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# EDUCATION, POLITICS AND ORGANISATION

## THE EDUCATIONAL TRADITIONS AND LEGACIES OF THE NON-EUROPEAN UNITY MOVEMENT, 1943-1986\*

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The political culture of the Western Cape, so any writer or visitor to the city of Cape Town and beyond will attest, is distinctive from that characterising the rest of the country. Wherever one stands on the organised political spectrum, it is distinctive for its combativeness, its intellectual assertiveness, and its critical disposition. Of course not all Western Cape activists or trade unionists are combative, or display critically enquiring minds. Nor are these qualities always an indisputable 'good'. Nonetheless, whatever the reservations and qualifications, it can be said that the political style of the Western Cape is distinctive. And it is remarkable. Sufficiently remarkable that it ought to be written about.

The reasons for this distinctive character are of course complex and varied. Amongst these the political style and traditions established by the Non-European Unity Movement which grew out of the Anti-Coloured Affairs Department (Anti-CAD) campaign of the early 1940s must be included. It must be stressed that this is not the only, or even most significant political movement in the Western Cape; nor does it account for traditions that may have developed in the African townships. The re-emergence of Congress and Communist Party politics on a mass scale within the last decade in all areas also testifies to the existence of strong traditions outside that of the Unity Movement. These do appear, however, to have a broadly national character, unlike that of the Unity Movement, which seems to be specific to the Western Cape. As such, it must go some way towards accounting for the particular character associated with Western Cape politics.

Why Unity Movement politics emerged in the Western Cape when and in the form it did is clearly a moot point. Why intellectuals here and nowhere else in the country should have been particularly receptive to Trotskyist approaches and ideas needs extensive research into the context and origins of the NEUM. It is not the subject of this paper. At its broadest level, the reasons must, however, include the early emergence of an artisanate in Cape Town, and what Bill Nasson has called 'the particular ethnic, social and economic structure of the Western Cape', an area, which 'has contained South Africa's largest concentration of people classified "Coloured", with an elite cultural milieu distinguished by a traditional cluster of intellectually

excellent high schools and a politically alert and articulate coterie of sharp petty-bourgeois radicals.

In this paper, the different splits and contending lines within the Western Cape Trotskyist tradition will be backgrounded in the interests of examining the contribution of the movement as understood in its broadest sense. Although they are significant, the interest and concern of this paper is the educational focus of the movement as a whole (see Rassool, 1990; *Searchlight South Africa*).

Many commentators and critics have lambasted the movement for its petty-bourgeois social base and the dominance of teachers within its organisational structures (Simons, 1976; Lewis, 1987; Alexander, 1986; Gentle, 1978). To this is ascribed its failure to organise a mass base, to move beyond the realm of education and ideas. What is seen in one context by some writers as a weakness or a failing can, in another, be perceived as its strength. An ambiguous and contradictory strength, but a strength nonetheless: the creation of a disciplined, critical and oppositional culture in schools and cultural life which placed a heavy emphasis on the subversive and liberating capacities of education.

Certainly this emphasis on education by a mainly teacher base was both its strength and its failing. Its strength can be measured in an examination of the origins of the political leadership of the Western Cape today. As Neville Alexander, himself a dissident product of the movement, has written somewhat sweepingly but not without a grain of truth: 'Hardly any young intellectual in the Western Cape entered political life (between the forties and the early seventies) but through the portals of the NEUM. Even its opponents and rivals ... could not escape its all-pervasive influence' (Alexander, 1986:2). Its failure can be measured in the extent to which the movement failed to appreciate the new forces at work in the post-1976 era. Amongst others, it lost the youth in the 1980s when a more action-oriented generation displaying to some a certain 'impatience with ideas' emerged (interview A). While it managed to 'keep certain things alive' in the 'dark and gloomy' 1960s such that by 1976 'everybody recognised that there was nothing else besides the Unity Movement, not even the ANC, in Cape Town', (Interview B) the NEUM lost its momentum in the late 1970s and early 1980s when it failed to respond to the renewed possibility for mass organisation and action and instead remained locked in a paralysing security consciousness which forbade it from abandoning earlier clandestine styles of working (Interview C).

In the context of the later 1980s' collapse of schooling and repeated refrain of the demoralisation of teachers, it seems timely to ask: how did they do it? In the long run they may have failed, but how did they manage, 'in the darkest days of repression' (Interview B), to establish their control securely over schools which are noted today for both their academic excellence and for being political schools; to build a corps of teachers noted not only for their political commitment, but also for their 'emphasis on teaching well' (Interview B); to educate politically generations of the youth who are distinguished both for their theoretical and political acuity as

well as being widely read; and to influence so thoroughly the political culture of the Western Cape? Alongside these questions, one also needs to ask, and what was their undoing? How were they undone? And is the tradition they established, going well beyond itself, now dead?

In answering these questions - how did they do it? and why and how were they undone? - one needs to look, then, at the three main areas of their activity: schools, teachers and youth, and political and cultural education outside of the schools. These three areas also need to be examined in an historical context. For a 'tradition', albeit an 'invented and constructed' one, can only be developed in and through history: both the work of the inventors, as well as the cementing mix of time and memory, give a 'tradition' its sense of continuity and stability, even though at the time it was constantly contested, in flux, and insecure.

Three main periods can be identified. The first is that between 1943 and 1963, the second 1963-1976, and the third 1976-1985. Although the roots of the Non-European Unity Movement lay in the 1930s, in the decade and years before the Second World War, it dates its own emergence to 1943, the year of the formation of the Anti-CAD. The Anti-CAD was formed to oppose the government-created Coloured Affairs Department, and was an amalgam of different organisations united by a Trotskyist or non-collaborationist perspective. The 1940s and 1950s were high points of organisational and political work. The NEUM engaged in several campaigns around the imposition of apartheid, but also focused much of its energy on the Transkeian rural areas where some within its ranks believed the peasantry formed an essential motor of social transformation. They also took over the Teachers League of South Africa (TLSA) in 1944. Not only was intellectual debate and discussion integral to the developing movement, intellectual *production* was a key feature of work of its activists. IB Tabata's *Education for Barbarism* (Tabata, 1959) must remain as one of the earliest and most telling indictments of the Bantu Education system that was being put in place, while Edgar Maurice's *The Colour Bar in Education*, (Maurice, 1957; see also Maurice 1946 and 1966) written in 1957, provides an unambiguously historical materialist explanation for the origins, purpose and development of racism in Western European societies. This somewhat instrumentalist Marxist analysis lies at the core of all its educational work:

One thing is clear from what has been demonstrated. And that is the intimate and close relationship that obviously and clearly exists between the development of colour feeling and the colour bar, on the one hand, and the development and rise of capitalism on the other. For racism is part and parcel of the class divisions generated by capitalism and developed within and concomitantly with the capitalist system as one of its fundamental traits (Maurice, 1957: 81).

