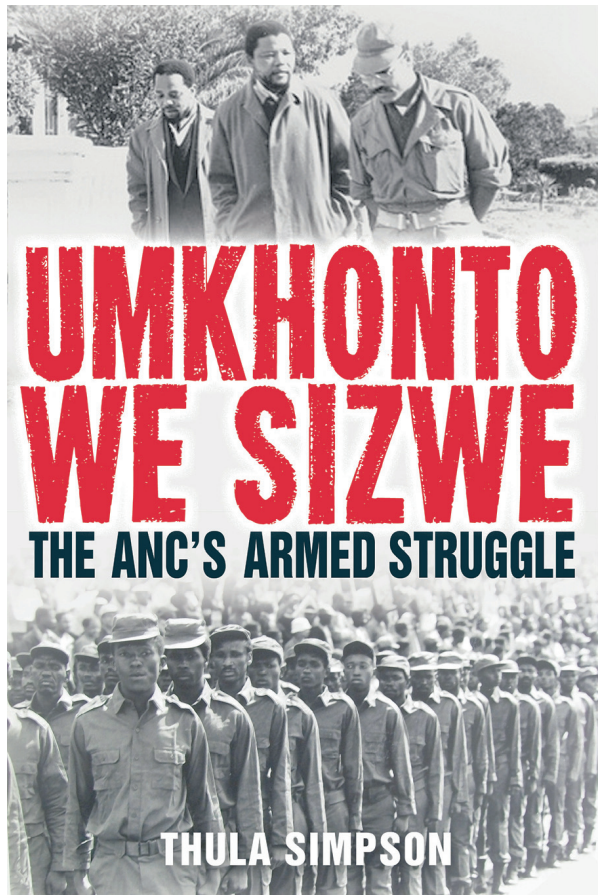
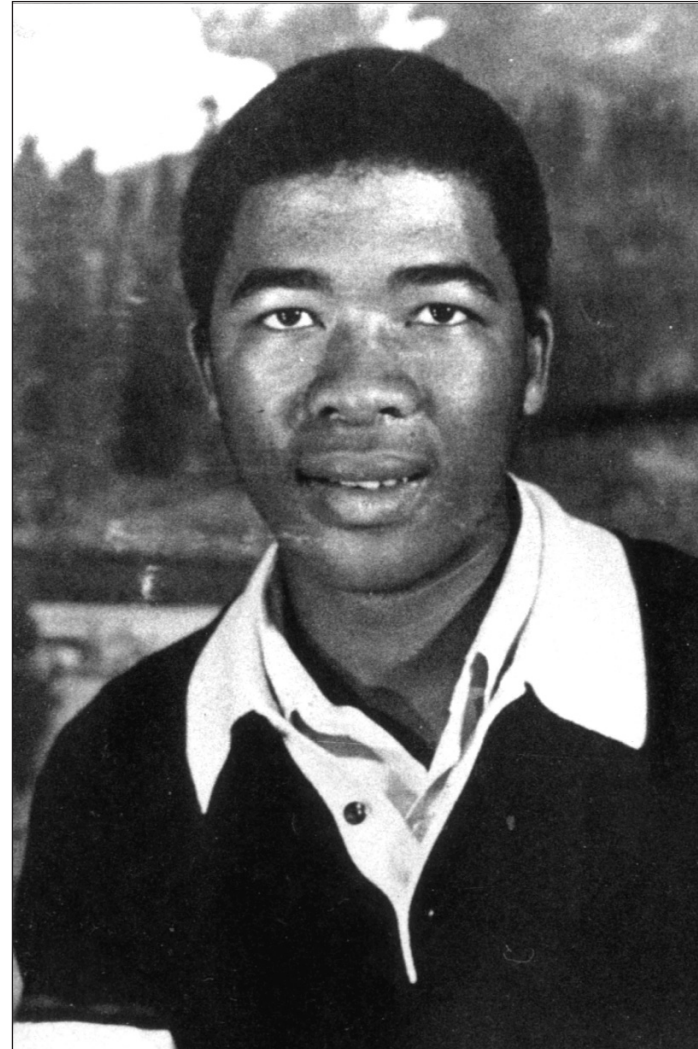


BOOK EXTRACT



Umkhonto we Sizwe: The ANC's Armed Struggle is the first in-depth study of the longest insurgency in South African history. Drawing closely from the writings and testimonies of the men and women who fought the armed struggle, it recreates the drama, heroism and tragedy of their experiences in their bid to free the country from the yoke of apartheid



GORDON WEBSTER: Went by the name Steve Mkhize.



ROBERT MCBRIDE: Mastermind of the rescue.



DERRICK MCBRIDE: Wanted to abort because of civilians.

From shouts of fear to 'Amandla!'

How Gordon Webster was sprung from Edendale Hospital

Author biography

Thula Simpson is a senior lecturer in the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies at the University of Pretoria.

She has spent a decade researching and writing on the history of the ANC's liberation struggle. His research has been conducted in Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, the UK and most extensively in South Africa.

His writing has been published in a number of scholarly publications, including the *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *African Studies*, the *South African Historical Journal*, *Social Dynamics* and the *African Historical Review*, as well as in edited book collections published by Wits University Press and the University of Cape Town Press.

