



Reflections in Prison (Robben Island Memories Series)

Mac Maharaj

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In 1976, when he was imprisoned on Robben Island, Nelson Mandela secretly wrote the bulk of his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*. The manuscript was to be smuggled out by fellow prisoner Mac Maharaj, on his release later that year. Maharaj also urged Mandela and other political prisoners to write essays on southern Africa's political future. These were smuggled out with Mandela's autobiography, and are now published for the first time, 25 years later, in *Reflections in Prison*.

This collection of essays provides a unique 'snapshot' of the thinking of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada and other leaders of the anti-apartheid struggle on the eve of the 1976 Soweto Uprising. It gives an insight into their philosophies, strategies and hopes, as they debate diversity and unity, violent and non-violent forms of struggle, and non-racism in the context of different interpretations of African nationalism.

Each essay is preceded by a short biography of the author, a description of his life in prison, and a pencil sketch by a leading black South African artist. The collection begins with a foreword by Desmond Tutu and a contextualising introduction by Mac Maharaj.

These essays are far more than historical artefacts. They reveal the thinking that contributed to the South African 'miracle' and address issues that remain burningly relevant today.

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