By 1963 the state had stifled political organisation and silenced intellectual work. A decade of economic growth and political repression ensued. The Unity Movement suffered as much from bannings, detentions and harassment as other political movements. A sustained assault was mounted also on teachers. In this period of

retreat, the rump of the Unity Movement's intellectuals who remained in South Africa withdrew or became confined to the schools. They now consolidated an effective hegemony over a few key schools, which became a crucial site for the transmission of a critical political education. Alongside the schools ran the Education Fellowships which organised and provided a forum for structured political and cultural debate and discussion. Study circles formed the base of their training in rigorous political education.

The year 1976 inaugurated a new phase in South Africa's political history. The political terrain once more became opened up to mass struggle. In particular, schools became literally first sites and then battlegrounds of struggle. Youth formed a vital and authoritative component of new mass organisations. Boycotts became a central method in their struggle. By contrast, the position of teachers in the wider society had changed dramatically. Very few people continued to see them as a leading force. The battle for control over schools was played out around and over them. Their loss of authority must be explained by a combination of reasons: the changing social structure and racial division of labour; the massive expansion of (inferior) schooling under apartheid; and the weak and conservative leadership of teacher organisations which had stepped into a breach created by repression in the 1950s and 1960s.

In this context, the refusal of Unity Movement teachers to leave their posts by asserting the primacy of education, to refuse student demands for support of the boycott, appeared to be abstentionist behaviour insupportable in the new context. Whether the positions and actions of Unity Movement teachers demonstrated a failure to adapt to changing circumstances or whether they were the logical outcome of a dogmatic adherence to a particular perspective developed in the 1950s and 1960s on what constituted the '*political*' teacher, they did not engage persuasively with the new youth politics. This split between what some believed was a dichotomy between the theory and the practice in the movement became manifested in a conflict between the older generation and the youth in the Unity Movement. The youth lost, and the Unity Movement lost the youth.

Nonetheless, there is a tradition and a method worthy of investigation. Let us begin with the origins of the movement, the teachers as intellectuals, then look at the schools, and finally at the Fellowships. The periodisation will roughly follow that sketched above, although there is obvious overlap between these issues in different periods.

### **Leading Role of the Intelligentsia, 1943-1963**

There is a certain irony in the verdict of so many commentators that the failure of the Unity Movement must be placed at the door of its teacher-base. Maligned and beaten with the petty bourgeois stick, the role of teachers in South Africa over time has not been an uncontested one. The way in which the Unity Movement itself developed derived at least in part from its own critique of the pivotal role that African and other intellectuals had and were playing in South Africa as collaborators

during the 1930s and 1940s. If, as Khan has pointed out (1976:71), Benny Kies, a key organic intellectual for the movement, by contrast overestimated their revolutionary potential, the fact that NEUM intellectuals were among the first in South Africa to recognise and try to conceptualise the role of intellectuals and teachers as intellectuals, is noteworthy.

During the 1940s and 1950s, in the process of Anti-CAD organisational work, in the study circles and forums of debate and discussion that were already a cultural feature of Cape Town's political life, as well as in NEUM and Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA) meetings and publications like *The Torch* (started in 1946) and the *Educational Journal*, policies and positions on the role of education, teachers and black intellectuals were thrashed out. The black intelligentsia in Cape Town was trained and recruited for the NEUM from the only two high schools open to black children, Livingstone and Trafalgar, the one situated in Lansdowne Road, the other in District Six. From here they proceeded to the University of Cape Town or to teacher training college. As a small minority from their community, they were acutely aware of their privileged position within it. One of their responses was to:

look for a different role for teachers. Teachers were largely children of the working class. The big thing was to show people their parents were working class and they owed them allegiance. Their education was a gift from their parents and they owed a pay-back ... The leading question at university was: what are you going to do with your education? By that time we had already worked out that teachers have got another function. They are the only people who've got the time, the leisure and that measure of education and literacy to get to grips with ideas in a community that was 80 - 90% illiterate (Interview; Kies, 1943:15).

Two key statements on the role of intellectuals were those by Benny Kies and IB Tabata. For Benny Kies,<sup>1</sup> addressing an Anti-CAD Conference composed largely of teachers, teachers as intellectuals have a revolutionary role to play. 'Without teachers', he said 'there would never have been a French or a Russian revolution' (Kies, 1943:15). It was from the intelligentsia that 'the emancipatory theory and practical leadership' have always come. This was because the workers and peasants were too exhausted and ground down by toil to have the time or leisure to study the conditions which led to their position. The intelligentsia, on the other hand, have the leisure and education to provide 'that fusion of theory and practice which is known as leadership'. It is the 'historical duty' of teachers, given this position, 'to provide such leadership' (cited in Khan, 1976:70).

He could arrive at this position, anathema to the classical Marxism from whose conceptual lexicon he drew his analysis of South African society, only because he collapsed the intelligentsia into the working class in such a way that no objective and analytical distinction could be maintained. The black intelligentsia, he argued: had sprung from the loins of the working class. They do not have to go to the people. They belong to the people and the people are all

around them (cited in Khan, 1976:70).

This conceptual collapse of the intelligentsia into the working class psychologically enabled the movement's intellectuals to turn a blind eye to their own class position and its implications. Since they were the working class, they did not need to go out to organise the working class. They could be content with organising only themselves. As a consequence, they may not have been confronted by questions imposed in the process of organisation of the working class. This theoretical position absolved them from history, and allowed them to remain trapped within a politics without a practical emphasis on organisation of the working class. As such, the theory of the leading role of the intelligentsia provided them with the conceptual and psychological basis of their belief in their ultimate correctness.

IB Tabata,<sup>2</sup> arguably one of the finest black intellectuals South Africa has produced in the twentieth century, expressed a different position when he wrote to Dr JS Moroka of the ANC:

Any educated Black man who holds himself aloof from the national struggle is committing a crime greater than common murder, for by his inactivity he is aiding the oppression and the brutalities perpetrated on our own flesh and blood. It is a duty imposed on us by the very nature of things (Tabata Papers, a).

For Tabata, the two most powerful 'weapons of struggle' at the disposal of critical intellectuals were 'the power of the written word' and the boycott, which was 'a powerful weapon only if it is properly used' (Tabata Papers, b). Both were central to NEUM strategy to build united opposition to segregation.

