

Nelson Mandela, His Life in the Struggle: A Pictorial History. Published by the International Defense and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, c 1978, 1988. Pages unnumbered.

Nelson Mandela, founder and leader of the African National Congress (the major liberation force in South Africa), is a public figure. His pictorial history hence depicts public space - the mass meetings, trials, mass uprising - and very little of private, reflective or individual South Africa, as found in other, "prettier" photo essays. This book shows a nation in active struggle, with Mandela and other leaders in constant, active confrontation with the state and its forces.

Slightly more than half of the book is taken up with the early struggle in which Mandela is still physically a presence. Mandela and selected personalities are prominent in this section partly because of the nature of the struggle at that time when civil disobedience led by bourgeois, educated people held the national and international limelight. (There was, of course, resistance at the grass-roots level in the rural and urban areas, but the participants did not get as much attention by the writers of history).

In the latter half of the book personalities (except for Winnie Mandela) disappear and the varied types of organized mass action come to the fore, where Mandela is shown as an inspiration and rallying symbol for many. Clearly, resistance in South Africa is occurring now from the bottom up, with today's youth on the frontline, together with the involvement of every level of the community: unions, churches, women's groups, students, educators. In the images of the early years, the state apparatus is represented by the police as a civil force -- later the state apparatus is armed, in armored cars and full, 'active duty' war stance. Section 13 has a moving selection of pictures, testament to the earnestness of the freedom struggle.

The book's upbeat tone is created by positive images of strong people fighting on all levels. Sparse images of massacre and imprisonment serve to give an edge to the business of liberation. It is, after all, a serious, enduring power struggle of the unarmed people of South Africa against an entrenched, highly technologized and armed minority government.

One must not look here, however, for much in the way of analysis. It is more a description in an 'action/reaction' pattern between the government and its opposition. Ultimately, of course, there is the reality behind the myth: Mandela and/or his release cannot change what the South African people have to do to free themselves.

Photographs here are effective, for in having the power of visual concreteness they create human interest. Mandela, the man, comes alive, he has a history, was young once with a young wife. The stills have all the advantages of a book; they can be moved around to enable

the reader to read in comfort, or to show other people. Elements of the picture (such as broken-down doors, people's national costume, gestures) can reveal themselves simply by virtue of being there, whereas in a moving picture the editorializing focus of the camera can lose other compositional elements more quickly because of its mobility, unless they catch the eye by possessing movement, or possess striking color, or some such factor. The still picture can be perused time and time again, and also it can be duplicated.

Mandela himself realizes that his role has changed and that his greatest contribution now must be, alive or dead, as a symbol, a rallying cry, because sharing the emotion created by a common symbol is a very important part of shared political activity and part of building a new language that comes from a shared history of resistance. It must be very difficult for an active, intelligent man to move into such an opposite role, but Nelson Mandela lives up to it -- for he has comrades and the example of the less visible who are actually carrying the struggle in South Africa, and of those who have lost their lives in the struggle.

The subtleties and variables that have developed on the political scene in South Africa through the consecutive States of Emergency and the death of Steve Biko, making South Africa one of the most complex and closely-watched revolutions in the world, are glossed over (or just plain omitted) in favor of a simplified picture of opposing forces in South Africa today. Yet in this simplification the book achieves its purpose: it gives the basics about Mandela's life within the history of the ANC so that he can be better understood as a symbol of South African resistance and South African aspirations.

Cheryl Dandridge-Perry

Operation Timer: Pages From The Savimbi Dossier. Edited with an introduction by William Minter. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1988. \$6.95.

The existence of documents disclosing a secret cooperation agreement between Portuguese colonial army officials and UNITA has been known of in this country for over 10 years. The documents were discovered and published in the aftermath of the April 1974 coup that ended 40 years of fascism in Portugal and signalled the end of Portugal's 400 year colonial presence in Africa. Until now, no English language translation of all of the documents has been available. Operation Timer: Pages From The Savimbi Dossier is the first such translation. Therein lies the major importance of Minter's work.

Minter's book provides a complete set of the available documents from the Savimbi dossier, edited and translated from Portuguese or French to English. Photocopies of several of the