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Inside Apartheid's Prison

RAYMOND SUTTNER

"Raymond Suttner is one of a small number of white comrades who played a substantial role in bringing apartheid to an end. His book should be read by all who are interested in South Africa." – Walter Sisulu

"Inspiring, courageous, authentic. Raymond Suttner's *Inside Apartheid's Prison* embraces all of these adjectives, and more." – Eddie Daniels, author of *There and Back: Robben Island, 1964–1979*

Jacana Media is proud to make this important book available again, now with a completely new introduction. First published by Oceanbooks, New York and Melbourne and University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg in 2001, the book was short-listed for the Sunday Times Alan Paton Award in 2002.

In the public imagination the struggle that saw the end of apartheid and the inauguration of a democratic South Africa is seen as one waged by black people who were often imprisoned or killed for their efforts. Raymond Suttner, an academic, is one of a small group of white South Africans who was imprisoned for his efforts to overthrow the apartheid regime. He was first arrested in 1975 and tortured with electric shocks because he refused to supply information to the police. He then served 8 years because of his underground activities for the African National Congress and South African Communist Party.

After his release in 1983, he returned to the struggle and was forced to go underground to evade arrest, but was re-detained in 1986 under repeatedly renewed states of emergency, for 27 months, 18 of these in solitary confinement, because whites were kept separately and all other whites apart from Suttner were released. In the last months of this detention Suttner was allowed to have a pet lovebird, which he tamed and used to keep inside his tracksuit. When he was eventually released from detention in September 1988 the bird was on his shoulder.

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Suttner was held under stringent house arrest conditions, imposed to impede further political activities. He, however, defied his house arrest restrictions and attended an Organisation for African Unity meeting in Harare in August 1989 and he remained out of the country for five months. Shortly after his return, when he anticipated being re-arrested, the state of emergency was lifted and the ANC and other banned organisations were unbanned. Suttner became a leading figure in the ANC and SACP.

The book describes Suttner's experience of prison in a low-key, unromantic voice, providing the texture of prison life, but unlike most 'struggle memoirs' it is also intensely personal. Suttner is not averse to admitting his fears and anxieties.

The new edition contains an introduction where Suttner describes his break with the ANC and SACP. But, he argues, the reason for his rupturing this connection that had been so important to his life were the same – ethical reasons – that had led him to join. He remains convinced that what he did was right and continues to act in accordance with those convictions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Raymond Suttner, who lives in Johannesburg, is a part-time professor at Rhodes University and an Emeritus Professor at the University of South Africa. Initially a legal academic, he later obtained an interdisciplinary PhD in history, political studies and sociology. During the apartheid era he was jailed for his activities as an ANC underground operative, as described in this re-issued edition. His other titles include *The ANC Underground* (2008) and *Recovering Democracy in South Africa* (2015), both published by Jacana Media.