

Clark, Robert P. *Negotiating with ETA: Obstacles to Peace in the Basque Country, 1975-1988*. Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1990.

Robert Clark's *Negotiating with ETA: Obstacles to Peace in the Basque Country, 1975-1988* is an invaluable study of the various attempts at negotiating the conflict between ETA (*Euskadi ta Askatasuna*, or *Basque Homeland and Freedom*) and the Spanish government over a 13 year period.

ETA has been involved in a violent struggle against the Spanish government for over three decades in order to achieve the independence of the Basque region. It had reconciled itself with the fact of entering into several negotiations with Madrid, without abandoning the essential element that differentiates it in the context of the Basque struggle, namely armed resistance.

After painstaking research, Clark takes his readers on a journey of discovery: the dynamics of negotiations between ETA and Spain, the ebb and flow of such negotiations, the substance of the talks and the reasons for failure. Between 1975-88, Clark tells us, negotiations between ETA and the Spanish authorities have entered into five stages: preliminary efforts where both parties wanted to bring about negotiations (1975-80), the Spanish government's attempt to socially reintegrate the Basques by issuing an amnesty to selected individuals (1981-83), the corresponding interest on the part of the Basques to reconcile their differences with Madrid (1982-83), the Spanish socialist government's issuance of another limited amnesty (1984-86), and finally, the Algerian theatre of bringing the Basques and the Spaniards together to settle the conflict (1986-88).

In this respect, *Negotiating with ETA*, after thorough encapsulation of the many unsuccessful efforts at settling the Basques' conflict with Spain, makes highly-informed recommendations, that are of benefit, not only for resolving the Basque-Spanish problem, but also for conflict resolution in other situations. Conflict resolution, thus, as Clark reminds us in more than one instance in his volume, can best be brought about through successful negotiations between insurgent groups and state actors. In this, Clark does not subscribe to the conventional wisdom of calling for reliance on non-negotiated measures to settle problems such as that of the Basques with the Spanish central government. He reminds us that "there are some benefits to be gained from a negotiated settlement ..." (p. 2) He stresses that "negotiations may be the best solution to insurgency, not because it is such a good option, but simply because all the others are so bad." (pp. 2-3) Negotiations reduce tensions among the conflicting parties and create a better atmosphere for reconciling differences, Clark asserts. Furthermore, without negotiations no confidence-building measures can exist. Absence of mutual trust will inevitably lead to increased extremism.

What was, then, the objective of negotiations between the Spanish authorities and ETA? Clark draws our attention to the fact that such negotiations can be classified under two different categories, with each category focusing on two sub objectives. The first category of objectives is concerned

with daily and/or issue-specific developments affecting the involved parties. The second type of objectives, to which this volume is devoted, deals with underlying dynamics that have brought about conflict between Spain and the Basque region, i.e. negotiations are motivated by the military and political realities that have characterized Spanish-Basque relations over the years. Questions pertaining to putting an end to the violence and upholding the right to self-determination are at the heart of negotiations here. The Spanish authorities are interested in creating a stable environment, free of violent acts by ETA. ETA, on the other hand, is most interested in creating a just environment, one which would enable the Basques to reap the benefits of independence. As Clark puts it:

during the mid-1970s . . . there began to emerge within ETA factions that favored a negotiated settlement that would bring about a cessation of all violence, free all ETA prisoners, leave the organization intact, and achieve a number of important intermediate goals that would lead eventually to full Basque independence. (p. 8)

Why did ETA undergo the fundamental shift from solely focusing on armed struggle to achieve its objectives to delicate balancing between violent acts and political maneuvering in the mid-1970s? For one thing, the Spanish police authorities under Franco were able, through their uncompromising punitive acts against ETA members, to convince at least some leaders in the organization that the cost of violence for the Basques outweighed the benefits. Furthermore, ETA was unable to qualify with practical measures its objective of political independence for the Basque region. Whatever violent acts the organization conducted against Madrid, they were not sufficient to exert the needed pressure on the Spanish government to transform its political agenda. To the contrary, such violent acts, the case seems to be, while inflicting harm on the Spanish authorities, have brought pain and suffering upon the Basques themselves. This "action-repression" spiral process did not create enough strong stimuli among the Basques to rebel on a mass level against the Franco regime. In addition, the increased economic and social development in Spain during the 1970s compared to earlier times has served to pacify the revolutionary spirit among some of the Basques. Relative social and economic comfort, which some of the Basques have felt, weighed negatively against the impulse for independence. (pp. 9-10)

This is in effect the driving force, which has, over several occasions, brought the two parties to the conflict together, each with its own agenda, in order to achieve its own objectives. In this context, negotiations have become manifestations of frustrated efforts by both parties to settle the conflict on their respective terms.

What results have the negotiations between the ETA and the Spanish authorities achieved? Between 1975 and 1988 these parties met over two dozen times. Yet the conflict has not been settled. Many of the attempts at negotiating have failed.

It is true, as Clark tells us, that negotiating with the Spanish authorities has, in some instances, created and in others perpetuated internal problems in ETA. (p. 10) However, in spite of the failures, and the side effects the negotiations have caused, tensions have been reduced. More importantly, both parties have realized that problem-solving need not be done on the battlefield, as it could very well be achieved around the negotiating table. Equally important is the fact that negotiations between ETA and the Spanish government, although they were frequently hampered, could provide an impetus for other insurgent groups and governments involved in conflicts to try settling their problems through peaceful means.

In sum, this highly informative, well-written volume is of immense value, not only to the understanding of Basque-Spanish relations, but also to the discourse surrounding the study of conflict resolution. Researchers in peace studies and such related fields, too, will find the information and the theorizing presented in this volume very useful and enlightening. The originality by which this work is characterized, the strong background of the author in this area, and the fine organization of the material make *Negotiating with ETA* a highly desirable source for libraries to add to their collections.

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Ryan, Stephen. *Ethnic Conflict and International Relations*. Brookfield, VT: Dartmouth, 1990.

Stephen Ryan of the University of Ulster attempts to address the crucial question of how to deal with ethnic conflict. Two books stand as standards by which his and other recent works on ethnic conflict should be measured: Donald Horowitz's *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (1985) and the edited volume by Joseph Montville *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies* (1990). By these standards, Ryan's book falls far short of the mark. The following review will focus on what Ryan claims to address, what he actually addresses, and what he fails to address.

The centre piece of *Ethnic Conflict and International Relations* is a model of ethnic conflict resolution which posits that under certain circumstances third party involvement, particularly by the UN, may be a vital component to conflict resolution strategies by: deinternationalizing a conflict; and contributing to peacekeeping (the targeting of armed groups to address violent behavior), peacemaking (the targeting of decisionmakers to address a perceived incompatibility of interests), and peacebuilding (the targeting of "ordinary people" to address negative attitudes and socio-economic structures). As these three strategies have already been articulated and developed by others,