One of Tabata's central and enduring intellectual preoccupations was the concept of 'slave mentality'. The concept of a slave mentality and its opposite, the fighting spirit, runs like a thread through his and the others' work. An early theorist of the necessity to achieve psychological before social liberation, he wrote that 'the deception of the people is a strong weapon in the hands of those who govern, and men have to *liberate their minds* (IBT's emphasis) and see through these deceptions before they can launch a determined struggle for liberation' (Tabata Papers, c).

In his article, 'Boycott as Weapon of Struggle' (see Hommel, 1989), written in 1952, he provides an analysis of the historical role of education in South Africa as enslaving and of the role of black intellectuals in that process. Schools were initially part of the process of conquest and the establishment of the capitalist mode of production during the nineteenth century. Black intellectuals played a key role in helping to control and integrate the African people into the new social order, first as 'policemen-chiefs', then as advocates of mission values and the 'meaningless slogan: development along their own lines' (Hommel, 1989), and finally, when 'it was necessary to create a dividing-line between the master-race and the dispossessed Africans', as collaborators in 'arresting the mind itself' (Tabata, 1952:180). For Tabata, 'the whole process of reducing the Black man to his present position would have been impossible without the help of the intellectuals... (who)... led their people into bondage'.

Although their positions are different, the same displacement as occurs in Kies' work, seems to take place in Tabata's. Marxist analysis is deployed in the service of a project which is, in the process, transformed into something else. Tabata's work is shot through with the burden of guilt and blame. Analysis of objective and subjective constraints becomes transposed into a moral crusade against false consciousness, the 'slave mentality'. Mental rather than structural fetters were represented as the source of oppression and therefore the focus of liberation, a task for which intellectuals and teachers were considered to be peculiarly suited.

Having seen through the deceptions and roles imposed on them, however, teachers could re-define their position: '... the teachers hold a key position. As a vocal section of the population they can frustrate any attempt to foist tribal education or tribal institutions on the Africans. As leaders of their people they can effectively organise resistance to any such attempts' (Tabata, 1952).

Teaching was one of the few high-status professions open to educated black people in South Africa at the time. In a colonial society, it constituted at one and the same time privilege and discrimination. To justify the privilege, its dimension as a service to the community was re-articulated in political terms. Teaching became, in the hands of the Unity Movement intellectuals, a political mission.

Kies stressed the leading role of the intelligentsia. One of Tabata's main concerns was liberation from a slave mentality. These emphases stressed ideological rather than practical, organisational work. Because the ideological work was not integrated into real, sustained and systematic efforts at organisation of the working class, a split occurred in its theory and practice. Theory emphasised organisation, the working class and the peasantry. It was not followed through, however, in practice. Practice thus did not draw from theory, and theory could not be changed on the basis of practice. Theory as a consequence became increasingly rigid and dogmatically applied to each new situation that presented itself.

After the radical NEUM teachers took over in 1944, the Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA) and its mouthpiece, the *Educational Journal*, became the chief vehicle for the theoretical expression of the role and purpose of the teacher in South Africa. The key figures in the founding of the TLSA in 1913 had been Harold Cressy and Dr Abdurahman, founder of the African Peoples' Organisation (APO), a body which concerned itself with improving the position of 'coloureds' in the society. The TLSA was to be open only to 'coloured' teachers and was granted official recognition by the Education Department. Before 1944 it confined itself to concerns affecting 'the education of our Coloured children and the status of those that teach them'. Its ultimate goals remained equal education for coloured pupils, and equal pay for coloured teachers with whites, which it sought to achieve through compromise and negotiation with the authorities.

For the NEUM radicals, the TLSA oldguard not only belonged to the collaborationist Coloured Advisory Council, and so were debarred from membership after their leadership coup in 1944; it also upheld an unacceptable division between



education and politics. Education could not be seen as neutral or separable from politics. Then and later, the analysis of the role of education that informed their thinking was based on the view that: 'a school exists and seeks to educate its scholars to fill a place and play a role within a particular social structure. Today the debate concerns the vital questions: Whom are we educating and what are we educating them for?' (*Educational Journal*, a). Clause 2 (c) of the new Constitution bound the League to 'coordinate the struggle in the educational field with the struggle for full democratic rights' and to do this 'by cooperation or affiliation with organisations fighting for full democratic rights for all non-Europeans' (Lewis, 1987:224). Accordingly the TLSA affiliated to the NEUM in 1945 and TLSA leaders stressed the simultaneity of educational and political struggle, and the necessity for political before educational change, if real educational change was to take place.

During the 1940s and 1950s the political struggle preoccupied the teachers. From the 1960s, hounded and harried by bannings and detentions, driven underground and into exile, those who remained turned their attention to education and schooling which was now being recast in the image of Verwoerd's apartheid dreams. Intervention became more theoretical and academic, rather than organisational and practical.

When the Bantu Education Act was promulgated in the 1950s, Tabata's *Education for Barbarism* had been part of the campaign against it. Successful opposition to the CAC and the pending transfer of Coloured schools to the Coloured Affairs Department delayed the transfer of these schools for ten years. By 1964, the state was secure enough to transfer 'coloured' schools: political trials of the early 1960s had emasculated all political opposition; African teachers had been dismissed en masse between 1954 and 1956; the executive of the Cape African Teachers Association (CATA), also affiliated to the NEUM in 1952, had been sacked, weakening the capacity of the Cape Teachers' Federal Council to mobilise around the issue, and 16 TLSA members were banned in different parts of the country (Interview A). In the context of the passage of the 1964 Coloured Affairs Act, the TLSA reaffirmed the function and purpose of teachers in schools as follows:

When the Bantu Affairs Department took over, the call went out from our ranks for all teachers to stay at their posts and defend the children against the bantuisers, defend education against bantuisation. Now that the Coloured Affairs Department is taking over, the same call goes out from our ranks to all teachers to stay at their posts, to defend the children against the colouredisers, to defend education against colouredisation (*Educational Journal*, b).

The role of the teacher, it was reiterated again and again by the TLSA, was to 'unmask' the 'deceptions' of the ruling class; to 'debunk its racist myths' and tell the truth:

In a certain sense the decision and the choice that each teacher has to make in such a situation, then or now, is individual. Each one has to decide whether he or she can or will teach lies or not (*Educational*

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best education for all was a general, academic and scientific one (*Educational Journal*, j). Commenting, for example, on handwork in the schools, it argued that:

Handwork is an essential *adjunct* to learning languages, science and art, but it is *secondary* to them. It cannot replace them, nor can there be any justification for stealing time from the study of languages and science... to devote to it... 'Handwork' as it is being inflicted upon Eiselen-de Vos Malan schools to drive out the essential academic content of education, is a menace... Such an approach is an attack upon academic standards and upon the intellect. If it succeeds it must sound the death knell of the new minds for the new age (*Educational Journal*, k).

