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376 BOOK REVIEWS

THE STRUGGLE IS MY LIFE. By Nelson Mandela. New York: Pathfinder Press, 1986. Pp. 249; 34 photographs. \$6.95 paper.

Nelson Mandela has become the very symbol of black resistance to apartheid. Twenty-five years of imprisonment and removal from the hurly-burly of politics have steadily enhanced his stature. Today he towers above South African politicians - black and white - as the one humane and charismatic leader who could, if given the chance, bind up the country's wounds. His early leadership within the Congress Youth League of the 1940s, in the African National Congress (A.N.C.) during the Defiance Campaign of the 1950s, and then in *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Spear of the Nation) during its initial sabotage campaign in the early 1960s, established his reputation in black politics. He became the worthy successor to Albert Luthuli, South Africa's first winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. He was also the key personality in the A.N.C. as it was forced underground and reluctantly turned to the use of countervailing force.

Mandela's speech from the dock before being condemned to life imprisonment in 1964 gave some indication of his tough-minded commitment to a non-racial system of government for South Africa. This address also revealed an emerging consensus within black politics that the South African regime was no longer legitimate. Now, with *The Struggle is My Life*, we have a concise, low-cost updated documentary study of the man, his life and thought. The person who emerges is a compassionate idealist, an eclectic thinker, a man made wise by the sufferings of prison life, a parliamentary democrat and a socialist. There is a solid index and thirty-four evocative photos to enhance the texts.

The Struggle is My Life was first published in 1978. This revised edition is a collection of Mandela's speeches, a selection of documents he co-authored, and memoirs written by colleagues who suffered incarceration with him on Robben (Seal) Island. Several new items have been added, including "I am not prepared to sell the birthright of the people to be free," Mandela's rejection of President Botha's offer of conditional release. The statement was read in 1985 by his daughter Zinzi at a mass meeting in Soweto. Earlier material is reprinted from Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Carter's *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa* (Stanford, 1977), and from Ruth First's *Nelson Mandela: No Easy Walk to Freedom* (London, 1965).

The years have slipped by and Mandela will be seventy on 18 July 1988; nevertheless, he remains physically disciplined, intellectually acute and a voracious reader. Outside the prison walls, South Africa's current turmoil has not only enhanced his standing still further among blacks, but among a minority of whites too. As the Commonwealth's Eminent Persons Group put it in their report *Mission to South Africa* (London, 1986), "Nelson Mandela has indeed become a living legend. Just as the gaoling of nationalist leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Jomo Kenyatta invested them with a unique aura and helped galvanize resistance to the colonial power, so, we believe, the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela is a self-defeating course for the South African Government to take" (p. 67).

Mandela's bonds of trust with the A.N.C. leadership remain strong, particularly an intimate friendship with his former legal partner, Oliver Tambo, president of the A.N.C. in exile. Nevertheless, this may not ensure his political future. Unfortunately the struggle against apartheid may be a prolonged one in the face of Afrikaner intransigence and the West's reluctance to apply tough

sanctions. In this case, South Africa will drift further into civil war and racial conflict in a bitter struggle radiating out into the whole region of Southern Africa. Only then will we see the full tragedy, for all the peoples of South Africa, of keeping Mandela in prison. While Mary Benson's *Nelson Mandela: The Man and the Movement* (New York, 1986) is a concise empathetic study, there is as yet no definitive biography of the man. Until such a work appears, *Nelson Mandela: The Struggle is My Life* is an important addition to one's personal library.

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