a fair election process. Are these two leaders jointly raising a unified fist of camaraderie or is one leader lifting the other's hand simply as a display of unity to quell the violence?

The early years of the NP and the ANC are documented in several similar books, but what distinguish this book from its predecessors are the details of the power transfer process. Negotiations began with the release of ANC leader Nelson Mandela after 27 years of imprisonment. Welsh and Spence elaborate on the uncertainty of these negotiations. Although informal negotiations had been taking place since 1985 when Deputy Minister for Defense Kobie Coetsee visited Mandela in the hospital after surgery, formal negotiations began in May 1990. The *Groot Schuur Minute* agreement outlined the commitment between the NP and the ANC to resolve the political crisis that was spurring violence across South Africa. Several months later under the *Pretoria Minute*, the ANC agreed to suspend the armed struggle. On 14 September 1991, the political parties signed the *National Peace Accord* in preparation for the *Convention for a Democratic South Africa* (CODESA) in December.

In the background, political rivalries and violence continued unabated, halting the negotiations. This stimulating narrative opens at CODESA, where a public row between Mandela and de Klerk threatened to stall negotiations. At the meeting, de Klerk sharply criticized the ANC for breaching the *Pretoria Minute* and Mandela shot back delivering a savage personal attack on de Klerk, describing him as "the head of an illegitimate, discredited minority regime (pp. 127-128)." Public disputes such as this dispelled even cautious optimism; yet the violent outbreaks were worse. Violence over control of the negotiations broke out across Kwazulu-Natal between the Inkatha Party and the ANC. The brutality culminated with the June 1992 Boipatong Massacre in which 46 residents of Boipatong were slaughtered. Mandela blamed de Klerk for complicity in the attack and the ANC withdrew from the negotiations. The breakdown in discussions led to the Bisho Massacre in which 28 protesters in Ciskei were shot. South Africa was on the brink of civil war. Welsh and Spence attribute the continued negotiations to the

implementation of a sunset clause, which set a deadline for elections and the signing of a new constitution. In September 1992, Mandela and de Klerk agreed on a *Record of Understanding*, thus clearing the road for the election of an interim government and the formation of a new constitution. Welsh and Spence provide insight into the thoughts behind the actions of de Klerk and Mandela and their negotiating stances while highlighting their skillful maneuvering that averted a civil war.

In addition to their discussion of the negotiation process, Welsh and Spence highlight the external factors that led to the demise of apartheid by examining the changing role of South Africa within a local, regional, and international context. Included in this analysis is a debate on the role of economic, political, military, cultural, and sporting sanctions in advancing the ANC movement. De Klerk said that there is “no doubt that sanctions seriously harmed and distorted the South African economy (pp. 187-88).” This debate concludes without taking a strong stance on the matter.

While this book provides readers with a detailed description of the years preceding the government's transition, this work fails to provide more than the insight that comes with hindsight. The epilogue, which briefly touches on the issues currently facing the South African government, is the most compelling part of the book though its brevity may leave readers wanting more.

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