Through the pages and the acerbic style of the *Educational Journal*, which made few concessions to English second-language speakers, new recruits to teaching were schooled in the analysis of the TLSA and NEUM on a monthly basis. Regular book reviews kept them up-to-date with latest developments in their field, as well as showed them how new Departmental texts conformed to the overall plan of 'tribalisation' of schooling. Analyses of annual CAD reports kept them informed of departmental moves. IQ and other racial myths were consistently exposed.

But what did this mean in practice? If the *Educational Journal* did manage to sustain a critique of apartheid schooling through the 1960s and helped to shape some teachers ideologically, what did this redefinition of professionalism mean for the organisation of teachers and for the schools in which they taught?

A short answer can be given to the first question. Organisationally, the TLSA declined from being present in the Western Cape (Alexander, 1986:6 and 11), claiming some 2 000 teachers in 1945 (Lewis, 1987: 233), to a handful of people clustered around a journal in 1975 (Interview B). Although it did challenge the Department on numerous occasions in the 1960s, applied to join a trade union federation, and did have a Legal Aid Bureau and Action Committee (Interview A), the organisational work of the TLSA was undermined both by the repression of the decade, as well as by the prior interest in and concern with ideological issues. By 1990, there was no NEUM organisation taking up the day-to-day issues facing teachers.

A longer answer can be given to the second. For their real impact in the schools and on the youth they taught was indisputably radical.

## Unity Movement Schools, 1963-1976

In a report listing the top 100 feeder schools for the University of Cape Town for 1983, Harold Cressy and Livingstone High School, both 'Unity Movement schools', come 10th and 11th.<sup>3</sup> This listing of one of the leading universities in the country places them ahead of good white middle class schools such as Camps Bay High and Sea Point High in Cape Town, Grey High in Port Elizabeth, St Andrews College in Grahamstown and several other prestigious white boys' and girls' schools. The two other Unity Movement schools, South Peninsula and Trafalgar

High, are listed 29th and 38th respectively, still a respectable listing. This is no mean achievement for schools subjected to the 'colouredisation' of schooling referred to above.

The students of these schools would have been amongst those providing a tone to student life which was described by a newcomer to the University of Cape Town as follows:

When I came here in 1973... I was coming out of a Trevor Huddleston, Dale White, Jo'burg social conscience, very much involved in race relations kind of activities and floating towards black consciousness. I came into an environment here at UCT which was absolutely alive with debate and discussion at a level which made all the other experiences I had gone through before look quite childish and quite backward in many respects (Interview).

An academic and a political tradition has certainly been bequeathed by these schools. An immediate objection might be that the academic results are explicable in terms of the class backgrounds from which the people attending these schools are drawn. While this might well be the case, it does not invalidate an achievement in the face of a changing structure of schooling: as 'coloured' schools, these schools were as disadvantaged in terms of national expenditure, for example, as other schools of its kind. Their privileged status can only be a relative one. In addition, it must be pointed out that the three other 'coloured' schools featuring amongst the top 50, Alexander Sinton (25th), Althone High (43rd) and Spes Bona High (48th), must then equally be disqualified. It is also true that whilst Unity Movement teachers at non-Unity Movement township schools made an enormous impact on selected working class children, children from working class areas and families (like C and M) were also present at Unity Movement schools. And finally, the middle class status of the students' parents does not explain why these schools stand head and shoulders above many other much more privileged, white middle class schools. It seems that while this might be one variable, and an important one at that, it cannot provide a satisfactory nor a full explanation. For this, one has to probe a little more deeply into the internal dynamics and make-up of the schools: the staffing policy, that indefinable quality, the 'ethos' of the schools, and the method and content of teaching.

Unity Movement teachers asserted their control over these schools during the 1930s by ensuring that they were staffed by both a core of 'very high profile people in the political movement', the so-called 'Unity Movement teachers', and 'people who (if they were not Unity Movement) were prepared to work like bloody Trojans to maintain standards and build up standards of the school' (Interview A). The schools had a more stable staff than most and had the advantage of having very well qualified staff, 'capable of assimilating what you were attempting to do' (Interview A). In addition, many of the teachers at these schools were 'banned' or experienced political harassment of some kind or another. As a consequence of the reputation that grew of being well-run, 'political' schools, where teachers challenged the

textbook and the inspector, and ignored the lure of bonuses and merit awards, they also began to attract people eager to teach towards a goal:

In a certain sense we could pick and choose... We had some excellent people on the staff who worked their fingers to the bone for the school... There was a camaraderie that enabled us to work in the same direction... People were mutually supportive (Interview A).

During the 1960s, Harold Cressy and South Peninsula both had Unity Movement principals who were able to gather very able people around them. At Livingstone and Trafalgar the situation was more complicated. At Livingstone, the prime candidate for the principalship, when it fell vacant, was a leading Unity Movement and TLSA figure, Mr Dudley. The principalship was never given to him. Like other 'coloured' schools, it experienced a high turn-over of principals. Nonetheless, an executive committee, in which Unity Movement teachers were influential, in effect ran the school, and had considerable leverage over appointment of new staff.

Teachers were carefully chosen for both their commitment to education as well as non-racialism. At least two of these schools, new appointments, if they were not already Unity Movement teachers, were told that the minute they entered the doors of that school, the values of the outside society no longer pertained (Interview A, I and J).

These joint emphases formed powerful elements in the building of a distinctive ethos in these schools. A school creed developed at Livingstone in 1967 encapsulated the philosophy the school tried to promote: it placed emphasis on non-racialism and on the joint efforts of scholars, teachers and workers in advancing society; discouraged vandalism and encouraged respect for the instruments of education, such as schools and universities, as well as for those who laboured manually. At Trafalgar, all the students knew that the school song, harmlessly enough simply singing the praises of the school, was written by people who were political prisoners on Robben Island. School assemblies were used to reiterate these principles, comment on current events and encourage students to rise above their circumstances and achieve. A number of students' cultural, sporting and debating societies were established through which students could participate in the corporate life of the school and establish contacts with other schools. A criticism developed later on that these contacts did not extend sufficiently to African schools.

