

Umkhonto we Sizwe: The ANC's Armed Struggle

Thula Simpson



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The armed struggle waged by the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), was the longest sustained insurgency in South African history. This book offers the first full account of the rebellion in its entirety, from its early days in the 1950s to the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as South African president in 1994.

Vast in scope, this story traverses every corner of South Africa and extends throughout southern Africa, where MK's largest campaigns and heaviest engagements occurred, as well as to the solidarity networks that the rebellion mobilised around the world.

Drawing principally from previously unpublished writings and testimonies by the men and women who fought the armed struggle, this book recreates the drama, heroism and tragedy of their experiences. It tells the story of leaders like Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Joe Slovo and Chris Hani, whose reputations were forged in the crucible of the armed struggle, but it is also a tale of martyrs such as Looksmart Ngudle, Ashley Kriel and Phila Ndwandwe, as well as of MK cadres such as Leonard Nkosi and Glory Sedibe, who would ultimately turn against the ANC and collaborate with the state in hunting down their former comrades. Written in a fresh, immediate style, Umkhonto we Sizwe is an honest account of the armed struggle and a fascinating chronicle of events that changed South African history.

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