Umkhonto we Sizwe: The ANC's Armed Struggle is his first single-authored book.

SERGEANT Richard Nxumalo and Detective Constable Dorasamy are driving along a deserted dirt road in Natal's Edendale district on the evening of April 27.

They see a Ford Granada, registered NP 86602, parked on the other side of the road. They see the backs of two men, who are standing by the boot, which is open.

Nxumalo orders Dorasamy to pull up. Upon seeing the police, one of the men, Gordon Webster, closes the boot.

Asked to open it, Webster says he doesn't have the key. Dorasamy radios to check if the Granada is stolen, while Nxumalo inspects the vehicle using the police car's headlights for illumination.

Lying on the ground by the boot he notices a brown leather bag and sees it contains several clips of ammunition.

Nxumalo draws his revolver and tells Webster and his colleague, Bheki Ngubane, to lie on the ground, face down.

As Dorasamy radios for help, Webster and Ngubane make a run for it in separate directions. Webster runs towards a barbed-wire fence while Ngubane flees across the road.

Webster's spectacles fall and he stumbles. Nxumalo orders him to stop. Webster ignores the call, after which Nxumalo fires several shots. Three of them hit Webster – two on his body, one on his right hand.

Webster continues running for a while before crashing into the fence, falling over it, and

tumbling on the other side.

Webster hears several more shots fired at Bheki Ngubane, who falls dead on the gravel verge on the edge of the dirt road.

Webster is taken to the second floor of Edendale Hospital's intensive care unit, where he is placed in a bed directly opposite the door.

On April 29, Robert McBride's father Derrick sees his son reading a newspaper in the takeaway attached to the family's Factorama workshop in Wentworth.

Robert McBride mentions "Steve Mkhize", who according to the report was injured by the police in an incident related to the ANC, during which somebody died. He says Steve Mkhize is somebody he knows.

On May 2, Robert McBride visits Antonio du Preez, a 22-year-old political activist in the Wentworth area.

McBride says a friend of his has been shot and is in hospital. The latest he has heard is that somebody is trying to kill him. The friend has undergone an operation and is in the intensive care unit. McBride says he wants to save his friend and would like Du Preez to help.

At about 4.20pm two days later, Derrick McBride is present alongside Matthew le Cordier, Antonio du Preez, Greta Apelgren and Welcome Khumalo at the Factorama workshop. Robert McBride addresses the group. There

is a piece of cardboard on the wall featuring a hand-drawn street map.

"There is no need to make an introduction, we know all of us for what purpose or reason we are all here," Robert McBride says. He points to the map and says, "This is the Edendale Hospital."

After cutting a hole in the perimeter fence at Edendale Hospital that evening, Robert McBride takes an AK-47 and a doctor's coat from a bag. He puts the coat on and places the AK under his arm. He tells Le Cordier to enlarge the hole while he and his father are in the hospital.

Antonio du Preez and Le Cordier then each take an AK-47 and wait by the bakkie that the group arrived in (Apelgren and Khumalo are elsewhere with orders to create an incident that will divert the police). Derrick McBride enters the gap in the fence first, followed by his son.

When the McBrides enter the hospital building Robert looks at his watch. It is 8.30pm.

As they approach the second floor via the stairs, Robert McBride sends his father to scout the route ahead. He tells him to turn left once he is in the ward and then left in the corridor. The bed is directly opposite the door of the ward.

Derrick McBride follows the instructions, but sees many civilians as well as some black policemen, so he retraces his steps. He returns to his son at the top of the stairs and says,

"Abort. Civilians". They make to withdraw, but then Robert McBride says he wants to see who these civilians are.

Constable Edward Ngcobo is leaving Ward 2R when he sees two men approaching.

The older is dressed in grey trousers and a grey jacket, the younger in a doctor's coat. As soon as they catch Ngcobo's eye they about-face and walk in the direction they came.

Ngcobo meets up with police colleagues and tells them the way those guys turned round was suspicious. He says he is going to see where they have gone.

Ngcobo has a pistol in his possession as he approaches the McBrides.

Realising he is being followed, Robert McBride takes his AK, which is half extended out of his coat, slips it off safety and onto automatic, and fires in front of him.

Derrick McBride looks behind and sees the policeman running away to the right of the corridor.

From his bed, Gordon Webster hears the fire from the AK. He also hears a single shot from a pistol.

Robert McBride is about one or two steps down the stairway when he turns and says to his father, referring to the policeman: "He's gone. Stay here and see that he doesn't come back."

The door bursts open in Gordon Webster's ward.

"Humphrey, Humphrey!" Robert McBride says, looking at bed number 4 which

stands directly opposite the door. It is empty.

Gordon Webster, who has been moved, has a white policeman next to him who draws a revolver and shoots at McBride, who turns round and returns the fire, striking the policeman in the arm. The policeman runs into an adjacent room. The policeman fires another shot through the closed door.

Now McBride sees Webster and approaches his bed. He tells Webster to stand up.

Webster can't. McBride pulls the drip and transfusion from the apparatus on which it is fixed. McBride asks a nurse conveying linen to give him the trolley.

