



In Our Own Skins: A Political History of the Coloured People

Richard van der Ross

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The Coloured community of South Africa came into being after 1652, when the Dutch and, later, the British seeped into southern Africa's arid west, forming an uneasy alliance with the indigenous people. In the first unions between settlers and indigenous peoples, the Coloured people of the Cape flicker to life. Fast-forward to 1910, the Union of South Africa, which sees the Coloured people lose what little parliamentary representation they had under the British. *In Our Own Skins* is the extraordinary record of the Coloured community and its 84-year battle to regain the franchise, told through the eyes of uncompromising insider Richard van der Ross. From the Stone meetings, conducted from a boulder on a windswept District Six hillside, to a petition carried, torch-like, to faraway London in 1909, it maps a trajectory of loss - and of restoration. Its rich cast - among others, the Glasgow-educated Dr Abdullah Abdurahman, his fiery daughter Cissie Gool, the Ghanaian FZS Peregrino, Jimmy and Alex la Guma and Labour Party stalwart Allan Hendrickse - plays a leading role in pulling the Coloured people through the post-colonial morass that is South Africa up to 1994 and beyond and proudly placing them, fully represented, in the Cabinet of Nelson Mandela.

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