

Tekst 7

JAMES LAMONT

A battered faith in the new South Africa

BEYOND THE MIRACLE

By Allister Sparks

Profile Books, £12.99,

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Even now, nearly 10 years after the end of apartheid, Allister Sparks still feels twinges of disbelief when he sits in the press gallery of South Africa's parliament in Cape Town.

Earlier in his career as a journalist on the Rand Daily Mail, he listened in the same gallery to Hendrik Verwoerd, the architect of apartheid, defending 24. "It sounded so plausible in that isolated, all-white chamber, cut off like an ocean liner from the pulsating polyglot reality of the society outside," Mr Sparks recalls.

Today, Mr Sparks peers down on a diverse throng of parliamentarians, rubbing shoulders good-humouredly. Racial division has given way to an open, tolerant society. A closed economy, rooted in mining and agriculture, has opened its borders and is hungry for foreign investment.

Can the change from white minority rule to multiracial democracy have 25, the veteran journalist asks himself. And is it as good as it looks?

Mr Sparks's latest book, *Beyond the Miracle*, is among the first of what will be many appraisals of South Africa in the coming months, marking 10 years since the end of apartheid. In April next year, a decade will have passed since Nelson Mandela took power in

the country's first fully democratic elections. It is a passage of time that many consider sufficient to gauge to what extent he and his African National Congress government have 26 the inequalities of apartheid.

Journalistic scorecards will come out. But South Africans themselves will be able to pass judgment on the ANC's performance at the ballot box. Parliamentary elections are expected in the first half of the year.

Mr Sparks's own comprehensive and readable assessment of the new South Africa is generous. He reminds us that South Africa's miracle transition achieved the 27 that other parts of the world still find so elusive. Its people stood at the brink of civil war and stepped back.

His book, the third in a trilogy, begins with Mr Mandela's swearing-in as president and ends with the prevailing debates about how to tackle the HIV/Aids pandemic, narrow the wealth gap and deal with Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe.

On the way, he takes in many of the 28 the post-apartheid era. He explains how the government transformed its economic policy, ditching nationalisation for a liberal economy with privatisation at its core. He recounts episodes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, where victims' families confronted their torturers. And he draws sympathetic portraits of two very different leaders: Mr Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, his successor.

Mr Sparks writes as 29. He admits to Mr Mbeki drinking him under the table in Lusaka; he arranges meetings to break the logjam between Afrikaners and the liberation movement; and he shares car rides with community leaders before they are assassinated by hit squads.

The book captures both the 30 of liberators who found – once in government – how impoverished South Africa had become in the last days of apartheid, and the pragmatic spirit with which they have set about taking the country forward.

“There was a feeling that if you dealt with apartheid a lot of other things would automatically fall into place, but that has not been the case. It is much harder than we expected,” Gill Marcus, deputy governor of the Reserve Bank, tells the author.

Some of the book’s most striking chapters illuminate that 31. Mr Sparks’s own efforts to reinvigorate the news operation of the South African Broadcasting Corporation – formerly an apartheid propaganda organ – show some of the shortcomings of

transformation. The SABC’s new management is dogged by indecision and in-fighting. The same tensions are to be found in many South African businesses.

Mr Sparks’s visits over the years to a once all-white suburb adjoining a squatter camp on the outskirts of Johannesburg 32. White people build a wall to keep the blacks out. The wall fails to do so. Black people move in. White people leave the neighbourhood. But some stay behind. People, irrespective of colour, lose their jobs. Overall, the cameos convey a battered optimism.

Beyond the Miracle sums up the challenge that the ANC faces as it approaches its third election with an analogy of a double decker bus. The top deck – the middle class – is increasingly multiracial and getting along just fine. Downstairs is filled to bursting with black people for whom little has changed. But there is no stairway that joins the two.

The reviewer is the FT’s former South Africa correspondent

Financial Times

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Kies bij iedere open plek in de tekst het juiste antwoord uit de gegeven mogelijkheden.

1p **24**

- A African integration
- B social equality
- C white supremacy

1p **25**

- A been a passing fancy
- B been misunderstood
- C done any good
- D happened so fast

1p **26**

- A broken down
- B tolerated
- C underestimated

1p **27**

- A ideal society
- B popularity
- C prosperity
- D reconciliation

1p **28**

- A conflicts characterising
- B milestones reached in
- C promises made in
- D traditions born in

1p **29**

- A a diplomat
- B an author of fiction
- C an insider
- D a typical white South African

1p **31**

- A determination
- B difficulty
- C sense of pessimism

1p **30**

- A disappointment
- B excitement
- C ruthlessness

1p **32**

- A are equally telling
- B present a different picture
- C provide little information