

AUTHOR'S NOTE

TRACING the life of Sir Arnold Theiler K.C.M.G. presented a curious paradox. On the one hand, his family with Swiss diligence and dedication went to extravagant lengths to recover and preserve everything written and published by and about him as well as his personal records. On the other, his lifetime employer the South African Government took no care whatever and nothing survives of his immense correspondence particularly with eminent men of his time, his administrative papers nor any record of his professional career beyond his published Reports. There survives in the State Archives Theiler's 'Personal File' which, for reasons apparent in this narrative, has not been made available to previous aspirant biographers nor the present writer.

The obligation to collect and preserve archival material has been recognised only comparatively recently in South Africa and strenuous and costly efforts have been made to establish adequate services. There is no evidence, as H. Watkins Pitchford insinuated, that Onderstepoort destroyed early records; but it is clear that during the Second World War, they were misguidedly removed and stored in a basement which, periodically flooded and inhabited by hoboos, earthworms, rodents and other vermin, virtually destroyed them. There remained available in the Director's office only the invaluable Visitors Book from Daspoort 1906-1908 to Onderstepoort October 1908-December 1936 and in a Strong Room, a few files recording early experiments. Furthermore, despite its worldwide fame, there is no published history of the Onderstepoort Veterinary Research Institute (as in the case of the Rockefeller Institute and others) nor of the South African veterinary profession.

When Dr Gertrud Theiler agreed to make family and other records available to me, I knew none of this and would certainly have withdrawn my request for facilities to record her father's life had I been aware. Compensations were however later found in an intensive study of his background. Other attempts to record his biography had failed for various reasons but Dr Gertrud herself had composed under duress 'Arnold Theiler 1867-1936', a short monograph published in 1971 by the University of Pretoria. She had been denied the time to consult the wealth of material contributed by the family in Switzerland, carefully preserved by Lady Theiler and collected by herself subsequently.

'The Theiler Papers' in family possession consist of:

Arnold's letters to his parents, his brother Alfred and friends from 1892 onward;

Emma's letters to his parents and to Alfred until 1936;

Arnold's letters to P. J. du Toit and vice versa;

Emma's letters to her daughters over a latter period which they dutifully preserved though she destroyed their letters to her when she left Lucerne in 1933;

Miscellaneous official and private letters;

A collection of files dealing with matters in which Theiler was implicated;

Theiler's Account Book kept by Emma in Johannesburg from 1894 onward;

Emma's engagement books for a number of years;

The certificates of all his awards, naturalisation papers, etc;

A list of his Scientific Papers from 1893 until 1934 compiled by Lady Theiler;

A large number of these publications;

A series of photograph albums and a large number of photographs, programmes, invitations, tickets, passes, Press cuttings, etc:

In addition, there were many evocative personal possessions, including his decorations, apparel, travelling trunks, etc, some donated to Museums.

With the thought of their publication in 1967 on the centenary of his father's birth, Max translated an edited version of his early letters into Americanese English which varied from the original German. The family had punctiliously extracted 'unpublishable' details in their typed transcripts of the originals and I am deeply grateful that both the expurgated and unexpurgated versions were made available to me in the original German which I then had to learn. Fortunately there was no Schwitzerdutsch. During a visit to Switzerland in 1971, I had the pleasure and benefit of being driven over a large part of the country by Alfred 2 (who sadly died before the completion of this work), his wife Elsie Zurcher and Arnold's niece Klärli Mettauert, accompanied by an English-speaking relative Marianne Eichenberger. They took me to his birthplace at Frick, his High School at Aarau, his universities at Berne and Zurich with their Veterinary Schools, the village of Beromunster when he first practised, and many other significant locales. I later met Klara Theiler, daughter of Alfred 1. All helped to collect, preserve and transcribe Arnold's letters for which no thanks could be adequate. They also assisted me in the course of my work, Alfred 2 obtaining the rare photograph of Arnold as a student and Klara and Klärli answering numerous questions when they subsequently visited South Africa.

To Dr Gertrud Theiler, I owe unbounded gratitude for the kind, patient and unreserved assistance rendered me over seven years and more. Neither she nor her sister Margaret nor other members of the family are in any way responsible for the manner in which I have interpreted the material kindly placed at my disposal and assembled by myself. I have recorded the life of Sir Arnold as the evidence indicated.

