

# A long walk to freedom- nelson mandela

[Philosophy](#), [Freedom](#)



Nelson Mandela in his book, Long Walk to Freedom argues through the first five parts that a black individual must deal, cope, and grow through a society that is hindering their lives" with apartheid and suppression of their rightful land. Rolihlanla Mphakanyiswa or clan name, Madiba was born on July 18, 1918 in a simple village of Mvezo, which was not accustomed to the happenings of South Africa as a whole. His father was an respected man who led a good life, but lost it because of a dispute with the magistrate.

While, his mother was a hard-working woman full of daily chores.

His childhood was full of playing games with fellow children and having fun. In school, Mandela was given his English name of Nelson. After his father's death, he moved to live with a regent, who was a well-off individual and owed Nelson's father for a previous favor. The next several years were full of schooling for Nelson. These schools opened Nelson's eyes to many things, which we will discuss later. He and the regent's son, Justice decided to travel to Johannesburg and see what work they could find.

They left on their journey without the regent's permission, but eventually escaped his power and settled down in the town. In Johannesburg, Nelson settled down in a law firm as an assistant and went to University of South Africa and Witwatersrand University to further his law education.

Witwatersrand University brought many new ideas to Nelson and awakened a spirit inside of him. The next several years, Nelson met many new political friends and began his involvement in the ANC. Also during this time, he met Evelyn and they became married.

Gradually Nelson's political involvement grew and his family life declined. Nelson and his good friend, Oliver Tambo opened a law firm, which took up most of Nelson's time. Evelyn mothered two of Nelson's children, but they gradually grew apart. Now, Nelson was an influential political individual and bans and jailing began to follow him around. One day, a young woman came into his life by the name of Winnie and they got married. Winnie gave birth to two more of Nelson's children. As time passed, Nelson's spirit for freedom grew more and more each day.

Though his life was full of bannings and jailings, he never gave up his fight, but he knew that the South African government was becoming agitated with him and the ANC. The South African government became ruthless and strict and this forced Nelson to leave his family. After he left his family, he went underground. Nelson's life has been full of hardships and decisions, but his heart for the struggle has never faltered. Now let us examine Nelson in closer detail. Nelson is an individual who fought through many hardships, but was also faced with decisions that affected his future, his family, and his livelihood.

As we look at Nelson deeper, we can see many interesting points. He was opened to new ideas and beliefs through his experiences in the schools of Heraldtown and Fort Hare, but knew there was something better. He decided to travel to Johannesburg to find new and greater opportunities. While, in Johannesburg, he believed education would be a key asset. While working for a small firm, he took classes at University of South Africa and eventually Wits

University. Here is where his mind and social life flourished. He interacted with great minds and influential political individuals.

He talked to many Africans without proper education, who contained more knowledge and better social skills than many Africans with education. But, he still persisted in acquiring his B. A. Wits University brought his life to new extents. He was also talking to Indians, Coloureds, and whites for the first time in his life and Becoming friends with many more prominent African individuals. Nelson soon joined the ANC and became very prominent in the fight for freedom. Nelson was always open to listening to new ideas, but when his was just starting his fight.

He believed that just Africans should fight the struggle and that the Indians, Coloureds, and communists would hinder their fight. As the ANC grew, Nelson also became well known. He was part of the Youth League, another beneficial part of the ANC. Nelson was not president yet, but was powerful enough to voice his opinions, which many people listened to and believed in. As Nelson's political involvement grew, the police became more aware of him. Nelson received ban after ban, which ranged from months to years. He also experienced jail time constantly. Eventually, the police's pursuit of him forced him to go underground.

Nelson was also becoming more open-minded. He now believed that the fight should involve the Indians and the Coloureds. He also believed that Communism did have some good points, but he would never accept the whole communism aspect. There were many freedom fighters in South Africa. One that stood out was Dr. Xuma. Dr. Xuma was friend of Nelson and

the president of the ANC, but the struggle forces many hardships on one" s life. Nelson gave everything up to pursue his fight for freedom. He left his family, his prospering law firm, and his past for the struggle.

Dr. Xuma believed in the same ideas as Nelson, but would not give up his prominence with the whites and his wealthy occupation for the struggle. This decision had to be made by many freedom fighters. Nelson gave his life for the fight. While, Dr. Xuma thought his career was more important. Now let us look closer at some issues seen through Mandela" s book. Through this paragraph, I will compare foreign influence seen in Long Walk to Freedom to foreign influence seen in Mexico through Professor Hornibrook" s lectures and notes. As I have seen through your lectures, South Africa was affected by foreign influence from the British and the Dutch.

Mandela" s autobiography helps give more detailed accounts of the European influence seen in South Africa. Ever since Mandela was born, the European" s power affected his people. European influence could be seen through every aspect of life. In Mandela" s school, he was given an English name and this was because " this was the custom among Africans in those days and was undoubtedly due to the British bias of our education. "(14) Also, " the education I received was a British education, in which British ideas, British culture, British institutions were automatically assumed to be superior.

