

PREFACE

The work that went into this book began by accident in March 1980 in an obscure rural slum in South Africa. For me, the project resembled the assembly of a vast and complex jigsaw without a preview of the final picture. The pieces of the jigsaw were gathered, slowly and haphazardly, over a period of more than ten years. Even as I write this preface, the last item to go to the publisher, I still pursue odd pieces, loose ends. In this sense, of course, the work will never be completed. Many people helped me to find the pieces or to discern their place in an emerging pattern. I should like to thank them here.

Above all, I am indebted to those whom I encountered in Onverwacht in 1980 and who committed their indignation and resilience and humour and parts of their life stories, unwittingly sometimes, to my field diaries. Together, their stories led me to ask the questions which ultimately shaped this book. I am also indebted to many other people, in Thaba Nchu and elsewhere, whose experience and goodwill gave me raw material. The endnotes for each chapter specifically attribute much of this material and also identify the other sources, published and unpublished, that I have used. Other debts should be explicitly acknowledged here.

Many people gave me hospitality and help of various kinds. In Thaba Nchu itself, I have to thank particularly Raphael Mothe and Peter Brislin and other priests of the Catholic mission; Walter Gill and his family, of the Methodist church; and Lawrence and Dorothy Hall, of the Presbyterian church. Throughout the 1980s, Eunice Sebotha gave me sharp and seasoned guidance to the intricate affairs of the Barolong elite. Sam Bairstow's generous bar gave me access to the hardly less intricate affairs of the English-speaking farming families south of Tweespruit. David Ambrose, in Lesotho, gave me the benefit of his unrivalled knowledge of sources for the region, ranging from old newspapers to modern maps. He and Sumitra Talukdar were also warm hosts on several occasions, as were John and Judy Gay of the Transformation Resource Centre in Maseru. For their hospitality, friendship and assistance, I want to thank Joan and Tony McGregor, outside Johannesburg; and Connie and Mollie Anderson, outside Bloemfontein. John and Pam Parr, near Thaba Phatshwa, introduced me to the 'Coloured' village there and also kindly put me up. John and Jill Moffett, on their farm near Gumtree (eastern Orange Free State), helped me with my enquiries on the Newberry family; and David Boddam-Whetham, of Cathcart (eastern Cape), whom I never met, wrote at length with his reminiscences of three generations of that family.

Janet Tomkins worked for me in Bloemfontein and with me in Pretoria. Her special quality of attending to fine detail turned a potentially tedious trawl of transfer deeds and mortgage bonds into a mine of fascinating information. Laurine Platzky, who co-ordinated the Surplus People Project, offered tireless support to me over many years. Karen Legge pursued particular sources for me in the Botswana National Archives, Gaborone. Andy Manson obtained copies of land transactions registered in Mmabatho (Bophuthatswana). Kevin Shillington and Brian Willan responded generously to my several impositions on their expertise. John Parkington in Cape Town, David Scogings in Durban and Glen Mills in Bloemfontein enabled me to obtain aerial photographs of Thaba Nchu and Onverwacht/Botshabelo. Tim Couzens in Johannesburg made contact with the daughter of a Milner settler on my behalf. William Beinart, Mark Beittel and Diana Wylie made separate exploratory forays for me in the Union Archives in Pretoria. Andrew Spiegel carried out one interview for me in Cape Town, pursued a number of enquiries on my behalf and managed my precarious finances in South Africa for more than a decade.

For help with documentary evidence in Britain and South Africa, I should like particularly to thank Anna Cunningham, Curator of Manuscripts of the library of the University of the Witwatersrand; Annica Van Gylswyk of the Documentation Centre for African Studies, University of South Africa; Michael Berning, Cory Librarian, Rhodes University; and Anne Rowland, of the Sydney Jones Library, University of Liverpool. I also acknowledge the help of staff at the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London; Rhodes House, Oxford; the Public Record Office, London; the Orange Free State Archives, Bloemfontein; the Union Archives, Pretoria; the Deeds Registry and the offices of the Surveyor-General and the Master of the Supreme Court, Bloemfontein.

Several people translated documents for me from Setswana or Afrikaans or Dutch into English: Catharine Thupayagale, William Beinart, Reinier Holst, Joan McGregor, John Sharp, Marij van Helmond and Emanuel Kreike. I remember also the intensive sessions of 'school' work we undertook in 1980 outside the Bakane homestead in Ha Motšoane, Leribe district, Lesotho, transcribing and translating interviews from Onverwacht recorded in Sesotho. Mmapuleng Moetsuo Bakane, in her inimitably caustic manner, contributed most to that task.

I am grateful to the Directors of the Southern African Research Program at Yale University, who invited me to spend the Fall semester of 1988 in New Haven as a Fellow of the Program. It was indeed a haven for writing. For company and conversation in that period, I especially thank Diana Wylie, William Beinart and Dunbar Moodie.

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For their support and enthusiasm over the years, I should like to thank John Peel, Sandy Robertson and Francis Wilson. I am very grateful for all the help I received. I take sole responsibility for the way in which I have fitted the pieces of the jigsaw together.

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