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Book Review: 'Nelson Mandela Speaks: Forging A Democratic Nonracial. South Africa'

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On Feb. 11, 1990, after 27 years in prison, Nelson Mandela picked up the fight for black equality in South Africa precisely where he left off.

As thousands of South Africans listened intently to see if the man they had known and loved had been broken by the harsh years of prison life, a resounding cheer trailed the final words of his first public address as a free man. He concluded his speech with the very same words he spoke while on trial for espionage nearly three decades earlier:

"I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the idea of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

Three years and a Nobel Peace Prize later, Mandela will possibly become South Africa's first president elected in a one-person, one-vote election scheduled for April 1994. Currently, South Africa is under white minority rule.

"Nelson Mandela Speaks: Forging A Democratic Nonracial South Africa" (**Pathfinder Press**, \$18.95) charts Mandela's anti-apartheid battle in a collection of speeches and writings given since the leader's prison release.

The book includes 26 of Mandela's speeches, two letters written to South African President Frederik W. Klerk, three interviews that appeared in international publications and 16 pages of photos.

Several of the addresses were given to U.S. audiences including a June 1990 speech before Congress and a July 1993 speech before the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

In his speeches and writings, Mandela explains the forces that fuel the violence that plagues black townships; addresses the South African government's reluctance to move towards democracy (from June of 1992 to March of 1993 the ANC broke off talks with the South African government due to increased police violence in the townships) and quells the fears of mourners attending slain-leader Chris Hani's funeral.

Extensive end notes fill out references specific to South Africa's development and give historical context to the fight against apartheid.

For those sympathetic to the antiapartheid movement, but only peripherally aware of its scope, "... Mandela Speaks ..." is a fine, though sometimes painful, way to bring the horrifying picture into detailed focus.