The nurse is hysterical – screaming, shouting and holding her head.

"Keep quiet, keep quiet, keep quiet," McBride repeats.

There is a basket on the trolley, and McBride lifts Webster and puts him on the basket. Webster takes the AK-47 from McBride. This enables McBride to push the trolley with both hands.

As he pushes the trolley through the door of the ward and into the passage, there are scenes of chaos, with people running in all directions screaming. Webster fires a salvo into the ceiling.

McBride tells him: "Stop! Let's get out of here."

When they reach the stairs and try to go downstairs, the basket slides off the end of the trolley and Webster falls out. McBride picks him up and re-

turns him to the trolley. Further down, Webster falls again, and has to crawl down the last couple of stairs himself. At the bottom, McBride puts Webster on another trolley and places the AK-47 on the lower level. With the help of his father he wheels Webster to the fence.

Le Cordier and Du Preez see the McBride is pushing a man on a trolley towards them. Robert McBride calls out to Le Cordier to come help carry "Steve" off the trolley and put him on the back of the bakkie.

Le Cordier notices that Gordon Webster is holding an AK-47 and that he has some plaster on his stomach with a small piece of pipe sticking out.

With the trolley remaining on the other side of the fence, Le Cordier helps pull Webster through.

Robert McBride drives with his father in the front, while Du Preez and Le Cordier are in the back with Webster, who is naked on this freezing winter night. Du Preez and Le Cordier give Webster their jackets.

Word has somehow spread. As the bakkie makes off, there are people shouting their approval in the surrounding areas.

Nurses are shouting "Viva ANC!" and "Amandla!" from the hospital. Others in the hospital give the men a round of applause.

● This is an extract from *Umkhonto we Sizwe: The ANC's Armed Struggle* by Thula Simpson. Published by Penguin Books at a recommended retail price of R350.

Water crisis: It's up to each of us to do our bit

ARTHI SANPATH

DURBAN residents are facing water restrictions of 15 percent.

The provincial department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs announced earlier this week that restrictions were now mandatory, because water levels at dams were critical.

"If these water savings [of 15 percent] are achieved now, the amount of water in Midmar and Albert Falls which are two of the most drought-affected catchments in KZN, could last until the next rains come. If we do not act now, the water taps of some four to five million people who live within these catchments will run dry," said MEC Nomsa Dube-Ncube.

She added that the department has also procured more than 53 motorised water tankers for various districts, drilled more than 150 boreholes and refurbished 85 back into operation, and provided emergency relief to the farming community, at a total cost of about R600 million to counter-



act the effects of the drought.

Durban residents, meanwhile, are taking up the cudgils in the campaign to conserve water – from reusing grey water (water from bathroom sinks, showers, tubs, and washing machines) to volunteering their skills in fixing pipes, to even organising bus tours to dams to see first hand the impact of the drought.

Recently, the non-profit organisation Life Long Learning KZN, presented a talk by Prof David Sedlak, director of the Institute for Environmental Science and Engineering at the University of California, to a group of Durbanites on water conservation.

It was presented by Technology, Entertainment and Design, an international non-profit organisation dis-

seminating information on varied topics usually via a short presentation. Videos of these presentations are available free on their website.

In his presentation, Sedlak argued that urban residents did not know what a catastrophic drought felt like, as it was easy to open a tap and get water.

According to Sedlak, there were four ways to ensure water supply to urban areas.

"The first method is via stormwater harvesting. One of the greatest tragedies is that most of our cities are covered by concrete, but if we designed cities in such a way that the water was able to permeate into the ground into the natural water table, and then draw from that, we would be able to ensure water supply."

Sedlak said studies showed that if half the stormwater that fell over San Jose, California, was collected it would supply water to residents for a year.

"Creating a large stormwater park into which stormwater drains can be

routed, passing through a natural filtration system such as a wetland, is one solution," he said.

The other methods Sedlak said were water re-use, water conservation and seawater desalination.

Jane Fraser of the Berea said she had already called in a company to install a system where her greywater was collected and reused in her garden.

"It's working well and I am able to use the waste water in my garden, it's a worthwhile investment in these times, and I found the presentation very informative."

Bernard Bryers, chairman of the Durban branch of the Institute of Certified Mechanical and Electrical Engineers said he had been trying to contact various government departments to volunteer his expertise.

"I feel that with my mechanical engineering background I can be of help possibly in fixing or maintaining pipes, especially as ageing and burst pipes are a common reason for water wastage," he said.

GO WILD

World Wildlife Day 3 MARCH

World Wildlife Day is on March 3rd to raise awareness of endangered animals and plants, and ways to fight against wildlife crime. This is a United Nations initiative to safeguard the natural environment for future generations.

Over the month of March the Sunday Tribune will showcase some of the province's top resorts and game reserves, and the challenges they face in protecting wildlife species that are under threat.

Initiatives that are making a difference, tourism outfits and leisure resorts, products and service providers who would like to show association to this special initiative and advertise in the feature should contact:
Patsy Chitray 031 308 2816
E-mail: patsy.chitray@inl.co.za

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