Warm and affectionate appreciation is offered to H.R.H. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone whose phenomenal memory, alert interest and gracious patronage of this and other of my works, have continuously provided inspiration and encouragement as they did Theiler. It was possible to inform her on her 95th birthday that his biography was completed.

Of the legion of individuals who actively and continuously assisted me, I am particularly indebted to those who knew Theiler at his zenith and after retirement, notably Miss Mary Gunn, historian of the National Institute of Botanical Research, Pretoria whose keen interest, astounding memory, recollection of Arnold Theiler and his colleagues, and loan of relevant literature were indispensable; Dr B. D. Pullinger, pathologist, adviser and friend who scrutinised this work in manuscript; Dr J. H. R. Bisschop, one of Theiler's first students and ultimate expert on bionomics who kindly conducted me over Onderstepoort recapturing 'the old man's days', and lent pictorial and literary material; Dr W. O. Neitz, protozoologist and collector of veterinary history who made much material available before Brazil coöpted him for research work there; and Dr E. M. Robinson of Knysna who was closely associated with Sir Arnold for many years.

The Honourable the Minister of Agriculture, Mr Hendrik Schoeman, the Departmental Secretary Dr W. Verbeek and the Under-Secretary Mr B. W. Viljoen kindly did what they could to repair the lack of record. Exceptional efforts were made at the Veterinary Research Institute at Onderstepoort where the then Deputy-Director Dr M. de Lange kindly permitted loan of Journals and Reports. I am indebted also to Dr K. E. Weiss and particularly to the head of the Photographic Department, Mr H. M. de Bruyn who, in addition to supplying many illustrations, maintained a lively and encouraging interest. The stately Library also contributed helpful information and reference works.

The State (incorporating the Transvaal) Archives in the Union Building accorded me exceptional facilities among much unclassified material and I am most grateful to the Chief Archivist and his staff, particularly Dr M. H. Buys who directed me to useful sources. At the Cape Archives Depôt, the then Chief, Miss Joan Davies rendered customary valuable assistance.

Much of my investigation was made in that extraordinary institution, the Johannesburg Public Library and Africana Museum where the then City Librarian and Director of the

Museum, Miss A. H. Smith provided unbounded facilities. For her interest and encouragement, I am deeply grateful and for that of members of her staff, notably Miss Jill Ogilvie, Mrs Louise de Wet and Mr James Winter. Rich in resource and efficiency, J. P. L. and its Strange Collection of Africana supply the most exigent researcher's demands with grace and enthusiasm. Valuable assistance was also rendered me by the Librarian John W. Perry and his deputy the late I. Isaacson of the University of the Witwatersrand whose Gubbins Collection through the kindness of its librarian Miss M. Farmer kindly permitted long loan of Petrus Naudé's highly relevant thesis. I am indebted also to Miss M. Lucas, then librarian of the University's Medical School. Similar assistance was also kindly extended by the Library of Rhodes University, the Library of Parliament, the Kimberley Public Library and the Adler Museum of Medical History in Johannesburg.

From private sources I derived particular benefit. *The Star* in Johannesburg accorded me exceptional privileges in consulting for months on end under the aegis of its then librarian Mrs M. Bondesio to whom I am deeply indebted, its earliest issues (not microfilm) and having them photocopied in which Mrs M. van Rooyen was notably helpful. These issues enshrine the only available records and minutes of many historic institutions and without them, much of my work would have been impossible. I am most grateful to the Argus Group, proprietors of *The Star*, for their kind coöperation and for their permission to reproduce their historic photograph of General Smuts presenting the British Agricultural Gold Medal to Theiler.

Similar service was openhandedly rendered me by Mr J. C. D. Osler of *The Stellalander*, successor to the *Northern News*, of Vryburg where, over many weeks, I was able to trace the smallest details of the Lamziekte epic and its sequelae. In a crowded country newspaper office, I was an embarrassment but the Vryburg Public Library kindly accommodated me when Mr Osler permitted the daily transport thither of his archival files dating from the early *Bechuanaland News*. It was much appreciated help.

The Schweizerverein Helvetia in Johannesburg had preserved its original Minute Book for whose availability I was most grateful. For similar willingness in assisting me, I thank the archival departments of the Chamber of Mines of South Africa, the South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy and Messrs Barlow-Rand Ltd whose archivist, Miss M. Fraser was most helpful.