Inside the classroom, teachers were encouraged not only to teach well, but also to make their subject relevant to South African realities. Special emphasis was given to the debunking of racial myths and stereotypes dominant in South African society (Interview A). As they saw it, they were less concerned to teach a particular Unity Movement conception of things, than to develop critical and thinking students. 'There was no tendentiousness, but when there was a real opportunity, students would be taught the scientific basis of things like racial characteristics', said an older Unity Movement teacher (Interview A). A younger teacher, associated with but not part of 'the fold', commented:

Around particular issues there may have been a line, but the principle

that underwrote a lot of the work they did was *critical* thinking... It was a thinking which encouraged responding to literature bias, for example, that went beyond party politics, and that is where all this... er... *darn* good work was done... The energy behind our teaching was focused on asserting a broad humanity rather than notions of race (Interview H).

This approach to teaching has forced the grudging respect of many a non-Unity Movement activist:

One thing that the Unity Movement did do, and that a lot of us can learn from, was their emphasis on teaching well. Whilst they were not into group teaching and democratising the classroom and all that, what they did believe was that you had to be a good teacher for a whole lot of different reasons. First of all, because of the whole question of serving the pupil, and then also it was protection against the Department you see. If the Department were to victimise them, it had to be for clear political reasons... That's what distinguished them from other people, the Unity Movement teachers in the old mould: they work, they're never late, everything they do is up to date, on time, they're disciplined, and so on (Interview B).

Students were encouraged to read widely, to attend plays and cultural events outside school, to take an interest in the politics of the country, and were also taken on excursions such as hikes in the mountains by teachers. Within this, there was, however, a certain measure of selection. Not all students were treated equally:

Our attitude was that there is no way you can treat the entire school as an inchoate, homogeneous mass. The pupils were encouraged to read, and where we noticed anybody sticking his head out, taking an interest in things, he was given additional encouragement... Not every pupil is going to take to political struggles; people's personalities play quite a considerable role in accessing to political struggle (Interview A).

Those who were selected for 'grooming', were told about bursaries they could apply for to continue their studies, initiated into wider reading, generally of a broadly socialist humanist kind, such as Jack London's *The Iron Heel* and Robert Tressell's *Ragged Trousered Philanthropist*, and invited to the activities of the South Peninsula Education Fellowship (SPEF).

Student responses to their schooling have varied. On the one hand there is pride in and appreciation of the quality of education they received, respect for the teachers and the way they widened their horizons in a gender-blind manner. On the other hand, there is also bitterness and anger about the elitism of the emphasis on and selection of a 'critical minority' for special attention, the contradictory failure and inability of the schools to prepare those not proceeding to university for the harsh realities of the world outside the school and finally, most importantly, their attitudes towards school boycotts after 1976.

In general, there was a sense of privilege and pride in attending a Unity Movement

school. Students who went there knew the school was different, and knew the teachers were different.<sup>4</sup> Mr C and Ms F both went to Livingstone. C recalls that:

When you came to Livingstone, you knew it was a political school. They kept preaching 'We want to develop thinking people'. It was important to think: that mattered above all else. I valued that. These guys had that distinction, they were leading lights in the school, so they attracted attention, and other teachers followed them. When a guy like Dudley addressed the assembly, he was just a cut above everybody else you knew. He never spoke like ordinary people, for example, but he spoke in a way we dreamed we'd one day be able to speak... So there was that cult of personality I suppose... Some people even adopted the mannerisms of a Dudley. They started flicking their cigarette ash the way these guys did. They'd take on the same expressions and the same nuances in their voices. I don't think I ever went that far... They were role models because they were so eloquent, they were courageous, they bore the scars of this struggle that we knew we had to get involved in.

For F, who came from what she describes as the inward-looking Moslem community of Salt River, Livingstone and its teachers opened all kinds of doors. They were role models and windows into a new world:

At school you were encouraged to be free, and when I looked at Dr Alexander he was completely different to anybody I had ever seen. He was, he just looked so free, it wasn't anything that he said... I have never ever seen a teacher who looked like that and who spoke like that... He came across as a very cultured individual because he already had his Doctorate, he spoke German like a native. It was just such an eye-opener; he was just such a different being to what I was used to...

More than individual teachers, there was the ethos of the school that impressed itself on her: 'The teachers didn't put any obstacles in your way... they treated you like an adult - that was amazing', and they 'inculcated in us the belief that through academic achievement I can get somewhere... that you could overcome hurdles'. For her, as a Moslem woman, the school was invaluable in allowing her 'to transcend my very restricted family environment'.

For students at schools established on the Cape Flats during the 1960s as part of the process of removing people from District Six, Newlands and Claremont, the Unity Movement teacher stood head and shoulders above everyone else. In the context of the chaos and ill-discipline of the township school and the 'decadence' of its teachers in the mid-1970s, he was an exemplary figure who brought sanity and inspiration. Unlike the other teachers, he led a sober and healthy life. He was also interested in the concerns of youth:

We all used to just hang around after school to just talk to him, just to talk, and he used to bring music to the school, music of the Latin American struggle, and Peet Seeger's 'What have you learnt at school

today, dear little child of mine'... Intervals were no longer intervals of chatting and running around but were intervals of sitting there and listening to music and asking him questions and talking to him. What was so remarkable (was that) he was very much interested not only in moulding your ideas but also in your personal life and family, which I think was a very smart way of getting through to people, especially adolescents (Interview E).

He likewise introduced these students to socialism 'in a very natural way' by encouraging them to read novels and books like John Reed's *Ten Days that Shook the World* and Edgar Snow's *Red Star over China*.

Many have held onto the positive side of the experience. H, for example, has remarked that the non-racial ethic of these schools meant that 'a lot of kids who come out of these schools have confronted some of that intellectual or ideological baggage they bring with them from the society - and they come out much better: more poised, more confident, able to take on their peers. They have been taught to take on the dominant symbols of their environment, and to handle them'. For others, like M, the 'fancy accents, fancy clothes and Latinisms' were simply alienating. For women such as D and F, the experience was soured by the elitism which selected and groomed some and not others; which assumed that some were university material and then concentrated all their energies on them, at the expense of the others; for the arrogance of the position adopted that 'if you weren't a teacher, you weren't political' (Interview D). As F put it:

They didn't prepare you for the harsh realities outside the school. They chose to prepare only a certain leadership core, and they didn't help the rest of us to cope with realities and what we would find outside. They made us feel as though we could do it, but in actual fact the hurdles were so great outside the school, there was no way you could do it... You were in matric, and all of a sudden you are outside, you know; this wonderful sort of protective cocoon in which you could do anything - just gone.

