

In 1993 South Africa state president F.W. de Klerk and African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize "for their work for the peaceful termination of the apartheid regime". Yet, while both deserved the plaudits they received for entering the negotiations that led to the end of apartheid, the four years of negotiations preceding the April 1994 elections, known as the transition era, were not "peaceful": they were the bloodiest of the entire apartheid era, with an estimated 14,000 deaths attributed to politically related violence. This book studies, for the first time, the conflicts between the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party that took place in South Africa's industrial heartland surrounding Johannesburg. Exploring these events through the perceptions and memories of combatants and non-combatants from war-torn areas, along with security force members, politicians and violence monitors, offers new possibilities for understanding South Africa's turbulent transition. Challenging the prevailing narrative which attributes the bulk of the violence to a joint state security force and IFP assault against ANC supporters, the author argues for a more expansive approach that incorporates the aggression of ANC militants, the intersection between criminal and political violence, and especially clashes between groups aligned with the ANC.

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