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Acknowledgements

In 1971 Nelson Mandela wrote a letter from Robben Island to his old friend Fatima Meer, in which he expressed doubt about memoirs — ‘What a sweet euphemism for self-praise the English language has evolved! Autobiography.’ And yet just four years later he had embarked on the first draft of what was to become his bestselling memoir Long Walk to Freedom.

As Mum Graça Machel indicates in the prologue to this book, the contingencies of time and struggle informed his decisions to write both Long Walk and the early sections of what has become this volume. The same contingencies ensured lengthy gestation periods for both books – each book took almost twenty years to get published.

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