There was no such thing as African culture. "(14) This shows that it was difficult to get away from the British influence even for children in school. The British and the Dutch governments passed several acts that were instituted to fight against the Africans freedom struggle. The Africans

struggle for independence was slowly growing and this scared the government. A new term was being seen and it was called " apartheid. " The government enacted laws and acts that prohibited Africans from doing Many things that were vital to their fight and survival. The Group Areas Act was one example.

This act called for each racial group to be separated into separate areas. Another act was the Population Registration Act, which showed that race had become the most important and influential aspect of South African law and society. Another act was the Suppression of Communism Act. This act called for all communists to be brought to trial. The police could arrest anyone they believed were trying to overthrow the government by violence and communist ways. Lastly, the government put bans on individuals who were becoming to involved in the struggle and finally the government banned the ANC and all other liberation groups.

This ban now made freedom fighting was illegal in South Africa. The effect of foreign influence was drastic. Africans lost sense of African culture in schools. While, the foreign government tried everything to break down the Africans chance for liberty. The foreign influence seen in South Africa crushed the African" s hope and survival. While this was occurring in South Africa, Mexico was also seeing the effect of foreign influence. Americans and Europeans came into Mexico and gained much power. Haciendas helped their rise and foreign investment in many minerals and oil. But, Mexico did not approve of this and changed it.

In 1917, Mexico created a new constitution, which limited foreign investment and promised land reform. This showed that Mexico did not want an overpopulation of foreigners and would not allow it. While, in oil, the foreigners controlled much of the oil, which Mexico had an abundance of. In 1938, oil workers went on strike and the companies would not give in, but instead of allowing foreign influence to become too powerful.

The Mexican leader, Cardenas sent in arbitrators. The arbitrators called for the one-third pay increase, but the companies refused. Therefore, Cardenas nationalized oil and limited the power of foreign influence in Mexico.

Now, Mexican oil was controlled by PEMEX, which is controlled only by Mexico. Mexico became a large influence in the oil market during the oil crisis, but also went through hyperinflation and eventually needed some foreign help. But, the Mexicans would not allow foreign influences to dominate the Mexican state as foreigners have affected South Africa. Now I will examine another issue seen in the book. In this paragraph, I will examine the movement seen in Long Walk to Freedom to the movement seen in China during the 1900's. In South Africa, the movement I saw was the Africans fighting for freedom.

In their time of struggle, they had little help from those with power. The liberation movement involved peasants, educated, and well-off Africans. But, the government did whatever they could to put down this struggle. They set up organizations, such as the ANC, Youth League, and others, but as seen in other places the wealthy and powerful would not help the struggle. Many people were blind to the struggle. " Most of these wardresses had no idea

why we were in prison, and gradually began to discover what we were fighting for and why we were willing to risk jail in the first place. (249)

Many individuals did not realize what the Africans were really fighting for and why the government was harassing them, but slowly they were learning. " Seeing prominent and educated white women discussing serious matters with a black man on the basis of perfect equality could only lead to the weakening of the wardresses' apartheid assumptions. "(249) The government tried to separate whites from blacks so whites would not turn sympathetic towards the Africans' fight. This scared feeling made the government acts and laws stricter and harsher towards the African struggle.

Therefore, in South Africa, the movement received little help from the people who had influence in the country and the help they truly needed. While, in China, their movement involved their peasants and they had help, which truly helped their struggle. Mao stated that " In a very short time,... several hundred million peasants will rise like a mighty storm... They will sweep all the imperialists, warlords, corrupt officials, local tyrants and evil gentry into their graves... "(Mao, 24) Here Mao stated that the peasants would destroy the landlords and corrupt individuals.

He helped the peasants by making some reforms. He gave peasants land and made marriages a free choice. He also instituted the 100 Flowers Campaign. This campaign allowed peasants to speak out and have freedom of speech. We see here that the peasants had help in their struggle, while the Africans had very little. This assistance helped the peasants to get the things they were fighting for. Mandela's Long Walk to Freedom, helped



show the rise of an incredible individual, who fought with many of his countrymen against the oppression and apartheid of white supremacy in South Africa.

Throughout the book, I have seen Nelson" s open-mindedness. Nelson always listened to communist ideas and Indian goals, even though he did not agree with them. Nelson faced many hardships through his struggle and this had to cause some resentment against his oppressors. But if anyone would not be biased in his writing, I would say it would be Nelson Mandela. He has showed in his book that he is a great individual and that he will not let his past feelings cloud his writing. You can see his feelings in his book and that is what makes it so good, but I believe he does not hide anything from us on both sides of the stories.

In conclusion, Mandela" s autobiography is a brilliant book written by an incredible individual. I wish I could have read the whole book for this essay, but that was not possible. It is hard to write an essay on the first 5 parts when I know some things that happened further in the book. I did not know if I should include that information in the essay, but I did not include it. This book helped to show the other side of the story. We always hear the victor" s story and in this class we got to hear the other side of the story.