Of the host of private individuals to whom I am indebted, I acknowledge first and foremost the unstinted assistance of the late Dr Petrus Naudé who from his sickbed sent me his research references and notes (kindly donated to me by his widow) for his indispensable doctorate thesis 'Boerdery in die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek 1857-1899'. Mr P. Ulrich Rissik, son of Johann, kindly transported me to the Irene Estate created by Alois Nellmapius (whose daughter-in-law Mrs Frieda Nellmapius provided valuable biographical details) owned by his son-in-law David van der Byl who accorded me every possible facility including historic photographs of the farmstead where Theiler first worked. I am grateful to the librarians of the Royal Veterinary College and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons' Wellcome Library, London for generous assistance in identifying early veterinary surgeons in South Africa, and to the Royal Society of South Africa whose centenary publication 'A History of Scientific Endeavour' makes much mention of Theiler; to Miss Kathleen Murray of Elgin, Cape for information on her grandfather Sir John Molteno; to Sir Drummond Dunbar, 9th baronet, of Jersey for the photograph of his grandfather; to Mrs M. L. Hahn of Durban for biographical details of her uncle Dr Cecil Schulz; to the nonagenarian Hans K. Ritter for personal experience of the Smallpox at Theiler's hands; to the centenarian Mrs Emily Greathead for details of early Johannesburg; to the then Prime Minister Mr B. J. Vorster for clarifying the relationship of the man of his name who offered to supply donkeys to the Z.A.R. during the Rinderpest and for referring me to sources

through whom I received an original Proclamatie drafted by Theiler at the time, kindly donated by Mr B. J. Hofmeyr of Deloskop; to Miss Lenore Phillips of Salisbury for descriptions of Rinderpest in Rhodesia; to Dr Roy Mack of the Commonwealth Bureau of Animal Health at Weybridge for his study of Rinderpest and access to two of Watkins-Pitchford's letters; to Mrs G. E. Lugg of Natal for biographical material on her father, Herbert Watkins-Pitchford; to the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture for information on his grandfather General Hendrik Schoeman; to Mr F. E. Leese of the Rhodes House Library, Oxford for information, particularly on F. B. Smith; to Miss M. Laver for making available her father's historic photographs of Middelburg with Milner, Selborne and others; to Mr B. Birman for generously copying relevant portions of the *Middelburg Observer*; to the Earl of Selborne for biographical details of his great-grandfather Lord Selborne; to the late Dr Petronella van Heerden for reminiscences of her kinsman H. C. van Heerden, Minister of Agriculture; to the Royal Agricultural Society of England for access to its records in London; to the Dictionary of South African Biography for privileged facilities; to Mr André Bothner for recollections of Sir Arnold; to Mr Gerrit Bakker who kindly translated from the original Dutch/Nederlands and otherwise assisted; to Mrs Gladys (P. R.) Viljoen for reminiscences; Dr P. J. J. Fourie; Major Cecil Cowley; Mrs Louise Behrens; Mr Arnold Katz; Dr Jean van der Poel; the late Dr John H. Gear and many others to whom tribute is owing.

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I am particularly indebted to Mr Stanley Evans who generously contributed his skill and wide historical knowledge to designing the maps in a spirit of the happiest coöperation.

At the outset of my work, the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa awarded a Senior Bursary (Research and Travel) ultimately approaching R2,000. I wish to record my deepest appreciation of the Council's kind consideration and patience during the unexpectedly lengthy period that the investigation entailed, and of the particular assistance of Miss K. Henshall. At no time was pressure brought to bear on me nor doubt cast on the validity of my labours. The absence of harassment and the implied sense of confidence were of the highest value and encouragement. In the Council's custody for reference by students and scholars is a fully-documented copy of this work which may be consulted on application to The President, Human Sciences Research Council, Private Bag X41, Pretoria 0001, South Africa. In its text, the spelling of all names and terms including scientific follows the usage of the times and changes accordingly.

To my publisher and longstanding friend, Mr Howard B. Timmins, I am indebted for exceptional care and coöperation in the production of this book to which he devoted enheartening energy and enthusiasm.

With particular warmth, I extend my gratitude to my kinsman Mr Philipp Rowland Gutsche through whose public-spirited generosity, the printing of the work was made possible and the cost of copies reduced to the minimum for the benefit of those who might take advantage of it.

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THELMA GUTSCHE