The 'harsh realities' in the mid-1970s consisted in both the labour market with its job reservation, racism and sexism as well as, as in F's case, the expectations Moslem families had of their daughters.

These responses all testify to the incontrovertibly and unavoidably contradictory effects of schooling - the gap that often exists between intention and outcome. Whilst many of the students coming from these schools have rejected aspects of the ethos, none of them has been critical of the quality of education they received, or the dedication of the teachers. Both of these, as has been shown, were central to the Unity Movement outlook. None of these criticisms are particularly damaging to the tradition.

And yet, by 1976, at the pinnacle of their influence, new forces were at work for whom the Unity Movement was simply irrelevant, and to whom the Unity Movement could not respond. It was the beginning of their undoing. On the national scene there was the re-emergence of mass politics and trade union struggle. The student



revolt of 1976 had occurred in the ideological context of the black consciousness philosophy, a philosophy which had a certain appeal to youth but which, while not foreign to the ideas of Tabata on slave mentalities, was dismissed and derided by the Unity Movement in an (in)famous series of articles that appeared in the *Educational Journal*, and were entitled: 'Black Consciousness: A Reactionary Tendency' (*Educational Journal*, L). It argued that black consciousness was an American implantation, class-based and manipulated by the CIA. Likewise the re-emergent independent trade union movement, augured by the Durban strikes of 1973, was scoffed at for being 'reformist' (*Educational Journal*, M). On the local scene, feminism was beginning to make an impact, but was brushed aside as diversionary. The *Educational Journal* again patronisingly noted that while 'of course they (women) too stand in need of emancipation... our primary concern is with the non-citizen majority' (*Educational Journal*, Nn) Why the Unity Movement was unable to respond any differently is difficult to explain. Theoretically, there was nothing which may have predisposed its intellectuals to hostility to new intellectual and organisational movements and challenges. A full explanation will have to be sought not in its theory, but in the separation that developed between theory and practice. A political practice based in organisation would have required the NEUM to do more than simply dismiss new social developments.

None of these attitudes endeared either Unity Movement school products or the new generation removed by Group Areas Act from the inner-city areas of Cape Town to the Flats, brought up in schools and trained in a university established during the 1960s, to the Unity Movement. Neither the schools nor the University of the Western Cape enjoyed any recognition by the Unity Movement, a factor which became a major issue in the disillusionment by the youth with the Movement. TLSA bursaries were awarded to students for study at the University of Cape Town. Students who did not gain entry to this university, and sought entry at UWC, were denied these bursaries on the grounds that this was a 'bush college', where standards had been debased by 'colouredisation'. This was an attitude forged in the late 1960s when the state established separate universities on an ethnic basis. Similarly lecturers taking posts at UWC, whatever their commitment or history, were tainted by association and became persona non grata (Interviews B, C, D, E, F, G and H).

The final straw, leading to rupture, was the attitude towards youth militants in the schools and their forms of organisation. There was solidarity action in 1976. A 'Super-SRC' involving SRCs from all the schools had been formed. Marches and demonstrations were held. But in 1980 Cape Town schools came into their own. The school boycotts of that year, which spread beyond the city itself, added 'awareness classes' to the repertoire of strategies employed by students in the history of youth resistance in this country (Molteno, 1988; Hyslop, 1987). Unity Movement teachers themselves were sceptical of what boycotts could achieve. Explained A:

One of the things we always insisted on was that pupils should read... But there were those who wanted action, action at any price. We said action without any kind of political direction is crazy. We told

students that if they wanted to make a statement, they would have to set out what their ideals for this country were... We wanted them to have a political content, not just to work out anger. We didn't want to let the students out onto the streets willy-nilly. From that time we became a target, a 'bourgeois school'.

For the new generation, eager to organise and get to grips analytically with the new movements and forces shaking South Africa, the Unity Movement had few answers. Their position on school boycotts alienated both students from township schools spearheading the boycotts, as well as those Unity Movement school students who sought to be part of the wider struggle. Their 'fancy accents, fancy clothes and fancy houses', their attitude to 'Bush' and other working class schools, the way they shied away from real organisational contacts with African schools - these became the elements of a wide-ranging critique of the Unity Movement. Its critics, inside and out, maintained that it was locked in its own glorious past; that its politics, despite the professed non-racialism, was 'Colouredist'; and that, despite its Marxist rhetoric, it could offer the working class little beyond 'tea or sherry and cakes' (Interviews M). The youth either moved away or fought a losing battle inside the organisation.

For M, the explanation lies in the fact that the Unity Movement intellectuals were 'unable to develop a flexible concept of tactics'. For others associated with the South Peninsula Education Fellowship (SPEF) where the splits and divisions between the younger and older generation crystallised most clearly, the explanation and failure lies in the fact that 'there was no public strategy of recruiting people... of broadening the base' (Interviews C, E, K and L). This, in turn, meant that there was no regeneration; only a rigid adherence to dogma from the 1950s and 1960s.

That this criticism has been able to come from the youth within its own ranks is, in its own way, a credit to the Movement, and testimony of the best of the tradition that it laid down. For the Unity Movement's influence did not stop or end at the doors of the school. Its Fellowships provided the critical training of its cadres.

### **The Fellowships, 1976-1985**

The South Peninsula Education Fellowship (SPEF) and the Cape Flats Education Fellowship (CAFEP), grew out of the left wing study circles of the 1930s and 1940s in Cape Town. Study circles fed into groups such as the National Liberation League formed in 1935 and the Non-European United Front formed in 1938. After the collapse of these organisations in 1939, they continued in the form of the New Era Fellowship (NEF), a 'debating society' (Khan, 1976:44) which provided the intellectual political training of those recruited from Livingstone and Trafalgar and UCT. Indicative of its internationalist orientation, the first talk given at NEF was on imperialism. Talks on the state, African nationalism, and the history of the AAC were only some of the topics dealt with at this time (Titles of talks given by Tabata: Tabata Papers).

Co-existing with political organisation and providing the terrain where positions

on issues were thrashed out, NEF developed the elements of a method and style which was to continue into the 1950s, until 1961 when it collapsed. People of different political persuasions were persuaded to come and address huge meetings in Canterbury Street in District Six in Cape Town. There was both a political and a cultural focus, with subjects of talks ranging from politics to history to art, music and contemporary literacy movements, a series given by Dora Taylor, later the author of *The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest* (Interview A). The majority of participants were drawn from the student community at UCT.

