

Acknowledgments

When I first began the research for this book, in 1992, only 16 years had passed since the Soweto uprising. Now South Africa has just celebrated the 30th anniversary of the uprising. It is difficult at times to account for the passage of so many years but it is evident that many people have contributed to this work during that time. I have incurred many debts. This book is testimony to those who have stood by my side and who have supported me and contributed to my work for the past 16 years. 1

Driving through modern Soweto it is sometimes hard to imagine what physical aspect would have stayed with us on that cold winter morning in June, 1976; Soweto has changed even in the past five years, squatter camps have disappeared, parks have greened everywhere, road construction heralds new development, HIV/Aids campaign billboards stand at many corners as reminders of the new challenges South Africa faces. But there are reminders of the past: physical ones like looming light masts and bullet holes in the red brick walls of township houses, and photographic ones that allow us to swirl back through time and look through their window into the past. This book would not be the same without the many photographs that provide both illustration and depth in time. Images provide us with a sense of the layeredness of experience, of the way physical surroundings change and remain the same over time. An image, grainy with age perhaps, or faded with time, can take us back visually, but also provides a contrast to the present. For the use of photographs taken through time I would like to thank the National Archives and Verne Harris, my late step father Derek Watson, Roger Swan and Sifiso Ndlovu, who helped me photographically retrace the steps of the students and walk the landscape of the Soweto uprising.

My thank you goes to the nameless (police) photographers who documented the uprising—their work provided valuable insight into the state's point of view and a chilling foil to the images taken by Sam Nzima, Peter Magubane and other black photographers who have left us with many striking historical photographs of the uprising. For his patience crisscrossing Soweto with me in search of the landmarks of the past and for the captivating images that day produced, my deepest gratitude to Roger Swan. For his remarkable photographic vision, now lost to us but captured in some of the images here, I would also like to remember and acknowledge the work of my late father, Derek Watson.

Reluctant to be responsible for yet another (mis)appropriation, I searched for Sam Nzima to secure permission to use his photograph of Hector Pieterse as well as to hear his story. I did not want to repeat the disrespect of others towards Mr. Nzima, but despite numerous attempts, it seemed impossible to reach him. Many years after I completed the dissertation, I visited the Hector Pieterse Museum with a group of students from St. Olaf College in Northfield. As I had done some

work for the museum, the curator welcomed my students and myself and—a few minutes later—introduced me to the gentleman who had been standing at his side: Sam Nzima. After a long conversation, in which I explained my work and my understanding of the history of the photograph, he very kindly agreed to permit me to use his famous photograph in the book. My warmest thanks go to him and to the American Historical Association for covering the royalty fees for this image and for thus making it possible to place the photograph centrally in this book.

The Gutenberg-e Award of the American Historical Association, the Mellon Foundation and Columbia University Press has made the publication of this book, the creation of the digital archive associated with it, and its translation into the electronic medium possible. For their vision and the challenge of its execution, their financial, technical, organizational and conceptual support, as well as for their patience and partnership in this daunting project, I am grateful to Kate Wittenberg, Gordon Dahlquist, Nick Frankovich (for his meticulous copy-editing and for helping me see both the trees and the forest), Sean Costigan, Karen Sabino Desiderio, David Millman, and Jim Burger at EPIC (Electronic Publishing Initiative at Columbia) and Columbia University Press; Robert Darnton, Pillarisetti Sudhir, Elizabeth Fairhead and Robert Townsend at the American Historical Association; my fellow Gutenberg-e authors whose work around the big table in Butler Library was a source of inspiration and support; and Sharene Azimi, Vyn Raskopf and no doubt many people behind the scenes/screens, who helped pick up the pieces, and carried this project to completion with a sense of urgency and dedication. 5

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