



# Lives of Courage: Women for a New South Africa

By Diana Russell

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In 1987 and 1988, Dr. Diana Russell journeyed from the United States to the land of her birth to learn about the special role of women in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. The fruit of her research is this extraordinary book: the first hand accounts, in their own words, of 24 courageous risk-taking women activists (portraits included). These are not only world-famous leaders like Winnie Mandela and Albertina Sisulu (although their stories are included in the book) but ordinary women who were trade unionists, members of radical organizations, student activists-black and white, African, Indian and Coloured, young and old. Lives of Courage: Women for a New South Africa compellingly dramatizes the little-known role of women who fought apartheid and its cruel apparatus-banning, banishment, house arrest, imprisonment, and torture-even as they strove to keep together their beleaguered families. With rare candor, they speak of the price they and families paid for their activism, of the difficulties of being a woman in a racist and sexist society, of the terrors they had endured, and of the dreams they nourished of a new South Africa. The fighting spirit of these women, their courage and conviction in the face of a modern state's vindictiveness, shines from every page of this inspiring book.

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## **Lives of Courage: Women for a New South Africa** By Diana Russell Bibliography

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

Apartheid, argues Russell ( *The Politics of Rape* ), sociology professor at Mills College in California, is intended to divide not only blacks from whites but all groups and families from each other. Raised in a white, English-speaking South African family, the author, who left at age 20, returned in 1987 to record these 24 moving oral histories of white and black women activist leaders of diverse ages, backgrounds and occupations in their struggles against oppression by the regime and by men. In addition to torture, sexual terrorism and degradation endured during prison terms, many of these women sacrificed motherhood to activism. Such famous leaders as Winnie Mandela, Albertina Sisula and Helen Joseph, among others included here, expect a revolution and stress the need for international pressure. Among those interviewed are members of the banned African National Congress, trade unions and groups primarily concerned with sexism and other feminist issues. These are tales of notable valor. Photos.

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From Library Journal

South Africa-born sociologist Russell talks with women of diverse ethnicity about their role in the struggle against apartheid which took them out of their homes and led them to the realization that they were being exploited by their own men as well as the government. From the support groups formed to help each other cope with the effects of terror, torture, solitary confinement, and split families grew feminist organizations of varied kinds. Russell sees a bleak future--with growing discontent of the majority, including many whites, violence is sure to escalate. Increased world consciousness of their plight is the only ray of hope. The number of books on this topic is increasing, and this one will round out women's studies collections, but is a necessity for only the largest of Africana collections.

- *Louise Leonard, Univ. of Florida Lib., Gainesville*

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About the Author

Diana E. H. Russell, Ph. D., was an Emerita Professor of Sociology at Mills College, Oakland, California, U.S.A., where she taught for 22 years. She is currently self-employed and works full-time on research, writing, consulting, lecturing, and feminist activism. Dr. Russell is the author/co-author/editor/co-editor of 17 books?most of them on sexual violence.

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