A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA

By Andrew Russell

After the National Party gained power in South Africa in 1948, its all-white government immediately began enforcing existing policies of racial segregation. Under apartheid, non-white South Africans (a majority of the population) would be forced to live in separate areas from whites and use separate public facilities. They were forced to carry ID books and were subject to a curfew between sunset and sunrise.

Black people were also denied basic rights, like being allowed to vote in elections. But Nelson Mandela believed that everybody should be treated equally. Mandela joined a political party called the African National Congress (ANC) and later co-founded the ANC Youth League, leading protests against apartheid.

When you find a cause worth fighting for you become passionate and passion fuels the fires of perseverance. Opposed to the policies of his country's white minority government, Mandela led a non-violent action against apartheid in South Africa. It was a choice that landed him in prison for 27 years.

Sentenced to life imprisonment, Mandela became a powerful symbol of resistance for the rising anti-apartheid movement, repeatedly refusing to compromise his political position to obtain his freedom.

The apartheid system in South Africa was ended through a series of negotiations between 1990 and 1993 and through unilateral steps by the National Party government led by F.W. de Klerk. These negotiations took place between the governing National Party, the African National Congress, and a wide variety of other political organisations. Nelson Mandela was a key negotiator while he was still in prison.

The 1993 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded jointly to Nelson Mandela and Frederik Willem de Klerk "for their work for the peaceful termination of the apartheid regime, and for laying the foundations for a new democratic South Africa."