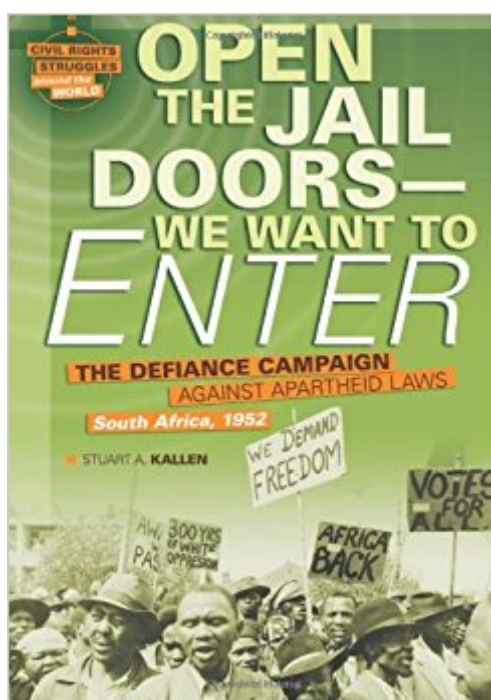


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# Open The Jail Doors &#151; We Want To Enter: The Defiance Campaign Against Apartheid Laws, South Africa, 1952 (Civil Rights Struggles Around The World)



## Synopsis

"The Defiance Campaign marked a new chapter in the struggle...going to prison became a badge of honor among Africans."— Nelson Mandela, 1952

On June 26, 1952, twenty-five men and five women entered the waiting room of a railway station in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. If they had been white people of European descent, they would have gone unnoticed. But they were black South Africans who were violating the waiting room's "Europeans Only" sign as part of the Campaign of Defiance against Unjust Laws. Instituted by the African National Congress (ANC), the campaign aimed to peacefully defy a series of laws known as apartheid— a system of legal racial segregation. Across the country, similar protests took place and more than 250 resisters went to jail that day. The ANC's strategy was to fill the jails to overflowing and cause the police and judicial branches of government to break down. In July fifteen hundred men and women took part in the campaign; in August more than two thousand went to jail. The Defiance Campaign eventually triumphed, but not before the tragedy of bloodshed, violence, and death among three generations of South Africans. In this riveting story of the long struggle against apartheid, we'll explore the reasons why thousands were willing to die in the fight for civil rights. And we'll witness how their courageous efforts led to the day in 1994 when Nelson Mandela stood before thousands of free South Africans as the nation's first black president.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Stuart A. Kallen has written more than two hundred fifty nonfiction books for children and young adults over the past twenty years. His books have covered countless aspects of human history,

culture, and science from the building of the pyramids to the music of the twenty-first century. Kallen is also an accomplished singer-songwriter and guitarist in San Diego, California.

Commander Jan van Riebeeck's role in establishing a colony for the Dutch United East India Company in South Africa in 1652 was a praiseworthy event in his time. The displaced Khoi, or Hottentots, as the Dutch disparagingly called them, and the San were not as pleased with his accomplishment nor were generations of Africans to come who claimed he was "to blame for more than three centuries of slavery and oppression." The establishment of Cape Colony made it easy to trade with the East and an influx of Europeans began to arrive. Indigenous peoples were displaced from their land and the practice of slavery began as the colony's need for laborers grew when Cape Town was established. Slaves began arriving from "East Africa, Madagascar, Mozambique, India, Ceylon, Malaysia, and southern and southeastern Asia." Little could anyone have known that the seeds for decades of hardship had been sown when van Riebeeck set foot on the soil that would become part of South Africa. Unable to pass up a good thing, the British were soon seen in South Africa to safeguard their trade routes. In order to "control the black population, the British instituted the Hottentot Code of 1809," a code that required them to "carry passes at all times stating where they lived and for whom they worked." It was the first of many codes and laws that would keep the indigenous population in their place and develop a protectorate for the minority European population. When slavery was abolished the British "source of free labor" was gone, but "exploitation of poorly paid black workers" continued. With the discovery of diamonds in South Africa in 1866 (and later gold) the mad, greedy rush for riches was on. In 1872 it was still deemed essential to put the black man in his place with Proclamation 14, a proclamation that "referred to African and mixed race workers as 'servants' and whites as 'masters.'" Apartheid had begun. Europeans became wealthy while their black counterparts were plunged further into poverty. Laws, acts, proclamations, and codes abounded to ensure a divide that would protect their wealth and status. Men like Mohandas Ghandi experienced first hand the insidious nature of segregation. Just when things seemed as if they couldn't get worse, the Native Lands Acts was introduced in 1912 by James Hertzog, minister of native affairs. Only "7.3 percent of South Africa's lands" were set aside for blacks and the following year the Black Lands Act "forbade white farmers from leasing land to blacks." It was time for the people to fight back, but severe restrictions on their liberties continued. You'll learn about the men and women who fought against apartheid (including Nelson Mandela), the South African National Congress (SANNC), the bywoners, the slaughter of the Israelites, the Rand Revolt, the horrifying living conditions blacks had to endure, how apartheid was

implemented, you'll learn about the "native bills," the Pan-African Movement, the Youth League, the Immorality Act, the protests (nonviolent and violent), the Campaign of Defiance, and you'll learn about many other interesting historical vignettes about how South African's struggled to eliminate apartheid. This is an excellent overview of the decades long struggle of the South African blacks' attempt to abolish apartheid. This was a very well written and researched book, a task that was not easy considering the breadth of the subject. One of the things that I liked the most about the book was (somewhat in the manner of Nelson Mandela) that it did not downgrade or bash any of the participants who found themselves drawn up in the controversy. This type of work is journalistic reporting at its best. The young reader will be able to see both sides of the picture and explore ethical considerations and cultural mores of the apartheid situation. One striking message from Mandela to Daniel Malan was especially poignant: "the struggle which our people are about to begin is not directed at any race or racial group but against the unjust laws which keep in perpetual subjugation and misery vast sections of the population." There are numerous photographs and informative sidebars interspersed throughout the book. In the back of the book is an index, a glossary, a timeline, a biographical section, source notes, a selected bibliography, and additional recommended book and website resources to explore.

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