



Mercenaries: Putting the World to Rights with Hired Guns

Al Venter

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Mercenaries have been a part warfare for centuries, and though the names have changed, continue to play a part in global military conflicts. In today's world these "soldiers for hire" are an attractive alternative when Western governments are reluctant to put their militaries at risk for obscure causes that would otherwise be difficult to explain to their electorates.

In this book noted author and foreign correspondent Al Venter provides a fascinating look at modern merc actions in the Middle East and Africa. From brushfire wars in the Congo to outright genocides in Biafra, highly skilled mercenaries were called upon to fight for order, and also for a living. Whether facing fanatics in Somalia or revolutionaries in Rhodesia, staving off cannibals in Sierra Leone or assisting a civil war in Angola the mercs put their lives on the line for a cause.

Many mercenaries freelanced, but under talented freebooting leaders some groups became crack outfits. South Africa's Executive Outcomes became a legend in its own time like a quasi military itself, as it dispatched fighters throughout the continent. Like an ad hoc Foreign Legion, fighters came from all countries around the globe to participate in the combats. In the US, the publisher of Soldier of Fortune magazine organized repeated expeditions from Laos to Peru. In Afghanistan the renowned helicopter gunship pilot Nellis has recently lent his skills after almost singlehandedly defeating gruesome insurgencies in Africa.

In this book Al Venter, who was actively involved in the direction and production of segments of the TV series "Mercenaries," provides both background to this unique class of warriors, and a fascinating look at their methods and actions.

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