By the 1960s the movement had expanded considerably. SPEF was established in the early 1950s in Grassypark, while CAFEF was founded in Athlone. Student Fellowships were also initiated in Paarl, Kimberley, Port Elizabeth, Durban and Johannesburg, which hosted the Progressive Forum (Interview A and Tabata Papers). The aims of the Fellowships, as expressed in the open SPEF constitution, were almost entirely educational - 'to provide a forum for the expression and dissemination of enlightenment'; 'to encourage the pursuit of knowledge and to foster a love of learning, scholarship and research of the highest standard' and to promote an interest in the Humanities and the Science... Art, Music, Creative Writing and Film'; 'to encourage a love for reading'.

During this period of intensifying repression, its activities also began to take on a form in which some events were more or less public and open. For obvious security as well as professional reasons, schools were not used to recruit students to Unity Movement principles and practices. This was the task of the Fellowships, which introduced students in a gradual way, first to the educational programme, which consisted of winter, spring and summer schools where lectures were given providing a different perspective on aspects of the school syllabus. Shakespeare symposia were particularly popular. Here, or at school, if selected by a teacher, they might be invited to the more overtly political and cultural evening programme which drew a wider layer of the community. From there, they could graduate into closed study groups where discussions on set readings would take place in reasonably strict security conditions (Interviews B, C, E, F, G, K and L). Once here, they might also have access to the extremely impressive SPEF library - which also had a public, cultural and a closed, political section consisting of 'banned' literature used for study groups - built up by Dawood Parker.

Different people were attracted to different kinds of activities. The cultural programme, with its songs, poetry readings and films provided through the New World Film Society, was a strong draw-card. So were the Children's Film Festival, Chess Club and Swimming Club. Through its cultural evenings in Newlands, SPEF tried to create a link with the international situation. This was part both of its internationalist political position, but also of its thrust to assert the broad common humanity of society. Initiation into international progressive culture formed part of the process of neutralising the hegemonic, exclusive, narrow, racial culture at work in South Africa. Thus the cultural programme was a committed and avant-garde

one. The songs of Victor Jara and Mikis Theodorakis, the poetry of Neruda, films on international struggles as well as the Bronowski series and Carl Sagan's 'Cosmos' were shown. Films were used not simply for entertainment, but to educate. Discussions after films focused both on the political message, as well as, for example, production techniques.

Likewise the political programme of debate and discussion had the power to attract both believers and non-believers. Topics dealt with current, controversial international and local issues. In the mid-1970s, when South Africa was invading Angola, and both Angola and Mozambique were gaining independence, talks on these topics were held, as well as on imperialism, racialism, the bantustans and Vietnam. The early 1980s were a period of ferment in South African society as the state and capital attempted to embark on a path of limited reform within the framework of the apartheid state. Talks given and debated at this time reflected critically on state strategy in a wider international context, as well as on the role of different sectors in addressing it. In 1981 talks on Class and State in South Africa and Total Strategy and the President's Council were discussed, as well as Nicaragua, Cuba, and Perspectives on Eastern Europe and the Polish Crisis. In 1982, talks were held on the role of the students as well as on the working class internationally and the trade union movement in South Africa, on Non-Collaboration and Unity, the Balkanisation of South Africa and The Palestinian Struggle.

Talks were always required to be theoretically informed and informative. The tone was serious, academic and formal. Thus, the one on Class and State focused on matters such as theories of the state, the state and its relationship to the working class in South Africa, the significance of Wiehahn and Riekert and the working class' response to state intervention in labour. The lecture on the role of students in society highlighted issues such as the history of student struggle in South Africa, lessons from past struggles and student objectives and priorities (selections from SPEF invitations generously given to me by June and Gert Bam).

And yet, despite the intellectual and academic nature of the forum, SPEF, for example, managed to attract at least a regular core of 50-100 people to their talks. On special occasions, the hall was packed with 200-300 people. The cut and thrust of the debate that followed was stimulating to many. Here they could listen to different angles on different topics, as well as hone their own debating skills. Speakers from the university who were 'left of liberal' were often chosen or set up to facilitate the debate: 'it just wouldn't go far enough and we'd have to struggle from the floor to refute some of the points' (Interview C). Younger members were encouraged both to participate from the floor and to chair or present topics themselves, even if they themselves had not been to university. Participation in any form, however, required reading and preparation. The older role models, well-spoken and astute, capable of demolishing arguments elegantly and cuttingly, demanded a high standard. Failure would be met with ridicule and humiliation. In addition the Fellowship provided a political home: 'It's very warm, very

comforting', said F:

to be with like-minded people, who could make the outside world go away... to feel like you were part of this huge sort of force. I felt that once I left this organisation, the wilderness was waiting for me outside. I only left when I was basically pushed out.

For the younger generation, as E put it, there was also another dimension: 'You felt good to be amongst all those people... that kind of spirit... you felt like a revolutionary, a Latin American revolutionary, a cadre...'

Cadres, however, were taught only some of their intellectual and public speaking skills in this forum. Their theoretical and analytical capabilities were sharpened in the study groups where youthful minds were concentrated on the theory and practice of revolution. Groups read Lenin, Marx, Trotsky, analyses of contemporary South Africa and international struggles such as that in Vietnam. The method followed was to ask each member to prepare a short summary at different sessions. An older and more experienced member would lead the discussion.

This process of education - general, political and theoretical; public and private - has allowed many to say, with L, that they 'weren't educated in the institutions of this country, the schools and universities of this country. My education was shaped in a real and fundamental way by SPEF and the (leading) individuals associated with it'. For others, appreciative as they may be, there were other problems: the sexism which ensured that men always chaired the sessions, gave lectures and had the authority to discount and hold up to ridicule feminist concerns; the personality cults and rivalries which were 'dressed up as huge political differences'; the clandestinity and inability to engage or attract large numbers, both related to aspects of its vanguardist approach.

By the mid-1980s, when resistance mounted by mass political and trade union organisation in South Africa had revealed the limitations of the state's new strategy for reform and co-optation and called down the full might of its repressive powers in the first State of Emergency, the contradictions between the theory and practice of the movement blew it and its associated structures apart. Old strategies developed during the 1960s to cope with repression, no longer sufficed. Recruitment on an individual basis through a long process of initiation and reading was far too long for the pace of events outside. Organisational gains made by other political and trade union structures, across the spectrum, made nonsense of the theoretical positions developed by the Unity Movement on them. The youth who had not left fought to unite the different splinters of the Unity Movement, to develop a more public profile and open strategy of recruitment. Some of the holy cows, such as the question of UWC, school boycotts, the academic nature and location of SPEF fora and alliances with forces not in agreement with the movement, were challenged and defeated. TLSA bursaries were stopped, and the funds were used to republish old Unity Movement literature. SPEF held its last meeting in 1986 (Interviews C, E, K and L). In 1985 the New Unit Movement emerged as a consequence of the work of the youth.

## Conclusion

The first question posed at the beginning of this paper was: if they did it, how did they do it? The answer is: through rigorous, strenuous attention to the education of politics, and the politics of education. The second was: and what was their undoing? The answer to that must be: their elitism and vanguardism. And the third: are they dead? have they left nothing behind? what lives on, if at all? The answer to this is ambiguous and complex. For while the movement itself as a political force is marginal and ineffectual, and some of its earlier dogmas now faintly quaint, in its own confused and contradictory way - through its teachers, its schools and its reading groups - it has helped to create and inform, against all odds, a section of the political culture in the Western Cape in decisive ways.

This paper has argued that the distinctiveness of the tradition bequeathed by the Unity Movement lies in its emphasis on education. This emphasis has taken different forms at different times, but has involved three essential elements. These are, firstly, the commitment to the vital role of teachers in the struggle, formulated in terms of the concept of the leading role of the intelligentsia. During the 1940s and 1950s, this and the concept of slave mentality were the most important education-related concepts developed by the NEUM. Professionalism for teachers was also re-defined to include a notion of political responsibility to youth. The politically responsible teacher was the teacher who took teaching and the truth about race seriously. Secondly, it has involved a commitment to using schools to both maintain a high standard of education, as well as to de-bunk racial myths dominant in the society. During the 1960s, it was argued, certain schools became known as 'Unity Movement Schools'. These schools were characterised by the commitment of the staff to teaching a non-racial ethos and encouragement of achievement. The final element has been a sense that political education continues inside as well as outside of school, in cultural as well as political fora, through discussion, debate and reading. Although these fora were developed long before 1976, their break-up in 1986 signalled a profound defeat. Through these three areas of activity, the Unity Movement managed to build a particular attitude to the role of education in struggle.

Responses to the Unity Movement's approach to education were shown to be varied, and reflect the usual contradictions between intention and outcome familiar to the schooling process. While on the one hand teachers' commitment and dedication was valued and teachers provided good role models, on the other the over-valuation of teachers devalued other occupations or routes students could be expected to pursue. While on the one hand, the schools widened horizons, and contradicted social expectations of students by making them aware of their capability and of possibility rather than incapacity and limitations, they did not prepare them for the realities of the labour market. While a broad, anti-racist humanitarian content was emphasised, pedagogies remained on the whole conventional. While the Fellowships took many through a rigorous programme of cultural

and political education, they alienated many by their elitism and sexism.

It has also been argued that a major contradiction emerged between its theory and practice, which undermined its potential wider impact, and which accounts for much of its later failures and the more negative aspects of its character. At one level practice was consistent with theory, in that theory stressed the leading role of the intelligentsia in freeing subordinated people from a slave mentality which held them in thrall to the divide and rule strategies of the ruling class. Teachers were considered to be best equipped for this role. At another level, this theoretical approach precluded questions about the practical organisation of the working class.

When all is said and done, however, we live in an imperfect world and some credit must go to the Unity Movement for, in however distorted and blameworthy a manner, producing people who, wherever they have gone, have impressed others with their critical approach, their clarity of thought, and their commitment to reading, debate and discussion. On their own and for its own sake, there may be little value in these things. In organisational contexts, they are vital in developing a democratic political culture.

\* This paper is hopefully the first in a series on educational traditions and legacies of social and political movements in South Africa.

(This paper has a very specific focus - the nature of the relationship between education and politics and education and organisation as it has found expression in one phase and in one area of South Africa's history. I will not look at other areas of activity such as civics. It is not intended to provide a comprehensive examination of NEUM educational theory, principles and practices across the country, but to raise debate about the more general questions about education and its relationship to politics and organisation. The paper benefited and gained much from interviews with individuals in Cape Town, some of whom wished to remain nameless, some of whom did not. I alone take responsibility for my interpretation. For the sake of consistency, interviews were listed A-M. Thanks especially to Bill Nasson and June and Gert Bam who helped with sources).

#### Notes

1. BM Kies studied at the Universities of Cape Town and London. A founder member of the NEUM, Kies also helped to establish the leftist discussion group, the New Era Fellowship and served as editor of the *Educational Journal of the Teachers' League of South Africa*. He wrote regularly for the *Torch* newspaper, the mouthpiece of the NEUM. After being dismissed from teaching at Trafalgar High School for his opposition to apartheid he became a barrister-at-law. Before his death in 1979 he had become one of the best known human rights lawyers in South Africa.

2. IB Tabata was a founder and leading theoretician of the NEUM. He was born in Queenstown in the Cape in 1909 and received his secondary schooling at Lovedale. After attending Fort Hare for some time he left the university to seek work in Cape Town in 1931. He became employed as a truck driver and joined the racially mixed Lorry Drivers Union, serving as a member of its executive. He joined the Cape African Voters' Association and educated himself politically by reading widely in Marxist and other literature. In 1935 he was a delegate to the founding conference of the All African Convention (AAC) and subsequently published the AAC pamphlet, 'The Awakening of a People', and served on the AAC executive. He was one of the founders of the Anti-CAD, and was active in NEUM from its inception in 1943. In the 1940s he travelled widely in the Cape and the Transkei, publicising the NEUM program and attacking government programmes aimed at limiting African livestock. Tabata favoured a peasant-based liberation movement and a long-range strategy of political education rather than short-range action campaigns. In 1956 he received a banning order confining him to Cape Town for five years, during which time he wrote 'Education for Barbarism', a pamphlet attacking the Bantu Education system. On the expiration of his ban in 1961, he helped found the APDUSA, which was intended to be an individual-membership body affiliated to the AAC and NEUM, and became its President. In May 1963 he fled South Africa via Swaziland and subsequently took refuge in Zambia. During his period of exile, he continued to hold the position of President of both the NEUM and APDUSA (See Karis, T and Carter, GM (eds) - *From Protest to Challenge*, volume 4, Political Profiles, extract; Tabata Papers, UCT Ms and Archives, BC 925).

3. 'Top One Hundred Schools', Information Paper no. 23, 'Which Schools do our Students Come From', University of Cape Town Careers Office, in 1978 Harold Cressy was 11th, Livingstone High

20th, South Peninsula 39th and Trafalgar 29th - still comfortably amongst the top 50.

4. In the following account I will focus on Livingstone, but interviewees who attended other schools attested to much the same things, with small differences here and there.

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Interviews A - M conducted in Cape Town, July 1990.

# **Agenda**

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